

USING PICTURE BOOKS TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH READING ABILITY OF
CHINESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

English Education

By

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2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Time flies, two years of study is coming to an end. These two years I have not only harvested the knowledge, but also harvested the friendship. First of all, let me thank Dr. Strobl. In the process of writing the paper, she gave me technical support, methodological guidance and spiritual encouragement, which helped me a lot in completing the paper. I would like to thank all the teachers who taught me knowledge in this course. It is your careful teaching that makes me have a good understanding of professional courses, which is also the basis for me to complete the paper. In addition, I also want to thank my classmates who study together with me. Their encouragement and help are very valuable spiritual wealth to me. Studying with them is an invaluable life experience.

Abstract

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Pei Wang

Under the Supervision of Dr. Staci Strobl

For the primary school students at the enlightenment stage in all aspects, the “cramming” English teaching method has constrained the students’ lively and active nature and unrestrained thinking and imagination. Blindly instilling English knowledge into students is likely to make them rebellious and even resistant to English learning. As a new teaching material for primary school English teaching, English picture books can increase pupils’ interest in learning English and improve their learning efficiency due to the books’ rich colors and novel pictures. English teachers should create a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere for students to read English in daily classes, and guide and explain the skills and methods of reading picture books to students, instead of letting students read simple picture books. Diversified and interactive teaching contents should be added to arouse students’ enthusiasm for English picture book reading and improve their ability and level of English reading comprehension.

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Chapter I Introduction

The importance of picture books for children's language development has long been affirmed by relevant literature and research. Huck, Helper and Hickman (1987) stressed the importance of reading picture books for language development. They clearly point out that reading picture books is conducive to children's language development, and children who read picture books often have stronger language skills. In terms of students' learning of foreign languages, picture books are also helpful to stimulate their learning motivation, improve their vocabulary and grammar skills, as well as their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Moreover, reading English picture books is in line with the three major conditions of language learning proposed by English teaching scholar Krashen (1981), which are to provide children with understandable language input, provide real and natural situations and low pressure, so that they can acquire English naturally.

Primary school is the basic stage of learning English. In the process of primary school English teaching, if teachers can stimulate students' interest in learning English, it will have a very important impact on the development of English teaching and quality of their education.

Statement of the Problem

In this paper, I want to prove that reading English picture books can promote the language acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL) students. I will discuss the importance of using English picture books in ESL class in China first, which can show some benefits of using English Picture Book. Then, I will show how to choose the best English Picture Books for students of elementary school in China. I will also discuss best practices in the use of English picture books for classroom teaching to improve students reading.

Definition of Terms

English Picture Book: English Picture Books generally refer to the storybooks in which pictures are the main parts and English sentences are supplements. The pictures can help students understand the question and make up for the restrictions on vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Zhong Jing, 2015).

The following shows that English picture books are different than comics. 1. Picture books usually present relatively complete pictures of a single length; Comics pays attention to the multi-angle of the picture, multi-length, all-around. 2. Picture books tend to express emotions and atmosphere, so that readers can have broad imagination and feelings; Comics use special symbolic language such as dialogue bubbles, speed lines, onomatopoeia and white space to vividly narrate stories and manipulate readers' emotions.

Critical Thinking: Critical thinking refers to optimizing patterns of the existing way of thinking, in thinking. Most thinkers are able to correctly and, rationally look at new things. Critical thinking is deep thinking, involving analysis, evaluation, reasoning, interpretation, and metacognition (Richard Paul, 2002).

Story Map: Story Map is a kind of reading teaching. It allows students to connect the main information into a concept map in reading, so as to guide students to master the main characters, plots, backgrounds, contradictions and solutions, etc., so as to achieve the purpose of understanding the text of the picture book.

There are many different ways of using a story map. For younger students aged 6-9 years, the teacher can make a mind map or a story map on the blackboard. Then the teacher leads students to review the whole story or to share different ideas about the story. For older students over 10, for example, the teacher gives the students a Story Map framework. The teacher leads the students to read the title and cover of the text. Then the students write the title on the Story Map. Students

read the original text and fill in the details according to the framework of the Story Map. Students use pictures to complement the Story Map, to discuss in groups, and to share their own understanding of the article.

In addition, teachers can design different types of Story maps for students to use according to the difficulty of the text and the level of students. For example, students with weak foundation can use pictures instead of words. If the story of a picture book is simple, the story map can be designed according to the structure. If the story of a picture book is more complex, the story map can be designed according to the plot.

Purpose of the Study

This paper analyzes the use of English picture books and their significance in the teaching of reading in elementary schools in China. It will introduce the steps in teaching from English picture books utilizing the three steps of reading, which are Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-reading, so as to illustrate the positive effect of English picture books on the improvement of students' reading ability.

Significance of the Study

This paper attempts to provide some referential suggestions for teachers engaged in English picture book teaching. It also discusses the comprehensiveness of English picture book reading teaching, trying to prove that English picture book teaching can promote the reading ability of Chinese elementary school students. The study will answer the questions: What is known about the use of picture books to improve language acquisition in China and in other places around the world, and what are the best practices in using them to achieve maximum language acquisition.

Delimitation of the Study

As a literature review, this paper does not directly test whether picture books improve language acquisition, only indirectly. It also focuses on what is applicable to elementary school teaching in China in both rural and urban areas.

Methodology

In this paper I will perform a systematic review of the existing literature on the use of picture books in English language teaching at the elementary school level. I will focus on how a teacher can use English picture books to improve students' reading ability, based on what the literature points to as best practices, weighing more heavily the sources that exhibit strong research methods. I'm going to discuss the advantages of using English picture book in elementary school in China. In conclusion, the paper will present an example of a lesson plan I have developed incorporating the best practices suggested by the literature.

Chapter II Review of Literature

Reading is the main way of language input and knowledge. The secondary goal of language skills in primary school is to be able to read simple stories and short essays with the help of pictures. In traditional English teaching, middle school students are in a passive position, and teachers' simple explanation increases students' pressure. Reading picture books can effectively improve the classroom atmosphere, mobilize the classroom learning atmosphere, attract students' attention and improve students' interest in learning English. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly strengthen the application of English picture books in primary school to cultivate students' reading ability, which is also the focus of this paper. At present, there is a phenomenon of low efficiency in the teaching of reading for senior grades in primary schools. Many excellent original picture books originate from English-speaking countries. It is an area worth exploring for English teachers to let children feel the authentic language through reading English picture books. This paper will explore the application of English picture books in primary school English reading teaching from three aspects: Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-reading, in an attempt to provide some referential suggestions for teachers engaged in English picture book teaching and bring English learners a world full of vivid pictures and vivid language.

Introduction of Picture Book

The term "Picture Book" comes from Japan. It refers to the stories presented by two media, visual and language art, which complement each other with words and pictures. In English children's picture books, the high repetition rate of rhymes or repeated sentence patterns encourages students to feel the rhythm of English pronunciation and the overall structure of language through a large number of listening and reading.

Picture books are not only to tell stories and learn knowledge, but also to help students construct their spirit and cultivate their multiple intelligence. Its intervention provides students with a large amount of language knowledge. It can provide students with real life situations and rich vocabulary to learn English and help them develop their language skills. Many of the high-quality picture books come from English-speaking countries, allowing students to feel the original taste of English language through reading English picture books.

The advantage of using English Picture Book in ESL class

Increasing interests of reading

The increased, prevalent amounts of visual imagery in our society create a need for us to become more visually literate (Kiefer, 1995). English picture books use an organic combination of English and pictures to interpret the story, and words and pictures complement each other. The stories in English picture books are vivid and interesting. The language in the story is simple and clear. It not only pays attention to rhyme, but also has a high rate of word pattern repetition. Picture books are beautifully illustrated and present the story well. The picture book is the most promising and vigorous of all available visual media (Seigel, 1995). English picture books conform to the age characteristics of primary school students and play an important role in stimulating their reading interest and developing their reading ability. Because picture books use both pictures and print, the possibilities for using them are expanded and enhanced. Therefore, a good picture book is a double work of art, which is worth learning and using in Chinese art classes in middle schools. They both entertain and teach, providing value to students of all ages (Graham, 2000).

Moreover, English picture books provide students with the most natural English learning environment. Unlike textbooks, English picture books focus on telling a complete story. In the

process of reading, students do not need to pay much attention to the grammar. Instead, they should follow the content of the story, walk into the story situation with heart and soul without burden and fear, feel the story and learn English in the language environment created by picture books. Huck (1977) noted many years ago that “Good literature is the key to motivation for reading, a prerequisite for learning” (p. 364).

The story is interesting. According to the cognitive development theory proposed by Piaget (1972), primary school students are in the stage of concrete operation, and their thinking is mainly based on the objective world, so they cannot think abstractly like adults. The readers of English picture books are children, and they must be full of fun from color to binding design. The interest of English picture books comes from intuitive pictures, humorous words and fascinating plots. Although comic strips, comic books and other children’s books are highly visual, the images in picture books are more intuitive. In English picture books, characters, actions and scenes are all concrete images, either realistic or exaggerated. The similarities are all fresh, strange and interesting for children. For example, in *I Want to Move*, the story is about a little rabbit, Tom, who does not want to live in a rabbit’s nest and wants to move in spite of his parents’ dissuasion. First, he learned to live in a tree like a bird, and then he learned to live on a web like a spider. When he lived like a cricket in the grass, he caught a thunderstorm. When he was afraid, his parents showed up and took him home. Finally, he found that his home was the best. As the story progresses, the children’s mood will follow the ups and downs of Tom’s journey. They wanted to know both where he lived and what happened in the story. Reading stories with such emotions and curiosity adds autonomy and interest to reading.

The story is appreciative. Every picture book is carefully designed, and the authors of words and pictures are generally first-class masters, who open the door of wonderful art

appreciation for children. For example, the author of the picture book *The Hungry Caterpillar* is the international children's literature master Eric Carle, who has won the New York Times Children's Book of the Year award, the Design Award of the Italian Bologna Book Fair, and other international awards in many countries. His personal style is very distinct. When creating picture books, he is good at collage techniques and integrates his imagination of heavenly horses and stars into his creations. *The Hungry Caterpillar* has been translated into 47 languages around the world and has sold more than 30 million copies. When children appreciate such pictures and texts, they are influenced by art and unconsciously an appreciation of art.

Developing thinking skills

Developing multiple intelligence. Vygotsky (1978) defines zone of proximal development as the area between actual and potential levels of development. The actual level of development indicates that children can independently complete the task, that is, to complete the development of a psychological function. The level of potential development represents the tasks that a child can perform with the help or cooperation of a recognized or other more competent person, that is, the underlying psychological functioning. The only way to determine the state of children's psychological development is to define its actual level of development and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978, p.87).

English picture books are usually published in the form of graded reading. Following the cognitive and language development rules of primary and secondary school students, they combine language knowledge and background knowledge organically to meet the reading needs of students at different levels.

English Picture books are rich in pictures and texts, so they can develop students' multiple intelligences. About language intelligence, teachers exercise students' listening ability, reading

ability and expression ability by asking them to listen to stories, read stories, tell stories and make up stories. The space intelligence training is mainly reflected in the teacher's guidance of students to observe the cover, appreciate the characters and scenes in the picture, and describe the environment in the picture book. As for introspective intelligence, reading and teaching of picture books with specific themes can help students better understand their hobbies and specialties and adjust their emotions. As for music intelligence, teachers can choose relevant picture books to let students enjoy children's songs and have a preliminary understanding of music. As for interpersonal intelligence, children can learn how to get along well with others, handle parent-child relationships correctly and care about others better through picture books. As for sports intelligence, it is mainly reflected in letting students use their body to perform the contents of picture books and make small articles. With regard to natural intelligence, through reading picture books, students can get to know about relevant animals, plants and natural phenomena, and develop thoughts and feelings of caring for nature. In terms of mathematical logic intelligence, students learn to see problems from different perspectives and develop the ability of creative thinking (Lin, & Ruilin, 2012).

Developing Critical Thinking Skill. Due to the uniqueness and specificity of thinking in English picture books, it is very necessary to use English picture books to guide the critical thinking ability of primary school students. Different thinking modes and thinking habits should be used to guide the development of children's critical thinking habits.

In the process of reading picture books, teachers guide students to think and understand from different roles and see problems from different perspectives. Students can find some possible character defects or characteristics of the characters in the picture books. In this process, students can find that things are not certain, right or wrong, and there is no correct explanation or

opinion. They cannot directly deny or affirm a thing, and they should look at it from a dialectical perspective.

Complementing the Textbooks

In China's education system, students have different versions of state-specific textbooks. In the primary school stage, the textbooks cover topics of daily life and divide them into units for learning. Therefore, when choosing picture books, teachers can try to choose picture books that are close to the theme of the teaching material.

Chinese primary school textbooks are all systematic and clear in language knowledge, but they have certain limitations in text layout, content design, level division and other aspects, and English picture books can well make up for these shortcomings. Primary school textbooks and English picture books complement each other.

In terms of text layout, primary school English textbooks in China mainly focus on English dialogues and short essays, which do not contain complete book information and are not conducive to cultivating students' textual concepts. English picture books are independent books with book information, enabling students to have a complete reading experience.

From the perspective of teaching, English picture books are conducive to hierarchical teaching, helping teachers to track the development process of students and providing them with personalized guidance. From the perspective of students, English picture books can help them to correctly evaluate their own level of development, select appropriate reading materials, and then form a positive self-evaluation. For example, students can choose English picture books according to their reading level. In this way, students can avoid the inferiority feeling caused by too many difficult words in English picture books.

Developing writing skills

Whatever their reading preferences, they will need the picture books for their writing (Benedict and Carlisle, 1992). Students of all ages and grades, even older students, need the step-by-step learning experience that picture book courses provide. Through the use of picture books, complex and abstract concepts are simplified or visualized. The philosophy of the story also naturally emerges. Thus making it easier for language art concepts to be internalized to the next level.

Improving students' empathy

A good English picture book is, between the lines often filled with tenderness and romantic poetry. Not only children but also adults are often unconsciously moved by the warm pictures and words in the books. Walking into the picture book, you will find that there are expressions of love everywhere in the book, the expression of affection and friendship can be seen everywhere in the picture book. A detail of the book, a moment will often move the child's sensitive heart. In such a warmth of affection, the child's inner feelings will become more and more delicate and rich (Wang Shan, 2010).

Ways of Choosing English Picture Books

The best way of choosing a picture book is to have students choose a picture book they like. Unlike home schooling, school education cannot meet all students' requirements at the same time. However, teachers can still choose English picture books according to their teaching habits and the preferences of most students. Morgan and Rinvoluceri (2012) thought that at minimum the story must make students feel interested and stimulate their thinking.

Considering the difficulty of story in different grades

The growth stage of primary school students is very obvious. Students of different stages have very different understanding of things. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the age characteristics of students when choosing English picture books.

According to the psychological characteristics of lower grade students, teachers should choose English picture books with engaging and stimulating art, which can attract students' attention, simple content and rhyming words, such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Eric Carle). This picture book has simple sentences, rhymes and catchy sentences. It has a simple plot. The pictures are very interesting.

Grades 3 and 4 contained middle-aged students who have a certain foundation in English listening and speaking. The selected picture books can be appropriately deepened in terms of length and language depth according to the actual situation of students. For example, *Mouse and Elephant* is a picture book with strong stories and vivid plots, which is very suitable for middle-aged students with a certain English foundation to read and learn. The content, about animals, colors, clothing and other related items, is the key learning content for the third and fourth grade students.

Grades 5 to 6 are the upper grades. The selection of picture books for these grades should not only keep the story of picture books on the basis of the middle and lower grades, but also leave space for students to think and imagine. For example, the picture book *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* has a vivid and interesting story, and students are very interested in it. The most important thing is that this picture book conforms to the learning theme of senior students and can be organically combined with the current English teaching materials.

In addition, English graded reading picture books have rich themes and are closely related to life. The situation is real, and the language is vivid. English graded reading picture books are in line with students' cognitive development level, which is conducive to students' understanding of British and American culture, expansion of students' thinking, and in particular, the cultivation of students' imagination and ability to analyze and solve problems.

Considering the arrangement of the story

The arrangement of story is also important. Gray and Leary (1935) believe that story arrangement affects the difficulty of reading, which in turn affects the overall reading effect. They summarized 289 text features that affect the difficulty of reading, and their conclusions are still influential today. Their book included the first scientific study of the reading skills of American adults. The sample included 1,690 adults from a variety of Settings and regions. The test used a number of passages from newspapers, magazines, and books -- as well as a standard reading test. Gray and Leary (1935) analyzed 228 variables that affect reading difficulty and divided them into four categories: content, style, format, and organization. They find that content is the most important, followed by style. The third is format, followed by organization. These include two types of story features: the format of the story (size, number of pages, paper quality, type of forest, line length, cover design, and chart) and the structure of the story (title, chapter distribution, paragraph distribution, and citation).

Strategies of Using Picture Book in ESL class

Good reading habits are the key factor to improve the efficiency of reading. In the English learning of senior primary school students, teachers can use picture books with clear context. At the same time, teachers should be student-centered and pay attention to guiding reading methods.

Clark, Christina and other researchers (2005) did a report, based on a survey of more than 8,000 primary and secondary school students in the UK, about why some choose to read, while others do not. Research literature suggests that reading for pleasure benefits children in many ways. However, research also suggests that young people's enjoyment of reading may be declining. With the current focus on reading, and the clear benefits of reading for pleasure, it is vital that schools and families place more emphasis on the pleasure of reading. Finally, they put forward three suggestions to teachers, which are to create a culture in which all students are cultivated to be enthusiastic readers. Work on how to better engage boys with reading. Consider how they can encourage reading at home (2005).

In addition, Ismail Sheikh Ahmad (2003) conducted a study on the extensive English reading project in three rural middle schools in Malaysia, aiming to encourage students to read English widely, help them overcome the difficulties in understanding English texts and improve their language proficiency. The results show that students in rural schools can and do benefit from extensive reading.

Pre-reading

Before telling the story of an English picture book, the teacher should guide students to observe the information on the cover page. Such as, the title of the book, the author, the illustrator, the publisher, the version, and so on. It can help students to establish the basic awareness of reading, for example, and to respect the author and learn how to choose books.

While-reading

When presenting a story, teachers should first put special emphasis on allowing students to observe and understand the language situation, because meaning construction depends on the situation. There are many teaching models for reading. Teachers should choose appropriate

teaching models and methods according to students' English reading literacy level. Below is the author of the four methods for reference.

Picture Walk. The teaching process of picture walk is similar to the real parent-child reading. It is also the most commonly used method in reading teaching. When we get a picture book, we usually look at the cover first, including the cover image and the title of the book, and then we look at the back cover and the title page and make a preliminary prediction of the book based on the digital information. Through picture books, readers will judge the accuracy of the information inferred according to the picture information and their own existing knowledge, and further pay attention to the trend of the content or the development of the plot, forming new concepts of events or characters. In this process, students learn language knowledge and cultural background knowledge, analyze and appreciate language, experience, views and emotional expression, and finally form their own unique opinions on the content of picture books.

Picture walk is essentially a kind of sharing reading, which is a process in which teachers and students read stories together and cooperate to construct meaning. In this process, the teacher “deduces the text story into the life story” (Huo W. B., 2016, p. 37) which requires teachers to conduct a deep analysis of the text and generate a teaching form of thinking by simulating the situation and through students' continuous behavioral experience and spiritual experience, takes the question as the guidance, through the cover page, the title page, the topic map and so on, to inspire the student to observe, to predict, to think, to share the personal experience. This activity can develop students' critical thinking skills by identifying, analyzing and solving problems in constant speculation and reading. At the same time, students also learn language knowledge in this process, through grasping the story plot, understanding the psychology of the characters, and

connecting with personal life. This makes the process of reading the story through picture walk a process of teachers and students cooperating to explore the meaning of the story.

The author summarized the teaching steps of the picture walk as follows by querying information and observing the real class: (1) Use warm-up activities to activate students' existing knowledge and interest in reading. For example, teachers can use songs, pictures, video and other media to introduce text themes. (2) Develop students' textual concepts. The teacher guides the students to identify the title, author, illustrator, etc. (3) Picture walk reading. The teacher guides the students to observe, analyze and predict according to the limited picture information. By constantly asking questions, teachers enable students to read in the process of analyzing and solving problems. At the same time students can learn language and construct meaning. Students develop critical thinking and predictive imagination when using reading skills and strategies. (4) Summarize and comment to form students' own understanding and judgment. The teacher assists the students to summarize the stories by means of story maps and other support and enables the students to form their own understanding and judgment of picture books by discussing their favorite characters, pictures, plots and other activities. (5) Read silently and read aloud to develop students' reading fluency. This can provide a complete and rich reading experience to students, which can strengthen students' accuracy, fluency and reading rhythm. (6) Communication and expression activities that promote the coordinated development of language competence. Teachers can design activities to encourage students to express their feelings about the story and evaluate the characters. Teachers can also design activity that add an ending to a story or create a new graphic story. Teachers can design teaching activities based on the concept of picture tour according to students' situation and class schedule. The activity steps of picture

walk teaching are flexibly adjusted to meet the needs of different story plots and different students.

Jigsaw Reading. Like the main steps of Jigsaw teaching, Jigsaw teaching in picture books has only been slightly developed and improved. The main steps are as follows:

(1) The teacher divides the story into several relatively independent paragraphs. They are usually made into story cards.

(2) The teacher has students into groups. Each group has a complete story card, and each student has a different part of the story. If there are many difficult words, the teacher would better show the new words in the context to students before Jigsaw reading.

(3) Have students discuss in groups. They should understand their own part of the story, and then put a complete and logical story together.

(4) If the story is long or difficult, the teacher can set up an Expert Group for student that has the same part of the story to discuss and learn. After that they come back to their group to complete the story.

(5) After discussion, the teacher has students check the order of the story in whole class. There are many forms of inspection. Ask the students to report their stories in groups. The two groups can also share with each other. It doesn't matter if the order of the story is different; The teacher should encourage multiple versions, but the student should explain why.

(6) Students read the whole story and learn the rest part of the story. There can be 'an expert' to teach other students' parts.

(7) Teachers can design some activities after reading, such as activity output after reading. Based on the remaining time, teachers can design the text-based output activity first, and then design the practical output activity. For example, text-based output activity can be designed to

match pictures with text, perform plot fragments in a story, or tell the story according to a story map, etc. Practical output activity can be designed to comment on the story or characters, to continue the story or to make up different endings, and so on.

Jigsaw teaching was pioneered and successfully tested in primary schools in Texas by Elliot Aronson, a famous American educator and sociologist in the 1970s. Research shows that this learning method is very effective in eliminating racial conflicts in schools, improving students' academic performance and promoting cooperative learning (Aronson, 1997).

After that, many scholars and teachers improved and optimized Jigsaw teaching. For example, Robert E. Slavin (1978) added overall tasks and expert groups on the basis of the original Jigsaw teaching method, which became Jigsaw II. Dwight C. Holliday (2000) and colleagues developed Jigsaw III and Jigsaw IV from the aspects of paying attention to the accuracy of students' knowledge acquisition and teachers' supplementary teaching for students.

Jigsaw teaching has been widely tried in various sections and disciplines in foreign countries, and its main purpose is to promote cooperative learning and independent learning (Law. Y, 2010; Souvignier and Kronenberger, 2007).

In China, Jigsaw teaching mainly focuses on college English teaching, especially reading teaching (Lu, M. L, 2010; Jiang, L, 2014). The literature on Jigsaw teaching is mainly the introduction of Jigsaw teaching, but there is little empirical research on Jigsaw teaching effect.

At present, there are two types of picture books used in primary schools, one is fiction picture books, and the other is non-fiction picture books which are science books without a continuous story line. After observing teachers' classes in the past two years and attending the national conference held by China English Reading Academy (CERA), the author found that Jigsaw teaching can be used in both types of picture books.

In the Jigsaw reading, the teacher should remind the students not to rush to finish the story and not to look at each other's story cards. Try to have each student tell the story of the story card and then finish the discussion. If the picture book is long, the teacher can choose the combination of partial picture walk and Jigsaw teaching. Teachers can show the part of the story by Picture Walk first, and then carry out Jigsaw teaching of picture books, which can reduce students' learning burden.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is a way of independent reading, which provides specific practice mode for cultivating students' reading interest and habit in the school environment. Continuous silent reading refers to teachers and students reading at a certain time of the day, usually 5 to 15 minutes, without interference from other things, and without having to carry out relevant reading tests or reports after reading (Gardiner, 2001; Pilgreen and Krashen, 1993).

The positive effects of Sustained Silent Reading are supported by a growing body of research. Sustained Silent Reading is a successful way to help students at all proficiency levels, including English as a second language (ESL), to develop literacy skills (Gardiner, 2005). In addition, studies have shown that continuous silent reading has a positive impact on cultivating students' reading habits and improving their reading attitudes (Yoon, 2002; Chua and S. Poh, 2008). Moreover, the longer the duration of the project is, generally more than one year, the more obvious the promotion effect will be (Krashen, 2004).

There are 6 principles for developing Sustained Silent Reading as mentioned by McCracken (1971). (1) Each student must read in silence. (2) The teacher should read as a role model which is very important for student to have Sustained Silent Reading (Campbell, 2010). Tell students not to look around. (3) Each student chooses one book on their own. Tell students not to change

to another book to prevent distraction. (4) Use a timer. It is better not to use a wall clock, so that students do not pay too much attention to the time. (5) There is no need to have students hand in the reading report by any forms. Otherwise, it will increase students' pressure and make them resistant to silent reading. (6) In a class or group, use collective binding force, and create collective reading environment.

According to Boatel's (1977) suggestion, it would be better to have 3-15 minutes for silent reading. Primary school can be controlled in 3-5 minutes. Secondary school can last 10-15 minutes.

The author also carried out Sustained Silent Reading in her own class. After a year and a half of silent reading activities, through comparing the reading test scores in the general examination, as well as the results of the two tests in the graded reading test website, students not only increased their interest in English reading, but also improved their English reading level.

Reading Circles. Reading Circles, also called Literary Circles, is a way to cultivate students' reading habits and enjoy reading (Greef, Jenkins & Comer, 2002). There are six roles in Reading Circles: Discussion leader, who ask questions about the reading material and organize group members to discuss; Summarizer, who summarizes the reading material; Culture collector, who looks for and compares cultural similarities and differences that appear in the readings. Connector, who explores phenomena related to real life or one's own life from materials; Word Master, who finds and solves the difficult or important words and phrases in the reading materials and explain the reasons; Passage Person, who explores and explains the important or beautiful paragraphs in reading material.

While reading, students think independently according to their own roles. After group discussion, students report their result to the whole class. Each student has a role sheet, including role, the name of the story, role profile, and writing space.

In teaching practice, teachers should flexibly use the reading circle. If the reading material is not suitable for the reading circle, the reading circle can be improved, such as changing six roles to other roles or adding or subtracting roles (Wang Qiang, 2017).

Post-reading

In the activity design after the story teaching, the above four kinds of reading teaching modes all adopt the output activity. Teachers can help students consolidate what they have learned and strengthen their language skills through role-playing, retelling, writing and other activities. For example, after Picture Walk teaching, the teacher guides the students to summarize the text and comment on the text according to the story map sorted out in the teaching. When summarizing the text, the teacher asks the students to review the main content in the form of questions and answers. When commenting on the text, teachers can ask students to discuss their views on the characters in picture books, their favorite characters, their favorite pictures or what they have learned from the picture books.

Using Picture Book in Rural Areas

Due to the limited learning conditions and family education of rural primary school students, most of them have very few extracurricular English reading training, which, to some extent, restricts the formation and improvement of students' English reading skills. English picture books have a wide range of content, vivid story plots, beautiful illustrations and wonderful language as a form of presentation, which can bring students a new feeling of English reading and open the door for students to read in English.

Some studies and practices show that teachers can use English picture books in rural primary schools to carry out teaching activities and exercise their English reading skills (Xu Xi, 2017; Ji Xia, 2017).

Summary

The author first introduced the definition of English picture books and the positive influence of English picture books on students' English reading. Then, the author expounded on the way to choose English picture books for students. Next, through a large number of literature studies and personal experience, the author focused on the main teaching modes and strategies of English picture books in primary schools in China and abroad. Teachers should choose appropriate teaching models and methods according to students' English reading literacy level.

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper focuses on the current domestic and foreign English picture book teaching. Through this paper, the author has some suggestions for teachers. For example, when using English picture books for teaching, teachers should let students naturally improve their reading ability through reading, instead of teaching reading strategies in isolation. Teachers should avoid allowing students to read and write in order to learn how to read and write, so as to lose interest in, and experience of, the real communicative role of language. Before the teaching of English picture book reading, the author once asked students to write a composition about travel. Before writing, the author introduced the sentence structure and usage that students need to use. Then the students began to write. When the author sees students' compositions, most of them are of the same pattern, that is, compositions demonstrated by teachers. This kind of writing does not improve students' interest in writing and writing ability, and even reduces students' interest in writing. Teachers should not make the reading text simple and strictly control the language structure and vocabulary: such reading is not real, and there is no learning process. Last but not least, teachers should not evaluate the reading and writing ability based on the test of some small skills, so that students pursue skills instead of overall content expression.

In addition, there are still some problems in the above-mentioned English picture book teaching, such as students' overall mastery of reading materials in jigsaw reading. The author will continue to pay attention to the classroom teaching of English picture books and participate in a teaching experiment, so as to provide reference for more teachers in the teaching of English picture book reading with an aim of cultivating of primary school students' English reading habits.

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Appendix:

Example of English Picture Book Lesson Plan

Judy

Context: *Arthur's Fantastic Party*

Context Introduction: Big Cat Graded Reading Series is published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. *Arthur's Fantastic Party* is from level 6 of the Big Cat English Graded Reading Series, which focuses on the protagonist Arthur and other animals. It tells a series of stories about Arthur who wants to hold a party and invite “the best” and “the most fantastic” animals to the party. The story is full of ups and downs, highlighting the character traits of each character and their attitudes toward their friends.

Students: This English picture book is designed for students in Class 1, Grade 5 of a primary school in ChangPing district, Beijing.

Goal: students can understand what the story is about and try to evaluate the characters in the story with their own words.

Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students can:

1. Analyze and tell the characteristics of the characters in the story by observing the pictures, and make a reasonable understanding of the story.
2. Describe the story with pictures.
3. Try to evaluate the characters in the story and express personal opinions.

Teaching Materials: English Picture Book, PowerPoint, Pictures of the characters, key words

Relevant Background: Students have the experience of learning English picture books. They are very interested in story reading, and most students can find the title and author information by observing the cover. Students and teachers can observe pictures, extract information and

predict the development of the story. At the same time, students can also organize the language to communicate with the teacher about the pictures. They have a certain ability to think and express themselves in English.

Procedures:

	Activity	purpose	time
Phase #1 Pre-reading	<p>Activity 1 leading in</p> <p>Teacher shows a cartoon picture of party.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What are they doing? ◆ Have you been to a party? ◆ What can you do at the party? <p>How do you feel?</p>	<p>Use a party picture to lead in.</p> <p>Attract students' attention.</p> <p>Stimulate the students' background knowledge by recalling the parties they attended and their own feelings.</p>	5 mins
	<p>Activity 2 predict the story</p> <p>The teacher shows the cover of the picture book, covers the title, guides the students to guess the story content, and predicts the plot development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you think of the party? 	<p>Use the cover pictures to make a preliminary understanding of the story and predict the story, so that students can have interest in reading.</p>	
Phase #2: While-reading	<p>Activity 1 the cover page</p> <p>The teacher presents a complete cover of the picture book and guides the students to discuss the information of the cover page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you know from the cover page? (title, illustrator, author, editor) 	<p>By observing the cover, students can get to know the cover information and develop the habit of reading.</p>	2 mins
	<p>Activity 2 read the story</p>	<p>Exercise students' observation ability by observing pictures.</p>	20 min

	<p>5. Teacher show the picture of page 14, and have student predict the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Who came to the party at last? <p>Teacher shows the pictures of page 14 and 15.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If you were Arthur what would you do? <p>6. Have students read from page 16 to page 21. Read the development and the end of the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What did Arthur do? Why he changed his mind? ◆ What did Flora say? <p>7. Teacher shows the picture on page 22, and guides students to understand the invitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Why did Arthur cross the postscript? <p>Teacher shows the thank letter from animals and guides students to feel the animals feelings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you know from the letter? ◆ Do you think they are fantastic animals? Why ? 	<p>Observe the pictures to predict the development of the story.</p> <p>Exercise student’s creative thinking.</p> <p>Independent reading can help students get good reading habits. Give students time to enjoy the story themselves.</p> <p>Experience the changes of Arthur’s attitude about fantastic animals.</p> <p>Exercise students’ observation and reasoning ability.</p>	
	<p>Activity 3 read the story by following the audio</p> <p>Teacher plays the whole story audio, and have students listen and read the story.</p>	<p>Imitate the pronunciation and intonation.</p>	<p>4 mins</p>

<p>Phase #3 Post-reading</p>	<p>Activity 1 retell the story in groups</p> <p>Teacher have students retell the story in groups. Each student can retell one part of it.</p> <p>Activity 2 Analysis and evaluation, link with reality</p> <p>1. Teacher leads the students to review the process of Arthur holding the party and organize the students to have an in-depth discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you want to say to Arthur? ◆ What do you want to say to other animals? <p>2. By reading stories, students can recall whether they have friends like story characters in their life, and whether they have read similar stories or experiences. They can share the stories in groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Do you have any friend like Arthur or Flora? ◆ Have you read similar stories? ◆ Are you fantastic? 	<p>Exercise the students' ability to summarize the story by reading the activity. In addition, students put forward their own views and opinions on the story, connect their own life reality, experience the relationship between the characters in the story.</p>	<p>9 mins</p>
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The story of the example of English picture book lesson plan



