

Charting Research for Analysis

READ 5453 Processes & Strategies for Comprehending Text

Citation	Pantaleo, S. (2004). Young children and radical change characteristics in picture books. <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , 58(2), 178-187.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore children's responses to and interpretations of the Radical Change characteristics found in two postmodern picture books • Identify the possibilities for language, literacy, and literacy development afforded by picture books with Radical Change characteristics
Length of Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study began on September 23, 2002 • Research conducted over a nine-week period of time
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary school (grades K-7) located in a predominantly commercial area of a city in western British Columbia, Canada • The inner-city school's approximately 155 students came from lower socioeconomic class families • 9 boys and 11 girls in a 1st grade class (only one student did not receive parental/guardian consent to participate in the study) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For two of the participants, English was not the primary language spoken at home ○ One boy and two girls were of Native American ancestry ○ One boy was from Romania ○ One girl was from Uruguay ○ One girl was of African Canadian ethnicity ○ Thirteen children were from European Canadian families • With the exception of two boys who were functioning significantly below grade-level in reading/writing, the teacher believed that most of the students' literacy skills were within the average range for beginning 1st grade • Three of the children received weekly therapy from a speech and language pathologist • The classroom teacher (Mrs. W.) was beginning her 16th year of teaching
Procedures/ Instructional Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1st grade class listened to the researcher read eight postmodern picture books • The children participated in both small-group and whole-class interactive read-aloud sessions • Once a week, for approximately 25 minutes, the children were pulled out of regular classroom activities to participate in the small-group read-aloud sessions with the researcher in an empty room in the school • For these small-group sessions, the students were organized into heterogeneous groups of three or four students • During these sessions, students were encouraged to talk to one another or to the researcher at any point throughout the read-aloud • The researcher asked various types of questions (imaginative, affective, analytical, and reflective) to encourage student consideration and discussion of unexplored textual and illustrative aspects of each book • After reading the story to each small group, the researcher read the book to the entire class and encouraged student participation • Following each whole-class read-aloud session, the children were asked to visually represent their responses to the picture book (students were reminded to think about what they were feeling, thinking, wondering, questioning, or imagining before they began their pictures) • The children dictated their accompanying sentences to either the teacher or the researcher since this study took place at the beginning of the school year
Phenomena Studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dresang (1999) used the term <i>Radical Change</i> to describe a conceptual framework or theory for understanding, appreciating, and evaluating the types of changes in current children's and young adult literature • Dresang identified three types of fundamental change in contemporary children's literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changing Forms/Formats (<i>graphics in new forms/formats, words and picture reaching new levels of synergy, nonlinear organization and format, nonsequential organization and format, multiple layers of meaning, and interactive formats</i>) ○ Changing Perspectives (<i>multiple perspectives, visual/verbal, previously unheard voices, and youth who speak for themselves</i>) ○ Changing Boundaries (<i>subjects previously hidden, settings previously overlooked, characters portrayed in new complex ways, new types of communities, and unresolved endings</i>) • In this article, the researcher discusses the Radical Change characteristics children noticed in only two of the eight picture books that were part of the original study

<p>Data Sources/ Measurement Instrument</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the whole-class read-aloud sessions, the classroom teacher took field notes (recording students' comments, facial expressions, and body language) • All read-aloud sessions were audiotaped, resulting in approximately 200 total minutes of audiotape
<p>Findings</p>	<p><i>The Three Pigs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This postmodern picture book includes multiple narratives in both text and illustrations • Children were able to interpret the different appearances of the pigs' skin when they left their original stories, despite the fact that no words in the text described the changes in their appearances • They also recognized when the main characters left their original stories to join a new story through observing the interactivity of the pigs with other characters from other stories • On several occasions, the children remarked how the pigs were looking for new stories to enter • The 1st grade students also knew that the pigs had to construct an ending to their story <p><i>A Day at Damp Camp</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This postmodern picture book is visually unusual and striking due to three rectangles nested inside one another on each page, and three of the students incorporated the three-frame structure in their visual responses • These three frames create an interactive and multilayered reading experience because they are not arranged in a linear manner • Often the 1st grade students first talked about the illustrations before asking about the words (this focus on the illustrations was understandable because the visual text predominantly tells the story)
<p>Discussion/Implications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters leaving their stories, multiple visual/verbal narratives and perspectives, nonlinear stories, unresolved endings, unconventional spatial arrangement of text, and onomatopoeic word illustrations are just a few of the characteristics appearing with greater frequency in contemporary literature for children and youth • The children were cognitively and affectively engaged throughout the small-group and whole-class read-aloud sessions • The read-aloud experiences with this group of 1st grade students (who had little, if any, prior experience talking about picture books with Radical Change characteristics) demonstrated that young "children can handle quite sophisticated visual and narrative devices" (Goldstone, 1998, p.51) • The changing forms and formats of many postmodern picture books require readers to make connections between the hypertext-like links in the books, as well as connections among multiple perspectives, narratives, and layers of meaning • The children's intertextual histories were constantly changing as they listened to, talked about, and visually responded to each picture book (they frequently made connections to previously read picture books during the small-group and whole-class sessions) • Research on effective reading instruction found that effective teachers engaged in an interactive style that encouraged active student involvement and posed more open-ended questions, to which multiple responses were appropriate • Postmodern picture books with Radical Change characteristics are ideal for reading to children because they offer multiple opportunities for meaning making and interpretation • These types of texts increases students' interaction with reading, because they demand a more active and involved reading experience • Readers make choices as they read and transact with the verbal/visual texts in various nonsequential ways • Reading texts such as the ones used in this study gave children a sense of agency because it required a greater degree of participation in the creation of meaning • There was evidence that children made <i>intratextual</i> connections (identified links to earlier episodes, phrases, actions, illustrations, and characters within the same text) and <i>intertextual</i> connections (identified associations between texts or illustrations and cultural knowledge and artifacts) during the read-aloud sessions • Picture books with Radical Change characteristics provide opportunities for readers to develop their abilities in comprehending text inferentially and critically • In addition to providing pleasurable aesthetic reading experiences, these types of books can teach critical thinking skills, visual literacy skills, and interpretive strategies