

絵本を使った生徒主体の教育法への提言

金澤延美

The Suggestions for the Student-Centered Teaching Approach Using Picture Books in Kindergartens and Elementary Schools in Japan

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INTRODUCTION

The writer has previously documented in the Komazawa Women's Junior College Faculty Journal Vol. 6, Ehon-no-Kai project team (of the picturebooks study meeting) conducted a survey about picture books amongst kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, and parents who have young children about picture books in 1992.

Through the results of the analysis of the survey, the writer learned that instruction using picture books given in Japanese kindergartens and elementary schools is teacher-centered.

In spite of the emphasis on the importance of bringing up pupils to be independent and to have positive attitudes in the latest The Course of Study For Elementary School, the main current of the teaching approach is still teacher-centered.

Picture books can not exist without pictures: hence the importance and usefulness of the pictures themselves, in picture books.

In this paper, the writer pay attention to the value of pictures in picture books as teaching materials as well as text, and put some new lights

on the concrete teaching methods that take into account the present condition of teachers' view points toward picture books as teaching materials and their ways of using picture books.

In this paper the writer will make recommendations regarding concrete teaching methods for picture books, based on a student-centered approach.

I RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF PICTURE BOOKS

1. ABOUT ACTUAL TEACHING CONDITIONS USING PICTURE BOOKS

To research actual teaching conditions, the writer set up the questionnaire as follows: "With regards to educational value, what method do you use to interest students in picture books?"

The following 6 choices were acceptable:

- 1) Reading aloud for listening purposes;
- 2) A picture-story show ("Kamishibai");
- 3) Making picture books;
- 4) A dramatization of true events;
- 5) Slides, videos, other audio-visual aids; and
- 6) Other.

1. How do kindergarten and elementary school teachers use picture books in their classes?

Table 1 gives a comparison.

TABLE 1

	Reading	Kamishibai	Making Picture Books	Dramatization	Audio·Visual	Others	No Answer	Total
Kindergarten teachers	97.1(135)	12.9(18)	15.8(22)	43.9(61)	23.0(32)	4.3(6)	2.2(3)	199.3(277)
Elementary school teachers	93.8(198)	17.1(36)	21.8(46)	26.1(55)	14.7(31)	2.8(6)	2.4(5)	178.7(377)
Total	95.1(333)	15.4(54)	19.4(68)	33.1(116)	18.0(63)	3.4(12)	2.3(8)	186.9(654)

TABLE 1 shows that 97.1% of the kindergarten teachers and 93.8% of elementary school teachers read picture books to the children; and that instruction using picture books in Japanese kindergartens and elementary schools is teacher-centered.

This tendency is shared by teachers regardless of age of teachers.

2. ABOUT THE USAGE OF PICTURES IN PICTURE BOOKS

To research on the intentions that underlie the teachers' choices of teaching materials, the writer set up two questions, as follows:

1. When choosing a picture book, is the importance you assign to the quality of the text the deciding factor?
2. When choosing a picture book, is the importance you assign to the quality of pictures themselves the deciding factor?

TABLE 2 : the quality of the pictures

	Always	Fairly often	with Equal Regularity	Seldom	Never	Unknown	No Answer	Total
Kindergarten teachers	4 (2.9)	25(18.0)	74(53.2)	25(18.0)	10(7.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	139(100.0)
Elementary school teachers	11(5.2)	76(36.0)	81(38.4)	28(13.3)	15(7.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	211(100.0)
Total	15(4.3)	101(28.9)	155(44.3)	53(15.1)	25(7.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	350(100.0)

TABLE 3 : the quality of the text

	Always	Fairly often	with Equal Regularity	Seldom	Never	Unknown	No Answer	Total
Kindergarten teachers	10(7.2)	66(47.5)	53(38.1)	5 (3.6)	3 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.4)	139(100.0)
Elementary school teachers	24(11.4)	101(47.9)	67(31.8)	16(7.6)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	211(100.0)
Total	34(9.7)	167(47.7)	120(34.3)	21(6.0)	6 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.6)	350(100.0)

TABLE 2 shows that twice as many elementary school teachers as kindergarten teachers (elementary school teachers ... 41.2%, kindergarten teachers ... 20.9%) attach great impor-

tance to the quality of the pictures. On the other hand, TABLE 3 shows that 59.3% of elementary schools teachers and 54.7% of kindergarten teachers attach great importance to the quality of the text. Therefore the percentage of teachers who attach most importance to the text is higher than the percentage of teachers that believes in the quality of the pictures. Therefore, many Japanese teachers in both kindergartens and elementary schools value the text more than the pictures themselves in picture books.

To have small children understand foreign cultures, the use of pictures in the picture books are more useful and effective than the text as teaching materials. Elementary school teachers should reconsider the value of the pictures in picture books as teaching materials.

Even though many Japanese teachers in both kindergartens and elementary schools have realized the importance of the pictures of picture books, when the teachers actually use the picture books in classes, their methodology involves merely reading the books aloud, which is a teacher-centered teaching method.

II. SUGGESTIVE WAYS OF USING PICTURE BOOKS IN CLASSROOMS BY STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

1. WAYS TO HAVE THE STUDENTS PAY ATTENTION TO THE DEVICES OF THE COVERS OF THE PICTURE BOOKS

Before reading aloud to the students, teacher might show students the cover of a picture book, and have them imagine the content of the story. Teachers should keep in mind "the importance of the instruction of having the students find out".

This should be especially applied for instructing lower graders such as 1st or 2nd graders: at first teachers may start by having students speak about things drawn on the covers. Many foreign picture books have ingenious designs and devices on the inside of book covers; on the covers themselves, and on the boxes for the books.

2. WAYS TO HAVE THE STUDENTS DEVELOP IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

(1) Before reading aloud, show all the pictures of the book, turning the pages one after another very slowly and then have the students imagine the story and say it.

(2) Stop reading before the last page and only show the picture(s) of the last page or of the last few pages; and have the students imagine the ending of the story and then have them say it.

(3) After reading through the book once, have the students make another story, using the same picture book pictures.

The teacher might turn the pages very slowly for the second time, without reading, so that the students can write down their stories. For lower graders, this activity can be done orally.

(4) After a teacher reads a picture book aloud, have the children imagine a continuation of the story.

Have them present their continuations in class can be presented either orally or in written form. For lower graders, oral presentation will do. For 3rd to 6th graders, it may be more fun to have each of the students write a continuation of the story, and to have class presentations. This presentation activity can be done either individually, or as group work.

For the activities mentioned above, small size picture books are not appropriate. This is because students may have difficulty seeing the small details of the pictures, which may result in loss of students concentration. Also, impressions from pictures of small picture books will not be vivid.

To avoid such problems, big picture books called "Giant Books (35 x 45 cm)" are highly recommended for classroom use. However the number of giant books available is still quite limited. So, if teachers use regular-sized picture books in classrooms, they should gather their students around them so that the students can see

the pictures well. If the teachers don't have a reading corner in their classes, which is carpeted and where the students can sit on the floor, it's preferable to put a vinyl or other sheet on the floor, so that the students can sit on the floor. In addition, each teacher can maintain closer eye contact with the students while reading books with this arrangement.

Activities (2) through (4) mentioned above are most effectively conducted as group activities, when time permits.

Divide each class into several groups; and have each group make one story.

To encourage the students' attitude toward the work providing some prizes such as "A SENSE OF HUMOR PRIZE" "MOST CREATIVE PRIZE" and so on given after the presentation based on the students' vote would be effective.

In such a group activity, each group needs one picture book. In other words, if there are 5 groups, 5 same books are required. If budget permits, the school library should purchase each good quality picture book in quantities of four or five at least, each time. Children enjoy reading such good picture books over and over again. Not only do the teachers borrow such books from libraries to use the picturebooks for group activities in class; children borrow these books, and bring them home perhaps sharing them with their families.

3. READING ALOUD DONE BY STUDENTS

- (1) Divide the class into small groups.
- (2) Provide identical picture books to each group, after the teacher has read that picture book in class.
- (3) Have each member of each group read aloud, taking turns within each group.

Having a child come to the front of the class, and have him/her read aloud to the class may not only make the burden too heavy for the child; but may also take away the picture book's appeal. Therefore, the greatest care must be taken in

dealing with this kind of activity in class.

III. THE SUGGESTIVE WAYS AND IDEAS OF USING PICTURE BOOKS IN DIFFERENT CLASSES

The usage of picture books in Japanese schools involves teachers reading them aloud. For lower graders many teachers use a break in a rainy day or a lunch recess for reading a picture book. On the other hand in the case of kindergartens, according to the research 88.3% of teachers read picture books at the end of the class just before saying goodbye. The same research tells that in the case of nursery schools 52.3% of teachers read picture books just before the midday nap to calm the children and 52.3% of teachers read at the end of the day while waiting for the children's parents to come. Through the research it is obvious that many teachers use picture books merely as tools to fill in the vacant time. This seems to come from the lack of understanding about the way of using picture books. Using spare time of 5 to 10 minutes is not enough at all to use picture books effectively. To effect a development in the situation, the writer would like to suggest to use picture books in different subject classes by the student-centered teaching approach.

NATURAL SCIENCE

Appropriate picture books would be used as introductory materials for teaching the ecology of insects, the botany of deciduous trees, change of seasons and more.

Such picture books like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*¹⁾ *Sleepy Bear*²⁾ *FROGGY GETS DRESSED*³⁾ are useful for the lower graders.

SOCIAL STUDIES

There are many picture books which would be useful for teaching Environmental problems, Ecology, History, International Understanding, Foreign Cultures and so on.

MORAL EDUCATION

Problems such as bullying, assisting handicapped people, friendship with aged people, treatment of animals, and many more discussion themes in the Moral education class would be easily found among picture books. Among them, *Arnie and the New Kid*⁴⁾ would be useful for lower graders to talk about bullying.

*Seven Blind Mice*⁵⁾ would be another recommended picture book to bring up a good discussion topic.

The teacher may cover the students' eyes after the reading of *Seven Blind Mice* for example, and have the children touch a thing and play "See who can guess right".

Through the experience of being blind during the game, the discussion following right after the game would motivate the children and be rich discussion contents.

MUSIC

As a group activity after reading a picture book, making a song is fun and exciting to the children.

Have the children make a parody of a song relating to the picture book and have each group sing. To motivate the children, adopt the form of a competition and give a prize to the best group by the children's own vote. For the lower graders a teacher had better suggest a song which everyone in the class knows and have them make a parody of the song as a group activity.

P.E.

The picture books which have running scenes all the way through the pages would be fun.

Have the children reproduce the story on the playground after the reading. Such books like *The Gingerbread Man*⁶⁾ or *Run, Run Pickles* would be useful for this kind of activity. Divide the children into groups and in each group have them decide the characters based on the story,

and run after the hero/heroine speaking his/her part. Learning the text of the picture books by heart should not be forced, but instead encourage the children to speak naturally while running around.

FINE ART

After reading picture books, there are many ways to develop them into the field of arts. For example, teachers may have the children draw imaginative pictures related with a picture book or have them make masks of the hero or heroine.

HOME ECONOMICS

After reading aloud in the class, have the children make dishes or dresses. Not necessarily a full-scale dress but could be a miniature doll's dress or a full size paper dress. Some foreign picture books contain the pictures of the inside of a house illustrated quite well in all small details. Have the children look at the pictures carefully and recognize the differences between the ones in the book and the ones in their houses. This kind of comparison could be a good introduction to understanding foreign cultures for young children. For older children teachers may have them study independently about ancient costumes, ornaments, food, life style and have them report the results after reading a picture book such as *Gilgamesh*.

JAPANESE

To develop the children's creative writing skill along with the development of imagination and creativity using picture books, have the children rewrite the story or write a script.

What the writer means by "rewriting" is the activity have the older children rewrite the picture book for younger children by using easy words and simple sentence structures. Or having younger children revise the picture book for older children by adding content. In either case, it's conducted individually or as a group activity.

Writing a script is the activity to have the

children write a dialog script by looking at the pictures. This result could be presented as a broadcast play or a handpuppet show.

IV. CONCLUSION

Through the result of the survey, the writer learned that many teachers realize the importance of pictures in picture books. On the other hand in both kindergartens and elementary schools, teachers' stress reading aloud as the most important above all other activity related to the use of picture books regardless of age of the teachers. There seems to be some problems awaiting solution such as the relationship with the curriculum, decreasing number of class hours because of the adoption of a 5-year-school day system and so on. However, the result of the survey shows attempts to teach children by the student-centered approach have not been much applied by Japanese school teachers when they use picture books as teaching materials. This result must have been caused by the teachers' lack of critical thinking about the instruction of using picture books maintaining the usual teacher-centered approach.

The Ministry of Education emphasis on the importance of developing children's creativity and imaginative power through school education, however, with the teacher-centered approach which only provides cram classes won't achieve the purpose. What is important is to have children think and find out the way to solve the problems.

The writer believes that the suggestions of the usage of picture books in different ways to develop the children's creativity and imaginative power based on the student-centered approach in this paper will help the teachers.

Notes

1) Carle, E. 1969. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. New York: Philomel Books.

2) Dabovich, L. 1982. *Sleepy Bear*. New York: Puffin Unicorn Books.

3) London, J. 1992. *Froggy GETS DRESSED*. New York: PUFFIN BOOKS.

4) Carlson, N. 1990. *Arnie and the New Kid*. New York: Viking.

5) Young, E. 1992. *Seven Blind Mice*. New York: Philomel Books.

6) Bittinger, J. 1989. *The Gingerbread Man*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

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