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This chapter brings together a number of papers related to the teaching of children and teenagers. Starting with very young children, the chapter opens with a symposium report: Sandie Mourão, Gail Ellis, Janice Bland, Smiljana Narančić Kovač and Opal Dunn discuss the use of illustration in children’s literature over the past 30 years. Next, Samúel Lefever presents some useful strategies for working with six-year-old children, and Sophie Handy does the same for working with teens. Working with teens is also the topic of Mercedes Agueda Foligna’s paper; she shows how the phenomenon of ‘Englishphobia’ among secondary-school students can be addressed by teachers. Moving to testing, Sandra Lucietto reports on an initiative to design diagnostic tests for Italian teenagers. The next two papers address the use of digital technology with teenagers. Jodi Wainwright offers suggestions for using technology to motivate teenagers, specifically in a French context, while Radhika Gholkar reports on the benefits and challenges of introducing technology to schools in India. Next, Lindsey Clark describes how innovative projects resulted in an immersion-type experience for Italian teenagers. In the next paper, Nayr Ibrahim explores the perspectives of the young learners themselves and shows ways to encourage self-review. The final paper in this chapter is by Patricia Santos. Her heartfelt account of teaching in a Brazilian school illustrates the fact that many children are trying to learn in very difficult circumstances.

9.1 Realbooks to picturebooks: 30 years of illustrated literature in ELT

Sandie Mourão Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal, Gail Ellis British Council, Paris, France, Janice Bland University of Munster, Germany, Smiljana Narančić Kovač University of Zagreb, Croatia and Opal Dunn Freelance, UK

Introduction

The objective of this symposium was to reinforce the expanding potential of picturebooks, also known in ELT as realbooks, for language education. It began with a definition from Bader: ‘A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a [reader/beholder]. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page’ (1976: 1).

There was a brief discussion around the preference for picturebooks over language
learner literature, which emphasised the authenticity of both pictures and words in picturebooks. The five speakers shared their views and experience of working with picturebooks from different perspectives.

**Responding to picturebook design and aesthetics: Sandie Mourão**

A picturebook usually contains 32 pages and so, in many cases, the illustrations overflow into the other parts of the picturebook—the front and back covers, the endpapers, the copyright and dedication pages and the title page. When looking at picturebooks children respond to the whole picturebook, the pictures, the words and its design.

Mourão (2012) has adapted a theory of literary understanding (Sipe 2000) with five response categories for the EFL classroom: an analytical response, an intertextual response, a personal response, a transparent response and a performative response. The analytical response has five sub-categories which manifest a response to:

- the narrative meaning: children predict, describe the narrative plot and make inferences, often about the illustrations;
- the illustrations: children identify, label and describe action;
- the words: children savour the spoken word and respond to its graphic features on the page;
- the book as object: children talk about the book as object, e.g. discussion around its endpapers; and
- the linguistic codes (L1 and L2): children translate from and into the L2, correct each other, compare words and codes and show evidence of thinking about language.

The intertextual response is evidenced when children make associative connections with other texts, such as another picturebook or a film. The personal response shows children making personal connections and sharing opinions about characters’ actions. The transparent response is an emotional or physical one revealed when children spontaneously interact with characters and relive the picturebook experience, such as gasping, laughing or asking for the story again. Finally the performative response is creative and pre-mediated and is usually entertaining to observe.

The session shared several short films of children responding to a picturebook and highlighted that response was something to take seriously: it is multifaceted, meaningful and multilingual, and it requires a response from the picturebook mediator, often in the form of rephrasing into English, confirming and encouraging.

**Promoting learning literacy through picturebooks: Gail Ellis**

Picturebooks provide a rich and motivating resource to develop basic vocabulary and phrases related to the content of a story, but they can also be used to develop multiliteracies. These include visual, emotional, cultural, nature, digital and moving image literacy; they also include learning literacy, defined as an ethos, a culture and a way of life which involves ‘being ready to develop our own learning capacities, develop the behaviours we now need as individuals, including being willing to learn continuously, as competencies essential to thriving in a globally connected, digitally driven world’ (Wynn 2016). *The Important Book* (Wise-Brown and Weisgard 1949) was used as an example of how learning literacy can be integrated into primary English language pedagogy by applying the plan–do–review cycle (Ellis and Ibrahim 2015).
The Important Book describes the major attributes of everyday familiar things, such as a spoon, an apple and the sky; each paragraph begins and ends with the key attribute. The rhythmic paragraphs assign a dream-like quality to reality: ‘the important thing about the sky is that it is always there’. The format provides children with a model of how to write a good paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting sentences; it also encourages creating and thinking critically as it invites children to construct their own opinions about everyday things and their world. It provokes discussion as peers may or may not agree with the key attribute chosen.

Working through the three stages of the plan–do–review cycle, children are informed of the aims of the activity, they identify success criteria, they draft and refine their paragraphs, and then they review what they did and learnt, how they learnt and how well they did in order to identify next steps. This process enables the teacher to create learning environments that develop learning literacy by providing opportunities for systematic reflection and experimentation and the development of metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies.

Global issues in picturebooks: Janice Bland

Intercultural competence calls for an approach to language education ‘that takes into account the actual, the imagined and the virtual worlds in which we live’ (Kramsch 2011: 366). Narratives are an important pedagogic medium. When they are compelling as well as comprehensible to the L2 learner as they can offer optimal input (Krashen and Bland 2014). They metaphorically represent many aspects of culture and as such offer windows onto other worlds. They also act as mirrors, as the imagined world reflects a new light onto the reader’s own world. Stories support humankind’s drive to construct coherence and meaning, and they can take the reader on educational journeys.

The pictures in children’s literature frequently provide convincing access to cultural details and involve the affective dimension—they are physically present and frozen in time—strongly drawing the reader/ beholder into the story-world. The pictures may transform into mental images that remain in the reader’s repertoire of experience, anchoring ideas, concepts and feelings along with language. Picturebooks reflecting cultural diversity move readers towards flexibility of perspective, away from the rather monolithic and often stereotyped input on other cultures provided in school textbooks. This is the meaning of intercultural competence, a competence that is designed to build bridges.

The use of English worldwide in different contexts is sometimes referred to as Global English(es), and global issues as subject matter fall within the remit of intercultural education. Contemporary and innovative creators of literature on serious themes are increasingly turning to visual narratives, and multicultural picturebooks on globally relevant topics can make a breadth and depth of understanding achievable for young learners as demonstrated in the array of picturebooks shown in the presentation.

Picturebooks in FL teacher education: Smiljana Narančić Kovač

Picturebooks are an indispensable resource in teaching English to young learners, and so they should be addressed in English language teacher education. Three areas should
be considered when planning a programme: theoretical considerations, familiarity
with published picturebooks and practical issues.

Theoretical considerations may include such topics as understanding the semiotic
model of a narrative picturebook, its intermediality, its flexibility as a form and the
complex relationships established between the verbal and the visual layers. Another
goal is to help students develop an ability to approach picturebooks critically from
different perspectives and to recognise their specific model of narrative communication,
which involves and activates the reader in the reading process, including re-readings.

Familiarity with published picturebooks provides an insight into a brief history
of picturebooks together with the experience of reading a number of high-quality
examples, including classic and contemporary authors. This makes it possible for
students to understand the role of the reader and the learner and to assume those
perspectives. It also involves spotting picturebooks that can be useful for EFL learners,
which links to the next area.

Practical issues embraces the evaluation of picturebooks according to their
quality and usefulness for the EFL classroom or individual reading, understanding
the potential of picturebooks for language learning and an ability to autonomously
develop teaching materials and design activities for young learners which are based
upon individual picturebooks and tailored to learners’ needs.

The study programme for primary teachers of English at the Faculty of Teacher
Education at the University of Zagreb is designed to meet most of the above-
mentioned needs. This was exemplified during the presentation through several
examples of activities for young learners based upon specific picturebooks created by
individual students of the Primary English major.

**Picturebooks and parents: Opal Dunn**

If English is introduced at a young age, it is likely to be most successful when the
‘learning triangle’ of parents, teacher and child (Dunn 2013) is actively set up.
Picturebooks are an excellent English experience for parents who want to use English
at home in enjoyable ways. This is motivating for children as it shows parents are
interested in their English learning experience. In this session ten tips were shared to
promote positive parent participation with picturebooks. These are as follows:

1. Inform parents how children learn a language, how you are going to teach it and
   the relevance of their support. Share your aims and objectives and include infor-
   mation about picturebooks you will use.
2. Provide a list of picturebooks for parents to read at home and criteria for selecting
   picturebooks, e.g. consider books for boys.
3. Set up a book borrowing classroom library system.
4. Provide tips for reading and sharing English picturebooks (see Dunn 2010).
5. Suggest how to re-use home language teaching strategies when sharing English
   picturebooks, e.g. stressing important words, speaking slowly and giving generous
   encouragement.
6. Suggest when to use the home language e.g. rephrasing children’s comments from
   L1 to L2; requesting short summaries of the story in the L1.
7. Provide ideas for picturebook follow-up tasks.
8. Explain any picturebook take-home activities clearly, so parents and child can complete these successfully.

9. Provide regular information on progress in emails, class blogs and closed Facebook groups by featuring favourite picturebooks, related projects and photos of children’s work.

10. Be sensitive to the individual needs and preferences of parents. Teachers can encourage parents, even with little spoken English, to playfully mediate English picturebooks, thus ensuring the learning triangle succeeds, for through English picturebooks it is possible for enjoyable English experiences to be extended into the home.

References


9.2 Six strategies for six year olds: teaching English to young learners

Samúel Lefever University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland

This talk discussed classroom strategies that teachers can use to make English learning fun and interactive while helping to ensure a comfortable and engaging learning environment for young learners.

Characteristics of young learners

Children are naturally inquisitive and open to new experiences. They ‘learn by doing’ through play, movement and interaction with others. It is natural for children to ‘negotiate meaning’ from language input in their surroundings. They are attuned to holistic learning and are more likely to reach for the overall meaning of a story rather