

# A Study of the Effect of Picture Book Appreciation on Young Children's Aesthetic Ability

Yuqian Zhang<sup>1\*</sup>, Conghui Su<sup>1</sup>, Songyan Shi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Qingdao Hengxing Science and Technology College, Qingdao, China

## Email Address

1738489091@qq.com (Yuqian Zhang)

\*Correspondence: 1738489091@qq.com

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## Abstract:

As a carrier containing rich aesthetic resources, early childhood picture books, with their profound pictorial narratives and vivid linguistic expressions, constitute a multi-dimensional and multi-level aesthetic space, which profoundly promotes the refinement of young children's aesthetic perceptual ability, the expansion of aesthetic imaginative ability, the enrichment of aesthetic emotions, and the deepening of the development of aesthetic comprehension ability. However, kindergarten aesthetic education faces the problems of insufficient teachers' aesthetic knowledge, uneven education and educational misconceptions. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen teachers' aesthetic education ability, deeply explore the value of picture book aesthetic education, and build a path of aesthetic education in line with the law of young children's development, so as to promote the comprehensive development of young children.

## Keywords:

Picture Book Appreciation, Young Children's Aesthetics, Aesthetic Ability

## 1. Introduction

Sense of beauty, i.e. aesthetic experience and feeling, originates from the process of aesthetizing things, people and works of art. In preschool education, cultivating children's aesthetic ability is the foundation of art appreciation and creative activities, and also the prerequisite for the development of their imagination, understanding and creativity. In view of the popularity of reading, kindergarten teachers should follow the pace of the times, strengthen their aesthetic education ability, and focus on the appreciation and reading of picture books, so as to enhance children's sensitivity to beautiful things and their aesthetic ability.

As one of the kindergarten curricula, activities in the field of art bear the important task of stimulating creativity as well as cultivating aesthetics in young children. The Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6 suggest that "art is an important form for human beings to feel, express and create beauty, as well as a unique way of expressing one's understanding of the world around us and one's

emotional attitudes.” [1] Young children are advocated to create and express beauty in their own way. The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (for Trial Implementation) mentions, “Encourage young children to boldly express their feelings, understandings and imaginations in different forms of art, respect the ideas and creations of each young child, affirm and accept their unique aesthetic feelings and ways of expression, and share in the joys of their creativity.” [2] In kindergarten, picture books are also a type that is easier for young children to come into contact with, and the main content of picture books is bright and colorful drawings, which can more intuitively help young children's appreciation and creation of the works, thus improving their aesthetic perception, aesthetic imagination, aesthetic emotion, aesthetic understanding and other aesthetic abilities.

## **2. The Value of Picture Book Appreciation in Cultivating Young Children's Aesthetic Ability**

Picture books not only have a simple educational function, the illustrations, lines, colors, etc. presented in the text also constitute a unique beauty of painting, some clever, natural vocabulary used in the picture books, but also constitute a unique beauty of language, and its content also contains a profound philosophy of life and common sense, for young children to bring the kindergarten, outside of the family, the knowledge of education. Children in the process of picture book appreciation, in the process of stimulating the development of young children's senses at the same time, more children bring a rich experience of art appreciation, enriching the feelings of young children on beautiful things, in order to improve the development of young children's aesthetic ability. Picture book reading is a kind of enjoyable appreciation activity, through the beautiful picture image and complete story narration, the aesthetic perception, aesthetic imagination, aesthetic emotion, aesthetic understanding and other aesthetic psychological elements of young children can be fully developed. [3]

Picture books directly stimulate young children's senses through their brightly colored drawings and humorous language, improve the sensitivity of young children's cognitive organs, enrich the development of young children's perceptions, so that young children can obtain direct perceptual experience, and promote the development of young children's aesthetic perceptual ability; the reading of picture books integrates aesthetic education to deepen the young children's perception of the beauty of the fantasy and internalization, stimulate the imagination, inspire the creation of inspiration, and promote the synergy of the development of the aesthetic imagination and creativity. The reading of picture books integrates aesthetic education, deepens young children's perception and internalization of fantasy beauty, stimulates imagination, enlightens creative inspiration, and promotes the synergistic development of aesthetic imagination and creativity. The aesthetic emotion of young children projects the unconscious psychological content and emotion of preschool children into the picture book object through empathy, so that the spirit of preschool children has a support; in addition to verbal expression, young children also express themselves through their own behaviors, such as changes in facial expression, body movements, etc., which are the natural expression and embodiment of the aesthetic emotion of preschool children. [4] Kindergarten teachers should encourage children to freely express their feelings and attitudes in picture book appreciation, avoiding emotional constraints, in order to promote the natural development of their emotional communication and aesthetic expression. [5] In the appreciation of the picture book

Guess How Much I Love You, children experience the educational significance of the picture book through the rendering of pictures and words, and at the same time, children will also bring their understanding of the picture book into their daily lives, which is not only confined to the knowledge of the picture book, but also rises to the understanding of the picture book as a whole, which is then internalized into children's day-to-day life, and promotes the development of children's aesthetic comprehension ability.

### **3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Aesthetic Education in Early Childhood Picture Book Appreciation Activities**

#### ***3.1. Problems of picture book appreciation activities in kindergartens***

##### ***3.1.1. Inappropriate selection of picture books and lack of aesthetic value of picture books***

In kindergarten picture book teaching, most teachers use picture book reading or appreciation to stimulate children's interest in reading, cultivate good reading habits, or promote the development of children's language expression skills, and help children make a series of preparations for school. Therefore, there are mistakes in the selection of picture books, teachers unilaterally purchase and put some science, literacy, literature and other educational picture books in large quantities, missing the suggestions or views of young children on the selection of picture books, completely from the perspective of the teacher, and young children in the process of picture book appreciation is completely in a passive state, passively accepting the picture book and the knowledge of the hard and dry, ignoring the picture book itself. The aesthetic value of picture books itself is neglected. Teachers in the teaching of language activities, often with picture books for the introduction, and then quickly into the specific activities, not to the depth of the beauty of the picture books themselves to explore and appreciate, so that the interest of the children was raised immediately extinguished, and then the thinking quickly shifted to the infusion of hard knowledge, can not achieve a good appreciation of the effect of the development of the ability to stimulate the aesthetic.

##### ***3.1.2. Insufficient professional competence of teachers and lack of guidance for young children's aesthetic expression***

In kindergarten, there is very little time for children to appreciate picture books. Teachers will arrange for children to read picture books for a few minutes during the transition period, or let children read freely in the reading area. Teachers think that children can have sufficient and quiet time to think about and appreciate the beauty of the picture books, but they do not know that children are unable to fully appreciate and review the beauty of the picture books within a short period of time. After the children finish reading, teachers do not care, fewer teachers will ask the children what picture books they have read and what they have learned, which is very common in kindergartens, and teachers mostly emphasize the educational significance of the picture books for the children, and teachers can't intervene in the children's reading as a participant, nor can they give the children some guidance when they have difficulties in reading, and even more can't evaluate the children's aesthetic performance accordingly, so that the children can only be able to appreciate and appreciate the beauty of picture books. They cannot give guidance to children when

they have difficulties in reading, nor can they evaluate the aesthetic performance of children, so that children can only fall into the feeling of picture book pictures, and cannot deepen their appreciation of the beauty of picture books.

### ***3.1.3. Disregarding the subject position of young children and neglecting the mining of language aesthetics in picture books***

According to the Guidelines, teachers should often read books and tell stories with children to enrich their language skills and cultivate their interest in reading and good reading habits. Teachers can make children feel the beauty of picture books more intuitively through their melodious and emotional explanations, together with the colorful pictures of the books themselves. However, in the current kindergarten, teachers use pictures to teach more, teachers think that colorful, childish and lovely pictures can bring more intuitively to the children's aesthetic experience, the children are also able to express their language through the pictures, and at the same time to appreciate the children's language expression ability development, while teachers think that the text of the picture book itself only plays a role in literacy and language expression for the children. Because teachers have this kind of thinking, they completely adopt a hard and plain tone to explain the picture content for children, which makes the picture disconnected from the whole story content and cannot bring children into the story situation, not only destroying the fluency and completeness of the language, but also failing to provide children with the time and opportunity to feel and appreciate the beauty of the language.

## ***3.2. Reasons for the problems of picture book appreciation activities in kindergartens***

### ***3.2.1. Early childhood teachers' lack of knowledge about aesthetic education***

On the one hand, teachers of young children unilaterally believe that the main purpose of using picture books is to cultivate young children's good behavioral habits, and pay too much attention to the cultivation of young children's intelligence, morality, and behavioral habits, neglecting the aesthetic education brought by the picture books themselves. If teachers do not specify the selection criteria for children's performance based on picture books, it is indeed easy for them to choose blindly or rely only on picture books recommended by others, which in turn affects the effective development of the activities. On the other hand, with the continuous development of society, parents are more and more concerned about their children's education, parents do not want their children to lose at the starting line, and hope that teachers will teach their children more knowledge to improve their intelligence, so in order to meet the expectations of parents, teachers input more literacy, oral expression, vocabulary and other aspects of knowledge to children in the process of picture book enjoyment, which makes the picture books lose their original value of promoting the aesthetics of young children, and even more so. This makes picture books lose their original value of promoting aesthetics in young children, and to a greater extent play the role of a teaching material.

### ***3.2.2. Early childhood teachers' aesthetic literacy is variable***

Pre-school children are strong imitators, and kindergarten teachers often act as imitators of young children, therefore, the aesthetic quality of teachers has a certain specificity, and teachers should not only have rich aesthetic experience, but also be

fully aware of the important role of aesthetic education for young children, and have the corresponding ability of aesthetic education. However, not all teachers in kindergartens have certain aesthetic education ability, and there is a big difference between teachers in private kindergartens and public kindergartens, and between teachers in urban kindergartens and rural kindergartens.

On the one hand, the influence of the region, urban kindergartens compared with rural areas, geographical location, access to rich material resources, teachers' salaries are relatively high, early childhood teachers to receive education and training opportunities are relatively more convenient and frequent, which will attract more outstanding early childhood teachers to join them. Many first-tier cities, as the first test points for education policies, will likewise have access to more convenient educational resources and lecture meetings to enrich the development of teachers' aesthetic literacy. On the other hand, influenced by the nature of schooling, most public kindergarten teachers are selected through the teacher recruitment examination, and the cultural literacy and professional competence of kindergarten teachers are selected through a certain assessment, but the state does not emphasize the assessment of the aesthetic literacy of kindergarten teachers in the process of selecting teachers, and thus this has led to a series of behaviors and phenomena in which teachers on the payroll have a lower level of aesthetic literacy, and carry out activities by copying others' lesson plans. While private kindergartens in the recruitment of teachers to pay more attention to the development of teachers' professional skills, such as the existence of piano, dance and other skills excellent candidates, even if non-pre-school education is also recruited in the ranks of the teaching force, it can be seen that such teachers not only do not have systematic pre-school education knowledge of the study, not to mention the existence of the relevant aesthetic literacy. Furthermore, the lack of systematic teaching of aesthetic education to preschool education teacher training students in current teacher training schools has led to the weak or even insufficient ability of teacher training graduates in aesthetic education.

### ***3.2.3. Lack of implementation of effective aesthetic education strategies by early childhood teachers***

It is clearly stated in the Outline that "young children should be guided to come into contact with excellent children's literature so that they can feel the richness and beauty of the language, and be helped to deepen their experience and understanding of the works through a variety of activities." [6] The relevant policies all provide specific guidelines for the educational objectives in the language area, but few of them provide corresponding strategies for teachers' aesthetic education. This results in the fact that even though early childhood teachers realize that they lack knowledge in aesthetic education, they do not know where to start learning, let alone how to fully exploit the aesthetic values embodied in picture books. In terms of aesthetic guidance for young children, teachers have some ability to guide young children's appreciation of picture books, but they lack the ability to provide young children with specific, scientific aesthetic education.

## **4. Effective Strategies for Cultivating Young Children's Aesthetic Ability Based on Picture Book Appreciation**

### ***4.1. Establish a scientific concept of aesthetic education***

Kindergarten teachers play the roles of participants, guides and supporters in picture book appreciation. Due to the underdeveloped psychological mechanism and age characteristics of young children, it is necessary to add the guidance of teachers in the process of picture book appreciation as appropriate. If teachers want to help children grasp the correct aesthetic concepts from picture book appreciation, they should first have scientific aesthetic literacy and knowledge themselves.

First of all, teachers' own reading of picture books and their understanding of picture books directly determines their ability to explore the educational value of picture books. Only by understanding a wide range of picture books and completing the accumulation of quantity can they realize the qualitative improvement through the learning of some theoretical knowledge of picture books. [7] Secondly, due to the individual differences of young children, each child has a different ability to appreciate picture books, and thus has a different feeling or experience of beauty. This requires teachers to learn how to teach children according to their abilities, not to teach generalized aesthetic knowledge to all children, but to carry out appropriate aesthetic education activities according to the receptive ability of children. Take children as the main body, listen to children's feelings, and targeted to give appropriate guidance, encourage children to boldly aesthetic expression, allow the existence of different aesthetic feelings of young children, and promote the holistic development of young children. Finally, teachers also need to strengthen the excavation of the beauty of the language in picture books, and present the pictures in picture books with words to children to stimulate their multi-sensory development. The language and text in picture books should not be regarded as educational content, but should be used in different tones and speeds to help young children have a deeper understanding of the value of language in picture books, so as to continuously enrich the aesthetic experience of young children.

#### ***4.2. Designing rational aesthetic education activities***

Activity design is the basis and guidance throughout the entire teaching activities, for early childhood teachers, before carrying out a certain activity, we must do a good job of activity design program, and for the aesthetic education, which requires extensive participation and guidance of young children's activities, it is even more important for teachers to scientifically and reasonably designed.

On the one hand, when teachers carry out aesthetic education, they should consciously guide children to feel the inner meaning and the feelings contained in the picture books. [8] For example, when children are enjoying a certain picture book, they can role-play it, so that through a deeper understanding of the characters, they can have a different experience of the whole picture book. In addition, teachers can observe children's emotional experience when reading picture books and the categories of picture books that children turn to the most, so that teachers can carry out reasonable aesthetic education activities on the basis of children's interests. On the other hand, teachers should create a suitable environment for children to appreciate picture books, including the physical and psychological environment. In terms of the physical environment, the reading space for picture books should not be too small, so as to avoid the phenomenon of oppression and crowding. It is also necessary to ensure adequate lighting, wall decoration as far as possible so that the pictures match the theme of environmental creation. At the same time, it is more important to pay attention to the changes in the psychological environment of young children, teachers should help young children to create a good psychological atmosphere such as

relaxation and pleasure. In the process of reading, not only to give children time to appreciate, there is enough time to communicate and discuss with their peers, but also to use reasonable methods to stimulate children's interest in reading, encourage children to actively share their own aesthetic experience with others, and help children establish self-confidence. In addition, choose the right time, with soft music, in a relaxed atmosphere of immersive reading.

#### ***4.3. Improvement of own aesthetic education capacity***

Teachers play a key role in kindergarten teaching activities, and teachers' aesthetic knowledge and level greatly affects the development of young children's aesthetic ability. If teachers have scientific and reasonable aesthetic education concepts, can take young children as the main body, pay attention to changes in young children's aesthetic ability, and give reasonable norms and guidelines in time, open the door of young children's aesthetic, and guide young children to feel the beauty of the picture books and all kinds of beauty in their lives, it is This requires teachers to continuously improve their professional ability and level, and strengthen the learning and training of aesthetic knowledge. Kindergartens can rely on diversified teaching practice and seminar platforms to invite experts in the field of curriculum development, business directors with rich management experience, and renowned master teachers in various disciplines to participate in and guide teachers in the design and implementation of teaching activities. Only by continuously improving the teachers' aesthetic education ability can they purposefully and systematically guide the development of children's aesthetic literacy in teaching activities and ensure the successful completion of teaching activities. Teachers in the implementation of aesthetic education process, but also widely read books, improve their own educational wisdom, flexible response to children in the aesthetic process of the problem, to create the right aesthetic education effect.

### **5. Conclusions**

In conclusion, aesthetic education in kindergarten education there are many problems, teachers in addition to strengthening their own aesthetic knowledge and literacy, but also to strengthen the cultivation of aesthetic quality of young children, so that young children in the process of appreciation of picture books, can fully discover the beauty of the United States, feel the beauty of the United States, understand the United States, and let young children to freely create the beauty of the United States, and fully mobilize the aesthetic enthusiasm of young children. In addition, teachers should strengthen the interaction between the environment and children's picture books, and continue to explore the aesthetic value of picture books in the process of appreciating them, so as to improve the level of aesthetic education for young children.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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