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Editorial

Teaching Children's Literature in the University: New Perspectives and Challenges for the Future

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Children's literature is an area of frequent scholarship, reflecting its influential position in telling stories, developing literacy, and sharing knowledge in many cultures. At its best, children's literature is transformative in the lives of children and their adult reading companions, and as such plays an important role in society. Indeed, in the last several decades, children's literature has become an important focus of teaching and research in centres for literature and literary criticism, education, and library/information sciences in universities across the world. Much has been written about the historical undervaluing of children's literature and research in this area (e.g., Nikolajeva, 2016). While there is considerable literature concerning the teaching of children's literature in primary and secondary classrooms (e.g., Bland & Lütge, 2012; Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Ommundsen et al., 2021), there has been relatively little scholarship on the pedagogy involved in teaching children's literature in a university setting with two notable exceptions. *Teaching Children's Fiction* edited by Robert Butler (2006) presents eight chapters by experienced children's literature teachers and scholars, mostly from

Britain, concerning intellectual and educational traditions in children's literature studies and teaching, sharing and discussion of teaching practices, and providing resources for teachers in this field. *A Master Class in Children's Literature*, edited by April Bedford and Lettie Albright (2011), offers chapters in which children's literature professors from across the United States of America share and reflect on their practice in relation to the structures of children's literature courses, the characteristics and elements of children's literature, and future trends and challenges in the teaching of children's literature.

1. Challenges in contemporary teaching with children's literature

In an essay published in 1959 entitled *Children's Literature and Children's Literacy*, L.S. Root stated, "To help children achieve literacy, children's literature must be removed from the position of splendid isolation which it now occupies in far too many classrooms" (p. 289). In order to reach this goal, she argues that three forces need to crucially interact--new programs of reading instruction based on appreciation and pleasure for what children read, recognition of the fundamental role of multimedia literacy, and broadened definitions of literacy and literature (p. 289). More than sixty years have passed but many aspects of this argument are still relevant today.

Nowadays literacy is still a crucial consideration in the teaching of children's literature at universities with many scholars creatively combining different theoretical frameworks and methods. From this perspective, one of the most compelling aspects is linked to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversities of university students in these courses. Engaging students with global and multicultural children's literature has become a fundamental element in building their intercultural understandings and abilities to successfully interact across cultures (Short, Day & Schroeder, 2016). This approach not only builds their literacy competence but also encourages their critical thinking and cross-cultural investigations. In addition, experiences with culturally diverse literature contributes to enlarging interdisciplinary content-area knowledge (social studies, arts, history, etc.) and supports a more engaged discussion about responsible and participative global citizenship (Johnson, Mathis & Short, 2017).

Other challenging features in contemporary teaching with children's literature can be traced to the rising sensitivity towards the protection and preservation of nature and the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals or Global Goals. New theoretical perspectives, such as ecocriticism, posthumanism and new materialism (Gaard, 2009; Goga et al., 2018; Duckworth & Guanio-Uluru, 2021), offer insightful tools to discuss these issues and engage with students in investigations that push their critical thinking in "more-than-human environments" (García-González &Deszcz-Tryhubczak, 2020, p. 47).

Many other complex topics challenge the theoretical frameworks and methods in teaching children's literature, such as the role of cross-disciplinary and cross-modality in children's and young adult literature, the current dominance of utilitarian uses of children's literature with a strong focus on bibliotherapy approaches, and the difficulties many of us have experienced at universities during the two-year period (2020-2021) of the pandemic, in trying to balance digital and on-line teaching with the lack of sensory elements in digital teaching environments due to the omission of the physical affordances of books.

Consequently, there is a compelling need to consider these aspects of teaching children's literature, including questioning problematic perspectives and sharing methodologies and educational practices that help scholars face present and future educational challenges of this discipline at the tertiary level.

2. Overview on the contributions to this issue

In this special issue, our contributors build on the work of Butler (2006) and Bedford and Albright (2011) in sharing their approaches to teaching children's literature in universities across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australasia. The thirteen articles in the special issue are arranged into three sections: Connecting across Students and Courses; Opening Spaces for Dialogue of Children's Literature; and Encouraging Critical Reading of Picturebooks.

The first section of the special issue, Connecting across Students and Courses, presents three perspectives from Scotland, Australia and Croatia on ways in which university students and courses connect with children's literature. Jennifer Farrar presents findings from a two-year survey of preservice teachers in Scotland, exploring their knowledge of children's literature and their attitudes towards reading, suggesting ways to create a literature-rich environment within a teacher education context. Alyson Simpson's article focuses on preservice teachers in an Australian context, describing a partnership between an initial teacher education course and local schools to create authentic interactions with children's literature. School children wrote letters to preservice teachers to describe their reading preferences and the preservice teachers made recommendations for further reading, in the process exploring their own reading identities. Lastly, Matea Butković and Ester Vidović explore representation of ethnic diversity in picturebooks used within six Croatian faculties of Teacher Education. Their findings indicate the need for teacher educators to expand their reading lists with more diverse voices.

Other issues on teaching children's literature are addressed in the section on Opening Spaces for Dialogue of Children's Literature with contributions by authors from Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway and Spain. Jeanette Hoffmann discusses the Didactic Research Labs where university students

read-aloud picturebooks to children and reflect on their learning processes using Key Incident Analysis. The results provide insights into both the processes of reflection by the primary school student teachers and the processes of children's literary learning. Marnie Campagnaro and Nina Goga problematize the notion of theoretical perspectives on ecocriticism, posthumanism and new materialism in children's literature with regards to the methodological tools and teaching practices necessary to prepare students to address these demanding issues. Based on a cross-disciplinary theoretical framework, the authors explore a pilot course which took place virtually to motivate students to fruitfully engage with nonfiction children's literature, aesthetic experiences, and environmental consciousness. Nicola Daly and Dianne Forbes describe their development of a four-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) focusing on picturebooks, using a sociocultural frame in partnership with a popular MOOC provider. Their work problematizes the relevant role of storytelling in achieving human connection and exploring social issues even in a virtual context. Inspired by the potential of Lifelong Education, Karla Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez and Xabier Etxaniz present a short-term project to teach children's literature to senior learners. The intergenerational classic tale of the Little Red Riding Hood and its contemporary retellings are used to encourage senior students to reflect on the moral discourse of children's literature and on their ideological responses to contemporary children's picturebooks.

The section on Encouraging Critical Reading of Picturebooks contains contributions from authors in the United States of America, France, Indonesia, Canada, Norway, Scotland and Turkey. Petros Panou's article describes supporting preservice teachers in the USA to read global literature radiantly, taking themselves outside their realities, and engaging their social imagination. Esa Christine Hartmann and Christine Hélot worked with preservice teachers in France to explore the use of multilingual picturebooks in bilingual educational contexts and the potential of multilingual picturebooks to foster the development of biliteracy and metalinguistic awareness. Nita Novianti's work in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting in Indonesia presents findings about developing critical literacy with EFL pre-service teachers using fairy tales. Danielle A. Morris-O'Connor shares her practice of using picturebooks in Canadian first year English Literature classes, exploring the potential of picturebooks in this setting and sharing assignment possibilities. The last two articles in this section involve film and LED technology. Berit Westergaard Bjørlo and Berit Westergaard Johnsrud discuss two films about picturebooks made by Norwegian in-service teachers during an in-service course on Norwegian language and literature. Their findings indicate that the making of film fostered high engagement and supported in-depth knowledge about children's literature. Lastly, Betül Gaye Dinç, Birce Özkan and Ilgım Veryeri Alaca share the experiences of students in an undergraduate/graduate course in children's literature who incorporated circuit-based technology into a picturebook they were creating,

building on the Maker Movement and Human Computer Interaction (HCI). Students commented on the playfulness and teamwork involved in this task and identified additional literacies they used.

In all three sections, the articles by contributors highlight the range of ways in which children's literature is being taught and the potential of children's literature for creating deep engagement among adult university students across a range of different and rich thematic, methodological and geographical contexts.

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"I Don't Really Have a Reason to Read Children's Literature": Enquiring into Primary Student Teachers' Knowledge of Children's Literature

"No tinc cap raó per llegir literatura infantil": indagar en el coneixement de la literatura infantil en alumnat de mestre/a de Primària

"No tengo ninguna razón para leer literatura infantil": indagar en el conocimiento de la literatura infantil en el alumnado de maestro/a de Primaria

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Abstract

Research into in-service teachers' knowledge of children's literature indicates there is a powerfully symbiotic relationship between teachers' perceptions and projections of themselves as readers and students' engagement with reading as a pleasurable activity (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al 2014). Less is known about pre-service teachers' knowledge of children's literature or their attitudes towards reading and the Scottish context is unexplored in this regard. Inspired by and aligned with the work of Cremin et al. (2008) with in-service primary teachers in England, this project investigated the personal reading habits of more than 150 student teachers over a two-year period by capturing snapshots of their knowledge of children's literature and perceptions of themselves as not only readers, but as readers of children's literature, at various stages of their initial teacher education. Framed by understandings of literacy practices as socially and locally constructed (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) and of literate identities as fluid, contingent and plural (Moje et al., 2009), this paper also outlines how project findings linked to knowledge of texts for children and reader identity have informed the teaching and learning of children's literature at university level.

Keywords: Initial teacher education, children's literature, identity, teacher knowledge, reading for pleasure.

Resumen

La investigación sobre el conocimiento de la literatura infantil en el estudiantado de Magisterio indica que hay una poderosa relación simbiótica entre las percepciones del profesorado y las proyecciones de sí mismos como personas lectoras y la motivación del alumnado respecto de una actividad placentera (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al 2014). Se sabe menos sobre el conocimiento de la literatura infantil o de sus actitudes hacia la lectura, y el contexto escocés está inexplorado a este respecto. Inspirado y alineado con el trabajo de Cremin et al (2018) sobre el profesorado en activo en Inglaterra, este proyecto investiga los hábitos personales de lectura de más de 150 estudiantes a lo largo de un periodo de dos años

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a través de la captura de instantáneas de su conocimiento de la literatura infantil y las percepciones de sí mismos, no solo como personas lectoras, sino como personas lectoras de literatura infantil en diversos estadios de su formación inicial como maestros y maestras. En el marco de la comprensión de las prácticas de literacidad como social y localmente construidas (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) y de las identidades literatas como fluidas, contingentes y plurales (Moje et al., 2009), este artículo también señala como los hallazgos de proyectos ligados al conocimiento de textos para niños y niñas y de la identidad lectora han informado la enseñanza aprendizaje de la literatura infantil a nivel universitario.

Palabras clave: formación inicial de maestros/as, literatura infantil, identidad, conocimiento docente, lectura por placer

Resum

La recerca sobre el coneixement de la literatura infantil en l'estudiantat de Magisteri indica que hi ha una poderosa relació simbiòtica entre les percepcions del professorat i les projeccions de si mateix com a persones lectores i la motivació de l'alumnat respecte d'una activitat plaent (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al 2014). Se'n sap menys sobre el coneixement de la literatura infantil o de les seues actituds cap a la lectura, i el context escocés està inexplorat a aquest respecte. Inspirat i alineat amb el treball de Cremin et al (2008) sobre el professorat en actiu en Anglaterra, aquest projecte investiga els hàbits personals de lectura de més de 150 estudiants al llarg d'un període de dos anys tot capturant instantànies del seu coneixement de la literatura infantil i de les percepcions d'ells i elles mateixos, no tan sols com a persones lectores, sinó com a persones lectores de literatura infantil en diversos estadis de la seua formació inicial com a mestres. En el marc de la comprensió de les pràctiques de literacitat com a socialment i localment construïdes (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) i de les identitats literates com a fluides, contingents i plurals (Moje et al., 2009), aquest article també assenyala com les troballes de projectes lligats al coneixement de textos per a infants i de la identitat lectora han posat al corrent l'ensenyament-aprenentatge de la literatura infantil a nivell universitari.

Paraules clau: formació inicial de mestres, literatura infantil, identitat, coneixement docent, lectura per plaer

1. Introduction

Learners' attitudes towards reading as a pleasurable activity can be positively influenced if their teacher identifies as a 'Reading Teacher', that is, as a reader who teaches and a teacher who reads (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al., 2014; Cremin, 2020). Research from England found that primary teachers' knowledge of children's literature was often limited to the books that teachers had read at school themselves, leading to what has been described as a 'Dahl dependency' (Cremin et al., 2008); in other words, an over-reliance on a limited range of dominant authors. Writing from a Norwegian context, Skaar et al.'s (2018) study of almost 250 pre-service and in-service teachers' narrative descriptions of themselves as readers found that literature was not part of the student teachers' lives and that there were "practically no genuine readers" among the pre-service teachers

in the study (p. 320). Such findings suggest that teachers will struggle to make recommendations that address the needs and interests of the increasingly diverse young readers in their classes (Cremin 2014; Clark & Teravainen, 2015). They also raise concerns about in-service primary teachers' awareness of the advantages that children's literature can offer pedagogically, for developing intercultural and empathic understandings (Short, 2011; Nikolajeva, 2013), and for cognitive and linguistic development (Smith, 2015).

University-based iniciar teacher education (ITE) has the potential to offer a vital space in which to interrupt cycles of limited teacher knowledge by developing student teachers' understanding of what it means to be a Reading Teacher and by broadening their awareness of authors and texts for children

University-based initial teacher education (ITE) has the potential to offer a vital space in which to interrupt cycles of limited teacher knowledge by developing student teachers' understanding of what it means to be a Reading Teacher (Commeyras et al, 2003; Cremin et al, 2008) and by broadening their awareness of authors and texts for children. Doing so may also help student teachers towards an increased consciousness of their personal and professional identities as readers, given the shaping effects such identities have on classroom practice and their linked development to learners' "embodied competences" (Carrington & Luke, 1997, p.107). This paper describes a project that has taken forward these ideas with the aim of gently disrupting student teachers' existing knowledge about children's literature in order to provoke change and further development in their literate identities.

2. Research Context

In the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Scotland's national educational framework for children and young people aged between 3-18 years, the status of children's literature is largely invisible. Organised around capacities and areas of learning rather than school subjects, the CfE aims to develop young people as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Government, 2009). Literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing are highlighted as being of central importance to all, meaning that practitioners in all stages are held responsible for developing and evidencing them across the curriculum. Despite this centralised focus on literacy, children's literature is not named explicitly as a resource for readers and teachers to explore and exploit. While the practice of reading for pleasure is alluded to via a curricular strand labelled "Enjoyment and Choice" (Scottish Government, 2009), in which learners are expected to be able explore texts and explain why they are enjoyable, Smith (2015) has noted that reading in the CfE is largely framed by a "heritage lens" (p.614) that foregrounds literature "as a place where national and cultural identity can be formed and reinforced" (p.614). According to Smith, this can lead to the

privileging of texts for their "provenance and age" (p.614) over their relevance to children's tastes and lives. As the terms "heritage" and "age" suggest, such a lens reinforces the dominance of classic or Canonical texts for children without simultaneously making room for newer, more diverse and culturally-relevant voices that reflect young people's lives and experiences. As such, Smith notes that children's literature has tended to occupy an ambiguous role within UK education systems, despite the current boom in children's publishing (Chandler, 2020) and increased visibility of such texts in out of school contexts.

This ambiguous status of children's literature is visible in the findings of Cremin et al's (2008) study, where in-service primary teachers' knowledge of children's literature was shown to be largely confined to a narrow range of already familiar fiction writers, with participants showing little to no knowledge of poets and picturebook authors. In their conclusion, the authors called on initial teacher educators to ensure that student teachers are exposed to diverse, high quality children's literature prior to qualification, but as Smith (2015) has pointed out, there is little space within primary initial teacher education programmes for this to happen. Consequently, children's literature is often located on the margins of teacher education as a "optional extra" taken by only a minority of student teachers (Smith, 2015), meaning that its broader significance and implications for practice are missed by the majority.

Consequently, children's literature is often located on the margins of teacher education as a "optional extra" taken by only a minority of student teachers (Smith, 2015), meaning that its broader significance and implications for practice are missed by the majority.

Such dynamics are reflected within the research context of this study: the third year of an initial teacher education programme at a Scottish university that leads to a primary teaching qualification after four years, with an integrated Master's level qualification available to those who graduate after five years. After an initial two years of macro-level educational studies, third year student teachers' timetable mirrors the curricular demands of the Scottish primary classroom and is structured around the CfE's eight areas of learning: expressive arts, health and wellbeing, languages (including English, Gaidhlig, Gaelic learners and modern languages), mathematics, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies and technologies. Students also undertake significant blocks of School Experience (practicum) within this year. Greater specialism is offered through a choice of seven electives that includes Children's Literature, meaning that around 20 Year 3 students can choose to study the subject to a greater depth. Given the element of choice, it is likely that those with a pre-existing interest in children's literature or reading will select it as an option. For the rest of the 140-strong Year 3 cohort who do not take the specialist elective, messages about children's literature are conveyed primarily via a series of literacy and English lectures and seminars, but, due to pressures of

time and space, coverage of children's literature becomes necessarily limited to whatever the teaching team can accommodate.

It is from within such a context that this project was conceived to explore the extent of student teachers' knowledge of children's literature and their perceptions of themselves as readers. In particular, this study aimed to:

- Explore and develop student teachers' knowledge and understandings of children's literature;
- Stimulate student teachers into actively and independently developing their knowledge of children's literature as a result of engaging with the study's tools;
- Create a case for the repositioning of children's literature from the margins towards the centre of ITE programmes at an institutional level;
- Explore the relative structural invisibility of children's literature in education with an interest in how this may contribute to teacher knowledge and perceptions of the subject.

Building on Cremin et al.'s work (2008) with in-service primary teachers in England, this paper presents a first tranche of findings from an enquiry into undergraduate student teachers' knowledge of children's literature at a Scottish university and site of initial teacher education. It reports on the findings of a questionnaire that was adapted from the original Cremin et al. (2008) study to explore pre-service teachers' personal reading habits, their knowledge of children's literature and initial perceptions of themselves as not only readers, but as readers of children's literature. Data was also collected using two autobiographical written tasks distributed an academic year apart, which asked participants to reflect on different aspects of their reader identity: these will be analyzed in separate publications.

In summary, the specific questions this paper addresses are:

- What is extent of student teacher's knowledge of children's literature at the outset of the curricular phase of their initial teacher education?
- What are student teachers' perceptions of themselves as readers and as readers of children's literature?
- What are the implications of these findings for teacher educators in the field of children's literature?

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framing

As mentioned above, this project utilised research tools developed by Cremin et al. (2008). With permission, I adapted the original survey to suit the profile of student teachers who were still in the process of gaining classroom experience and might therefore not be able to answer questions related to the use of children's literature in school.

Data were collected from the Year 3 cohort of undergraduate students during 2017-18 (a pilot study); 2018-19 (sample size 80) and 2019-20 (sample size 70). This paper discusses the findings from the 2018-19 and 2019-20 cohorts. The questionnaires were distributed during an induction day held prior to the start of the new academic session. Scheduled slightly before the start of the new academic term, the induction days were not attended by every student in each of the cohorts (which usually comprise 120-140 students, compared to the 70-80 present at induction). I decided to circulate the questionnaires that day given that it represented an opportunity to capture the students' knowledge about children's literature and self-perceptions as readers before any lectures or seminars had taken place. Ethical permission to conduct the study was granted by the host institution; participant information statements and consent forms were distributed to all in attendance at the induction day after a brief talk to explain the aims of the project. To ensure a wider take-up, the questionnaires were completed during the induction session, with students able to indicate whether or not they wished to participate.

The questionnaire comprised a mix of open and closed questions. The latter were tabulated and translated into graphs to support the process of analysis for any patterns. The former, which included slightly longer responses to questions about reader identity, were coded using key steps of the reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A benefit of reflexive thematic analysis (TA) is that it can be applied in diverse ways, including inductively, deductively and for semantic purposes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Intended to offer researchers theoretical flexibility and thereby a wide range of applications, an aim of reflexive TA is to support the identification of patterns of meaning across data sets, while acknowledging the inherently shaping influence of researcher subjectivity throughout the process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After an initial period of data familiarisation, the qualitative data were coded and then grouped under themes that expressed the overarching narrative emerging from my interpretation of the participants' responses. These themes are explored in the Findings and Discussion section of this paper.

Theoretically, this project is framed by understandings of literacy as socially and locally constructed (Street, 1984; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). This perspective has implications for initial teacher education by highlighting a shift away from perceptions of literacy learning and teaching as predominantly skills

based, towards a view of literacies as plural, contingent and mediated by an individual's fluid and socially constructed literate identity (Moje et al., 2009, p.416). For student teachers, this perspective highlights a need to recognise the ways in which their own assumptions about reading and related values about being a reader can significantly impact their future classroom practice.

For the purposes of this paper, student teachers' knowledge of children's literature is conceptualized as one of the multiple, intertwined strands of "funds of identity" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014) that inform teachers' personal and professional beliefs and practices (McAdam & Farrar, 2018). Under this view, it becomes vital for student teachers to interrogate their funds of identity in order to become more aware of the shaping influences at work. Without such a heightened awareness, there is a risk that taken-for-granted cultural scripts will continue to dominate, silencing the diverse and less dominant identities that exist within any classroom setting (McAdam & Farrar, 2018). In the context of children's literature, this equates to the diversity of texts shared within classrooms and teachers' awareness of the "possible selves" they make available to younger readers through their text selections (McCarthey & Moje, 2002, p.237). According to McCarthey and Moje, the choice of books and teachers' mediation of them has a profound effect on children's development of self.

4. Findings and Discussion

For ease of discussion, in the paragraphs that follow the 2018-19 cohort are referred to as Group A (sample size 80), with the 2019-20 group referred to as Group B (sample size 70). The questions are presented in the order the student teachers encountered them in the survey.

4.1 Q1. What Was Your Favourite Book as a Child?

When asked to name a favourite book from their childhood, the majority of student teachers across both cohorts were able to provide an answer. From Group A, 4% did not provide an answer; 3% of student teachers in the Group B left this question blank. A wide range of texts were provided - over 70 separate titles - with some texts and authors receiving multiple mentions. All of the texts mentioned were works of popular fiction. The authors most dominant across both cohorts were Jacqueline Wilson (Group A: 18%; Group B 21%) and Roald Dahl (Group A: 14 %; Group B: 29 %), with some respondents choosing to enter "Anything by Jacqueline Wilson" as a blanket response to the question. Other authors mentioned several times included Enid Blyton, Michael Morpurgo and JK Rowling, with 'Harry Potter' given as a response by three people in Group A and seven in Group B. The majority of texts mentioned were chapter books, with only a small number of students citing picturebooks or illustrated texts as their childhood favourites. Those mentioned included *Hairy MacLary* by Lynley Dodd (2 mentions in both Group A and B); Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (3 mentions in Group A); *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler (3 mentions in Groups A and

B); and Judith Kerr's *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* (2 mentions in Groups A and B). No works of poetry or nonfiction were recorded.

4.2 Q2. What Children's Books Have You Read Recently for Pleasure?

This question did not elicit as many responses as the first question, with 36% of Group A and 49% of Group B choosing to leave it unanswered. Of those who did answer, the author most dominant across both cohorts was JK Rowling, who is sometimes described as a cross-over author, with texts read by adults and children. Rowling received a total of 12 mentions from respondents in Group A and 11 from Group B. Other authors recording multiple mentions included Julia Donaldson (12 mentions in Group A; 5 in Group B); Roald Dahl (9 mentions in Group A; 6 from Group B) and The Hungry Caterpillar (5 mentions from Group A only). As these results suggest, there were close overlaps between the most dominant authors read recently (Donaldson, Dahl and Carle) and those cited as childhood favourites in response to the first question.

4.3 Q3. When Did You Last Read a Children's Book?

For this answer, respondents could choose from the following:

A) In the last month

B) In the last 3 months

C) Within 6 months

D) Over 6 months

From an overview of all responses provided, it was clear that another option had emerged: that of a blank response. Therefore, under option E, I calculated the percentage of respondents who had decided not to fill this in, presumably to indicate they had not read any children's books within memory. As Table 1 shows, around a third of the total number of students in Groups A and B had read a children's book within three months of the survey. Yet at the opposite end, according to the combined figures from options D and the student-generated option E, 47% of Group A and 63% of Group B had not read a children's book in over six months, if not longer. Such figures might be considered worrisome, given these primary student teachers were at the mid-way point of their initial teacher education, but another concern is that fact that the construction of their timetable up until that point had not facilitated engagement with children's literature, meaning that if reading children's books was not already a pre-existing feature of their literate identity, it was unlikely to become a core activity without prompting or support. This idea is explored in more detail in relation to some of the other questions.

Answer	2018-19/A	%	2019-20/B	%
A) In the last month	11	14	10	14
B) In the last 3 months	18	23	10	14
C) Within 6 months	13	16	6	9
D) Over 6 months	14	17	19	27
E) No answer provided	24	30	25	36

Table 1. When did you last read a children's book?

4.4 Q4. List 6 'Good' Authors for Children.

When asked to name six 'good' authors for children, where 'good' was explained as an author they would consider worthy of reading in the classroom, 84% of both Groups A and B could list four or more names. Only one person per group failed to name a single author, with one person in Group B able to think of only one name. Dominating the lists was Roald Dahl (with 75 mentions by Group A and 59 from Group B); followed by Jacqueline Wilson (with 57 mentions from Group A and 49 from B); closely followed by JK Rowling, who attracted 57 mentions from Group A and 43 from Group B. The next highest scores came from David Walliams (24 from Group A; 33 from Group B); Julia Donaldson (25 mentions from Group A and 21 from Group B); Enid Blyton (18 from Group A and 27 from Group B); and Michael Morpurgo (18 from Group A; 29 from Group B).

Interestingly, many of the same authors were cited by the in-service teachers surveyed by the Cremin at al. (2008, p.15) research team over a decade earlier, when Dahl, Morpurgo, Wilson and Rowling topped the lists of mentions. The close alignment of the student teachers' selection of 'good' authors with those already named by their more experienced colleagues in England is perhaps a reflection of the authors who continue to be promoted by larger publishing houses that feed into UK booksellers but is perhaps also indicative of the point raised earlier: that teachers' knowledge of children's literature can often be limited to the books they read as children, which is then passed on to their classes (Cremin et al., 2008). To some extent, this is borne out by the recurrence of Dahl, Wilson and Rowling, and to a lesser extent, Morpurgo and Blyton, in the student teachers' responses to questions 1, 2 and 4. The emergence of David Walliams as a 'good' author in the eyes of the student teachers but not the in-service teachers in the earlier study can be explained by the fact that Walliams' first book, *The Boy in the Dress*, was published in 2008, the same year Cremin et al.'s work was published. Since then, Walliams has gone onto dominate the lists of best-selling children's books. Certainly, the prevailing dominance of authors such as Dahl, Wilson and Blyton in the student teachers' mentions

suggests the narrowness of their knowledge about texts for children that would, if left unchecked and undeveloped, construct cultural scripts of a limited range within Scotland's increasingly diverse classrooms.

4.5 Q5. List 6 'Good' Poets for Children.

With 'good' intended to be understood in the same manner as question four, this question tasked student teachers with identifying the names of six poets writing for children. According to the responses provided by Group A, 73% of students could not name a single children's poet; for Group B the figure was 56%. Some student teachers could name one poet (16% of Group A and 23% of Group B) but no-one in Group A or B could name 5 or 6 poets. In Group B, three people were able to name four poets each, the highest achievement across both cohorts. Of the poets named, the highest number of mentions was for Dr Seuss (with 13 mentions by Group A and 20 from Group B); with Robert Burns the second most frequently named poet for children (9 mentions by Group A and 10 by Group B). Of interest here is the student teachers' identification of Robert Burns, (the 18th century writer who is commonly referred to as Scotland's national poet), as a poet for children, when in fact Burns primarily wrote for adults. Yet many of his poems are taught to children in Scottish schools, with recitations of Burns' verse still a traditional feature of many primary and secondary classrooms in February, when Burns' Night is celebrated to honour the poet's life and works.

Other writers listed as poets named included Roald Dahl (with 3 mentions from Group A and 11 from Group B); AA Milne and Spike Milligan (both with 4 mentions each from Group B), Michael Rosen (2 mentions from Group A only); while Carol Ann Duffy, a poet many Scottish teenagers study (sometimes alongside Robert Burns) as part of a national secondary school qualification, received single digit votes from both groups (Group A: 1; Group B: 3). As these results illustrate, the student teachers' knowledge of poets writing for children was extremely limited, raising possible questions about the level of exposure to children's poetry the student teachers had during their own time at school. Interestingly, the in-service teacher participants in Cremin et al's (2008) study in England also found the poetry question to be a challenge, with only 10% of respondents able to name six poets, and 58% able to name only one, two or no poets at all (2008, p.15).

4.6 Q6. List 6 'Good' Picturebook Authors/ Illustrators.

As with the question about children's poets, the questionnaire results revealed that the student teachers were not familiar with picturebook authors and/or illustrators. In fact, as with the poets, the majority of student teachers were unable to name a single picturebook author and/or illustrator. In Group A, 72% of respondents did not answer the question; for Group B, the figure was 50%. Some students could name one picturebook author and/or illustrator (12% of Group A; 20% of Group B),

with a handful of people able to provide the names of four author/ illustrators (1 person in Group A and 6 in Group B).

The most frequently named author-illustrator was Quentin Blake, with 10 mentions in Group A and 22 mentions in Group B. Other picturebook author and/or illustrators with several mentions included Julia Donaldson, Nick Sharratt, Dr Seuss, Eric Carle and Judith Kerr. In most cases, works by these authors had also been cited in answer to previous questions. An exception to this was Nick Sharratt, a picturebook author and illustrator in his own right, who is also well known for his illustrative work for the written works of Jacqueline Wilson and Julia Donaldson. In amongst the short list of author/illustrators who received a single mention were some writing in languages other than English (Yuri Morales and Herve Tuller), and those best known as comic book artists (Stan Lee and Jack Kirby). Therefore, while the responses to this question were limited, in a sense they were more diverse than the answers given to any of the other questions. Yet overall, the student teachers' responses showed significant gaps in their knowledge of children's literature and indicated to the literacy teaching team where some targeted support was required.

4.7 Q7. Rank the Following Statements in Order of Importance, Where 1 is the Most Important.

To answer Question 7, the students had to read the following statements and then rank them from most to least important.

Children's Literature is important because:

1. It develops reading

2. It develops writing

3. It widens knowledge

4. It engages the emotions and helps to develop empathy

5. It develops the imagination.

Responses to this question were interesting in that they highlighted the student teachers' pre-existing assumptions about children's literature before they encountered it formally within the context of their initial teacher education. The majority of students across both cohorts felt that children's literature played an important role in developing the imagination (Group A: 45%; Group B: 34%). Children's literature's role in developing reading received the second highest rating (Group A: 26%; Group B: 27%), with option 3 (widening knowledge) receiving slightly more ratings than number 4 (developing emotions and empathy), putting them into third and fourth place respectively. The option that

received the least number of ratings was the one related to writing, with only 3% of ratings from Group A and no ratings at all from Group B.

Remarkably, the student teachers' top and bottom choices (imagination and writing respectively) mirrored those of the in-service teacher participants in Cremin et al's (2008) study. The student teachers' selection of imagination as the primary role of children's literature is perhaps reflective of the predominance of fiction in the texts identified in their responses across the questionnaire and, as Cremin et al. noted in relation to their own project, may also indicate respondents' recognition of the escapist pleasure that reading can provide (2008, p.18). That the student teachers did not yet perceive connections between reading children's literature and writing provided a clear opportunity for the teaching team to emphasise the interconnectedness of reading and writing pedagogies in subsequent sessions. It also foregrounded the need to actively engage student teachers with ways of using children's literature as much more than an imaginative "treat", by supporting them towards deeper understandings of children's literature as "a resource that aids in the exploration of self, others and knowledge of the world" (Arizpe et al., 2013, p.241) in and through a variety of modes, including writing.

4.8 Q8. Are You a Reader?

All of the students provided a response to the question "are you a reader?". In broad terms, 52% of Group A recorded a 'yes' and 48% a 'no'. Group B's responses painted a slightly different picture, with 66% responding with a 'yes' and 34% with a 'no'. Reasons given for 'being a reader' included: students' perceptions of reading's helpful role in unwinding and relaxation; reading as a means of escaping reality and the sheer enjoyment that reading can bring to individuals. The list of reasons for 'not being a reader' was longer, and included:

- Lack of time
- Lack of interest or enjoyment
- Competing interests, specifically technology
- Impact of university pressures/ coursework demands
- Difficulties with reading, such as dyslexia and low concentration.

4.9 Q9. Are You a Reader of Children's Literature? Give a Reason.

Again, all respondents provided a response to the question "are you a reader of children's literature?" In Group A, 23% of respondents responded with 'yes', while 77% recorded a 'no'. In Group B, the proportion of 'yes' responses was 29%, with 71% registering a 'no' vote. As this indicates, the majority of student teachers did not identify with describing themselves as readers of children's literature.

To explore these results in more detail, the following paragraphs unpack some of the reasons the participants provided alongside their yes/no answers. As noted in the methodology section, responses to open questions in the questionnaire were coded and then organised under common themes, which are listed below. Themes common to both Groups A and B are discussed in this section.

4.9.1 Lack of Time

Many students reported time as a barrier to reading children's literature, including students who answered 'yes' to the question "are you a reader of children's literature?" For some people, reading children's books was a habit they had fallen out of in recent years, often as a result of academic pressures ["I read many children's books growing up and for going into school but not so much now as when I was young…"], whereas others depicted the difficulties of finding time for reading children's books, using phrases like "it's a struggle…"; "time management" or the simple and direct "not enough time." Some conveyed a sense of guilt with responses such as: "Not as often as I should", suggesting a recognition that reading children's literature would be a helpful pastime for a future teacher.

4.9.2 Relevance

In response to Question 9, a minority of student teachers expressed a desire to engage with children's literature and explained why they felt it was relevant to their studies. According to one respondent: "I have not explored children's literature yet, but it is something I need to do soon as it very important for teaching." Another reported that she already read children's literature to her young family but noted "this questionnaire has highlighted how much it should be a focus going forward." It is interesting that these final respondents appeared to use the questionnaire as an immediate prompt for reflection, caused perhaps by their awareness of missing knowledge (possibly from questions they could not answer), or from a recognition of questionnaire's role as teaching tool at this stage in their initial teacher education.

Some students' responses indicated that they did not regard children's literature as being relevant to their on-going studies as a primary school teacher. This was strongly communicated through answers such as:

> "No, I don't really have a reason to read children's literature."
>
> "No, children's literature does not really cross my mind."
>
> "I haven't ever considered reading children's books."

As indicated by the phrases "don't really have a reason" and "haven't ever considered", the concept of children's literature appeared to be removed from these respondents' perceptions of what they ought to be concerned with as student teachers.

Several student teachers said that children's literature was not relevant because they did not "have any children at home to read to". The converse of this also emerged: many respondents identified as readers of children's literature largely because they spent so much time reading it to their own families. In a couple of cases, respondents who read to their families added caveats that put a distance between themselves and the idea that their decision to read children's literature was representative of a personal choice. For example: "I read to my young family members and at times re-read old childhood favourites. However, it is not my main source of literature," and "I only read children's literature with my little cousins." While this notion of distancing is explored again under another sub-heading, it is interesting to consider is as a possible expression of a "folk theory" about being literate, that is an example of "common-sense linkages which are popularly accepted as facts about the social effects and consequences of literacy" (Luke & Carrington, 1997, p. 97). In this instance, such a literacy folk theory could be the apparently taken-for-granted assumption that the 'simple' world of children's literature becomes less relevant once readers become adults, leading to these student teachers disregarding its significance for their developing careers as teachers of primary-aged children.

The converse of this also emerged: many respondents identified as readers of children's literature largely because they spent so much time reading it to their own families. In a couple of cases, respondents who read to their families added caveats that put a distance between themselves and the idea that their decision to read children's literature was representative of a personal choice

4.9.3 Children's Literature is for School

As a sub-theme also related to 'relevance', responses of this sort categorized the reading of children's literature as an activity that would take place predominantly in school. Many students across both groups responded with comments like: "I read children's literature on placement: that is all"; "I only read children's literature for professional purposes" and "I don't read it outside of school experience." A strong sense of engagement with children's literature as conditional on context emerged through the students' repeated use of the word "only", which was peppered across responses under this

theme: "I *only* read texts to prepare for lessons"; "I *only* read children's literature for research"; "I *only* read children's literature if I intend to use it on placement"; and "*only* in early educational settings".

As with the themes already explored, there emerged a strong sense that some students aimed to displace or distance themselves from children's literature, by keeping it at a remove - for classroom use only. Under this view, children's literature would remain marginalized from future practice in ontological and pedagogical terms, as a tool to be lifted (and lowered) when required, but without deeper understandings of children's literature's scope and potential (Arizpe et al., 2013).

4.9.4 Personal Preferences

When providing a reason for their 'yes/no' answer to the question, *'are you a reader of children's literature?*' some students framed their responses using the idea of choice or

preference. For some respondents, this was connected strongly to a sense of enjoyment. For example: "children's literature is creative, and I enjoy stimulating my imagination"; or "children's literature is often very engaging and enjoyable and explores interesting messages"; and "I like reading children's books as they are fun." One respondent connected this sense of taking pleasure from children's literature to her developing career as a teacher: "I enjoy exploring children's literature and exploring how it may help my future practice."

For other respondents, reading children's literature emerged as something they would prefer not to do, for a variety of reasons. One such reason was that, as adults, they preferred to read texts aimed more squarely at their grown-up status. This could be seen within comments such as: "I don't feel it is for my age", or "I read according to my age category" and "I try to read more mature literature to develop different parts of myself" and finally, "I prefer to read books inappropriate for children".

Another reason the student teachers preferred not to read children's literature was linked to a perception of it as being too basic for adult readers. According to one respondent, "Children's literature is too simple to read for enjoyment", while another noted: "I feel it would not expand my knowledge and challenge me." One student teacher expressed a concern about "being judged" by others if they were found to be reading children's books; a worry that also spoke to the concerns conveyed by another respondent who felt that children's literature was "not intellectually stimulating", although, with some self-deprecation, also noted as an after-thought: "I would probably be very surprised if I tried."

What many of the more negative-sounding statements have in common is the perception of reading as an activity that is individual, preferably bounded by age and linked to self-development, with little recognition of the idea that reading texts for children might support the development of adults too,

both personally and professionally. They also convey the outdated idea of children's literature as simple, a view long contested (Nikolajeva, 1998) and one that is challenged by the increasingly complex texts available for young readers. That one of the students expressed a fear of 'being judged' if caught reading a children's book highlights the tensions that exist between some student teachers' pre-existing assumptions about children's books – the "folk theories" mentioned above (Carrington & Luke, 1997) and the fact that there are so many high quality texts for children available.

But, as the comment "I would probably be very surprised if I tried" conveys, there is an expectation of learning still to come, while the words of the student teacher who read for enjoyment with one eye on her developing teaching practice shows that such learning is already happening. As the last section of this paper outlines, these responses have been used to inform the teaching and learning of children's literature at university level, a project that is on-going. Before that, the results of the survey's last question are described.

4.10 Q10. How Do You Rate your Knowledge of Children's Literature?

To answer this question, student teachers had to select from one of the following answers;

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Patchy
5. Needs work.

Overall, across both groups, nobody rated their knowledge of children's literature as 'very good', while 15% of Group A and 20% of Group B considered their knowledge as 'good'. For both groups, the individual label that attracted the most self-ratings was "satisfactory" (40% of Group A and 34% of Group B), conveying a sense that these respondents were content with their level of knowledge. The next highest response was 'patchy', with 34% from Group A and 30% from Group B, while the group with the smallest numbers of ratings overall belonged to 'needs work', with 11% and 16 % from Groups A and B respectively.

These final self-evaluations are interesting when considered against the survey's headline findings, including the fact that most student teachers could not name a children's poet or picturebook author/illustrator, and few very student teachers saw reading children's literature as relevant to their lives. Yet many of the respondents chose to rate their knowledge of children's literature as either 'satisfactory' or 'patchy'. While 'patchy' suggests a recognition of uneven or threadbare coverage

when it comes to knowledge of children's literature, the label 'satisfactory' conveys a sense of 'ample sufficiency' – in other words, a level of knowledge that is 'just enough.'

Overall, most students did not view their knowledge of children's literature as particularly problematic. Such a perspective makes sense when considered holistically, for it is unlikely that student teachers would be able to necessarily recognise the gaps in their knowledge when they were not yet aware of what else was possible.

Overall, most students did not view their knowledge of children's literature as particularly problematic. Such a perspective makes sense when considered holistically, for it is unlikely that student teachers would be able to necessarily recognise the gaps in their knowledge when they were not yet aware of what else was possible. Indeed, to blame the students for lacking knowledge would be to take a deficit approach and would also disregard the systemic and socio-cultural conditions that have shaped their experiences of, and exposure to, children's literature, including at school and university.

5. Next Steps, Conclusions and Implications: Putting the Findings into Practice

The picture of student teachers' knowledge about children's literature that emerged from the survey data is both interesting and challenging. While it is important to acknowledge the limits of this project's sample size, it is interesting to note the similarities in results across the two years and the points in common with Cremin et al's (2008) study. In particular, it is interesting to note the continued dominance of a small group of fiction authors and the lack of diversity therein. The student teachers' limited knowledge of poetry and picturebooks is concerning, but – again - interesting as it also suggests that more work needs to be done to understand why such imbalances exist. Looking ahead, it will be fascinating to see what commonalities can be traced from the Scottish data to students on ITE programmes in Sydney, Australia and Galicia, Spain, where the survey is also being used.

The curriculum of initial teacher education programmes is already a crowded and contested space but when used as an audit tool, the questionnaire provided a clear rationale for a closer focus on children's literature within the undergraduate literacy course, starting with 3rd year, where curricular time was already allocated. Inspired by what we knew about good literacy teaching, we aspired to create a children's literature-rich environment within our institution. For example:

- We created a children's literature book-browsing and borrowing library within our building; a small but colourful space for the students to talk about books, to share ideas and to take books home. Inspired by the look and feel of many children's libraries, there are comfy chairs and

squashy stools; wooden book boxes full of picturebooks that invite rummaging, tall shelves for novels and wall displays that showcase the students' work around texts for children.

- We started up lunchtime book clubs, including some that shadowed children's book awards. These successfully moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- We developed seminars on Reading for Pleasure pedagogies (Cremin et al., 2014) that tasked student teachers with engaging with creative activities that explored their own identities as readers, including a River of Reading (Cliff Hodges, 2010).
- We based a lecture around the survey results to help highlight the significance of children's literature, the gaps in the students' existing knowledge and to direct them towards some wonderful poets, picturebook authors and illustrators.
- We squeezed even more children's literature into our teaching and encouraged our student teachers to write reflectively about their own development as Reading Teachers (Cremin et al., 2014), a facet of this project that will be discussed in subsequent publications.

Through this approach, we started to weave together the "social fabric of new reading communities" (Cremin et al., 2014, p.154) in which we initiated explorations of what reading 'looks like' in the 21st century, modelled reading behaviours, stimulated the development of student teachers' knowledge of children's literature and created online and in-person spaces for students to talk about children's texts and reading. By doing so, we also aimed to make visible the socially-constructed nature of such reading communities and the sorts of work that underpins them.

Writing about the concept of the literate habitus, Carrington and Luke (1997) have noted that "each individual's literate practices reflect his or her cultural and social capital resources and contribute to the further development of habitus and subsequent life trajectory across fields" (p104). Following this, the survey results can be recognised as expressions of the student teachers' literate identities. Given the indeterminate status of children's literature within the Scottish school curriculum and initial teacher education, it is possible to begin to understand why so many student teachers within this project did not connect or identify with children's literature in the questionnaire and why the range of knowledge was so limited in cultural terms. To return to Esteban-Guitart and Moll's (2014) "funds of identity" concept, the challenge for teacher educators becomes how to meaningfully embed knowledge and understandings about the rich diversity of children's literature in such a way that it can become part of a student teacher's literate identity and therefore an integral part of their future practice.

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Teaching with Children's Literature in Initial Teacher Education: Developing Equitable Literacy Pedagogy through Talk about Books

Enseñar con literatura infantil en la formación inicial de maestros/as: desarrollo de una pedagogía de la literacidad equitativa a través del diálogo sobre libros

Ensenyar amb literatura infantil en la formació inicial de mestres: desenvolupament d'una pedagogia de la literacitat equitativa a través del diàleg sobre llibres

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Abstract

Teaching about children's literature in pre-service teacher education is quite rare, even though research shows it is crucial for teachers to be good at teaching reading as well as being committed readers (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al., 2009). Emphasis on the reading process can sideline the importance of talking about quality literature to engage students in reading (Simpson, 2016). I have positioned the role of talk about books as a core part of the undergraduate program that I coordinate. In this way, the pre-service teachers of this study were alerted about the 'fiction effect' (Jerrim & Moss, 2019), which shows extended reading of literature has potential to improve reading skills for all students.

The paper explores how an initial teacher education course in Australia partnered with local schools to create interactions between school children and pre-service teachers talking about children's literature. A dialogic approach to learning (Alexander, 2020) was adopted to teaching pre-service teachers to develop equitable literacy pedagogy working with children's literature. Equity was used as a guiding principle to ensure pre-service teachers would provide children of all backgrounds and abilities the same opportunities to read literary texts. During their education program, the pre-service teachers received letters from school children who wrote about their reading preferences. The letters were discussed for evidence of reading habits and new books were sought as recommendations for children to read. By considering their own reading identities, pre-service teachers collectively developed their knowledge about children's literature as they developed knowledge of literacy pedagogy. The scaffolding of habits of noticing through iterative discussion (Simpson et al., 2020) helped the pre-service teachers learn about their students, learn from their students, and encouraged them to take a more holistic view of the teaching of reading.

Keywords: children's literature, equity, literacy, dialogic pedagogy, initial teacher education

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Resumen

Enseñar literatura infantil en la formación de docentes es bastante extraño, aunque las investigaciones muestran que es crucial, para maestros y maestras, ser competentes en la enseñanza de la lectura y también ser lectores y lectoras comprometidos (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al., 2009). El énfasis en el proceso lector puede dejar de lado la importancia de hablar sobre literatura de calidad que anime al alumnado a leer (Simpson, 2016). Hemos situado el rol de hablar sobre libros como una parte fundamental del programa de graduados que coordinamos. De esta manera, se advirtió al estudiantado de Magisterio de este estudio sobre el "efecto ficción" (Jerrim & Moss, 2019) el cual muestra que la lectura extensiva de literatura tiene potencial para mejorar las destrezas lectoras para todo el alumnado.

Este artículo explora la colaboración entre un curso de educación inicial para maestros en Australia con escuelas locales para crear interacciones entre escolares y estudiantes de Magisterio hablando sobre literatura infantil. Se adoptó un enfoque dialógico al aprendizaje (Alexander, 2020) para enseñar a desarrollar una pedagogía equitativa de la literacidad al alumnado de Magisterio trabajando con literatura infantil. La equidad se utilizó como principio guía para asegurar que este alumnado proveería en un futuro a niños y niñas de todos los contextos y con diferentes habilidades las mismas oportunidades de leer textos literarios. Durante su programa educativo, el alumnado de Magisterio recibió cartas de escolares que escribían sobre sus preferencias lectoras. Las cartas se discutieron para mostrar los hábitos lectores y se buscaron nuevos libros para recomendar a los escolares como lectura. Considerando los propios perfiles lectores, el alumnado de Magisterio desarrolló colectivamente su conocimiento sobre literatura infantil y también su conocimiento sobre pedagogía de la literacidad. Crear hábitos de percepción a través de discusiones iterativas (Simpson et al., 2020) ayudó al estudiantado a aprender sobre los y las escolares, aprender de los y las escolares y les animó a tomar un punto de vista más holístico en la enseñanza de la lectura.

Palabras clave: literatura infantil, equidad, literacidad, pedagogía dialógica, formación de maestros

Resum

Ensenyar literatura infantil en la formació de mestres és bastant estrany, encara que la recerca mostra que és crucial, per als i les mestres, tant ser competent en l'ensenyament de la lectura com ser lectors/es compromesos (Commeyras et al., 2003; Cremin et al., 2009). L'èmfasi en el procés lector pot deixar de banda la importància de parlar sobre literatura de qualitat que encoratge l'estudiantat a llegir (Simpson, 2016). Hem situat el rol de parlar al voltant de llibres com una part fonamental del programa de graduats que coordinem. D'aquesta manera, l'estudiantat de Magisteri d'aquest estudi estaven advertits sobre l"efecte ficció" (Jerrim & Moss, 2019), el qual mostra que la lectura extensiva de literatura té potencial per millorar les destreses lectores per a tot l'alumnat.

Aquest article explora la col·laboració entre un curs d'educació inicial per a mestres a Austràlia amb escoles locals per crear interaccions entre escolars i estudiants de Magisteri tot parlant sobre literatura infantil. Es va adoptar un acostament dialògic a l'aprenentatge (Alexander, 2020) per ensenyar a desenvolupar una pedagogia equitativa de la literacitat a l'alumnat de Magisteri treballant amb literatura infantil. L'equitat es va utilitzar com a principi guia per tal d'assegurar que aquest alumnat proveirien en un futur a infants de tots els contextos i amb diferents habilitats, les mateixes oportunitats de llegir textos literaris. Durant el seu programa educatiu, l'alumnat de Magisteri va rebre cartes d'escolars que escrivien sobre les seues preferències lectores. Les cartes van ser discutides per mostrar els hàbits lectors i es van buscar nous llibres per tal de recomanar als infants com a lectura. Tot considerant els propis perfils lectors, l'alumnat de Magisteri va desenvolupar col·lectivament el seu coneixement sobre literatura infantil i també el seu coneixement sobre pedagogia de la literacitat. El fet de bastir hàbits de percebre a través de les discussions iteratives (Simpson et al., 2020) va ajudar l'estudiantat a aprendre sobre els escolars, aprendre també dels seus escolars i els va encoratjar a prendre un punt de vista més holístic sobre l'ensenyament de la lectura.

Parales clau: literatura infantil, equitat, literacitat, pedagogia dialògica, formació de mestres

1. Introduction

Equitable access to literature is core to student development. Research such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) reports demonstrates that children from poorly resourced homes are less likely to achieve successful learning outcomes at school. That is, there is a proportionate relationship between the number of books students have at home and the reading scores they achieve, so those with more books at home have a distinct learning advantage over those with few (Thomson et al., 2016). The same research shows the power of teachers who provide opportunities for extended engagement with literary texts on a regular basis, as this builds inclusive practices that support all students to achieve equitable learning outcomes. Despite the importance of engaging all students in reading for enjoyment, struggling readers are more often given skills-based exercises than opportunities to read and talk about literary texts with their peers (Simpson, 2016). The PIRLS framework underscores the continuing need for teachers to be well versed, not only in what they teach and how they teach, including 21st-century modes of learning, but also to have good insight into their learners' needs (Mullis et al., 2009). The concept of teacher as professional, therefore, must encompass the capacity for them to orchestrate multiple sources of evidence informed by research (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). Hence, it is crucial that the deliberative decisions teachers make to improve student learning outcomes in general are informed by disciplinary content knowledge about literary texts, pedagogic content knowledge about the teaching of reading (Shulman, 2015), as well as situated knowledge about their students and themselves as readers.

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This paper reports on a study of an initial teacher education course in Australia that prompted discussions of children's literature between school children and pre-service teachers (PST) as a pedagogic tool. The purpose of the program was to use a dialogic approach that supports the co-construction of meaning through well structured, collaborative talk (Alexander, 2020) to teach pre-service teachers to develop equitable literacy pedagogy informed by children's literature. During the final unit studying English in their undergraduate education degree, the PST received letters from school children who wrote about their reading preferences. As part of their coursework, the PST discussed the children's letters and reading habits, planned a sequence of lessons to encourage their critical reading, and sought new reading recommendations. The PST also wrote biographies about their own reading practices at the start and end of the semester. Because of these interconnected

activities, the PST collectively developed their knowledge about children's literature as they expanded their personal and professional knowledge of literacy pedagogy. Prior research has shown that iterative discussions help PST learn about and from their students, and encourages them to take a more holistic view of the teaching of reading with children's literature (Simpson, 2020).

2. Literature Review

The literature review introduces three key bodies of work that influence this study. Each one contributes to the theoretical and methodological design of the research in different ways. The three interrelated areas align with the thematic analysis of data to highlight how: a social equity agenda drives professional decision making; personal engagement with children's literature informs teaching; and pedagogic rationales can be strengthened through the adoption of dialogic learning.

2.1. Equitable support of students

A culture of learning by testing is strongly prevalent in schools (Ellis & Smith, 2017). The tragic result, as Graves (2002) called it, of this approach is "the proliferation of aliterate children, who can read but choose not to" (p. 1). Studies continue to show that 'performative pedagogy' where there is little opportunity for children to engage voluntarily with books, constrains their intellectual and affective engagement in reading (Hempel-Jorgensen et al, 2018). Yet the converse is also true when teachers create a reading culture in their classrooms where reading is associated with enjoyment. Free reading choice has been shown to encourage personal engagement, support the emergence of critical appreciation, seed literary behaviours, and improve literacy skills (Cliff-Hodges, 2010). Therefore, teachers who create inclusive learning opportunities for all may break the cycle of inequitable literacy practices and provide prolonged engagement with reading for every child, not just the 'fast finishers' (Vanden Dool & Simpson, 2021).

Equitable programs where teachers make deliberative choices within socially situated and localised literacy practices have been shown to make a difference to disadvantaged students. For example, a large-scale design experiment study based on the Strathclyde Three Domains Tool reveals how educators enabled more inclusive literacy teaching by attending to the three intersecting domains of students' cultural and social capital, cognitive knowledge and skills, identity and agency (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). Based on the results of this research, it is important for PST to be prepared to take up the challenge of enacting equity in practice by developing approaches to the teaching of reading that can engage diverse students. This is a challenge for initial teacher education (ITE) programs, as mandated literacy content limits the time available to give PST experience with reading, selecting and teaching with a wide range of children's literature (Simpson, 2016). Yet good teaching relies on high quality pedagogy that depends on the intellectual work of teachers who have developed capacity to make

appropriate decisions for children's different needs. The development of pedagogic reasoning is seen as key to professional knowledge (Loughran, 2019). Therefore, educating PST through a dialogic approach that blends learning about children's literature while learning through children's literature is a strategic solution that deepens understanding as it enriches engagement. Exploration of paired reading autobiographies provides insight into how strategic learning design impacts on PST capacity to notice critical features in literacy landscapes of practice (Ellis et al., 2020).

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2.2. Teacher knowledge of children's literature

Research reveals the importance of teachers being good at teaching reading and also being committed readers (Commeyras et al., 2003). The value of reading for pleasure cuts across the issues of equity raised above as it offsets emphasis on reading skills and provides opportunities for all students to engage with quality texts (Cremin et al., 2014, p. 1). Yet, despite the impact that teachers' personal reading habits may have on children, it has been shown that many teachers do not have sufficient background knowledge about children's literature to inform their use of it in teaching (Cremin et al., 2008). Teachers' low engagement with children's literature is associated with weak professional confidence in working with literary texts in the classroom (Jenkinson, 2012). It is argued that, for teachers to have the capacity to match text to child, text to learning outcome, and text to discipline area, they need to regularly explore a wide variety of literary texts (Frey et al., 2008). This need is no less important for pre-service teachers who deserve to empower themselves to teach powerfully in their future classrooms through experiential learning with literary texts.

A comparative study of the teaching of children's literature in initial teacher education programs in four countries (Simpson, 2016) recorded the low number of hours dedicated explicitly to the topic. The findings revealed differing levels of PST confidence in their knowledge of children's literature ranging from low to high. More problematically, the findings also reported the resistance some PST had experienced during school placements to teaching with children's literature in place of reading scheme texts. Studies have shown that local school practices reduced the long-term influence of initial teacher education (Hong, 2010); this is a strong motivator to increase PST knowledge of children's literature in personally and professionally meaningful ways. This study proposes that if children's literature is employed as a catalyst for dialogic exchange in initial teacher education, it could prompt both intellectual and affective responses with long-lasting impact on future teaching behaviour. That

is, through grounded experience, the ITE program could lead PST to reflect on content and pedagogic content knowledge as well as re-engage with the rarely read text form.

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2.3. Dialogic learning

The rationale for the dialogic approach to teaching and learning demonstrated in this study is underpinned by a rich body of research demonstrating its benefit. The ground-breaking work by Barnes (1976) in the 70's focused on the value of talk in the classroom. Talk is seen as creating an environment, where active learning is nurtured, not just as a mode for communication. Emerging initially from work on child language development in the field of linguistics (Halliday, 1975), a contextualised focus on the role of talk in education has been promoted since by scholars, including Alexander (2020) and Wegerif (2019), who place classroom discourse at the heart of pedagogic design. By approaching the topic from different theoretical directions, all these scholars have exemplified the social and cognitive benefits from encouraging exploration of knowledge through talk. Of particular relevance to this paper is the large Randomize Controlled Test (RCT) study of low Socioeconomic Status (SES) school children in the UK, which provides quantitative data reporting the significant impact of teachers' well designed talk practices on students' learning outcomes (Alexander, 2018).

Alexander (2020) proposes six dialogic principles to help teachers support student learning through interaction. These principles encourage equitable design for classroom talk that is collective, supportive, reciprocal, deliberative, cumulative and purposeful for all students. Research on dialogic teaching demonstrates how well-designed talk depends on the teacher's facility with a repertoire of discourse patterns (Alexander, 2018). A review of research on dialogic learning notes an emphasis on the role of the teacher in negotiating conditions for productive learning through talk (Jones & Hammond, 2016). This responsibility provides a strong rationale for including dialogic engagement with children's literature as part of the curriculum as PST form their personal and professional identities as literate beings. Studies by Simpson (2016a, 2017, 2020) have investigated quality talk about quality texts in both higher education and primary school contexts and revealed the productive impact dialogic learning has on PST, school students and teachers.

The three fields of scholarship outlined above combine logically to influence the development of the research focus. The research question emerging from this literature asks: What is the impact of engagement with children's literature through dialogic interactions with children and literary texts on PST capacity to develop equitably informed literacy pedagogy?

3. Theoretical framework: viewing education as a complex, social system

The study of ITE is informed by a social constructivist view of literacy that acknowledges the situated nature of literate practices (Street, 1995). This view positions initial teacher education as a specific context within which pre-service teachers are enculturated into ways of becoming teachers of reading. The interplay of macro, meso and micro forces such as policy, curriculum and personal experience will also inform the PST use of children's literature in their teaching (Simpson, 2016). The study adopts Freire's (1983) critical stance on exploring all pedagogic actions for evidence of deliberative equitable social impact. From this perspective, the work that PST do as they read and respond to literature is considered as individual 'aesthetic and intellectual pursuit' (Cliff-Hodges, 2010, p. 65), as well as professionally attuned, collaboratively engaged, cultural practice.

The ecological view of education explored by Ell et al. (2019) acknowledges the dynamic interplay of multiple influences operating in complex systems (Davis & Sumara, 1997). In my undergraduate teaching context, education is read broadly as a complex system that encompasses school and higher education as well as policy and professional communities through which "initial teacher education intersects with the systems in which student learning is embedded" (Ell et al., 2019, p. 182). By viewing education as a complex system of interrelated parts, my study uses a lens to zoom out to capture features of situated contexts and zoom in to capture details of intellectual deliberations. This exploration of effects brought about by a program that connects children and pre-service teachers across time and space to talk about children's literature is particularly suitable for a study investigating written and spoken texts.

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4. Methodology: tracking the paths of interweaving data

This paper reports holistically on an in-depth, qualitative analysis of an education program evolving over a semester, examining the causal links between components of learning and teaching. Hence the learning sequence designed for the PST is described as a set of iterative phases. It employs a mixed-methods, qualitative research design to capture rich data from a contextually situated case (Yin, 2014). Because the study has adopted the conceptual model of an ecological view of education systems (Ell et al., 2019), all data sets are viewed as interrelated. That is, learning emerges from complex systems, rather than being a product of a linear process. Therefore, the value of tracking multiple moving parts,

static structures and hybrid interactions highlights the potential impact of making a small innovation in a large system.

4.1 Participants: pre-service teachers from urban Australia

The study is a bounded case of a study program offered at an urban Australian university. The fourth-year cohort of Bachelor of Education (Primary) PST was chosen through targeted convenience sampling (Cohen at al., 2018), given the researcher's access to the site. 200 primary school children aged 10-11 from eight local primary classes agreed to take part in the study. All participants joined voluntarily. Ethical procedures were followed to use data submitted with permission and then anonymised.

4.2 Contextual background: embedding dialogic practices in learning about literature

This section gives a brief overview of how triangulation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies supported my goal to develop equitable children's literature informed literacy pedagogy during a university semester.

Research shows that lack of teacher knowledge about literature prohibits broad approaches to the teaching of reading. In this study, to find out the knowledge of children's literature participant PST held, two data collection tools were embedded into the program. At the start of the semester, the Teachers as Readers survey (Cremin et al., 2008) was adapted for use in Australia with permission and run with the entire PST cohort (see Appendix 1). The data collection resulted in 76 completed surveys revealing PST existing reading habits and current children's book knowledge. Before classes commenced, the PST also wrote a retrospective reading autobiography (Farrar, 2020), providing insight to their personal experiences learning to read as young children (see Appendix 2).

The literature review discussed the benefits of embedding dialogic learning in the classroom. The learning design of the ITE program featured in this paper created dialogic spaces for PST to increase their interaction with children's literature as a deliberate focus to improve their knowledge of children's literature. To achieve this goal, I employed two strategically dialogic approaches. The first strategy, literature circles, depends on small groups of peers choosing, reading, and discussing the same book, taking on different discursive roles (Daniels, 1994). This part of the learning sequence contributed to the PST enriching their content knowledge of recently published Australian children's literature. It also deliberately scaffolded PST pedagogic awareness of the importance of productive dialogue in education settings. The PST read about literature circles and then organised their versions of them. In the lead-up to this part of the learning sequence, the PST matched theory to evidence by reading letters from children describing the impact that literature circles had on their critical reading.

Consequently, the learning sequence positioned them both as reader participants and reflective practitioners.

The second dialogic strategy set up interactions between groups of PST, as they discussed letters received from a reading buddy program with primary children (aged 10-11 years old) from local schools. Each pre-service teacher was paired anonymously with two children. The school children wrote letters to the PST expressing their interest in reading, describing their favorite characters and naming some of their favorite authors / books. As the PST analysed the letters for structural and linguistic features and reading preferences, they engaged in multiple, iterative discussions with peers. This phase of the learning sequence contributed to PST developing pedagogic content knowledge on the topic of teaching writing. The dialogue also prompted the PST to develop deep knowledge of the use of children's literature in teaching. At the end of the semester, the PST wrote back to each child including recommendations of new books for the children to read. During the program, 400 letters were sent, 200 from children and 200 from PST.

The assessment tasks in the program increased critical awareness of teachers' decision making. To examine the development of PST emerging professional awareness, I focused on their pedagogic reasoning. At the end of the semester, PST were required to work in small groups and write rationales justifying what they would teach about by writing to the set of 8-10 children they had come to know through the buddy letter swap program. The PST explained learning outcomes based on an analysis of a set of children's letters and justified the books they would use as the basis of their teaching. In an appendix to their assessment submission, PST included the student letters they had annotated and the letters they wrote back to students, which provided the personalised book reviews.

To ensure that PST could individually justify their professional reasoning, all pre-service teachers met with their tutors for small group interviews in the final week of the semester. Each PST was expected to defend the planning of a lesson sequence according to core learning principles. The resulting dialogues prompted discussion of how aligning literary texts, children's interests and deliberately designed writing tasks equitably supports diverse learners. The PST were led to consider how strategic decisions about targeted learning design was evidence of their emerging professionalism.

At the end of the semester, after classes had finished, all PST wrote a second reading autobiography reflecting on the knowledge gained from reading and discussing the role of children's literature in the teaching of reading.

4.3 Data sources: following the impact of literature on learning

Given the multi-layered nature of the learning design described above, six interwoven data collection methods were used during the study including: 1. A reading habit survey, 2. Personal reading autobiographies, 3. Letter exchanges, 4. Pedagogic rationales, 5. Small group interview and 6. End-of-semester unit of study satisfaction survey (USS). For the purposes of this paper, the impact of PST learning with children's literature in ITE has been explored through one data source (paired reading autobiographies). The data selection before and after the unit of study affords depth of analysis and reveals changes in personal opinion, literary content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge over time. Twenty-five viable pairs of reading autobiographies were collected, analysed and discussed below.

4.4 Analysis: coding personal, pedagogic and professional indicators

Influenced by the work of Ellis & Rowe (2020, p. 421), the analytic codes chosen for this study align with the three domains of The Strathclyde Model. The indicators are used to code pre-service teachers' Personal Literary Engagement (cultural and social capital), Pedagogic Reasoning (cognitive knowledge and skills) and Emerging Professionalism (identity and agency) (see Figure 1). As the ITE in which the PST are enrolled expects them to develop an integrated professional, ethical and personal identity, this analytic frame is reasonable. The Three Domains Model (2020) was originally proposed to help pre-service teachers equitably support school students' learning in under-privileged contexts. In this paper, the model is adopted as an analytic framework to examine whether the strategic learning design of teaching with children's literature impacted as planned on the pre-service teachers' meta-awareness of their own literacy teaching practices.

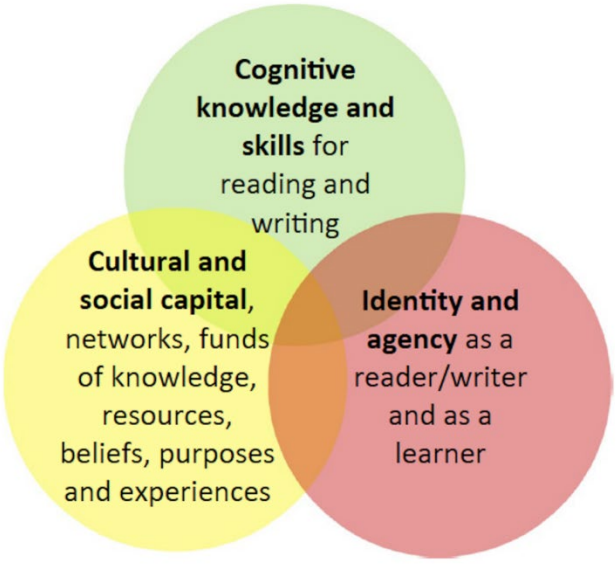

Figure 1: The Strathclyde Three Domain Tool for literacy teaching and assessment

Thematic analysis of data collected from the paired reading autobiographies was undertaken. Brief analytic examples are provided in Table 1 to show how the coding relied on semantic content and other discursive language features identifiable using educational linguistics (Jones & Hammond, 2016). Later, the findings indicate whether the PST reported positive (+ve) or negative (-ve) experiences.

Code name with definition	Example from PST
Personal Literary Engagement [PLE] indicators of personal literary engagement [both +ve and -ve] were selected on the basis of linguistic markers related to: experience as a child, or as an adult external to university study. These responses were typically expressed in first person, non-theoretical / affective language.	"I remember having to take home-readers home with me… I preferred to sit and read a book… Books were my escape from the bullying I was experiencing."
Pedagogic Reasoning [PR] indicators of pedagogic reasoning were selected on the basis of linguistic markers related to: content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge regarding the teaching of reading or writing. These responses were typically expressed in pragmatic outcome related / curriculum-based terminology.	"I remember doing a few activities with basic sight words and rhyming during the earlier years but do not remember how this was further consolidated to reading fluently."
Emerging Professionalism [EP] indicators of emerging professionalism were selected on the basis of linguistic markers related to: professional forecasting and / or critical commentary on literacy practices. These responses were rarer than the others, and typically expressed as future focussed or theory informed reflections revealing nascent teacher identity and occasionally awareness of teacher agency.	"I think reading is a skill that a lot of students can take for granted and using quality literature can open so many doors for students who struggle to engage in the 'process'."

Table 1. Coded examples

5. Findings: patterns of interaction with children's literature from childhood to higher education

A total of seventeen items were identified by analysing the twenty-five initial autobiographies as notable factors in reading experiences. Items were counted as notable if 10% or more of the individuals mentioned them in their reflections. The factors were classified according to the three categories of Personal Literary Engagement (seven factors), Pedagogic Reasoning (three factors) and Emerging Professionalism (one factor) depending on vocabulary and other linguistic markers. The tables below provide a breakdown of the scoring system according to factor grouping, instance and positive or negative weighting. It is heartening to note that 84% of the ITE cohort report enjoying reading as adults, but the reading autobiographies reveal mixed experiences on the pathway to their final year of ITE.

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5.1. Personal Literary Engagement categories of evidence

Home Personal Literary Engagement	% mentions	+ve	-ve	no mention
enjoyed as a child	76%	19	4	2
books in home	72%	18	4	3
read to by others	64%	16	6	3
public library use	56%	14	3	8
reading for pleasure	48%	12		13
reading to others	40%	10		15
school readers at home	16%	4	2	19

Table 2. Personal Literary Engagement with reading at home positive and negative influences

In Table 2, the autobiography data demonstrates that the home environment stimulated a relatively positive reading experience for most PST. Five out of seven factors related to personal literacy engagement through reading at home, including being read to, books in the home and visits to local libraries, were mentioned positively in at least 50% of the reflections. It should be noted that books in the home was one factor where PST with EALD (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) backgrounds had a marked experience as children compared to peers whose first language was English. The autobiographies written by PST 1, 2, and 3 who all had EALD backgrounds, recorded less access to books at home in their first language or in English. These PST developed different linguistic and cultural capital from their peers, which shaped their reading identities accordingly.

> PST 1: During my early primary years, I wasn't usually read bedtime stories, however I would often read assigned literacy books to my parents as part of homework and practice. I also remember doing literacy reading cards, which I didn't particularly enjoy.

One factor, the experience of taking school readers home to read, was rated more positively than negatively but only featured in 16% of mentions. This factor shows reading practices crossing the boundary between home and school contexts. Its lack of importance to the PST could indicate how young readers can differentiate between reading practices. For, even though only 48% of the PST made positive commentary about reading for pleasure as young children, this finding accords with the research that reading for pleasure is a key motivator (Cremin, 2014a), whereas reading for skills practice can work against reading engagement (Mullis et al., 2009).

School Personal Literary Engagement	% mentions	+ve	-ve	no mention
teacher scaffolding	60%	15	2	8
whole group	52%	13	1	11
as work	52%		13	12
school library use	44%	11		14
individual reading	28%	7	5	13

Table 3. Personal Literary Engagement with reading at school positive and negative influences

In Table 3, the autobiography data shows that PST had varied experiences of learning to read at school. Two out of five factors related to personal literacy engagement were mentioned positively in at least 50% of the reflections. These factors were teacher scaffolding and whole group reading. School library use was mentioned positively in 44% of the reflections. In contrast, reading as work was negatively commented in 52% of the reflections.

> PST 2: … being an EAL/D student who moved to Australia when I was 9, I do not remember having a library with a vast variety of books which interested me at school.

> PST 3: Reading wasn't something that I found myself turning towards. I never usually read at school.

As access to a wide range of books has been upheld as a major impact on reading behaviour (Jerrim & Moss, 2019), it is pleasing to see that library use outside of school was remembered as being an important factor in many PST's personal reading histories with positive commentary from 56% of the cohort. However, despite the promising results that can be achieved through student engagement with libraries in schools, it is a concern that 56% of PST did not refer to school libraries at all. There is

clearly work to be done to remind PST of the potential of teachers and librarians working together (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2009).

5.2. Pedagogic Reasoning categories of evidence

Pedagogic Reasoning	% mentions	+ve	-ve	no mention
Productive strategies	84%	21	4	
Unproductive strategies	32%	8	17	
Empathy	16%	4		21

Table 4. Pedagogic Reasoning from reflecting on reading as a child

The first autobiography was not deliberately intended to stimulate the PST to reflect on themselves as teachers. It was fascinating, therefore, to note the language of literacy education inflected their reflections on themselves as young readers. Table 4 shows a high proportion of mentions (84% of cohort) and reveals PST familiarity with the language of the profession through comments on the positive pedagogic strategies they experienced as children. In addition, 32% of PST recorded unproductive pedagogic strategies experienced at school. The vocabulary chosen to exemplify their perceptions named reading programs, curriculum planning, classroom management, syllabus content and other identifiable evidence of the content and pedagogic knowledge they had already established before the semester started.

> PST 4: I remember doing a few activities with basic sight words and rhyming during the earlier years, but do not remember how this was further consolidated to reading fluently.

As data was collected in the final year of the PST's undergraduate degree, knowledge of literacy pedagogy was expected. However, the level of critical awareness confirmed that these young teachers were also developing pedagogic insight, which would inform their future decision making. This outcome aligns with the goal of the final unit to expand on existing content knowledge, enhance understanding of reading for pleasure, and encourage professional responsiveness to deliberative planning. That is, the PST were challenged through research, readings and the letter exchange program to notice individual children's literacy needs and design teaching practices informed by syllabus and adapted to local contexts (Simpson, 2020).

5.3. Emerging Professionalism category of evidence

Emerging Professionalism	% mentions	+ve	-ve	no mention
Intentionality	36%	9		16

Table 5. Emerging Professionalism from reflecting on reading as a child

At the beginning of the semester, it was interesting to see that some PST were already forecasting their influence on future students and considering the lessons they could draw purposefully from their past experience as readers. Just over a third of PST provided evidence of Emerging Professionalism. However, as the task did not overtly seek this kind of commentary, the fact that a third of PST were able to express this awareness without prompting is taken to be a strong indication of their ITE grounding to this date.

> PST 5: I have developed a genuine passion for children's literature and [will] endeavour to build a functioning library in my own classroom.

One important point from the findings was a suggested relationship between positive experience as a child reader and predilection to develop professional intentionality prior to the focus unit of study.

That is, the PST who had grown up with positive affirmations of themselves as readers through Personal Literary Engagement were already more able to discern and explain pedagogic

From the sample of data collected at the beginning of the semester, it is possible to see a trend that relates strong early reader identity with greater teacher insight at the commencement of semester. That is, the PST who had grown up with positive affirmations of themselves as readers through Personal Literary Engagement were already more able to discern and explain pedagogic strategies and frame up their future teacher agency than peers who recounted a weaker reader identity. As shown above, PST 1, 2 and 3 all had negative reading experiences at home and school, and all reflected negatively on Pedagogic Reasoning in the first reading autobiography. As a result of this trend, it was decided that a strong indicator for the impact of the unit would be a shift by these PST from the low initial insight of Pedagogic Reasoning and no Emerging Professionalism, to greater capacity in both.

Figure 2 uses colour shading to indicate reading experience and pedagogic rationale data from reading autobiography 1 with negative, positive and n/a weighting. Each column represents one PST. Asterisks in nine columns indicate the PST who demonstrated Emerging Professionalism prior to the semester. The pattern read from left to right shows a clear trend that PST with positive reading identity were more likely to express professional insights.

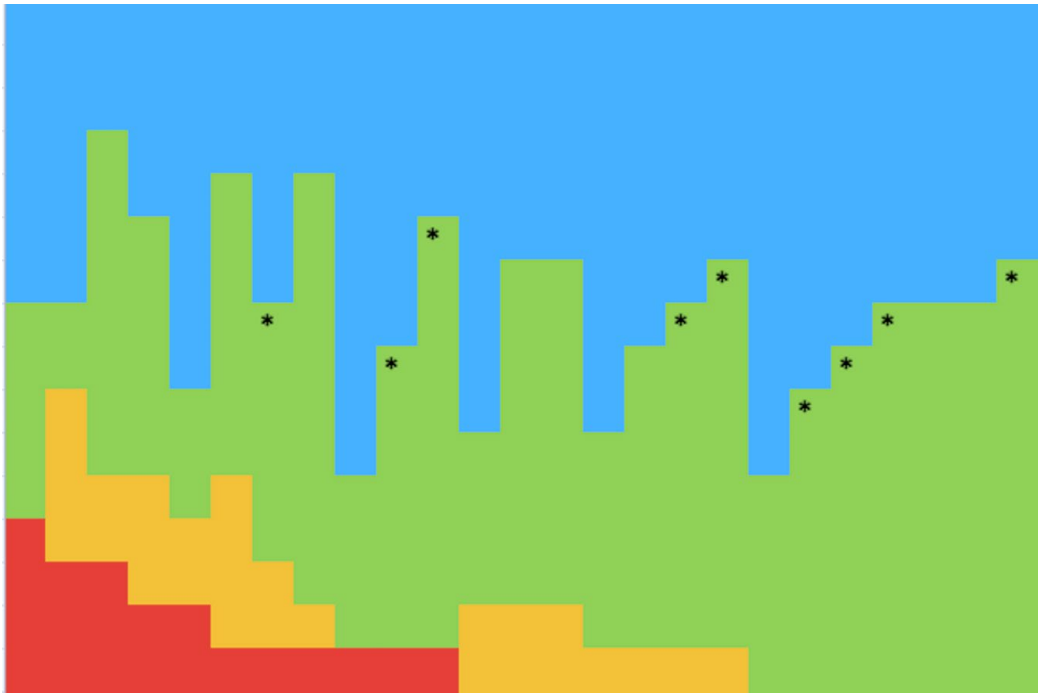

Figure 2: Trends linking experience as child reader to professional insight prior to semester

5.4 Reading autobiography 2 post semester

A total of eight themes were identified in Autobiography 2 (hereafter A2) as notable and responses were coded as Personal Literary Engagement (two factors), Pedagogic Reasoning (four factors) and Emerging Professionalism (two factors). Themes were counted as notable if 10% or more of the PST mentioned them in their reflections. However, as most mentions of all three types were present in different combinations for all themes, factors are represented in the tables according to groupings of greatest emphasis across the whole cohort. That is, the evidence has been presented to show relative weighting within factor grouping.

5.5 Personal Literary Engagement emphasis of evidence

	Personal Literary Engagement	Pedagogic Reasoning	Emerging Professionalism	no mention	Total %
Teacher who reads	76%	12%	0%	12%	100%
Adult experience	16%	56%	28%		100%

Table 6. Personal Literacy Engagement with reading as a teacher

In the A2 prompts, there was a far lower emphasis on Personal Literacy Engagement than in Autobiography 1 (hereafter A1). The intent was for PST to reflect on the development of their

professional learning at the end of their last unit of English study. However, the question asking them to report on their identities as teachers who read surprisingly led most of the cohort (76%) to form their responses as a personal focus. Only 12% of PST provided pedagogic reasoning in their responses showing that the PST perceive teacher reading habits are a matter of personal responsibility.

> PST 1: I realised that being able to find the joy and value in reading children's literature has made me find the value in sharing this joy and value with students.

5.6. Pedagogic Reasoning emphasis of evidence

	Personal Literary Engagement	Pedagogic Reasoning	Emerging Professionalism	no mention	Total %
Reader who teaches	4%	88%	0	8%	100%
Experience on placement	0	68%+ve 12% -ve	4%	16%	100%
School use of Reading for Pleasure	0	48% +ve 16% -ve	0	36%	100%
University learning	4%	80%	16%	0	100%

Table 7. Pedagogic Reasoning from reflecting on teaching reading

Reflection on the teaching of reading demonstrated PST had developed stronger Pedagogic Reasoning, as should be expected. This was particularly noticeable where PST commented on factors that influenced them positively. The low weighting for Personal Literary Engagement in this set of factors stands in contrast to the factor of teachers as readers above. In the data of Table 7, PST comments reveal their association of being readers who teach as a matter of professional responsibility. This result could stem from a lack of familiarity with the concepts, which were only introduced in the current semester. The findings echo Cremin et al.'s study that shows it is important for teachers to be both Teachers as Readers and Reading Teachers (2014). By the final year of their degree these PST have had many practicum experiences. Therefore, the positive findings for PST developing pedagogic reasoning in this unit of study speaks against Hong's 2010 proposition that university learning loses its power when contrasted with lived classroom experience.

> PST 2: Having to read a text and thoroughly engage with it in literature circles allowed me to take on the role of a 'teacher who reads and a reader who teaches', and practice it with my peers.

The two other factors heavily weighted for pedagogic reasoning show both positive and negative influences on PST. Experience on placement was ranked by 68% of PST as a positive contribution to

their learning. This figure contrasts with 12% of PST who gave negative commentary. The other factor with positive (48%) and negative (16%) ranking was reading for pleasure, which provided insight into various PST perspectives. It is possible that a weighting of 36% of n/a reflects the lack of time allocated for reading for pleasure in schools. This interpretation may be viable given the inequitable emphasis on skills in reading programs provided for struggling readers (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018).

5.7. Emerging Professionalism emphasis of evidence

	Personal Literary Engagement	Pedagogic Reasoning	Emerging Professionalism	no mention	Total %
Intentionality	12%	52%	36%		100%
Confidence	8%	36%	36%	20%	100%

Table 8. Emerging Professionalism from reflecting on teaching reading

Reflections that demonstrated emerging professionalism were coded if they were examples of teaching as intellectual work (Loughran, 2019). 36% of PST demonstrated this awareness equally in their responses about confidence in teaching and intentionality. It should be noted that unlike A1, where evidence of Emerging Professionalism only existed in one item, in A2 there were Emerging Professionalism comments in all themes. In contrast to A1, 17 PST demonstrated Emerging Professionalism at the end of the semester. This indicates that the course design provoked increased emergence of professionalism over the semester. However, more data needs to be collected to judge whether the impact is consistent across cohorts. Although there was an increase from A1 to A2 in evidence of Emerging Professionalism, more PST couched their comments in terms of Pedagogic Reasoning. As shown in Simpson (2016), this may indicate that Pedagogic Reasoning is the main focus at this stage in their career.

It is encouraging to see that those PST who were already demonstrating Emerging Professionalism in A1 were consistent. However, far more encouraging is the finding that PST 1, 2 and 3 identified in A1 as holding weak reader identity changed their attitudes by the end of the semester. In A2, all three of these PST expressed strong Pedagogic Reasoning and Emerging Professionalism in their reflections on the teaching of reading with children's literature. This finding supports the positive impact of the unit on improving PST confidence teaching with children's literature (Jenkinson, 2012).

> PST 3: I need to enrich my knowledge and experience of literature to ensure successful learning opportunities. However, this year has influenced my ability to develop this goal by being critical of the way reading experiences are shaped in schools and the different ways that literature can be used skillfully in classroom practice.

6. Discussions

6.1 Zooming-in to see individual change

What is the impact on PST engagement with children's literature through dialogic interactions with children and literary texts on PST capacity to develop equitably informed literacy pedagogy? To address this research question, I provided evidence of changes in personally, pragmatically and critically informed pedagogic awareness. In the discussion below, I present two interrelated propositions. First, if the fiction effect (Jerrim & Moss, 2019) exists, the PST should have shown increased interest in reading children's literature by the end of the semester. Second, if dialogic pedagogies do support development in critical understanding through social interaction (Alexander, 2020), the PST should have become more alert to their professional responsibility as future teachers to make deliberative decisions. That is, they would be recognising the importance of designing reading programs that ensured all children, regardless of their ability, would be given regular access to and extended time with children's literature.

The zoomed-in view of data from the reading autobiographies reveals that the unit helped all PST enrich personal literacy engagement during the semester. Not only did they take opportunities to re-engage with reading books, but they also became more informed about the principles of Reading for Pleasure and the importance of deliberative learning design. This positive outcome can be found in Personal Literary Engagement coded comments, such as: "My recent love for reading has been ignited through this unit", and Pedagogic Reasoning coded comments "Having to read a text and thoroughly engage with it in literature circles allowed me to take on the role of a 'teacher who reads and a reader who teaches', and practice it with my peers." The PST were aware that their learning had been framed strategically and were able to make meta-commentary on the unit as an educative experience. "This course has helped me reach out to children's books with a purpose which allowed me to enjoy the perks of reading again."

The letters to buddies also show the productive impact of PST learning *with* children's literature as it increased their knowledge *of* children's literature. The reading autobiographies do not list the specific titles that PST searched for to match children's reading interests, demonstrating the ability to build reading communities (Cremin et al., 2009; Frey et al., 2008). However, the second reading autobiographies show that the PST who had positive reading childhood experiences and those who had negative experiences were strongly committed to enhancing skills-based literacy pedagogy through children's literature by the end of the semester. PST comments, such as "The challenge is to ensure that students still enjoy reading and don't see it as merely an academic obligation or task",

signal how they are alert to the risks of limiting children's access to literary texts by teaching them to read through a constrained skills approach (Cliff-Hodges, 2010).

The personal engagement aspect was a pleasing result. However, in relation to point two, there are indicators of impact showing that these young teachers will amend their approach to teaching in the future. There was clear evidence of increased capacity in pedagogic reasoning and emerging professionalism over the course of the semester, as the PST strengthened the foundations of their professional knowledge (Loughran, 2019) on teaching with children's literature. Even though some PST had steeper learning curves than others, all achieved positive outcomes. For instance, the trend identified in Autobiography 1 for PST with a poor reader identity to be associated with weaker insight into productive pedagogies was equalised. The findings above acknowledge the socially situated context of learning (Street, 1995). They show how PST 1, 2 and 3 whose negative experiences with reading in childhood were captured in A1, developed skills at explaining deliberative pedagogic rationales in their post semester reflections. These three PST demonstrated the emergence of purposeful intent to enact professional agency in the future to work towards improving social equity in their classrooms (Freire, 1983). By reflecting on their own reading autobiographies, their interaction with literature in the university program and their observation of reading in schools, each student formed new meta-awareness of their identities as reading teachers and teachers of reading.

I argue that these changes were influenced by iterative, dialogic processes, which engaged these PST in productive talk about children's literature during the semester. Combined with the power of children's literature to mindfully disrupt entrenched literacy practices that shaped the reading experiences of young primary school children, the dialogic approach stimulated new thought processes for the PST. The paired quotes show the value of working iteratively with children's literature. The impact shifted PST attention from personalised negative perceptions of home or school reading practices towards pedagogic awareness of the importance for teachers to read quality literature. This result echoes the studies by Commeyras (2003), Cremin (2014), Simpson (2020) and others that demonstrate rich engagement with children's literature can support teachers to develop personal and professional understanding.

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Overall, the data from the reading autobiographies demonstrates how the PST worked through concepts about the teaching of reading connected to their cultural and social capital, their cognitive knowledge and skills, and their professional identity and agency (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). The three approaches interacted in a way beneficial to the development of pedagogic content knowledge (Shulman, 2015). Isolated as stand-alone elements the same impact would not have occurred. As Simpson, Cremin & Smith in a forthcoming paper propose, aesthetic appreciation of literature, personal engagement with literature, and pedagogic sensitivity to literature are insufficient in and of themselves. It is teachers' capacity to work across all elements of the 'additive trio' that will encourage them to take agentic action on behalf of learners and inform equitable practices.

6.2 Zooming-out to appreciate systematic design

The theoretical framework adopted for the study argues for attention to be paid to the complexity of education systems (Davis & Sumara, 1997). Therefore, it is important to consider both the learning design adopted for the unit and the socio-cultural context in which it was implemented. Taking a zoomed-out perspective of the situated learning encourages a holistic appreciation of the connectedness made possible within this particular education ecology for this group of PST. The letter exchange example shows how ideas can 'travel' and new practice can emerge when an idea meets the right conditions (Ell et al., 2019, p. 21). Iterative and dialogic pathways of interaction around teacher knowledge and practice were established for PST with schools from the start of the semester. Authentic communication with school children was realised in the form of letters, which prompted extended discussions on student learning. Parents and teachers permitted the letter exchange as the project aligned with the priorities and practices of schools and communities. The partnership between the university and the schools may be a manifestation of state and national education system policy, but the benefit to learners was up close and personal.

The unit exhibited dialogic principles because the interactive nature of the pedagogic innovation created multiple opportunities for social and intellectual engagement over time (Alexander, 2020). The deliberative design to create dialogic spaces for interactions spanning peer to peer/ child to PST/ and PST with tutor ensured that dialogue was purposefully embedded in all weeks and learning and assessment tasks within the unit. Some instances of talk were designed to support learning, e.g. general tutorial discussions; others contributed more visibly to formative assessment, e.g. the peer feedback given during literature circles; and others, for example the pedagogic rationale interviews, were explicitly used for formal summative assessment. The power of this kind of learning when run collaboratively with learners as partners can be described by referring to Alexander's principles as seen in the following overview of the letter exchange program.

There is clear evidence of cumulative benefit to the PST and school children of quality talk about quality texts, as facts and opinions about reading were woven into "coherent lines of thinking and enquiry" (Alexander & Wolfe, 2008, p. 8). The letter exchange component of the ITE program is an excellent example where purposeful dialogue sets up well-planned interactions between PST, addressing clear learning goals. The incorporation of letters from children about literary texts prompted PST to think responsively about complex pedagogy. It could be argued that the school children and pre-service teachers developed reciprocal relationships as they shared ideas and proposed new viewpoints. Admittedly some of this communication was in writing and on a small scale, given that PST worked in pairs and small groups. However, the response letter to the children not only closed the loop via a social contact, but also shared important knowledge up and down the chain through PST, academic, school teacher and child. Therefore, it can be argued that the interaction of collaborative dialogue, engaged reading and targeted writing scaffolded PST's aesthetic responses to and content knowledge of children's literature in a cumulative and responsive fashion (Alexander, 2020).

7. Conclusion

In my teaching, I have deliberately embedded discursive exploration of children's literature to foster professional dialogue. I have reframed the role of talk about books and meta-talk about 'talk for learning' as a core part of this undergraduate unit. In this way, the 'fiction effect' potential to improve student engagement with reading (Jerrim & Moss, 2019) is fostered for my current PST and their future pupils. A broad approach to understanding the social and intellectual demands of reading has been supported through dialogue to help the PST

- attend to reader identity (their own and their letter buddies),
- consider the importance of multiple components necessary to help students become engaged readers, and
- practice the intellectual work of teachers who choose to provide equitable access to literacy.

Working to improve children's will to read (Graves, 2002), I am helping the PST avoid the trap of applying a one-size-fits-all mentality that simplifies the complexity of teaching. Acknowledging that teachers face many challenges that may constrain their professional practice, this study of PST was designed to support deliberative intellectual work. As the unit is aligned with the program goal, which expects PST to develop an integrated professional, ethical and personal identity, the outcomes of this research prove that the approach taken contributes to the achievement of this goal.

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Representation of Racial Diversity in Picturebooks in Teacher Education Programs in the Republic of Croatia

Representación de la diversidad racial en los álbumes ilustrados en los programas de formación de maestros en la República de Croacia

Representació de la diversitat racial als àlbums il·lustrats als programes de formació de mestres a la República de Croàcia

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Abstract

In the Republic of Croatia, the importance of intercultural education and competence-oriented curricula has gained momentum in the last decade, with children's literature being perceived as an invaluable source of intercultural learning and a fruitful tool for an exploration of global cultural diversity. Given that empirical data indicate the importance of children's age for selecting age-appropriate intervention methods that would help combat discriminatory and prejudicial views, especially during the period between early and late childhood, this paper explores the choice of authors and picturebook titles taught in children's literary courses at six Croatian Faculties of Teacher Education (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar, and Split) with the aim to determine how university instructors interpret multicultural children's literature and to which extent their syllabi accentuate the potential of picturebooks in fostering future pre-school and elementary-school teachers' intercultural competence.

The findings indicate a misalignment between the objectives of intercultural education and the racial and ethnic representation of authors and their characters, especially protagonists. Furthermore, intercultural competence is not a major learning objective in the analyzed university syllabi. The choice of authors and picturebooks indicates a clear preference for white North American and European authors and white characters and protagonists. These findings highlight the need for teacher-educators, i.e., university instructors, to rethink the nature of their learning objectives and study content and to expand their reading lists with more diverse voices that challenge the traditional models that have historically left many ethnic groups misrepresented, under-represented, or fully omitted from school and university curricula.

Keywords: intercultural education, multicultural literature, picturebooks, teacher education, teacher-educators

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Resumen

En la República de Croacia, la importancia de la educación intercultural y los currículos orientados a competencias han ganado intensidad en la última década. La literatura infantil se percibe como una fuente inestimable de aprendizaje intercultural y una herramienta productiva para la exploración de la diversidad cultural global. Dado que los datos empíricos indican la importancia de la edad de niños y niñas para seleccionar los métodos de intervención apropiados para la edad que ayudarían a combatir las perspectivas discriminatorias y perjudiciales, especialmente, durante el periodo entre infantil y primaria, este artículo explora la elección de autores y autoras y de los títulos de los álbumes que se enseñan en cursos de literatura infantil en seis facultades de magisterio de Croacia (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar i Split) con la intención de determinar como los y las docentes universitarios interpretan la literatura infantil multicultural y hasta qué punto sus currículos acentúan el potencial de los álbumes ilustrados para alimentar la competencia intercultural del profesorado de infantil y primaria.

Los resultados indican una desalineación entre los objetivos de la educación intercultural y la representación étnica i racial de los autores y autoras y sus personajes, especialmente protagonistas. Aún más, la competencia intercultural no es un objetivo principal de aprendizaje en los currículos universitarios analizados. La selección de autores/as y álbumes señala una clara preferencia de autores/as blancos/as norteamericanos y europeos, y personajes protagonistas blancos. Estos resultados enfatizan la necesidad de los docentes, por ejemplo docentes universitarios, de repensar la naturaleza de sus objetivos de aprendizaje y de los contenidos de sus estudios y expandir sus listas de lectura con voces más diversas que desafíen los modelos tradicionales que han dejado históricamente determinados grupos étnicos mal representados, infrarrepresentados o completamente ausentes de los currículos escolares y universitarios.

Palabras clave: educación intercultural, literatura multicultural, álbumes ilustrados, formación docente, formación de educadores/as

Resum

A la República de Croàcia, la importància de l'educació intercultural i els currículums orientats a competències han guanyat intensitat en la darrera dècada. La literatura infantil és percep com a una font inestimable d'aprenentatge intercultural i una eina fructífera per a l'exploració de la diversitat cultural global. Atés que les dades empíriques indiquen la importància de l'edat dels infants per tal de seleccionar els mètodes d'intervenció apropiats per a l'edat que ajudarien a combatre les perspectives discriminatòries i perjudicials, especialment, durant el període entre infantil i primària, aquest article explora la tria dels autors i autores i dels títols dels àlbums que s'ensenyen en cursos de literatura infantil a sis facultats de magisteri de Croàcia (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar i Split) amb la intenció de determinar com els i les ensenyants universitaris interpreten la literatura infantil multicultural i fins a quin punt els seus currículums accentuen el potencial dels àlbums il·lustrats per alimentar la competència intercultural del profesorado d'Infantil i Primària.

Els resultats indiquen una desalineació entre els objectius de l'educació intercultural i la representació ètnica i racial dels i les autors i els seus personatges, especialment protagonistes. Encara més, la competència intercultural no és un objectiu principal d'aprenentatge en els currículums universitaris analitzats. La tria d'autors i autores i àlbums assenyala una clara preferència d'autors blancs nord-americans i europeus, i personatges i protagonistes blancs. Aquests resultats emfasitzen la necessitat dels docents, per exemple docents d'universitat, de repensar la natura dels seus objectius d'aprenentatge i dels continguts dels seus estudis i expandir les seues llistes de lectura amb veus més diverses que desafien els models tradicionals que han deixat històricament determinats grups ètnics mal representats, infrarepresentats o completament omesos dels currículums escolars i universitaris.

Paraules clau: educació intercultural, literatura multicultural, àlbums il·lustrats, formació docent, formació d'educadors/es

1. Introduction

The beginnings of the picturebook as an established medium can be traced back to the 19th century, while from the 1960s onwards, it has undergone a real renaissance (Narančić Kovač, 2015). In picturebooks, the two discourses, namely the verbal (linguistic) and the visual (illustrative), as Narančić Kovač (2015) observes, simultaneously participate in mediating the contents of a picturebook, while the pictures can replicate, expand, and even contradict the verbal text. One of the most thorough definitions of what the picturebook represents can be found in Bader (1976), "A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child" (p. 1). The modern picturebook, therefore, has not only pedagogical but also psychological, artistic, and linguistic potentials of influence on a child and can be a powerful medium when introducing multicultural literature into the teaching process since they, as agents of socialization, present an excellent opportunity to enculturate young children with open attitudes and values toward cultural diversity.

Multicultural children's literature can be defined as literature that gives voice to the sociocultural experiences of previously under-represented groups. It validates these groups' experiences, including those occurring because of differences in language, race, gender, class, ethnicity, identity, and sexual orientation. As such, it can be a catalyst for social action and increasing students' cultural awareness and sensitivity (Ford et al., 2000). Multicultural literature is, therefore, "an appropriate means of building respect across cultures, sharpening sensitivity toward the ways in which all individuals have much in common, and improving the self-esteem of people who are members of a racial and ethnic under-represented" (Norton, 1987, p. 502). In this context, picturebooks can, through readers' engagement with the semiotic meaning of the picture-text relationships, discover and critically analyze the multiple voices and ideologies represented in the narratives (Stephens, 2018).

Initial teacher education, in particular, plays a crucial role in helping preservice teachers understand the effects of cultural and racial diversity on students and providing them with the necessary competencies to use this diversity as a classroom resource in their teaching practices. As Alismail (2016) noted, "by effectively preparing preservice teachers to implement multiculturalism, these new teachers become multiculturalism's advocates, more prepared to achieve equity and social justice in their classrooms" (p. 139).

The term multiculturalism generally refers to the natural state of society that cannot but be diverse (Council of Europe, 2012), i.e., the coexistence of multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multireligious groups in a common space, whereby learning to live together in a multicultural society is the main objective of intercultural education (Council of Europe, 2012). Interculturalism is the active dimension of such

diversity. Whereas multiculturalism evokes descriptive elements, with people from different cultures living peacefully side by side, interculturalism presupposes the relationships, interactions of individuals, groups, and communities and emphasizes their capacity to assume shared responsibilities and create common identities (Council of Europe, 2012). Beyond representing "a configuration of beliefs and practices which promote respect for and acceptance of diversity in today's societies" (Tupas, 2014, p. 243), interculturalism also addresses power structures and struggle, with its goal not being reduced to understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of cultural differences but also the transformation of the existing social order to ensure greater voice and authority to the marginalized cultures, which might lead to greater social equality and justice. As Tupas (2014) further notes, in the twenty-first century pedagogic interculturalism, this might mean broadening national education curricula to a wider range of voices and stories in the hope of greater social inclusion. Yet, given that "culture" is not a closed corpus of beliefs and representations but rather a dynamic social construct, Abdallah-Pretceille (2006) argues that the concept of "culture" is marked too much by a descriptive and categorizing approach, which might lead to students only learning about cultural stereotypes or even prejudices instead of them being provided with critical tools to analyze and contextualize that which is deemed 'cultural.' She, therefore, proposes the term "culturality" since it allows us to understand cultural phenomena "based on dynamics, transformations, fusion and manipulations. The notion of 'culturality' refers to the fact that cultures are increasingly changing, fluent, striped and alveolate" (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 479). Hence, it is vital that practitioners and researchers "move from the idea that people are cultural objects to that of people negotiating representations on themselves, their experiences, and their environment" (Dervin, 2014, p. 193) and consider examining observed differences in a specific situation.

In the Republic of Croatia, the education system is oriented, among other things, towards the holistic development of the child and the creation of a knowledge society and values that will enable progress and sustainable development. The values that should enable holistic development are knowledge, identity, humanism and tolerance, responsibility, autonomy, and creativity (National Curriculum for Early and Pre-School Education, 2014). Furthermore, the National Curriculum Framework for Pre-School Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education [NCF] (2010), which defines all aspects of formal education ranging from the pre-school level to the completion of secondary education, highlights "human dignity, freedom, justice, patriotism, social equality, solidarity, tolerance, industriousness, integrity, peace, health, conservation of the natural and human environment, and other democratic values" (NCF, 2010, p. 14) as the key values underpinning Croatian education. A major shift is noticed in the objectives of individual subject curricula, which increasingly place emphasis on learning outcomes as opposed to the teaching content. However, Milner (2005) underscores that

"the very nature of this content and how it is actually incorporated into the lessons are also critical" (p. 393). In other words, it matters what is included, how, and why.

Teachers, as central actors in education, play a significant role in teaching literature. It is the teachers who adapt the materials to the students, thus respecting and accepting the different student personalities. However, for preservice teachers to be able to engage in discussions on diversity and confidently reach for appropriate teaching resources that will assist them in this challenging endeavor, it is worth exploring how teacher-educators address these same topics throughout initial teacher education. Research suggests that reading and discussing books with characters of different ethnic backgrounds can positively affect childrens' interethnic attitudes (So, 2016) as well as reading motivation and reading literacy (Becker et al., 2010). Therefore, initial teacher education should emphasize evaluation, selection, and sharing of multicultural literature.

This paper aims to determine the presence of undergraduate and graduate courses specifically addressing children's picturebooks at six Croatian Faculties of Teacher Education and how teacher-educators, i.e., university instructors, interpret the notion of multicultural children's literature in their selection of authors and titles. More specifically, it aims to explore the representation of racial diversity and the range of experiences depicted among the selected authors/illustrators and characters as a foundation for promoting the values of inclusivity, equality, and respect for racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the future teachers' educational practice.

However, for preservice teachers to be able to engage in discussions on diversity and confidently reach for appropriate teaching resources that will assist them in this challenging endeavor, it is worth exploring how teacher-educators address these same topics throughout initial teacher education.

2. Toward an Intercultural and Inclusive Curriculum

If carefully directed, the educational process can reduce and mitigate many negative socializing factors and behaviors towards people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Buterin, 2009). Therefore, given the important role which school plays in disseminating values of equality, tolerance, open-mindedness, and respect, among others, it is vital that the fundamental tenets of intercultural education are not mere accessories to the existing subject curricula or taught as a separate school subject; instead, it should be a principle inherent to the overall school life and culture. This means that teachers themselves need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively navigate through intercultural content and acknowledge their diverse students' needs. In this sense, an interculturally competent teacher might be defined as someone who "has the ability to see the relationship between culturally diverse students, the ability to mediate, interpret, critically and

analytically understand their own culture and the culture of culturally diverse students" (Bedeković, 2011, p. 144).

One of the key concerns in intercultural education is the accurate representation of cultural and ethnic diversity in teaching materials and the regular inclusion of such materials in teachers' everyday teaching practice. Intercultural education, in its core, is not only concerned with ethnically and linguistically diverse learners but rather encompasses questions surrounding gender, class, intergenerational relations, among many others (Tupas, 2014). It is committed to combating "inequality, racism as well as sexism, and all other forms of prejudice, oppression and discrimination through the development of understanding, attitudes and social action skills" (Räsänen, 2009, p. 37) and strives to increase educational equality for all gender groups, students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups, and those with special educational needs. As Ladson-Billings (1994) claims, negative effects arise when one fails to notice the history, culture or background represented in textbooks or curriculum. Gay (2000) asserted that students from racially/ethnically underrepresented groups often feel "insulted, embarrassed, ashamed, and angered when reading and hearing negative portrayals of their ethnic groups or not hearing anything at all" (p. 116) and, in their research, Schneider and Preckel (2017) confirmed that course effectiveness is strongly related to what teachers do and that the choice of teaching methods has substantial effects on student achievement. It is, therefore, imperative that students from racially/ethnically underrepresented groups "encounter and experience a curriculum that highlights, showcases, and speaks from the point of view of the life experiences and contributions of people of color, women, and other marginalized groups, not just those of the White mainstream" (Milner, 2005, p. 92). Furthermore, the damage is done to students belonging to the ethnic dominant group since such cultural omissions may lead to diminished abilities to master the skills necessary for a successful life and work in a multicultural society (Buterin, 2009).

If we consider that the questioning of one's identity in relation to others is an integral part of the intercultural approach to education, then neglecting to include all students in the teaching process and failing to incorporate their communities' authentic narratives into the everyday life inside the classroom presents both the dominant and under-represented groups with "a one-sided worldview that does not correspond to reality and is clearly counterproductive to the objectives of intercultural education" (Butković, 2020). This, then, also means that intercultural education is focused on students pertaining to the dominant group. Furthermore, this indicates the importance of creating a culturally-responsive school and teaching atmosphere that respects and actively promotes the value of each member of society and highlights the contribution of each ethnic community to the rich cultural tapestry that makes up national culture.

3. Importance of Age-Appropriate Interventions

Research indicates the importance of children's age not only for selecting age-appropriate materials that would help combat or mitigate the development of stereotypical and prejudiced views in children but also for the implementation of appropriate intervention methods and the timing of such interventions (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011), and, according to Granic and Patterson (2006), interventions seem to be more successful in age periods during which the target behavior or attitudes change per se because changing individuals are more receptive for environmental input. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that teachers understand how their work and the chosen teaching materials affect their students.

Research has shown that children begin to notice race by age two, while by age three, they show signs of being influenced by societal norms and biases and may even exhibit prejudice based on gender, race, or disability (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Furthermore, the development of children's ethnic identity is shaped between ages three and five (Bowles, 1993). In their meta-analysis, Raabe and Beelmann (2011) investigated developmental trends in prejudice by integrating empirical studies on age differences in ethnic, racial, or national prejudice among children and adolescents with the aim of gaining insights into the most appropriate point in time for implementing intervention programs. Referenced studies continuously found that prejudice increases between early (2-4 years) and middle (5-7 years) childhood and then decreases slightly between the middle (5-7 years) and late childhood (8-10 years) as well as within late childhood. In contrast, no general age trend could be confirmed in adolescence (10 years and later). On balance, it seems that age-related changes in prejudice are limited to childhood only.

On the other hand, a decrease in prejudice occurs between middle and late childhood; however, this only occurred in studies using explicit prejudice measures, whereas measurements of implicit attitudes revealed no age-related change between middle and late childhood (Banaji et al., 2008), which supports the notion that children at this age start to control their prejudiced responses (Rutland et al., 2007) and consciously evaluate different social groups. In other words, prejudice seems to change from explicit expressions to more implicit forms at elementary school age. It seems that, in the period between early and middle childhood, children start to observe positive events happening to dominant group members and negative events happening to under-represented group members. Based on these experiences, they learn explicitly or implicitly to view disadvantaged under-represented groups negatively, and advantaged dominant groups positively, even if they belong to the under-represented group themselves. Furthermore, prejudice toward higher status groups increases between middle and late childhood, which might explain that children from under-represented groups begin experiencing

conflict between their racial identities and societal stigma and stereotypes based on their race during this period (Cole and Valentine, 2000). This indicates, in turn, that children's positive views on their racial/ethnic identities are closely connected to positive associations with their race during this age period. On the other hand, prejudice toward lower status groups remains unchanged or decreases.

Not only is children's age of vital importance for choosing the appropriate teaching strategies and materials but also teachers' awareness of its importance. Given that both teachers and students change throughout the process of intercultural education, the present research was inspired by the findings obtained in research with university students of different study programs in the Republic of Croatia, all of whom showed significant gaps in historical knowledge and implicit biases that must be addressed throughout formal education.

In their research conducted with student-teachers, Butković and Vidović (2019) found that two-thirds of students are not aware of the discriminatory attitudes and behaviors towards racial minorities in Croatia and that they struggle with the appropriateness and the role which racial nomenclature should play in children's literature. Furthermore, in a creative writing task, students of non-teaching study programs showed a clear preference (99.85%) for white male characters (Butković & Vidović, 2020). What is more, even the Ministry-assigned mandatory reading list for elementary schools, published in the latest Croatian Language Curriculum (2019), revealed some astounding findings. The selected authors are 100% white Europeans and their characters, unsurprisingly, are white, Christian, and European. Croatian authors on that list almost exclusively focus on the dominant Croatian population and culture, omitting to give voice to national, ethnic minorities. Furthermore, none of the protagonists' skin color is unambiguously other than white, their religion other than Christian, and their country of origin outside of Europe (Butković, 2020).

Given these findings, it is worth posing the question if initial teacher education programs are preparing new generations of teachers who are competent to address this gap between the curricular orientation toward fostering interculturally competent students and the lack of a greater ethnic and racial representation of authors and characters recorded in mandatory reading lists for the young readers.

4. Research Aims and Questions

This research aims to determine the presence of undergraduate and graduate courses specifically addressing children's picturebooks at six Croatian Faculties of Teacher Education (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar, and Split) and how university instructors interpret the notion of multicultural children's literature in their selection of authors and titles. More specifically, it aims to explore the representation of racial diversity and the range of experiences depicted among the selected authors/illustrators and

characters. Furthermore, learning outcomes in university courses are analyzed to determine the extent to which the selected syllabi accentuate picturebooks' potential in fostering future pre-school teachers' and elementary school teachers' intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence being "the expected outcome of the insertion of interculturality in language learning and teaching" (Dervin, 2009, p. 2), may be defined as the capacity "to see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and to mediate, that is, interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people" (Byram, 2000, p. 9), whereby it entails the understanding that one's "own and other cultures' perspective is culturally determined rather than natural" (p. 9). It is thereby crucial to remember that intercultural education and the fostering of intercultural competence not rely solely on the perceived cultural differences as this, according to Phillips (2010), often leads to cultural hierarchy, "There are said to be 'better' and 'worse,' 'more advanced,' and 'more backward' cultures" (p. 20), but instead to take into into account similarities across national boundaries as this would lead to a more complex and less one-sided picture of intercultural encounters (Dervin et al., 2012, p. 5).

In our endeavor, we were guided by the following research questions:

Q1: How many courses exist on children's picturebooks in six Croatian Faculties of Teacher Education?

Q2: Do the selected syllabi mention the development of intercultural competence as a learning outcome?

Q3: Does the selection of authors reflect global racial diversity?

Q4: Do the selected picturebooks include racially diverse characters (especially as protagonists)?

Q5: Does the found representation of racial diversity facilitate the advancement of equality, and can it be utilized as a vehicle for intercultural learning?

5. Methodology

For the purpose of this research, we searched for syllabi on children's picturebooks in undergraduate and graduate university courses at six Faculties of Teacher Education in Croatia (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar, and Split), which are publically available on the Faculties' websites. This was followed by an analysis of references to intercultural competence in the selected course syllabi. Finally, we contacted the course instructors to provide us with a list of authors/illustrators and picturebook titles when these were not visible in the syllabi. Given that one of the aims of this research was to determine how university instructors interpret the notion of multicultural children's literature, we focused on their choice of picturebook authors/illustrators and human characters.

In our analysis of authors/illustrators, we included information on the authors' nationality and race, which was identified through digital information (author websites, interviews in online media, information on book covers). This provided statistical information about what percentage of recorded national and racial diversity is considered "diverse" and "multicultural" in the corpus of analyzed authors.

For the analysis of characters, we read all the listed picturebooks and examined the illustrations. We categorized the characters into three groups: those containing only human characters, only anthropomorphized animals/objects, and a combination of human characters and anthropomorphized animals/objects. We proceeded with recording those examples that pointed to an unambiguous visual representation of racial diversity among human characters. Finally, we counted the number of picturebooks with racially diverse characters in the role of the protagonist.

6. Research limitations

This research was limited to the analysis of picturebooks and authors/illustrators that are addressed as part of courses dealing specifically with children's picturebooks and did not include titles mentioned in other types of children's literary courses at the aforementioned Faculties of Teacher Education. Therefore, our findings should not be understood as reflecting a uniform approach to the selection of all authors/illustrators and all children's picturebooks addressed in undergraduate and graduate university courses at the Faculties of Teacher Education in the Republic of Croatia.

7. Results and Discussion

The first phase of research aimed to determine the existence of undergraduate and graduate courses on children's picturebooks at six Croatian Faculties of Teacher Education (Rijeka, Pula, Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar, and Split) and how university instructors interpret the notion of multicultural children's literature in their selection of picturebook authors/illustrators and titles. This was followed by an analysis of the course learning outcomes to determine the extent to which the selected syllabi accentuate the potential of picturebooks in fostering future preschool teachers' and elementary school teachers' intercultural competence (Table 1).

Faculty of Teacher Education	Undergraduate	Graduate	Elective/ mandatory course
Rijeka	*Picturebook – A child's first book*	-	elective
Pula	-	-	-
Zagreb	*Picturebook in the English language*	-	mandatory
Osijek	-	-	-
Zadar	-	*Picturebook and the culture of reading during early and pre-school age*	elective
Split	-	-	-

Table 1. Reference to intercultural competence in the outlined study objectives

The search for course syllabi on children's picturebooks rendered two undergraduate courses (*Picturebook – A child's first book (*4th semester*)*, *Picturebook in the English language (*6th semester*)* and one graduate course (*Picturebook and the culture of reading during early and pre-school age (*8th semester*).* The compiled reading list resulted in a total of 79 authors/illustrators and 155 picturebook titles.

Course	Course objectives
Picturebook – A child's first book	- correctly interpret and analyze the basic concepts of children's literature and media culture related to the picturebook - independently interpret picturebooks by Croatian and foreign authors and professional literature - recognition of the picturebook as a combination of literary and fine arts - use picturebooks independently in working with early and pre-school children
Picturebook in the English language	- present the historical development and diversity of picturebooks in the English-speaking world, with an emphasis on the narrative picturebook; - distinguish and compare types of picturebooks and their characteristics; - understand the problems of theoretical definition of the picturebook, the complex relationship of its verbal and visual components, and other constitutive characteristics of the picturebook as a multimodal art form, including specific readership; - explain and apply the English terminology of the theoretical description of the picturebook; - apply the acquired knowledge and their interpretive and analytical skills for the purpose of evaluating individual picturebooks; - interpret the potential of the picturebook for application in English language teaching
Picturebook and the culture of reading during early and pre-school age	- understand the importance of early literacy; - analyze/interpret the content of individual picturebooks; - understand and distinguish the types of picturebooks and their function; - recognize and evaluate the quality and appropriate picturebooks for children; - connect literary content with other related artistic, scientific, and general cultural content (both at the synchronic and diachronic level) in an interdisciplinary and intermedial manner;

	- learn independently and progress by performing independent tasks during the teaching process, depending on which language issues are defined and analyzed or which topic is discussed; - develop research skills at the level of writing a professional paper; - develop abilities for continuous evaluation and self-evaluation of one's own work and efficiency.

Table 2. Reference to intercultural competence in the outlined learning objectives

It is observable from Table 2 that the analyzed learning objectives do not specifically include acquiring or refining student-teachers' intercultural competence. They are, instead, more explicitly focused on the theoretical considerations and interpretation of children's picturebooks. Only the course *Picturebook in the English language*, in the syllabus section addressing the course's alignment with the broader study program objectives, includes the development of openness to different ways of creative expression, flexibility, and empathy, the improvement of students' sensitivity to the values of their own and other cultures and to the values of intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity in the research, social and work environment. This, however, is not found in the other syllabi.

However, since we acknowledge that the term "intercultural competence" does not necessarily need to be mentioned in a course syllabus in order for that course to foster intercultural sensitivity and, thus, intercultural competence, we proceeded with the analysis of teacher-educators' choice of authors/illustrators (Figure 1) and characters (Tables 2 and 3) that would provide future teachers with a solid knowledge foundation about diverse personal narratives that could be used in their classroom practice.

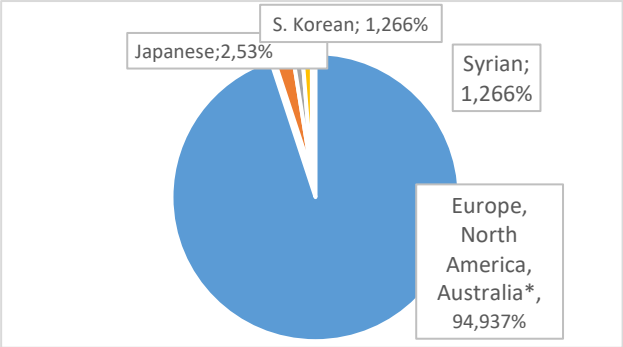

Figure 1. Choice of authors and illustrators

**Countries included in the order of frequency: Croatia, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada, Russia, France, Belgium, Sweden, The Netherlands, Italy*

Out of 79 authors and illustrators, as many as 75 (94.94%) are white, and only four (5.06%) are authors of color. Furthermore, the choice of authors reveals a clear preference for (Western) European and North American authors. This finding is similar to the research carried out by Butković (2020), who

found that white European authors are given preference on the Ministry-assigned mandatory reading list for elementary schools.

An almost identical pattern is observed among in-service teachers' suggestions which children's authors to include on the elective readings list for elementary schools. In May 2019, following the publication of the latest Subject Curriculum for the Croatian language, the Ministry of Education issued a call to early elementary school teachers, Croatian language teachers, and school librarians to contribute to the creation of an updated elective reading list for elementary schools. Among the shortlisted authors, 98.4% were white, and 96.3% were European (Ministry of Science and Education, 2019). While additional research is required on the choice of authors in other university syllabi, the obtained findings seem to suggest a trend in the choice of authors among teacher-educators, in-service teachers and librarians, and the competent Ministry – an over-representation of white, European authors and a virtual exclusion of authors of color. The over-representation of white authors has been recorded in previous research (e.g., Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, 2020; NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, 2018; Koss 2015; Koss et al. 2017).

[…] the obtained findings seem to suggest a trend in the choice of authors among teacher-educators, in-service teachers and librarians, and the competent Ministry – an over-representation of white, European authors and a virtual exclusion of authors of color.

In the continuation of our analysis, we focused on the characters in the analyzed picturebooks to determine how many of them include human and non-human characters (animals and objects). This was followed by an analysis of the visual representation of racial diversity among human characters (Table 3).

Course	Total number of picturebooks	Human characters only	Animals/objects only	Humans and animals/objects
Picturebook – A child's first book	12	3	9	-
Picturebook in the English language	46	25	12	9
Picturebook and the culture of reading during early and pre-school age	95	41	46	7
Total	**155**	**69**	**67**	**16**

Table 3. Human and non-human characters in picturebooks

Given that our focus is on determining unambiguous examples of racial diversity, only picturebooks with human characters (69) and those that contain both human and non-human characters (16) were used in further analysis (Table 4).

Course	Number of picturebooks with human characters	Picturebooks with racially-diverse characters	Picturebooks with all-white characters	Picturebooks with racially diverse protagonists	Picturebooks with all-white protagonists
Picturebook – A child's first book	3	-	3	-	3
Picturebook in the English language	34	4	30	-	33
Picturebook and the culture of reading during early and pre-school age	48	8	40	1	47
Total	**85**	**12**	**73**	**1**	**84**

Table 4. Representation of racial diversity among human characters

The final analysis has revealed a disheartening, yet not completely unexpected, result. Out of 85 picturebooks containing human characters, while only 12 picturebooks contain racially diverse characters (14.1%). This finding is in line with research that suggests that white characters appear as the default race in children's literature (Adams, 2021; Koss & Paciga, 2020; Welch, 2016; Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, 2020; Larrick, 1965), picturebooks (Pescosolido, et al. 1997; Edmonds, 1986), and children's board books (Hughes-Hassell & Cox, 2010).

Given the clear dominance of white characters, it is worth highlighting the severe under-representation of characters of color in the role of the protagonist in the picturebooks selected by teacher-educators (Figure 2).

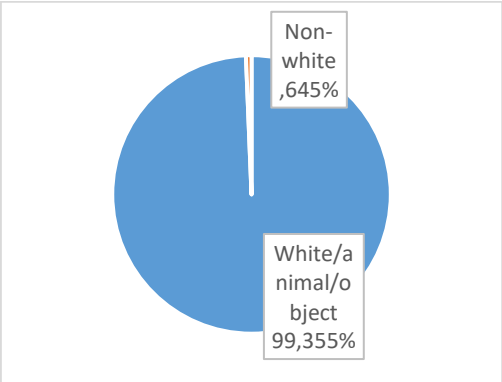

Figure 2. Chances of a non-white protagonist

Only one picturebook (1.1%) contains a character of color as its protagonist. Considering that this is the only example of a character of color as a protagonist in the total number of analyzed picturebooks (155), that percentage is even lower (0.65%).

This finding means that children belonging to under-represented groups do not share that experience and are continuously exposed to narratives they do not necessarily identify with. Furthermore, the obtained findings confirm the conclusion by Butković (2020) that predominately white authors write about predominately white characters.

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While it is undeniable that children enjoy reading and discovering anthropomorphized animals and objects, the question is inevitably imposed on why teacher-educators seem more comfortable with selecting non-human characters for children to identify with instead of human characters of a different skin color? This question is all the more pressing if we consider that it is the teacher-educators' task to equip future teachers with the appropriate knowledge and tools to address challenges that inevitably face them in diverse classrooms. This is an area that is greatly unexplored in research and should be given more attention.

The findings related to both the recorded racial diversity among the selected authors and human characters in picturebooks leads to the conclusion that the overall corpus of selected authors and characters does not live up to the expectation of an equitable representation of racial diversity but rather favors white characters.

If student-teachers are not exposed to information and experiences that challenge their own beliefs, attitudes, and prior knowledge in a safe and carefully guided manner, then it is questionable whether those same student-teachers will instinctively reach for resources in the future teaching practice that will help them address barriers and discrimination faced by under-represented ethnic groups.

8. Conclusion

In the 21st century, it is imperative that children see themselves and their communities represented in the school curriculum and be continuously exposed to authentic materials that assist them in exploring who they are and how they fit into society. This, however, imposes the need on teacher-educators to address these topics in their initial teacher education courses in order to equip future teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately review existing classroom practices

and approaches to introducing diverse narratives that challenge outdated visions of the world that remain present in school curricula.

The findings of this research indicate that intercultural competence is not a major learning objective in two out of three analyzed university syllabi (75%). Furthermore, the choice of authors/illustrators reflects a preference for North American and Western European authors, as well as authors who are white (94.94%). Regarding the choice of characters, in 73 picturebooks (85%), the characters are all-white, while racially diverse characters are encountered in only 12 picturebooks (14%). As many as 84 picturebooks (98.9%) focus on a white protagonist, while in only one picturebook (1.1%), the protagonist is a Roma girl. In other words, the chances to encounter a protagonist of color in the entire corpus of analyzed picturebooks (155) is at a disheartening 0.65%. Furthermore, racial diversity does not play a (significant) role in the analyzed picturebooks, which stands in stark contrast to the objectives of intercultural and fair education that takes into account the perspectives of many groups. These findings also reveal that the teacher-educators' choice of a multicultural range of authors/illustrators and picturebooks, whereby its multicultural aspect is derived predominately from the fact that the authors/illustrators represent 14 countries, does not in and of itself ensure insight into the authentic life experiences of those members of society who have historically been discriminated against and marginalized.

This, however, imposes the need on teacher-educators to address these topics in their initial teacher education courses in order to equip future teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately review existing classroom practices and approaches to introducing diverse narratives that challenge outdated visions of the world that remain present in school curricula.

If teacher-educators are viewed as designers of intercultural encounters in tertiary classrooms, for example, through the choice of materials and their implementation in the classroom setting, then their corpus of the selected authors/illustrators and picturebooks discussed here, which rely on the dominant group's perspective, cannot be understood as contributing to a critical examination of cultures that would challenge future teachers' assumptions about cultural diversity, empower them to probe critically educational content, and assist them in making informed decisions about the resources that make visible both the national and international cultural diversity. Furthermore, if our major educational aim is to provide a transformative educational experience both for future teachers and their future elementary school students, then teacher-educators must make it a priority to rethink and renegotiate the nature of their curricula from more traditional models that have historically left many ethnic groups misrepresented, under-represented, or not represented at all to curricula that are consciously more inclusive of different ethnic and racial groups. It does not suffice to only speak about

diversity, discrimination, prejudices, and human rights abuses; concrete examples of how to combat and mitigate them need to become part of teachers' education and everyday classroom practice. This also includes teachers' confidence and courage to choose those teaching materials and children's literature that challenge the traditional literary canon that too often omits authors, illustrators, and characters belonging to racially and ethnically underrepresented groups. The development of intercultural competence only makes sense if "the other" becomes an equally valuable part of the educational process, either by being part of the classroom group and/or by being visible in teaching materials, fictional or otherwise.

The development of intercultural competence only makes sense if "the other" becomes an equally valuable part of the educational process, either by being part of the classroom group and/or by being visible in teaching materials, fictional or otherwise.

While this research has its limitations, we nevertheless hope that it is a step in the right direction in raising the awareness that teacher-educators must engage in continuous self-reflection on whether their choices and actions performed as part of their university courses assist future teachers in becoming more culturally sensitive and, thereby, more interculturally competent so that they can, in turn, continue the endeavor in their future teaching practice.

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Student Teachers and Kindergarten Children Talking about Picturebooks Focusing School in Didactic Research Labs at University

Estudiantes de Magisterio y alumnado de Infantil hablan sobre álbumes centrados en la escuela en laboratorios didácticos de investigación en la Universidad

Estudiants de Magisteri i alumnat d'Infantil parlen sobre àlbums centrats a l'escola en laboratoris didàctics de recerca a la universitat

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Abstract

As part of the project "Lehren, Lernen und Forschen in Werkstätten" (Teaching, Learning and Researching in Laboratories) from 2016 to 2019, seminars on German language and literature didactics were held at the "Lern- und Forschungswerkstatt Grundschule" (LuFo, Primary Education Research Lab) at the Technische Universität (TU) of Dresden. The seminars, which were attended by student primary school teachers, dealt with telling stories using wordless picturebooks, reading aloud picturebooks about school or other topics. The student teachers dealt with selected picturebooks from the perspective of literature didactics, visual literacy studies and empirical research on reading engagement. They designed didactic arrangements (different kinds of didactically based activities by students with children in a literary-aesthetic context) following the principles of inquiry-based learning and invited kindergarten and primary school children to the LuFo to explore the stories told in the picturebooks together. The study is based on the student teachers' seminar papers in which they describe their projects, give didactic reasons for the selection of literature and analyse their interactions with the children around the picturebooks. Using the example of picturebooks about school, the study uses Key Incident Analysis to ask which books the student teachers chose and how they read them, how they talked to and interacted with the children about them and how they shaped the reading situations. Finally, they asked how they reflected on their own learning processes. The results give an insight into both the processes of reflection of the primary school student teachers and the processes of literary learning of the children.

Key words: Reading engagement, Visual literacy, Picturebooks, Primary education, Inquiry-based learning

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Resumen

Como parte del proyecto "Lehren, Lernen und Forschen in Werkstätten" (Enseñar, Aprender e Investigar en Laboratorios) es llevaron a cabo seminarios sobre didáctica de la lengua y la literatura alemana en la "Lern- und Forschungswerkstatt Grundschule" (LuFo, Laboratorio de Investigación de Educación Primaria) en la Technische Universität (TU) de Dresden del 2016 al 2019. Los seminarios, a los cuales asistieron estudiantes de Magisterio de Primaria, versó sobre contar historias a través de álbumes ilustrados sin palabras, y se *leyó* en voz alta álbumes ilustrados sobre la escuela y otros temas. El alumnado de Magisterio se enfrentó a álbumes ilustrados seleccionados desde la perspectiva de la didáctica de la literatura, desde los estudios sobre alfabetización visual y desde la investigación empírica en animación lectora. Diseñaron dispositivos didácticos (diferentes tipos de actividades didácticas realizadas por el estudiantado con niños y niñas en un contexto literario-estético) siguiendo los principios del aprendizaje basado en la indagación e invitaron a alumnado de Educación Infantil y Primaria al LuFo para explorar juntos las historias que se narraban en los álbumes ilustrados. Este estudio está basado en los documentos del seminario de los y las estudiantes de Magisterio en los cuales describen sus proyectos, dan razones de tipo didáctico para la selección de la literatura y analizan sus interacciones con el alumnado acerca de los álbumes. Utilizando el ejemplo de los álbumes sobre la escuela, el estudio utiliza el Análisis de Incidentes Críticos (Key Incidents Analysis) para preguntar qué libros escogían los y las alumnos y alumnas de Magisterio, cómo los leían, cómo hablaban sobre ellos y con quién, y cómo interactuaban acerca de estos con niños y niñas y también como daban forma a las situaciones de lectura. Finalmente, también se preguntaron sobre cómo lo reflejaban en sus procesos de aprendizaje. Los resultados se acercan a los dos procesos de reflexión. Por una parte el del alumnado de Magisterio Educación Primaria y por otro el de los procesos de aprendizaje de los niños y niñas.

Palabras clave: Animación lectora, alfabetización visual, álbumes ilustrados, Educación Primaria, aprendizaje basado en la indagación

Resum

Com a part del projecte "Lehren, Lernen und Forschen in Werkstätten" (Ensenyar, Aprendre i Investigar en Laboratoris), es van dur a terme seminaris sobre didàctica de la llengua i literatura alemanyes a la "Lern- und Forschungswerkstatt Grundschule" (LuFo, Laboratori de Recerca d'Educació Primària) a la Technische Universität (TU) de Dresden del 2016 al 2019. Els seminaris, als quals van assistir estudiants de Magisteri de Primària, va versar sobre contar històries a través d'àlbums il·lustrats sense paraules, i es va *llegir* en veu alta àlbums il·lustrats sobre l'escola i d'altres temes. L'alumnat de Magisteri va enfrontar-se amb àlbums il·lustrats seleccionats des de la perspectiva de la didàctica de la literatura, des dels estudis sobre alfabetització visual i des de la recerca empírica en animació lectora. Van dissenyar dispositius didàctics (diferents tipus d'activitats didàctiques realitzades per estudiantat amb infants en un context literari-estètic) tot seguint els principis de l'aprenentatge basat en la indagació i van convidar infants d'Educació Infantil i Primària al LuFo per tal d'explorar tots junts les històries que es narraven als àlbums il·lustrats. Aquest estudi està basat en els documents del seminari dels i les estudiants de Magisteri en els quals descriuen els seus projectes, donen raons de caire didàctic per a la selecció de la literatura i analitzen les seues interaccions amb els infants al voltant dels àlbums. Tot utilitzant l'exemple dels àlbums sobre l'escola, l'estudi utilitza l'Anàlisi d'Incidents Crítics (Key Incidents Analysis) per tal de preguntar quins llibres triaven els i les alumnes de Magisteri, com els llegien, com en parlaven i amb qui, i com n'interactuaven al seu voltant amb infants i també com donaven forma a les situacions de lectura. Finalment, també es van preguntar sobre com els reflectien en els seus processos d'aprenentatge. Els resultats s'acosten a tots dos processos de reflexió: els de l'alumnat de Magisteri Educació Primària i els dels processos d'aprenentatge literari dels infants.

Paraules clau: Animació lectora, alfabetització visual, àlbums il·lustrats, Educació Primària, aprenentatge basat en la indagació

1. Introduction

Children's literature as a university subject of learning is relevant to both children's literature research, but also to the training of future educators and teachers, especially future primary school teachers. The aim of such studies is to learn about a diverse range of contemporary children's literature, to explore its "experientiality" (Fludernik, 2009), to recognise its literary-aesthetic potential and to be able to build up a "repertoire of stories" (Dehn et al., 2014) during ones studies. A further step is the ability to independently select children's literature and to design didactic arrangements. This term is used in this paper to refer to different kinds of didactically based activities by students with children in a literary-aesthetic context. In order for this selection and designing process to not remain at a theoretical level but to become an experiential learning process for the student teachers, authentic situations of trying things out, of joint encounters between student teachers and children in conversation about literature are necessary. One setting for such literary encounters at universities can be Laboratories that are equipped with a rich material landscape for storytelling (e.g. kamishibai, stick figures, story boxes, theatre cases) and with a variety of children's literature and that can also be spatially designed as reading places with the help of flexible furniture arrangements (sofas, seat cubes, seat cushions). Beyond these spatial resources, however, there is also a need for teaching formats that make use of this potential and use it for inquiry-based learning (Huber, 2013; Mieg, 2019). This article deals with such a format in the form of Didactic Research Laboratories (Hoffmann et al., 2019). After a discussion of the theoretical background and the project context, the concept of Didactic Research Laboratories is presented and explained using an example. Key incident analyses (Kroon & Sturm, 2007) of a reading aloud workshop conducted by student teachers with kindergarten children are then reported, revealing diverse learning potentials of children and student teachers alike. The article concludes by considering the point of view of higher education didactics.

2. Context

2.1 Theoretical context

Children's literature occupies a significant place in children's lives. Children grow up in a sea of stories (Bruner, 1996) and acquire the world narratively, because learning and narration are closely linked. In doing so, they increasingly move in different worlds, that of reality and that of fiction. Both worlds complement each other and refer to each other (Wieler, 2018). The acquisition of the ability to imagine as the basis of literary learning (Spinner, 2006) plays a central role in linking these different worlds, relating reality and fiction to each other, and thereby expanding one's own scope of action. In imagination, children learn to think in drafts (Ulich & Ulich, 1994) and to imagine "possible worlds" (Bruner, 1986). For the initiation of these cognitive learning processes in language and literature acquisition, the social context plays a decisive role. Children's reception of literature is embedded in a social context and is structured dialogically and narratively (Wieler et al., 2008). From an early age, rhymes are recited together with competent others, finger games are played, songs are sung, stories are told, and picturebooks are read aloud. In this context, multimodal approaches to stories are significant (Naujok, 2018). Language and literature acquisition are closely linked to this. In order to sensitise future educators and teachers to the importance of children's literature in their studies of childhood education or primary education, there is a need for experiential spaces that allow them to learn more about children's literature and in its dialogical appropriation in interactions with children (Hoffmann, 2020). This article aims to provide an example of the 'opening' of these literary spaces of possible worlds in university studies.

2.2 Project context

This section outlines the context of the research project from which the analyses originate. The project "Lehren, Lernen und Forschen in Werkstätten" (Teaching, Learning and Researching in Laboratories) was a sub-project of the package of measures called "Synergetische Lehrerbildung im exzellenten Rahmen" (Synergetic teacher education in a framework of excellence, TUD-Sylber) and was funded by the "Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung" (BMBF) as part of the "Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung" from 2016-2019. Its aim was to develop and evaluate learning formats following the principles of inquiry-based learning at university laboratories. In cooperation with other sub-projects of this research context, questions about fields of tension between theory and practice in teacher education - as the German title "Spannungsfelder zwischen Theorie und Praxis in der Lehrer/innenbildung" (Areas of tension between theory and practice in teacher

education, Ertl-Schmuck & Hoffmann, 2020) of the collective volume from the project group suggests - were dealt with from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The “Lern- und Forschungswerkstatt Grundschule” (LuFo) (Primary Education Research Lab) at the TU Dresden was created in 2013 and was developed and lead by this author in cooperation with other colleagues (Hoffmann et al., 2019, Figure. 1). The LuFo is conceived as a stimulating learning environment with diverse language and literature didactic materials and an extensive collection of contemporary children's literature, with a focus on picturebooks. These offer student teachers an insight into children's life worlds and open numerous storytelling, talking and writing opportunities with children. In this way, future teachers can build up a “story repertoire” (Dehn et al., 2014) during their studies, which they can draw on in their later teaching practice.

Figure. 1. Logo and interior view of the LuFo (Lern- und Forschungswerkstatt Grundschule)

Once a semester, groups of children from kindergarten, primary school and secondary school are regularly invited to the LuFo in seminars designed as “Didactic Research Labs” (Hoffmann et al., 2019; Herrmann, 2019). Student teachers at the LuFo prepare didactic arrangements with a focus on various topics for these seminars. They carry these out with the children and reflect on their observations and experiences in terms of inquiry-based learning (Huber, 2013; Mieg, 2019). In the Didactic Research Lab, the children were invited to tell stories, read, draw, write and talk to each other about children’s literature. In all these

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activities, the focus was on literary-aesthetic approaches. Didactic Research Labs were designed and implemented on the following topics during the project period:

- 2016, 2018, 2019 Creative Writing,
- 2017 Reading Interests of Boys and Girls,
- 2017 Storytelling on Textless Picturebooks,
- 2018 “Language” Exhibition at the Museum,
- 2018 Graphic Literature and its Reception,
- 2019 Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks.

The various topics arose in light of research carried out by this author in connection with my former professorship in Primary Education/German at TU Dresden, and also in collaboration with cooperation partners or in connection with current events. For example, the Didactic Research Lab on the “’Language’ Exhibition at the Museum” (2018) was held in connection with the exhibition shown at the Deutsches Hygiene Museum Dresden (DHMD) “Sprache. Welt der Worte, Zeichen, Gesten” (Language. World of Words, Signs, Gestures) (Schmitz & Weiss, 2016). The Didactic Research Lab “Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks” took place in parallel to the lecture series “100 Jahre Grundschule in Deutschland - eine Schule für alle?” (100 Years of Primary School in Germany - A School for All?) (Brandt et al., 2021) on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the common primary school at the Faculty of Education of the TU Dresden. This particular Didactic Research Lab is the focus of this article.

3. Didactic Research Lab “Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks”

3.1 Procedure of the Didactic Research Lab

The Didactic Research Lab consisted of three parts: a preparatory literature study, the conception of the didactic arrangements and their implementation and reflection.

The first part of the Didactic Research Lab “Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks” was organised in the form of reading of academic texts at home and joint seminar discussions in the whole group. The student teachers first engaged with storytelling between picture and text from a literary studies perspective and learned about analysis models for picturebooks (Staiger, 2013; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2014). Afterwards they engaged with the topic empirically from the perspective of

literary socialisation research (Arizpe et al., 2014; Wieler, 2014), considering how children acquire language and literature in interaction with other children and adults. Then the student teachers discussed the didactic approach of dialogical reading aloud (Spinner, 2005; Merklinger & Preußer, 2014). Finally, they learned about pedagogical observation (de Boer, 2012) and key incident analysis (Kroon & Sturm, 2007) from a research methodological perspective.

In the second part of the Didactic Research Lab, the student teachers worked freely in groups. Here, the focus was on dialogical learning in the teacher students' groups (Wells, 2015). They made various joint selection decisions concerning which picturebook to use, which didactic approaches to take and which materials to use. Very practical organisational considerations also needed to be made (who would greet the groups of children on arrival, where the children could hang up their jackets, and where they could eat their sandwiches after the sometimes long journey to the university).

Finally, in the third part, the student teachers implemented their didactic arrangements with the groups of children. Half of the group always conducted the reading aloud workshop and the other half observed the interactions from an ethnographic perspective; this is discussed in more detail below. Following the implementations, joint reflection rounds took place in the entire seminar before the student teachers continued to develop their reflections in writing the seminar papers.

The following section explains these individual phases in more detail, based on the concrete implementation of the Didactic Research Lab, before analyses of a selected reading aloud workshop are carried out.

3.2 Selection of picturebooks for the Didactic Research Lab

In the run-up to the Didactic Research Lab "Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks", a selection of picturebooks was made; all the books were about school, in particular about starting primary school, meaning that an important transition in the development from kindergarten child to school child is thematised. From a socio-ecological perspective, it has been shown that media, including picturebooks, can support children in coping with transitions within and between different socio-ecological zones (Vollbrecht, 2010; Wegener, 2018): between the centre (the family), the local space (the neighbourhood or living environment), the outskirts (such as kindergarten, school or sports club) and the periphery (excursions, holidays or visits) (Baacke, 2018a; Baacke 2018b). Starting primary school represents a transition within the socio-ecological zone of cut-outs and is

thematically and narratively taken up in extremely diverse ways in children's literature, especially in picturebooks, comics and first reading books (Hoffmann, 2021). In the study “Erzählen in Texten und Bildern - Graphic Novels im Deutschunterricht” (Narrating in Texts and Pictures - Graphic Novels in German Lessons), Hoffmann (2017; 2021) showed, with qualitative-empirical analyses, that school entry is significant for children even at the end of their primary school years and that graphic narrative stories about school entry offer numerous narrative and writing occasions for joint remembering. A total of 21 picturebooks and first reading books were selected in particular for the Didactic Research Lab “Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks” under discussion. The titles were as follows (ordered by publication date; the bibliography at the end of the article also lists the English-language versions, if available):

- *Ich will auch in die Schule gehen* (Lindgren, 1980),
- *Nur Mut, Willi Wiberg* (Bergström, 1982),
- *Ich will in die Schule* (Fährmann, 1994),
- *Schulgeschichten vom Franz* (Nöstlinger, 1987),
- *Als ich klein war* (Gaetzi, 1999),
- *Philipok* (Tolstoj & Beneduce, 2000),
- *Kwatsch. Julius P.* (Scieszka, 2001),
- *Nein! Zur Schule geh ich nicht!* (Child, 2005),
- *Zwei dicke Freundinnen* (Schärer, 2006),
- *Flunkerfisch* (Donaldson, 2007),
- *Garmans Sommer* (Hole, 2009),
- *Meine Mutter ist in Amerika und hat Buffalo Bill getroffen* (Regnaud, 2009),
- *Regenwurmtage* (Damm, 2011),
- *Nur Mut, kleiner Luis* (Ramos, 2012),
- *Die coolste Schule der Welt* (Hula, 2013),
- *Wir sind 1a* (Teich, 2014),
- *Frau Hoppes erster Schultag* (Bertron, 2016),
- *Liebe Grüße, deine Giraffe* (Iwasa, 2017),
- *Der Bär ist los! Warum Bären nicht in die Schule gehören* (Sperring, 2018),
- *Die Schule* (Teckentrup, 2018),
- *Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh* (Völk, 2018).

In addition to a few widely popular titles from the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Lindgren, 1980; Bergström, 1982), the list included in particular recent, and also "challenging and controversial" (Evans, 2015), titles from the 2000s and 2010s, some of which were nominated for the German Youth Literature Award as picturebooks (Scieszka, 2001; Hole, 2009) or as children's books (Regnaud, 2009; Iwasa, 2017). Overall, a wide variety of stories focused on being afraid and being brave, dreaming and being curious, being late and lying, or being excluded and being different. Some picturebooks are aimed more at a preschool age (e.g. Donaldson, 2007; Sperring, 2018), others at an advanced primary school age (e.g. Regnaud, 2009; Teckentrup, 2018). What all these stories have in common is that they take the child's perspective and take their worries and needs, and also their thirst for exploration and knowledge, seriously.

During the selection process, the books were spread out on a long table and the student teachers were invited to browse them. The students were asked to form groups through the books and to enter into conversation with each other. The books were then exhibited in connection with the 100th anniversary of the primary school during the "Lange Nacht der Werkstätten" (Long Night of Laboratories) as part of the TU Dresden's "Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften" (Long Night of Science) during which the TU Dresden opens its doors to all those interested and provides an insight into current research and teaching projects.

3.3 Student teachers' choice of picturebooks

The student teachers formed four groups of five to eight student teachers and were asked to select one picturebook per group. The four books chosen were (Figure 2): *Nur Mut, Willi Wiberg* (Bergström, 1982), *Philipok* (Tolstoj & Beneduce, 2000), *Flunkerfisch* (Donaldson, 2007) and *Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh* (Völk, 2018).

Figure. 2. Covers of the picturebooks selected by the student teachers (Bergström, 1982; Tolstoj & Beneduce, 2000; Donaldson, 2007; Völk, 2018)

Overall, the student teachers drew on international children's literature from different linguistic-cultural contexts (Swedish, Russian, English, German/Austrian). Different styles of drawing and narration can also be discerned. It is noticeable that against the background of the literature offered, the student teachers increasingly fell back on the familiar, such as the literary classic by Tolstoy, the Willi Wiberg stories, which some presumably know from their own childhood, or the author and illustrator duo Scheffler and Donaldson, well known from their book *The Gruffalo*. Only one group of student teachers moved into unfamiliar territory and chose a wordless picturebook, which was published the year before the seminar: *Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh* (*When I go to school you see something I don't see*) by Juli Völk (2018), a young author and illustrator from Austria. The picturebook was nominated by Deutschlandfunk 2018 for "Die besten 7 im Oktober" (The Best 7 in October). It tells the story of a brother and sister on their way to school in the early morning, from saying goodbye to their parents to sitting at their desks in the classroom. The focus is on the journey to school, where they meet many other children and there are numerous wonderful and strange things to see. The picturebook tells the story 'quietly', not only by not using words, but also through the use of pictures in soft tones and light shading. The double-page spreads are designed as hidden object pictures, with numerous side stories that literally distract from the route to school again and again. The cover is reminiscent of a school exercise book, with the typography of the title in cursive script on a lined background within a frame that is typical of exercise books. In this way, school or the journey to school is not only taken up in terms of content, but also told visually.

The following section presents the conception of the reading aloud workshop on the picturebook described in the previous paragraph by the group of student teachers, followed by empirical analyses of selected aspects.

4. Reading aloud workshop Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh

4.1 Preparation and implementation of a didactic arrangement

In the reading aloud workshop *When I go to school…* the student teachers prepared a didactic arrangement that enabled different multimodal approaches (Naujok, 2018) to the picturebook. The target group was a group of seven kindergarten children who were about to start school right after the summer holidays. In this respect, it could be assumed that the journey to school was a significant topic for them. The student teachers had put the chairs and tables in the LuFo to one side and

prepared a seating circle on the floor with cushions, surrounded by colourful seating cubes. The student teachers chose a playful approach to start the conversation with the children and to introduce them to the picturebook (Figure 3).

Figure. 3. Playing the game "I see something you don't see" as an introduction to the picturebook

Following the title of the picturebook *When I go to school, you see something I don't see*, they played the well-known (in Germany) guessing game "Ich sehe was, was du nicht siehst" (I see something you don't see) with the children. The LuFo with its stimulating material landscape, presented on open shelves, provided a rich environment for this. The picturebook itself was in the children's field of vision with the cover facing forward on a shelf, so it was selected as a search object during the game: "I see something you don't see, and it's green." This brought the picturebook into focus and it was now the central object of conversation. Following the concept of the "Bilderbuchkinogespräch" (picturebook cinema discussion) (Hoffmann, 2019) on wordless picturebooks, the student teachers conducted a "picturebook discussion" with the preschool children. They placed the open picturebook in the middle of the sitting circle, looked at the pictures together, let the children talk about them and accompanied and supported this with prepared questions about the story and the characters. The student teachers had set up a kamishibai, a storytelling theatre, with a landscape picture from the picturebook, on which pictures of the characters from the story were gradually hung on to a line. These characters were given invented names to give the children an orientation to the characters of the book.

After the picturebook discussion, the children drew pictures with crayons on paper (Figure 4). The seating cubes were used as impromptu tables.

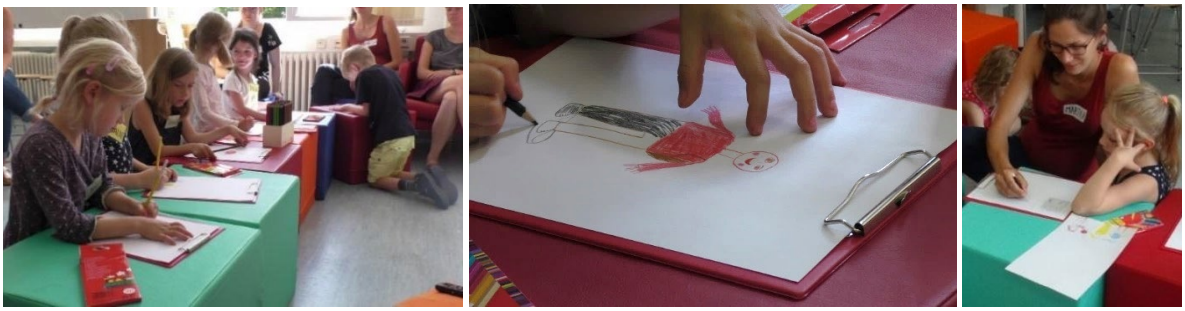

Figure. 4 Drawing and writing to the picturebook

The student teachers then asked the children to write texts to the children's pictures, following the didactic approach “Schreiben zu Vorgaben” (writing to texts/pictures/figures) (Dehn, 2004) by applying the concept of “Diktierendes Schreiben” (dictating writing) (Merklinger, 2011). Finally, the children's texts and pictures were presented to the other children and student teachers in the larger group. This didactic arrangement included multimodal approaches of playing, telling, drawing, and writing to the picturebook.

4.2 Ethnographic observation and data collection

Following the principles of inquiry-based learning, the student teachers developed a research question about their project as a starting point. This question related to the children's literary learning processes or their collaborative interactions. While three student teachers of the group carried out the reading aloud workshop with the children, the other two student teachers of the group devoted themselves to ethnographic observation, following the concept of interpretative classroom research (Krummheuer, 2000). They prepared observation protocols of the situations in which they recorded in writing the aspects of interest for their research question. Furthermore, the interactions were recorded with photographs, audio and video. The audio recordings were then transcribed by the student teachers using the “Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem” GAT 2 (Conversation Analysis Transcription System, Selting et al., 2009). The video recordings were used to assign the voices to the speakers and to identify and record non-verbal communication if necessary. The children's pictures and texts were scanned in as further data (Figure. 5).

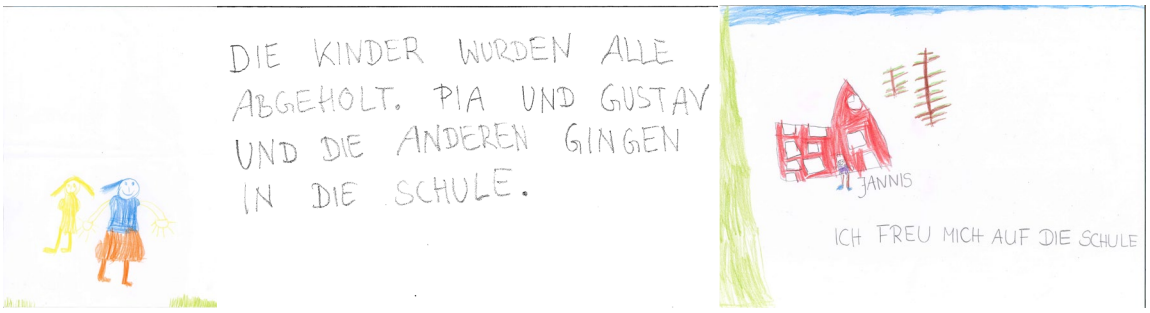

Figure. 5. Children's texts and drawings

This approach, which is both practical and observational, distinguishes the Didactic Research Labs from the teaching placements that student teachers carry out with children in schools. The focus here is on inquiry-based learning (Huber, 2013; Mieg, 2019).

4.3 Reflections in the seminar and analyses and reflections in seminar papers

After the reading aloud workshops, the observations were reflected on together in a plenary discussion in the seminar. The lecturer moderated this discussion by asking the student teachers to talk about the course of the reading workshop in general as a first step. Following this, particular "crucial points" and "stumbling points" from the observations were highlighted and presented to the whole seminar for discussion. The focus on the one hand was on the linguistic-literary learning processes of the children, and on the other hand on the pedagogical and literary-didactic learning processes of the student teachers. This common reflection in the seminar served as the basis for the student teachers' subsequent written analyses and reflections in their seminar papers.

5. Empirical Analyses

5.1 Methodological approach

In the research project "Lehren, Lernen und Forschen in Werkstätten", a total of eight Didactic Research Labs were carried out in three years (see above). Within the Didactic Research Lab "Reading Aloud - School in Picturebooks", four reading aloud workshops using four picturebooks were conducted and documented by the student teachers. A total of 25 children's texts and drawings were produced. The observations and children's products were analysed and reflected upon in writing in eight seminar papers by a total of 17 student teachers. From this corpus of data, an insight into the analyses of the project is given below, using the example of the reading aloud workshop on the picturebook *Wenn ich in die Schule geh...* (When I go to school...). Following the

principles of interpretative classroom research (Krummheuer, 2000), different data sources were triangulated. The following analyses are thus based on both the conversation transcript from the picturebook discussion and the student teachers' seminar papers. Individual excerpts are selected from these data and analysed with the help of “Key Incident Analysis” (Kroon & Sturm, 2007). With this type of analysis, important details provide perspectives on fundamental structures of the whole. The central research questions in this paper are:

- How do student teachers choose their picturebook and how do they deal with the picturebook's ambiguity and openness to interpretation?
- What do they choose for didactic foundation of their research question and their didactic arrangement?
- How do student teachers create links between fiction and reality when talking with children about a wordless picturebook?
- What insights do student teachers gain into the research process and how do they gain them?

5.2 Picturebook selection by student teachers

With the selection of the picturebook (Figure. 6), central decisions have already been made for the reading aloud workshops. How do student teachers choose their picturebook and how do they deal with the picturebook's ambiguity and openness to interpretation?

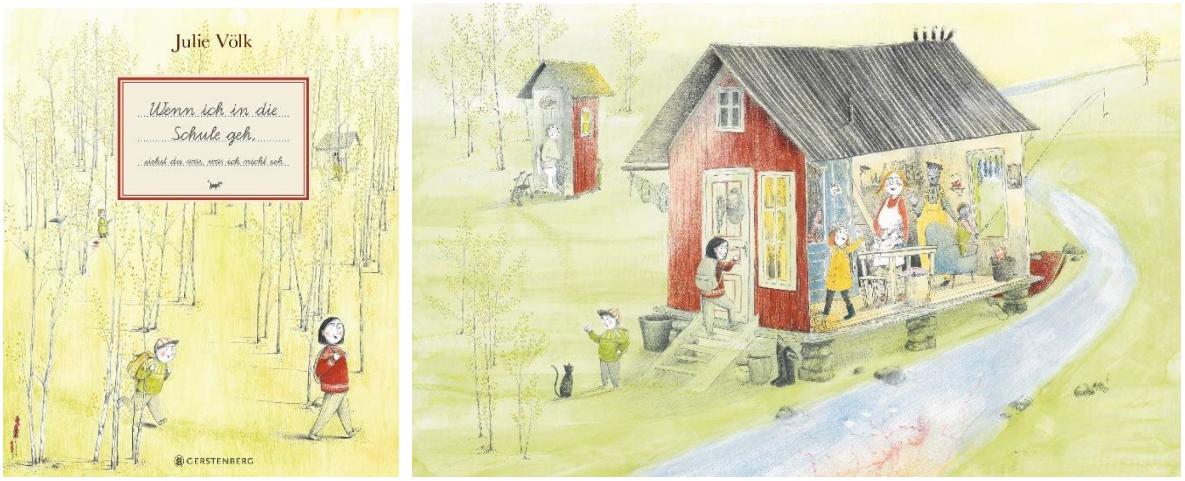

Figure. 6. © Julie Völk (illus.), from: *Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh*, Gerstenberg Verlag

The student teachers in one group describe their choice as follows:

> The book caught our eye and aroused our interest, especially because of the tender and detailed illustrations. At first, we were sceptical about the extent to which one can read a book that has no text at all. But the scepticism changed quickly and became an enriching challenge for us. (Seminar paper, Reading aloud, group 4, p. 12)

As the student teachers write in their seminar paper, they were particularly convinced by the pictorial design of the picturebook, by the "tender and detailed illustrations". Thus, it is not the subject matter that is the focus of the selection decision, but the way in which the story is told visually. The lack of text in the story initially led to irritation - as is often the case among adult readers. The student teachers use a conceptual transformation to illustrate their conscious handling of this irritation: the student teachers turn the "scepticism" initially caused by the missing texts into an (enriching) "challenge". This conceptual transformation illustrates a conscious decision to engage with the unfamiliar and to see it as something that one can grow from. The student teachers also made the richest detail of the visual narrative fruitful for the dialogic exchange with the children in conversation. For example, starting from the mobility walker in front of the outdoor toilet in the background of the picture and the tail fin of the elderly lady sitting in it (Figure. 6), a conversation about the name and function of walking aids and their use by their own grandparents as well as the surprise of seeing mermaids in the story developed.

[…] they were particularly convinced by the pictorial design of the picturebook, by the "tender and detailed illustrations". Thus, it is not the subject matter that is the focus of the selection decision, but the way in which the story is told visually.

5.3 Student teachers' research question and didactic arrangement

As a starting point for the design of their reading aloud workshops, the student teachers were asked to formulate a research question, which was a great challenge for many. What theoretical and didactic foundations underlie the research question and the didactic arrangement? In their seminar paper, the student teachers in the group that used the "When I go to school..." picturebook formulated the following research question:

> To what extent do the children follow the traces of the individual characters throughout the book and compare the situations with their own experiences? (Seminar paper, Reading aloud, group 4, p. 18)

From the student teachers' formulation of the research question, it is evident that they have engaged with literary reception research, which sees the connection of fictional worlds with real experiences as a central moment in literary learning (Spinner, 2006; Wieler, 2018). The focus on the characters in the story is also evidence that the student teachers are aware of children's interests in stories which have been pointed out by the research on reading socialisation (Wieler et al., 2008).

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In their didactic arrangement, the student teachers assign particular importance to spatial design (Figure. 7).

Figure. 7. Talking about the picturebook story

They describe their reflections on the prepared environment as follows:

> After the joint welcome, the children were greeted by a reading corner which had already been prepared. Cushions arranged in a circle and the kamishibai standing there invited the children to read aloud. The book itself remained in the middle of the circle for a long time during the conversation, clearly visible to all girls and boys. (Seminar paper, Reading aloud, group 4, p. 18)

The conviction that a “welcoming” environment is needed for “literary sociability” (Mattenklott, 1982) is evident from the student teachers' reflections. This includes, on the one hand, the circle as a suitable seating arrangement for conversations, especially about literature, and on the other hand, the choice of seat cushions on the floor (instead of chairs or seat cubes), which create a cosy and less distant atmosphere and might be familiar from everyday life at kindergarten. The student teachers also explicitly refer to the visibility of the picturebook for all children in the centre of the circle; this is particularly significant given that making a picture book visible to all children in this way does not always form part of everyday teaching practice in primary schools in Germany (Kruse, 2016). The kamishibai that the student teachers choose to introduce the characters one by one into the stories, to give them names and thus make them memorable, is also used as a medium to close the semicircle of the seat cushions into a circle. The children sit in a semicircle so that they can see the book well; the circle is closed by the kamishibai, creating a cosy picture book viewing situation.

5.4 Connecting fiction and reality in the picturebook discussion

The student teachers pay special attention to the first double-page spread in the picturebook discussion with the children. It is this page that introduces the story, represents the starting point of the plot, and introduces the characters (Figure. 8).

Figure. 8. © Julie Völk (illus.), from: *Wenn ich in die Schule geh, siehst du was, was ich nicht seh*, Gerstenberg Verlag

On this double-page spread we see a family's living room, as if in a theatre setting. On the left, the mother is sitting, and the father is standing at the breakfast table, which is still set, with cereal bowls and a newspaper lying on it. On the right side of the picture we see two children, of different heights, standing with their satchels on their backs at the open door that leads directly outside. They cast long shadows into the room through the morning sun. The parents say goodbye to their two children: the mother sends a kiss through the air with her flat hand held in front of her mouth and the father waves with his arm raised and smiles. The (smaller) boy waves back, while the (taller) girl is already holding the door handle and looks ready to go. In the background of the picture, behind the parents in the corner of the room, leaning against the wall and a cupboard, we see a 'school cone', a sign that the younger of the two children has probably just started school. In order to understand - in a national, and especially in an international context - what the tradition of school cones means to the children who participated in our study, a brief cultural-historical digression is needed. In Saxony, where the TU Dresden is located, the school cone is called a "Zuckertüte" (sugar cone) as it contains lots of sweets to "sweeten" the start of school. The tradition of the school cones or rather Zuckertüten originally comes from Saxony and Thuringia and has great significance there compared to other countries and compared to other federal states in Germany (Deckert-Peaceman, 2011). For example, the sugar cones there are significantly larger in size and length, are given away in greater numbers and the associated celebrations are also larger and numerous: for example, in addition to the actual school induction ceremony on the first day of school with the whole family, a "Zuckertütenfest" (sugar cone party) is also celebrated in the kindergarten just before the summer holidays start to say goodbye to the preschool children. Below, an excerpt from the transcript of the conversation between student teachers and children (with anonymised names) about this double-spread page is presented (Figure. 8, s. transcription conventions in the appendix), followed by its analysis[1].

[1] The transcription conventions are based on the minimal transcript of GAT 2 (Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem, Selting et al., 2009).

207	Student 1	this is the first page of our book
208	Aaron	school cone
209	Student 1	and you can have a look at this page
210	Student 2	you can slide a little bit more ( )
211	Aaron	school cone
212	Student 1	and my first question i have for you is what do you think (.)
213		where the two children are going °h where they [run to]
214	Children	[to school]
215	Student 1	in the school you think but why do you think that you can
216		[clarify that]
217	Aaron	[because of the] school cone
218	Student 1	because of the school cone
219	Mia-Lucia	to learn to read
220	Student 1	to learn to read (.) exactly but what do you see in the picture
221		why do you think that they go to school
222	Student 2	how could one recognise this
223	Naomi	by the school bag
224	Student 1	on the back
225	Aaron	yes
226	Student 1	(2.0) do you have another idea the school cone is already a
227		pretty good indicator
228	Aaron	yes I have the
229	Student 1	a very nice hint (.) yes (.) you have seen it right away
230	Helen	to the school cone party maybe
231	Student 1	to the school cone party did you already have it in
232		kindergarten
233	Children	yes
234	Mia-Lucia	there we have shown snow white
235	Aaron	and i was the leader of all the dwarves
236	Student 1	yes
237	Naomi	i was snow white
238	Mia-Lucia	i was the evil queen
239	Student 1	yeah (.) so you all agree that they want to go to school

Figure. 9. Transcript of the key incident "school cone"

To what extent do the student teachers succeed in making connections between fiction and real experiences when talking to the children? Before the student teachers ask their first question (but after the first child discovers the school cone on the picture), they invite the children to look at the double-spread page and ask them to “move over a bit more”. This reveals three aspects: looking at a picture requires time (temporality), looking at a picturebook is connected to closeness to each other (physicality and sociality) and it requires an unrestricted view of the pictures (materiality). Only when this situation has been established does a student teacher formulate the first impulse question about a possible path the children could take. Several preschool children express the assumption that the children are going to school, whereupon the student teachers ask them to justify their assumption: “Why do you think that?”, and further on also “What do you see in the picture?”, “How could one recognise this?” With these formulations, the student teachers emphasise the space of fiction, which leaves various possibilities open (they do not ask "How can you tell?", “How do you know?” or “Why is it like that?”, which would require more unambiguous answers). Subsequently, the children express different assumptions, for example, “because of the school cone”, “to learn to read”, “by the school bag”, “to the school cone party, maybe”, mixing up reasons and motivations. In some cases, they also remain explicitly linguistically in the space of possibility, for example, through the “fictionality signal” “maybe” (Dehn, 2019; Hoffmann, 2019).

In the second part of this passage of conversation, a student initiates the transition to the preschool children's own experiences based on the children's expression “Zuckertütenfest” (school cone party), asking, “Did you already have it in kindergarten?” In doing so, she initiates the literary learning process of connecting one's own involvement and accurate textual perception (Spinner, 2006), the connection between fiction and reality (Wieler, 2018). Although the question is asked in a closed manner and is initially answered by several children with the word “yes”, three children, without being asked again and with obvious enthusiasm, talk about the fact that they performed a play based on a fairy tale (“Snow White”) at their Zuckertütenfest and explain which roles they took on: “leader of all the dwarves”, “Snow White” and “evil queen”. The children's own imminent start at school, with the associated transformation from pre-schooler at kindergarten to schoolchild, is

The children's own imminent start at school, with the associated transformation from pre-schooler at kindergarten to schoolchild, is symbolically anticipated here by telling the student teachers about their transformation into fairy tale characters. Through storytelling, this transformation becomes a meaningful memory for the children.

symbolically anticipated here by telling the student teachers about their transformation into fairy tale characters. Through storytelling, this transformation becomes a meaningful memory for the children. Finally, one of the student teachers leads the conversation back to the picturebook by summarising that the story is about the journey to school from the children's perspective, again opening up spaces of possibility in her formulation by perspectivising the interpretation ("so you all agree that they want to go to school") (Hoffmann, 2019).

In their own conversation analyses in their seminar papers, the student teachers describe their oscillations between fiction and reality with the children in conversation as follows:

> During the conversation there were on the one hand passages in which the children explained their experiences of their own accord, and on the other hand, we asked questions which encouraged the children to talk about their experiences. (Seminar paper, Reading aloud, group 4, p. 26)

In addition to the passage just analysed, in which the question impulse comes from the student teachers, there are also others in which the children talk about their experiences without prompting, for example in a picture where a mobility walker is depicted (Figure. 6) and a child says that his grandfather also has one.

5.5 Student teachers' reflections on their own learning process

In the last section of their seminar paper, the student teachers were asked to reconstruct their own learning processes. What insights do the student teachers gain in the research process and how do they gain them? One student from the group "When I go to school..." offers the following insights, among others:

> In the course of the preparations, I realised what a great challenge it can be to prepare a read aloud. [...] It was important what atmosphere we wanted to create, and which objects to include. We had to think about how to read the book aloud, what questions to ask, what our goal is, and to what extent we can inspire and captivate the children. […]
>
> For my future teaching career, I therefore take it for granted that reading aloud is not something that should simply be done on the side, but something that requires extensive preparation. (Seminar paper, Reading aloud, group 4, p. 30f.)

The pedagogical and didactic learning processes formulated by the students result from the "challenge" of preparing a reading discussion. These learning processes can be located on different levels, as follows (the quoted phrases in brackets are taken from the student teachers' seminar papers): Spatiality ("what atmosphere we wanted to create"), Materiality ("which objects to include"), Performativity ("how to read the book aloud"), Cognition ("what questions we ask", "what our goal is") and Motivation ("to what extent we can inspire and captivate the children"). The conclusion that the student teachers themselves draw from their experiences is that "reading aloud is not something that should simply be done on the side, but something that requires extensive preparation". While this insight is not original, considering the typical "casualness" of reading aloud which has been observed in empirical classroom research (Kruse, 2016), or the reading aloud situations of "five-minute stories" accompanying the breakfast break, which can be observed again and again in the context of school internships, its importance should be emphasised.

6. Conclusion

The presented key incident analyses have provided important insights into Didactic Research Labs on reading picturebooks. With regard to the potential of research-based learning in the context of university teacher education and with a view of picturebooks as conversation and storytelling occasions for children, it can be said in summary that the student teachers engaged with the ambiguity of the wordless picturebook and also had an open conversation with the children. They repeatedly made the children create connections between the fictional story and their own experiences. They became aware that the preparation, implementation, and reflection of reading and talking about picturebooks requires time and they are willing to invest this time. The student teachers did not gain their knowledge from didactic instruction by the lecturer, but rather through their own research process - by practical experience with picturebooks, in conversation and interaction with children, and through theoretical reflection against the background of an intensive study of the literature.

In addition to the personal encounter with the children, the analyses presented here have shown that important aspects for the process of inquiry-based and dialogic learning in connection with children's reception of picture books are the space, the book selection, the independent work in the group, the inquiry-based observational approach, the time for reflection and writing as a heuristic process. In this regard, we can note the following:

- The *flexible furniture, children's literature and didactic material* in the room of a Learning and Research Laboratory offer student teachers scope for creativity that they can use in a literary-aesthetic way.
- On the one hand, the *broad pre-selection of picturebooks* by the lecturers guaranteed literary-aesthetic narratives and action-relevant themes for kindergarten and school children. On the other hand, it gave the student teachers enough freedom of choice to set their own thematic and aesthetic priorities in their didactic arrangements in the reading aloud workshops.
- Although developing the didactic arrangement through *independent group work* requires a significant amount of time, since the scientific literature has to be read independently and all didactic decisions have to be discussed and agreed upon in the group, it promotes the student teachers' ability to reflect and improves the 'feedback culture'. They design the didactic situations together in discussion and can work through and discuss different possibilities.
- The *inquiry-based observational approach* in the implementation of the reading workshop through video and audio recordings and observation protocols provides the data for analysis and reflection and shifts the student teachers' focus and orientation from themselves (as designers of the situation) to the children (and their linguistic-literary learning processes).
- Allowing *time and space for reflection* (orally in the seminar discussion and in writing in the seminar paper) ensures that student teachers think through their own literary practice and anticipate future pedagogical-didactic challenges.
- The *heuristic function of writing* plays a special role in the context of research-based learning. During the transcription of the recorded conversations, the student teachers already gain insights into their own language practices in conversations about literature and those of the children. During the writing of the seminar papers, these insights can then be developed and structured.

The central moment in the whole concept of the Didactic Research Labs is the encounter between student teachers and children in the context of the university. This is not only a fruitful professionalisation opportunity for the student teachers, but also a special experience for the kindergarten and primary school children in an educational setting that is otherwise inaccessible to them in everyday life. This is demonstrated by the children's interest, concentration and, in

particular, their observable enjoyment of the literary activities offered by the student teachers and the shared literary experiences in the group.

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Green Dialogues and Digital Collaboration on Nonfiction Children's Literature

Diálogos verdes y colaboración digital en literatura infantil de no ficción

Diàlegs verds i col·laboració digital en literatura infantil de no-ficció

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Abstract

Contemporary children's literature has developed a growing interest in the interconnectedness between humans and the environment and in the ongoing exchange and negotiation of ways to be in the world. These new directions in children's literature consequently challenge teachers of children's literature in higher education. The study of contemporary children's literature needs not only to be informed by new theoretical perspectives like ecocriticism, posthumanism and new materialism, but also to revisit, develop and explore the methodological tools and teaching practices necessary to prepare students to address these demanding issues. The aim of the article is to present and discuss the research question: *How is it possible to secure scholarly dialogue and practical collaboration in an academic course on nonfiction children's literature and environmental issues*? Building on a cross-disciplinary theoretical framework consisting of theory of nonfiction, ecocriticism, dialogic teaching, environmental architecture and place-based teaching, the study reports on a pilot course which took place in the summer of 2020. Due to the pandemic situation the course became digital. Hence the digital challenges *and* possibilities turned out to be a critical aspect of the planned practical collaboration between students, teachers and students and teachers. The main goal of the course was to help motivate students to engage in and negotiate about nonfiction children's literature and sustainability, to enhance their aesthetic experiences and to foster their environmental consciousness through children's literature. The course was characterized by its alternating blending of lectures and hands-on experiences with theoretical and methodological tools as well as nature or culture specific places.

Keywords*:* Nonfiction children's literature, ecocritical dialogue, environmental architecture, digital collaboration, interconnectedness

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Resumen

La literatura infantil contemporánea ha desarrollado un interés creciente en la interconexión entre los seres humanos y el medio ambiente y en los intercambios y negociaciones en curso sobre las maneras que hay de estar en el mundo. Estas nuevas direcciones en la literatura infantil, consecuentemente, retan al profesorado de literatura infantil en la educación superior. El estudio de la literatura infantil no solo necesita estar al día sobre las nuevas perspectivas teóricas como la ecocrítica, el posthumanismo y el nuevo materialismo, sino también revisitar, desarrollar y explorar las herramientas metodológicas y las prácticas docentes necesarias para preparar el alumnado para abordar estas exigentes problemáticas. El propósito de este artículo es presentar y discutir la pregunta de investigación: *¿Cómo es posible asegurar el diálogo académico y la colaboración práctica en un curso escolar de literatura infantil de no ficción y cuestiones medioambientales?* Construyendo un marco teórico interdisciplinar que consistía en teoría de la no ficción, la ecocrítica, la enseñanza dialógica, la arquitectura medioambiental y la educación basada en el lugar, el estudio expone un curso piloto que tuvo lugar en verano de 2020. Debido a la situación pandémica, el curso se convirtió en digital. Así pues, los retos digitales y las posibilidades acabaron resultando un aspecto crítico de la colaboración práctica planificada entre estudiantes, docentes y estudiantes y docentes. El principal objetivo del curso era ayudar a motivar el alumnado para captar su atención y negociar acerca de la literatura infantil de no ficción y la sostenibilidad, mejorar sus experiencias estéticas y nutrir su conciencia medioambiental a través de la literatura infantil. El curso se caracterizó por la alternancia de clases y experiencias prácticas con herramientas teóricas y metodológicas como también con localizaciones culturales y naturales específicas.

Palabras clave: literatura infantil de no ficción, diálogo ecocrítico, arquitectura medioambiental, colaboración digital, interconexión

Resum

La literatura infantil contemporània ha desenvolupat un interés creixent en la interconnexió entre els éssers humans i el medi ambient i en els intercanvis i negociacions en curs sobre les maneres que hi ha d'estar al món. Aquestes noves direccions en la literatura infantil, conseqüentment, resulten un repte per al professorat de literatura infantil a l'educació superior. L'estudi de la literatura infantil no només necessita estar al dia sobre les noves perspectives teòriques com l'ecocrítica, el posthumanisme i el nou materialisme, sinó també revisitar, desenvolupar i explorar les eines metodològiques i les pràctiques docents necessàries per preparar l'alumnat per abordar aquestes exigents problemàtiques. El propòsit d'aquest article és presentar i discutir la pregunta de recerca: *Com és possible assegurar el diàleg acadèmic i la col·laboració pràctica en un curs escolar de literatura infantil de no-ficció i qüestions mediambientals?* A través de la construcció d'un marc teòric interdisciplinari que consistia en teoria de la no-ficció, l'ecocrítica, l'ensenyament dialògic, l'arquitectura mediambiental i l'ensenyament basat en el lloc, l'estudi exposa un curs pilot que va tindre lloc a l'estiu de 2020. Degut a la situació pandèmica, el curs va esdevenir digital. Així doncs, els reptes digitals i les possibilitats van acabar resultant un aspecte crític de la col·laboració pràctica planificada entre estudiants, docents i estudiants i docents. El principal objectiu del curs era ajudar a motivar l'alumnat per engrescar-se i negociar al voltant de la literatura infantil de no-ficció i la sostenibilitat, millorar les seues experiències estètiques i nodrir la seua consciència mediambiental a través de la literatura infantil. El curs es va caracteritzar per l'alternança de classes i experiències pràctiques amb eines teòriques i metodològiques com amb també indrets culturals i naturals específics.

Paraules clau: Literatura infantil de no-ficció, diàleg ecocrític, arquitectura mediambiental, col·laboració digital, interconnexió

1. Introduction

Contemporary children's literature has developed a growing interest in the interconnectedness between humans and the environment and in the ongoing exchange and negotiation of ways to be in the world. These new directions in children's literature consequently challenge teachers of children's literature in higher education. The study of contemporary children's literature needs not only to be informed by new theoretical perspectives like ecocriticism, posthumanism and new materialism, but also to revisit, develop and explore the methodological tools and teaching practices necessary to prepare students to address these demanding issues.

Sharing a common interest in the new environmental direction of contemporary children's literature, we started planning, in August 2019, a pilot course devoted to students, postgraduate teachers, young and senior educators, librarians, cultural operators and experts to take place in a small town on a hillside in Italy. Due to the COVID-19, the course had to move from the environment of Sarmede to the individual environments of the participants and the teachers – such as kitchens, regular workplaces, bedrooms or balconies. Initially we regretted and worried about this change from one place to many places. Then, in March 2020, we decided to try to create a digital didactic space as personal and interconnected as possible.

This article discusses and justifies how we designed an academic course on ecocritical dialogues and nonfiction children's literature, guaranteeing at the same time a place awareness in teaching practices although the course had become digital. In order to do so the outline of the article is as follows: First, we present the principal theoretical framework consisting of theory on children's nonfiction, dialogic teaching and ecocritical literature conversations, and environmental architecture. Second, and in line with the theoretical framework, we present and justify the course design. Third, we present and discuss two examples of students' digital collaboration. Finally, we conclude by indicating the main didactic achievements.

This article discusses and justifies how we designed an academic course on ecocritical dialogues and nonfiction children's literature, guaranteeing at the same time a place awareness in teaching practices although the course had become digital.

Even if the general ideas offered by ecopedagogy (Gaard, 2009) or ecocritical pedagogy (Garrard, 2012; Bartosch & Grimm, 2014) were relevant to our project, we found few previous studies that combined environmental aware children's literature with the dialogic teaching of literature in higher education. The studies we are building on are presented and referred to in the theoretical framework.

2. The theoretical framework of green dialogues

Exploring innovative interdisciplinary theoretical and didactical approaches to children's literature in a changing word is one of the major challenges in our research field. Inclusive and reflective societies are becoming more demanding, and teachers are looking for new educational projects that can respond to these needs. Building a theoretical framework capable of melding nonfiction, dialogic teaching, ecocritical literature conversations and environmental architecture goes in that direction.

Initially spread out and dependent on a few especially interested scholars, the academic attention to and theoretical exploration of nonfiction children's literature have become more international, unified and discussed across the field of children's literature research. There may be several reasons for this change, both within the research field and within the market of children's nonfiction. One may point to a growing interest in the many and various forms of knowledge communication and integration in children's literature. One may also cite the tendency to mix and challenge presupposed ideas about the limits between art and science. Consequently, recent theoretical approaches to children's nonfiction have tried to scrutinize and conceptualize these many forms and art-science mixtures. The latest and perhaps potentially most influential scholarly works are a large study of a national (American) corpus (Sanders, 2017), an example-based introductory characterization (von Merveldt, 2018), an aesthetic focus on a nonfiction award (Grilli ed., 2020), and an international volume on nonfiction picturebooks (Goga et. al., 2021).

The concept of nonfiction children's literature refers here to books that select, organize and interpret facts and figures to help readers to become curious or gain knowledge about the world. These books may use both verbal and visual strategies and different narrative and descriptive forms to make knowledge accessible and engage readers intellectually and emotionally. Nonfiction picturebooks have exploded in both quality and quantity in the last ten years. In these books, visual and typographic strategies are as important as the verbal strategies (e.g., Salisbury, 2020; Martins & Belmiro, 2021).

Curious about the teaching or educational potential of this rich mixture, we wondered if it was possible to organize an active learning (Fedeli & Bierema, 2019) course that put emphasis on contemporary nonfiction children's literature thematically oriented towards environmental issues. Hence, we carefully selected our analytical as well as explorative examples to centre around books about plants (particularly trees), animals, homes, and houses (linking up with the Greek root of 'eco', that is, 'oikos' meaning 'house'), and biographies (lived life).

A key tool applied to encounter, explore, and discuss the various literary examples during the course was the ecocritical dialogue or literature conversation (Goga & Pujol-Valls, 2020). The idea of ecocritical literature conversations builds on the theoretical perspectives of ecocriticism and acknowledged research on dialogic teaching. An often-cited definition of ecocriticism is found in Cheryll Glotfelty's introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) and reads "ecocriticism is the study of the *relationship* between literature and the physical environment" (p. xviii, our italics). She further underscores that "ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (p. xviii). Building on Glotfelty's definition, Greg Garrard (2004) deepens the definition of ecocriticism as "the study of the *relationships* between the human and the non-human, throughout cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" (p. 5, our italics). In line with and supplementary to these definitions, theorists within posthuman and new materialist thinking (e.g., Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2008; Braidotti, 2019) have challenged what have been considered firm binaries (like nature-culture, human-nonhuman) and focused on the entangled and co-shaping networks of the many various life forms and diverse matter. Rosi Braidotti (2019) underscores that the posthuman subject is embodied and embedded in a relational becoming where the identity of the subject is a constant negotiation with human and more-than-human others. Both Donna Haraway and Karen Barad have been occupied with ethical implications of communication, response, and care when diverse life forms and matter intertwine and interact with each other. According to Haraway (2008), the point is simple: "we are in a knot of species coshaping one another in layers of reciprocating complexity all the way down" (p. 42).

This attention towards the relationship, or a relational exchange, between literature, the human, the non-human and the physical environment complies with the key ideas of dialogic teaching. According to Robin Alexander (2020), dialogic teaching builds on the idea that children construct meaning "from verbal interaction with others – parents, teachers, peers – and the worlds those others inhabit" (p. 13), and that carefully prepared and adapted opportunities to talk or participate in dialogues may lay the groundwork for students' examination and negotiation of meaning (p. 36). When an ecocritical perspective is incorporated into the talk, it has the potential to be directed towards the entangled network between literature and the physical environment and to take an earth-centred, or ecocentric, approach to the text. If aiming for an ecocentric talk, a timely key question is how to arrange for dialogic teaching in accordance with ecocritical and ecological insights. As further specified by Alexander, the six main principles guiding the planning and conducting of classroom talk are *collective*, *supportive*, *reciprocal*, *deliberative*, *cumulative* and *purposeful* (p. 131). Hence, ecocritical literature conversations

should build, to rephrase Rupert Wegerif's 'dialogic space' (2007), ecodialogic spaces for students appropriate to support collective analyses of texts, and deliberative and reciprocal discussions, thinking together, and negotiations of the meaning of a literary work from an ecocritical perspective. Or summed up in the words of Alexander (2020), "[t]alk illuminates text, and text illuminates talk" (p. 90). This, in turn, may be broadened to stating that talk and text illuminate the natural world, and the natural world illuminates talk and text.

The quality of life of human beings not only depends on the relationship with other life forms but it is also tightly entangled with specific settings or localities (Orr, 2002). This awareness could be further cultivated in order to foster a more profound comprehension of ecology and sustainability and to enrich an active ecological imagination. Following David Orr, we should struggle for new ways "to expand the ecological imagination of our students, to stretch their sense of possibilities, and to connect them to people changing the world" (p. 159). Linking environmental education, architecture and children's literature is one of these possibilities. Architecture gives shape to various forms of human habitation and embodies a beloved space like a home. In the 20th century innovative architects built houses looking at the needs of a transforming society, including a greater contact between human and nature. Their works also helped forge the image of houses and architecture in children's literature (Campagnaro, 2021). Some designers and architects state that children's picturebooks had a great impact on their imagination as children (Lange, 2018) and even conditioned the way they view architectural spaces as adults (Hong, 2018). Some studies (Ebrahimi et al., 2016) demonstrate how children's literature can, for example, provide architects with ideas and inspiration, by observing "the rules governing the structure of a literary work" (p. 1159). Hence, architecture in children's literature can turn out to be a strategic ally to help students to develop a more respectful attitude toward the environment and to become more conscious of their constructed environment.

The quality of life of human beings not only depends on the relationship with other life forms but it is also tightly entangled with specific settings or localities (Orr, 2002). This awareness could be further cultivated in order to foster a more profound comprehension of ecology and sustainability and to enrich an active ecological imagination.

Children's literature can expand ecological awareness and imagination because it is capable, for instance, of conceiving buildings as if they were alive, like trees or living organisms (McDonough & Braungart, 2002). Homes and architecture in children's books are often depicted as innovative ecological landscapes which include fresh air, flowering plants, daylight in many spaces and roofs covered in soil and trees. Fictional cities in picturebooks offer beauty, nature and comfort for

many inhabitants. These representations are capable of connecting aesthetic literacy, green building literacy (Cole, 2019) and science education, and offer insightful literary examples of how to integrate design and science.

The common features of these theoretical perspectives became the crucial guidelines for the overall and holistic course design and the green dialogues in particular. Summing up, these features may be identified as the entangled, reciprocal interaction between verbal and visual strategies in nonfiction, students, students and texts, as well as environment, living conditions and sustainability for all lifeforms.

3. Course design

In line with the established theoretical framework, our course was designed to motivate students to engage in and negotiate about children's nonfiction, to foster their environmental consciousness through participatory and collaborative reading, and to increase their knowledge about how scientific and aesthetic themes in children's literature, like evolution, ecology, and environmental architecture, may be joined in the overarching theme of sustainability. To be able to give an overview of the main elements of the course design, the following section is organized in five subsections, each presenting and accounting for one of the key elements of the course: *key topics*, *selection of books*, *didactic organization*, *workshops,* and *laboratories*.

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3.1 Key topics

To both narrow down the broad field of nonfiction children's literature and to provide students with examples relevant to the principal ideas identified by the scholarly works within nonfiction children's literature, ecocriticism, dialogic teaching, and environmental architecture, we decided to concentrate on four *key topics*: trees, animals, biographies, and homes. The students were asked to sign up for groups according to these topics, that is, we had a tree-group of students, an animal-group, a biography-group, and a home-group. By giving them the opportunity to

choose a topic, we hoped both to increase their general engagement in the course and to provide them with experiences of participation and reciprocity from the very beginning.

3.2 Selection of books

Expertise in the sphere of visual and aesthetic literacy is closely connected to the capacity to read, understand, interpret, and use facts and figures to create knowledge, and to appreciate harmonious forms and innovative modalities of verbal and visual strategies in nonfiction picturebooks (Goga et al., 2021). This is the reason why we paid a great deal of attention to the selection of *the nonfiction picturebooks* for our course. We selected picturebooks that could provide students with a more articulate and critical relationship between picturebook theory (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2018), aesthetics and science and at the same time foster their environmental awareness. Therefore, we chose nonfiction picturebooks with very diversified shapes and graphical solutions (see Figs. 1a and 1b).

Figures 1a and 1b. Covers of some of the selected picturebooks.

Our selection was based on three criteria. The first criterion was to select picturebooks which were published very recently and presented interesting qualities such as innovative picture-text relationships, high-quality graphical layout, rich materiality and challenging hybridation. Secondly, we decided on picturebooks which contained complex paratextual elements that could be analysed with students to support their exploration of nonfiction features, such as information accuracy. Thirdly, we chose picturebooks that were able to invite readers to engage in the texts and to examine the various verbal and visual strategies used and combined to impart knowledge and ideas about the world.

3.3 Didactic organization

We also paid special attention to the online *didactic organization*. We used an active learning approach that could offer students the chance to be effectively engaged during the digital lessons with us and with the course material through discussions, problem solving, case studies and peer evaluation. During the course, we varied the time management of our activities. Different strategies were applied during the course such as:

- whole class lessons from 45-60 minutes
- microteaching approaches with sessions around 15-20 minutes, followed by a short activity for students (between 2 and 5 minutes)
- rich didactic schedules: plenary session, workshop, observation activity and discussion, peer review and feedback, reflection, and recap.
- different digital didactic tools: Zoom breakout rooms, Zoom polls and Slido, which is a tool for presentations that turns Q&A or word cloud sessions into more engaging conversations.

3.4 Workshops

To keep a balanced exchange between lectures and participatory activities, we arranged one to two *workshop* sessions each day. The workshop groups were decided by the choice of topic, that is, we had a tree-group, a home-group and so on. The aim of the workshops was to create an arena where the participants could discuss the ideas presented in the lessons in relation to a

specific project of their own. During the course of the workshops, the students were supposed to plan, carry out and present this project. The first work in groups was to present a preselected nonfiction book to the group. This helped the group participants to get to know each other better and to start familiarizing themselves with the topic they had signed up for. Additionally, the exchange of book presentations facilitated the work to be done in the next workshop, where they were supposed to start planning what to do and how to do it. Since each workshop session was summed up in a plenary session including feed-forward comments from peers and teachers on ideas and work in progress, part of the next workshop was to inspect, adjust and decide on their ideas and plans. As a rule, both in plenary discussion and in discussions in breakout rooms the students were encouraged to listen carefully to each other, secure time, and space for everyone to share their ideas (take turns) and to ask clarifying questions if, or when, something was difficult to comprehend or agree upon. Hence, the students were encouraged to have a negotiative attitude and approach to the utterances and ideas of the others and to be open minded regarding their own ideas, that is, open to broadening their perspective or changing their opinion.

Hence, the students were encouraged to have a negotiative attitude and approach to the utterances and ideas of the others and to be open minded regarding their own ideas, that is, open to broadening their perspective or changing their opinion.

3.5 Laboratories

To both promote and perhaps include an environmental and to a certain degree also an ecological awareness in the various projects and to emphasize the importance of dialogue, sharing and negotiation, we arranged dialogic laboratories in the form of ecocritical literature conversations. The book selected for this conversation was the picturebook *Un grande giorno di niente* (2016) by Italian author and illustrator Beatrice Alemagna. The book seemed suitable for discussing a literary work from an ecocritical point of view because it fits the concept of an environmentally oriented work, which, according to Lawrence Buell (1995, pp. 7-8), features a nonhuman environment in a way suggesting that human history is involved in natural history, while the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest. In addition, human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation and the environment is a process rather than something constant or given. The plot of *Un grande giorno di niente* contains many shifts and encounters between the main character and his environment (see Fig. 2).

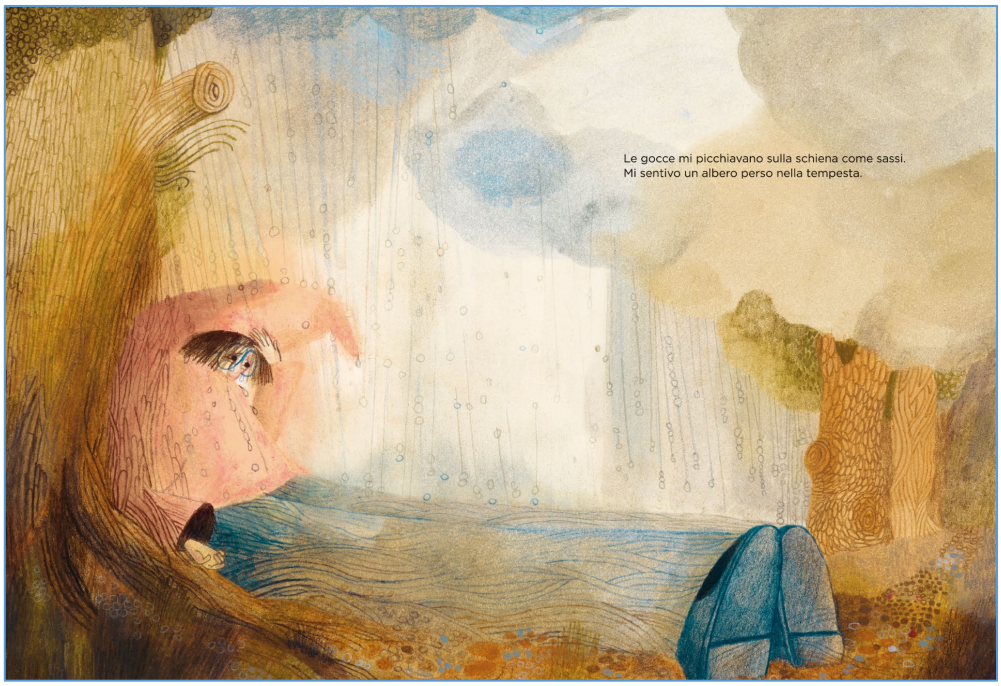

Figure 2. *Un grande giorno di niente* (2016) by Beatrice Alemagna, Topipittori. Reproduced with permission.

These encounters were open to students' exploration and discussion, but could also be reflected upon in relation to their own connections with nature, which they shared in a place-based lesson at the end of the course (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3 Student and tree. An example of place awareness in a didactic digital environment. Permission was given to share the student photo.

Using digital sharing tools (like Slido) and plenary talk, students were asked to move through the picturebook, paying special attention to some of these child-nature encounters. The various sharing modes and the teachers' responses modelled ways to revoice, rephrase, request evidence of reasoning and challenge students to test another perspective (Alexander, 2020, p. 111-112). As evidenced in the following two examples, many of these modes were later included in the students' projects.

4. Output – Two examples of students' digital collaboration

To be able to present and discuss in more detail how the exchange or transmission between lectures, workshops and dialogue worked during the course, we focus on two of the four topics, trees and homes. These topics are seemingly different, as something organic and slow moving versus something firm and inorganic, but, perhaps not surprisingly, they are more intertwined with each other than one might think at first glance. We should also recall that in children's literature we often see how children build houses or seek refuge or a place of their own in trees. Trees and homes are both some sort of shelter to humans, places to climb, to connect with and be sensitive to environmental stimuli (rain, wind, sun- or daylight). As pointed out by Emanuele Coccia in his book *The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture* (2019, first published in French in 2017), plants, obviously including trees, are "the most intense, radical, and paradigmatic form of being in the world [and to] interrogate plants means to understand what it means to be in the world" (p. 5). Coccia further stresses that plants connect air, or breath, sun and soil, and that they are the centre of where "everything comes into contact with everything else" (p. 27). Finally, and worth mentioning, Coccia sees plants being in the world as a means "to exercise influence especially outside one's own space, outside one's own habitat, outside one's own niche" (p. 43). Hence trees and environmentally intertwined homes may be perceived as places for dialogic, exchange-based, reciprocal relations and collaborations, between students, readers, books and the environment.

4.1 Trees – creating a double dialogue between storyline and encyclopaedia

The decision to focus on trees as one of the four subjects was motivated by an interest in cultural plant studies within the field of ecocriticism and in the many representations of trees in children's literature, both the symbolic and metaphoric meaning, but also the geo-cultural significance of trees in children's literature, such as the frequent appearance of birch and pine trees in Norwegian and Swedish children's books (Goga, 2020; Borg & Ullström, 2017). Hence

one short lesson addressed the topic of trees in children's literature. Also, in the picturebook selected for the ecocritical literature conversation, the intra-action with trees played a pivotal part. As mentioned above, such intra-action with trees seemed to be picked up and emphasized when the participants, on the last day of the course, were asked to give a place-based presentation of something connecting with their project.

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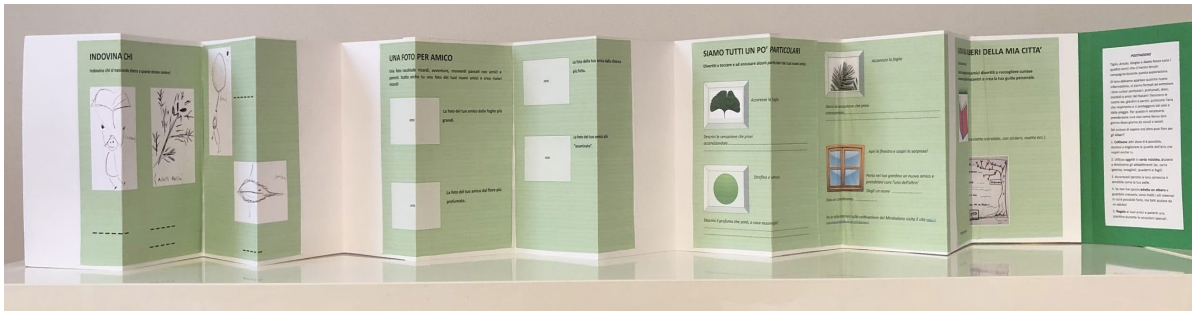
The workshop group concerned with trees first presented their preselected books to each other and then decided on one of the books to present in the plenary session. The tree-group presented the books *Ortica* (2020, *Nettle* – subtitled: A guide to how to listen to wild nature) by Marina Girardi, *Dans la forêt* (2011, In the forest) by Anouck Boisrobert and Louis Rigaud, *Raccontare gli alberi* (2013, To tell the trees) by Pia Valentinis and Mauro Evangelista, and finally, *Come un albero* (2017, Like a tree) by Rossana Bossù. Their choice of books clearly manifested their interest in directing their project in a nature-aware direction. Their collective work was inspired by these books, in particular the picturebook *Ortica*, as well as by specific nonfiction devices and ecocritical perspectives they picked up in the lectures. That is, they decided to make a leporello, a two-sided book, titled *Tree street number 4*, with a storyline, a walk on one side and an encyclopaedic and educational part (questions, activities, challenges) on the other side (Figs. 4a and 4b).

Figures 4a. Project work on trees. Permission was given to share the students' work.



Figures 4b. Project work on trees. Permission was given to share the students' work.

One may suggest that the choice of format was based on the principal ideas of dialogic teaching and thinking. To be able to turn and fold is a physical manifestation of the sharing of turns and unfolding of thoughts characteristic of a true dialogue.

- The walk was taken by two child characters, where the smaller one seemed to be the one with the answers and the bigger one the one with the questions. As one may observe in the students' work, the aim of the two children's walk was to plant a tree.
- The educational side of the leporello encouraged readers to learn the names of leaves and to take a photo of a friend – indicating that trees are our living fellows and friends. It also enticed readers to touch and smell leaves, seeds, and tree bark and to make their own neighbourhood walk of trees.

The final result confirms that the students managed to apply the theoretical knowledge to their own work and that the collaborative sharing of ideas and suggestions was crucial to the richness of their material work.

4.2 Homes – creating a poetic and scientific interplay between light and leaves

As stated, be it real or imaginary, and even when it is not manifested (Reimer, 2013), home is an essential topos in children's literature. It is so relevant because it is the place where protagonists live, struggle to grow or which they decide to leave behind when they move away for adventure. Moreover, a home is also significant in children's literature because it can be considered either as a space of psychological characterization or as a symbol of cultural and socio-historical evolution (Campagnaro, 2019). We decided to include it in our didactic programme because differently from many studies of the representation of homes in fiction picturebooks, very little research and teaching have been conducted on homes in nonfiction. Finally, recent research emphasizes that introducing green building practices in education can significantly contribute,

for instance, to the development of ecological literacy in primary classrooms (Zangori & Cole, 2019). Our aim was to connect all these features in a didactic workshop that was able to convey a positive human-ecosystem impact relationship and stimulate a growing awareness of human-ecosystem connections. These are the main reasons why we selected home as a topic for our laboratory.

For students to focus on abiotic and biotic relationships in nonfiction picturebooks was a quite demanding task because they were also invited to reflect on how architecture is able to respond to social problems and give effective answers to future challenges, like for instance promoting cultural diversity and developing environmental sustainability.

The group devoted to houses presented their preselected books to each other and then in the plenary session. Only one member, however, discussed a picturebook about homes and architecture. The picturebook was *Case nel mondo* (2018, Homes in the world) by Mariapaola Pesce and Martina Tonella. Other members preferred to show nonfiction picturebooks they were particularly fond of, especially picturebooks about animals, which is a rich typology in the market of nonfiction.

The fact that they presented books other than books on homes created some difficulties when the house-group started exploring and sharing ideas about homes for their project in the laboratory. That is, they lacked guiding examples for their work. In fact, these students worked hard but they struggled to find a harmonious consensus within the group. As an outcome, they decided to create an elegant photo-illustrated nonfiction picturebook about the characteristics and the perception of light in a familiar place such as a home.

The aim of their project was to study the phenomenon and the properties of light from the scientific point of view. Therefore, they investigated natural and artificial light in a familiar space such as the home (Figs. 5a and 5b). They introduced many different topics (the relation between the natural light and the perception of colours or between the natural light and geographical positions, time, and hours of the day, and so on). They also used scientific words like electromagnetic waves, electric fields, visual spectra, refraction, quantum leaps, and so on.

Figures 5a and 5b. Project work on homes. Permission was given to share the students' work.

Another interesting aspect of their project was the title they chose for their book. They named it *Komorebi. Lighting home.* In the Japanese language, "komorebi" is a word to indicate the fascinating interplay between light and leaves when sunlight shines through trees. The shadows cast on the ground or even through the curtains create an everyday and peaceful beauty. So the presence of trees and natural sunlight reflects their sensitivity to the connection between homes and nature. From this perspective, they managed to develop an intriguing approach to human-ecosystem connections.

Even though they had many inspiring ideas, topics, and activities in their picturebook, which was really well designed, they fell short in their main task. Probably the difficulty was linked to the fact that they didn't find a positive balance among all the members of the group. This aspect caused problems in accomplishing the goal of their project, which was to help young readers to observe and develop a silent, contemplative and ecocritical attitude towards the viewing of sunlight through trees inside a house.

5. Didactic achievements – A sort of conclusion

To conclude, we suggest that, all in all, the digital laboratory course "in Sarmede" proved that the students managed to engage aesthetically with children's nonfiction, that their encounters with a variety of picturebooks with a special emphasis on the selected topics and their reflections and workshop discussions had the potential to promote environmental consciousness, and that although the course was digital, we were able to build an interconnected community, including emotional engagements.

The students' aesthetic engagement with picturebooks is evidenced in their group presentation of preselected books, in the ecocritical literature conversations, as well as in their own project work, which applied several aesthetic elements. The fact that the students included environmental and ecological oriented layouts, questions and tasks in their project work indicates that the picturebooks examined (in the whole class and in groups) and the pre-decided topics of the course were a helpful framework for most of them. Originally planned to be a substantial place-based course including open-air lessons, tree climbing, building excursions, soil and weather sensations, and walks and talks, the didactic digital environment had to be built in a way that allowed students and teachers to connect with each other and with each other's places. Not only was the outdoor lesson in Zoom, where students and teachers invited the others to take part in their local environment and their topic related site, of great importance in building an interconnected and environmentally aware digital community. The balanced use of plenary sessions, written and oral exercises and breakout room sessions – where teachers came to listen and take part in the discussion – also proved to be absolutely essential.

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According to the students reports and feedback, they also experienced these achievements: "Very good the richness of both the picturebooks that were analysed and the hands-on activities (Slido, plenary sessions, individual work, group-work, feedback). [...] Even if we could not look into each other's eyes, there was, however, a welcoming common attitude to listen and share".

The students' feedback also contained some critical elements, mostly related to the length of the sessions and the lack of the possibility to sense the materiality of the picturebooks. Based on their feedback and our own experiences with several challenges, we hope to have the opportunity to fulfil these requests and improve the course in the near future.

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Teaching Children's Literature Online: Co-constructing Stories in a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Enseñar literatura infantil online: la co-construcción de historias en un Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Ensenyar literatura infantil: la co-construcció d'històries en un *Massive Open Online Course* (MOOC)

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Abstract

Most scholarship on teaching children's literature has focused on teaching fiction in university literature courses (Bedford & Albright, 2011; Butler, 2006). While there is a vast literature associated with online teaching dating back more than 20 years (e.g., Palloff & Pratt, 2005), and there is increasing use of online teaching in university contexts (Rapanta et al., 2020), there are very few published descriptions or analyses of the online teaching of children's literature. In this article we document and discuss the development of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to be delivered in mid-2021 focusing on picturebooks developed at a university, in partnership with a popular MOOC provider. The MOOC development is analysed with respect to supporting the presence of the educators, creating clarity in the delivery of the content, providing spaces for reflection and interaction, and generating human connections in an online environment. These features are linked to the notion of storytelling (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019). The contribution of picturebooks to supporting these aspects of effective online teaching is also discussed.

Key words: Picturebooks, Massive Open Online Courses, Effective online teaching, Human connection, storytelling

Resumen

La mayor parte de los estudios sobre la enseñanza de la literatura infantil han puesto el foco en la enseñanza de ficción como parte de cursos de literatura a nivel universitario (Bedford & Albright, 2011; Butler, 2006). Aunque hay abundante investigación sobre la enseñanza online desde hace más

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de 20 años (por ejemplo, Palloff & Pratt, 2005), y el uso de la enseñanza online en contextos universitarios se ha incrementado (Rapanta et al., 2020), hay muy pocas descripciones o análisis sobre la enseñanza online de literatura infantil. En este artículo documentamos y analizamos el desarrollo de un *Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)* que se compartirá a mediados de 2021, enfocado en álbumes ilustrados, desarrollado por una universidad en colaboración con un conocido proveedor de MOOC. Se estudia el desarrollo del MOOC en relación al apoyo a los educadores presentes, la claridad en la entrega de contenidos, la aportación de espacios para reflexión e interacción, y la generación de conexiones humanas en un entorno online. Estas características se enlazan con las nociones de *storytelling* (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019). También se discute la contribución de los álbumes ilustrados en apoyar estos aspectos en una enseñanza online efectiva.

Palabras clave: álbumes ilustrados, Massive Open Online Courses, enseñanza online efectiva, conexiones humanas, storytelling

Resum

La major part dels estudis sobre l'ensenyament de la literatura infantil han posat el focus en l'ensenyament de ficció com a part de cursos de literatura a nivell universitari (Bedford & Albright, 2011; Butler, 2006). Encara que hi ha abundant investigació sobre l'ensenyament online des de fa més de 20 anys (per exemple, Palloff & Pratt, 2005), i l'ús de l'ensenyament online en contextos universitaris s'ha incrementat (Rapanta et al., 2020), hi ha molt poques descripcions o anàlisis sobre l'ensenyament online de literatura infantil. En aquest article documentem i analitzem el desenvolupament d'un Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) que es compartirà a mitjans de 2021, enfocat en àlbums il·lustrats, desenvolupat per una universitat en col·laboració amb un conegut proveïdor de MOOC. S'estudia el desenvolupament del MOOC en relació al suport als educadors presents, la claredat en el lliurament de continguts, l'aportació d'espais per a reflexió i interacció i la generació de connexions humanes en un entorn online. Aquestes característiques s'enllacen amb les nocions d'*storytelling* (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019). També es discuteix la contribució dels àlbums il·lustrats en donar suport a aquests aspectes en un ensenyament online efectiu.

Paraules clau: àlbums il·lustrats, Massive Open Online Courses, ensenyament online efectiu, connexions humanes, storytelling

1. Introduction

The academic study of children's literature has long been undervalued (Reynolds, 2011). Perhaps this is because of its association with a less powerful group in society (children), and the fact that it is predominantly researched by another less powerful group in academia (female academics). This double helping of disadvantage both in terms of audience and researchers may mean we should not be surprised that the study of the pedagogy of teaching children's literature in universities has received little attention. Exceptions to this are two edited volumes; one published in Britain in 2006, focusing on the teaching of children's fiction in the UK from a literary perspective (Butler, 2006), and the other published in the USA by the Children's Literature

Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) on the teaching of children's literature (Bedford & Albright, 2011). Aside from these two volumes, the dearth of literature concerning the teaching of children's literature contrasts strikingly with the plethora of literature concerning online teaching. This article brings these two fields together as we describe the development of a Massive Open Online Course or MOOC concerning children's literature, specifically picturebooks to be delivered mid 2021. The development of an effective MOOC can be compared to an effective form of storytelling (Bietti, Tilston, Bangerter, 2019).

Before we describe the details of this course development, we first review the literature about effective online teaching with a specific focus on the importance of presence and clarity. We then review the literature concerning the teaching of children's literature at universities.

2. Section Effective Online Teaching: Presence and Clarity

Effective online teaching and learning can be theorised through a sociocultural lens, that is, as a social experience where understandings are co-constructed in a community context (Bell, 2011). A sociocultural frame emphasises the human rather than the technological, first and foremost (Preece, 2000; Salmon, 2011). Far from being technologically determinist, a sociocultural perspective recognises the salience of human agency. It highlights students' and teachers' active participation in online learning, emphasising interaction, communication, collaboration and community.

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Aligned with social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), the view of online learning proposed here considers knowledge to be socially constructed, and highlights the role of communication. A key tenet of Vygotskian social constructivism is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), conceptualised as the distance between the level of independent problem solving and the level of potential development when the learner is guided by the presence and clear communication of a teacher.

The theoretical frame thereby emphasises presence and clarity as two key principles of effective online teaching. These two areas resonate with the authors' combined experience of 40 years of online teaching: In short, as teachers we aim to "Be there, and be clear."

Presence (or being there) is a way of conveying to course participants that their teachers are real human beings, who are knowledgeable, responsive and supportive. Garrison, Anderson and

Archer (2000) propose three categories of presence: cognitive, social, and teaching presence. Conceived as three core elements of a Community of Inquiry (COI), cognitive presence equates with constructing meaning through discussion; social presence is the projection of personality to be seen as 'real people'; and teaching presence is about the design and facilitation of course content (Garrison et al., 2000). By engaging in online discussions, the course participants, in turn, establish their own presence in the course. Within a COI, participants construct knowledge as they share ideas and experiences, explore issues, argue about interpretations, negotiate meaning, discuss, reflect upon and re-evaluate their positions. It is the interaction within the course that has potential to create community amongst participants. In order to lay the foundations, however, our presence as educators is both a starting point and a means of continuity. Our presence tells the learners that they are not alone and invites them to connect with us and with each other.

When we reference clarity, we believe that effective online pedagogy involves clarity of communication with regard to purpose, expectations, structure, timelines, space, and reminders. Participants appreciate the security of knowing what they are learning and why. There is a resounding agreement in the literature that clear expectations at the outset of an online course are a necessity for this sense of purpose to be precise (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005; Dennen, 2005; Jackson, Jones & Rodriguez, 2010; Kumar, Martin, Budhrani & Ritzhaupt, 2019). A sense of purpose is reinforced by links between discussions and course content. Participants expect us to be transparent about how (and how often) they are to engage, how long their contributions should be, and how (and when) they will receive feedback. If course structure and timelines are clear at the outset, enabling participants to see what is coming up and when, a sense of purpose and anticipation is promoted. The curation of the online space must also be straightforward and uncluttered to create a pleasant learning environment. Finally, learning online can be overwhelming and is often fitted around an already full lifestyle. Hence, participants generally appreciate timely reminders about what is coming up to maintain clarity of direction.

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In their literature review concerning the role of storytelling in the creation and transmission of culture, Beitti, Tilston and Bangerter (2019) discuss the importance of storytelling for making sense of the new, and in creating social cohesion. They note the value of structure in the

organisation of ideas within the story. We suggest that both presence and clarity contribute to the storytelling needed in the creation and sharing of new knowledge in a MOOC. This links to the idea of learning through storytelling espoused by FutureLearn, the MOOC platform used for the children's literature course *The Power of Picturebooks* described in this article.

3. Teaching Children's Literature

The scholarship on teaching children's literature has focused on teaching fiction in university literature courses (Butler, 2006; Bedford & Albright, 2011). In Butler's volume, Pinsent and Reynolds (2006) surveyed the range of Masters programmes in children's literature offered in Great Britain at that time, noting the development of a distance mode for the delivery of the MA in Children's Literature at Roehampton University in the 1990s which used printed materials and online communication.

One chapter in the NCTE volume that explicitly discusses the development of an online university children's literature course is by Sylvia Vardell (2011) who explores the contribution of technology to the teaching of children's literature in the seven years since she first taught a Children's Literature Assembly Masters course in 2004. She notes that technology has greatly expanded access to resources and provided a myriad of opportunities for communication within the children's literature community. Looking into the future, she notes the potential for technology to continue to enhance learning opportunities in the field. At the time of writing, she herself had taught online courses using platforms such as Blackboard and WebCT for a decade. She observes the huge investment of time needed before online delivery in preparing written and video materials, and the importance of regular communication with students on a daily basis, rather than conventional face-to-face teaching in prescribed times. She also outlines the double-edged swords of accessibility, flexibility and technology which all act to enable online teaching at the same time as presenting challenges to both teachers and learners. So, for example, while technology makes online learning available to a wider range of students who may not be able to relocate geographically in order to attend a face-to-face course, it also means that access to the course material depends on technology working.

In their overview of 55 syllabi from college and university classes introducing children's literature to pre-service teachers, Martinez and Roser (2011) give examples from four professors of children's literature of their approaches to teaching, including Junko Yokota who encourages her students to use technology in their learning and assessments including keeping logs and contributing to online reviews. Martinez and Roser (2011) summarise that providing spaces for achieving thoughtful and collaborative discourse is an important aspect to consider when

designing children's literature courses. A more recent survey of 31 children's literature syllabi in the US state of Texas aimed to identify essential learning outcomes among children's literature courses taught in Texas (Sharp, Diego-Medrano & Coneway, 2018). There was no indication from this survey as to whether any courses were taught online.

We believe that this small set of literature concerning the teaching of children's literature in a university context in general, and the teaching of children's literature online, leaves a space for our description and analysis of creating an online course teaching children's literature using a MOOC platform.

4. Context

There are several contexts to consider in the MOOC development. The first is the context of the Massive Open Online course, and the second platform being used, FutureLearn.

4.1. MOOCs

Peters, Besley and Gordon (2014) chronicle the flowering of MOOCs that universities have offered from around the world since about 1998. They note that while they present some pedagogical challenges and depend on the technological capability of the student, they have the potential to disrupt existing models of tertiary education which can be linked to privilege by offering educational opportunities to underserved groups, and having the potential to co-exist with more traditional 'place-based' learning. MOOCs have the advantage of making learning accessible by making it free and available to anyone with a device and an internet connection. Tertiary institutions often see MOOCs as a way of recruiting students and as a kind of Public Relations exercise, which is far from trivial in these competitive times when universities are globally ranked according to reputation.

4.2. FutureLearn

FutureLearn.com is a digital platform established in 2012, and it is jointly owned by Open University (UK) and SEEK Limited (an employment agency). It has 175 partners (both in the United Kingdom and Internationally) who contribute MOOCs to the platform, and the University of Waikato in Aotearoa/New Zealand (where the two authors work), is one of them. FutureLearn hosts courses on a range of subjects with the most popular being business, management, healthcare and medicine, and teaching. It emphasises the importance of social learning and storytelling in the delivery of its courses (FutureLearn, n.d.). All courses are free and they are often used as recruitment tools, giving students a taste of a subject for which they might enrol in an entire course at the hosting university later. Alternatively, FutureLearn users can pay to

upgrade for extended access to a course, assessment, and certificates, leading to micro-credentials or online degrees. The model used in the online learning platform uses videos, articles, quizzes and discussions in a highly prescribed format. Among the more than 10 million learners who have signed up to study on the platform, FutureLearn attracts hobbyists who learn for leisure purposes; professionals seeking to upskill and update in specialist areas; and students who want to study flexibly.

5. Course Development

The development of the MOOC entitled 'The Power of Picturebooks' is the focus of this article. It resulted from an invitation for proposals from the institution where we work, which is a FutureLearn partner. Our proposal for a four-week MOOC was accepted and then, across 10 months, we met weekly to develop the course content. Nicola's focus was the content, and Dianne's the online pedagogy. The length of time taken was a reflection of the fact that this was completed alongside existing teaching and research commitments, a feature of the development of MOOCs commented on by Peters, Besley & Gordon (2014). Development of the course involved (1) clarifying the focus of each week's content, (2) locating suitable material for participants to read, (3) writing material to deliver some content, (4) creating video-recorded and audio-recorded material to deliver the content of the course, and (5) creating opportunities for reflection and interaction. Considerable time was spent requesting permissions for the video-recording of picturebooks, the use of particular readings, and for picturebook authors to be approached and interviewed.

5.1. Weekly Focus

We decided that the weekly focus for our four-week MOOC would tell a story reflecting our own interests in the use of multiple languages in picturebooks and social justice. The course needed a general introduction to picturebooks. We believed that, given the central role of visual images in picturebooks (Arizpe & Styles, 2015), a week dedicated to visual analysis was also required. Thus, the four weeks of the course had the following foci: An introduction to picturebooks and their history; picturebook illustrations and visual analysis; investigating languages in bilingual picturebooks; and exploring social issues depicted in picturebooks (see Figure 1).

Thus, the four weeks of the course had the following foci: An introduction to picturebooks and their history; picturebook illustrations and visual analysis; investigating languages in bilingual picturebooks; and exploring social issues depicted in picturebooks

Week	Focus	Materials
1	An introduction to picturebooks and their history	• Video: Meet the Educators • Article: 'What is a picturebook?' • Reading: 'A History of Picturebooks'
2	Picturebook Illustration and Visual Analysis	• Audio interview: 'Meet an illustrator' • Article: 'Visual analysis of picturebook illustrations' • Video: 'Learning to analyse picturebook illustrations'
3	Investigating languages in bilingual picturebooks	• Article: 'Dual language picturebooks' • Video: 'Meet a dual language picturebook author' • Reading: 'How children's picturebooks can disrupt existing language hierarchies' • Video: 'Analysing language hierarchies in bilingual picturebooks'
4	Exploring social issues depicted in picturebooks	• Article: 'Understanding others through picturebooks' • Reading: 'Bias starts early' • Two videos of picturebooks being read

Figure 1. Weekly Foci and Materials in Power of Picturebooks MOOC

Within these four weeks we wanted to present material as multimodally as possible, taking advantage of the affordances of online learning (Kumar, Martin, Budhrani & Ritzhaupt, 2019; Picciano, 2009). Therefore, we spent considerable time locating various materials to support the content delivery. Sometimes we located already published material, sometimes we created audiovisual material, and at other times we wrote our own material. A summary of material for each weekly focus is featured in column 2 of Figure 1.

5.2. Locating Existing Material for Reading

Locating existing material suitable for an extensive range of readers was a challenge. For Weeks 1, 3 and 4, we found readings with relevant information for that weekly focus and written in an accessible way. The Conversation provided two of the articles used- one in Week 3 and another in Week 4. The Conversation is a collaboration between academics and journalists which was established in 2011. It is an online publication which publishes articles presenting academics' research in an accessible 800-word article free to read and republish (The Conversation, 2021). One article on dual-language picturebooks and language hierarchies was chosen for Week 3 (Daly, 2019). Another on bias in picturebooks in some Australian early-childhood settings was used in Week 4 (Adam, 2020). Further reading was located in a chapter covering the history of picturebooks (suitable for Week 1) from a textbook written for a general lay audience. Ensuring

the material we provided for course participants was accessible for non-specialist readers, some of whom would have English as an additional language, was an important part of ensuring clarity of communication and engagement with the learners.

5.3 Creating New Written Material

The FutureLearn format provides for the writing of original 'Articles' to present content, and we used this tool to generate foundational material in each of the four weeks. FutureLearn itself provides a tool to ensure clarity of information within articles by giving articles written by course educators a score for readability based on several algorithms relating to sentence structure and vocabulary. Here, it became very useful to have two course creators; one who wrote the article, and one who could give editing advice from an informed outside perspective. Nonetheless, it has to be said that we struggled to achieve the recommended readability scores suggested for these articles, mainly due to our need to introduce the specialized vocabulary associated with visual analysis and our own writing styles honed for dense academic writing.

5.4. Creating Video-recorded and Audio-recorded Material

In order to develop a presence within the course, we knew it was important to have material where we were audiovisually present each week. This was achieved by creating short video recordings. In Weeks 1 and 2, both educators were present in these short clips: in Week 1 introducing ourselves and a picturebook we appreciate, and in Week 2 discussing the different aspects of visual analysis. Then, in Weeks 3 and 4 we took turns. In Week 3, Nicola introduced ways of analysing language hierarchies in dual-language picturebooks, and in Week 4 Dianne introduced our two guest picturebook readers. The involvement of guest readers was a way of diversifying the presence, in recognition that while the educators were a constant presence, our colleagues could create variation and freshness.

For engagement in the online platform, we knew it would also be effective to include some other voices and faces. As a result, we also created audio and audiovisual content featuring guests related to our weekly topics. In Week 2, we interviewed a famous picturebook illustrator in an audio-recording, with slides of her picturebooks shown during the recording. In Week 3, we have an audiovisual recording of a Zoom interview a Māori-English bilingual picturebook author. And in Week 4, we have audiovisual recordings of two fellow educators reading picturebooks featuring diversity in terms of expressing gender identity and socioeconomic and family diversity.

5.5. Creating Opportunities for Reflection and Interaction

Having both worked in education for many years, we have a strong belief in a sociocultural approach to knowledge, understanding that knowledge is created through interaction and reflection (Bell, 2003). In choosing to work with FutureLearn, we were encouraged that the philosophy underpinning their course design also emphasises community support and social learning (FutureLearn, n.d.), inspired by Laurillard (2002). Thus, the development of places for reflection and interaction was a strong focus in our course design. To set our intention of involving interaction throughout our MOOC, we begun in Week 1 with a discussion forum asking participants to reflect on a picturebook with special meaning to them from their past. A second discussion area in Week 1 was set up for participants to introduce themselves to one another using a picturebook that has special meaning for them. A discussion area is also included after a reading about the history of picturebooks where participants are invited to discuss what they had learned from the reading.

In Week 2, there are two discussion areas: participants are invited to reflect on their learning after listening to the interview with the illustrator, and after viewing the video explaining the visual analysis of illustrations, there is a discussion area for participants to share analysis of an illustration of their own choice.

In Week 3 a discussion area is provided to find and discuss a bilingual picturebook which participants bring from their own context. In Week 4, there is again a discussion area provided after reading the Conversation article about the lack of diversity in picturebooks in early childhood settings, and another to discuss reactions to the two guest speaker readings of picturebooks.

We have also included opportunities for participants to reflect more broadly on the MOOC, by including a half-way reflection in Week 2 and an end-of-course reflection in Week 4. These spaces invite reflection not only on the course content, but also on the learning experience, enabling participants to provide feedback and forward about what they enjoy and what they find challenging. Following the metaphor that our four-week online course was indeed an act of storytelling, we refer here to Bietti, Tilston and Bangerter (2019) who discuss the importance of "social activity in which people share cultural information in a collaborative conversational style" (p. 710).

Discussion is vital to learning as it enables participants to generate share experiences, articulate their position, generates critical consideration of a topic based upon consideration of multiple perspectives; discussion can act as a catalyst for action. Our extensive use of Asynchronous

Online Discussion (AOD) was a deliberate choice. This form of text-based discussion, where participants do not have to be online at the same time, has long been a cornerstone of distance learning for very good reasons (Locke & Daly, 2007). Enabling participation across timezones, discussions help to generate community and provide opportunities for the sharing of experiences and co-construction of knowledge. Key affordances of AODs include flexibility, inclusivity, and deep learning. The most often cited benefit of this approach to discussion is having time to think and reflect. There is potential for high levels of peer discourse, whereby every participant can have a voice. The fact that engaging in AOD involves reading and writing, in turn, affords the metalinguistic and meta-analytic advantages of print. The availability of an enduring record of discussions means that learners are more likely to be more attentive to others' views, more systematic and more exploratory. Being able to weave or synthesise ideas is enhanced because all contributions are preserved (Salmon, 2000). Writing is useful as both process and product of rigorous critical thinking, argumentation, and reflection (Aloni & Harrington, 2018; Hew, Cheung & Ng, 2010). Both the asynchronicity of time and the written communication format present advantages for thinking, affording thoughtful responses (Guiller, Durndell & Ross, 2008; Salter, Douglas & Kember, 2017).

Discussion is vital to learning as it enables participants to generate share experiences, articulate their position, generates critical consideration of a topic based upon consideration of multiple perspectives; discussion can act as a catalyst for action.

In addition to discussions, the FutureLearn platform offers a tool called a 'quiz'. In each of the four weeks, after the Article (written by educators), we created a 6-question multiple choice quiz, allowing students to reflect on their learning in another more structured and individualised way.

6. Enablers and Challenges for Supporting Clarity and Presence

Throughout the four-week MOOC *The Power of Picturebooks*, there were aspects of the course structure which supported or enabled clarity and presence in our storytelling, but there were challenges too.

We believe the most effective tool we had for creating a sense of being there, a sense of presence in the MOOC, was the use of audiovisual recordings. As mentioned earlier, we ensured we were both present in Weeks 1 and 2, as the participants became familiar with us. At least one educator was present audiovisually in Weeks 3 and 4. While research on online settings has shown that presence can be established in a text-based medium (Gunawardena, 1995), it can

more easily be established with vocal cues (Bialowas & Steimel, 2019; Ice, Curtis, Phillips, Wells, 2007; Tu & McIssac, 2002). Furthermore, visual cues conveyed by video means enable an even greater sense of presence since the educators can be both seen and heard (Bialowas & Steimel, 2019; Borup, West, Thomas, & Graham, 2014; Clark, Strudler, & Grove, 2015; Han, 2013; Miller & Redman, 2010; Seckman, 2018).

Nevertheless, the challenges for maintaining a presence during the MOOC relate to the large numbers of students who typically enrol in a MOOC compared with other modes of delivering children's literature education at universities. It is difficult to establish relationships with large numbers of participants, and active moderation of online discussion with a massive volume of posts is also challenging

We also used audio and audiovisual recordings to bring other voices into our storytelling across the MOOC, representing various genders and ethnicities. We created a diversity of presence by having an audio interview with an illustrator (Week 2), an audiovisual interview with a bilingual picturebook writer (Week 3), and by having two educators read picturebooks on video (Week 4). In these ways, we harnessed a range of communication media - text, audio, and video - to boost our online presence (Bialowas & Steimel, 2019; Thomas, West, & Borup, 2017) and enhance our storytelling (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019).

Nevertheless, the challenges for maintaining a presence during the MOOC relate to the large numbers of students who typically enrol in a MOOC compared with other modes of delivering children's literature education at universities. It is difficult to establish relationships with large numbers of participants (Chiu & Hew, 2018), and active moderation of online discussion with a massive volume of posts is also challenging. The lack of one-to-one dialogue areas within the online platform may also contribute to this challenge. The fact that participants will be working in a range of time zones means that responses may not be as immediate and synchronous as when the entire class is in the same time zone. This lack of immediacy may impact negatively on the participants' perceptions of the educators as present.

As for clarity, the FutureLearn format and structure is standardised, ensuring that whichever course a participant takes, the visual organisation of the online presentation will be familiar. This familiarity and consistency impart clarity to the course, as does structure in all forms of storytelling (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019) . FutureLearn's intent is to make the learning process visible so that course participants know what is coming next, where they are in a course, and how far they have come. In effect, FutureLearn provides signposts to indicate progress (FutureLearn, n.d.). FutureLearn also has inbuilt several features which support accessibility,

another important aspect of clarity. These include having transcriptions for any video or audio clips for the hearing impaired, or for learners of English who may find reading easier than listening to an unfamiliar accent. Some short-time learners may also choose to speed up the pace by skim reading a transcript rather than watching a video. The readability tool used to assess any lengthy written articles in the course ensures the readability of text. Having an alt (alternative) text is required for any images used so that screen readers can interpret these for the visually impaired.

7. Human Connection through Speech and Story

Having both participated in MOOCs ourselves, one of the things we noted from our own experiences was that when presenters used stilted reading styles in their presentations, we tuned out. For this reason, we deliberately aimed to use a chatty and conversational style in our video-recorded clips each week. These were later transcribed for accessibility. In effect, we 'scripted backwards' by loosely planning our presentation points (mindful of clarity), talking naturally (to convey presence), and then transcribing to produce the script (again, for clarity). This approach using backward scripting is contrasts with the more conventional approach of scripting and then reading aloud.

Our intuition about the need to avoid stilted reading styles is supported by Bame (2016) who discusses the negative impression of stilted and overscripted presentations in MOOCs. This approach to online presentation is also supported by the work of Archard and Merry (2010) who explored online communication with Early Childhood Education students in an online course. Their findings showed that their own unedited and largely unplanned conversational podcasting was received favourably by students who commented on how it added a human touch, and allowed lecturers to develop an online identity which was much richer than if they had used writing only. Archard and Merry (2010) noted that their students appreciated knowing their lecturers beyond their roles as teachers. The human and personal features of voices (and sometimes faces) can convey to course participants a richer understanding about the presenters and help to ease the isolation of online learning (Salmon & Edirisingha, 2008). In this way, our retrospective scripting further enabled our online presence in support of connections and a sense of community.

Our inclusion of two picturebooks read aloud in Week 4 shows the particular affordance of the picturebook itself as a mode of content delivery and a means of connection within a MOOC. This inclusion of picturebooks adds a tangible aspect to the storytelling within our MOOC. We included stories within the overall story of the MOOC. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine*

Dress (Baldecchino & Maenfant, 2014) is the story of a boy who likes to wear a tangerine dress from the Dress Up Box at school. He is teased but learns to be strong in his enjoyment of wearing the dress despite contravening conventional gender identity rules amongst his classmates. *The Trolley* (Grace & Gemill, 1993) is the story of s single mother not having enough money for Christmas presents for her two children and making a trolley (go-cart) for them from bits and pieces in her shed. Using Bishop's well-known metaphor of children's literature offering windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990), both of these books were chosen to ensure that some participants might see themselves in the books being read, and others would gain some insight into realities which are not their own. As each picturebook is read and participants are drawn into the story, we know that facial expression, body language and intonation are contributing to the human connection (Archard & Merry, 2010) being made within the MOOC. We also believe that these stories contribute to the threads of the overall story across the course.

This sharing of picturebooks and stories also occurred during the interview with the illustrator (Dame Lynley Dodd, creator of Hairy Maclary) who reflected on many of the picturebooks she had illustrated, the interview with the bilingual picturebook author (Dr. Darryn Joseph, author of *Whakarongo ki ō Tūpuna. Listen to your Ancestors* who reflected on the writing of a specific picturebooks, and the introductions from the two lead educators who shared specific picturebooks they enjoyed as a way of introducing themselves: *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* (Dodd, 1983) and *Taking the Lead. How Jacinda Ardern Wowed the World* (Hill & Morris, 2020).

Several researchers have shown the pedagogical affordances of picturebooks when used to support tertiary education for preservice teachers (Daly & Blakeney-Williams, 2015; Johnson & Bainbridge, 2013) and Education majors (Myerson, 2006). Myerson's work with American undergraduate students described how well received by the students the picturebooks were in support of acquiring basic theories of learning and development. Johnson and Bainbridge's (2013) work explored the affordances of picturebooks to provide a safe space for discussing sometimes difficult issues. Daly and Blakeney-Williams (2015) explored how picturebooks were used by 8 teachers across a range of curriculum areas for modelling pedagogy, making links to communities, supporting visual analysis, and exploring social and cultural issues. In each of these studies, the power of the story within each picturebook (both text and image) appeared to be very effective in delivering new ideas (Bietti, Tilston & Bangerter, 2019). The development of the MOOC presented in this article provides another example of using the stories in picturebooks to connect with communities and explore what may be considered by some, difficult issues such as gender identity and family and socioeconomic diversity.

8. Conclusion

This article has outlined the development of a 4-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) entitled 'The Power of Picturebooks' which will be offered on the FutureLearn platform. We have explained the importance of presence and clarity through a sociocultural frame for effective online learning, and described how the course was developed in ways that maximise these attributes and provide opportunities for reflection and interaction. We have made links to the metaphor of storytelling across the course and threads of multiple stories within that larger story, focusing on the contribution made by stories from our guest speakers and in the picturebooks themselves in achieving human connection and exploring social issues. This description is based solely on reflections of the two authors concerning the process of the course. Future research is needed to explore participant reception and perception of the MOOC with respect to the contributions of clarity, presence and the stories from guest speakers and within picturebooks to the storying across the course as a whole.

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‘Once Upon Many Times *Little Red Riding Hood*’: Introducing Contemporary Children’s Literature to Senior Learners

‘Érase muchas veces *Caperucita Roja*’: Introducción a la literatura infantil contemporánea en las Aulas de la Experiencia

‘Hi havia moltes vegades la *Caputxeta Vermella*’: Introducció a la literatura infantil contemporània a les Aules de l'Experiència

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Abstract

Inspired by the idea of Lifelong Education, the University of the Basque Country decided to open its academic program to senior learners, creating the ‘Experience Classroom’ College. This college, aimed at people over 55 who are not currently working, offers a specific Degree in Human Sciences. One of the compulsory courses of this four-year degree is ‘Language and Literature’. The aim of this paper is to present the short-term project to teach children’s literature conducted in that course, in which we presented senior learners with a general overview of how the production of children’s literature has changed over recent decades. To do so, we analysed the intergenerational classic tale of the Little Red Riding Hood and compared its contemporary retellings. We chose this fairy tale since it is part of a global narrative tradition that has been reinterpreted throughout the history of children's literature according to the social, moral, and literary concerns of each moment. After concluding that most of the learners only knew the Brothers Grimm’s versions of the tale, we read both the Perrault and the Brothers Grimm versions and discussed their differences. In the subsequent lessons we brought 25 diverse contemporary retellings of the fairy tale including picturebooks, silent books, illustrated books, comics and verses. The chosen retellings enabled interesting discussions about psychological characterisation, social criticism, humour and parody, and visual codes concerning narrative and semantics. Ultimately, exploration of this book selection revealed to the senior learners the ways in which postmodern trends have become features that characterise contemporary children’s literature.

Keywords: children’s literature, Little Red Riding Hood, picturebooks, senior learners, adult education

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Resumen

Inspirada por la idea de la Educación Permanente, la Universidad del País Vasco decidió abrir su programa académico a estudiantes adultos mayores, creando las 'Aulas de la Experiencia'. Este programa, dirigido a personas mayores de 55 años que no realizan actividad laboral remunerada, ofrece un Título Universitario en Ciencias Humanas. Una de las asignaturas obligatorias de este título de cuatro años es 'Lengua y Literatura'. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar el proyecto breve para enseñar literatura infantil realizado en esa asignatura, en el que presentamos a estudiantes adultos mayores una visión general de cómo ha cambiado la producción de literatura infantil en las últimas décadas. Para ello, analizamos el cuento clásico intergeneracional de la *Caperucita Roja* y comparamos sus versiones contemporáneas. Elegimos este cuento tradicional porque es un referente global que ha sido reinterpretado a lo largo de la historia de la literatura infantil según las inquietudes sociales, morales y literarias de cada momento. Después de concluir que la mayoría del alumnado únicamente conocía la versión del cuento de los hermanos Grimm, leímos las versiones de Perrault y de los hermanos Grimm y debatimos sobre sus diferencias. En las clases posteriores, leímos 25 diferentes versiones contemporáneas del cuento, incluidos álbumes ilustrados, álbumes sin palabras, libros ilustrados, cómics y poemas. Las versiones elegidas suscitaron un interesante debate sobre cuestiones como la caracterización psicológica, la crítica social, el humor y la parodia, y los códigos visuales relacionados con la narrativa y la semántica. Por último, la exploración de esta selección de libros reveló a los estudiantes adultos mayores las formas en las que las tendencias posmodernas se han convertido en rasgos que caracterizan la literatura infantil contemporánea.

Palabras clave: literatura infantil, Caperucita Roja, álbum ilustrado, estudiantes adultos mayores, educación de adultos

Resum

Inspirada per la idea de l'Educació Permanent, la Universitat del País Basc va decidir obrir el seu programa acadèmic a estudiants adults majors, creant les 'Aules de l'Experiència'. Aquest programa, dirigit a persones majors de 55 anys que no desenvolupen una activitat laboral remunerada, ofereix un Títol Universitari en Ciències Humanes. Una de les assignatures obligatòries d'aquest títol de quatre anys és 'Llengua i Literatura'. L'objectiu d'aquest article és presentar el projecte breu per a ensenyar literatura infantil realitzat en aquesta assignatura, en el qual presentem a estudiants adults majors una visió general de com ha canviat la producció de literatura infantil en les últimes dècades. Per a això, analitzem el conte clàssic intergeneracional de la Caputxeta Vermella i comparem les seves versions contemporànies. Triem aquest conte tradicional perquè és un referent global que ha estat reinterpretat al llarg de la història de la literatura infantil segons les inquietuds socials, morals i literàries de cada moment. Després de concloure que la majoria de l'alumnat únicament coneixia la versió del conte dels germans Grimm, vam llegir les versions de Perrault i dels germans Grimm i vam debatre sobre les seves diferències. En les classes posteriors, vam llegir 25 diferents versions contemporànies del conte, inclosos àlbums il·lustrats, àlbums sense paraules, llibres il·lustrats, còmics i poemes. Les versions triades van suscitar un interessant debat sobre qüestions com la caracterització psicològica, la crítica social, l'humor i la paròdia, i els codis visuals relacionats amb la narrativa i la semàntica. Finalment, l'exploració d'aquesta selecció de llibres va revelar als estudiants adults majors les formes en les quals les tendències postmodernes s'han convertit en trets que caracteritzen la literatura infantil contemporània.

Paraules clau: literatura infantil, Caputxeta Vermella, àlbums il·lustrats, estudiants adults majors, educació d'adults

1. 'Experience Classroom' College at the University of the Basque Country

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education (UNESCO, 1997) declared that the share of elderly people in relation to the world population was higher than ever before, and that the proportion would continue rising. This upward trend has also taken place in the population of the Basque Country during the last two decades. In 2000, the proportion of the Basque population who were 65 or older was of 17.2% and it has increased to 22.8% in 2020 (Eustat, 2021), being higher than in Spain (19.6%) (INE, 2021) and in the EU-27 (20.6%) (Eurostat, 2021).

Global ageing has become one of the defining features of 21st century societies, forcing a whole series of social, economic, scientific, cultural and educational adjustments in accordance with the new situation (Bru, 2012). As stated in the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education (UNESCO, 1997):

> These older adults have much to contribute to the development of society. Therefore, it is important that they have the opportunity to learn on equal terms and in appropriate ways. Their skills and abilities should be recognized, valued and made use of. (p. 6)

It was in this spirit, according to this idea of Lifelong Education, and following the World Declaration on Higher Education (UNESCO, 1998), that the University of the Basque Country decided almost 20 years ago to open its academic program to senior learners (Gillate, 2011). The institution created the 'Experience Classroom' College, an educational initiative included in the White Book of Lifelong Learning of the Basque Government (2004).

Global ageing has become one of the defining features of 21st century societies, forcing a whole series of social, economic, scientific, cultural and educational adjustments in accordance with the new situation (Bru, 2012)

This college, aimed at people over 55 who are not currently working, offers a specific degree in Human Sciences. This degree aims to spread culture and knowledge to improve their quality of life (Escuder-Mollon et al., 2014) and to promote an active aging, in addition to paying tribute to the generations to whom we owe today´s economic and social welfare. The classes are face-to-face and the courses are passed without the need for exams, although the senior learners are required to attend at least 80% of the classes of each course.

This four-year degree encompasses a wide range of courses that cover various thematic fields of culture and science, such as Anthropology, Art, IT, Health, History, Language, Law, Literature,

Music, Nutrition, Pedagogy, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology. Besides those courses, complementary activities such as didactic outings, excursions, talks or cultural and social events are organised outside the university to enrich the learning experience of senior learners, as well as foster their personal relationships.

One of the compulsory courses of the Degree in Human Sciences is 'Language and Literature' and its teaching is assumed by the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature. This course is divided into two subjects held in the first and second year. 'Language and Literature I' offers a panoramic approach towards different aspects related to the study of language and seeks to highlight how languages arise, how they are learned, how they vary, and, ultimately, how they work. 'Language and Literature II' presents the main periods, currents, genres, and general trends of Spanish Literature through the reading and analysis of representative authors and works.

In this context, and considering that the classes of this course at the Campus of Araba are held in the Faculty of Education and Sport, we decided to carry out, as a bridge between both subjects, a short-term project. The aim was to teach children's literature to first-year senior learners in the last three lessons of the 'Language and Literature I' that we entitled 'Once upon many times *Little Red Riding Hood*'.

2. Reasons for teaching children's literature to senior learners

After the efforts made during the last three decades of the 20th century (Moreno Verdulla & Sánchez Vera, 2000), during 21st century children's and young adult literature has been consolidated as an academic field in Spanish universities (Díaz-Plaja, 2009). Nevertheless, its presence in university curriculum, in terms of core courses, is minimal (Cerrillo & Utanda, 2000). Thus, while the use of children's and young adult literature seems to be limited to certain programmes of Initial Teacher Education, its use in Adult Education may seem paradoxical.

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On the contrary, as English (2000) explains: "children's literature enables significant adult learning because it facilitates learning through experience, responds to the adult need to have relevant educational experiences which enhance critical thinking (…)" (p. 13). Likewise, according to Ho (2000), children's literature is also suitable for adult learners because it offers:

> [S]ources of knowledge, particularly concerning history and culture (folklore), sociological and psychological insights into realistic fiction, and a story framework for reading and writing when exploring genres, whether comprehending or composing. Children's literature also enriches the arts and humanities, such as visual arts and drama, and encourages the faculty of imagination. (p. 260)

Following this idea, Bloem & Padak (1996) emphasises that the benefits of using children's literature with adult learners cannot be underestimated:

> First-rate children's literature offers the same benefits that any high quality literature and art offer, including the pleasure of a good story, the experience of knowing other people and places, and the opportunity to reflect or examine ideas and values. In short, like all good literature, children's literature provides a forum that allows us to see or think in a new way. (p. 49).

Being so, children's literature has become a valuable tool for adult literacy (Sharp, 1991; Handel & Goldsmith, 1989; Bloem & Padak, 1996;) and for teaching English as a foreign language to adult learners (Ho, 2000). Even so, there does not seem to be any research about how children's literature may be used with senior learners. Therefore, we hope our analysis and reflections of the short-term teaching project 'Once upon many times *Little Red Riding Hood*' will contribute to further research concerning the use of children's literature with senior learners.

Although children's literature is not part of the syllabus of the 'Language and Literature' course, we decided that these senior learners would appreciate knowing more about the characteristics of contemporary children's literature and how it has evolved over recent decades for several reasons. First of all, because they spend a lot of time with children. In the Basque Country, as del Barrio et al. (2011) point out:

> el ejercicio del principio de reciprocidad a través de la transferencia de cuidados en el ámbito familiar tiene una relevancia muy importante en nuestra cultura. (…) Entre las personas mayores la práctica de solidaridad familiar más frecuente es el cuidado de nietos/as. (p. 90)
>
> [the exercise of the principle of reciprocity through the transfer of care in the family environment is of very important relevance in our culture. (…) Among the elderly, the most frequent practice of family solidarity is caring for grandchildren]. Translated by the authors.

In that sense, in 2010 in the Basque Country, among the people over 60 who have grandchildren (72%), a 45.5% indicated that they helped their children frequently with childcare. Moreover, 29.7% of the people who take care of their grandchildren do so every day, similar to those who provide this help once or twice a week. That is, 59.2% of the grandparents take care of their grandchildren at least once a week (del Barrio et al., 2011). Some years later, another study carried out in the Basque Country in 2016 showed that 20% of grandmothers and 19% of grandparents who have grandchildren take care of them every day, and 21% of grandmothers and 25% of the grandparents do so several times a week (Gabinete de Prospección Sociológica, 2017).

Therefore, at least in the Basque Country it is common for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren while the parents are at work. During that time, they play, eat, go to the park, watch TV, do homework, read together or grandparents tell children stories. When special dates like Christmas or birthdays arrive, it is also usual for them to give their grandchildren books as present. Even if they do not have grandchildren, books are also a common gift when a friend's grandchild is born. However, due to the exponential growth that children's publishing market has undergone in Spain in the 21st century (Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez, 2018), senior learners may not be aware of the characteristics of contemporary children's literature and the changes over recent decades. Thus, they may have trouble choosing quality children's books.

Given that children's literature is a concrete cultural product and, therefore, children's books are subject to certain historical, cultural and educational conditions (Shavit, 1986), we decided to illustrate its evolution with the turn of the century by means of the retellings of the *Little Red Riding Hood*. Through a study of fairy tales and an analysis of how the genre has been transformed, it is possible to understand the evolution of children's literature, what it offers and demands of its readers (Bellorín, 2015).

> Desde sus inicios, los libros para niños han ido adecuando los elementos del folklore a su público. Las historias tradicionales se han ido reformulando para ajustarse a las exigencias del mercado y para encajar en los discursos de la postmodernidad y en las dinámicas de la globalización. (p. 16)
>
> [Since their inception, children's books have adapted the elements of folklore to their audience. Traditional stories have been reformulated to fit the demands of the market and to fit into the discourses of postmodernity and the dynamics of globalization.] Translated by the authors.

Although senior learners might be unfamiliar with the characteristics of contemporary children's literature, there was little doubt that they would know *Little Red Riding Hood.* This fairy tale is a worldwide literary reference that has been shared and reinterpreted so many times according to social, moral, political, educational and literary concerns (Zipes, 1993 & 2002; Colomer, 1996), that it appears to be a universal icon (Beckett, 2008) or meme (Zipes, 2012).

3. *Little Red Riding Hood*: the intergenerational fairy tale par excellence

Rodari (1973) said that with just these five words –girl, forest, flowers, wolf and grandmother– everybody would evoke the same fairy tale (Etxaniz, 2020). Not surprisingly, if there is a quintessential fairy tale that has been passed down from generation to generation in Western societies, that is *Little Red Riding Hood*. It is one of the first fairy tales that many older adults have been told, and it is likely that it will be one of the first they will tell their children and grandchildren (Orenstein, 2002). Furthermore, it has been one of the most retold and reinterpreted fairy tales of the 20th century, with more than a hundred different versions since World War II (Colomer, 1996), and "it is indisputably the most commented on fairy tale of all time" (Becket, 2002, p. XV). It has been widely studied from several perspectives such as Literary Studies (Ziolkowski, 1992; Becket, 2002 & 2008; González Marín, 2005; Martin, 2006; Secreto, 2013), Folklore Studies (Mieder, 1982; Dundes, 1989; Douglas, 1995), Psychoanalytical Studies (Roheim, 1953; Bettelheim, 1977), and Gender Studies (Bottigheimer, 1987; Marshall, 2004) among others.

If there is a quintessential fairy tale that has been passed down from generation to generation in Western societies, that is Little Red Riding Hood

Orenstein (2002) argues that the multidisciplinary interest aroused by this fairy tale is in response to the opposition of archetypes, some of the fundamental concerns of the human race such as family, morality, growing and aging or relationships between the sexes.

> (…) it explores the boundaries of culture, class, and specially, what it means to be a man or a woman. The girl and the wolf inhabit a place, call it the forest or call it the human psyche, where the spectrum of human sagas converges and where their social and cultural meanings play out. (p. 8)

Today this story is approached with the wrong idea of its simplicity (Orenstein, 2002), an approach probably influenced by the "simplicity assumption" that seems inevitably linked to the

concept of children's literature. Nevertheless, we must not forget that these fairy tales were not originally aimed at a child audience (Bettelheim, 1977).

> Eran narrados por adultos para placer y edificación de jóvenes y viejos; hablaban del destino de las personas, de las pruebas y tribulaciones que había que afrontar, de sus miedos y sus esperanzas, de sus relaciones con el prójimo y con lo sobrenatural, y todo ello bajo una forma que a todos les permitía escuchar el cuento con delectación y al mismo tiempo reflexionar acerca de su profundo significado. (Etxaniz, 2020, p. 35)
>
> [They were narrated by adults for the pleasure and edification of the young and the old; they spoke of the fate of the people, of the trials and tribulations that must be faced, of their fears and their hopes, of their relationships with others and with the supernatural, and all this in a way that allowed everyone to listen to the story with delight and at the same time reflect on its deep meaning]. Translated by the authors.

In the short-term project entitled 'Once upon many times *Little Red Riding Hood*' which we planned to teach children's literature to first-year senior learners, we did not intend to explain the historical evolution of children's literature through the trajectory of this fairy tale. Neither did we offer a thorough and extensive study of the variations or symbols present in its multiple retellings. On the contrary, we leveraged the timelessness of this shared literary reference to present some of the current characteristics of contemporary children's literature to people much older than its implied reader.

4. 'Once upon many times *Little Red Riding Hood*' teaching project

We conducted the short-term teaching project 'Once upon many times *Little Red Riding Hood*' on January 2020, at the end of 'Language and Literature I', one of the compulsory courses of the specific Degree in Human Sciences at 'Experience Classroom' College at the University of the Basque Country.

Although there were 50 people enrolled in this course, an average of 35 people attended this project (figure 1), which was divided into three lessons of one hour and a half each. 12% of the people enrolled in this course never attended, 4% attended just a single lesson, 34% attended two lessons and 44% attended the full project. The main reason given by the senior learners to justify their absences was that some lessons coincided with cultural events organized by the 'Experience Classroom' College like an opera concert or a visit to an exhibition.

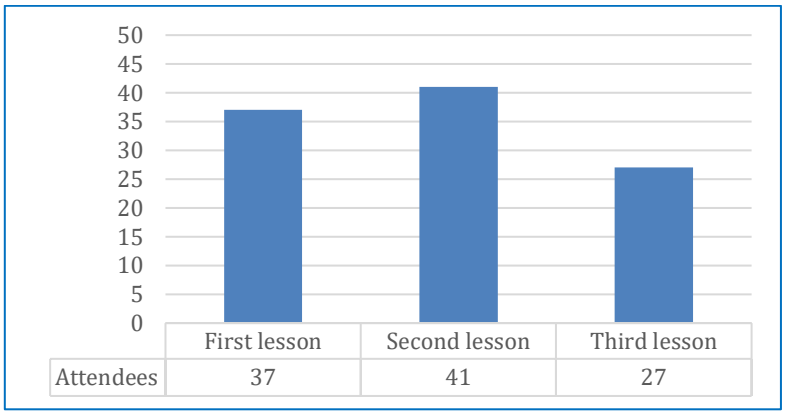

Figure 1. Number of attendees at each lesson of 'Once upon many times Little Red Riding Hood'

4.1. Memories about Little Red Riding Hood

In the first lesson, we introduced ourselves to the senior learners and explained the main aim of the project: to present some of the current characteristics of contemporary children's literature through the retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood*. In order to know their background, we asked senior learners to write this fairy tale from the point where Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf in the woods. With this task, we wanted to know which version of the fairy tale they remembered, specifically which ending. 92% of the learners attending the first lesson only knew about the Brothers Grimm's version of the tale, in which Little Red Riding Hood is rescued by a hunter. The remaining 8% of the learners commented that they also remembered the ending in which the wolf eats both Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. Nonetheless, there was not as much consensus on how the hunter saved Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. Some remembered that the grandmother hides in the closet when the wolf break into her house, and others that he devours her so fast that she ends up in his stomach on one piece. Others remembered that the hunter arrives just in time to stop the wolf from eating Little Red Riding Hood, and others that he arrives too late and finds the wolf taking a nap in grandmother's bed. When he hears the cries for help coming from the wolf's stomach, he opens it taking Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother out safe and sound. Almost 25% of the learners also remembered that, after being rescued, the hunter and Little Red Riding Hood fill the wolf's belly with stones. However, most of them mentioned that when the wolf wakes up from his nap, contrary to what happens in the

In the first lesson, we introduced ourselves to the senior learners and explained the main aim of the project: to present some of the current characteristics of contemporary children's literature through the retellings of Little Red Riding Hood.

Brothers Grimm's version, he is so thirsty that he decides to approach the river to drink water; when he bends down, he falls into the river and drowns by the weight of the stones he did not realise he was carrying inside. This deviation from the original version of Brothers Grimm shows the close relationship between the tale of *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats* and *Little Red Riding Hood,* as pointed out by González Marín (2006). Notwithstanding this resemblance, none of the learners had ever heard about Little Red Riding Hood's encounter with a second wolf.

Given that most of the learners only knew about the Brothers Grimm's version of Little Red Riding Hood, we read both Perrault's (2016/1697) and Brothers Grimm's (1984/1857) version in pairs and discussed their differences focusing on the characters and the endings. Moreover, we brought up the elements of the tale that were developed in an oral tradition and were removed or adapted in the first literary versions. In that debate, some of the learners stated that Perrault's version did not seem appropriate for a child audience. Consequently, it allowed us to explain the historical context in which each version was written, their implied reader and we reflected on the morals and values that were intended to be transmitted at each moment. Thereby, we concluded that the close relationship between children's literature and the transmission of various values or, in other words, the moral discourse of children's literature, is undeniable (Etxaniz, 2004). This being the case, readers may be aware of the author's moralizing intentionality, but the alleged lack of a clear didactic purpose can make it difficult to perceive the existing moralizing discourse (Etxaniz, 2004). At the end of the first lesson, after discussion and debate about the moral and educational function of children's literature, we read aloud James Finn Garner's (1995/1994) version of *Little Red Riding Hood,* in which, through parodic humour, the politically correctness and censorship of children's literature is taken to the absurd.

We introduced 25 diverse contemporary retellings of the fairy tale that were published from 1998 to 2020 in order to describe their characteristics and to analyse their differences.

The second and third lesson of this project followed the same structure. We introduced 25 diverse contemporary retellings of the fairy tale that were published from 1998 to 2020 (see appendix) in order to describe their characteristics and to analyse their differences. Most of them were picturebooks and silent books, but we also included some illustrated books, comics and verses, all of them published in Spanish except for the silent picturebooks.

4.2. Introducing picturebooks to senior learners

As Daly and Blakeney-Williams (2015) describe, the effectiveness of the use of picturebooks in the classroom has been demonstrated in many curriculum areas, but as we previously pointed out, there does not seem to be any research about how picturebooks may be used with senior learners.

We decided to primarily use picturebooks for two main reasons. Firstly, because it allowed us to read several retellings in the hour and a half that each class lasted, and, secondly, due to the proliferation of these type of books in the current production of children's literature.

> If during the eighties we saw children's and young adult narrative consolidating itself in the dimension of written literature, children's narrative today seems to be characterised as a multimodal literary form. (…) This change is embodied in the picturebook and its apparent dominance within the children's publishing market. (Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez, 2018, p. 391)

While the picturebook was conceived as a book for early readers already in the 1930s and the bases of what we nowadays understand by picturebook were settled in the 1960s (Duran, 2000), it was more than likely that the senior learners had not heard of this type of book or were aware of its specificity. That is why we decided to start the second lesson with a brief explanation about what a picturebook is and about the aspects that must be taken into account when reading it.

Based on the definition proposed by Bosch (2012) in which a picturebook is a "story composed of fixed, printed, sequential images consolidated in a book structure whose unit is the page and in which the illustrations are primordial and the text may be underlying" (p. 75, apud Bosch, 2018), we highlighted that a picturebook is not only the result of the relation between text and illustrations, but also of the peritextual elements since the materiality of the book can also become a discursive element (Van der Linden, 2013/2015).

> Todo tiene significado en el álbum. Hay que concebirlo como un sistema global cuyos principales componentes (pertenecientes a la materialidad, al contenido, a la expresión o a la compaginación) participan, en distinto grado, en la producción de significado, según las opciones elegidas por cada creador. (p. 35)
>
> [Everything has meaning on the picturebook. It must be conceived as a global system whose main components (pertaining to materiality, content, expression or layout) participate, to varying degrees, in the production of meaning, according to the options chosen by each creator.] Translated by the authors.

Therefore, we described some of the peritextual elements and material aspects of the book that may have the greatest impact on the semantic construction of the picturebook: the format (size and shape), the dustjacket, the front and back covers, the endpapers, the frontispiece, the full title page and the gutter (Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez, 2018).

We explained how the size of the picturebook can influence the appreciation or response of the reader (Nodelman, 1988; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Matulka, 2008; Lambert, 2015) even before starting to read. On one hand, the small size format favours a relationship of intimacy with the reader (Colomer, 2010), creating a relationship of proximity and possession (Aumont, 1990, apud Bosch, 2015). On the other hand, the large format establishes a physical distance between the reader and the book, as if it were a spectacle, which is why they are usually ideal to be read in groups (Colomer, 2010). A large-format picturebook induces an exploratory and collective reading (Van der Linden, 2013/2015; Bosch, 2015).

Regarding the most common shapes of the picturebook, we distinguished the vertical rectangular, the horizontal rectangular and the square. The vertical rectangular format is often considered the most common, neutral and balanced (Colomer, 2010), since verticality provides a certain stability. Verticality does not exclude the representation of landscapes, although it gives little support to the idea of movement (Van der Linden, 2013/2015). In addition, it is usually used both in picturebooks that focus on a single episode to emphasize, for example, a gesture or the expression of a character (Nodelman, 1988; Lee, 2013/2014), and in those that use multiple panels (Nikolajeva, 2008; Colomer, 2010) to represent various actions or different situations. If the vertical rectangular shape guides the reader's gaze from top to bottom, the horizontal rectangular shape does so from left to right (Matulka, 2008), which conveys a certain sense of dynamism. Therefore, it is usually used to describe a journey or trip (Nikolajeva, 2008; Van der Linden, 2013/2015; Bosch, 2015) or for certain panoramic representations, such as landscapes (Colomer, 2010). Over and above, the picturebook with square shape, it becomes a horizontal rectangle when it is open, which allows combining both forms depending on whether the illustration occupies a single page or the double-page spread.

In addition to its format, we expressed that the cover is usually the first thing a reader sees of a picturebook, although sometimes it can be totally or partially covered by other material elements such as a dust jacket. Now, except for the occasions in which these elements are used, we made clear that the front cover is the business card of a picturebook. In this sense, Salisbury (2004) emphasizes the importance of the graphic design of a cover, since it must “promote the book and demand attention, while at the same time being true to the spirit of the book's

contents" (p. 100). So, contrary to the popular saying, to not judge a book by its cover, the visual information on the cover is usually the basis on which the reading response to the rest of the picturebook is built (Nodelman, 1988). Furthermore, Nikolajeva (2008) maintains that it is a highly significant part, as it can provide vital information to understand the story, but without revealing too much of its content. An opinion also shared by Díaz Armas (2006), who assures that, if observed carefully, the cover can offer abundant information:

> La información que un lector atento puede extraer de la cubierta es amplia. En ella pueden encontrarse prácticamente completos los siguientes datos: protagonista, tema, conflicto, tono, género literario, intención, referencias intertextuales, tipo de relación intertextual. Estos indicios desplegados ante los ojos del lector/espectador de un álbum permiten a veces una anticipación directa, sin fisuras. (p. 34)
>
> [The information that an attentive reader can extract from the cover is extensive. In it, the following data can be found practically complete: protagonist, theme, conflict, tone, literary genre, intention, intertextual references, type of intertextual relationship. These signs displayed before the eyes of the reader / viewer of a picturebook sometimes allow a direct anticipation, without fissures.] Translated by the authors.

Given that the front cover is the gateway to the content of the picturebook, and that this is of vital importance both to attract the potential reader and for the construction of expectations and hypotheses about the story, we also highlighted the discursive value that the back cover can acquire.

> The back cover is also a possible narrative space. Normally, back covers carry some information about the author, a short plot summary, and perhaps some reviews. Yet occasionally the back cover is an indispensable part of the story. At the least, front and back cover present an inseparable whole establishing and accentuating the visual narrative space. (Nikolajeva, 2008, p. 60).

We explained to the senior learners how the picturebook requires, unlike the illustrated book, a careful and detailed reading of the entire book. Otherwise, the reader could miss significant information for the global understanding of the narrative or ignore parallel stories to the main plot. Díaz Armas (2003) refers to this expansion of the narrative function towards material and peritextual elements of the picturebook as a physical overflow beyond the book. This over-information is not only limited to the cover and the dust jacket, but it can also be extended to

other internal peritextual spaces, such as the endpapers, the frontispiece, the full title page or the credits page.

To finish the explanation about picturebooks, we outlined that some illustrators not only manage to integrate the gutter into the composition of the double-page, but also give it a narrative function. After this brief introduction, we distributed the selected books so that the senior learners could read them in pairs.

4.3. Reading contemporary children's literature

As we have stated, the main aim of this teaching project was to present some of the current characteristics of contemporary children's literature to senior learners. To do so, we based the selection of the retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood* to use in this project (see appendix) on the PhD dissertation carried out by Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez (2018). She analysed the characteristics of the most significant narrative works of children's literature published within the Spanish market between 2003 and 2013 aimed at readers between 8 and 10 years old.

Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez (2018) concludes that contemporary children's narrative, "having been consolidated as written literature, incorporates the visual code in its narrative and semantic construction: a combination of languages that make the picturebook a unique and ideal ecosystem in which to introduce narrative complications" (p. 393). This feature is clearly evident in the retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood,* used in the second and third lesson of this teaching project.

Regarding the literary representation of the world, the results of Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez's (2018) study show that "the moral element, a more psychological characterisation of the characters, social criticism of the modern lifestyle as the underlying theme, along with humour and parody as a literary game, are what characterise the current narrative" (Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez, 2018, p. 390). As a sample of those features, senior learners read in pairs the retellings shown in table 1 and we discussed their characteristics and differences, for example: characters, plot, endings, illustrations, point of view, topics, ways of telling, etc.

Feature of contemporary children's literature		Retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood*
Literary representation of the world	The moral element	– *Raconte à ta façon... Le Petit Chaperon rouge* (Chaine & Pichelin, 2016) – *Caperuza* (Martín Vidal, 2016) – *Caperucita Roja* (Mistral & Valdivia, 2014) – *Caperucita Roja* (Potter, & Oxenbury, 2019) – *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* (Rascal, 2002) – *Caperucita Roja* (Serra, 2019)
	A more psychological characterisation of the characters	– *La ladrona de sellos* (Arnal, & Blasco, 2014) – *En el bosque* (Browne, 2004) – *A* (Martínez Oronoz, 2018) – *Boca de Lobo* (Negrín, 2005)
	Social criticism of the modern lifestyle as the underlying theme	– *La niña de rojo* (Innocenti & Frisch, 2019/2012)
	Humour and parody as a literary game	– *El cartero simpático o unas cartas especiales* (Ahlberg & Ahlberg, 2020/1986) – *Cuentos en verso para niños perversos* (Dahl & Blake, 2016/1982) – *Lo que no vio Caperucita Roja* (Ferrero, 2013) – *La noche de la visita* (Jacques, 2010/2008). – *Caperucita Roja, Verde, Amarilla, Azul y Blanca* (Munari & Agostinelli, 1999/1993) – *Caperucita Roja (tal y como se lo contaron a Jorge)* (Pescetti & O'Kif, 1998) – *La verdadera historia de Caperucita* (Rodríguez Almodóvar & Taeger, 2004) – *El apestoso hombre queso y otros cuentos maravillosamente estúpidos* (Scieszka & Smith, 2004/1992)

Table 1. Retellings of *Little Red Ridding Hood*.

Note. Retellings of Little Red Ridding Hood as an example of the features of contemporary children's literature regarding the literary representation of the world defined by Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez (2018).

Likewise, Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez (2018) concludes contemporary children's literature narratives "require an active participation on the part of the reader for their interpretation have become the norm" (p. 391). We reflected on this trait and how it ascribes to the influence of the

postmodern condition in children's literature mainly through open endings, metafictional resources, and ironic humour present in a large part of the retellings used in this project.

When the senior learners read the retellings in pairs, they spontaneously conversed in small groups about the characteristics of contemporary children's literature just mentioned. However, at the end of the third lesson, we made a general conclusion of everything read and learned during this teaching project.

The senior learners who attended this project participated actively in it, exchanging ideas, opinions and reading experiences. Many of them stated that they enjoyed the lessons and that they would read some of those books with their grandchildren. At the end of the teaching project, we carried out an opinion survey among them. The opinion survey was designed by the University of the Basque Country and it is used by all the people who teach at any course of bachelor's and master's degrees offered by the university. The results of the opinion surveys are included in the internal quality processes of the faculties as well as in the renewal of the accreditation of the degrees. The results of this opinion survey revealed that their interest in children's literature increased, that despite not having any prior knowledge on the subject they did not find the project difficult, and that the bibliography and materials used contributed to their learning process. Altogether, on a scale of 1 to 5, the general satisfaction of senior learners was 4.5. In short, the objective of the project was achieved by promoting dialogue, teamwork and reflective attitude among the senior learners.

The results of this opinion survey revealed that their interest in children's literature increased, that despite not having any prior knowledge on the subject they did not find the project difficult, and that the bibliography and materials used contributed to their learning process

5. Conclusions

Through the 'Once upon many times Little Red Riding Hood' teaching project we presented a general overview of the changes that have taken place over recent decades in the production of children's narrative to first-year senior learners enrolled in 'Language and Literature I', one of the compulsory courses of the Degree in Human Sciences at 'Experience Classroom' College at the Campus of Araba of the University of the Basque Country. To do so, we analysed the intergenerational classic tale of the *Little Red Riding Hood* and compared its contemporary retellings.

By means of a shared reading and literary gathering, we reflected on the moral discourse of children's literature, and on how it is adapted to the social, axiological, political, educational and literary values of the historical and cultural context in which it is published. We also discuss findings from a previous research (Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez, 2018) such as that postmodern trends, a more psychological characterisation of the characters, the social criticism of the modern lifestyle as the underlying theme, humour and parody as a literary game, along with the incorporation of the visual code in its narrative and semantic construction are some of the features that characterise contemporary children's literature.

The results of this opinion survey revealed that their interest in children's literature increased, that despite not having any prior knowledge on the subject they did not find the project difficult, and that the bibliography and materials used contributed to their learning process

The present work provides a description of a teaching project about children's literature for senior learners, a description that could be expanded with future studies on how senior readers respond to children's literature and picturebooks. Future studies are also needed to determine if children's literature should be included in the curriculum of courses aimed at senior learners.

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7. Appendix

Books used in the 'Once upon many times Little Red Riding Hood' teaching project.

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Engaging the Social Imagination in the College Classroom Through Radiant Readings of Global Picturebooks

Activar la imaginación social en el aula universitaria a través de lecturas *radiantes* de álbumes globales

Activar la imaginació social a l'aula universitària a través de lectures *radiants* d'àlbums globals

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Abstract

Building on Kelly Wissman's (2019) work, the article describes and analyzes artifacts from the author's college children's literature class, during which students *read radiantly*: in ways that may take them outside of themselves, their realities, and points of view, "like rays emitting from the sun, to seek out alternative perspectives, new directions, and unique pathways" (p. 16). The analysis of these collected student artifacts is guided by Wissman's understanding of *the social imagination* as the capacity of a reader to imagine "the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others" as well as "to invent visions of what should be and what might be" (p. 15). It also builds on the theoretical framework developed by Kathy Short (2019) in relation to the *social responsibility* that needs to be practiced and cultivated by those involved in the creating, teaching, and reading of global children's literature. Nurturing reading as an act of creativity and fostering dialogic inquiry around global picturebooks is shown to be quite effective in engaging college students' social imagination. The author brings evidence from the prompts and artifacts that supports this effectiveness, demonstrating the different ways in which students were able to read *Two White Rabbits* (2015) and *The Arrival* (2007) radiantly. The prompts were successful mainly because, by design, they required readers to use their imagination and creativity as well as pay close attention to the picturebooks' visual aesthetics in order to fill in the gaps. Another important reason behind the students' radiant readings was the selection of these specific picturebooks, which fit Jessica Whitelaw's (2017) definition of *disquieting picturebooks* as they encourage their readers to embrace unfamiliarity and discomfort.

Keywords: global picturebooks, college classroom, reading radiantly, social imagination, social responsibility, disquieting picturebooks

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Resum

Tot basant-se en el treball de Kelly Wissman's (2019), l'article descriu i analitza instruments de les classes sobre literatura infantil que imparteix l'autor a la universitat, en la qual l'alumnat havia de read radiantly (llegir radiantment): de manera que els traga de si mateixos, de les seues realitats i dels seus punts de vista "com rajos emesos pel sol, eixir a la cerca de perspectives alternatives, noves direccions i sendes singulars" (p.16). L'anàlisi d'aquests instruments acumulats de l'alumnat es guia per la forma d'entendre la imaginació social com la capacitat de la persona lectora d'imaginar "els pensaments, sentiments i experiències d'altri" al mateix temps que "inventa imatges del que hauria de ser i el que podria ser" (p.15). També es construeix sobre el marc teòric desenvolupat per Kathy Short (2019) amb relació a la responsabilitat social que ha de practicar-se i conrear-se per les persones involucrades en la creació, ensenyament i lectura de la literatura infantil a nivell global. Promoure la lectura com a un acte de creativitat i fomentar una conversa dialògica sobre àlbums il·lustrats a nivell global es demostra com una forma efectiva d'involucrar la imaginació social de l'alumnat universitari. L'autor presenta evidència de les premisses i instruments que demostren aquesta efectivitat, tot il·lustrant diferents formes en la quals l'estudiantat va ser capaç de llegir radiantment Two white rabbits (Dos conills blancs) i The arrival (L'arribada) (2007). Una de les raons principals de l'èxit va ser que, per disseny, les premisses de les quals es partia requerien que els lectors i les lectores feren servir la seua imaginació i creativitat al mateix temps que paraven atenció a la càrrega estètica i visual dels àlbums il·lustrats per omplir els forats. Una altra raó important per l'acollida d'una lectura radiant de l'alumnat va ser la selecció d'aquests àlbums il·lustrats que segueixen la definició proposada per Jessica Whitelaw (2017) de disquieting picturebooks (àlbums il·lustrats inquietants) ja que incentiven als lectors a acceptar el desconeixement i la incomoditat.

Paraules clau: àlbums il·lustrats globals, lectura radiant, imaginació social, responsabilitat social, àlbums il·lustrats inquietants

Resumen

Basándose en el trabajo de Kelly Wissman's (2019), el artículo describe y analiza instrumentos de las clases sobre literatura infantil que imparte el autor en la universidad, en la que los alumnos tenían que *read radiantly* (leer radiantemente): de forma que les sustraiga de sí mismos, de sus realidades y de sus puntos de vista, "como rayos emitidos por el sol, salir a la búsqueda de perspectivas alternativas, nuevas direcciones y senderos singulares" (p. 16). El análisis de estos instrumentos acumulados del alumnado se guía por la forma de entender la imaginación social como la capacidad de la persona lectora de imaginar "los pensamientos, sentimientos y experiencias de otros" a la vez que "inventa imágenes de lo que debería ser y lo que puede ser" (p.15). También se construye sobre el marco teórico desarrollado por Kathy Short (2019) con relación a la responsabilidad social que debe practicarse y cultivarse por las personas involucradas en la creación, enseñanza y lectura de la literatura infantil a nivel global. Promocionar la lectura como un acto de creatividad y fomentar una conversación dialógica sobre álbumes ilustrados a nivel global se demuestra como una forma efectiva de involucrar la imaginación social del alumnado universitario. El autor presenta evidencia de las premisas e instrumentos que demuestran esta efectividad, ilustrando diferentes formas en que el estudiantado fue capaz de leer *radiantemente Dos conejos blancos* [edición inglesa *Two White rabbits*](2015) y *The Arrival* (*Emigrantes)* (2007). Una de las razones principales del éxito fue que, por diseño, las premisas de las que se partía requerían que los lectores y las lectoras usaran su imaginación y creatividad a la que vez que prestaban atención a la carga estética y visual de los álbumes ilustrados para rellenar los huecos. Otra razón importante para la acogida de una lectura radiante del alumnado fue la selección de estos álbumes ilustrados, que siguen la definición propuesta por Jessica Whitelaw (2017) de *disquieting picturebooks* (álbumes ilustrados inquietantes) ya que incentivan a sus lectores a aceptar el desconocimiento y la incomodidad.

Palabras clave: álbumes ilustrados globales, lectura radiante, imaginación social, responsabilidad social, álbumes ilustrados inquietantes

1. Story and the Social Imagination

Kathy Short (2019) points out that our worldviews develop as an everchanging web of interconnected stories and that our human lives themselves are essentially stories (pp. 1-2). This understanding of story allows us to appreciate the potential of global children's literature to encourage the "narrative imagination so that readers enter story worlds to experience how people live, feel, and think around the world" (p. 2). Deborah Ellis (2019), the acclaimed author of global children's literature, further extends this thinking when she says that through literature, we can create the world we want to have and so "stories, especially those for children, are not just about what is but, more importantly, what can be" (p. 9). Patricia Enciso (2017) captures the important social role stories can play when she writes that "stories are central to the work of reimagining past, present, and future relations" (p. 30). Stories can propose alternatives to our habitual and normalized present through the mode of "what if" and "what might be." In this manner, stories help us understand and use our imagination as social practice (Enciso, 2017).

Several scholars attribute the relationship between story and imagination as social practice to stories' ability to energize the reader's *social imagination*. Kelly Wissman (2019) partly defines the social imagination as "the capacity of a reader to grasp the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of characters and to extrapolate beyond what is presented in the text to imagine the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others" (p. 15). Additionally, social imagination enables us to imagine different versions of our society and envision social change. In this sense, Wissman espouses philosopher Maxine Greene's (1995) understanding of the social imagination as "the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live, in our schools" (p. 5). Greene contends that the arts activate the social imagination and invite us to become "wide awake" to the troubles and possibilities within our shared world.

When we view imagination in this manner, we begin to think of it more as a transformative experience rather than a character trait (Enciso, 2017, p. 31). This is why Enciso defines imagination as *social practice*: "Imagination entails the effort to manage gaps in time between what is, what has been, and what might become within contexts of unequal histories and expectations for speaking and being heard" (p. 35). Her use of the word "effort" implies that readers and storytellers can consciously activate and cultivate their social imagination.

2. Reading Global Picturebooks Radiantly

Writing about the narrative imagination and social responsibility, Short (2019) suggests that socially responsible readers of global literature identify and reflect on the cultural locations and biases they bring to a book, and become aware of how their cultural locations do and do not connect with the cultural location of that book. Most importantly, they are willing to be open and to learn from another's life and experiences (p. 7).

Wissman (2019) also emphasizes a stance of openness when she coins the term *radiant reading*. This is a way of reading that engages our social imagination by allowing us to go outside of ourselves. In her analysis of "The state of the art in picturebook research from 2010 to 2020" Evelyn Arizpe (2021) identifies Wissman's work as a promising critical literacy approach that enhances readers' active meaning-making through close attention to the aesthetic and material aspects of picturebooks. Arizpe asserts that reading radiantly has been shown to develop students' ability and inclination to address issues of inequality and injustice (p. 269).

According to Wissman (2019), when we read radiantly we are "open to books that may take us outside of ourselves, our own experiences, realities, and points of view" (p. 16). Openness allows the radiant reader to "be inspired, like rays emitting from the sun, to seek out alternative perspectives, new directions, and unique pathways" (p. 16). This outward movement, visualized through the metaphor of sunbeams, permeates the social practice of reading radiantly. Using Wissman's elements of reading radiantly, I have created the graphic in Figure 1, which further visualizes the stance and practice of openness/outward movement performed by the reader.

Each and every ray in figure 1 points to openness; from being open to be moved and transformed, to embracing the imagination as a social guide, to reading in ways that may move us to action. Referring specifically to the reading of picturebook narratives, Wissman (2019) calls for reading experiences that are "charged encounters" with picturebooks, in which the reader "has a deep connection with the book and a heightened awareness of its aesthetic features" (p. 15). During this kind of reading experiences "the text may illuminate a new way of thinking and also inspire a new reading of the world" (pp. 15-16).

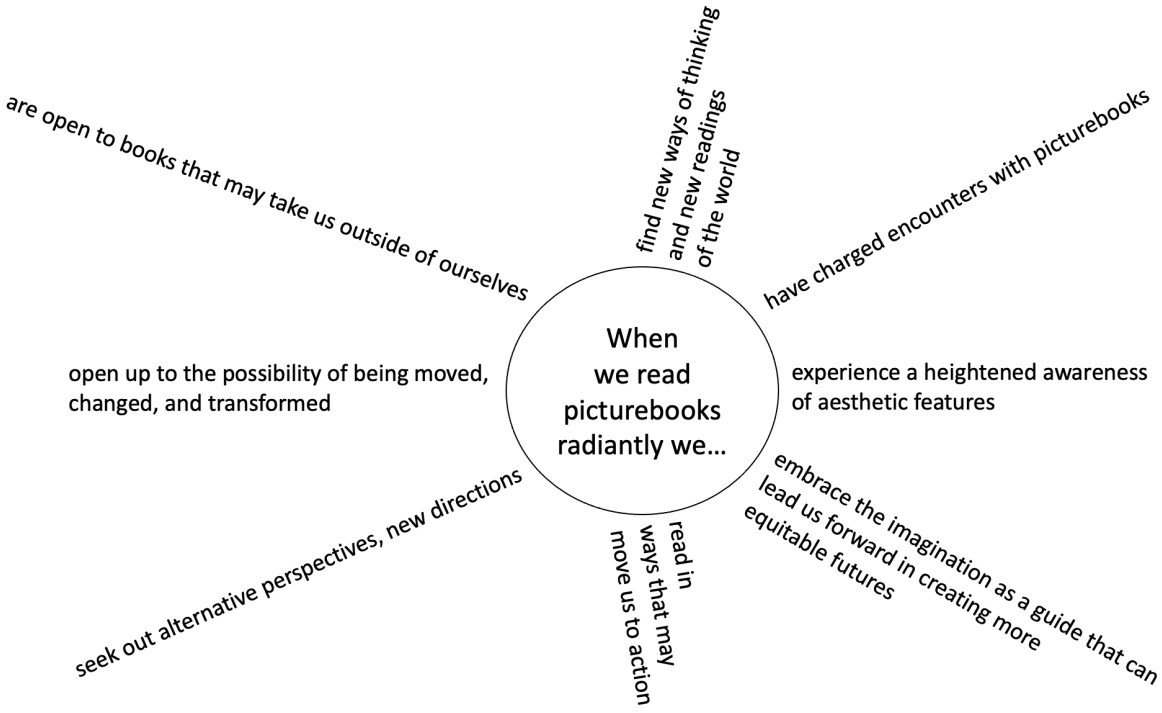

Figure 1. Radiant reading as openness and outward movement

Wissman suggests that picturebooks are ideal conduits for radiantly engaging children with the arts because they are aesthetic objects, in which both the visual and verbal sign systems interweave and contribute to meaning making. Engaging with the aesthetic aspects of picturebooks can thus lead us to what Kevin Tavin (2007) calls "a heightened awareness, radiance of mind, or a moving disposition we may have when engaging with art" (p. 41). Through collaborative inquiries with four elementary educators who incorporated diverse picturebooks with global themes into their teaching, Wissman observed that students engaged deeply with picturebooks, demonstrating this heightened awareness and radiance of mind, as they became "attuned to the text's aesthetic features: the poetics of the language, the beauty of a color, the movement of a line" (p. 15).

3. Educators' Social Responsibility

Short (2019) argues that socially responsible educators can enable socially responsible readers, mainly by creating educational contexts that encourage dialogic inquiry around global children's literature. Within these contexts "readers never read a book alone" (p. 7); meaning that they read books alongside other books and also read and discuss books along with other students. Emphasizing the danger of having

students read a global book alone, Short explains that when her college students don't read a global book along with other books or materials, they tend to see that book as representative of an entire global culture. To avoid cultural misconceptions and stereotypical perceptions, she always asks students to read multiple texts, using intertextuality to create a context within which to read global children's literature: "When students read books alongside each other and within broader contexts, they are more likely to respond from a perspective of empathy, rather than sympathy" (p. 9).

Moreover, socially responsible educators have their students question why they have a particular response to a global story and think about how they are culturally positioned in relation to the book's culture. Yet another strategy is to ask students to do some research, exploring the bookmakers' cultural locations in relation to the context of the book, the term *bookmakers* including everyone who contributes to the publishing of a book, such as authors, illustrators, translators, and publishers (Short, 2019, p. 9). This might encourage students to think deeply about issues of cultural authenticity and representation.

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An overarching social responsibility for educators is to create contexts that foster dialogue. Dialogue involves the openness mentioned earlier in this article, an openness that allows readers to listen and consider other students' interpretations that might differ from their own. It also involves an openness to engage difficult or even disturbing issues and thoroughly explore and discuss them, rather than merely identifying them at the surface level. Moreover, as dialogue combines critique and inquiry, we need to encourage readers to pose questions and challenge established ways of thinking and being (Short, 2019, p. 9).

Learning contexts that encourage students to engage in dialogue with each other and with diverse texts, characters, and cultures proved to be quite significant in Wissman's (2019) study on reading radiantly as well. She notably observed depth, complexity, and vibrancy in student discussions, when teachers engaged them in dialogic explorations of the picturebooks. Similarly, Short (2019) proposes dialogue strategies that encourage readers to reflect deeply on a book, consider multiple interpretations, and identify issues they consider important, rather than just discuss issues that the teacher has already identified. Such proposed strategies include *Say Something*, *Save the Last Word for Me*, *Sketch to Stretch*, *Consensus Boards*, and *Webbing* (Short & Harste, 1996).

I consistently use the dialogue strategies suggested by Short—mostly the first three—with my college students. Using the *Say Something* strategy, students work in pairs with one copy of the book between them. They take turns reading aloud from the book and stopping at a point they would like to say something. They repeat this process until they have read a pre-agreed section of the book. In *Save the Last Word for Me*, students discuss in groups of four. One of the group members selects an excerpt from the book and reads it to their group. The other three students then take turns speculating why the reader chose to share this specific excerpt with them. The reader remains silent but has the "last word" at the end to talk about their actual reason for selecting this excerpt. In *Sketch to Stretch*, students sketch the meaning(s) they make when reading a book and then share and discuss their sketches. I have found these strategies to effectively spark openness and outward movement, as they foster dialogue and encourage students to consider multiple perspectives that might differ from their own.

Most importantly, these strategies empower radiant readings and engage the social imagination, mainly because they nurture "reading as an act of creativity" (Wissman, 2019, p. 16); as a process that actively involves the reader's imagination. Wissman includes this quality in the main four features of instructional practice that supports the development of the social imagination and enables students to read radiantly (p. 16):

1. Selecting texts that broaden the imaginative landscape
2. Encouraging students to attend to the aesthetic attributes of picturebooks
3. Nurturing reading as an act of creativity
4. Creating space for agency and activism

Nurturing reading as an act of creativity entails supporting the students' aesthetic transactions and valuing knowledge created within the affective realm. Teachers who participated in Wissman's study, for example, used the following prompts to guide the discussion of a wide range of picturebooks that students read together in pairs:

1. What Really Matters to the Main Character
2. What Surprised Me or Worried Me about This Story
3. What I Still Wonder / Questions I Still Have (p. 20)

Wissman (2019) values these prompts as they do not ask children to merely reiterate facts or focus exclusively on comprehension; instead, they encourage young readers to consider interesting questions about people, life, and the human condition. And to answer these questions, students need to pay close attention to their sensory experiences and emotional responses to the texts and engage their social

imagination. Wissman concludes that these prompts played an important role in students' success to read radiantly and to reflect deeply about the experiences of individuals across the world and across time.

I consistently use similar prompts with college students. Over the past few years, however, I have been finding that such prompts are most successful at engaging students with questions as the ones listed by Wissman, when they are posed in ways that spark students' creativity and imagination. Instead of directly asking what really matters to the main character, for instance, I may ask students to imagine what the protagonist would take with them if they had to leave their home permanently; or I may pause during a read-aloud and ask them to speak as if they are the main character's consciousness; or I may have them conduct an imagined interview with the protagonist (as I did in one of the activities described in the following section). Similarly, instead of directly asking the question of what surprised or worried them, I may ask them to post emojis that reflect how they felt at different points in the story, and rather than asking what they are still wondering about, I may ask them to do "annotated spreads" (as described by Farrell, Arizpe, and McAdam, 2010) which can involve selecting an image from the picturebook and annotating it with looming questions.

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4. Engaging the Social Imagination in the College Classroom

Nurturing reading as an act of creativity and fostering dialogic inquiry around global picturebooks has been quite effective in engaging college students' social imagination. In this section, I bring evidence that supports this effectiveness from one of my classes, demonstrating the different ways in which students were able to read two global picturebooks radiantly. This was an online class I taught at the University of Georgia in the fall of 2020. The course surveys diverse children's literature and is open to students from all across the campus. Twenty-six students were enrolled in this class, most of them in their second year of studies and about half of them being education majors. The other half came from departments across the University. The students had diverse cultural backgrounds but more than half of them were white female students. While it would be useful to look more closely at the students' backgrounds and investigate how these corelated with their responses to the picturebooks, for the purposes of this study I take a wider-angle approach, looking at two artifacts they created—one for each picturebook—and analyzing them to see if and how the students read radiantly.

Taking Kathy Short's advice to never read a book alone, I chose to have students read together two very different picturebooks that share the common theme of immigration. In addition to the urgency of the social issues present in these picturebooks and my personal identity and experiences as an immigrant, I also gravitated towards these specific stories because research has shown that reading about migration and refugee experiences can raise the level of awareness, vicarious engagement, and empathy in students (Arizpe, et alii, 2014; Hope, 2017; Lysaker & Sedberry, 2015). Other research has found that when reading such picturebooks, refugee and migrant students feel that their experiences are validated and that they are not alone in confronting issues related to displacement (Arizpe, Colomer, & Martínez-Roldán, 2014).

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The first picturebook was *Two White Rabbits* (2015), authored by Jairo Buitrago, translated by Elisa Amado, and illustrated by Rafael Yockteng. It was first published in Canada and is set in Mexico. A young girl is the narrator of this moving story, sharing her feelings, thoughts, and experiences as she and her father make the arduous journey toward the US border. The second one was the wordless picturebook *The Arrival* (2007) by Shaun Tan, which was first published in Australia and takes place in a fantasy world. It tells the story of a father who migrates to a distant and unfamiliar country to build a better future for his family, starting with the painful separation from his family and progressing to his long journey, his arrival at the foreign land, the hardships and isolation he faces there, the connections he begins to make, and the reunification with his family. Both picturebooks are stunningly illustrated, inviting readers to attend to their aesthetic attributes in the ways that Wissman suggests.

5. Radiant Readings of *Two White Rabbits*

In *Two White Rabbits*, the illustrations imply that the father's perspective is different from that of the girl, who is narrating the story. This perspective difference is evident even in the cover image, where the two main characters travel on the roof of a train and feature contrasting gazes and facial expressions.

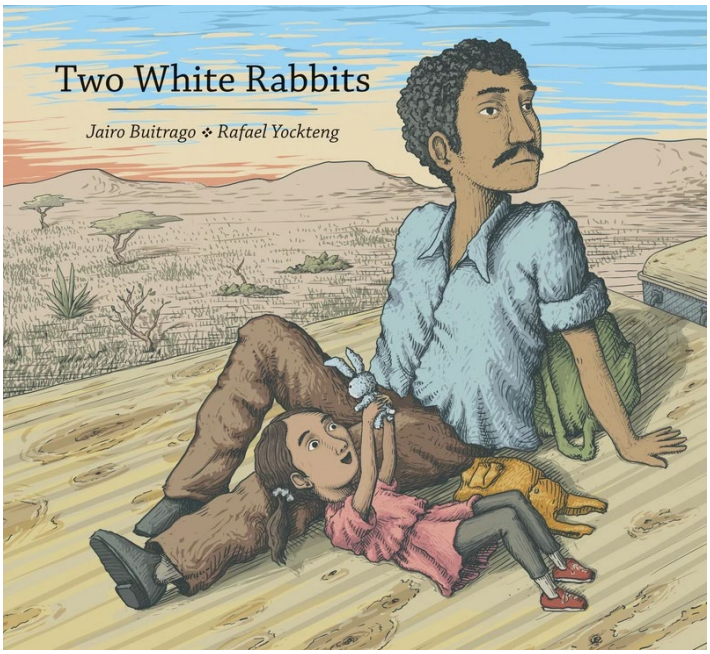

Figure 2. Perspective difference in the cover image of Two White Rabbits

Students responded to a prompt that asked them to zero in on this contrast of perspectives. Taking Wissman's advice to create prompts that cultivate the social imagination, pose questions about readers, people, and the human condition, and invite students to pay attention to their sensory experiences and emotional responses, I designed the following prompt:

- *Retell the story from Dad's Perspective*
- Read the picturebook *Two White Rabbits*. Write at least one sentence for most of the images (usually double-spreads) in the book, re-telling the story through the eyes of dad.
- After you have posted your own entry, respond to at least two other posts, comparing and contrasting the different ways in which different people have responded to this assignment. What do you observe?

Students' responses overwhelmingly demonstrated their radiant readings of the story, and the discussion that followed—as encouraged by the second part of the prompt—showed an openness to consider multiple perspectives that might differ from their own.

In variable degrees, students showed heightened awareness of the picturebook's aesthetic features. They paid close attention to such visual elements such as color, line, placement on the page, facial expressions, and body language and this enabled them to imagine the father's thoughts and emotions in spite of the fact that these are not verbalized in the girl's narration. In the first two double spreads, for instance, the girl only says the simple phrase "When we travel, I count what I see." For the same four pages, a student provided the following alternate narration with the father as narrator:

> When we travel, she sits on my shoulders and holds on tight.
>
> Though my legs get tired, my heart warms at the sound of my smart young *hija* counting aloud all the animals she sees. She doesn't know what is to come, and her enthusiasm encourages me on our journey.

The student's use of the Spanish word "hija" emphasizes the father's affection for his daughter. Paying attention to the visual aesthetics, the student is also able to imagine and put the father's sensory experiences into words ("my legs get tired") as well as his emotional responses ("my heart warms at the sound…"). She even captures such complex sentiments such as apprehension ("She doesn't know what is to come") and hope ("her enthusiasm encourages me on our journey"). The same student later writes "I try to stay calm for her sake, but I am scared," demonstrating how she let the book take her outside of herself to empathize and experience the story through the father's eyes.

The visual storytelling in *Two White Rabbits* is evocative but aspects that diverge from the textual storytelling are also open to multiple interpretations. This is true for a page that reads "'Where are we going?' I sometimes ask but no one answers." The student quoted above wrote the following from the father's perspective:

> "Where are we going?" she asks me. I do not answer her. Instead, we just walk on. I cannot tell her where we go. I cannot tell anyone, but we must keep going.

Two other students, on the other hand, wrote the following:

> "Where are we going". I softly hear her ask, but I couldn't focus on her as my mind was somewhere else. I was making sure the men with guns didn't see us.
>
> Sometimes she asks me where we are going. It's too much for her to understand; I say nothing.

The first student imagines that the father cannot tell anyone where they are going because that would put them in danger. The second student imagines that he doesn't say anything because he is preoccupied with avoiding the men with guns. And the third student imagines that he thinks his girl is too young to understand. While the three students fill in the gaps in very different ways, they do so imaginatively, demonstrating that their social imagination—their capacity "to extrapolate beyond what is presented in the text to imagine the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others" (Wissman, 2019, p. 15)—has been energized.

The students' diverse interpretations are most obvious in relation to the last, wordless, double spread in the picturebook. Here, the father is shown to release the two white rabbits that accompanied them as pets for part of their journey into a wild landscape that is disrupted by the presence of a huge border wall. As shown in table 1, while some students followed the original narration and did not add any text under the image, several offered their interpretations of the father's gesture.

Student 1	Our trip must continue, but the rabbits cannot come. I can't manage food for them on this journey, too...
Student 2	As the bunnies hop away, they lead the way to the border we have been seeking, and we have finally made it.
Student 3	Once we are there we set the two rabbits free. They are now free just like you and me.
Student 4	When we get off the truck, I let the rabbits go. They should get to experience the freedom that I so desperately want for her.
Student 5	In the middle of a desert, we let them go. Free. And they run straight to the border.
Student 6	I set the two rabbits free as they should be. Now, the only thing stopping me and her from freedom is the wall.

Table 1. Diverse interpretations of the father's gesture to release the rabbits

Different students "read" this final image in pragmatic or symbolic ways, and where some see hope others see hopelessness or frustration. In any case, both types of responses, as well as the sharing and discussion that followed, showed that:

- Students had a charged encounter with the picturebook (the poetic language they used in their responses highlights this)

- They sought out alternative perspectives and new directions (they successfully completed an assignment that asked them to do just that)
- And were open to new ways of thinking, new readings of the world (their discussion was peppered with comments that acknowledged how their peers' posts made them see things differently).

6. Radiant Readings of *The Arrival*

Similarly, the students' responses to *The Arrival* demonstrated heightened awareness of the aesthetics, charged encounters with the picturebook, and openness to new ways of reading the world. Interestingly enough, these manifestations of the social imagination were most evident in the questions the students asked. Unlike the *Two White Rabbits* cover image, *The Arrival* cover features eye-contact between two characters; this does not reassure the reader, however, as we notice that the human character is alarmed and perplexed by this encounter with a strange creature (Figure 3).

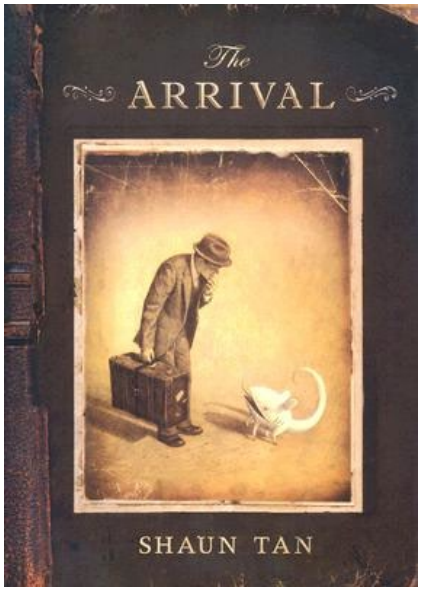

Figure 3. Eye-contact between two characters in *The Arrival* cover image

By creating an entire imaginary place, culture, and language that are foreign to all readers and creating a wordless picturebook around a character who is "wordless" himself in the new place he immigrates to, Shaun Tan invites readers to empathize with the protagonist's fears, struggles, and frustrations. This is why I thought inviting students to let the main character's voice be heard was a fitting assignment, and one that also fitted Wissman's call for prompts that cultivate the social imagination:

Interview the main character

Read/View the wordless picturebook *The Arrival*. Then write an imagined interview with the main character in the book. Ask him at least five questions and write how you imagine him answering them.

After you have posted your own entry, respond to at least two other posts, comparing and contrasting the different ways in which different people have responded to this assignment. What do you observe?

As shown in the table below (Table 2) students asked pragmatic questions as well as questions from an affective realm. Some focused more on one of the two categories of questions, while others kept a balance between the two.

Pragmatic Questions
- Why did you leave your family? - Why did you move to another country? - What was the hardest thing you had to overcome on your journey? - Was it hard to find work in your new country?
Affective Questions
- How did you explain to your daughter that you had to leave for a while? - How did you feel when you first saw the shore of the new land you were immigrating to? - How did sharing your story with other immigrants make you feel? - How did you deal with loneliness in the new land? - How did you feel when your wife and daughter arrived?

Table 2. Pragmatic and affective questions in student interviews

Regardless of the category they fall under, though, these questions show the students' effort to see the world through the eyes of a different person and a conscious openness to a book that may take them outside of themselves.

Because *The Arrival* is wordless, and as Tan loves to use symbolism in his illustrations, there was plenty of room for multiple interpretations. One instance with noticeably diverse interpretations was students'

speculation about why the main character had to leave his family and migrate to a faraway place. The only explanation Tan provides is an image of the protagonist's homeland under the shadow of a giant, spiky, reptile-like monster. While the majority of the students imagined the main character as an economic migrant (similar to the US mainstream image of the immigrant), some students imagined him to be a refugee or an asylum seeker:

The sharing and discussion demonstrated that most students were open to other interpretations, new ways of thinking, new readings of the world. They paid attention to the second part of the prompt that encouraged them to compare and contrast the different ways in which different people responded to the assignment. They were even open to revisiting and revising their initial interpretations, allowing themselves to be influenced by other people's responses to this visual narrative.

Imagining the main character as an economic migrant
- My hometown was an impoverished town. We could no longer have a life there. - I wanted a better life for myself and my family.
Imagining the main character as a refugee or an asylum seeker
- My old country was plagued with a monster within. The government was turning on its people. - My home country was becoming a dangerous place for my family. I wanted to escape from there and get my family to safety.

Figure 4. Imagining the main character as an economic migrant or a refugee/asylum seeker

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As with the *Two White Rabbits* picturebook, students' responses and the sharing and discussion that followed showed that they had a charged encounter with *The Arrival*. The powerfully poetic language some students used is indicative:

> **Interviewer:** How did you feel about this new land?
>
> **Interviewee:** It was terrifying and beautiful. It was strange yet wonderful.

> **Interviewer**: Is there anything you learned as an immigrant that you would pass down to your children?
>
> **Interviewee:** We only survive because of each other. Take care of that community, no matter how different, big, or small, because only when you take care of the people around you, do you take care of yourself.

7. Discussion

The prompts, which were designed for two different picturebooks themed around immigration, were successful in nurturing reading as an act of creativity and fostering dialogic inquiry; and thus, also succeeded in engaging the students' social imagination. A main reason behind their success was that, by design, they required readers to use their imagination and creativity, and pay close attention to the picturebooks' visual aesthetics to fill in the gaps. This was also facilitated by my ascribing to Arizpe's (2021) advice to "allow students plenty of time for both 'slow looking' and 'deep thinking' and introduce visual literacy terms so they can talk about what they observe" (p. 268).

Another important reason behind the students' successful radiant readings was the selection of these specific picturebooks. Short (2019) suggests that socially responsible readers "remain open to books that depict cultural ways of living that are unfamiliar and so may cause discomfort" (p. 5). And Jessica Whitelaw (2017) considers that this embracing of unfamiliarity and discomfort is encouraged by certain kinds of stories, which she calls *disquieting picturebooks*. She identifies five different kinds of disquieting: embracing ambiguity; opening to hurt; pausing for interruption; hearing silences; and witnessing resistance.

Furthermore, both picturebooks invite readers to empathize with the characters as they hurt and go through traumatic experiences, and students' empathetic responses are evident in their artifacts. Both picturebooks also invite close looking and offer the reader/viewer moments of pause and reflection, an affordance that the students relied heavily upon in order to imagine the characters' thoughts and feelings.

Two White Rabbits and *The Arrival* feature four of these five kinds of disquieting. The ambiguity in both stories (especially evoked through the illustrations) caused diverse interpretations amongst students. Furthermore, both picturebooks invite readers to empathize with the characters as they hurt and go through traumatic experiences, and students' empathetic responses are evident in their artifacts. Both picturebooks also invite close looking and offer the reader/viewer moments of pause and reflection, an affordance that the students relied heavily upon in order to imagine the characters' thoughts and feelings. The fourth kind of disquieting,

hearing silences, is also evident as both stories bring silenced/marginalized stories to the fore; students listened attentively to the silenced characters and imagined what they would say having been empowered to do so. Witnessing resistance is the only disquieting feature in the two picturebooks that is not as powerfully present as the others.

The lack of this last feature can partly explain why some aspects recognized by Wissman as major attributes of reading radiantly were not fully realized. As resistance was not foregrounded in the picturebooks, students did not seem inspired to take action and resist social establishments that oppress the main characters' real-life counterparts. Having created a "Radiant Reading Checklist" I would check the first five elements as strongly present in the student artifacts, whereas the last three—and especially the last one: "reading in ways that may move us to action"—were not fully realized (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Radiant Reading Checklist

I recognize the importance of the last three items on this list and the valuable effects they can have both for individual students and for social change. As Op de Beeck (2017) observes in relation to picturebooks about the environment, critical praxis is needed if sociopolitical practices are to be changed (p. 124). For students to be moved to action, though, they need to be able to imagine themselves as people with agency; people that can bring about social change. Writing about school-age readers, several scholars have argued that engaging students with stories that feature characters who take action for social change can inspire them to also envision themselves as agents of social change (Kornfeld & Prothro, 2005; Mathis, 2017; Short, 2012). Janelle Mathis (2017) argues that "experiencing acts of agency through reading authentic international children's literature offers powerful ways to learn about other members of the global community as well as consider the potential for one's own agency" (p. 220). I believe the same

applies for college-level readers' interaction with such literature. This is why in future reiterations of my children's literature class I plan to also include picturebooks that more explicitly enable students to witness and envision agency and resistance.

Moreover, I recognize that the goals of enabling students to be transformed and moved to action for social change cannot be fully achieved merely through interactions around well-designed prompts, such as the ones I have described. Students need to be given the time and space for critical inquiry, so they can explore and identify the local and/or global issues that they consider important and worthy of their effort and intervention; as well as relevant venues of action. Thus, in the future I will more intentionally design into my curriculum Wissman's (2019) fourth feature of effective instructional practice, namely creating space for agency and activism.

8. Conclusion

Nurturing reading as an act of creativity and fostering dialogic inquiry around global picturebooks has been shown to be quite effective in engaging college students' social imagination. I brought evidence from the prompts I designed and the artifacts that students produced in response to these prompts that supports this effectiveness, demonstrating the different ways in which students were able to read *Two White Rabbits* and *The Arrival* radiantly.

Students' responses overwhelmingly demonstrated their radiant readings of the stories, and their discussions showed an openness to consider multiple perspectives that might differ from their own. In variable degrees, students showed heightened awareness of the picturebooks' aesthetic features, had charged encounters with the picturebooks, and demonstrated openness to new ways of reading the world. They paid close attention to such visual elements such as color, line, placement on the page, facial expressions, and body language and this enabled them to imagine the characters' thoughts and emotions. The manifestations of students' social imagination were often evident in the questions they asked. Their sharing and discussions demonstrated that most students remained open to other interpretations, new ways of thinking, and new readings of the world. Paying attention to the second part of the prompts that encouraged them to compare and contrast the different ways in which different people responded to the assignment, they were open to revisiting and revising their initial interpretations.

The prompts succeeded in engaging the students' social imagination because they were designed based on Wissman's advice to create prompts that pose questions about readers, people, and the human condition, and invite students to pay attention to their sensory experiences and emotional responses.

Additionally, they were designed to nurture reading as an act of creativity and to foster dialogic inquiry. By design, the prompts required readers to use their imagination and creativity, as well as pay close attention to the picturebooks' visual aesthetics. Another important reason behind the students' successful radiant readings was the selection of these specific picturebooks, which both follow Short's (2019) principle to never read a book alone and fit Whitelaw's (2017) definition of *disquieting picturebooks*; picturebooks that encourage the embracing of unfamiliarity and discomfort.

Nevertheless, witnessing resistance, one of the main features of disquieting picturebooks was not as powerfully present in the two picturebooks as the other features listed by Whitelaw. The absence of this feature can partly explain why some of the major attributes of reading radiantly were not fully realized. As resistance was not foregrounded in the picturebooks, students were not inspired to take action and resist the status quo that oppresses the main characters' real-life counterparts. In future reiterations of my children's literature class, I will adjust my instruction to create more space for agency and activism, and strive to include picturebooks that more explicitly enable students to witness and envision agency and resistance.

As resistance was not foregrounded in the picturebooks, students were not inspired to take action and resist the status quo that oppresses the main characters' real-life counterparts

As a socially responsible educator, I need to continue using approaches that enable students to read radiantly and further explore more holistic approaches of engaging students' social imagination, which can encourage them to be transformed and moved to social action. And as a socially responsible researcher, I also need to further study the potential and potency of reading global picturebooks radiantly to engage the social imagination in the college classroom.

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The Three Robbers in Three Languages: Exploring a Multilingual Picturebook with Bilingual Student Teachers

The Three Robbers en tres idiomes: explorar un àlbum il·lustrat multilingüe amb estudiants de magisteri bilingües

The Three Robbers en tres idiomas: explorar un álbum ilustrado multilingüe con estudiantes de magisterio bilingües

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Abstract

This study investigates translingual and multimodal teaching strategies in the context of multilingual literacy acquisition within a bilingual education program in France. It is based on a research project carried out at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Strasbourg, during the academic year 2017-2018. The purpose of our research is to analyze the student teachers' representations and attitudes towards multilingual picturebooks, and to lead them to explore the pedagogical affordances of interlingual and intersemiotic mediation in the context of a multilingual reading project built around the trilingual edition of Tomi Ungerer's The Three Robbers. The qualitative analysis of the student teachers' discourses allows us to discuss how translingual and multimodal activities give rise to a new pedagogical approach to literacy with young readers, specifically in a bilingual education context, and explain how picturebooks can foster integrated, multimodal, and translingual learning, as well as the development of biliteracy and metalinguistic awareness.

Keywords: multilingual picturebooks, bi/multiliteracy, multimodality, bi/multilingual education, translingual teaching and learning

Resumen

Este estudio investiga estrategias de enseñanza translinguísticas y multimodales en el contexto de la adquisición literaria multilingüe como parte de un programa de educación bilingüe en Francia. Está basado en un proyecto de investigación llevado a cabo en el Postgrado de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad de Estrasburgo durante el año académico 2017-2018. El objetivo de nuestra investigación es analizar las representaciones y actitudes de los estudiantes de magisterio hacia álbumes ilustrados multilingües, y conducirles a explorar las aplicaciones pedagógicas de la mediación interlingüística e intersemiótica en el contexto de un proyecto de lectura multilingüe, construido sobre la edición trilingüe del libro The Three Robbers (Los tres bandidos) de Tomi Ungerer. El análisis cualitativo de los discursos de los estudiantes de magisterio nos permiten examinar cómo las actividades translingüísticas y multimodales dan lugar a una nueva estrategia

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pedagógica hacia la alfabetización con lectores y lectoras jóvenes, específicamente, en el contexto de una educación bilingüe, y explican cómo los álbumes ilustrados pueden promover un aprendizaje integrado, multimodal y translingüístico, además de desarrollar el conocimiento metalingüístico y una alfabetización bilingüe.

Palabras clave: álbumes ilustrados multilingües, bi/multiliteracidad, multimodalidad, educación bi/multilingüe, enseñanza-aprendizaje translingual

Resum

Aquest estudi investiga estratègies d'ensenyament translingüístiques i multimodals en el context de l'adquisició literària multilingüe com a part d'un programa d'educació bilingüe a França. Està basat en un projecte d'investigació dut a terme en el Postgrau de l'Escola d'Educació de la Universitat d'Estrasburg durant l'any acadèmic 2017-2018. L'objectiu de la nostra investigació és analitzar les representacions i actituds dels estudiants de magisteri cap a àlbums il·lustrats multilingües i conduir-los a explorar les aplicacions pedagògiques de la mediació interlingüística i intersemiòtica en el context d'un projecte de lectura multilingüe, construït sobre l'edició trilingüe del llibre The Three Robbers (Els tres bandits) de Tomi Ungerer. L'anàlisi qualitativa dels discurs dels estudiants de magisteri ens permeten examinar com les activitats translingüístiques i multimodals donen lloc a una nova estratègia pedagògica cap a l'alfabetització amb lectors i lectores joves, específicament, en el context d'una educació bilingüe, i expliquen com els àlbums poden promoure un aprenentatge integrat, multimodal i translingüístic, a més de desenvolupar el coneixement metalingüístic i una alfabetització bilingüe.

Paraules clau: àlbums il·lustrats multilingües, bi/multiliteracitat, multimodalitat, educació bi/multilingüe, ensenyament-aprenentatge translingual

> « Il faut collectionner les langues parce qu'une fois qu'on a une autre langue, on comprend mieux la culture des autres. On peut s'amuser avec les langues, on peut les faire transpirer, les mettre au gril. Pour moi, un coucher de soleil, je le ressens en français, en allemand, en anglais ou en alsacien, de cette façon je peux jouir de quatre couchers de soleil à la fois, au niveau astral, c'est pas mal! » (Ungerer, 1996)

Today, the importance of teaching children's literature within the scientific context of higher education and, more specifically, within teacher education, is unquestionable. Children's literature offers windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990) that allow us to reflect upon the complex world we live in and to make sense of our experiences inside and outside the story we read (Nikolajeva 2014). Children's literature – especially in the form of picturebooks – thus helps us construct our identity by projecting us into a playful world of reflexive imagination (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008). However, "the skill of taking meaning from reading can only be achieved when a range of symbols that are pertinent to children are combined in

children's literature; these may include the written, the visual, the auditory and the kinaesthetic" (Daly & Limbrick, 2018, p.1).

In this sense, multilingual picturebooks, which induce a multimodal reading process, provide a particularly enriching pedagogical approach for literacy acquisition and development within the context of bi/multilingual education (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013, Mourão, 2015). As recent research has shown, multilingual picturebooks can nurture high-quality literacy learning in multilingual classrooms, based on creativity, empathy, and multicultural experience (Ibrahim, 2000; Heggernes, 2019). Be it in order to practice linguistic mediation or to foster metalinguistic awareness and multilingual literacy, teaching multilingual children's literature at university level plays an essential role in the bilingual or multilingual professional development of student teachers. More so, the discovery of the pedagogical affordances of multilingual picturebooks at university may engage student teachers in developing new pedagogical approaches to literacy teaching in multilingual classrooms through the use of children's literature.

In order to investigate translingual and multimodal teaching strategies in the context of multilingual literacy acquisition within a bilingual education program in France, we carried out a research project at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Strasbourg, during the academic year 2017-2018. The purpose of our research was to analyse the student teachers' representations and attitudes towards multilingual picturebooks and to lead them to explore the pedagogical affordances of interlingual and intersemiotic mediation in the context of a multilingual reading project using the trilingual edition of a famous picturebook, The Three Robbers by Tomi Ungerer (1962 for the first edition, published in New York). The pedagogical investigation of this picturebook, which includes three languages: Alsatian, German, and French, was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the pedagogical affordances of multilingual picturebooks in bilingual education?
- How and by which teaching strategies can these books foster multilingual literacy?

Our research method included several focus group discussions with 24 bilingual student teachers completing their first year of teaching practice in bilingual primary classrooms in France. The qualitative analysis of the multilingual reading project investigated different teaching strategies, such as interlingual and intersemiotic translation, linguistic mediation, translingual creative writing, and comparative grammar and lexicology as linguistic transfer activities. Over all, we discuss how translingual and multimodal activities give rise to a new

pedagogical approach to picturebooks, specifically in a bilingual education context, and explain how they may encourage multilingual literacy acquisition.

Consequently, we first present a short research overview of two didactic dimensions that support our study: the trans-turn in the context of bilingual education and the pedagogical affordances of multilingual picturebooks in multilingual literacy acquisition. Second, we describe the context of bilingual education and bilingual teacher education in Alsace, France. Third, we present the context, design, and results of our research project, based on our interpretation of the pedagogical qualities of Tomi Ungerer's multilingual picturebook. Last, we reflect on a new pedagogical approach to multilingual picturebooks, including linguistic mediation and multimodality.

The purpose of our research was to analyse the student teachers' representations and attitudes towards multilingual picturebooks and to lead them to explore the pedagogical affordances of interlingual and intersemiotic mediation in the context of a multilingual reading project using the trilingual edition of a famous picturebook, *The Three Robbers* by Tomi Ungerer

1. Research Overview

1.1 The Multilingual and Trans-turn in Bilingual Education

Multilingual education research benefits from the conceptual renewal of two subsequent "turns," the multilingual turn and the trans- turn. First, the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014, among others) led to a new perspective in the fields of applied linguistics. Second the updates in language acquisition, and bilingual education, by considering multilingual competence as a social factor questioning pedagogical norms, and thus as a learning resource, different from monolingual proficiency. More so, multilingual competence is now recognised as qualitatively different: "Scholars now realize that a bilingual person's competence is not simply the sum of two discrete monolingual competences added together; instead, bilingual competence *integrates* knowledge in two languages and is thus quantitatively different from monolingual competence" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 591). In fact, the features of a bilingual speaker's linguistic repertoire cannot be described as a simple addition of two separate monolingual repertories but should be approached in terms of an integrated multilingual repertoire (Cummins, 2007).

Secondly, and based on the scientific acknowledgment of the mixed language practices bi/multilinguals negotiate in order to communicate within various linguistic communities, the trans-turn (Hawkins & Mori, 2018) triggered an erasure of language boundaries (Cenoz & Gorter,

2013), and even more radically, a "disinvention of languages" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) as immutable, ordinated, and separated systems that had turned out to be incompatible with the dynamic social practice of multilinguals. Evidently, the trans-turn is centred on the translanguaging theory (Garcia & Wei, 2014), which considers the dynamic discourse practice of multilinguals as an integrative shuttling between languages, called *translanguaging.*

On the other hand, the described conceptual revolutions favourably enhanced the elaboration of new pedagogical approaches within the context of bilingual education. Moreover, translanguaging as a pedagogical approach in the multilingual classroom (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010) refers to translingual activities that foster language awareness, linguistic mediation, and metalinguistic and intercultural competencies, helping (emergent) bilingual students construct a bilingual identity (Daly, 2014; Hélot, 2014).

According to these new approaches, bilingual education research aims to explore new pedagogical strategies to foster integrated and translingual learning, as well as the development of biliteracy and multiliteracy, especially through the creative use of children's literature (Sneddon, 2009). Indeed, the acknowledgement of mixed language practice (translanguaging) and language transfer in multilingual classrooms envisages the development of cross-linguistic or translingual teaching and learning strategies, as well as the pedagogic practice of active language transfer that allows bi/multilinguals to make use of their full linguistic repertoire within oral and written contexts. Hence, multilingualism is strongly connected to multiliteracy (Breuer et al., 2021; Kafle & Canagarajah, 2015).

[…] bilingual education research aims to explore new pedagogical strategies to foster integrated and translingual learning, as well as the development of biliteracy and multiliteracy, especially through the creative use of children's literature

1.2 Pedagogical Affordances of Multilingual Picturebooks in Multilingual Literacy Acquisition

Following the scientific and didactic evolutions caused by the trans-turn, multiliteracy instruction now focusses on cross-linguistic or translingual approaches (Hartmann, 2020b). Consequently, children's literature can play an essential role in multilingual literacy acquisition, as illustrated in the book *Children's Literature in Multilingual Classrooms* (Hélot et al., 2014), with the goal of developing new pedagogical approaches to literacy teaching in multilingual classrooms through the use of children's literature. Additionally, multilingual children's literature, whether in dual language, multilingual, or translated books, offers rich possibilities to

introduce learners to intercultural understanding, empathy, and the negotiation of hybrid identities (Bland, 2020; Short, 2009).

Yet, in order to be able to teach literacy in multilingual classrooms (Edwards, 2015), we need to imagine new pedagogical approaches and develop new visions of the teaching of reading and writing. In this sense, multilingual picturebooks particularly foster multilingual and multimodal literacy acquisition, because they can transform translanguagings into creative resources for the learning process (Kersten & Ludwig, 2018; Hartmann, 2020a). How can we explain this link between translanguaging, which means the practice of using two or more languages concomitantly, and the acquisition of reading and writing competencies in two or more languages? The missing link would certainly be the practice of translation, which we see as mediation between two languages and two cultures. Translation explains the importance of multilingual picturebooks in multilingual literacy acquisition: multilingual picturebooks are often dual language books, presenting two linguistic versions of the same story. One of these two versions is in almost all the cases a translation (Hartmann & Hélot, 2020). Passing from one linguistic version to the other, bilingual students learn to establish links and bridges between the two languages of the picturebook, and so, understand the connections between the different linguistic elements of their plurilingual repertoire.

Moreover, multiliteracy acquisition based on the reading of multilingual picturebooks is strongly connected to a pedagogy of multimodality (Serafini 2010), since "emergent research on literacy highlights the imaginative, interpretive, non-linear, interactive, dynamic, visual, and mobile features of communication" (Hasset & Curwood, 2009, p. 270). The complex dynamics arising between versions of different languages (as presented in dual language books), but also between the words and images multilingual picturebooks bring to life, invites both cross-lingual and cross-semiotic reading experiences. The plurilingual and plurisemiotic (visual, textual, spatial, auditory, gestural) reading experience of picturebooks as an artistic and holistic performance challenges multilingual students to engage in active imagination and meaning making. "Multimodal texts include various pathways to follow parallel displays of information, extensive cross-referencing elements, evocative graphics and images that extend, an often replace, the printed word as the primary carrier of meaning" (Hasset & Curwood, 2009, p. 271).

The complex dynamics arising between versions of different languages (as presented in dual language books), but also between the words and images multilingual picturebooks bring to life, invites both cross-lingual and cross-semiotic reading experiences

Hence, multimodal picturebooks can be an excellent springboard for multilingual and multimodal literacy instruction, since they offer interactive narration, multiple perspectives, and meaning-expanding images and typology, shaping the decoding activity of the reader-interpret into a semiotic mediation process that simultaneously fosters linguistic mediation proficiency.

2. Research Context:

2.1 Bilingual Education and Bilingual Teacher Education in Alsace, France

Since the beginning of bilingual education in French public schools in 1992, the language policy that governs the organisation of bilingual education in the region of Alsace is grounded on the didactic and structural separation of the two languages of instruction, French and German. The German language within bilingual education in Alsace is considered the written standard form of the Alsatian variety (Huck, 2016), thus representing a so-called regional language and not a foreign language. The strict separation of teaching time in the French-German bilingual program in primary schools and preschools is based on the "one teacher-one language" principle that refers to Ronjat's theory (1913). In this partial immersion program (also called "50/50 immersion") leading to the binational baccalaureate diploma called *Abibac* (combining the German Abitur and the French Baccalauréat), all the subjects are taught half in German and half in French, whereas both the German and the French classes have to follow the totality of the French curriculum. This 50% immersion gives the emerging bilinguals enrolled in this program a high exposure to the German language, which they still have to acquire as a school language since most of the enrolled students are monolingual French children having minimal contact with the Alsatian variety.

According to our personal observations, the overall linguistic profiles of bilingual classes in Alsace greatly vary from one school to another. Some bilingual classes are composed almost exclusively of francophone pupils (emergent bilinguals), while other classes show a small number of bilingual (French-German) pupils, belonging to binational families (one French parent and one German parent) or to Alsatian families communicating in the Alsatian variety. Other classes again show multilingual learners (emergent multilinguals) with an international family background, whose family languages differ from the two school languages, French and German.

The pedagogical aim of the bilingual program in Alsace implies high literacy proficiency in French as well as in German, while the political aim entails the conservation of an expiring regional language, the Alsatian variety (Huck, 2016). According to this parity-immersion-principle (50% immersion), all subject contents are taught through German and through French. Accordingly, one teacher is responsible for the German part of the program, and another one for the French

part. Hence, the two languages and the subjects taught through these two languages are experienced as "two solitudes" (Cummins, 2013), as two separated linguistic spaces without communication between them, producing double or parallel monolingualism (Hélot, 2011). This top-down language policy is based on the assumption that the presence of the students' L1 (French) in the L2 class (German) represents an obstacle to the development of listening, speaking and writing proficiency in the L2.

This monolingual concept of language allocation is not limited to the education of emergent bilingual students; it equally affects the education of student teachers working within the bilingual program. Whereas student teachers in charge of the French part of the program enrol in a regular monolingual teacher education program in primary education (a Master degree called "polyvalent"), student teachers assigned to the German part are indeed bilingual teachers who follow a specific program in bilingual primary education (a Master degree called "bilingual") with additional examinations in German. Curiously, although bilingual, the latter will teach all their courses only through the German language. The former, on the contrary, are considered and trained as regular mainstream teachers, although educating emergent bilingual students within a bilingual program. Both emergent bilingual students and bilingual teachers are therefore supposed to function in a monolingual mode (Hélot, 2014).

Consequently, the pedagogical practice of linguistic transfer, which may be considered as a logic outcome of the *Linguistic Interdependency Hypothesis* (Cummins, 2013), encounters numerous institutional and ideological hurdles within this context, where each language is taught in a monolingual mode, preventing emerging bilinguals from constructing a bilingual identity (Hélot, 2014). Additionally, the "one teacher-one language" policy, as well as the underlying monoglossic ideology, hinder the creation of interactional spaces where proficiency in linguistic transfer, linguistic mediation, translation, intercultural understanding, multiliteracy, and metalinguistic awareness can be enhanced. The monolingual ideology of bilingual education in Alsace and the strict separation approach of the institutional language policy rigorously restrict the possibilities of bilingual pedagogy. Although bilingual education policy in Alsace leaves little room for translanguaging (representing, as we have seen, both the social practice of bilingual speakers and a pedagogical approach to bilingual education), bilingual teachers, if encouraged and supported, are well able

Although bilingual education policy in Alsace leaves little room for translanguaging […], bilingual teachers, if encouraged and supported, are well able to invent critical alternative approaches in their classrooms, which may encourage simultaneous and integrated literacy acquisition in two or more languages

to invent critical alternative approaches in their classrooms, which may encourage simultaneous and integrated literacy acquisition in two or more languages.

3. Research Project

3.1 Exploring a Multilingual Picturebook in Bilingual Teacher Education

As our research overview has shown, multilingual picturebooks represent a rich multimodal learning resource for bi/multilingual literacy acquisition in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. The bilingual education context in Alsace particularly invites the didactic and pedagogic exploration of multilingual picturebooks written by multilingual Alsatian authors, since they reflect the pluralistic cultural identity of bi/multilingual learners. We therefore chose to work with a picturebook by Tomi Ungerer (1931, Strasbourg, France - 2019, Cork, Ireland), a multilingual Alsatian painter, illustrator and author, whose famous picturebooks fascinate both children and adults. Tomi Ungerer worked in New York, Canada, Ireland, and France. He published over 140 books in English, French, German, and Alsatian, that were translated into more than thirty languages, ranging from his celebrated children's stories to controversial volumes of social satire.

3.2 General Objectives of the Research Project

In order to investigate new pedagogical approaches for multilingual literacy acquisition, we designed a multilingual reading project within our German didactics course for bilingual student teachers at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Strasbourg (Bilingual Master Program, academic year 2017-2018). The objective of this project was to make bilingual teachers aware of the pedagogic affordances of multilingual picturebooks in bilingual education. More specifically, this project targeted the didactic elaboration of integrated and translingual teaching strategies for biliteracy instruction in bilingual primary classrooms in Alsace.

3.3 Academic Profile of the Participants

At the time of the project, the student teachers were in the middle of the second year of the Bilingual Master program for bilingual primary teacher candidates, which follows a three-year Undergraduate Program (called "Licence" and equaling the Bachelor's Degree) in different subject areas. Simultaneously, the student teachers were accomplishing their teacher training practice in bilingual primary classrooms two days a week, where they were in charge of the German part of the curriculum. The student teachers' discourses hence reflect their representations and experiences as young teachers in bilingual primary classrooms in Alsace. During their first year of the Master Program, the participants in our research had already taken

some course units in bilingual education didactics, but at the time of the project, they had not yet acquired any academic knowledge about biliteracy instruction.

3.4 Linguistic Profile of the Participants

Although all of the student teachers participating in our project showed a bilingual French-German profile, their bilingual repertoire turned out to be highly diverse. Indeed, the linguistic resources and competences of bilingual teachers in Alsace reflect the multiple and complex linguistic profiles of the bilingual primary classrooms they teach. While many bilingual teachers belonged to binational French-German families or to Alsatian speaking families and had attended the bilingual track to the Abibac (French-German Baccalaureate Degree), others completed a Bachelor's Degree in German studies at a French university inside or outside of the region of Alsace, so that their bilingualism could be mostly considered as an academic outcome. Another group of the student teachers had completed a successful Erasmus exchange in Germany, Switzerland, or Austria during one or two semesters, which allowed them to acquire sufficient proficiency in the German language to enroll in the bilingual teacher education program. Another group again was raised in an international and multilingual academic and familial environment in Germany or France, and was now attending the selective integrated bilingual study program of the French-German University, alternating semesters in French and German universities throughout the curriculum. Lastly, some bilingual student teachers with high proficiency in German grew up as children of German cross-border commuters from the other side of the Rhine River. Last of all, a very small number of the student teachers consists of German and German speaking students, who wish to gain experience in the French education system for personal reasons.

3.5 Tomi Ungerer's *The Three Robbers* as a Trilingual Picturebook

The multilingual book we chose to work with is the famous story of *The Three Robbers* (1962). The trilingual edition *Die drei Raiwer* (2008) unites the translations in the three languages of Alsace: Alsatian, French and German. Studying the picturebook of a multilingual Alsation author represents an excellent strategy for acquiring multimodal and multilingual literacy, but also for constructing a bilingual identity and gain a deeper understanding of bilingualism and biculturalism. With his famous statement "Je n'ai pas de langue maternelle. J'ai seulement plusieurs langues fraternelles" [I don't have a mother tongue. I only have several fraternal languages] (Ungerer, 1996, our translation), Tomi Ungerer deconstructs the ideology of a unique mother tongue and opens the path towards a multilingual and multicultural identity. Interestingly, Tomi Ungerer calls the concept and practice of multilingualism an *interlingual*

traffic: "Quand on est trilingue, on a une possibilité bien plus grande de jouer avec les mots, on peut trafiquer d'une langue à une autre" [When one is trilingual, one has a much greater possibility to play with words; one can traffic from one language to another] (Ungerer, 1996, p. 49, our translation). The metaphor *traffic* refers to the two main concepts of translanguaging: *shifting* between languages and cultures, *tampering* with the monolingual norm, and *negotiating* a multilingual and multicultural identity.

The trilingual book *Die drei Raiwer - Les trois brigands - Die drei Räuber* [The Three Robbers] illustrates such a negotiation of linguistic and cultural identity. Although it was originally written in English by Tomi Ungerer and published in New York in 1962, the trilingual book edited in Strasbourg (Ungerer, 2008) only presents three languages – Alsatian, French, and German – as a symbolic synthesis of the region's polyphony, without incorporating the original language the story was written in. The concept of this multilingual book, titled *Tomiphonie* (by the editor who wrote the introduction), recalling Bakhtin's (1970) famous "polyphonie," represents not only a metaphor of the concept of linguistic plurality, but also a mirror of Ungerer's linguistic identity, which is presented as an Alsatian identity, crystallizing the fusion of three languages: Alsatian, French, and German. Accordingly, the Alsatian translation accomplished in the trilingual edition by an Alsatian poet and writer, Robert Werner, embodies this polyphonic fusion of French and German within the Alsatian dialect, since this translation actually arose from both the French (Ungerer, 1968) and the German (Ungerer, 1963) versions. The trilingual edition thus becomes a symbol of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Alsatian region, as told in the introduction to the book: "Like in everyday life in Alsace, the three languages luckily cohabit on the same page, encouraging stimulating linguistic activities" (Introduction by the editor, our translation).

With his famous statement "Je n'ai pas de langue maternelle. J'ai seulement plusieurs langues fraternelles" [I don't have a mother tongue. I only have several fraternal languages], Tomi Ungerer deconstructs the ideology of a unique mother tongue and opens the path towards a multilingual and multicultural identity

4. Research Method and Design

In our research project, 24 bilingual student teachers enrolled in our German didactics course formed eight groups of three students that discussed the reading of the trilingual edition of *The Three Robbers*, to answer the following questions: "Could you imagine reading this trilingual picturebook with your pupils? How would you read it? Which activities could accompany this

reading in order to build bridges between the different languages of the book/classroom?" In this way, eight group discussions took place within the framework of two course units in December 2017 and January 2018. The outcome data of these focus group discussions were recorded as text documents (word documents) or audio documents (mobile phone recordings) sent to our email address. The discussions, deliberations, and proposals of the student teachers in this context served as data for the qualitative analysis presented below.

Could you imagine reading this trilingual picturebook with your pupils? How would you read it? Which activities could accompany this reading in order to build bridges between the different languages of the book/classroom?

The qualitative analysis of the student teachers' discourses follows three categories that we indicated inductively: (1) Possibilities of implementation of translingual teaching strategies in the context of the prevailing language policy; (2) Status and interaction modalities of the different languages displayed in the picturebook; (3) Creation of a repertoire of translingual teaching strategies for multiliteracy instruction.

5. Research Results:

5.1 Translingual Teaching Strategies for *The Three Robbers*

How could Tomi Ungerer's trilingual picturebook be read in a bilingual primary class in Alsace and, more specifically, during the German class, from which language alternating and mixing is officially banned, as a consequence of the institutional language policy? On the one hand, the discourse analysis of the group discussions reveals some student teachers' preference for an alternate reading in the different languages of the book, as well as an alternate distribution of the latter. This language alternation, which implies language separation, means that the student teachers would take advantage of the "one teacher-one language" principle to split the story into different chapters that would be read each one in one single language. In this sense, language alternation would take place between different chapters of the story, according to a monolingual approach.

On the other hand, some student teachers show interest in linguistic transfer revealing the similarities between Alsatian and German lexis, as well as interferences of the French syntax within the Alsatian text. These cross-linguistic activities indicate an integrated and translingual approach. Lastly, the student teachers observe the status of each language within the visual presentation of the page, as well as the intersemiotic relationship between text and image, between language and visual representation, the latter dominating, interconnecting and

"translating" all three languages (French, German, Alsatian) according to an intersemiotic approach.

Creative plurilingual pedagogy also means developing intercultural communication proficiency, such as understanding different interpretation possibilities of moral values transmitted in the story (kindness vs. ferocity, outlaws vs. justice, richness vs. poverty), and, overall, Ungerer's "Alsatian humour," which appears to be essentially *translingual*. However, translingual approaches do not end here: the participants of this project multiply multilingual writing, speaking and theatre performances, which crystallise other forms of intersemiotic transfer.

As expected, the "one teacher-one language" policy dominates and sometimes overrules the pedagogical possibilities of the trilingual reading, but does not impede the creation of innovative pedagogic approaches that highlight translingual activities such as linguistic transfer and mediation, metalinguistic analysis, as well as creative multimodal tasks, all fostering biliteracy acquisition.

5.2 Translingual Activities or Language Alternation?

How to fit into the "one teacher-one language" policy and the separation of languages, time and subjects when reading a trilingual story in a bilingual mode? The solution proposed by the trainee teachers would be to apply the method of consecutive language alternation. *Consecutive language alternation* implies the practice of alternating languages and teachers instead of mixing languages by an only teacher. "The book could best be explored together by the two collaborating teachers (French teacher and German teacher). Such collaboration would create coherence between the two parts of the bilingual programme. The French teacher would be responsible for the French translation of the story, and the German teacher for the German translation." This kind of language alternation produced by parallel readings in two languages implies forms of tandem teaching: "This trilingual book could illustrate bilingualism: both teachers could read it in a parallel way, each one in his/her language. That is, the German teacher reads the German text, and the French teacher reads the French text. This way, the students will get to know the same story in two languages." In the words of another group: "One day, two pages of the German text could be read, the next day, two pages of the French text could follow, the book travelling between the two classes." In this sense, the French version would adopt an *initiation* function, facilitating the subsequent entry into the German text: "We certainly could read a trilingual book in the bilingual class, because students could better understand the story. It is very important to build a connexion between the two languages for conveying the meaning of the story. The French teacher could begin with the reading. The first

part of the story is quite complicated; therefore, it would be more logical to first read and explain it in French."

Only one suggestion seems to refer to consecutive language alternation by the same teacher: "The story of this book could be discovered and read in three languages: the first page in Alsatian, the second page in French and the third page in German. This rotation from one page to another would allow the students who do not understand German nor Alsatian to find elements corresponding to their first language every third page, which might help their understanding of the story."

These possibilities of consecutive language alternation based on the separate reading of the French and the German texts in Tomi Ungerer's trilingual picturebook can be considered as a constructive compromise for fitting into the prevailing language policy. Yet, they seem to miss the important linguistic and cognitive benefits of simultaneous translingual reading, as shown in the following sections.

5.3 Alsatian and German: Inter-comprehension Activities

Language awareness and inter-comprehension activities are connected to the discovery of the story's multilingual context and text and the nature of the three languages presented in the book. "The teacher could begin this project by reading aloud the Alsatian text and ask the students if this language makes them think of something… if they understand something… If the students discover that the language the story was read in is the Alsatian variety, the teacher could show them the numerous similarities between Alsatian and German, but also between Alsatian and French, because Alsatian is a mixture of both."

The status of the Alsatian variety within the trilingual book undoubtedly leads to the analysis of the linguistic presentation and context of the story, but also addresses linguistic comparison: "The German and the French part of the text displayed on the page is almost identical since they represent quite literal translations of the Alsatian text, which is written in much greater typographical letters. Consequently, the Alsatian text appears to be the original text, while the French and German texts have to be seen as subordinated translations"; "This trilingual children's book emphasises the Alsatian variety, written in greater typographical letters and thus consuming more space on the page. The title of the book is only written in Alsatian, without translation. The translation into German and French is supposed to help understand the Alsatian text. This trilingual book offers the opportunity to construct linguistic links between German and the Alsatian variety."

Over all, student teachers became aware of the prominence given to the Alsatian language and proposed a reading of the story in this language in order to subsequently compare it with standard German and to detect similarities and differences. In the words of the teachers: “The book is meant to discover the Alsatian variety. Students could try to read and to understand the Alsatian text, by referring to the German and the French translation.” These inter-comprehension activities allow students to establish links between parented languages such as Alsatian and German, but also to connect the academic school language to the familiar regional variety: “The most important language of this multilingual book is the Alsatian variety. It would be interesting to read this story in Alsatian as well. Afterwards, the students could hear, discover and detect the similarities and the differences between standard German and the Alsatian variety.”

The book is meant to discover the Alsatian variety. Students could try to read and to understand the Alsatian text, by referring to the German and the French translation

5.4 French and German: Linguistic Mediation

Another group of student teachers focused on French and German, the two languages of the bilingual program being presented to learners together in a book, as offering a support for reading comprehension. For example, “the students have the possibility to look in the French translation for a word they do not know in German and to find its meaning: as for example Räuber/brigands”.

In fact, “constructing links or bridges between languages” refers to interlinguistic comparison and transfer as a cognitive activity. Linguistic mediation is meant to enhance the comprehension and semantic analysis of the story, as shown in the following suggestions. “The side-by-side coexistence of the French and the German translations of the Alsatian text facilitates linguistic mediation: students can look in the parallel French translation for a word they don’t know in the German text and get the meaning of it.”

As “language mixing or alternating by the teacher” is not recommended by student teachers trying to fit into the one teacher-one language policy, their “student experts” play an active part in linguistic mediation, using linguistic transfer to foster the understanding of the story by their fellow students. “The students will adopt the important part of the mediation between languages: they are the interpreters of the two language teachers (German and French). Likewise, student experts will reformulate and explain the plot of the story to those who do not understand.”

But even when translation is seen as creating a bridge between different languages, other student teachers warned of the danger of using translation too often, lest it endangers the acquisition of German: “Being able to go from one language to another could help to build bridges between the different languages. However, in the daily context of teaching through German, working on the French text should remain rare and clearly motivated, otherwise the learners will not make the effort to learn the German language.” This statement is not surprising; it is consistent with the belief in the one language-one teacher policy being the best strategy for learning German. It also shows a lack of understanding of young learners’ motivations in learning an additional language.

5.5 Illustrations and Intersemiotic Translation: Towards Multimodal Reading

Unsurprisingly, some student teachers showed a clear preference for intersemiotic translation, focusing on the central role of the illustrations for comprehension of the text in one language or the other, precisely because it allowed them to avoid the use of interlingual translation and to keep to the one language - one teacher policy. For example, they explained: “Only one picture corresponds to the three texts, thus showing readers that the three languages mean the same thing. The picture is as important as the text and takes the largest space on the page.” Or again, “the role of the pictures is rather important: the reader can use the pictures to understand the meaning of the text. Pictures are explanatory. We also have the possibility to read the story in one language only: the students are going to understand the text with the pictures, without understanding the language in which the text was read.” The second quote points to the possibility of reading the text in one language only, therefore avoiding any form of language mixing or contact between the three languages displayed in the book. In other words, this trilingual book would be read as a monolingual book and intersemiotic translation used to develop reading comprehension in one language only.

Consequently, if the student teachers prefer intersemiotic transfer to linguistic transfer, they give the text-image relationship a greater pedagogical impact in the process of comprehension: “The images can be perceived and used as mediation to language and can assist the understanding of the text. Instead of using translation, it would be preferable to refer to the images, in order to see if they help reveal the meaning of the story, given that the pictures dominate the text.” Lastly, Tomi Ungerer’s pictures are perceived as a valuable tool for lexical acquisition: “In order to acquire new vocabulary, the students could link several images of the book to several new words.”

5.6 Metalinguistic Activities

Taking a different approach to this monolingual view of translation, a further group of student teachers was at once aware of the affordances of a trilingual text for metalinguistic activities, and for students to be given concrete examples of multilingualism. In fact, interlinguistic comparison in the form of comparative (contrastive) grammar, as well as the development of metalinguistic proficiency, cannot be avoided when reading a trilingual book: "The multilingual book is not necessarily fitted for the German class, since, generally, the decoding of the German text should be made through the images and not always through the French translation. Nevertheless, recent research recommends constructing links between the languages taught, as well as to use a metalanguage."

Others suggested that the learners themselves be educated to reflect on the similarities between the three languages and taught to decode some words in the German text: "The students should establish the similarities between the three languages. The teacher could read the Alsatian text, and the students could mark the words they recognize in the German text." Language awareness leads to language comparison: "This trilingual book makes the students aware that the same word can exist in several languages. The next step could be reading the Alsatian text and its translations into German and French and having the students compare them in order to examine the similarities and the differences between the three languages." Finally, language comparison implies reflexion on the functioning of language as metalinguistic thinking: "The students could try to detect the same words in the different languages; for example: Alsatian: *gschicht*, German: *Geschichte*, French: *histoire*. They will also discover that the capital letters of the German nouns do not apply to the Alsatian variety."

5.7 Multilingual Literacy Activities

Furthermore, some student teachers saw the possibility with the trilingual text of carrying out narrative analysis in a bilingual mode. They suggested "the students could study the use of grammatical and semantic connectors through this story, used to create the narrative progression: Es war einmal / Il était une fois (beginning of the story), Der Erste …. Der Zweite… Der Dritte / Le premier… Le deuxième… Le troisième (presentation of the three robbers), as well as Zum Schluss / À la fin, announcing the ending of the story."

Finally, Tomi Ungerer's trilingual book gave rise to the idea of proposing a multilingual creative writing project, based on a new version of *The Three Robbers*. This multilingual text would incorporate all the languages spoken by the children in a class, who would also illustrate the text and invent a new ending. In the words of the student teachers: "As a follow-up activity, students

could complete a multilingual writing project and write a multilingual story using all the different languages spoken in their class, based on the story of *The Three Robbers*. The students could rewrite the same story with all the languages they practice and paint their pictures to accompany the text or invent new multilingual chapters that could follow the end of the story."

This most creative proposition is another form of interlinguistic transfer, essential to multilingual literacy acquisition. This sort of transfer can give multilingual children the opportunity to be the authors of their own texts and to make full creative use of their multilingual competence.

We surely must appraise the courage of conducting such a multilingual writing exercise where *textual translanguaging* is at work since the actual understanding of the development of biliteracy is still dominated by a mono-linguistic approach. Indeed, creative transposition activities could represent another form of intersemiotic and interlinguistic transfer, as suggests another group: "The students could act a little scene of the story in order to practice the pronunciation of the language and to give meaning to the text read, for example, the scene of page 3-4."

5.8 Multimodal and Intercultural Activities

The reading of Tomi Ungerer's trilingual picturebook could be enriched thanks to an intercultural and multimodal interconnection with other creations around the robber-theme, such as a song, a movie and tales. Let's quote the student teachers' proposition: "The Three Robbers could be linked to the stories of *Robin Hood* and the Arabian tale *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves*." This intercultural approach could be widened by a multimodal one, as pursues the participant: "We could watch the movie of *The Three Robbers* and listen to (and sing) *The Three Robbers* song."

Two multimodal suggestions are intended to enhance the lexical repertoire in German: "We could describe the pictures of the book in German and learn new vocabulary. We could also listen to the audiobook in German and to the sounds that accompany the reading and that explicit the different weapons of the Robbers, for example."

6. Conclusions and Perspectives: Towards a New Pedagogical Approach to Multilingual Picturebooks

Our research project based on the trilingual edition of Tomi Ungerer's *The Three Robbers* allowed us to reflect on a new pedagogical approach to multilingual picturebooks, emphasising linguistic mediation and multimodality. In multilingual picturebooks, the building of bridges between different languages is complemented by the shifting between different media, especially between text and image. In picturebooks, images play the most significant part in

meaning making, as they settle and narrate the story and make the content palpable. In *The Three Robbers*, text and images are complementary, as for example in the last page of the story, where the meaning is purely figurative, since it arises from the visual analogy between the robbers' hats and the form of the three towers.

Figure 1. Meaning arising from visual analogy 1:
Tomi Ungerer, *Die drei Räuber*

Figure 2. Meaning arising from visual analogy 2:
Tomi Ungerer, *Die drei Räuber*

Figure 3. Meaning arising from visual analogy 3: *Die drei Räuber* [1]

This visual analogy, which becomes a key image, is also present on the emblem of the robbers' castle. Discovering Tomi Ungerer's picturebook therefore means to read in an intermedial or multimodal way, and to decrypt the secret links between pictures and text. In this context, learning to read also means learning to decode, understand and interpret the marvellous pictures, and to combine the information they convey with the information delivered by the

[1] Three figures from Tomi Ungerer *Die drei Räuber* Copyright © 1963, 1967 Diogenes Verlag AG Zürich

three linguistic versions: French, German, and Alsatian. Consequently, picturebooks belong to the category of multimedia, calling for a multimodal approach of literacy teaching.

Our research argues for the use of multilingual picturebooks for the development of multilingual literacy in bilingual education, and more importantly, within the teacher education program for bilingual teachers at university. Such books could not exist without translation; therefore, they are the best examples of the mediation competence and intercultural understanding bi/multilinguals develop through their knowledge of several languages.

For teachers, the pedagogical affordances of multilingual picturebooks in bilingual pedagogy should be exemplified through creative projects, reassuring them that functioning in a multilingual mode is not detrimental to their students' bilingual acquisition. We also hope to have shown in this article that student teachers are well able to become creative agents of change in bilingual classrooms, once they have understood that strictly separating languages in their literacy teaching is not the most productive approach for their students to develop their bilingual identity.

Our research argues for the use of multilingual picturebooks for the development of multilingual literacy in bilingual education, and more importantly, within the teacher education program for bilingual teachers at university.

Multiliteracy teaching means teaching to read and write in several languages and in different semiotic modes: multilingual picturebooks are thus a perfect support for multimodal and multilingual literacy acquisition. Presently, ongoing research projects are trying to improve the translingual teaching strategies presented in this study by testing them in bilingual primary classrooms, in order to elaborate innovating pedagogical approaches for the creative reading of multilingual picturebooks.

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Introducing Critical Literacy to Pre-Service English Teachers through Fairy Tales

Introducir la literacidad crítica con estudiantes de Magisterio a través de cuentos tradicionales

Introduir la literacitat crítica amb estudiants de Magisteri a través dels contes tradicionals

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Abstract

The need for a more critical approach to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning is undeniable, yet little has been done to prepare teachers for teaching with this approach. This article reports one of the cycles on my action research study, involving a teacher educator and 35 pre-service English teachers. Together with the teacher educator, a unit on critical literacy was developed using fairy tales as the core text. In the unit, we introduced pre-service teachers to critical literacy through the critical reading, analysis, and rewriting of fairy tales for social transformation. They were assigned to rewrite a fairy tale as a form of social action and to reflect on the choices made in the rewriting process. The re-written fairy tales and the accompanying reflection essay were analysed using a rubric adapted from the four dimensions of critical literacy (Lewison et al., 2002). The re-written fairy tales and the reflections suggest the pre-service teachers' growing understanding of the non-neutrality of text, ability to read from a different perspective and offer an alternative one, and ability to identify socio-political issues, such as stereotypes, and to subvert them.

Keywords: critical literacy; EFL; fairy tales; pre-service English teachers

Resumen

La necesidad de un enfoque crítico de la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera es innegable, aunque se ha hecho bastante poco para preparar los y las docentes a enseñar des de este enfoque. Este artículo da cuenta de uno de los cicos de nuestro estudio de investigación-acción que involucra a una formadora de docentes y 35 estudiantes de Magisterio. Junto con la docente, se desarrolló una unidad sobre literacidad crítica a través de la lectura crítica, el análisis y la reescritura de cuentos tradicionales para la transformación social (Lewison et al., 2002). Los cuentos tradicionales reescritos y las reflexiones sugieren el aumento de la comprensión crítica de los y las docentes y la no neutralidad del texto, la habilidad de leer desde una perspectiva diferente y la habilidad de identificar problemas sociopolíticos como los estereotipos y subvertirlos.

Palabras clave: literacidad crítica; inglés como lengua extranjera; estudiantes de Magisterio de inglés.

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Resum

La necessitat d'un acostament crític a l'ensenyament-aprenentatge de l'anglés com a llengua estrangera és innegable, tot i que s'ha fet ben poc per preparar els i les docents per ensenyar des d'aquest acostament. Aquest article dona compte d'un dels cicles del nostre estudi d'investigació-acció que involucra una formadora d'ensenyants i 35 estudiants de Magisteri. Juntament amb la docent, es va desenvolupar una unitat sobre literacitat crítica a través de la lectura crítica, l'anàlisi i la reescriptura de contes tradicionals per a la transformació social (Lewison et al., 2002). Els contes tradicionals reescrits i les reflexions suggereixen l'augment de la comprensió crítica dels i les mestres i la no neutralitat del text, l'habilitat de llegir des d'una perspectiva diferent i l'habilitat d'identificar problemes sociopolítics com els estereotips i subvertir-los.

Paraules clau: literacitat crítica; anglés com a llengua estrangera; estudiants de Magisteri d'anglés

1. Introduction

Being literate in English in this twenty-first century is not sufficient to prepare English as a foreign language (EFL) students to be citizens who have the aspirations to participate in creating a democratic and just society. This need calls for the teaching of critical literacy that ultimately aims to promote social justice through literacy experiences (Lewison et al., 2002; Vasquez et al., 2019). Critical literacy that acknowledges the intricate relationships between power and English language learning (Dooley et al., 2016; Luke & Dooley, 2011) has grown in popularity as an approach to teaching and learning in EFL classrooms in various countries. It has opened up spaces for discussions of real-world issues and encouragement of social transformation (Gómez Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Huh, 2016; Janks, 2012, 2014) in classes where formerly language competence was the sole focus. Preparing EFL teachers to be critical then becomes paramount, especially given its increasing perceived importance in the classrooms of English language teaching (ELT) in general and English as a foreign language (EFL) in particular (Dooley et al., 2016; Huh, 2016; Luke & Dooley, 2011; Pennycook, 1990, 2001).

Critical literacy has also quite recently entered Indonesian EFL classrooms. It has been adopted as an instructional approach for teaching English at college (e.g. Setyaningsih, 2019; Suarcaya & Prasasti, 2017) and secondary (e.g. Gustine, 2014; Gustine & Insani, 2019; Kurniawati et al., 2020) levels. Despite its growing acceptance into the EFL classrooms, little attention has been given to preparing teachers to be critically literate and competent to teach from a critical perspective. Meanwhile, McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2020) argued, "The most challenging precondition for teaching critical literacy is that the teachers themselves must first become critically literate" (p. 588). Against this backdrop, the action research study sought to develop critical literacy skills with pre-service teachers that will hopefully be useful for teaching their future students with a critical approach.

There are various strategies teacher educators have attempted to equip their pre-service teachers with critical literacy skills. The pre-service English teachers in this particular action research were introduced to critical literacy through critical engagement with fairy tales. The reasoning behind the selection of fairy tales as the core text and further explanations of the contextual backgrounds and theoretical frameworks of the study are elaborated in the following sections.

Despite its growing acceptance into the EFL classrooms, little attention has been given to preparing teachers to be critically literate and competent to teach from a critical

2. Critical Literacy for EFL Pre-Service Teachers

The teaching and learning of English in the context where English is not the first language is strongly political (Dooley et al., 2016; Huh, 2016; Luke & Dooley, 2011). Yet, in classrooms, English is often taught as a language whose main function is for communicative purposes (Huh, 2016), and teaching is focused more on grammar and vocabulary memorisation (Alwasilah, 2001, 2011; Gustine, 2014). Critical literacy then comes into the picture to highlight the political nature of English teaching and learning (Dooley et al., 2016; Huh, 2016). It encourages critical discussion and fosters critical awareness of learners in using and learning English as a foreign language (Gómez Jiménez & Gutierrez, 2019; Huh, 2016).

Such critical discussion and consciousness-raising can only be facilitated by teachers who are critically literate. In this context, critically literate EFL teachers are those who are aware that the teaching of English is political—what they teach (and not teach) and how they teach are political actions that bear some consequences (Luke & Dooley, 2011; Pennycook, 1990, 2001). EFL teachers who are critically literate also understand the relationship between language, in this case English, and power, and that English can be the key to access the dominant power (Luke & Dooley, 2011). Finally, critically literate EFL teachers are also aware that students' socio-economic backgrounds affect how they learn English (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2019; Pinter, 2017), so too their different cultural backgrounds which necessitate cultural awareness and sensitivity in teaching and learning (Pinter, 2017). In this action research, the focus is on raising pre-service teachers' awareness and understanding of the relationship between text and power by engaging them in critical reading and analysis of fairy tales. It is expected that this activity will help develop the pre-service teachers' critical stance which is necessary to help them become critically literate (Lewison et al., 2008; Pennycook, 1999).

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3. Fairy Tales and Critical Literacy

The term fairy tale traditionally refers to tales involving fairy characters (Ashliman, 2004; Zipes, 1979/1992), although it has been popularly used for tales of magic that have no fairy characters at all, such as Little Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel. The term was derived from the French modern phrase, which was also the title of a book written by Countess D'Aulnoy (1697), Les Conte de Fees. The misnomer began when the term came to be translated into "Tales of the Fairys" in English (Ashliman, 2004; Zipes, 1979/1992) and later used to refer to the German folk tale (Volksmärchen) (Zipes, 1979/1992).

Originally part of the verbal folklore, the fairy tale, as argued by Zipes (1979/1992, 1983), was transformed into a print-based literary genre disseminated to the general public to serve the political purposes of some European countries' feudal and capitalist societies. The Brothers Grimm (Germany) and Charles Perrault (France) collected and reappropriated what would become today's most popular classic fairy tales. Although fairy tales were originally intended for adult readers, they were later targeted at child readers and as such have undergone much appropriation, as was done by the Brothers Grimm to the second edition of their collected fairy tales, Nursery and Household Tales published two years after its first edition in 1814 (Zipes, 1988). To this date, fairy tales have almost always been associated with children, especially after Disney adopted them into many children's films and animations consumed worldwide.

Traditionally, fairy tales serve as wish-fulfilment fantasy rooted in the European tradition of wonder tale (Lüthi, 1970; Zipes, 1979/1992). The tales give their readers some hope of restoration and justice, where the good will always be rewarded, and the bad will always be punished. Typically, fairy tales include characters from the extreme ends of the spectrum, the most beautiful and/or the ugliest, the king and/or the peasant, etc. (Lüthi, 1970). What primarily distinguishes fairy tales from other folktales such as legends is their non-specific ties to a particular place or culture; instead, they can be claimed for authorships and re-written for certain purposes (Zipes, 2015). Based on these characteristics, the fairy tale in this study is defined as a tale with fantasy elements, containing either fairies or non-fairy creatures, set in a magical and imaginary realm, and is part of the popular culture. The genre comprises the tales originating in oral traditions, such as those collected by the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault, and the modern tales created by specific authors, such as Marie-Catherine (Countess) D'Aulnoy and Hans Christian Anderson.

The use of fairy tales for teaching critical literacy is quite common in language classrooms across various contexts, from language arts to foreign language such as ELT. Fairy tales have been used to engage students in critical reading and analysis for encouraging social transformations at various levels

and contexts, from early childhood and kindergarten (e.g. Kim, 2016; Kim & Cho, 2017; Labadie et al., 2013; Maher, 2018; Wee et al., 2017) to primary school (e.g. Ajayi, 2012; Bourke, 2008; Karagiannaki & Stamou, 2018), early secondary (e.g. Gustine & Insani, 2019; Hayik, 2015, 2016), upper secondary (e.g. Ajayi, 2015), and to college level (e.g. Huang, 2019; Stasz & Bennett, 1997).

Teachers and practitioners have cited the popularity and appeals of fairy tales to learners across ages and genders as one of the main reasons to use them as the core text in their critical literacy practice (Ajayi, 2012; Hayik, 2015, 2016; Karagiannaki & Stamou, 2018; Stasz & Bennett, 1997; Wee et al., 2017). This view is supported by scholars of fairy tales who highlight the universal popularity and appeal of fairy tales to people of all ages (Ashliman, 2004; Kole, 2018; Lüthi, 1970; Zipes, 1979/1992, 1983, 2013).

Fairy tales also carry certain messages or ideologies that speak for the interest of certain groups of people (Ashliman, 2004; Bobby, 2009; Zipes, 1979/1992, 1983). Because one of the primary concerns of critical literacy is to help learners uncover the ideologies, biases, and social injustices represented by text, many teachers have used fairy tales for this purpose with their students. Some of the popular topics addressed in critical literacy practices using fairy tales include gender (Garofalo, 2013; Hayik, 2015, 2016; Huang, 2019; Kim & Cho, 2017; Tsai, 2010; Wee et al., 2017) and racial identity (Ajayi, 2012; Hsieh & Matoush, 2012).

The final reason for using fairy tales for critical literacy practices is related to the ultimate goal of critical literacy to encourage learners to participate in social action through reconstruction of text (Janks, 2000; Jones, 2006). Traditionally, fairy tales have been rewritten or revisited to fight against the hegemonic ideas represented or promoted by particular classic fairy tales (Tatar, 1999). Rewriting the fairy tale is then seen as an act of reconstructing the ideologies and countering them to promote social justice.

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4. Teaching Critical Literacy to Pre-Service Teachers Using Fairy Tales

The potentials offered by fairy tales to teach critical literacy have also been recognised by teacher educators. Fairy tales have been used as the core text to teach critical literacy to pre-service teachers in the context of English language (e.g. Chou, 2007; Stasz & Bennett, 1997). The most common activity to critically engage pre-service teachers is by inviting them to rewrite fairy tales to reconstruct gender and racial roles constructed in the tales. In some practices, the rewriting is done through

transmediation, such as reported by Altenderfer et al. (2012), in which the pre-service teachers revisited Hansel and Gretel through parody in the form of a photography-based comic strip.

Although fairy tales have been quite popularly used in teaching critical literacy to EFL students (e.g. Gustine & Insani, 2019; Hayik, 2015, 2016; Huang, 2019; Ko & Wang, 2009), their use in teacher education has not been reported. In fact, not much research has reported how critical literacy is introduced to EFL pre-service teachers. Within the limited literature, Dominguez (2019) engaged rural Colombian pre-service teachers in critically analysing advertisements displayed in their surroundings. Gutiérrez (2015), together with three of her Colombian pre-service teachers, explored the pedagogical approaches using critical literacy. She provided them with articles showing how various teachers translate the approaches into classroom practices. Subsequently, they created lesson plans with critical literacy orientations. Finally, Ng (2017) reported how his pre-service teachers conducted microteaching by translating critical literacy into secondary English lessons. No such research has been reported in Indonesian contexts, leaving a gap to be filled in by the present study.

5. Methods

The aim of the present study is to introduce critical literacy to EFL pre-service teachers to help prepare them to teach with a critical stance in the future. To this end and considering the fact that this particular topic has not been widely researched, action research was the appropriate method to employ (Efron & David, 2013; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007). The present action research study sits within both the critical and pragmatic paradigms. From the critical point of view, it is motivated by an interest shared with the teacher educator "in liberating" (Mills, 2011, p. 6) learners from practices in English teaching and learning that ignore students' voices and identities and sustain cultural hegemony (Luke & Dooley, 2011, p. 3). The action research also sits within the pragmatic paradigm (Mills, 2011) because it is part of my lifelong professional development, carried out in the university where I have been teaching, and the results are expected to help me improve my teaching and the practices of EFL teaching and learning in the university.

5.1 Participants and Site

I collaborated with a teacher educator and 35 pre-service teachers (31 female and 4 male students) taking the course of Practice of Teaching English to Young Learners. The pre-service teachers were enrolled in an English education study program in a busy city in Indonesia. Consent was obtained from the teacher educator and the pre-service teachers before the implementation of the critical literacy unit and after approval was received from the university ethics research committee.

5.2 The Unit

I collaborated with the teacher educator to create a unit on critical literacy, embedded in the course taken by the pre-service teachers. The unit consisted of four sessions, in which the pre-service teachers were first introduced to story-based methodology, the fairy tale as an alternative genre for teaching English to young learners, and critical literacy as an alternative approach to teach English to young learners. The present article reports a part of the unit where the pre-service teachers were introduced to critical literacy and engaged in the critical reading and analysis of fairy tales for social transformation. The engagement was expected to help pre-service teachers gain better understanding of critical literacy and to have some ideas to teach critical literacy through fairy tales to their future students.

5.3 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected mainly from the pre-service teachers' group assignments on rewriting critical literacy along with their reflection essays. The primary data were triangulated with interviews conducted with some pre-service teachers, and my reflections and notes of critical moments during class sessions.

The fairy tale re-writing assignment required the pre-service teachers to select a fairy tale and re-write it by using the critical literacy skills guided by the Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy (Lewison, et. al, 2002). They were asked to first read the fairy tale critically, trying to identify the ideology represented in the tale, whose voice is present and whose is absent, and any hegemonic idea commonly taken for granted (disrupting the commonplace). Secondly, they were encouraged to read the tale from different and/or multiple perspectives; for example, by changing the perspective (point of view) and reversing the characterisations of the characters (protagonist to antagonist, evil to good, etc.) (interrogating multiple viewpoints). Thirdly, they were asked to identify any social injustices represented by the tale (focusing and sociopolitical issues) and to eventually think of any actions to take to address the injustices (taking social action).

The assignment was done in a group of three to four. The design of the assignment was selected to allow for critical discussions or dialogues, as one of the most important strategies in the teaching and learning of critical literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004), to take place among the pre-service teachers. To ensure the contribution of each of the groups, the pre-service teachers were asked to write down their individual contributions to the assignment.

6. Data Analysis

To find out the extent to which the pre-service teachers gained understandings of critical literacy, their assignment on rewriting a fairy tale and reflecting on the rewriting was analysed using the rubric adapted from Lewison's et al. (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy consisting of "disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting social justice (p. 382). Lewison's et al. (2002) framework of critical literacy has been quite popularly used in teaching critical literacy in EFL classrooms (e.g. Gustine, 2014; Hayik, 2015, 2016). The framework has also been used as an analytical tool. Gustine (2014), for example, used this framework to analyse her students' responses to her critical literacy lesson on representations in advertisements. Hayik (2015) also used the framework to guide her analysis of her EFL secondary students' reconstruction of Cinderella, although she did not develop the framework into a rubric for the purpose.

In this study, I developed the framework into a rubric to analyse students' writing. The use of this framework as an analytical tool of student writing is what distinguishes my study from previous ones in which the fairy tale was used in teaching critical literacy to pre-service teachers. The previous studies (Chou, 2007; Stasz & Bennett, 1997) did not use specific frameworks to analyse how the re-written fairy tales show the writers' newly gained or developing understandings of critical literacy. The adapted rubric is presented in Table 1.

Dimension	Indicators
Disrupting the commonplace: "seeing the everyday through new lenses" (Lewison et al., 2002, pp. 382-383)	● Being able to identify the message that the fairy tale conveys, and the general response expected from the reader. ● Being able to identify the ideology or hegemonic idea promoted by the fairy tale that is usually taken for granted and question this by looking at it from a new or fresh perspective. ● Being able to interrogate the fairy tale with such questions as: How does the text position me as the reader? What character/ideology is privileged in the text? Does the text contain any biases against particular gender, race, class? Etc.
Interrogating multiple viewpoints	● Being aware of one's own perspective when reading the fairy tale. ● Being able to re-write the fairy tale from a different perspective; for example, using the point of view of one of the characters or that of the marginalised/prejudiced character.

Focusing on sociopolitical issues	● Being able to identify social injustices (stereotypes, biases, prejudices against certain gender, race, or culture, etc.) in the fairy tale.
Taking action and promoting social justice.	● Being able to subvert the identified social injustices by changing the characterisation of the character(s). ● Radically changing the storyline of the fairy tale to promote social justice.

Table 1. Rubric for Assessing Students' Re-Written Fairy Tale and Reflection Essay

The four dimensions are interrelated and at times overlapping, in which a particular excerpt in the re-written fairy tale or reflective essay may reflect one or more dimensions. For example, two dimensions of critical literacy can be found in the following excerpt by the group of pre-service teachers rewriting The Little Mermaid, "She was too young when she married Prince Eric[;] she was 16 at the time in the original story." The first dimension is the ability to disrupt the commonplace, to be aware that the fairy tale promotes underage marriage, which is a common case for many fairy tales. This fresh perspective disrupts the commonplace in that many usually overlook underage marriage and romanticise it. Another dimension is focusing on a sociopolitical issue, in which the pre-service teachers readily identify the social issue of underage marriage and focus on this issue throughout the rewritten fairy tale and the reflection.

Another dimension is focusing on a sociopolitical issue, in which the pre-service teachers readily identify the social issue of underage marriage and focus on this issue throughout the rewritten fairy tale and the reflection.

A total of 12 assignments were submitted by the pre-service teachers. Out of the 12 assignments, two were not included in the analysis because they did not follow the prompt carefully. The first group (group 2) selected *Frankenstein* by Mary Wollstonecraft, which belongs to the science fiction genre, and the second group chose *The Two Goats,* which was part of Aesop Fables. *The Ugly Duckling* and *Alamat Ng Sibuyas* can be both categorized as fable and legend, respectively. However, based on the criteria of fairy tales as described in the previous section, the two are considered fairy tales because, among others, they have been rewritten for certain purposes with claimed authorships. They are also not attached to a particular place or setting. *Alamat Ng Sibuyas,* for instance, originally derives from Filipino folktales. However, it has been re-written and reappropriated into various settings. The same can be said about *The Magic Pot* that is said to have originated from Chinese folktales.

Another way of ensuring whether the pre-service teachers were aware of the categorization was by asking them why they chose the respective tales. Upon being questioned for their selection, Group 2

and group 7 admitted they were not really sure of the fairy tale genre and had a misconception that fantasy and fables were included under the genre. On the other hand, group 9 argued that *Alamat Ng Sibuyas* belonged to the category of fairy tale because the version they adopted was popularised by a specific author who made many changes to the original tale for entertainment purposes.

7. Findings and Discussion

The findings show that most of the fairy tales selected by the pre-service teachers for the assignment were the classic tales popularised by Disney, including *The Little Mermaid*, *The Ugly Duckling* (three groups), *Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella*, and *Aladdin*. These fairy tales also share the similarity of originating from European countries, except for *Aladdin* which is believed to be part of the Middle Eastern tale *1001 Arabian Nights*. Only two groups chose a fairy tale that originated and circulated in Asia, namely *Alamat Ng Sibuyas*/*The Legend of Onion* (the Philippines) and *The Magic Pot*.

The selection can be explained by the popularity of Disney fairy tales among children and adults alike. The Australian pre-service teachers (adults) in Chou's study (2007) and the American primary school children in Ajayi's study (2012), for example, listed fairy tales popularised by Disney, such as *Snow White, Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel,* etc. when asked to share their favourite fairy tales. A similar phenomenon was reported in non-English speaking countries, such as Korea (Kim & Cho, 2017; Wee et al., 2017) and Greece (Karagiannaki & Stamou, 2018). In this regard, it seems that the Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers have also been familiar with the Disneyfied fairy tales.

[…]the analysis of the 10 re-written fairy tales and the accompanying reflective essays indicate that to a great extent the pre-service teachers have gained the abilities to read the fairy tales from a fresh perspective, present a different viewpoint to the story, identify social injustice and other sociopolitical issues in the tale, and rewrite the fairy tale to address the social injustices represented by the tale

With regard to how the assignments reflect the pre-service teachers' understandings of critical literacy, the analysis of the 10 re-written fairy tales and the accompanying reflective essays indicate that to a great extent the pre-service teachers have gained the abilities to read the fairy tales from a fresh perspective, present a different viewpoint to the story, identify social injustice and other sociopolitical issues in the tale, and rewrite the fairy tale to address the social injustices represented by the tale, reflecting the four dimensions of critical literacy identified by Lewison et al. (2002).

7.1 Disrupting the commonplace

All groups of pre-service teachers were able to read the fairy tales from a fresh perspective or question the ideas commonly taken for granted in them. In general, they could see some ideas related to gender roles, discrimination or bullying, and stereotypes of certain characters that have been perpetuated by fairy tales and subsequently taken for granted by general readers. Gender roles are the most predominant ideas disrupted by the pre-service teachers, as found in groups rewriting the tales of *The Little Mermaid, Cinderella*, *Rapunzel,* and *Alamat Ng Sibuyas.* This finding resonates with Zipes' (2013) argument that fairy tales have been created and disseminated, among others, to sustain the dominant patriarchal ideology that survived through the 19th and 20th centuries. Patriarchal ideology places women as the second gender, and fairy tales generally represent women this way.

In addition to gender roles, the pre-service teachers in group 1 were able to see the concept of marriage at a young age promoted by *The Little Mermaid.* In their reflection, they reasoned: "She was too young when she married Prince Eric; she was 16 at the time in the original story." This concept is generally overlooked and at times romanticised in fairy tales. Many fairy tale female characters marry at a young age, such as those in *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella*, and *Snow White*. Marriage is also frequently promoted as the ultimate goal of women's lives in fairy tales (Lieberman, 1972; Neikirk, 2009). The pre-service teachers saw marriage at a young age from a fresh perspective. They disrupted the romanticisation of marriage for young women.

The rest of the groups were able to identify the stereotypical characters commonly represented in fairy tales, such as the bad wolf (*Little Red Riding Hood*), the orphan thief (*Aladdin*), the greedy/foolish king (*The Magic Pot*), and the beauty versus the ugly/beast (*The Ugly Duckling*). Group 8 (*Aladdin*), for instance, noticed the original story promotes stealing as a means of survival for poor orphans, as shown in their reflection: "poor, abandoned orphan children . . . will always have bad behavior and do crimes in order to survive." The idea of orphans as petty criminals who survive by stealing and doing other petty crimes is promoted and sustained in fairy tales and other forms of literature (Wagner, 2012). The pre-service teachers were able to see this stereotype from a fresh perspective, arguing that being orphans should not be associated with criminals.

7.2 Interrogating multiple viewpoints

The next dimension, "interrogating multiple viewpoints," is concerned with the ability to read the story and rewrite it from different or multiple perspectives. In general, the strategies employed by the pre-service teachers to present the story from a different perspective include switching or changing the characters and/or characterisations and presenting the perspective of a different character whose voice or perspective is commonly unheard in the original fairy tales.

The groups that switched and/or changed the characters' characterisations include *The Little Mermaid, The Ugly Duckling* (group 5)*, Alamat Ng Sibuyas,* and *The Magic Pot.* The group rewriting *The Little Mermaid* switched the traits and behaviors of the prince with those of Ariel. Instead of Ariel falling deeply and blindly in love with the prince, it is the prince who falls in love with her. An excerpt of the tale demonstrates this switch: "And he thought he fell in love[;] he fell for Ariel. He tried to find a way to go to Ariel's house." In the original story, it is Ariel who struggles to go to the land of the prince, even going as far as sacrificing her voice in exchange for feet. Similarly, in the re-written *The Ugly Duckling*, the group decided to switch the mother duck character with a swan to remove the original "switched at birth" motive and highlight the idea of maturation. In *Alamat Ng Sibuyas*, the pre-service teachers switched the gender of the main character, Sibuyas, from a girl to a boy, to send a message that boys can also cry. Finally, group 4 rewriting *The Magic Pot* chose to change the king, from a greedy one to a wise one, to avoid a bad ending to the story as in the original version where the king died because of his greed.

The rest of the groups chose to center the perspectives of other characters: the wolf (*Little Red Riding Hood*), the witch (*Rapunzel*), the villagers (*Cinderella*), Jasmine's father, the king (*Aladdin*), or animals on the farm (*The Ugly Duckling*—group 6). The *Little Red Riding Hood* group chose to include the perspective of the wolf in the tale to emphasise their concern with deforestation and the loss of natural habitats for animals caused by human greed. The *Rapunzel* group decided to tell the story of the witch so that readers could better understand her motives and intentions toward Rapunzel. Similarly, the character of the king in *Aladdin* was given a voice and changed his disposition from one who sees the value of people based on their wealth to one who values personality and attitudes more. Finally, the supporting animals in *The Ugly Duckling* (group 6) were given a voice in the story to promote the idea of respecting and accepting the ugly duckling as a different duck, instead of ugly.

By interrogating their own perspectives and exploring the perspectives of other characters who are silent or not given enough voice, the pre-service teachers were able to gain an awareness that a story may give voice to

The strategies employed by the pre-service teachers are referred to as "character substitution" and "character perspective," respectively by McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004). McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) explained further how these strategies are effective to help students examine alternative perspectives and explore "the viewpoints of different characters in a story or different people in a real-life situation" (p. 49). By interrogating their own perspectives and exploring the perspectives of other characters who are silent or not given enough voice, the pre-service teachers were able to gain an awareness that a story may give voice to certain characters and hence socio-cultural groups but not to other groups.

7.3 Focusing on socio-political issues

For the third dimension, all groups, except group 4 (*The Magic Pot*), were able to identify the sociopolitical issues raised in the fairy tales. As shown by Table 2, the issues identified were mostly concerned with stereotypes related to gender and race, although other issues, such as bullying, marriage at a young age, deforestation, and stereotypes of certain cultural groups, were also observed. As Chou (2007) contended, "Critiquing through recreation of fairy tales can reveal biases of personal and cultural constructions of race and gender" (p. 55). The majority of the pre-service teachers in Chou's study (2007) were also found to be focused on gender in their reconstruction of the fairy tales. All groups, except one, were reported to have selected fairy tales with a female main character.

In other classrooms, fairy tales have also been reported to be used as the core text in critical literacy practices that dealt with gender representation, particularly women. Garofalo (2013) invited Canadian primary school students to analyse how Disney's powerful female characters are usually portrayed as being evil and ugly. Hayik (2015, 2016) engaged her early secondary Arab-Israeli students in reconstructing Cinderella to transform gender bias represented in the fairy tale. Other teachers also reported similar focus on gender representation in fairy tales with their respective students in various contexts (Huang, 2019; Kim & Cho, 2017; Tsai, 2010; Wee et al., 2017).

Group	Tale	Social justice issues identified
1	*The Little Mermaid*	Underage marriage and the stereotype of women blindly falling in love with man, sacrificing everything for them
3	*The Ugly Duckling*	Bullying
5	*The Ugly Duckling*	The stereotypical idea of beauty and the marginalization of those that do not meet the standards of beauty, bullying
6	*The Ugly Duckling*	The stereotype of black is ugly and white is beautiful; bullying
8	*Aladdin*	The stereotype of orphans as petty criminals
9	*Alamat Ng Sibuyas/The Legend of Onion*	The gender stereotype of masculinity versus femininity in dealing with emotions
10	*Rapunzel*	The stereotypes of female characters in extreme spectrums: either too weak and passive or too aggressive and evil

11	*Little Red Riding Hood*	The stereotypical idea of animal as bad and human as good; deforestation
12	*Cinderella*	The promotion of competition instead of support among women

Table 2. List of socio-political issues identified in the tales

Interestingly, the pre-service teachers in this study unearthed more socio-political issues than gender and race. Bullying, for instance, was the issue identified by all groups rewriting *The Ugly Duckling*, which has been attested to by other researchers as well (e.g. Slee, 2017; Utami, 2018). There is also the issue of deforestation brought forward by the group rewriting *Little Red Riding Hood* that is believed to have been caused by human greed, as represented by the wood cutter.

At some point, this dimension may seem to be overlapping with the dimension of "disrupting the commonplace." However, the dimension of "focusing on sociopolitical issues" is more than being able to identify stereotypes or commonly taken for granted ideas in the fairy tale. This dimension takes this identification of social justice issues further by relating them to the real-world situation. Group 5 (*The Ugly Duckling*), for example, was aware that the standards of beauty have marginalised certain societies, especially those who are from the marginalized groups: "Societies have marginalized those who are different . . . People from other races with darker tones are seen as different . . . body [shaming] is everywhere" (reflection essay).

7.4 Taking action and promoting social justice

Essentially, the act of rewriting or reconstructing a fairy tale is considered a social action. As Lewison et al. (2008) contended, encouraging students to be agents of change can be strengthened "when students compose their own narratives, counternarratives, letters, essays, reports, poems, commercials, posters, plays, and webpages to promote social change" (p. 21). Based on the analysis, it was found that most of the groups incorporated this dimension of taking action and promoting social justice in their rewritten fairy tales. The majority of the pre-service teacher groups changed the storyline of the fairy tales and/or transformed some of their characters to realise this goal.

As an example, the *Cinderella* group radically changed the story by removing the part of the sisters competing to go to the ball and get noticed by the prince. Instead, the group decided to solely focus on the education of Cinderella and how the stepmother and stepsisters all helped her to be successful in her education. The group also transformed the stepmother's and stepsisters' characterisations from evil to good and were very supportive of Cinderella's education pursuits.

Group 3 (*The Ugly Duckling*) and group 4 (*The Magic Pot*) were found to have not included this dimension in their fairy tales. In *The Ugly Duckling*, the pre-service teachers failed to elaborate upon

the new idea of maturation and how it relates to bullying. In the reflection, they said they would like to raise the issue of bullying that happens in the close environment of the bullied. However, in the story the bullying stopped only because the ugly duckling transformed into a beautiful swan, not because the bullies learned a lesson or realised they made any mistake. In *The Magic Pot*, although the story's ending changes into a happy one due to the new characterisation of the king as a wise man, the reflection did not show the reasoning for the change and what social issue was uncovered and addressed. Their main concern was in simplifying the story to suit young readers. They also explained their attempts at localising the story by changing the setting to rice fields but failed to explain why such localisation is necessary.

8. Conclusions

Introducing critical literacy to pre-service teachers or undergraduate students in general is not an easy task, as is noted by Bartlett (2009) and Lee (2016). It is even more challenging with EFL pre-service teachers who have never had experience with teaching English from a critical stance and who have always seen the teaching of English as a neutral activity to help learners be fluent in a language used internationally. Within the limited literature on this particular topic of critical literacy and pre-service teachers, the present action research has attempted to engage EFL pre-service teachers in disrupting the fairy tale, interrogating it from multiple perspectives, identifying socio-political issues in the tale, and reconstructing the work as a form of social action (Lewison et al., 2002).

Critical literacy was a relatively new concept for the pre-service teachers; however, when introduced through critical engagement with fairy tales, they seemed to not only enjoy the activity but also gain understandings of some of the key tenets of critical literacy, particularly concerning the interplay between text and power. Through the engagement, the pre-service teachers became aware that fairy tales, which are frequently perceived as 'innocent' children's tales, are not that innocent. When critically analysed, the tales were found to promote certain ideologies, stereotypes and marginalisation of certain groups of people. This awareness of the political nature of text is important because "awareness is an initial step in the process of change" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 336). Through this activity of critically engaging with fairy tales by questioning the tales for their biases and assumptions, the pre-service teachers are expected to apply the same questioning attitude to whatever text they will encounter in their future teaching and learning.

In the feedback to the unit more than half of the pre-service teachers mentioned this particular activity helped improve their understanding of some of the key concepts of critical literacy. This positive feedback is most possibly attributed to the use of the fairy tale for the critical engagement. The pre-service teachers were already familiar with fairy tales, especially those popularised by Disney. As

argued by Lee (2016), “children’s books present difficult issues in a way that is comprehensible to adults as well as children while the significance of the issues presented in the books is not compromised” (p. 50). Engaging with the tales was consequently fun and enlightening.

The most important challenge observed was the ability to reflect, which is important for teachers to be critically literate. While all the fairy tales were reconstructed in ways that suggest some attempts at social transformations, these attempts were not well-elaborated in the reflections by some groups.

However, certainly there were also challenges encountered throughout the critical engagement with fairy tales. The most important challenge observed was the ability to reflect, which is important for teachers to be critically literate (Lewison et al., 2008). While all the fairy tales were reconstructed in ways that suggest some attempts at social transformations, these attempts were not well-elaborated in the reflections by some groups. *The Magic Pot* group, for example, transformed the story from having a bad ending to a good one by changing the greedy king into a wise king. However, the reflection essay did not explain why the transformation was done and what social injustice was identified from the original story that necessitated such transformation.

Certainly, more efforts should be made to help EFL pre-service teachers become critically literate and better able to learn how to teach with a critical edge in the future. The present action research hopefully can serve as an impetus for EFL teacher education to consider teaching critical literacy to pre-service teachers.

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Teaching Picturebooks in First Year Literature Courses

Enseñar con álbumes ilustrados en primeros cursos de literatura

Ensenyar amb àlbums il·lustrats a primers cursos de literatura

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Abstract

In many universities, first year literature courses are required for students in a wide variety of programs, including arts and sciences. These courses are generally focused on teaching transferable skills and strategies, such as critical analysis, essay writing, and research. This article argues that picturebooks are an exceptional teaching tool for these broadly focused first-year courses, because they quickly engage students as learners, encourage participation, and open students to new approaches of critically reading texts while challenging their assumptions and personal biases about children's literature. Examples of picturebooks, secondary sources, class discussion, and group work activities used in first year literature courses are shared, along with students' responses to these approaches. The article ends with an explanation of a short, low-stakes assignment that instructors can assign students to help build essential skills with picturebooks, and exercises to do around picturebooks to work on critical thinking skills. Picturebooks are often perceived as being simple and only for children, but many picturebooks are layered texts that make great teaching tools for any literature course.

Keywords: first-year undergraduates, picturebooks, student engagement, literature course, transferable skills/strategies

Resumen

En muchas universidades, los primeros cursos de literatura son un requisito para el estudiantado de una gran variedad de programas, incluyendo las artes y las ciencias. Estos cursos, generalmente, se centran en enseñar habilidades y estrategias transferibles como el análisis crítico, la escritura de ensayos y la investigación. Este artículo argumenta que los álbumes ilustrados son una herramienta excepcional de enseñanza para estos cursos enfocados de manera muy amplia ya que motivan al alumnado como aprendices, motivan la participación y abren este alumnado a nuevos enfoques a la lectura crítica de textos al tiempo que plantean un reto a sus asunciones y sesgos personales sobre la literatura infantil. Se compartieron ejemplos de álbumes ilustrados, fuentes secundarias, discusiones de aula y actividades de trabajo en grupo que se utilizaron en las clases de literatura para primeros cursos junto con las respuestas del alumnado a estos planteamientos. El artículo acaba con la explicación de una tarea corta, de bajo riesgo, que el profesorado puede pedir al alumnado para ayudarlo a construir habilidades básicas con álbumes y ejercicios para hacer sobre estos para trabajar con habilidades de pensamiento crítico. Los álbumes ilustrados se perciben a menudo como

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simples y dirigidos a niños y niñas, pero muchos álbumes tienen diferentes capas que los convierten en herramientas magníficas para cualquier curso de literatura.

Palabras clave: alumnado de primer curso de carrera, álbumes ilustrados, motivación del alumnado, curso de literatura, habilidades/estrategias transferibles

Resum

A moltes universitats, els primers cursos de literatura són un requisit per a estudiantat de una gran varietat de programes, incloent-hi arts i ciències. Aquests cursos, generalment, se centren a ensenyar habilitats i estratègies transferibles com l'anàlisi crítica, l'escriptura d'assajos i la recerca. Aquest article argumenta que els àlbums il·lustrats són una eina excepcional d'ensenyament per aquests cursos enfocats de forma molt àmplia ja que motiven l'alumnat com a aprenents, motiven la participació i obrin aquest l'alumnat a nous acostaments a la lectura crítica de textos mentre plantegen un repte a les seues assumpcions i biaixos personals sobre la literatura infantil. Es van compartir exemples d'àlbums il·lustrats, fonts secundàries, discussions d'aula i activitats de treball en grup que s'utilitzaren a les classes de literatura per a primers cursos, junt amb les respostes de l'alumnat a aquests enfocaments. L'article acaba amb l'explicació d'una tasca curta, de baix risc que el professorat pot demanar a l'alumnat per tal d'ajudar-lo a construir habilitats bàsiques amb àlbums il·lustrats i exercicis per fer al seu voltant per treballar sobre habilitats de pensament crític. Els àlbums il·lustrats es perceben sovint com a simples i adreçats a infants, però molts àlbums tenen diferents capes que els converteixen en eines magnífiques per a qualsevol curs de literatura.

Paraules clau: alumnat de primer curs de carrera, àlbums il·lustrats, motivació de l'alumnat, curs de literatura, habilitats/estratègies transferibles

1. Introduction

In teaching first year English, I am continually moving towards giving students more opportunities to engage through in-class discussion, group work, and workshops. Although my first-year English courses' main objectives are to teach either critical analysis or writing research papers, I recognize that most students are in their first year of university and still learning how to be successful in a university setting. Thus, I also see my course as an opportunity to help students learn strategies and introduce them to resources that allow them to better navigate the stresses of university. My focus is tied to my concerns about student mental health and well-being. Children's literature helps to meet my course objectives, as well as being an important part of my teaching pedagogy focusing on strategy development and student well-being. In this article, I argue that picturebooks are a useful teaching tool in a first-year literature course, regardless of its focus, and use my own experiences and approaches to teaching picturebooks,

along with examples of student work, to show that picturebooks can lead to diverse and critical discussions that help students develop strategies and reach course objectives.

I see many of my approaches to teaching first year students reflected in Bill Johnston's (2010) discussion of the First Year Experience (FYE), which he describes as the transitionary phase into university that is a varied experience influenced by the increasing diversity of student backgrounds. Johnston's goal is to suggest ways to create a better FYE for as many students as possible. Although he calls for a university-wide approach that sees coordinated strategies implemented at all levels and across campus, Johnston acknowledges that depending on institutional culture and attitudes towards teaching, instructors may find themselves trying to implement some of his strategies in an individual course.

My focus is tied to my concerns about student mental health and well-being. Children's literature helps to meet my course objectives, as well as being an important part of my teaching pedagogy focusing on strategy development and student well-being

Johnston (2010) describes a good FYE as allowing students to not only learn content, but also gain skills and strategies that they can take forward. The class should be structured around activities, support, feedback, and assessment that will build selected skills. Johnston believes that first-year learning is best cultivated in an environment that is open and engaging, while shifting the focus to students experiencing learning instead of simply listening to lectures. In essence, a good first year class will make the learning process "collaborative, cumulative and constructive," and have "engaged and empowered" learners who are encouraged to think in "deep, reflective, analytical, and creative" ways (p. 41). Similarly, I aim to have my first-year classes focused on engaging in strategies, supporting student needs, and giving choices that reflect both their interests and their learning needs.

I have taught picturebooks in two different first year English literature courses at the University of Alberta, *ENGL 102: Introduction to Critical Analysis* and *ENGL 103: Case Studies in Research.* ENGL 102 is focused on teaching students to critically analyse and read a variety of texts and requires the instructor to cover different genres, time periods, topics, and approaches in the course texts. The requirements of this course mean that picturebooks, and any other children's literature, are just one part of the course. The focus of ENGL 103 is on teaching students to write a research project and allows the instructor to choose a case study (in my case, children's literature) to teach the process of academic research, as well as critical analysis. I generally link my case study of children's literature to a theme, such as "time and space" or "representations

of childhood," and select picturebooks based on that theme and the foundational skills of the course. I scaffold the assignments in both these courses, beginning with low-stakes assignments to practice the foundations, such as understanding, using, and citing a secondary source, or doing a short close-reading, and build to the longer essays that finish these courses. I cover picturebooks near the beginning of both courses, so my teaching of them is connected to building foundational skills and strategies through in-class engagement and feedback. I rarely lecture in my courses, instead focusing on group discussion and work, class discussion, working through examples as a class, allowing students to practice strategies, and assignment workshops for peer and instructor feedback.

Although I approach my teaching of picturebooks similarly in both ENGL 102 and ENGL 103, there are some differences. In ENGL 102, picturebooks are used to introduce close reading of literature in general, while in ENGL 103, picturebooks serve as an introduction to discussions around children's literature. In this article, I begin with an outline of the advantages of using picturebooks as a teaching tool, followed by my method of using a picturebook in a general English literature course like ENGL 102, and then expand on additions for courses with a stronger children's literature focus, like ENGL 103.

2. Strengths of Picturebooks as a Teaching Tool

I cover picturebooks at the beginning of both courses because they are an excellent way to introduce close reading and analysis, while also helping with early student engagement and confidence. From this standpoint, picturebooks help meet my teaching objectives in first year English literature courses in three ways: First, although it may seem very basic, picturebooks are generally not as intimidating to first year students as other forms of literature. Students feel they can more easily understand and grasp a picturebook, and thus are more willing to participate in discussion and activities. Second, students have some familiarity with picturebooks. They likely have a favourite book from their childhood and have memories of reading it and why they liked it. For engagement, there is nothing better than personal connection and experience. Third, while students know and have read picturebooks, it is unlikely that they have interrogated why and how they understand a picturebook in a particular way, and if there are other ways to understand it. Students often come to class thinking of picturebooks as simple, but they can quickly be shown the multiple layers of meaning and complexity in a picturebook

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that comes from closer observation. Although students have read and analyzed novels, poetry, and plays in high school, they likely have not approached a picturebook since primary school and have little knowledge of how to read and analyze pictures. This lack of background generally makes students more open to learning new approaches and more inclined to use secondary readings for assistance.

There are many studies focused on using picturebooks as a teaching tool for children and youth, but only a few that take this subject into the university classroom or focus on adult learners. However, the studies that do focus on picturebooks in the university classroom find similar advantages and strengths to what I just listed. Daly and Blakeney-Williams (2015) see the advantages of picturebooks as a teaching tool in their accessibility (both in availability and familiarity), their ability to connect adults to their child selves and in turn the book, their ability to break negative perceptions and build confidence, and their use to grab students' interest to help fill knowledge gaps. The university students that Meyerson (2006) surveyed rated reading picturebooks in class the most positively of all classroom activities, which they noted helped them understand concepts and theories, while also being a nice change of pace. For Meyerson (2006), picturebooks can be a powerful learning tool as long as they are not overused. Student biases of the simplicity of picturebooks are addressed by explaining why they are being used, and care is given so students do not form simplistic understandings of theories and concepts being taught using picturebooks. Maizonniaux (2017) surveyed students before and after picturebooks were used in their university-level language and cultural studies course. The students moved from seeing picturebooks as simple, for children, and with images that just illustrated the text, to seeing picturebooks as sophisticated, rich, and complex. They also showed engagement in the texts as their thinking shifted to address questions debated in picturebook research. Maizonniaux (2017) emphasizes the importance of balancing accessibility and stimulation (or simplicity and complexity) when choosing picturebooks to teach, as this balance is important to student engagement and productive learning.

For new language learners, the language level of picturebooks is often appropriate to their own, while the books also provide enough depth and complexity to keep adult learners engaged.

While Meyerson (2006) suggests that university instructors from many disciplines can use picturebooks effectively in their classrooms, and Daly and Blakeney-Williams (2015) include instructors from a variety of curriculum areas in their study, both these studies are focused on teacher education programs, and Maizonniaux's (2017) study is of French language learners. The benefits or reasons to use picturebooks in courses for pre-service teachers and new language learners is more evident than

in a general literature course. Pre-service teachers will soon be teaching children and looking to pedagogical approaches to use in their future classrooms, where picturebooks can naturally take an important role. For new language learners, the language level of picturebooks is often appropriate to their own, while the books also provide enough depth and complexity to keep adult learners engaged. In this article, I add to this field of knowledge by focusing on another area of study, literature, where picturebooks are a beneficial teaching and learning tool at the university level and continue to be overlooked and misrepresented.

3. The First Impression Approach

I always start discussing a picturebook in class by using a "first impression" approach, asking students to look at the outside of the book: what does the book suggest to them by its shape, size, colour, title, font, and cover illustrations? Students often discuss what age group the book is geared toward, the mood or atmosphere of the cover illustration, and suggest hints given about the story inside and its focus. Figure 1 shows the results of one class's first impression discussion of Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*. This group of students focused on the book's cover. They began with broad ideas about the style and setting but soon focused in on certain objects, characters, colour, lighting, cover design, and even the title itself, and connected them together to begin forming a concept of the whole book. Most notably, the students have already caught onto the importance of interactions and relationships over place in this story, which came from taking their readings of the characters (the man and the creature) and objects (the man's clothes and suitcase) on the cover "photo" that does not have any suggestion of background or place.

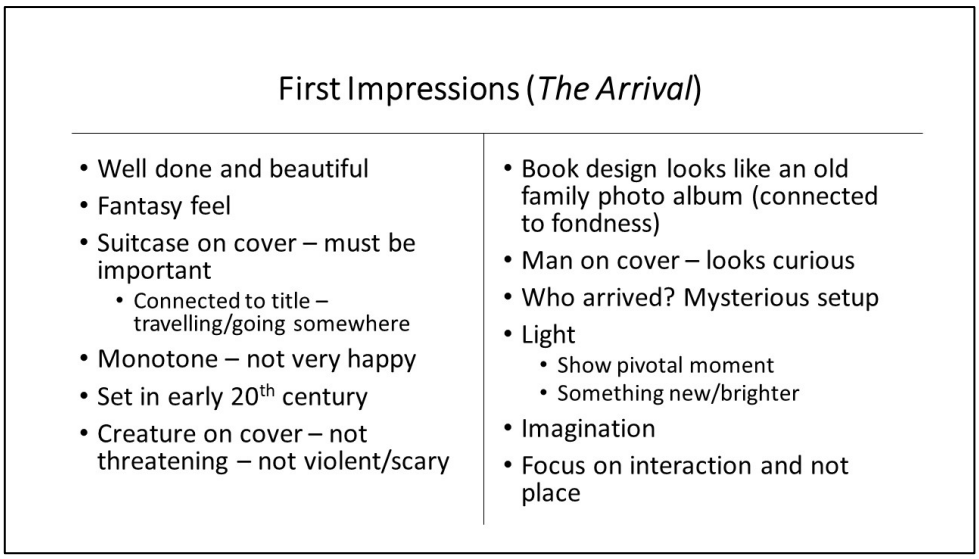

Figure 1. A recreation of the board work resulting from a first impressions discussion of Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* with an ENGL 102 class.

Maria Nikolajeva (2006) discusses a similar starting approach, saying that she always starts

> the exploration with the picturebook as an object, an artefact. The students are rarely aware of the fact that not only the pictures accompanying the words, but the cover, the back cover, the title page, and the endpapers may contain significant information, as can the size and format of the book, page layout, and other purely format qualities (p. 109).

For example, when I teach Nicola Campbell's *Shin-chi's Canoe* (2008), which follows the experiences of an Indigenous brother and sister as they attend residential school, I ask students to also read the cover flaps, which include a description of Campbell (who is Interior Salish and Métis) interviewing elders and family who survived residential school to help write the book. I also point them to Campbell's (2008) introduction, where she briefly describes the history and impacts of residential schools, but also states that "steadfast resistance, determination, courage, healing, strength of spirit and an overwhelming love for our children and culture are the tremendous forces that have empowered indigenous peoples around the world to overcome the profound impact that this part of history has had on them" (p. 1). When *Shin-chi's Canoe*, I give students a brief overview of the activism, experiences, and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada, as students have different levels of knowledge, and emphasize that these issues are still unresolved and are relevant to current experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. I ask students to consider what intended audience these cover flaps and introduction indicate, as well as what message the book wants to send. The discussion often covers the introduction as written for white adults in Canada who are reading the book with children and need help answering children's questions. Students may also note that while the book could be for any reader, it does have elements that are present to educate and inform the white reader. I also point to the section of the introduction I previously quoted and guide the conversation towards discussing the children in the story as resilient survivors, who with the help of their family work against the institutional and governmental systems attempting to strip them of their culture and identity.

4. Critical Reading of Illustrations

My next step in teaching students a picturebook is to focus on the pictures and how they tell the story. This step is more straight-forward with a wordless picturebook, as words always influence readers, but asking students to focus on the pictures first, even in a picturebook with words, is a good way of introducing how to do close reading that gives detailed examples and explanations. When I take this picture-focused approach with a picturebook that has words, I also include a discussion on how words and pictures influence each other.

In my ENGL 103 class, I have students read Perry Nodelman's (1988) chapter on the relationship of pictures and words to help with this discussion, but it is not difficult to summarize the main points for students. Nodelman (1988) argues that words influence how we read pictures and vice versa and take on a different meaning together than they would separately, as they "limit" each other (p. 221). Words and pictures have different strengths, with words giving context and focus for which the pictures can give specifics and extra details not in the words, especially in their style and characterization. While words describe things we have experienced, pictures can show us things we do not know or have the words to understand. Nodelman (1988) also includes a description of an experiment he did that asked participants to describe the story of a picturebook from viewing only the pictures. Although the experiment cannot be fully replicated, as students generally have already read the book when they come to class, asking them to think about what story and meaning they get from the pictures alone is a good method to demonstrate the relationship between words and pictures in picturebooks. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the results of two ENGL 103 classes reading *Shin-chi's Canoe* without the words. Their focus is on the importance of context, which the words provide, that is lost when just reading the pictures and takes away a lot of the weight of the story and its residential school setting. The students also note that the message of hope and resilience in the story, related to family bonds, is also lost without the words for guidance.

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By asking students to focus on the pictures for their analysis, they cannot just quote the words on the page as their example but must explain what they see and how particular parts of the image affects their understanding. To help, I cover some basic concepts from Molly Bang's (2000) *Picture This: How Pictures Work*, giving a summary of Bang's explanations of how shape, size, and placement can affect the reading of an illustration and drawing versions of the illustrations that Bang uses as examples in her book. Figure 4 is an example of what students have access to in the online classroom after class for reference. This slide is an example of the minimum information students need, but I have also introduced quotes from Bang's book to expand on these concepts.

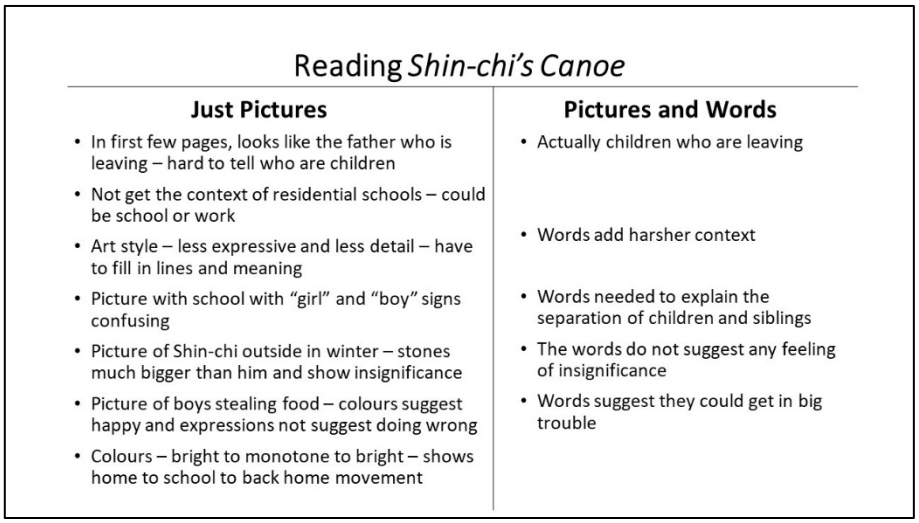

Figure 2. A recreation of board work that resulted from a discussion of reading words and pictures in Nicola Campbell's Shin-chi's Canoe with an ENGL 103 class

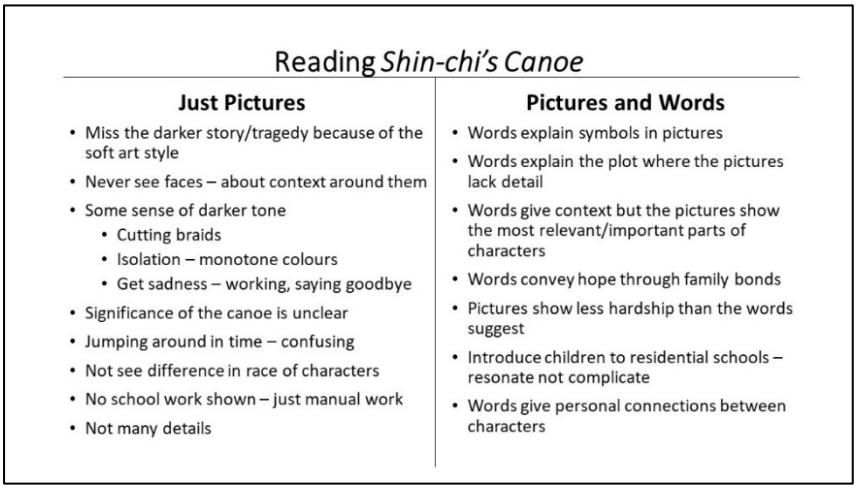

Figure 3. A recreation of board work that resulted from a discussion of reading words and pictures in Nicola Campbell's Shin-chi's Canoe with an ENGL 103 class (different class from figure 2)

For example, the third image in the third row and the first image in the fourth row show how "We feel more scared looking at pointed shapes; we feel more secure or comforted looking at rounded shapes or curves" (Bang, 2000, p. 70). It is helpful to ask students what they associate with rounded versus pointed shapes, starting with the landscape-like images on the board, to note how rolling hills are easy to traverse and associated with sunny days, while mountains are difficult to climb and dangerous. Students may also connect roundness to a stuffed animal or pointedness to a knife. I introduce each piece of information individually and draw the images as I go. It is important to give students time to take each image in and ask questions, as generally this lesson is their first in reading pictures, and to leave the images on the board for students to reference in their practice readings.

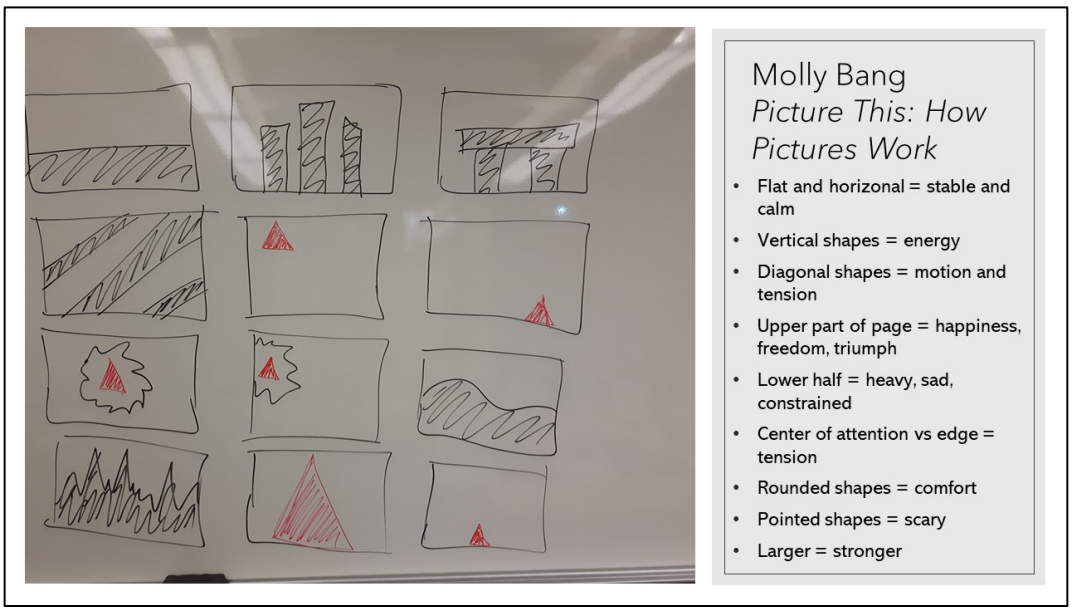

Figure 4. An example of the information you can provide students to begin reading pictures[1]

Although Bang discusses how the shape and placement of objects affect a picture, students can find that tight focus limiting and difficult for their first practice reading. To give students more options, I suggest other visual aspects of the book to consider: font type, size, and colour; where the words and illustrations are placed on the page; the use of white space and borders to separate images and/or words; colours in illustrations; and the design of characters, their facial expressions, and postures. As I introduce each group of concepts, I have students find examples in the picturebook and discuss as a class how these aspects affect how we read the illustration, full page, and book as a whole.

It is helpful to ask students what they associate with rounded versus pointed shapes, starting with the landscape-like images on the board, to note how rolling hills are easy to traverse and associated with sunny days, while mountains are difficult to climb and dangerous

When I use *Shin-chi's Canoe,* for examples of colour, students often point to the more varied and vibrant colours of the beginning and end of the book, when Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi are at home with their family, which diminish when the children are at residential school. When I ask why they think the colours change, students generally point to the oppressive nature of the school and the children's hardship, often using the example of the double spread of children in the dining hall having meagre portions of bland food while the teachers in the next room eat full meals of meat and vegetables (Campbell, 2008, pp. 21-2). The only colours used in the image

[1] This example is best used when there is limited time (more information can be given if there is more time)

are greys and a muddy yellow, with the exception of a splash of colour on the teachers' food. Also, although the teachers' dining room is lit, the students' dining hall is in shadow, lit only by the light of the other room. Students often note the lack of colour highlights the lack of nutrition and the blandness in the children's food, and the shadow represents their sadness at being split from their siblings and not allowed to speak to each other. On the previous page, this separation is made clear with the pictures of Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi doing their gendered tasks while being separated by text and white space (Campbell, 2008, p. 20). This page works as a good example of how borders, white space, and the layout of a page are important to consider in picturebook analysis.

5. Engaging Students Through Focused Close Reading

Having discussed as a full class our initial impressions of the picturebook and different aspects to consider when reading picturebooks, the next step is for students to use their new reading and analysis strategies, either individually or in groups. If students are working individually, they pick their own page to analyze. This option is best when students do this practice outside of the classroom; for example, if class time is running short and students are given the analysis for homework, with the results discussed in small groups or as a full class in the next session. Once, when I cancelled an in-person class because of extreme weather at the beginning of the picturebook section of an ENGL 103 course, I moved the class online by posting the slideshow with the Molly Bang images and explanations, plus the list of other aspects to consider, and had each student post an analysis of a page of *Shin-Chi's Canoe* of their choice. Between 40 students, almost every page was covered, and most students gave very detailed and varied analysis. I used their work to shape the questions for our class discussion the next day, to expand on the many symbols, themes, and concepts they had already identified.

If this first picturebook analysis is during class time, the most productive approach is to put students in small groups and assign each group a page in the picturebook. While in individual work students focus on a page that they find interesting or appealing, groups can take on the challenge of an assigned page so that a variety of pages are covered. Assigning pages also removes time wasted on groups discussing which page to analyze. With Tan's *The Arrival*, each group has two specific illustrations or pages to compare, with two groups comparing the same pages to get different perspectives and ideas. In having students compare two pages, I ask them to focus on each individually, then together, and then in relation to the whole book.

The goal is for students to make a focused analysis and comparison that they can use as an example for a larger concept, theme, or analysis of the book. For example, one pair of pages

assigned in *The Arrival* are the first in chapter I and chapter IV. Each has a grid of nine images of objects from the family's home before and after they immigrate, respectively. Whereas individually the objects give insights into the family and their lives in both locations, a comparison shows how their lives have evolved but also how their family connection has stayed the same, with household objects like the kettle and clock looking drastically different, but also the continued inclusion of the family portrait, the daughter's drawings, and the father's origami animals. From there, students can take symbols, like the origami animals that show up throughout the book and compare their use in other sections of the book to help them further form the overall meaning.

With a list of elements to consider when analysing picturebooks, students usually do a good job of describing details and explaining how they see those details affecting the meaning of the book. As with any text where students are asked to give detailed examples to support an analysis, students can tend towards plot points and generalities. Surprisingly, tending towards generalities happens more with Tan's wordless picturebook, likely because students feel that without any words, the plot is all they need to discover. The best solution is to always ask students to explain how they know the plot: Why do you think that is what happened? What in the picture made you think that? How did the characters on the page and their expressions, gestures, clothing, colouring, etc. lead you to that understanding? It is good practice for the instructor to move between the groups to ask these types of questions and point to further pieces in the images that students could consider. Even with that caveat, I find that picturebooks are a great introduction to focused reading because giving students one page or image does not feel overwhelming, but still gives them a lot to work with. Also, when focusing on a single illustration, it is much harder to give generalities and students cannot just point to a quote. They quickly see the need to describe and explore the details they see in the image. Even the difficulties that arise from wordless picturebooks can be helpful so students are aware of the kind of questions they should be asking in their analysis.

I find that picturebooks are a great introduction to focused reading because giving students one page or image does not feel overwhelming, but still gives them a lot to work with. Also, when focusing on a single illustration, it is much harder to give generalities and students cannot just point to a quote

In ENGL 103, I cover three picturebooks over two weeks, having students read two secondary sources throughout: the Perry Nodelman (1988) chapter and Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott's (2006) chapter on time and movement. Both are straight-forward readings that discuss various ways to approach and read picturebooks. Nodelman's chapter is particularly useful to help

students think about how pictures and words work together in a picturebook to tell a unique story, instead of the illustrations being just visual additions that have little consequence. Nikolajeva and Scott cover in detail how pictures can suggest or show movement and the passage of time, which Nodelman also touches on in how words and pictures cannot be split into representing time and space.

In my last few ENGL 103 courses, I paired Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) with Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's (1992) *The Stinky Cheese Man and other Fairly Stupid Tales*, because it is filled with examples of movement and time in pictures. Nikolajeva and Scott cover many different techniques of showing movement, so I begin the class by asking students which techniques they see being utilized in the Scieszka and Smith's book. One technique students point to is the use of a pageturner in "The Tortoise and the Hair." In this story, Tortoise is racing Rabbit's growing hair, which can be seen sprouting from Rabbit's head in the first illustration and leading to the next double-page spread (Scieszka & Smith, 1992, pp. 31-2). The hair winds around the double spread, spelling "not" in front of "the end" and continuing again past another page flip to the "once" that begins the next story called "The Stinky Cheese Man" (Scieszka & Smith, 1992, pp. 32-34). When students are asked what the pageturner is used for in this instance, they often point to the hair drawing the reader to turn the page, but then subverting expectations in twisting around and leading to an unrelated story. As the story ends with Tortoise and Rabbit's race still ongoing, the discussion can move towards how Scieszka and Smith play with time and our expectation for stories to have endings.

This story also has a good example of simultaneous succession in the multiple images of Tortoise climbing a rock with his watch's time changing (Scieszka & Smith, 1992, p. 33). Students find this example quickly and with some guidance can think through how the use of this technique is also playing with time. Although Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) say that "the change occurring in each subsequent image is supposed to indicate the flow of time between it and the preceding one" (p. 140), the images of Tortoise have only slight changes besides his watch and move in a circular shape, which challenges our understanding of the flow of time. Besides learning about ways that pictures show movement, Nikolajeva and Scott give students terms to use in their discussion of illustrations that add to their confidence in their analyses.

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales is a good picturebook to use in a first-year literature course because it is accessible and works well with my teaching approach. This postmodern picturebook uses every inch of its printed surface, from endpapers to the ISBN number, to help tell its story and play with expectations, so discussing first impressions and the

elements of the book encourage student thinking. This book can be paired well with Bang (2000), Nodelman (1988), or Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) as it has examples of many of the methods and techniques for reading picturebooks that are noted in the readings and can stand alone or introduce these aspects of reading for a course. It is an especially good pairing for Nodelman, because *The Stinky Cheese Man* takes his discussion about what words and pictures do best and how both come together to tell a particular story a step further by making the words part of the illustrations and action.

6. Encouraging Critical Thinking

One exercise, which generally takes up a full 50-minute session, is a student-led discussion about what we expect from picturebooks and fairy tales, and how Scieszka and Smith's book breaks those expectations. This discussion is very useful in my ENGL 103 course as it challenges students to think about their own personal definitions and biases towards picturebooks and children's literature in general. Figure 5 shows the first half of this exercise that focuses on fairy tales. Students expected fairy tales to teach a lesson, be exciting and adventurous, and have a happy ending, but found Scieszka and Smith's book to be silly, pointless, and anti-climatic without satisfying endings. Students then responded to a question about why they think the book works against these expectations and the subsequent results. The students discussed the critique on fairy tales and their unrealistic portrayal of life experiences, the parodying of fairy tales being both for humour and to challenge binaries, as well as the need for readers to have a knowledge of fairy tales to understand the book fully and how that means people at different ages will experience the book differently.

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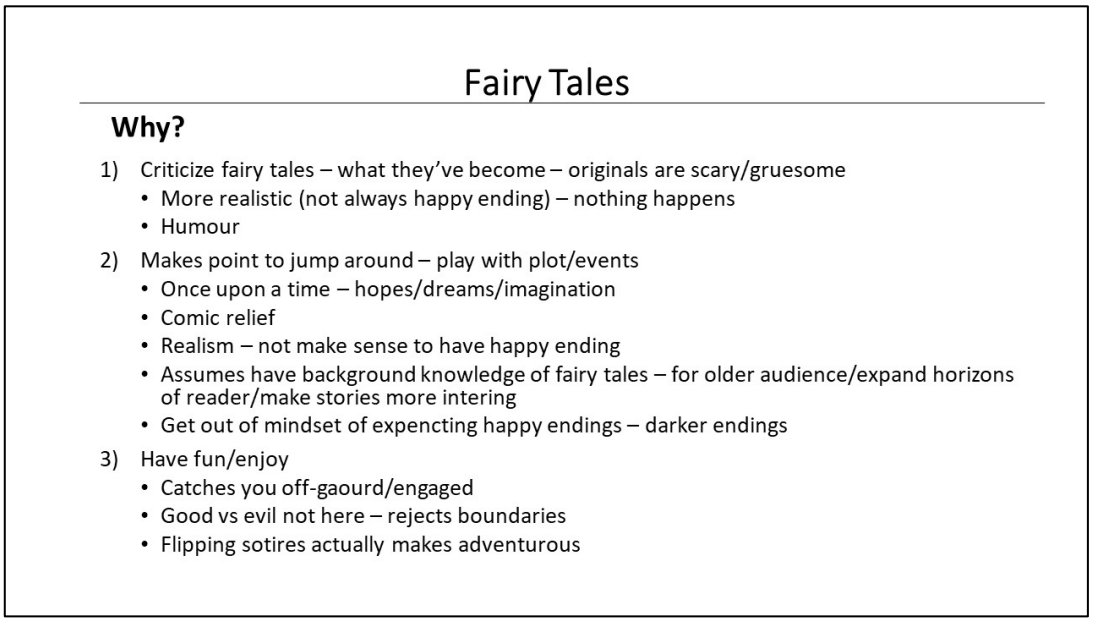
Figure 6 shows the second half of the exercise with the same class. While their expectations for picturebooks were that they are visually appealing and contained complete stories, they found that *The Stinky Cheese Man* plays with visuals in ways that are not conventionally appealing and with the idea of the book as a constructed text, having characters aware they are in a book and using pieces of the book and its creation to tell or change their stories. When I asked why these creative choices were made, students pointed to humour, but also to the book being a helpful way to teach children about book construction and a variety of storytelling methods, including

self-aware characters. This discussion of *The Stinky Cheese Man* is an excellent way to introduce students to postmodern picturebooks and concepts such as metafiction. As figures 5 and 6 show, students are already making the connections to *The Stinky Cheese Man* as metafiction in their references to the making and construction of the book as part of the story. For a short assignment that has students using a secondary source to help support their reading of a text, I give the option of pairing *The Stinky Cheese Man* with Deborah Stevenson's (1994) article on the postmodern nature of the picturebook, which gives interested students more background on the elements of postmodern picturebooks.



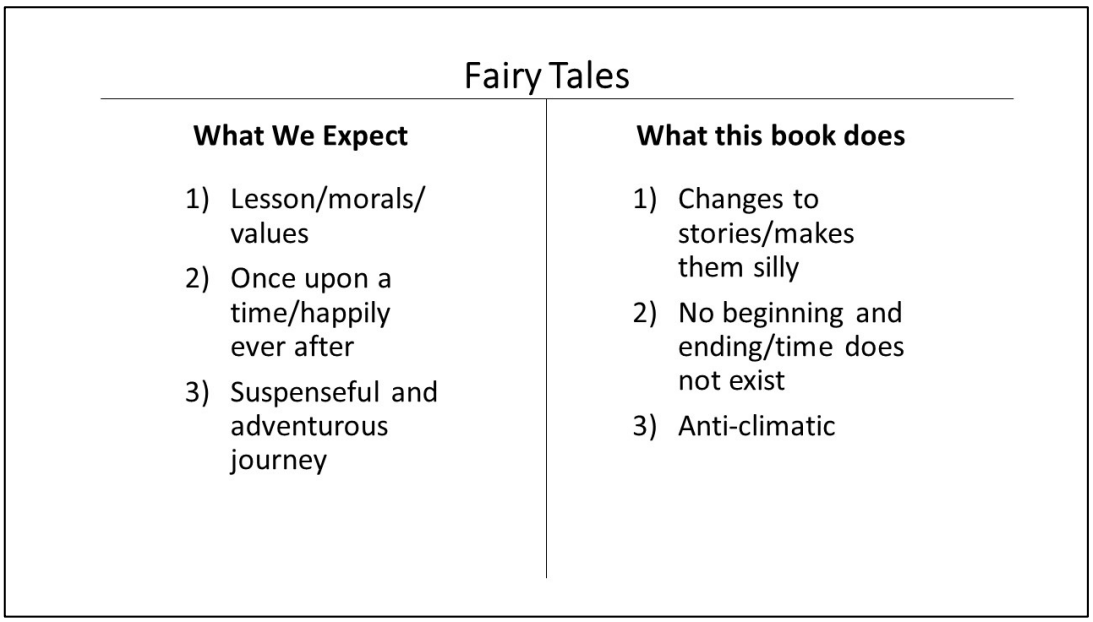


Figure 5. A recreation of the board work that resulted from a discussion about what the students of an ENGL 103 class expected from fairy tales and what they actually observed in Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

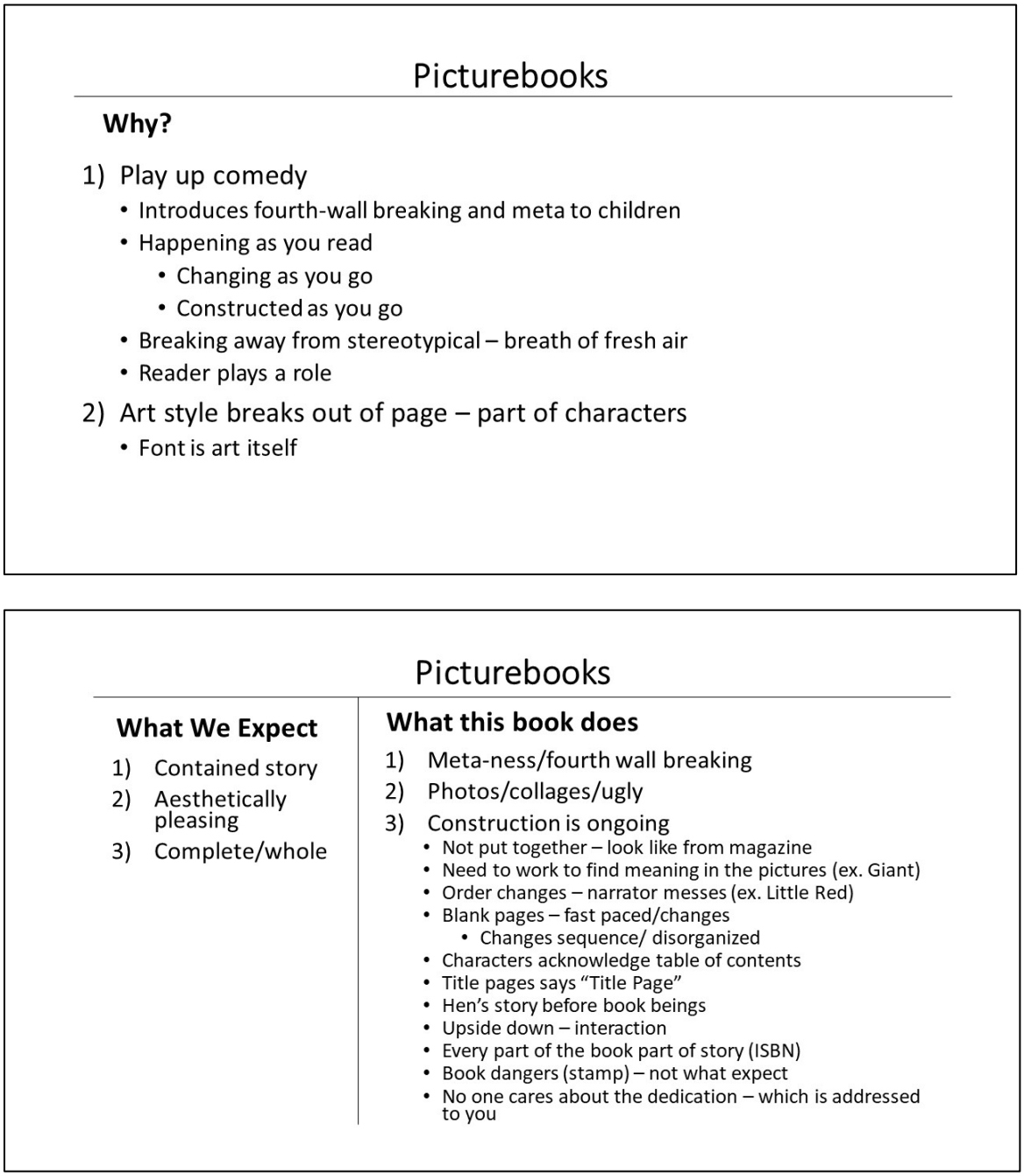
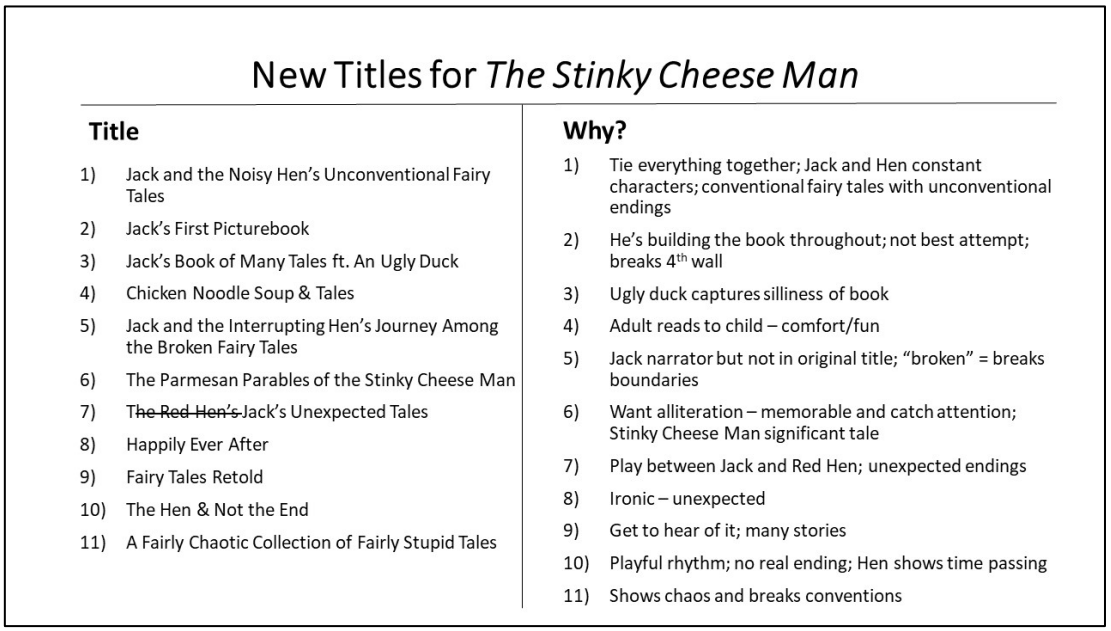


Figure 6. A recreation of the board work that resulted from a discussion about what the students of an ENGL 103 class expected from picturebooks and what they actually observed in Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

In the following class, we do a short activity suggested in Fuss and Gleason's (2015) excellent book *The Pocket Instructor: Literature*. I use a version of Johanna Winant's "The New Title" exercise that asks students to rename the book they have been studying. As Winant (2015) suggests, this exercise is best used when students are familiar with the text (p. 37), because students are asked to create a new title based on their discussion and experience with the text so far. It can be a useful way to begin the class as it brings them back to the previous discussion and the ideas that stuck with them, so that after the exercise the discussion can continue with the new titles as a starting point. Alternatively, this exercise can be a fun way to finish up with a text to summarize what the students thought was most relevant in the class discussions. For example, Figure 7 shows the results of asking students to work in groups of three to create a new title for *The Stinky Cheese Man* and the reasons behind their choices. The titles show that the students considered various parts of the book, such as the complexity of Jack being character, narrator, and creator in the book, the Little Red Hen being a surprise and unwanted character but an essential part of the book, the book's play with story shape and endings, the dynamic of the child and adult reading the book together, and the general silliness and parody the students saw in the book. The students put a lot of thought into the elements they saw as important and how to best represent them.



New Titles for *The Stinky Cheese Man*

Title	Why?
1) Jack and the Noisy Hen's Unconventional Fairy Tales	1) Tie everything together; Jack and Hen constant characters; conventional fairy tales with unconventional endings
2) Jack's First Picturebook	2) He's building the book throughout; not best attempt; breaks 4th wall
3) Jack's Book of Many Tales ft. An Ugly Duck	3) Ugly duck captures silliness of book
4) Chicken Noodle Soup & Tales	4) Adult reads to child – comfort/fun
5) Jack and the Interrupting Hen's Journey Among the Broken Fairy Tales	5) Jack narrator but not in original title; "broken" = breaks boundaries
6) The Parmesan Parables of the Stinky Cheese Man	6) Want alliteration – memorable and catch attention; Stinky Cheese Man significant tale
7) ~~The Red Hen's~~ Jack's Unexpected Tales	7) Play between Jack and Red Hen; unexpected endings
8) Happily Ever After	8) Ironic – unexpected
9) Fairy Tales Retold	9) Get to hear of it; many stories
10) The Hen & Not the End	10) Playful rhythm; no real ending; Hen shows time passing
11) A Fairly Chaotic Collection of Fairly Stupid Tales	11) Shows chaos and breaks conventions

Figure 7. The responses from an ENGL 103 class's group work that asked them to create a new title for Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* and to explain the reason for their choice

In ENGL 103, the picturebook section of my course ends with students giving short, low-stakes, five-minute group presentations about how they would design their own picturebook while using secondary sources to support their design decisions. For this 5% assignment, students are graded on their design (2%), their use of secondary sources (2%), and their presentation (1%). The objectives of the assignment are to encourage students to think creatively, practice using and citing secondary sources, and experience presenting to a group. Even though they are only required to describe their design choices and use support from readings covered in class, many groups make full illustrations, do extra research around a particular interest, and come up with very creative and unique designs. Students are given two fairy tales from *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales* (2005), "The Witchball" and "Now I Should Laugh, If I Were Not Dead," that they can use for the plot of their picturebook, although some groups create their own stories. I have another version of this assignment that has each student work individually and submit a written description of their picturebook design with support from secondary sources. For both versions, I emphasize with students that it is the creativity and effectiveness of their design that they are being graded on, not their artistic skills.

Figures 8 and 9 are a sample from one group's slideshow presentation. For this page of their design, they focus on Nikolajeva and Scott's (2006) discussion on the verso and recto pages, and how contrast between them can help instill meaning. They distinguished the poor boy and rich girl in "The Witchball" by contrasting a black and white drawing, which they associated with the boy's sadness and the disapproval of the girl's family, while the girl is drawn in bright colours to show her happiness and difference from the boy. Figures 10 and 11 are two slides from another group's presentation who used "Now I Should Laugh, If I Were Not Dead." This group focused on using techniques of movement and object placement to help tell their story. They use motion lines and pageturners to create interest and a sense of urgency, they place characters closer to or further from the viewer to suggest different levels of importance, and they use simultaneous succession to show the wife working and time passing. Both these groups used what they learned from reading picturebooks and the secondary sources by Nikolajeva and Scott (2006), Nodelman (1988), and Bang (2000), to effectively present their stories and thus demonstrated their understanding of 'how picturebooks work' by creating their own. I think these results show the potential of picturebooks to help students gain strategies around textual analysis, reading secondary sources, and supporting arguments, but also increase student engagement. Picturebooks can make the practice of close reading and analysis fun and engaging, but also challenge students to step outside their comfort zones to work with a type of text they have likely never analyzed before.

Design #1- Adventure Page - Home Page

- In Nikolajeva and Scott's "How Picture Books Work" they introduce the notion that "the verso establishes a situation, while the recto disrupts it; the verso creates as sense of security, while the recto brings danger and excitement." (151)
- Verso: boy and his home; Recto: the girl in her home
- this is shown in in our story through the contrasting of the lives of the boy and the girl. The girl and the boy have different uses of colour, and setting to depict their differences. The recto represents danger because her family does not approve of the boy and he will not be able to achieve his "adventure" on his own. It is also made to look more visually appealing than the boy's to represent his sadness, and longing and help readers sympathize with him.

Figure 8. An example of an ENGL 103 student group's picturebook presentation. The notes on this slide explains the choices for one of the illustrations they created (see figure 9)

Figure 9. An example of an ENGL 103 student group's picturebook presentation. This is the illustration that the slide in figure 8 references

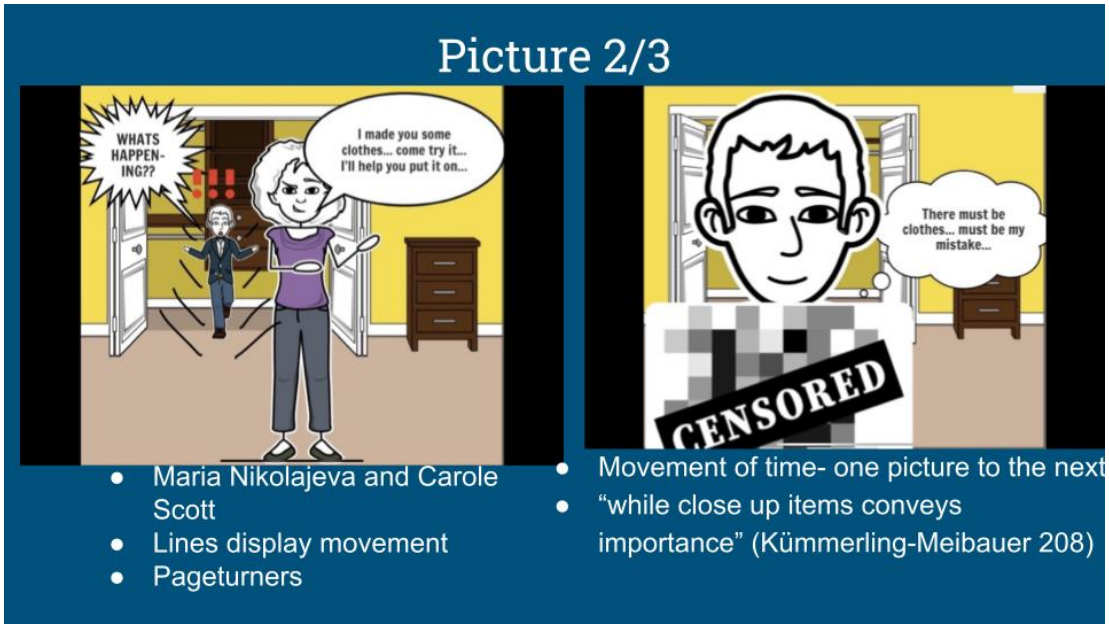


Figure 10. An example of an ENGL 103 student group's picturebook presentation. Figure 11 shows the next slide from the same group

One question to encourage students to build their critical thinking is to consider their understanding of children's literature (or picturebooks) and biases or personal experiences that make their approach to these texts different from other students in the class or even narrow their understanding or critical approach. One exercise for the first day of an ENGL 103 class is to ask students to bring what they consider their 'Top 6 List of Children's Literature.' I give no more explanation. When they come to class, they pair up with a classmate and work together to make their two Top 6 Lists into one Top 6 List. Then they pair up with another group, and then that bigger group pairs with another group, and so on, until the class is in two large groups who have each created a Top 6 List. Both groups write their final list on the board, but the texts in those lists are not the important part of the exercise. As the exercise progresses and students discuss what texts should stay on the list and students defend their choices, they begin to discuss topics that are discussed widely in the children's literature field and to think critically about what they consider children's literature. The group discussions often touch on such topics as the age groups children's literature is aimed towards, age appropriateness of texts, censorship, how to judge the 'quality' of a text, the types of texts considered 'literature,' the topics appropriate for children, and if children's literature should teach a lesson or just entertain.

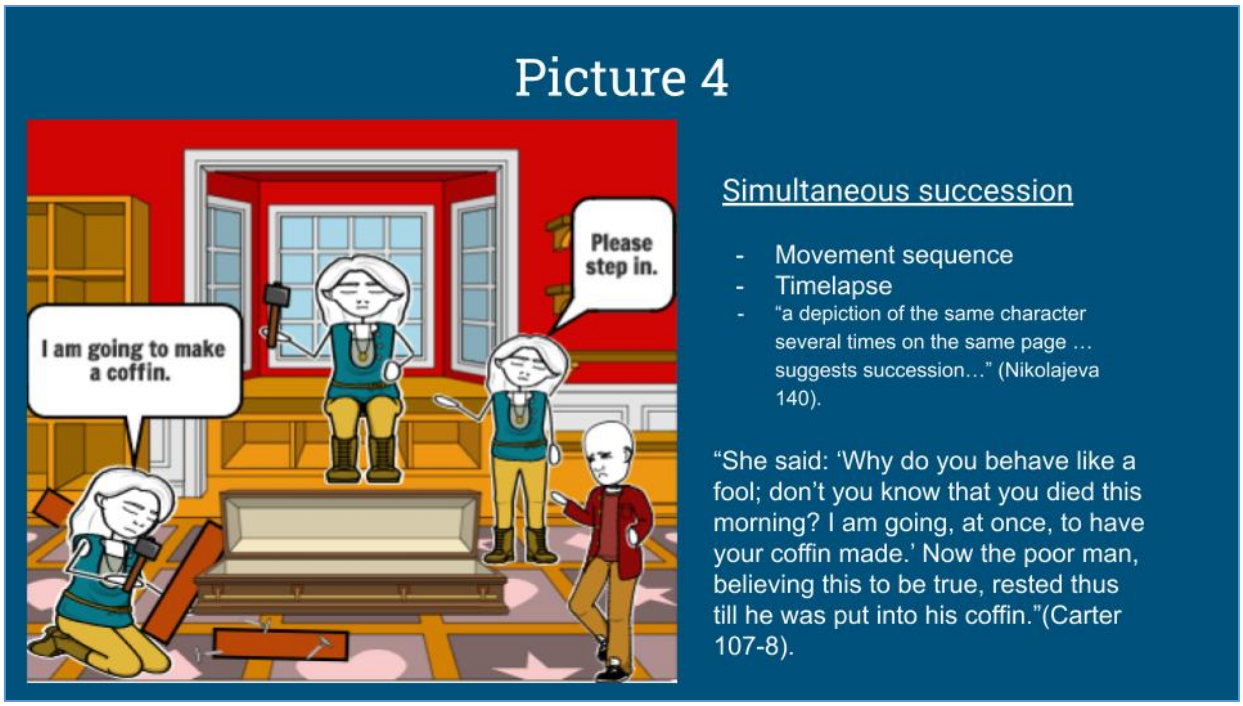


Figure 11. An example of an ENGL 103 student group's picturebook presentation. Figure 10 shows the slide before from the same group

When the final lists are on the board, I ask students who have a text they really wanted included to add that text on the board. Then, I ask students what is missing. Often most texts on the lists have white authors and main characters, are perceived as classics, and present a Western experience. These are important questions to begin asking at the start of any course, but I make this focus when teaching children's literature because our value judgements and methods of comparing and analyzing children's texts are often based on our own nostalgic memories and particular experiences of childhood. The next class focuses on Marah Gubar's (2011) "On Not Defining Children's Literature," which provides students with discussions in the field around the power and place of adults in children's literature, how the variety and diversity in children's literature is approached, and the challenges around defining the genre. With this critical background, students have important questions to ask of their own and other's readings of the texts covered in the class, which they already began asking when they attempted to understand what children's literature meant to them in the first class.

Students have important questions to ask of their own and other's readings of the texts covered in the class, which they already began asking when they attempted to understand what children's literature meant to them in the first class

7. Conclusion

Picturebooks are perceived as being simple and for young children. My goal is to change this perception with students and the aim of this article is to do the same with instructors. Daly and Blakeney-Williams (2015), Meyerson (2006), and Maizonniaux (2017) have noted the effectiveness of picturebooks to be accessible and build student engagement and confidence, while teaching them effectively also breaks misconceptions about the simplicity of picturebooks to encourage deeper and more complex thinking and understanding in students, especially when they are introduced to difficult topics, concepts, or theories. While their studies focus on teacher education and language courses, I want to bring the conversation about the effectiveness and benefits of teaching picturebooks at the university level into the general literature course. I have outlined methods to approach teaching picturebooks that cover the outcomes of many university literature courses, especially first-year mandatory courses, including image and visual literacy, close readings, critical thinking, and the reading and effective use of secondary sources.

I have outlined methods to approach teaching picturebooks that cover the outcomes of many university literature courses, especially first-year mandatory courses, including image and visual literacy, close readings, critical thinking, and the reading and effective use of secondary sources

Picturebooks are exceptionally varied in their topics, styles, and complexity, and first-year literature instructors can find a picturebook that will suit their class. At the end of each course, I ask students what texts they would want to keep in the course if they were to take it again. Picturebooks are always at the top of the list. Including a picturebook increases student engagement and sense of confidence so they feel more comfortable participating and contributing to class and group discussions, and keeps students open to new ways to read and critically analyze a text. With the proper questions and exploration, picturebooks lead to deep, reflective, analytical, and creative thinking. Picturebooks are fun and engaging for students, but also introduce important reading and writing strategies that they need to be successful in their university and future careers. They are an effective teaching tool that I encourage university instructors to consider adding to their courses.

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Making Tutorial Films on Picture Books in Teacher Education

La creación de videotutoriales sobre álbumes ilustrados en la formación del profesorado

La creació de videotutorials sobre àlbums il·lustrats en la formació del professorat

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Abstract

In this article we analyze two films about picturebooks, made in student-led groups in a children's literature course at university level. We also investigate the self-assessments the students wrote. The assignment was designed to explore specific Norwegian picturebooks, in this case *Snill* (*What a girl!*) by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus and Garmanns hemmelighet (Garmann's secret) by Stian Hole. Our aim is to highlight ways this assignment expanded the students' knowledge on picturebooks and literature didactics. For this purpose, we build upon picturebook theory, theories on multimodality and theories on collaborative learning processes.

Our findings support results and ideas in other studies on how to use and produce multimodal artefacts and digitized media in collaborative learning contexts (Jewitt, 2006; Jewitt, 2013; Kress & Selander, 2011; Selander, 2015), and studies on the potential of collaborative teaching and learning processes, and of students' self-assessments (Alexander, 2017). Both films present and discuss the interplay between words and images in ways that demonstrate solid knowledge of picturebook theory. The analyses also indicate that this kind of film-making project may foster a high degree of student engagement suited to achieve in-depth knowledge on topics within the field of children's literature.

Key words: picturebooks, multimodality, film making, literature didactics, teacher education

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Resumen

En este artículo analizamos dos cortometrajes sobre álbumes ilustrados, realizados por grupos de estudiantes en un curso de literatura infantil a nivel universitario. También investigamos las autoevaluaciones que escribieron los mismos estudiantes. El trabajo fue diseñado para explorar álbumes ilustrados noruegos específicos, en este caso Snill (Amable) de Gro Dahle y Svein Nyhus y Garmanns hemmelighet (El secreto de Garmann) d'Stian Hole. Nuestro objetivo es mostrar las maneras en las que este trabajo de aula incrementó el conocimiento del estudiantado sobre los álbumes ilustrados y la didáctica de la literatura. Con este propósito, nos basamos en la teoría de los álbumes ilustrados, en las teorías sobre multimodalidad y en teorías sobre procesos de aprendizaje colaborativo.

Nuestros hallazgos apoyan los resultados e ideas de otros estudios respeto de cómo se utilizan y producen los artefactos multimodales y los medios digitalizados en contextos de aprendizaje colaborativo (Jewitt, 2006; Jewitt, 2013; Kress & Selander, 2011; Selander, 2015) y en estudios sobre el potencial de los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje colaborativo y de autoevaluación del alumnado (Alexander, 2017). Los dos cortometrajes presentan y analizan la interacción entre palabras e imágenes de manera que demuestran un conocimiento sólido de la teoría sobre los álbumes ilustrados. El análisis también indica que este tipo de proyecto de realización de videotutoriales puede alimentar un alto nivel de involucración del alumnado que permita conseguir un conocimiento profundo de temas en el campo de la literatura infantil.

Palabras clave: álbumes ilustrados, multimodalidad, realización de cortometrajes, didáctica de la literatura, formación de profesorado

Resum

En aquest article analitzem dos curtmetratges sobre àlbums il·lustrats, realitzats per grups d'estudiants en un curs de literatura infantil a nivell universitari. També investiguem les autoavaluacions que van escriure els mateixos estudiants. El treball va ser dissenyat per explorar àlbums il·lustrats noruecs específics, en aquest cas *Snill* (Amable) de Gro Dahle i Svein Nyhus i *Garmanns hemmelighet* (El secret de Garmann) d'Stian Hole. El nostre objectiu és mostrar les maneres en les quals aquest treball d'aula va incrementar el coneixement de l'estudiantat sobre els àlbums il·lustrats i la didàctica de la literatura. Per a aquest propòsit, ens basem en la teoria dels àlbums il·lustrats, en les teories sobre multimodalitat i en teories sobre processos d'aprenentatge col·laboratiu.

Les nostres troballes donen suport als resultats i les idees d'altres estudis respecte de com s'utilitzen i produeixen els artefactes multimodals i els mitjans digitalitzats en contextos d'aprenentatge col·laboratiu (Jewitt, 2006; Jewitt, 2013; Kress & Selander, 2011; Selander, 2015) i en estudis sobre el potencial dels processos d'ensenyament-aprenentatge col·laboratiu i de autoavaluació de l'alumnat (Alexander, 2017). Tots dos curtmetratges presenten i analitzen la interacció entre paraules i imatges de manera que demostren un coneixement sòlid de la teoria sobre els àlbums il·lustrats. L'anàlisi també indica que aquest tipus de projecte de videotutorials pot nodrir un alt nivell d'involucració de l'alumnat que permeta assolir un coneixement profund de temes en el camp de la literatura infantil.

Paraules clau: àlbums il·lustrats, multimodalitat, realització de curtmetratges, didàctica de la literatura, formació de professorat.

1. Introduction

This article discusses experiences from a film making project in student-led groups performed in a children's literature course at university level. The discussion is based on a student assignment designed to explore specific picturebooks by making tutorial films using digital tools. The student films include reflections on picturebook aesthetics as well as ideas on how to present, discuss and work with picturebooks in educational settings. The article investigates ways the films demonstrate competencies in these fields, along with how and to what extent the assignments showcase multimodal qualities, filmic devices, and digital competences. Since the students worked on the films in groups, the article also reflects upon collaborative learning processes.

The film project involved 50 teachers who, during the fall 2019 and the spring 2020, joined an in-service course at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. These teachers, all employed in primary or secondary schools, attended the course with the aim of upgrading their competences within the subject Norwegian language and literature. This type of student group, which involves adults with substantial work experiences, calls for teaching methods and mediation of knowledge suited to support their professional roles and practices (Säljö, 2006; Timperley, 2011). The task of teaching children's literature at in-service courses for teachers has not been subject to much research, and thus, this article contributes to filling this gap. However, the research project should be relevant to various children's literature courses at university level and not restricted to courses specifically designed for in-service teachers.

While there is a substantial body of literature concerning the use of picturebook in school settings, there is not a great deal of research on the use of picturebooks in teacher education (Daly & Blakeney-Williams 2015, p. 90). Among the few studies that exist, there are examples of research on how picturebooks may be used across various curricula and subjects (Daly & Blakeney-Williams, 2015; Meyerson, 2006). Our article contributes to the field by investigating a picturebook project at university level specifically related to the topics of children's literature and literature didactics. Our study is thus framed by this research question: *In which ways may students in teacher education expand their knowledge on picturebooks and literature didactics through a process of film making in student-led groups?*

While there is a substantial body of literature concerning the use of picturebook in school settings, there is not a great deal of research on the use of picturebooks in teacher education

2. The research material: contextual frames and selection of data material

Our research project involves two categories of research material: 1) student films made in groups of three to five students, and 2) individual self-assessments. The films represent the final group productions, while the self-assessments express the students' individual experiences.

To ensure that every picturebook from the reading list was represented in the total amount of student films, we, as course instructors, selected one specific book for each group. The seven picturebooks, all by awarded Norwegian picturebook creators, span several topics, such as identity issues, various relational issues, environmental challenges, philosophical questions, and Sami culture. They also represent different verbal and visual styles, and various types of interactions between words and images. Though each group made a film on only one picturebook, the students were acquainted with all seven books in an introductory lecture prior to the film project. Moreover, as part of the semester's final seminar, all the films were presented to and discussed with fellow students. Thus, the term "tutorial film" signals a purpose of learning potential, not only as the result of the filmmaking process, but also by watching and discussing the films produced by other course participants.

The total scope of research material involves 12 student films and 55 self-assessments. For this article, the research material is limited to include two student films and seven self-assessments. In addition, we touch upon some aspects from the total scope of self-assessments. Since the article addresses an international audience, we have selected films which present and discuss two books that have earned international attention. One is *Garmanns hemmelighet* (*Garmann's secret*), by the author/illustrator Stian Hole, first published in 2010. The book is the third one in a trilogy about the boy Garmann, a series translated into many languages, following the success of the first book *Garmanns sommer* (*Garmann's summer*), which earned several international awards. The other book is *Snill* (*What a girl!*) by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus, first published in 2002 and later republished several times. This book is also translated into other languages and represents one among several awarded picturebooks by Dahle and Nyhus.

The investigations and discussions of the research material are based on some certain premises. The students live in different parts of the country, and therefore they had to communicate on digital platforms. However, they also met in classes on campus, organized as two-day seminars three times per semester. Furthermore, the assignment instructions accentuate that all group members should contribute to the process of filmmaking, and all of them should be seen and heard in the final film product.

3. Methodological and ethical considerations

The analyses of films and self-assessments build upon qualitative research methods which support in-depth investigations and "thick description" of a limited selection of data material (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 247). Thus, our analyses cannot lead to general conclusions on students' learning experiences. Rather, the method of qualitative research allows us to focus on multi-faceted aspects of the limited material of films and self-assessments.

The article's methodological framework is furthermore based on multimodal analyses related to the film medium and to the picturebook medium. This includes observations and discussions of how the students comment on and display interactions of verbal and visual modes in the picturebooks and how the films combine modes of verbal text, visual images, sound effects and motion pictures.

Research on projects and assignments based on researchers' own teaching and own student group demands careful ethical considerations (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 112). Thus, our research project has been subject to notification and approval by The Norwegian Centre for Research Data, and we confirm that we exclusively use data material from participants who have given their consent.

4. Theoretical approaches

Picturebook theory and reflections on literature didactics make a fundamental framework for the discussion of the film products. Since the students' main theoretical sources are based on Norwegian textbooks and articles on their reading list, our evaluations of theoretical insights implied in the films are mainly based on the course syllabus (Birkeland et al., 2018; Bjerke & Johansen, 2017; Håland & Ulland, 2014; Ommundsen, 2018).

Another theoretical frame relates to new approaches to teaching and learning processes due to the continuous expansion of multimodal and digital technologies. Several researchers point to the inclusion of teaching and learning practices that allow students to use and produce multimodal artefacts and digitized media in collaborative learning contexts (Jewitt, 2006; Jewitt, 2013; Kress & Selander, 2011; Selander, 2015). The film making project described in this article is inspired by these perspectives.

In an article from 2015, Staffan Selander, a researcher within the field of digital and multimodal learning design, relates the multimodal approach to "a Scandinavian tradition of project-oriented and problem-based learning and also to historically strong traditions of evening courses, re-education and further education" (p. 101). This aligns well with the context of our film making project. Selander combines his focus on learning strategies with social-semiotic theory (p. 105), with specific references to works by Gunther Kress, not the least to the well-known *Multimodality. A social semiotic approach*

to contemporary communication (Kress, 2010). On this basis, Selander (2015, p. 107) calls for learning designs which may allow interactions with other learners as well as with a multiple sources, including multimodal and digital texts, artefacts, devices, and tools. In an article from 2010, Kress and Selander claim that multimodal approaches to learning "will lead to a culture of recognition of agency and semiotic work, in all modes and genres" and to "a valuing of the agency of all learners" (p. 268).

The film project's emphasis on a collaborative learning context is inspired by the multimodal approach as described above. However, the project also relates to dialogic principles of learning in a wider sense. In *Towards dialogic teaching* (2017), Robin Alexander advocates a dialogic pedagogy which favours classroom talks, group talks, and problem-solving activities based on collaborative negotiations and inquires. This dialogic principle reflects an understanding of knowledge "as fluid rather than fixed," a democratic view that allows for "treating teachers and pupils as joint enquirers" (p. 29). According to Alexander, the principles of dialogic teaching and learning have the potential to foster lifelong learning, and thus, they are valid not only for children, but also "for the learning of adults, including teachers" (p. 53). Also, Alexander's valuing of students' self-assessments is relevant to our project. He claims that "being 'attentive to what students say about their experience of learning' is, for the dialogic teacher, the *sine qua non*" (p. 35), and thus, he accentuates a shift from a focus on *what* students learn to *how* they learn.

5. Analyses of films and self-assessments

In this section we present and analyze elements from the two student films and from self-assessments by these students. The analyses discuss various qualities in the films based on three categories which arise from the article's theoretical framework: 1) Picturebook aesthetics and picturebook didactics, 2) Multimodal and digital competences, and 3) Dialogic learning processes.

Within the first category we investigate how the films demonstrate students' ability to analyze visual and verbal aesthetics in a specific picturebook and their ability to reflect upon how to present, discuss and work with picturebooks in a classroom context. The second category involves questions on how the students have applied and emphasized multimodal qualities and digital tools in their films. The last category points to how the films signal cooperative efforts during the process of film making. The film analyses are supplemented by findings in the students' self-assessments.

6. Student film 1: Based on What a girl! by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus

6.1. The picturebook: Content and characteristics

The original Norwegian title of the book *Snill* (2004) means kind or gentle and refers to the book's main character, a little girl, who in the first part of the story acts like a very neat and well-behaved girl.

The English title *What a girl!* (2011) refers to the girl's status as a role model to be admired. However, both titles also indicate an ironic function due to the verbal and visual exaggerations of the girl's gentleness in the first part of the book, as well as to her transformation into a less well-behaved girl in the latter part. Further on we refer to and cite from the English title. However, the illustrations included in the article are reproductions from the Norwegian edition, to ensure they are in line with the edition on which the students based their films. The English edition was published in India with a parallel edition in Hindi, both aimed to be part of the "World Girl-Child Picture Book Project" with the purpose of bringing books and children together in rural India (Maagerø & Østbye, 2017, p. 186).

In the Norwegian text, the character is named Lussi, while in the English translation, she is called Sheelu. The book tells the story about how the neat and gentle Sheelu becomes almost invisible and finally disappears into the wall. After a while she fights herself out of the wall accompanied by a large scream. She is even able to help other silent females, young girls as well as adult women, to come out of the wall. From this point Sheelu develops into a strong and self-confident girl who no longer needs to be well-behaved and neat all the time.

The book highlights topics like identity issues and gender roles, and the story about the little girl's fight for self-esteem has fascinated children as well as adults in various age groups. As pointed to by Maagerø and Østbye (2017, p. 169), the book has also been discussed by many student teachers as part of their curriculum at university. *What a girl!*, as well as other picturebooks by Dahle and Nyhus, have been acknowledged, not only because of the books' attentiveness to how vulnerable children cope with their lives, but not the least as a result of aesthetic qualities in words and images. In the analysis that follows, we investigate how the films present and discuss thematic issues as well as aesthetic qualities in *What a girl!*.

6.2. Film analysis

The film starts by presenting close ups from the book's front page (see figure 1), the prologue image and the two first double spreads. Moreover, the first scenes include examples of children's drawings of the Sheelu character made by the teachers' own pupils in primary school (see figure 2). Implicitly, the drawings demonstrate that the teachers have engaged their pupils in making visual responses to the story about Sheelu, and thus, the film early on includes a didactic element. The opening scenes furthermore display a moving camera effect by using cinematic devices like tilting, panning, and dissolving. The gradual shifts from one image to another create smooth connections

Implicitly, the drawings demonstrate that the teachers have engaged their pupils in making visual responses to the story about Sheelu, and thus, the film early on includes a didactic element

between the various images in the film sequence, thus, creating a well-composed rhythm of film clips. The visual images are supplemented by music. We hear the student group sing a traditional children's song with lyrics describing a child's intention of being nice and neat, dutiful and disciplined, and thus, the lyrics allude to the portrait of the gentle Sheelu. The film's one-minute introduction stands out as a multi-faceted prologue that demonstrates insights into the use of multimodal and filmic effects as well as insights in the picturebook's aesthetics and thematics.

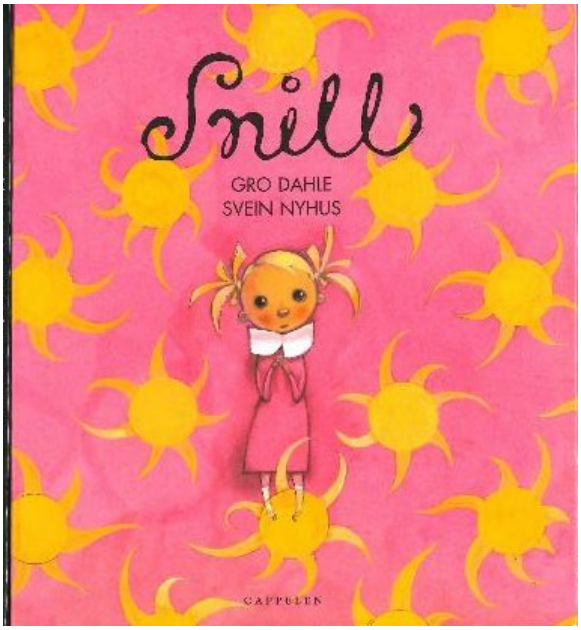

Figure 1. *Snill* (2004) by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus, J. W. Cappelen (front cover).

Figure 2. A children's drawing of Lussi (Sheelu).

The next part of the film shifts to a more static scene in which one of the students gives a short introduction to verbal and visual qualities in various picturebooks by Dahle and Nyhus, winding up with an example from a double spread in *What a girl!.* The static impression of the scene is softened by

placing the speaker in front of a smart board showing images of the author, the illustrator, and the specific double spread. Thus, the scene displays a pedagogical context alluding to a classroom setting.

The third section of the film investigates ways the portrait of the nice and neat Sheelu recalls former ideals of child-upbringing. To illuminate this question, the students explore what they consider to be intertextual relations between the Sheelu portrait and representations of the ideal child in song texts written by the Norwegian song writer Margrethe Munthe (1850-1931). Munthe's song texts remained popular through the 1950s and 60s in Norway, and in 2010 a selection of her song lyrics was republished in a new song book edition. Some of her songs are still alive as classics in the Norwegian song canon, while others convey outdated views upon childhood and child upbringing. The film includes some recitals and melodies from Munthe's song titles like "Jeg skriker ikke jeg!" [No, I never yell!] and "Lille Lotte er så pen" [Little Lotte is so neat], both examples of lyrics that highlight the childhood ideal of being neat and well-disciplined. The song texts also promote the urge to live up to expectations from parents, teachers, and other adults. Through cross cuts between passages in Dahle's text and the song lyrics, similarities in choices of words become strikingly evident. One example is taken from double spread 3 in the picturebook: "Isn't Sheelu nice and sweet? / Oh, oh, oh, what a nice little girl! / Her mother's gold. / Her father's sunshine." Words and characterizations like these are easy to spot and hear also in the film's examples from Munthe's lyrics, which are presented by scans from the song book accompanied by children's voices singing "Little Lotte is so neat." Again, the students accentuate the use of music to be included in their film.

In today's Scandinavian societies the role of strong and active children with their own opinions are highly valued, and boys and girls alike are encouraged to speak up for their rights and needs (Maagerø & Østbye, 2017, p. 187). However, there are still children who for several reasons are not seen and understood well enough, and there are still ideals and expectations that may bring children and young adults into unwanted roles. In this respect, the Sheelu portrait, as well as the intertextual relations to Munthe's song lyrics, is of current interest, and these perspectives seem to be implied in the film.

To reflect on intertextual relations between *What a girl!* and Munthe's song lyrics is an original move by the students. This idea has not been touched upon in lectures in the course program or in any other sources as far as we know. Thus, the students' reflections on this point and the examples they include are based on their own choices worked out through common efforts within the group.

The fourth section of the film deals with close readings of selected double spreads. In this part the students apply knowledge about iconotext analysis, as described in their textbooks (Birkeland et. al., 2018; Ommundsen, 2018). When commenting on various types of interactions between words and images, they emphasize examples of counterpointing, complementary and expanding principles, terms

based on the picturebook typology in *How Picturebooks Work* by Maria Nikolajeva & Carol Scott (2001, p. 12). Moreover, they point to specific devices in the picturebook's verbal texts and illustrations. By exemplifying the use of metaphors and similes, repetitions and contrasts, stave rhymes and assonance, various rhythmic effects, and the structure of verse lines in Gro Dahle's text, the presentation accentuates how the verbal storytelling includes distinct poetic qualities. While analyzing images, the group comments on specific elements from the paratexts as well as the double spreads, like the use of colors and various perspectives, and the significance of visual details. All in all, the students' icontext analysis has a particular focus on verbal and visual portraits of Sheelu. In the following paragraphs we include examples from the students' iconotext analysis by commenting on their presentations of double spread 1 and 9 in the picturebook (see figure 3 and 4).

While analyzing images, the group comments on specific elements from the paratexts as well as the double spreads, like the use of colors and various perspectives, and the significance of visual details. All in all, the students' icontext analysis has a particular focus on verbal and visual portraits of Sheelu

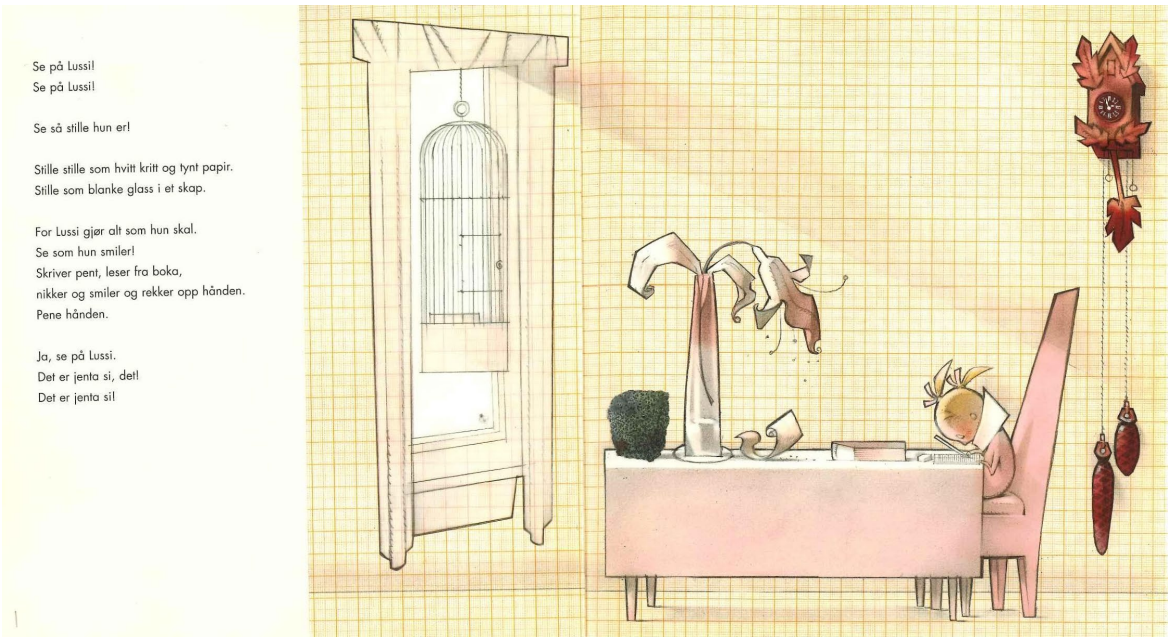

Figure 3. *Snill* (2004) by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus, J. W. Cappelen (doublespread 1).

As an example of a counterpointing relation between words and images, the film points to the iconotext of the first double spread in the story (see figure 3). The verbal text describes in poetic ways a quiet and dutiful, but also a smiling Sheelu:

> Look at Sheelu!
> Look at Sheelu!
>
> Look, how quiet she is!
>
> Quiet as white chalk and thin paper.
> Quiet like shiny glasses in a cupboard.
>
> Because Sheelu does everything
> as she is supposed to.
> Look, how she smiles!
> Writes beautifully, reads from her book,
> nods, and smiles and puts up her hand.
> Her nice little hand.
>
> Yes, look at Sheelu.
> What a girl!
> Yes, what a girl!

The visual portrait of the girl supports the impression of her quiet and disciplined behavior as described in the verbal text. However, the image contradicts the statements on Sheelu's smile by depicting her with a serious and maybe sad appearance. Thus, the film presents this scene as an example of a counterpointing interplay. The presence of a stone supplemented by faded flowers in a vase and a creased piece of paper on the table makes the contrasts between the verbal text and the visual scene even more evident. These visual details are not specifically mentioned in the film. However, in other parts of the film the students point to how details in Nyhus' illustrations may have various functions in the iconotext; they may support the verbal text as well as complement, expand on and contradict the words.

To a large degree, the film accentuates how Sheelu's transformation is described in words and images. One example points to how Sheelu's quiet appearance is compared to fragile things like "chalk and thin paper" and "thin shiny glasses" in the opening scene (double spread 1), while compared to sharp and hard things in a later scene: "Quiet as spikes and needles and sharp pins. / Quiet as screws and nails. / Quiet as a sting" (double spread 7). These stings of something hard proves to be the first signs of Sheelu's transformation, leading up to the story's climax, a scene which is highly accentuated in the film. The image of spread 9 shows a five-armed girl fighting herself out of the wall with a wide-opened mouth alluding to an angry outburst, and this scene plays a vital role in the last part of the film (see figure 4). The text supports and complements the image by describing how Sheelu turns into a hammer and various other tools to help her break out of the wall.

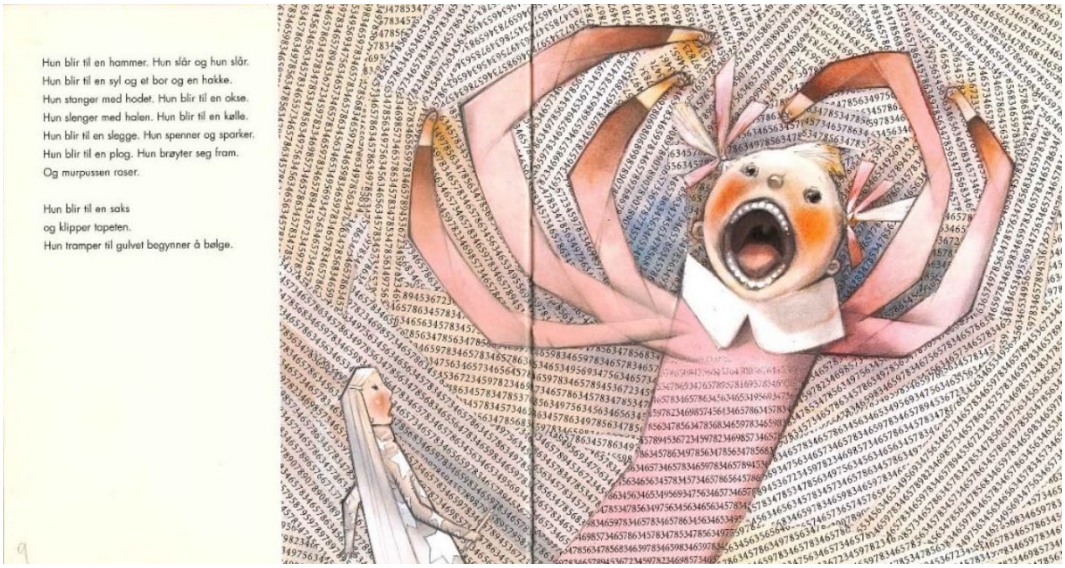

Figure 4. *Snill* (2004) by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus, J. W. Cappelen (doublespread 9).

The film's iconotext analysis as described above, is presented by slides with scans from specific picturebook spreads and a voice-over. This part the film applies no moving camera effects or other creative devices, and thus, the style of presentation appears as quite traditional. However, the analysis demonstrates solid knowledge of picturebook theory and insights in close reading of images as well as verbal texts.

The last scenes of the film repeat cinematic and multimodal effects applied in the opening scenes, and thus, the film creates a circular structure. The visual scenes in the ending show how Sheelu changes from being very orderly and humble to a girl who finally learns to stand up for herself. Sheelu's outburst described in spread 9 (see figure 4), and, also in spread 10, play a significant role in this section. Presentations of these illustrations are combined with images from children's drawings of Sheelu's fierce outcry, an element which makes an effectual contrast to the children's drawings of the nice and orderly Sheelu displayed in the film's intro (see figure 5).

Figure 5. A children's drawing of Sheelu's outburst.

Moreover, the visual representations of Sheelu's roar are accompanied by powerful soundtracks from the popular song "Roar" by Katy Perry. Parts of the song's lyrics relate quite astonishingly to the story about Sheelu, as shown by these quotes:

> So, I sat quietly
> Agreed politely
>
> I guess that I forgot I had a choice
> […]
> You hear my voice
> You hear that sound
>
> Like thunder, gonna shake the ground
> […]
> You're gonna hear me roar

Again, the students have made an intertextual relation between *What a girl!* and song lyrics, this time to very different music than Munthe's children's song as presented in the first parts of the film.

7. Student film 2: Based on Garmann's secret by Stian Hole

7.1. The picturebook: Content and characteristics

As earlier mentioned, Stian Hole's picturebook *Garmann's secret* is the third picturebook in the trilogy about the boy Garmann. The English translation of the book by Don Bartlett was published in 2011. In this version, five of the spreads have been changed by the author-illustrator, as Johanna is given a swimsuit and a shirt so that she is no longer swimming naked, and Garmann no longer puts his finger directly on her back, but on her shirt. In another spread in the Norwegian version, Johanna is hanging up-side-down from a tree branch while Garmann is standing next to the tree peeing. In the translated version Garmann is left out of this spread. To be in line with the edition the student films are based on, the reproductions of spreads are taken from the Norwegian edition.

The book series tells the story about how the boy Garmann explores his surroundings and his relations to people around him. In the first book, *Garmann's summer,* the story takes place in his home and garden, in *Garmann's street*, in his neighborhood, and in *Garmann's secret*, in his schoolyard and the nearby woods. In the last book Hole tells a story about how Garmann and his friend Johanna steal away to explore secrets in the woods, secrets about each other and thoughts about life, nature, the earth, and outer space. The scenes with Garmann and Johanna playing in the woods revolve around their conversations and reflections just as much as their actions.

Stian Hole is well-known for his visual techniques, making colorful digital collages of photos and drawings. His picturebooks have an abundance of visual details for the reader to discover. As Tom

Barthelmess puts it in his review: “The dreamlike photo-collage artwork mixes contemporary images with ones borrowed from the past (Elvis and other vintage figures can be seen in a local parade), as well as botanical and astrological prints, for a heightened, surreal effect” (Barthelmess, 2011). Characterizing Hole’s collages as “dreamlike” aligns well with the illustrator’s own description of his techniques. Hole (2008, p. 159) has explained that he for several years looked for a suitable tool to make his digital collages, until he found the Photoshop image editing software, a program which allows him to make illusions of seamless collages. Garmann's face can consist of up to 30 different seamless pieces, Hole states (p. 159). The effect of this layer upon layer of photographs is that the characters’ faces may look familiar at first sight, but when you look closer, they could be anyone. Kristin Ørjasæter (2014) points to how the visual aesthetics in the books about Garmann has a hypermediated character that invites the reader to sense and experience the images as encounters between the real and the virtual world.

7.2. Film analysis

In this film Hole’s aesthetic universe sets the tone from the start. The opening displays double spread 4, a scene from a Norwegian Constitution Day parade (see figure 6), accompanied by a few seconds of a march traditionally played in these parades. The sound clip is the only piece of music heard in the film. In this scene, Elvis Presley appears in front of the parade supported on each side by the girl twins Hanna and Johanna, two child characters who appear in all three Garmann books. However, suddenly in the next film clip the viewer discovers that there is a vital change in the parade scene. The film makers have replaced the faces of Elvis and the girls with small portraits of themselves implemented into Hole’s illustration. This play with Hole’s collage-technique, combined with the sound of a marching band, gives a humoristic start and creates an immediate contact between the students and the spectators.

Figure 6. *Garmanns hemmelighet* by Stian Hole, Cappelen Damm (double spread 4).

The next scene is set in a library. Here one of the students has put herself in front of a bookshelf displaying picturebooks, amongst them *Garmann's secret*. The student is looking straight into the camera speaking about the importance of offering children a wide range of books to read. She accentuates the teachers' mission to lead the pupils into a rich text culture. The use of close ups of a student addressing the spectator establishes a personal presence and proximity to the spectators. The film continues with cross cuts between the live action scenes in the library and scenes with a full screen image from the endpapers of *Garmann's secret* accompanied by voice over comments. This part of the film includes a short presentation of other books by Hole and information about his photoshop technique. The various shifts between live action scenes and voice-over scenes demonstrate the capacity to create variety and rhythmic effects by means of cinematic devices.

The third film section presents an analysis of *Garmann's secret*. To limit the scope of their analysis, the students point to the need for selecting some main elements to highlight. The choices they have made involve the book's paratexts and some selected scenes mainly from the schoolyard and the woods. The discussion includes the questions of how Garmann and other main characters are introduced and how the characters' personalities and relations are described by words and images. The students' comments on their selection criterions demonstrate insights in the book's aesthetics and storytelling, as well as reflections on what restrictions and possibilities the making of a film with a time limit of ten minutes may offer.

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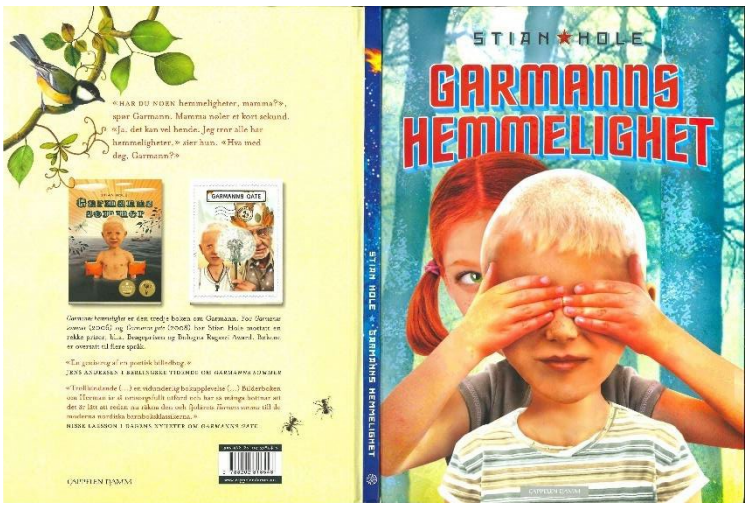

Figure 7. *Garmanns hemmelighet* (2010) by Stian Hole, Cappelen Damm (back and front cover).

In their paratext analysis, the students comment on elements from the book cover, the endpapers, the imprint page, and the title page. The front cover image describes a scene with Garmann and a girl right behind him holding her hands over his eyes (see figure 7). In the film, the display of the front cover is accompanied by a voice-over explaining that the illustration, combined with the book title placed directly above the children's heads, invites the reader to wonder about what secret the book may involve. After the front cover introduction, the film shows a hand flicking through most of the pages, thus, giving an idea of the book's dimensions. This move lets the viewer glance into the book's visual universe. The next clip shows the endpapers' depiction of a starry sky and a space capsule, and the voice-over states that this may reinforce the readers' wonders about what secrets the book keeps.

The following clips focus on various elements on the imprint page and the title page. The collage includes several references to the Soviet cosmonaut Gagarin, i.e., a photo of him and three different Russian stamps dedicated to the cosmonaut. The film points to how the Gagarin references are suited to foreshadow how Garmann and Johanna imagine that the metal thrash they find in the woods is a space capsule. The students also highlight the function of other elements in the imprint page, such as the small children's drawing of a girl combined with drawings of the letter "J" and a heart, which foreshadow the penultimate double spread with an image of Garmann and Johanna kissing each other. The film also makes a few comments on the back cover, specifically pointing to an image of a small bird, a chickadee, sitting on a branch with green leaves, a visual detail which relates to the wood scenes inside the book. In conclusion, the film's presentation of the paratexts proves to be multifaceted and demonstrates an interest in the function of visual elements. The presentation combines the modes of showing and telling in ways that heighten the informational quality.

In the next clip the film stops at double spread 12, showing a dreamlike scene of Garmann and Johanna floating around in outer space. Using this scene as an example, the students reflect on why the book may challenge the child reader's skills of interpretation, especially when it comes to how fantasy and reality is blended. The students also point to other dichotomies being questioned in this book. The conversations between Garmann and Johanna in the woods include scientific as well as philosophical and religious aspects, thus the borders between these fields are challenged. Another example is the book's exploring of likeness and difference, in particular related to the identical twins Hannah and Johanna. Finally, the students point to how photos and drawings appear to blend into one another, leaving the viewer uncertain about which is which.

The next part of the film starts by presenting the book's first three double spreads, which include scenes from the schoolyard. The film shows how the opening spread presents a close-up portrait of a girl looking directly at the reader. Behind her, several pairs of anonymous children's feet can be seen

and combined with a visual background consisting of lined paper, like in a schoolbook. The illustration gives an impression of a schoolyard scene, the commentator states. The girl has a rather distorted open mouth, indicating that she sends a mocking message to someone, and the voice-over explains how the verbal text supports this impression by saying that the girl named Hannah teases Garmann about kissing her sister Johanna. Thus, the combined words and image let the readers understand that Hannah appears as rather dominant, the voice-over states. The film also comments on the symmetrical or supportive relation between the verbal text and the illustration in this spread.

Continuing this analysis, the students dwell at the school-yard scene in double spread 2, which in contrast to the close-up in spread 1, opens as a panoramic view of the various school yard activities. Then a slow zooming-in focuses on a small figure almost hidden behind a tree, who turns out to be Garmann. By this cinematic move, the students cleverly mimic how the readers' eyes are guided by the text towards Garmann: "Hannah's horrible, Garmann thinks, moving away. He has seen how things work on the playground; he knows that children form a circle around you and shout and jeer. You have to get away before you're left standing in the middle." For the rest of the break, he stays hidden in the shadow of the tree and watches Hannah and Johanna jump rope." (double spread 2).

Figure 8. *Garmanns hemmelighet* by Stian Hole, Cappelen Damm (double spread 3).

In double spread 2, the reader can spot Garmann's back, but the two girls he is looking at are hidden behind the tree, not visible to the reader. The students point to the page turning effect, as double spread 3 (see figure 8) shows a close-up of Garmann behind the tree, allowing the reader to see Hannah and Johanna jumping rope on the other side of the tree. Here, the students point to the similarities and differences in how Hole presents the twin-sisters. "The twins are identical and yet

different, Garmann thinks" (double spread 3). The student comments on how the differences are depicted, by showing one of the sisters with a long-sleeved shirt and naked feet, while the other has shoes, jeans, and short sleeves. Even the arrangement of the ponytails expresses the difference between them, the commentator says.

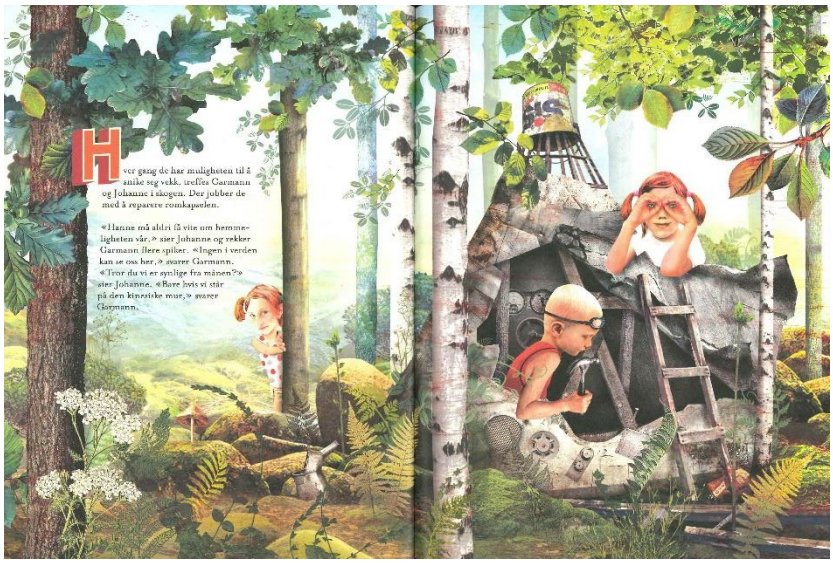

Figure 9. *Garmanns hemmelighet* by Stian Hole, Cappelen Damm (double spread 14).

After analyzing the presentation of the main characters, the student takes us through the story by highlighting the secret place in the woods, showing glimpses of scenes where Garmann and Johanna explore the landscape, play, dream, talk, swim, touch each other and kiss (see figure 9). While continuing to show examples from the book-spreads, the students move from analyzing to discussing certain theoretical issues, such as aesthetic versus efferent reading in the classroom, the complexity of the story and the mixture of symmetrical, complementary and expanding iconotexts. By using several literary theoretic angles chosen from the course syllabus, they address the theme of social exclusion, the readers' horizon of understanding, and how *Garmann's secret* can be viewed as "an open text" due to the manifold options of interpretation.

In the final two minutes of the film, we see and hear children in a school yard, shown from a birds-eye-view, accompanied by a voice-over reflecting upon literature didactics: "Who are the children in our classrooms? How do we consider their age, cultural background, life experiences, language, and reading skills when planning and conducting literary conversations?" The voice-over underlines the need to involve children's own understanding and experience in book talks. She recommends reading this book in a smaller group of pupils to allow more room for interaction with the text and illustrations.

The final scene can be interpreted as cinematic counterpart to Hole's schoolyard collage. Thus, the film starts and ends with the students mimicking Hole's visual universe.

8. Individual self-assessments

After having submitted their films, the students were asked to write an individual text of 1-2 pages reflecting upon what kind of knowledge, both in the field of picturebooks and in digital competencies, they found especially interesting or useful. They were also asked to reflect upon the collaboration within the group.

The three students behind the film *Snill* all say they have learned a lot about picturebooks and book talks through this assignment. One of them says she used to think that the verbal text was most important when reading picturebooks aloud in her class, sometimes not allowing all the pupils to see the illustrations. She further describes how she, through the filmmaking project, has come to prepare herself in a different way when presenting a new picturebook to her class. Before she attended this course, her pupils were guided to discuss the theme as presented primarily in the text, she says, but now she will guide them to analyze the iconotext. Another student also accentuates how she has become aware of using music along with the picturebook after having discovered that the text in "Roar" by Katy Perry corresponded so well with *Snill*.

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One student says she was both excited and skeptical towards working in a small group to complete such a major task. Also, the use of digital tools and forms of communication was scary at first. Not long after, they agreed to read the picturebook in their separate classes and to conduct book talks with their pupils. Then they met to share their classroom experiences and to discuss what aspects to bring into the film. They used Messenger for communication, Google Disc for sharing documents and co-writing, and iMovie for film-editing. As these three students lived relatively close to one another, they agreed to meet to edit the film jointly, and thus, being able to solve the digital challenges together.

This group asked us to consider adjusting the assignment by prolonging the ten minutes time limit of the film. The tight limits made them leave out quite a lot of material, especially clips from using the book in the classroom, discussing the upbringing of girls and boys today and "in the old days." They also comment that the technical quality of the film footage was not as good as they had wanted due to limits of the size of the file.

Finally, all three students say they value the assignment highly. They appreciate the opportunity to obtain digital competencies in a supportive environment. One of them puts it this way: "Sharing and uploading these films has also been new and educational for me. It took a lot of practice to master the app, but it was fun. You learn fast when something is fun, and you need it!" They did not know any of the other students when the work started, and they described the social aspect of working in a group as important for their motivation to work with the film project.

The four students who made the film about *Garmann's secret* also express themselves positively about the assignment. Most of them had some knowledge about picturebooks when they started. One student describes how she used picturebooks with her pupils for coziness, working with reading strategies or "spicing up" a subject in natural science, but how her new insights have broadened her view of what books to present to her classes and how to manage book talks. She describes how she is looking forward to using all the picturebooks from the course syllabus. Another student describes how she gained interest to the point that she is now reading book reviews.

The group members first established contact via Facebook and Messenger and shared a Google disk for collaborating with the manuscript. They chose to edit the film in iMovie. One of the students had preliminary knowledge of iMovie so she undertook all editing. The three students who were not directly involved in editing say that they were given a course from the fourth student, and they are all eager to use this tool for making their own tutorial films and letting the pupils try to make films themselves. One student says that working with this group assignment gave her confidence to try new digital tools on her own. Another one puts it this way: "This has been a bit scary and a demanding workload, but I would not have missed it. I'm surprised at how much I've learned from this, and how harmless it turned out to be."

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The 7 self-assessing texts we have chosen for this project appear to be representative for what the rest of the 55 students expressed. All say they will use picturebooks and book talks more often, and that they already have discussed with their colleagues some of the great benefits working with picturebooks may have. The impression is that working with this assignment gave the students a higher academic confidence in the field of children's literature.

We offered no training in digital filmmaking and made no demands concerning what programs to use. A few of the 55 students expressed frustration about the challenge to explore digital filmmaking on their own. Some students say that the final editing was done by the one in their group who already knew how to edit and had access to the equipment needed. Still, they say this assignment made them

less scared of exploring digital tools alone or together with their pupils. Some say that sending files, films, photos, and texts back and forth by e-mails soon was replaced with collaborating on a platform where sharing files was easy. They emphasize how these new digital skills will be of great value in their work. Although the technical side of the film making process led to some frustration, most of the students expressed great joy and pride in how their exploring of technical possibilities helped them to develop their ability to make this film, opening the possibility of making more tutorial films in the future.

9. Discussion of findings

As pointed to in the analyses, both films present and discuss the interplay between words and images in ways that demonstrate solid knowledge of picturebook theory. The students discuss verbal and visual aesthetics in observant and multifaceted ways, and they connect their observations wisely to characterizations of main characters and to thematic issues. Both films convey an awareness of the equal role of words and images and demonstrate insights into various types of visual and verbal interactions.

Also, didactic issues are addressed in the films, although more thoroughly in the *Garmann's secret* film than in the film about *What a girl!*. In the self-assessments, the students expand largely on their didactic engagement. The overall impression is that the film making project has made the students aware of new and more diverse ways of working with picturebooks in their classrooms.

Another main issue in our findings relates to how the two films apply the film medium's multimodal affordances in creative ways. The film about *What a girl!* emphasizes particularly the potential of various musical elements, while the other film to a greater extent applies various visual modes of presentation. The students' willingness to explore the use of digital tools is a vital premise for the multimodal qualities of the films. Statements from the self-assessments support the impression of the students' engagement in exploring multimodal resources and digital tools.

According to findings in both the films and the self-assessments, the process of working together in groups allowed for a high degree of student agency and independence. The students expressed that they appreciated the chance to solve problems and make inquiries within the group fellowship. These findings align well with how multimodal and digital learning design theories accentuate the values of collaborative learning contexts (Jewitt, 2006, 2013; Kress & Selander, 2011; Selander, 2015) and furthermore with the principles of dialogic teaching and learning as described by Alexander (2017). Moreover, since the participants in the film making project are experienced teachers, their comments

on the benefits of working in groups correspond to Alexander's focus on dialogic teaching and learning as a tool to foster lifelong learning.

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10.Concluding remarks

One aim of this article has been to investigate how students in children's literature courses may expand their knowledge about picturebooks and picturebook didactics by making tutorial films in student-lead groups. Another aim has been to study the students' use of various multimodal sources and digital technologies and to gain insight in their experiences from exploring these tools. Though this study involves in-service teachers, the film making project should be relevant to other groups of students and may also include topics other than picturebooks. The analyses indicate that this kind of film making project may foster a high degree of student engagement suited to achieve in-depth knowledge on topics within the field of children's literature.

11.Acknowledgements

All images and citations from the picturebooks are reproduced with permission from the authors, illustrators, and the publishing house.

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