

A Survey and Research on the Use of Picture Book Stories in English Teaching in Elementary Schools

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Abstract:

The thesis uses field interviews and questionnaires to analyze the feedback from teachers and students and finds that there still exist many problems in teaching picture book stories, especially the lack of teaching experience on how to integrate picture books into textbooks organically. In addition, this thesis uses literature research method, and the research analysis finds that most of the literature has conducted in-depth research on the definition of picture book teaching and the meaning of picture book teaching, but there is a lack of research on the organic combination of picture book story teaching and textbooks. Therefore, this thesis research can help pre-service and in-service teachers understand picture book teaching in depth, and then better integrate picture books with textbooks so as to achieve the purpose of teaching for fun, and as a result, students can also have fun and acquire a lot from learning.

Keywords:

Picture Book Teaching Research, Elementary School English

1. Introduction

With people attaching more importance to elementary school English teaching, picture book teaching has received more and more attention from educators because of its unique presentation. Picture books are an important resource for English education in elementary school, telling stories in the form of combined graphic expressions, expressing specific emotions and themes through the interweaving and interaction of pictures and texts, and the themes of tolerance and respect, gratitude and cooperation, and self-identity and acceptance that they contain can make readers gain rich spiritual growth in a subtle way. The greatest significance of picture book teaching lies in its role in the initiation of children's English reading, the development of reading character, the enrichment of imagination, the formation of integrated thinking, and the development of logical thinking. The effectiveness of picture book teaching largely depends on whether teachers can deeply analyze the meaning of picture book themes and make full use of their nurturing value. [1] And picture book story teaching is also one of the important ways of English teaching, because the

discourse and contextual features of the story itself are conducive to students learning the meaning and function of language in context, and students can perceive the charm of language in understanding the content, plot, characters' emotion, and thematic meaning, and at the same time, it also helps to develop students' empathy ability. Therefore, picture book stories are very meaningful teaching contents for elementary school English teaching.

However, the literature reveals that most of the previous studies are based on specific directions of teaching picture books in elementary schools, such as: research on the meaning of unit themes, students' emotional experiences, the "SSG" teaching model, and the concept of English learning activities. Most of them have also analyzed the current situation of picture books, their teaching significance and future prospects. However, most of them are from a more abstract, macro and theoretical perspective, and rarely combine textbooks with picture books, students and classrooms, lacking practical effects. For example, in the article [2] the author discusses the history of primary English picture book teaching research, the analysis of primary English picture book research themes and the future outlook on primary English picture book teaching, and also analyzes the current situation of picture book teaching in China and some scholars' research on picture books, but some of them only give theoretical approaches, lacking concrete and feasible solutions combined with the real situation. The Return to the True Nature of Picture Book Reading Teaching [3] also mainly discusses the basic principles and concepts of picture book teaching from a theoretical perspective, lacking a specific teaching implementation process and a corresponding practical investigation for comprehensive analysis. Therefore, the literature study reveals that no in-depth research has been conducted on how to organically combine picture books and textbooks.

2. Investigation and Analysis of Picture Book Stories in English Teaching in Primary Schools

2.1 Investigation into students' picture book story learning

In the past five years, survey interviews have been conducted with more than 40 local elementary school students (mainly in grades 4-6) from Hubei, Hunan, and Chongqing provinces and the questions mainly focus on:

- 1) How does your teacher teach the picture book story?
- 2) What have you acquired from picture book story learning?
- 3) How would you like your teacher to teach picture books?

The students' corresponding feedback is as follows:

- 1) Some teachers teach in a single way, focusing too much on knowledge, and their teaching cannot attract students' interest.
- 2) Students can learn the main idea of the picture book stories, but they have great difficulty in understanding the challenging words and reading aloud.
- 3) Students hope that teachers can provide more interesting teaching activities, increase more relevant extra-curricular contents and cultivate their ability to learn independently.

2.2. Investigation into teachers' picture book story teaching

At the same time, we also had some communication with teachers in elementary schools, and we find they teach the story part in the following way:

- 1) Some teachers simply translate the content of the English into Chinese, and do not discuss the background of the story in depth, let alone expand it or even ignore the story because of the lack of time.
- 2) Some teachers just use the story content to teach students to read aloud, without taking their interest, motivation, and enlightenment into consideration.
- 3) Some teachers do teach this part by playing animated videos (but only for fun), doing reading role-play, and playing small games (but for learning words), but they fail to achieve their original goal of getting students to know the themes and cultivating students' cultural awareness.

From the above information, we can clearly realize that a lot of primary school teachers lack experience in picture book teaching, which is embodied in the following aspects: single teaching method, superficial teaching analyses, poor integration between the picture book stories and the textbook texts. Therefore, if this is the case for a long time students' interest and motivation will slowly wear off and diminish under its influence.

In addition, according to the content design of different editions of elementary school English textbooks from children's hands and online, all editions of textbooks have story time sections. Some editions include fun reading, story time and culture tips in the review section; some editions bear a whole English story learning section, and questions followed each story, and the Let's act section. We can see from the design of these different versions of the textbooks that English picture book teaching is very important in terms of the content requirements of the Ministry of Education, and they are all interspersed in different forms in the textbooks. However, a lot of teachers ignore its existence, and in some cases, even if they do teach it, it does not really serve the meaning and value of teaching.

Therefore, in order to help pre-service and in-service teachers use picture books better, we need some methods, some strategies to improve our picture book story teaching so as to make students enjoy learning, love learning.

3. How to Realize the Organic Combination of Picture Book Teaching and Textbook

In order to realize the organic integration of picture book and textbook, we will adopt the "PWP" classroom teaching mode, and elaborate on three parts: introduction, in-class session, and post-class assignment design. At the same time, we will provide solutions to specific problems and difficulties encountered by students in the teaching process, so as to better integrate picture book teaching with textbooks.

3.1. Lead-in

The classroom introduction is an important step for the teacher to begin teaching, and the first step to get the students' attention and minds engaged in the content of the lesson. The design of the introduction should not be overly complicated and inoperable, but be relevant and inspiring, and needs to be combined with a variety of activities according to the students' specific school level [4]. The following are effective methods used in elementary schools:

3.1.1. Picture sorting introduction method

Elementary school students are an active group, with a strong curiosity about things, and rearranging disorganized pictures can usually stimulate their curiosity to a certain extent, attract their attention and make them integrate into the classroom more quickly. And by sequencing the pictures, students need to analyze the logical relationship of the story in conjunction with their grasp of the overall structure of the story and with keyword cues, which helps to exercise their logical thinking skills and observation; The questions generated in the sorting process will in turn trigger students' thinking, which in turn helps to mobilize their initiative and creativity in the process of problem solving; listening to the teacher's explanation with questions will not only further improve their problem solving ability, but also develop self-confidence. In addition, students share their opinions with each other in the sorting process, enhancing cooperation and communication among themselves, which not only exercises their oral expression skills but also facilitates the formation of their critical thinking.

For picture book stories with simple pictures, take *Handa's Surprise* picture book story as an example, the teacher will disrupt the order of the pictures in the picture book story, give the beginning and end of the pictures, and write a few key words in each picture, for example, on the first picture write "Seven fruits in a basket". Write "Banana is taken away" on the picture of a monkey taking a banana; write "Goat against tree" on the picture of a goat hitting a tree; Write "Handa and her friend" on the picture of Handa meeting with her friend. After breaking up all the pictures, students were asked to reorder them according to the pictures and the key words, and finally several students were asked to show their answers and explain their reasons, then other students analyzed and discussed, and finally the teacher commented and summarized.

For picture book stories with complicated pictures, take the *Three Little Pigs* picture book story as an example, the teacher also disordered the pictures and gave the beginning and the end of the story, because *Three Little Pigs* is not a single logical relationship, but consists of several parallel logical relationships, students will feel complicated and difficult to understand the content of the story, and do not know how to order the pictures. Teachers can give students appropriate prompts, such as asking them some questions:

- a. What is the relationship between the big bad wolf and the little pig
- b. Why did the big wolf blow on the little pig's house?
- c. Why did the wolf often talk to the little pig outside his house?

Appropriate prompts will not bore students with the complexity and difficulty of understanding the story; rather, timely prompts will be more helpful in guiding the logic of students' thinking and continuing to stimulate their interest.

3.1.2. Oral presentation introduction method

Elementary school students are at the stage of development from concrete image thinking to abstract thinking. Relying on their individual ability to observe pictures and make sense of the picture book story, they can not only develop their abstract thinking skills, but also exercise their observation power. In the process of reading, students will have questions about the characters and plot of the story, and through self-analysis and oral presentation, they will be able to narrate the story with their own

opinions, which will not only develop their ability to analyze and solve problems, but also effectively develop their expression skills and improve their self-confidence. In addition, oral presentation can give each student the opportunity to express himself/herself, develop his/her learning autonomy and creativity, give full play to students' main role, and promote students' motivation and active classroom atmosphere.

For picture book stories with fewer pictures, take the *Guess How Much I Love You* picture book story as an example, the teacher let the students browse the picture book independently for 3-4 minutes and asked them questions: "Based on the pictures and text, use your imagination to describe what story do you think the article is mainly about?" Several students were then asked to share their own ideas on their own initiative, and other students started analysis and discussion based on this.

For picture book stories with more pictures, take the example of *There's an Alligator Under My Bed* picture book story, the teacher can combine the free talk method by first asking the students the following questions: "When you sleep alone, do you fear the bottom of the bed? " After inviting several students to answer, ask another question: "How do you overcome it? " After the students' heated discussion, let them spend 4-5 minutes reading the illustrated story in this lesson and describe what happened to the main character in the story and how he solved the matter, and finally the teacher further analyzed and discussed with other students.

3.2. In-class session

3.2.1. Story Title

The title is a more direct way to understand the whole story, and it is a high level summary of the content of the article. The title of a story can lead students to have a guess about the content of the article, which not only can spread students' thinking and develop their creative ability, but also can attract students to understand the story deeply. Use the following picture book as an example:

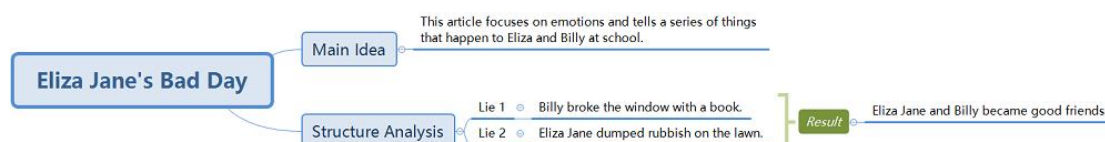


Figure 1. *Eliza Jane's Bad Day.*

In the picture book *Eliza Jane's Bad Day*, the title can be used to stimulate students' curiosity in terms of how things started and how things turned out. When the title is presented to them, it can trigger endless speculation. "Was Jane late for school, and if so, what was she late for?" "Was she criticized by her teacher?" "Was she in trouble with her best friend?" and a host of other ideas will prompt They want to understand the story. After having a guess about the beginning of the story, the students will be curious about the rest of the story, and they will wonder "who Jane will ask for help, who she will talk to, whether it is her parents, her teacher or her friends" and "whether Jane finally gets rid of her bad mood". These thoughts will lead them to explore more. These thoughts will lead them to explore more of the story.

3.2.2. Storyline

The storyline helps students to grasp the story more completely and deeply and understand the characters. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher can show the cover of the story and ask students to guess who the main character is. Then the teacher can take students through the storyline with pictures to give them a general idea of where the story is going, and finally return to the textbook to guide them to read the story closely and understand the storyline in depth. The teacher can also set questions in the key parts, so that students can study with the questions to enhance the depth of learning and understanding and memory of the key points.[5] In the picture book *My Dad*, teachers can address the questions “He can jump right over the moon.” “He can walk on a tightrope.” “He can wrestle with giants.” These sentences are asked with “What can his father do?” so that students can review the sentence pattern of can and new words such as jump, walk and wrestle. In addition, teachers can increase students’ participation in the classroom in many ways. In the picture book reading class, one of the students explained the picture book of the very hungry caterpillar at the end of the class, and she performed the whole story first. Therefore, we can also try to use this method to stimulate students’ enthusiasm and motivation when explaining picture books.

In addition to the performance method, teachers can also use the game method to design different mini-games according to the development of the story and combine the content of the picture book with the content of the textbook, so as not to easily distract students and at the same time to improve students’ participation in the classroom. In the Human Education version of the textbook, students start learning numbers in third grade, so teachers can combine it with the picture book *Ten apples up on top* when teaching related words or content. This picture book is fun as well as melodic, and pulling out the words 1-10 one by one as the story progresses can deepen students’ memories. The teacher can also use the number hugging game to review the number words learned and let the numbers be called out in English to achieve better learning and review.

3.2.3. Story characters

Character analysis is also an important part of learning picture books. The teacher can lead the students to analyze the characters and their characteristics through the storyline. In this process, students can first experience the emotional changes of the characters through audio or video, and then be guided to imitate the tone of voice of the characters in the story, so that they can understand the content and main idea of the story more closely through the changes in their emotions. In addition, the teacher can also analyze the character traits by leading students to understand the transformation of the characters’ behavior and emotions before and after the story, so as to sublimate the theme of the essay with small insights. Use the story to peek into life and use the characters to educate students and help them establish a correct outlook on life and values. When guiding students through characters, it is best not to use a commanding tone like “can’t,” “shouldn’t,” or “can’t” to educate students, but to guide them to judge the story by themselves. The main character’s behavior, and then use it to guide students if the same thing happens in their own lives and how to solve it.

In the *My mum* picture book, the author introduces a very good mother. The teacher can further guide students to talk about their own mothers by analyzing the mothers in the story during the lesson. Before the lesson, let them share their impressions of their mothers, and then through the interpretation of the characters in the picture book, let

students recall what their mothers have done for them, and what new ideas they have after learning this picture book, and what new understanding they have of their mothers, to feel the greatness of mother's love. Teachers can also use the method of transposition to help students understand the characters deeply, using questions like "If you were mum, what would you do?" to guide students to put themselves in their mother's shoes and understand the hard work of being a mother.[6]

3.3. Post-lesson homework design

English after-school homework is the expansion and extension of the course learning content, not only can effectively help students enhance their cognitive experience and comprehensive application ability, but also an important means to consolidate the efficiency of classroom teaching, which requires teachers to try to meet the psychological characteristics of students when assigning English after-school homework, so that English after-school homework is full of fun, to ensure that students can complete the after-school homework, show their learning achievements, but also from We will also make sure that students can accept the English homework from their hearts. We will analyze the effectiveness of English after-school homework in secondary schools in the light of the requirements of the new curriculum.[7] Therefore, the after-school homework of picture book teaching should avoid mechanical rigidity and be integrated, multi-modal and selective.

3.3.1. Focus on the integration of homework content

As an extension of textbook teaching, picture book teaching should play a role in consolidating and strengthening the basic contents of the textbook. Therefore, we should try our best to establish a connection between the two in our homework assignments, taking the picture book story of "The Tortoise and the Hare" as an example:

Ask students to discuss what the text has in common with this picture book story in the context of the text they studied last week. (For example, 1. the similarities of the main characters, 2. what the author wanted to express with this story, etc.)

Through this kind of homework, students can further review and consolidate what they have learned in class while expanding the picture book story, and analyze the two texts at multiple levels, which not only helps students improve their academic performance, but also trains them to think differently.

3.3.2. Pay attention to the multimodality of homework forms

English learning emphasizes listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and collaborative development, so the mechanical completion of after-school exercises will only frustrate students' motivation to learn and turn them into "dumb English" under exam-oriented education. In elementary school, we focus on cultivating students' interest in learning English, and listening and speaking is a good way to do this. Take the picture book story of "The Hare and the Tortoise" as an example.

- a. Ask students to retell the story in their own words to their parents after class.
- b. Ask the students to dub the turtle or the hare on the "Fun Dubbing" software.

Practice.

- c. Ask students to act out the story with a partner after class and ask their parents to upload the video of the performance to the class.

All the above assignments are full of fun, not limited to a single written task, but encourage students to express themselves more and let them practice and master English while “playing”, so as to promote students’ comprehensive development.

3.3.3. Provide selectivity in the degree of completion of homework

There are always various differences among individual students, some are field independent and some are field dependent.[8] For different types of students, homework should also present selectivity, and students can choose homework according to their interests, which can improve the quality of students’ homework completion on the one hand, and realize the teaching according to their abilities on the other. Take “The Tortoise and the Hare” as an example:

- a. Ask the students to continue the story and guess what will happen later.
- b. Ask students to use a paintbrush to draw on paper an episode of the story that strikes you.
- c. Retell the story of “The Tortoise and the Hare” to your parents.

Please choose any two of the above assignments to complete.

If you encounter difficulties in completing the homework after class, you can ask your classmates in the group for help or check the vocabulary with the help of your cell phone. After the homework is completed, parents will punch in the class group and the teacher will check and monitor the completion of the homework.

The independent choice of after-school homework can develop students’ different strengths, give them a sense of self-satisfaction and achievement in the process of completing homework, and reduce students’ after-school stress, so that they can develop physically and mentally.

After-school homework is the last part of picture book teaching, and its quality is related to the extent of students’ knowledge absorption and consolidation, and also affects students’ subsequent English learning. Therefore, teachers should try to do the above three things to lay a good foundation for students’ English development.

4. Conclusions

Elementary English is an enlightening subject, and the incorporation of picture book stories in teaching materials reminds us of the need to make changes in response to the current situation, student needs, and educational developments. Just as the introduction of the double reduction policy has brought a new paradigm to education, picture book stories are particularly important in elementary English teaching, which brings about an enjoyable teaching and learning process that is fun and educational. And picture book teaching is a vivid teaching method. Teachers use picture books as a carrier in teaching, and implement storytelling as a specific operation method to teach, which enhances the fun and literature of teaching, thus better completing the teaching task. At the same time, the stories in picture books construct the various contexts necessary for language learning: linguistic context, situational context, cultural context, and temporal context. [9] Therefore, it is highly feasible to implement English story picture book teaching at the elementary school level. As teachers, they should analyze the teaching materials carefully, fully explore the large amount of story materials in the curriculum resources, organically integrate the teaching content so that the picture book stories and the textbook materials are organically integrated,

effectively organize the teaching methods, and efficiently achieve the teaching objectives. How much students gain in a lesson actually comes in large part from the students' wholehearted integration, personal experience and comprehension, rather than how much knowledge the teacher tells. Comenius said, "Teaching is the most glorious profession under the sun." Hope that every teacher can do a good job in this glorious career and fill the world with flowers!

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of This article.

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