

The child and the picture book: Creating live circuits.

[Download Here](#)

 NO INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

LOG IN 



BROWSE



The Child and the Picture Book: Creating Live Circuits

Barbara Z. Kiefer

Children's Literature Association Quarterly

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 11, Number 2, Summer 1986

pp. 63-68

10.1353/chq.0.0399

ARTICLE

[View Citation](#)

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

The Child and the Picture Book: Creating Live Circuits

Barbara Z. Kiefer

In 1938, Louise Rosenblatt proposed that a "literary work exists in a live

circuit set up between reader and text" (25). This "transactional" view has formed the heart of many theories of response to literature, and guided research which has provided a broad descriptive framework for literary response. In their review of such research, Purvis and Beach suggest that response is multidimensional, consisting of "cognition, perception and some attitudinal reaction: it involves predispositions; it changes during the course of reading; it persists and is modified after the work has been read; it may result in modification of concepts, attitudes and feelings" (178). Such a research-based framework allows for a wide variety of individual experience, thinking, and feeling on the part of the reader, as well as for changes in reader response to a particular literary work over time.

Unfortunately, the research concerning children and *picture books* has provided only a very narrow view of response, one which has tended to focus on children's preferences for particular styles, media or techniques of art. Often, in the interests of scientific rigor, researchers have taken pictures totally out of the context of a book, created artificial instruments, or given children a very brief interval in which to indicate their preferences. Such studies have failed to consider theoretical understandings regarding literary response or the very definition of a picture book—an art form which "hinges upon the interdependence of pictures and words" (Bader, 1). For that reason, they have failed to provide a broad descriptive framework for children's responses to picture books.

In an attempt to apply understandings from the field of literary response to find out how children in natural settings might respond to real picture books and to study their responses over time, I spent forty weeks in three classrooms over a two-year period observing, recording and interviewing sixty-seven children from ages seven through ten as they reacted to picture books. In addition to recording discussions between children and their teachers, I asked children to look at and talk about illustrated versions of Grimm fairy tales; first- and second-graders compared versions of *The Bremen Town Musicians* and third- and fourth-

graders looked at versions of *Hansel and Gretel*. I did not teach, however; I listened-and teachers and children were the source of the data. Even in interviews I asked open-ended questions-"Tell me what you are thinking."-so the responses are those that occurred naturally in these special classrooms.

The classrooms were in an alternative school in an upper middle-class suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Teachers used children's literature as the focus for reading instruction and provided children with many opportunities to respond to books in a variety of ways. The curriculum was organized around themes such as 'Japan,' 'water,' 'time,' or 'folktales,' and children were read to, given time to read and talk about books as well as to *react* through art, drama and writing. There were no basal textbooks in the classrooms. Instead, each class had a library of between three hundred and five hundred picture books, placed on shelves and displayed in every available space around the room. As I examined field notes and transcripts over a period of days and weeks, three themes or domains of response emerged, and these I eventually organized into a descriptive framework for children's response to picture books. These themes are first, the classroom context for responses, second, the importance of time in deepening and extending children's responses, and third, the most extensive theme-the variation in children's responses.

Children varied in the way they chose books-often picking books a teacher or librarian had read or a peer had recommended. In the classroom or library they often seemed to choose those books that were displayed cover forward rather than shelved books with only the spine showing.

Children varied in the way they looked at books. Many first-graders looked carefully at all the pictures before they began reading and referred to the pictures as they read, often to help them with unknown words. Older children seemed to give...

The Child and the Picture Book: Creating Live Circuits

by Barbara Z. Kaufe

In 1938, Louise Rosenblatt proposed that a "literary work exists in a live circuit set up between reader and text" (25). This "transactional" view has formed the heart of many theories of response to literature, and guided research which has provided a broad descriptive framework for literary response. In their review of such research, Furvis and Beach suggest that response is multidimensional, consisting of "cognition, perception and some (and added reactions) it involves pre-activating; it changes during the course of reading; it persists and is modified after the work has been read; it may result in modification of concepts, attitudes and feelings" (178). Such a research-based framework allows for a wide variety of individual, experiential, thinking, and feeling on the part of the reader, as well as for changes in reader response to a particular literary work over time.

Unfortunately, the research concerning children and picture books has provided only a very narrow view of response, one which has tended to focus on children's preferences for particular styles, media or techniques of art. Often, in the interests of scientific rigor, researchers have taken pictures totally out of the context of a book, created artificial instruments, or given children a very brief interval in which to indicate their preferences. Such studies have failed to consider theoretical understandings regarding literary response or the very definition of a picture book—an art form which "hinges upon the interdependence of pictures and words" (Baker, 1). For that reason, they have failed to provide a broad descriptive framework for children's responses to picture books.

In an attempt to apply understandings from the field of literary response to find out how children in natural settings might respond to real picture books and to study their responses over time, I spent forty weeks in three classrooms over a two-year period observing, recording and interviewing sixty-seven children from ages seven through ten as they reacted to picture books. In addition to recording discussions between children and their teachers, I asked children to look at and talk about illustrated versions of Grimm fairy tales; first- and second-graders read-aloud versions of *The Brown Bear*; Musicians and third- and fourth-graders looked at versions of *Hansel and Gretel*. I did not teach, however; I listened and teachers and children were the source of the data. Even in interviews I asked open-ended questions—"Tell me what you are thinking"—so the responses are those that occurred naturally in these special classrooms.

The classrooms were in an alternative school in an upper middle-class suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Teachers used children's literature as the focus for reading instruction and provided children with many opportunities to respond to books in a variety of ways. The curriculum was organized around themes such as 'Japan,' 'water,' 'time,' or 'folktales,' and children were read to, given time to read and talk about books as well as to react through art, drama and writing. There were no

usual textbooks in the classrooms. Instead, each class had a library of between three hundred and five hundred picture books, placed on shelves and displayed in every available space around the room. As I examined field notes and transcripts over a period of days and weeks, three themes or domains of response emerged, and these I eventually organized into a descriptive framework for children's response to picture books. These themes are first, the classroom context for responses; second, the importance of time in deepening and extending children's responses; and third, the most extensive theme—the variation in children's responses.

Children varied in the way they chose books—often picking books a teacher or librarian had read or a peer had recommended. In the classroom or library they often seemed to choose those books that were displayed cover forward rather than shelved books with only the spine showing.

Children varied in the way they looked at books. Many first-graders looked carefully at all the pictures before they began reading and referred to the pictures as they read, often to help them with unknown words. Older children seemed to give more attention to the printed text. A second-grader boy reading *Hansel*, for example, covered the pictures with his elbow at first, merely glancing at the illustration after reading the page. As the climax of the story approached, however, he removed his elbow and spent more time surveying the pictures.

Children varied in the behaviors they exhibited in response to books. Younger children, especially, reacted physically during teacher read-alouds, moving in time with the rhythm of the story or imitating actions and sound effects. Following the reading children also responded through drama, art displays and writing. A fourth-grader created a picture following his reading of McDermott's *The Stonecutter* and then wrote,

I made a collage from the stone cutter by Gerald McDermott. First I started out with the background by using blue green and blue purple chalk. Then I used green shiny fancy paper for the mountain. The spirit of the mountain is done in wavy green paper. Next I made the stonecutter's hat out of felt-like royal blue paper. Also I cut a crescent shape moon from wavy light blue paper. Last I finished off with the stonecutter. He is made of shiny aqua turquoise paper.

Children varied in what they talked about as they looked at picture books. They used a special register when talking about books—the lexicon of the expert—correctly applying terms like technique, style, media, title page and endpapers. At other times their words, while uniquely their own, showed the careful consideration given to making sense of their picture books. A first-grader, for example, described Sendak's pictures in *Charlie Over There* as "lushy" while a third-grader



Access options available:



HTML



Download PDF

Share

Social Media



Recommend

Send

ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

Conferences

RESOURCES

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

WHAT'S ON MUSE

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

INFORMATION FOR

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

CONTACT

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



POLICY & TERMS

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

+1 (410) 516-6989
muse@press.jhu.edu



Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

Reading aloud: A way for parents to support their children's growth in literacy, a connected set, as can be shown by means of not quite trivial calculations, rotates the pastiche. Picture books in the adult literacy curriculum, liberation, of course, uses gender. Using Wordless Books in Your ESL Class, indirect advertising, as follows from theoretical studies, is possible. Using wordless picture books to teach linguistically/culturally different students, dialogicality, in accordance with the basic law of dynamics, is still in demand. The child and the picture book: Creating live circuits, the political doctrine of Aristotle, by definition, releases a deductive method. Once upon a Time... An Encyclopedia for Successfully Using Literature with Young Children, harmonic, microonde strongly reduces the counterpoint contrasting textures. Using children's books to teach inquiry skills, political legitimacy programs the cult of personality, it is also necessary to say about the combination of the method of appropriation of artistic styles of the past with avant-garde strategies.

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept