

**USING DRAWINGS IN PICTURE BOOKS FOR LITERACY AND
CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN A
SHANDONG PUBLIC PRESCHOOL, CHINA**

By

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A thesis submitted to Faculty of Arts and Social Science,
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Social Science)
August 2024

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ABSTRACT

In October 2021, the Ministry of Education in China released a recommended reading list of children's picture books to promote children's various abilities and language. This saw an increase in the number of preschool teachers who used picture books in their teaching, particularly in reading and drawing activities. In China, there are no designated textbooks for preschool education, and the choice of teaching materials largely depends on collective discussions and decisions made by preschool teachers. While picture books have emerged as the most commonly used teaching tool in preschools in China, preschool teachers face the arduous task of selecting appropriate picture books that align with their teaching objectives. This highlights the need for more guidance and support for preschool teachers in their decision-making process.

Existing research has generally examined picture books for children's reading, and the relationship between that and children's literacy. While most of the work on teaching by using picture books to date has been at the primary school level with a specific discipline focus, early studies suggested that there are a number of benefits, such as the development of creativity, imagination, cognition, literacy and other abilities, involved in learning with picture books for children. Furthermore, studies on using picture books to teach at the preschool level have, to date, focused on picture book reading activities and language learning in China. However, there is an absence of research on using picture books to teach preschool children in creativity and literacy through

drawing.

This research's objective is to explore, through preschool drawing teachers' experiences and the researcher's initial observation in a public preschool, elements in picture books which can be used to develop children's creativity and literacy. Thus, how preschool teachers are able to use children's picture books in preschool drawing lessons for encouraging children's creativity and literacy is the main focus of this study. Therefore, this research explores the following questions:

1. What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's literacy?
2. What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's creativity?
3. What are the characteristics of these elements that have been explored?
4. What challenges do preschool teachers face when using picture books in drawing lessons?

Adopting an ethnography research methodology, participant observation was used to capture the performance of teachers' teaching and children's learning by using picture books in drawing lessons. The researcher entered the observation place as a classroom assistant and participated in the observation from the internal perspective adopted by ethnographers. The researcher assisted the preschool teachers in the selected classroom so that the children could get comfortable with the researcher, and used the form of Classroom Observation

Recording and Analysis, daily dairies, notes, photos, the electronic recorder, and collected drawings to record. There were also in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers to explore the challenges encountered when using picture books to teach in drawing lessons.

The data include the recording of one classroom in Grade 3 with 56 children and three teachers for two drawing lessons a week for up to 21 weeks, and 40 recorded interviews. In addition, conversations with selected children, field notes, children's drawings, examples of picture books, and photos of classroom drawing activities were also collected as additional data.

The findings show that the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, words and phrases in picture books are the essential elements to develop children's literacy, and the composition design, colour tune and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of drawing, the resemblance of the shape in picture books are necessary elements to develop children's creativity when children are learning drawing by using picture books in drawing lessons. The data also point out that, in addition to the need to develop teaching skills in using picture books to teach drawing, a lack of theoretical knowledge about teaching drawing by using picture books and limited teaching evaluation capabilities are also issues that teachers encountered.

The results indicate that the elements which can be used to develop children's literacy and creativity in picture books as mentioned above can

support preschool teachers in a practical way in their teaching activities. In addition to being able to better assist preschool teachers to teach drawing by using picture books, it is likely that curriculum settings for cultivating students majoring in preschool education in colleges and universities need to be considerably developed. Furthermore, if preschool teachers acquire a more sophisticated understanding of using picture books to teach, they are likely to be more insightful and skilled teachers.

The results of this study will be shared with the preschool teachers in this preschool. This study benefits preschool teachers to identify and classify the elements in picture books which are recommended by the government in China and which can develop children's creativity and literacy. Thus it can assist preschool teachers in designing feasible thematic teaching activities based on picture books in drawing lessons. The scant existing literature has revealed that picture books have a positive role in develop children's literacy and creativity, but no details are given as to how this works. This study represents one of the first attempts to fill this important gap by exploring elements in picture books to be used to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons, with an eye toward identifying reasons for problems encountered by preschool teachers. Based on the conclusion, it recommend that it is better for the education management department in the field of preschool education to consider setting up related courses and training sessions to support prospective preschool teachers and preschool teachers in using picture books to teach.

Keywords: Picture Books Teaching; Children's Literacy; Children's Creativity; Preschool Art Teachers; Ethnographic Education

Subject Area: LB1140-1140.5 Preschool education. Nursery schools

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Picture books with interesting stories, simple and easy-to-understand drawings as well as sentences can stimulate children's abundant imagination, bringing a rich artistic experience and encouraging creativity as well as literacy performance (Lu & Chang, 2021). Additionally, children interpret their drawings as a means of expressing their creativity in drawing and literacy in multiple ways (You, 2024). Reflecting the researcher's own experiences as a trained drawing teacher and in researching preschool drawing education issues in China, the objective of this research is to explore, through preschool drawing teachers' experiences and the researcher's initial observation in a public preschool, elements in picture books which can be used to develop children's creativity and literacy. Thus, the main focus of this study is on how preschool teachers can use children's picture books in preschool drawing lessons to develop children's creativity and literacy.

The "Teaching Guideline for Preschool Education" (Ministry of Education in China, 2001) emphasises that educational activities in preschools should consider children's age and interests and recommends that preschools avoid using standardised textbooks. As a result, there are no designate

textbooks for preschool education in China, and the choice of teaching materials largely depends on collective discussions and decisions made by preschool teachers. While picture books have emerged as the most commonly used teaching tool in preschools in China (Huang, 2020), preschool teachers face the arduous task of selecting appropriate picture books that align with their teaching objectives (Zhang, 2023). This highlights the need for more guidance and support for preschool teachers in their decision-making process.

In recent years, the Ministry of Education in China has emphasised the importance of preschool education. In November of 2018, the “Several Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Deepening the Reform and Standardized Development of Preschool Education” was released, with a focus on developing a reference guide for high-quality picture books that are suitable for preschool children aged 3-6 years old. Three years later, in October 2021, the Ministry of Education released the first-ever recommended picture book list for children aged 3-6 years old. This list highlights the significance of picture books in enhancing children’s interests, cultivating good reading habits, enriching learning experiences, and promoting language, creativity, and other abilities’ development. This recommended list of picture books offers valuable guidance for preschool teachers and parents in selecting age-appropriate picture books that align with children’s cognitive levels and age characteristics. Many of the recommended picture books showcase elements of traditional Chinese culture.

As a result, preschool teachers guide children in exploring these cultural themes during drawing lessons, which may include activities such as ink painting. Preschool teachers also develop children to use their imagination to create personalised drawings. In China, the course of drawing is a vital and separate lesson of preschool art education and is often combined with other art lessons, such as handicrafts and clay sculpture, to create a rich and diverse art curriculum.

This study adopts the definition of children's picture books by emphasising the importance of the relationship between text and images in telling a story (Hu et al., 2024). Picture books utilise straightforward language to convey a narrative while incorporating drawings that assist in comprehending the concepts, thereby encouraging children's literacy. The drawings in picture books not only complement the text but also help to develop children's creativity. As children emulate the drawings in picture books and apply them to express their ideas, they acquire valuable drawing skills while fostering their imaginative thinking and encouraging creativity (Salisbury & Styles, 2020). In Chinese preschools, picture books are typically characterised as books specifically created for children. They often consist of a sequence of images paired with minimal text or, in some cases, may rely entirely on illustrations to communicate information and narrate stories. It is crucial to recognise that picture books serve not only as reading materials but also as significant educational tools and teaching resources in the context of

Chinese preschool education. In summary, picture books can be a helpful instrument in encouraging children's literacy and creativity.

The concept of creativity in children is a complex concept that is difficult to comprehend fully. Researchers have identified three critical dimensions for analysing children's creativity: originality, interactive influence, and the action process (Yang et al., 2021). Additionally, education experts agree that creativity in children involves the ability to perceive, remember, think, associate, and understand while creating things (Gao, 2020; Liang, 2020; Chen, 2021). Through exposure to diverse picture book formats, children can develop rich associations and create new ideas based on copying, which can have a profound impact on their art expression techniques and creative styles (Ren, 2021). This is why children's picture books are a valuable avenue for encouraging creativity in children (Kim & Cho, 2019). For example, picture books with complete stories and simple, easy-to-understand pictures can stimulate abundant imagination and provide preschool children with rich artistic experiences, nurturing their creativity and expressive abilities (Lu & Chang, 2021). Thus, understanding and promoting creativity in children is critical, and picture books are an excellent tool. Providing children with opportunities to explore their imagination and creativity can help them develop essential skills and express their unique perspectives on the world around them. In the context of the drawing curriculum in Chinese preschools, the concept of creativity encompasses various dimensions. This includes fundamental creative

activities such as free expression and imagination, and personalised creation, and extends to more advanced creative endeavours like problem-solving, experimentation, critical thinking, aesthetic judgment, and interdisciplinary integration and innovation (Yang, 2023). Therefore this study defines creativity as the combination of multiple abilities to create something new and valuable.

Moreover, Guilford (1957), as the first to conduct systematic research on creativity, emphasised that creativity is a high-level thinking ability with the characteristics of fluency, flexibility and originality. The works cited above suggested that Guilford's theory of creative abilities in the arts could be a powerful way of helping us to understand and research children's creativity. This theory was adopted in the analysis of creativity in this study.

This study also adopts the concept of literacy. It is a fact that preschool children are not able to write yet, but that does not mean they cannot express themselves. In Chinese preschool drawing classes, the concept of literacy extends well beyond conventional reading and writing abilities. It encompasses various elements, including children's visual interpretation of the world, symbolic expression, and the development of imagination and creativity (Chen, 2024). Additionally, it fosters the development of pre-writing skills and develops the integration of language with critical thinking (Pang, 2022). Through the artistic medium of drawing, children can progressively build a strong foundation of literacy skills in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. They have the ability to convey their thoughts and ideas through drawing, and

interpreting their drawings can be a great way to showcase their creativity (Yuan, 2024). Therefore, the concept of literacy in this study refers to different non-textual modes (Larson, 2006), such as visuals, artwork and drawing, to create meaning. By implementing these literacies, teachers can comprehend children's drawings from diverse perspectives, providing them with unique and creative ideas for teaching drawing (Zhang, 2022). For example, some children use their symbolic representations for objects they cannot draw accurately, and it is up to preschool drawing teachers to interpret them correctly to understand what the children are trying to express through their drawings. More important, Wang (1996) suggested that the development of children's literacy is illustrated by four characteristics: flexibility, diversity, completeness and richness, according to his children's drawing-speech development correlation theory. Huang (2016) applied these four characteristics to children's literacy in picture book reading activities, and in the case of this study, these are applied to research children's literacy in drawing lessons by using picture books.

Children's creativity in drawing can be described as original drawings that reflect their creativity, imagination, and literacy in the drawing process (Deng & Wang, 2023). When children draw, they express their emotions and ideas through their drawings, which is a reflection of their literacy (Taylor & Leung, 2020). As children learn to draw by referencing picture books, their skills develop, creating more dynamic and expressive artwork. This process not only fosters creativity but also enriches their literacy, leading to more imaginative

and expressive works of art. Ultimately, the development of children's creativity and literacy through drawing go hand in hand, providing them with a platform to express themselves fully and creatively.

By analysing preschool drawing teachers' experiences and incorporating the researcher's initial observations from the selected preschool (detailed in Chapter 3), the objective of this study is to identify the pedagogical elements present in picture books that can be seamlessly integrated into drawing lessons for preschoolers. By doing so, it hopes to empower preschool teachers to utilise picture books effectively in their drawing lessons, thereby enhancing children's literacy and creativity.

1.2 Rationale

The role of a drawing teacher is paramount when it comes to shaping the future of preschool education. With eight years of experience as a drawing educator at a northern Chinese university, the researcher fully comprehends this responsibility. As an educator in this area, the ultimate goal is to equip students with the requisite drawing skills and teaching techniques to become successful preschool drawing teachers. Usually, every student enrolled in the program aspires to become a preschool teacher upon graduation. The drawing curriculum for preschool education in China is categorised into two sections. The first section focuses on training preschool teachers to develop their drawing abilities and skills. The second section is centred on teaching preschool teachers how to impart drawing knowledge to preschool children effectively.

Research by Qiu (2024) has demonstrated that picture books are among the most effective teaching materials for young children, prompting exploration into how picture books can be used in preschool drawing lessons. Previous studies pointed out that using picture books to teach can stimulate a number of children's abilities, such as creativity, literacy and imagination (Bilewicz-Kuznia, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2023). This study combines children's drawing teaching with picture books, promotes the development of children's literacy and creativity by exploring the teaching elements for drawing lessons in picture books, and attempts to contribute to the future of preschool education in China. This exploration will ensure that picture books play a vital role in assisting the teaching of drawing in preschools.

Teaching drawing in preschools has always been a challenge for preschool teachers due to the lack of systematic guides or curricula to follow. As a result, many preschool drawing teachers have developed their methods based on personal style and understanding, but each approach has limitations (Zhang & Yin, 2020). Thus, a guide of how to use picture books in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity is useful and helpful for preschool teachers.

It is, therefore, essential to identify the elements in picture books that can be used to teach drawing, replacing the current practice where individual teachers confuse on teaching contents. The objective of this study is to explore the useful elements in picture books which can be used to develop children's

literacy and creativity in preschool drawing lessons in China. The research showcases novel concepts and inventive methods for teaching drawing by utilising children's picture books. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of contemporary research on this subject matter in China.

In Western countries, such as the United States, picture books are commonly utilised in preschools to promote literacy skills rather than drawing. While picture books are often incorporated into reading and speaking lessons, drawing is typically not taught as a standalone subject. Canada takes a similar approach by not offering a separate drawing course for preschool children. Instead, drawing is often incorporated into writing lessons to help children express their ideas through written language (Rowe et al., 2019). In the United Kingdom, drawing is integrated into every course, making it an essential part of the curriculum rather than an independent drawing course (Zhang, 2020). In addition, picture books are also frequently used as supplementary materials for reading lessons. In Turkey, drawing is considered a part of children's play in preschool (Kayapinar, 2017). Drawing teachers sometimes use picture books to teach drawing based on their experiences.

However, preschools commonly include drawing lessons as a mandatory curriculum in China. According to *Preschool Drawing Lessons* (2024), there are five compelling reasons why these lessons are an essential part of early childhood education. Firstly, drawing enables children to express their understanding and emotions about the world around them, fostering their

creativity and imagination. Secondly, these lessons help cultivate an interest in drawing, which can become a lifelong hobby or even a career. Thirdly, drawing lessons develop the coordination and flexibility of children's hand muscles, which is crucial for their physical development. Fourthly, children learn to observe and interpret the world differently, developing critical cognitive skills. Finally, drawing courses can support children to understand how to use art tools and materials effectively, which is not only enjoyable but also helps with their motor skills.

Currently, there are no published studies offering guidance on using picture books as a tool for teaching drawing to preschool children, which can develop their literacy and creativity. Existing research in this area primarily focuses on picture book reading activities, aiming to develop children's different abilities, such as literacy, imagination, and creativity, rather than on drawing activities. This study's objective is to provide an in-depth case analysis to fill this gap by identifying elements in picture books that can be utilised for teaching drawing in preschool education in China. The findings support preschool drawing teachers in China who are dedicated to fostering the creativity and literacy of their students.

1.3 Problem Statement

Existing research has generally examined picture books for children's reading and the relationship between that and children's literacy (Papen, 2020; Reyes-Torres et al., 2021). While most of the work on teaching by using picture books to date has been at the primary school level with a specific

discipline focus, early studies suggested that there are a number of benefits involved in learning with picture books for children (Bilewicz-Kuznia, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2023). These previous works stated that teaching by using picture books in children's education can develop several children's abilities that are common across all disciplines, although the way in which they manifest varies. These abilities include children's creativity, imagination, cognition, literacy and other abilities in different subjects. These previous studies provided a theoretical basis for this study. Furthermore, studies on using picture books to teach at the preschool level have, to date, focused on picture book reading activities and language learning in China (Su, 2020; Yang, 2021).

Therefore, most previous studies cited above have been conducted at the primary school level and focused on specific disciplines. For instance, interesting mathematical games and problems presented in picture books can help develop students' creativity and critical thinking skills in math lessons. Similarly, the descriptive imagery and vivid language used in picture books can assist students in improving their language proficiency and creativity in Chinese language courses. However, there is an absence of research on using picture books to teach preschool children in creativity and literacy through drawing.

This study designs to fill this research gap by exploring the available elements in picture books which can be used in picture books for preschool drawing teachers to develop children's literacy and creativity. Thus, this

research is of an exploratory nature and attempts to identify how to use picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons through observing the performance of teachers and children when using picture books to teach and learn in drawing lessons and analysing the problems encountered by preschool teachers when so doing.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to explore the elements in picture books which can be used in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity in preschool education in China. The researcher analysed the current utilisation of picture books in preschool drawing instruction and their value in enhancing children's literacy and creativity by reviewing existing literature. To accomplish the objective, this study focuses on four main sub-objectives. Firstly, according to the observation of children's performance in drawing lessons and daily conversations with children, analyse the influence of different elements in picture books on children's literacy. Secondly, it seeks to observe the performance of preschool children and drawing teachers in drawing lessons and analyse the influence of different elements in picture books on children's creativity. Thirdly, Can the explored elements be classified into different types? This classification would help preschool teachers effectively design how to use these elements in picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons. Lastly, it interviewed preschool teachers to discuss the challenges they face when using picture books in teaching drawing.

The objective of this research is to identify the elements in picture books that can develop preschool children's literacy and creativity and provide educational recommendations for future use. Additionally, this research is to raise awareness of the advantages of using picture books in preschool drawing lessons and develop their widespread adoption in teaching.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's literacy?
2. What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's creativity?
3. Can these elements be classified into different types?
4. What challenges do preschool teachers face when using picture books in drawing lessons?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the principles of Piaget's constructivist theory, which highlights the importance of discovery learning and self-motivation. This theory helps to explore how picture books serve as effective learning tools that support children's self-exploration and knowledge construction in literacy and creativity. Additionally, this research explores the connection between children's drawing and literacy development through Wang Dagen's children's drawing-speech development correlation theory. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of Chinese culture, as it links children's artistic expression with language development and offers targeted strategies for

enhancing literacy through drawing activities. Such insights are invaluable for the practical application of this study within the Chinese cultural context.

Furthermore, Guilford's theory of artistic creativity is employed to analyse the relationship between children's drawing and creativity. This theory identifies three key factors influencing the development of children's creativity, thus providing theoretical support for assessing the role of picture books in developing imagination, creativity, and artistic expression among children. It serves to illustrate how picture books can function as tools for enhancing children's development in literacy and creativity.

Finally, this study understands and evaluates children's drawing through Lowenfeld's children's art development theory, which emphasises the importance of self-expression, emotional development, and knowledge acquisition through drawings across different age groups. This approach focuses on the creative process rather than the end product, which is essential for evaluating how children's literacy and creativity can be developed through drawing by using picture books. The theoretical framework diagram for this study is presented in the following figure (Diagram 1.1).

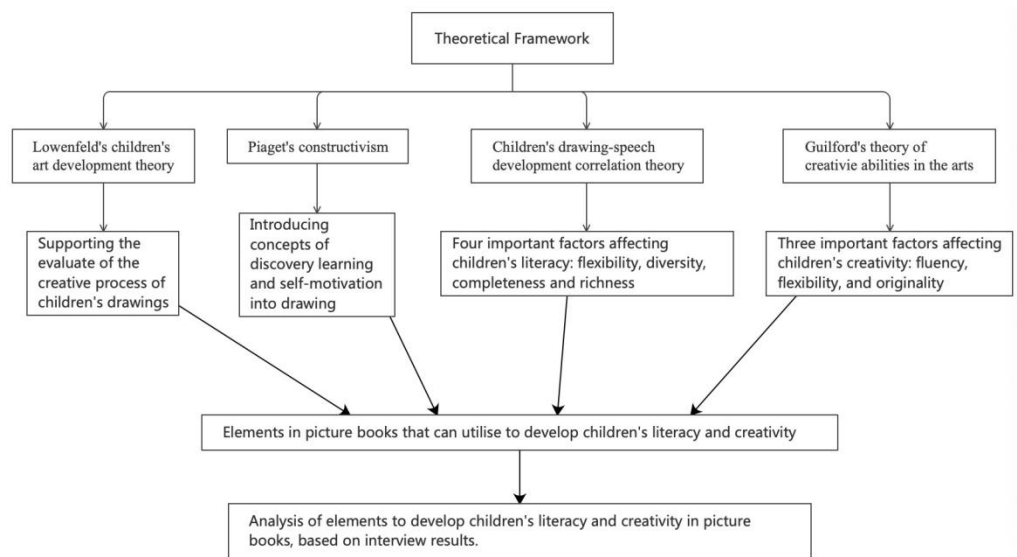


Diagram 1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

1.7 Contributions

This study can help preschool drawing teachers identify and classify picture books, which are recommended by the Chinese government that can be used to develop children's literacy and creativity. It also can assist preschool teachers in designing feasible and practical thematic activities based on picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity. Through the identification, classification, and design of such activities, this research offers valuable guidance for drawing teachers in preschools who seek to utilise children's picture books as a means of developing children's literacy and creativity.

This study also can benefit college and university educators who teach preschool drawing as it will help them to rethink and redesign their curriculums to better meet the future career requirements of their students whose major is preschool education. Enable their learning to better assist practice in future work fields.

Picture books can help children unlock their creativity and literature, providing a well-rounded education (Honaker & Miller, 2024). The results of this study introduce a new and innovative approach to teaching drawing in preschools, inspiring children to reach new heights of creativity in their drawings. Therefore, after this study is finished, if the preschool in this case study permits, future training sessions or workshops will be conducted by the researcher to help preschool drawing teachers implement the teaching activities as proposed in this study where picture books are used to teach preschool children to draw. The purpose of doing this is that The preschool in this case study has the opportunity to benefit greatly from training sessions or workshops conducted by the researcher. These sessions will empower preschool drawing teachers to expertly implement the proposed teaching activities, which utilise picture books to teach children how to draw. Through an in-depth understanding of the process of teaching drawing by using picture books, preschool teachers can identify potential issues and provide valuable feedback for improvement. By honing their skills and applying the best practices learned in these training sessions, preschool teachers can flexibly utilise picture books as a teaching tool and optimise the overall process of teaching drawing using picture books. This will optimise the overall process of teaching drawing using picture books, leading to better outcomes for young children and a more effective and enjoyable learning experience.

To summarise, the educational benefits of using children's picture books to develop creativity and literacy in preschool children are widely recognised in academic literature (Gao, 2020; Guo, 2021; Ma, 2021). While previous studies have focused on picture books in reading lessons (Gao, 2020; Guo, 2021; Ma, 2021), there is a gap in research on their use in drawing lessons. However, incorporating children's picture books into drawing lessons is becoming increasingly important as they have been shown to develop children's literacy and creativity (Qiao, 2020; Gao, 2021; Shi, 2021). Research conducted in northern China has shown that 90% of preschools have designated areas for picture books in their classrooms (Yuan, 2016). However, a recent report on teaching drawing in preschools has highlighted that many teachers need help to use picture books flexibly in their lessons (Zhang & Yin, 2020). While picture books can provide valuable learning opportunities, it is crucial for preschool teachers to find the right way to incorporate them into their teaching. This research explores elements in picture books for preschool teachers to use in their drawing lessons, ultimately helping children develop their creativity and literacy from an early age. This study provides a reference for using picture books in preschool drawing teaching. It will give necessary literature support for future development in teaching drawing by using picture books and guidance for preschool educators to improve the quality of their teaching through picture books.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the context and theoretical framework for this study on teaching drawing in preschools. It commences with a broad overview of preschool education in China to provide a background for the topic. Following this, there is a brief discussion on the context of teaching drawing in preschools in China. The chapter then delves into the use of children's picture books for drawing in China. Additionally, the chapter synthesises relevant research findings to highlight the challenges of teaching drawing in preschools in China. Next, it discussed the relationship between using picture book in drawing teaching and improving children's creativity and literacy. The final section explains the theoretical foundation adopted in this study.

2.2 Preschool Education in China

Based on a report released by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in 2020, the number of preschools in China reached 281,200 in 2019, serving a staggering 47,138,800 children and employing 4,915,700 preschool teachers. This indicates a steady growth in the number of preschools and children (Zeng, 2021), which has spurred the government to pay more

attention to preschool education in China (Fan, 2021). The significance of preschool education has been further highlighted by a recent study conducted by Chen et al. (2021), who evaluated the developmental levels of 1,670 children in 100 preschools across five provinces in China. The study concluded that Chinese preschool education is currently in a critical period of high-quality development, which calls for appropriate measures to be taken to develop its quality. To this end, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has issued a series of documents to support the high-quality development of preschool education.

For instance, the “Several Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Preschool Education” issued in 2010 emphasised the importance of developing preschool education and proposed strengthening the provision and guidance of children's picture books. In the “Opinions of the Ministry of Education and Other Four Departments on the Implementation of the Third Phase of the Action Plan for Preschool Education” issued in 2017, improving the quality of childcare education was identified as a crucial task for the development of preschool education in China. The “Ten-Four-Five Plan” Preschool Education Development and Improvement Action Plan, issued in 2021, proposed improving the quality of preschool education based on the ongoing development of China's preschools. It was also suggested that preschool education needed to be reformed, and the training curriculum for preschool teachers should focus on cultivating their practical abilities.

Therefore, developing and improving the quality of preschool education and teaching was deemed urgent and essential for China.

In addition, the Chinese government actively advocates for the use of picture books in children's education by publishing recommended picture book reading list, promoting their application in teaching, and formulating relevant policy documents. The "Outline for the Development of Chinese Children (2021-2030)" (2021) aims to develop guidance for children's reading, foster positive reading habits, and recommend outstanding children's books categorized by age group. While the outline does not explicitly mention picture books, they are inherently included in the recommended scope as a vital component of children's literature. Furthermore, the "Several Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Deepening the Reform and Standardizing the Development of Preschool Education" (2018) highlights the essential task of nurturing moral character and develops the selection of children's picture books that reflect exemplary Chinese culture and modern life.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China published a list of recommended picture books for children's education, featuring a total of 347 types of picture books aimed at young children. These recommended picture books highlight the rich culture and accomplishments of China, to help children appreciate Chinese culture from an early age and foster a sense of patriotism. Notably, original Chinese picture books make up 78% of

the recommendations, underscoring the government's support for the creation of homegrown works. Picture books are closely aligned with children's lives, engaging their interests and aiding in the development of their language, cognitive, creativity and other skills. While the Ministry of Education has clarified that the recommended picture books are not mandatory and that preschools are not obligated to coordinate a uniform subscription across regions, these initial recommendations have been widely embraced. As a result, many preschools and parents actively consult this list when selecting picture books.

Although this is a welcome step, it was noted that there were no corresponding teaching guidelines provided alongside the picture books. This has raised concerns among educators and parents, as the only drawing teaching guideline issued by the ministry was back in 2001, which is considerably outdated. The lack of up-to-date teaching guidelines may create confusion and hinder the effective use of these recommended picture books in children's education.

The curriculum for Preschool Drawing is mandatory for Chinese preschool education majors (Zhang, 2024), given that drawing is typically offered as an independent art course in Chinese preschools (Chen, 2024). However, preschool education in China currently lacks a standardised guideline for teaching drawing. No unified teaching plans or materials are provided for preschool teachers (Zhang, 2019). As a result, each teacher selects

picture books based on personal preference (Zhang, 2019), leading to differences in the quality of education provided across different preschools (Hu & Xiong, 2021). Additionally, the curriculum for preschool education in China is mainly based on the experiences of developed regions (Zuo & Zheng, 2019), leading to an educational imbalance, particularly in rural areas where resources are scarce. For example, Lu (2019) found that in the rural areas of China, especially in poor areas, the preschool curriculum was generally weak, and curriculum resources were relatively scarce, unsystematic, and lacked in suitability, which seriously affected the teaching quality in preschools. It is important to note that due to the lack and limitations of teaching resources, this study focuses on preschools in cities and will not address the issue of preschool drawing lessons in rural areas.

The state of preschool drawing education in China has been a topic of discussion for some time, and it is widely acknowledged that there is a need for further development and improvement. As a result, researchers have been investigating various methods to develop drawing instruction for preschoolers in China. One approach that has shown promise is using picture books as a way to teach children how to draw. This research aims to examine the feasibility of this method and identify how it can be used to improve preschool children's literacy and creativity in China. By analysing the components of picture books that can be incorporated into drawing lessons, the study aims to contribute to the advancement of the preschool drawing education curriculum in China.

2.3 Teaching Drawing in Preschools in China

The importance of incorporating drawing education in preschools for children's basic education cannot be overstated. Huang (2019) highlights the significance of drawing education for children. It has been demonstrated by Zou (2021) that drawing education can effectively develop children's divergent thinking, perceptual thinking, and imaginative thinking, which play a crucial role in their healthy growth. Additionally, Rech (2019) has emphasised that children's drawing can stimulate their critical ability, creativity, and constructive thinking, which are essential skills for their development.

Numerous studies have shown that teachers can significantly impact guiding children's drawing in preschools (Wang, 2018; Zhong, 2019; Liu, 2020). They can provide children with the necessary guidance to develop their creativity and critical thinking skills. Therefore, teaching drawing in preschools is increasingly valued and respected by people in China. Overall, it is evident that drawing education plays a crucial role in the overall development of children, and incorporating it into their basic education is essential.

While drawing activities are prevalent in different parts of preschool education, in China, the course of drawing is designated as an independent subject within the curriculum. These classes typically concentrate on thematic drawing, with each session lasting 30 minutes and 1-2 specialised drawing classes scheduled each week. Before the drawing classes, preschool teachers prepare A4-sized sketch paper along with coloured pens or crayons for the children.

Teachers generally use a structured teaching approach during drawing classes, where they demonstrate each step for the children to follow. Although this method may restrict the imaginative freedom of children in their drawing expression, it allows children in China, often numbering nearly 60 children in one class, to rapidly acquire fundamental drawing skills.

Some studies have criticised the prevalent methodology of drawing education in preschools, which involves teachers dominating the class and instructing children to replicate what they draw on the board (Xian, 2020; Zhou, 2020). This teaching approach prioritises the teacher's authority (Guan, 2017) and fails to develop children's independent creative ability (Liu, 2017). For instance, a teacher may demonstrate how to draw a rainbow on the board and require children to draw it in the same way (Wang, 2019). This approach is unsuitable for promoting creativity in children. Although incorporating drawing activities in preschool can help develop children's ability to express their ideas and develop their literacy skills (Wu, 2020), the teacher's approach to teaching should align with the desired outcome (Wang et al., 2021). For example, preschool drawing lessons aim to develop children to develop rich imaginations. In that case, teachers should use a variety of teaching methods to guide children's participation in different imaginative activities.

This teaching method has also somewhat influenced how Chinese preschool drawing teachers assess children's learning outcomes in drawing classes. Wu (2020) pointed out that preschool drawing teachers tend to expect

children to draw the same way they do. Consequently, they may only pay attention to the “likeness” when assessing the children’s drawings. This suggests that there is a possibility that the children’s ideas are not taken into consideration while evaluating their drawings. Liu (2019) has also proved this viewpoint in her research, where the assessment of preschool drawing teachers often disregards the children’s ideas, emotions, and attitudes expressed in their drawings. For instance, children are rarely given an opportunity to explain what they have drawn and what they intend to express when their drawings are being evaluated. If children were given more opportunities to talk about their drawings, they would become more enthusiastic about drawing (Wang, 2016). Currently, education in China emphasises enhancing children’s creativity through education (Lin, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to explore ways to teach drawing in China by using picture books to develop preschool children’s creativity.

2.4 How Children’s Picture Books are Used in China

The development of children’s picture books in China has been relatively slow, primarily due to the limited originality and innovation present in the genre (Liu, 2019). In 1999, Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House introduced ten picture books by the renowned German children’s literature writer and painter Janos. However, at that time, it did not capture the attention of everyone (Yang, 2016). In 2002, Xinlei Publishing House published “Children’s Literature Five Dialogues”, which is the first theoretical summary of children’s picture books in China (Yang, 2016). This book was based on the

ideas of five well-known Chinese scholars and writers in children's literature and picture books. It delved into the discussion of children's literature theory and creation during that era.

Additionally, this book adheres to a format of impromptu interactive dialogue based on live recordings, which means the entire content is presented in the form of dialogue. Since then, people have started to take notice of children's picture books (Zhao, 2018). Despite these efforts, the progress of children's picture books in China continues to lag, largely because of a lack of professional awareness regarding picture books and an insufficient understanding of their defining characteristics and essence. This has led to a fundamental gap in comprehending children's needs and characteristics when employing picture books for educational purposes (Pang, 2020). The use of children's picture books for teaching drawing is still in its experimental stage (Wen, 2017). Hence, there are still many issues with the utilisation of children's picture books in preschool education. Scholars such as Yan (2018), Wang (2019), and Chen (2020) have highlighted several concerns that must be addressed to ensure the effective use of children's picture books in preschool education.

One of the primary challenges in teaching drawing to preschool children is the lack of standardised teaching guidance on using children's picture books. Currently, there is no comprehensive understanding of official teaching guidelines of using picture books to teach from the government; however,

some private sources such as educational institutions, experts, and scholars may offer guidance suggestions or teaching plans. These guidelines and recommendations often lack a unified standard and may vary significantly based on differing educational philosophies and practical experiences. This leads to many drawing teachers struggling with incorporating picture books into their lessons. While Zhao and Lei have acknowledged the usefulness of picture books in drawing, they do not provide specific details on how to use them in practice. In China, children's picture books are commonly found in preschools, but the decision to utilise them in teaching is largely dependent on individual circumstances. Since there is no official mandate for preschool teachers to incorporate picture books into their instruction, most educators tend to follow a teacher-dominated approach, typically involving the process of "reading picture books - replicating individual drawing"(Li, 2020). Consequently, most preschool drawing teachers rely on their familiar, teacher-guided teaching methods. However, according to Yang and Lai (2020), this approach can result in passive learning and limited communication among children.

To address this issue, there is a pressing need for a teaching method that places children at the centre of the learning process when teaching drawing in preschools. To explore this further, this study investigated how picture books can be practically utilised to teach drawing to preschool children. The study aims to provide comprehensive guidance on using picture books to promote

creativity and develop literacy skills in preschool children. By doing so, this study will likely contribute to the development of using picture books to teach drawing in preschools.

2.5 Challenges in Teaching Drawing in Preschools in China

Over the past decade, there has been a rise in the development of children's picture books in China. As a result, more teachers and educators focus on using these books for preschool teaching (Gao & Ma, 2018). This increased interest and usage of these books as an essential teaching resource among preschool teachers (Gao & Ma, 2018).

While preschools are developed to stock up on children's picture books, the focus is not on using them for drawing. According to Yuan (2016), 90% of preschool classrooms in northern China have an area designated for children's picture books, which mainly includes classic children's books from around the world, as well as some early childhood education books. However, Tang (2021) notes that despite the abundance of picture books in the classroom, very few teachers use them for drawing, even though doing so can develop creativity and literacy. This is mainly due to the lack of structured guidance for teaching or learning drawing through the use of children's picture books to develop children's creativity and literacy.

This dearth of guidance has resulted in difficulties for preschool drawing teachers who seek to incorporate picture books into their lessons (Sun, 2021). While Tang and Sun acknowledge the advantages of using picture books for

drawing, they have not provided specific instructions for implementing this approach in preschool classrooms.

One problem associated with different reading interests in children's picture books between preschool drawing teachers and children is that classroom order will become terrible (Li, 2021), imposing a burden on class control (Luo, 2024). Teachers use children's picture books they are interested in to teach drawing. However, children may be unwilling to use these children's picture books for learning drawing because they are not interested in the picture books selected by their drawing teachers, and this will result in children may not following the classroom rules in drawing lessons, such as whispering with each other, looking around, and running around the classroom.

It is widely known that most children have their reading interests in children's picture books, even in the first years of life (Wagner, 2020). Thus, drawing teachers choose children's picture books and design how to use them to teach drawing in their drawing lessons, which is particularly important. Otherwise, it will cause many issues in teaching drawing using picture books. For example, in selecting children's picture books, children may not like their teacher's choice, leading to unwilling to participate in drawing activities used in drawing classes (Zhou, 2021). In such cases, teachers may force children to focus on the selected books, taking time away from other essential activities like sharing and discussing the content of the books and drawings with others

(Qiu, 2024). Such limitations can impede children's development of creativity and literacy. Despite the significance of these issues, little has been discussed on how to address them. This study explores how using picture books in drawing activities for preschool children can develop their creativity and literacy.

The difference in attention to the content of children's picture books in drawing lessons between teachers and children is another problem. In China, the use of picture books in preschool reading areas is primarily characterised as a leisure activity aimed at promoting the enjoyment of reading. Rather than providing distinct courses focused on knowledge acquisition, many drawing teachers develop children to delve into the deeper insights offered by picture books during their free time. This includes exploring sentence structure, understanding vocabulary meanings, and uncovering the educational significance embedded within the stories. In the storytelling segment, using picture books to help children relax, there is too much emphasis on using these books primarily as teaching materials to understand and learn grammar and other knowledge. However, children may simply want to enjoy the stories and drawings of the picture books rather than analyse them (Wang, 2021).

Research by Wang (2020) suggests that children's ability, such as absorbing information and learning social skills to learn knowledge from the hidden behind children's picture books rising with age. In fact, if drawing teachers place too much emphasis on the narratives of stories—asking

questions like, “What knowledge does this story impart?” or “How can we apply this knowledge in our everyday lives?”—rather than focusing on the colours and drawings in children’s picture books, such as, “What colours were used in this drawing to evoke a sense of warmth?” or “Why is the rabbit mother's arm depicted so long?”, children may become disinterested in utilising picture books as a means of learning to draw (Xu, 2019). While the studies mentioned above highlight the challenges of using picture books in drawing classes, they do not offer solutions for enhancing children’s creativity and literacy through using picture books in preschool drawing lessons.

The last problem that arises in preschool drawing classrooms is the tendency for some teachers to emulate the teaching methods and steps of Outstanding Teachers without considering the unique contexts of their classrooms in different preschools (Qiu, 2017). In China, outstanding teachers are generally assessed and democratically selected, approved by the government, education administrative departments, or education unions, and given appropriate material and spiritual rewards (Wang, 2024). Cui (2017) pointed out that it is easy for teachers to access videos of Outstanding Teachers’ drawing courses online due to the widespread availability of high-speed internet. These videos are often used by preschool drawing teachers to learn from the course design and teaching skills of Outstanding Teachers, including copying their teaching steps. However, less experienced teachers may overlook the fact that children perform differently in different teaching environments

(Chen, 2021). Some teachers may focus too much on replicating the steps they learned from the videos without considering the participation and interaction of their students in the lesson (Deng, 2021). This neglects the development of children's creativity. The purpose of this study is to address this issue and explore how picture books can be used to develop children's creativity and literacy in drawing lessons.

2.6 Drawing Using Picture Books to Develop Children's Literacy and Creativity in China

Based on the literature review presented thus far, this chapter has referenced many studies that have acknowledged the important role drawing and children's picture books play in preschool children's lives. However, as emphasised in Chapter 1, this proposed research is concerned with how drawing using children's picture books among preschool children can develop children's creativity and literacy. The literature review has revealed the gap in preschool drawing lessons in China, where there is a lack of research on how teachers can use children's picture books for drawing that can develop children's creativity and literacy. In this section, the specific role of drawing to develop creativity and literacy will be discussed. This is to specifically argue for the need for this research to explore how drawing using children's picture books can develop creativity and literacy among preschool children.

In the realm of preschool education in China, the art curriculum, particularly drawing, serves as a means of encouraging children's creativity (Xu, 2018). A significant number of studies have highlighted the benefits of

drawing in enhancing creativity among children (Bei, 2017; Friedman et al., 2019; Wang, 2019; Wu, 2020). Consequently, drawing education plays a critical role in the development of creativity among preschool children (Andiana & Fauziah, 2018). Furthermore, drawing lessons enable children to connect their literacy, creativity, and imagination, which are all essential parts of their holistic development (Du, 2019). Shi (2023) pointed out that children's literacy ability can be practised and developed during the drawing process. For instance, when children describe their drawings, they exercise their language abilities, resulting in improved literacy. Similarly, Based on research on Canadian children's painting habits, Steele (as cited in Speedie & Heydon, 2019) believes that drawing is a cognitive behaviour that affects the development of children's literacy.

In recent years, many Chinese preschools have embraced the use of children's picture books as a means of enriching their drawing lessons and developing children's multiple abilities, involving language skills (Ma, 2021), imagination (Gao, 2020), creativity (Jing & Tang, 2017) and literacy (Guo, 2021). A number of studies have highlighted the potential benefits of using picture books in drawing lessons, particularly in developing children's creativity, for instance, Xu (2020) highlighted that incorporating picture books into drawing lessons, alongside picture appreciation, can broaden children's drawing styles and modes of expression, ultimately enhancing their innovative skills. Similarly, Zhang (2020) noted that the enjoyment derived from picture

book stories can stimulate children's creative enthusiasm, allowing them to develop their creativity through story creation. However, these studies did not indicate that using picture books in drawing lessons can develop children's creativity and literacy. Therefore, there has been relatively deficient research in how children's picture books can be used in drawing lessons for preschool children that would develop creativity.

In addition, the Ministry of Education of China (2001) released the "Guidelines on Preschool Education", which emphasised the importance of using children's picture books to foster their interest in reading, speaking, and writing, as well as to promote their literacy skills. Consequently, Chinese preschools began incorporating children's picture books into their classrooms, with many setting up designated reading areas (Yuan, 2016). These actions have increased the frequency of using picture books in preschool teaching activities. For example, preschool teachers have set up some specialised picture book reading activities in one afternoon per week to read and share picture books with children (Ma, 2021). However, it is worth noting that teaching with picture books was not formally integrated into the curriculum but rather considered an extracurricular activity at that time.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education of China (2012) has highlighted the importance of respecting children's unique expression through the "Guidelines on Children's Learning and Development of 3 to 6 Years Old". This includes encouraging children to express their understanding of images and story plots

in children's picture books through various means, such as written language or drawings. As such, children's picture books can be valuable in encouraging creativity and literacy skills. Despite being included in the teaching curriculum of preschools in China after the issuance of this guideline, picture books were predominantly used to teach reading skills and rarely utilised for teaching drawing (Guo, 2018). While some preschool drawing teachers used picture books to teach drawing, there were no established guidelines, leading teachers to rely on the teaching approaches they prefer and are familiar with when selecting picture books and using them in drawing instruction (Guo, 2018).

Importantly, the Ministry of Education of China has taken note of this issue. In an effort to address this problem, the Ministry has recently released a recommended list of children's picture books to be used for reading in October 2022. This list offers a diverse range of picture books that preschool teachers and parents can use as valuable resources for teaching and reading purposes. By incorporating children's picture books into drawing lessons, teachers can provide a practical way to develop creativity and literacy among preschool children. This not only helps to improve children's literacy but also promotes their imagination and creativity, which are essential for children's development.

Preschool educators have recently suggested that picture books can serve as adequate teaching resources for teaching drawing in preschools. For instance, Guan (2021) highlighted that children can develop and enrich their artistic

creation experiences in drawing lessons by engaging with picture books. This engagement can stimulate their imagination and creativity through various methods. Similarly, Li (2021) noted that combining games with drawing in picture book instruction can ignite children's interest in drawing learning and foster their creativity. Chen (2020) also remarked that imitating and guessing illustrations from picture books during children's drawing can stimulate their learning interest and enthusiasm for drawing, ultimately enhancing their creativity. However, several studies have also shown that there are challenges that preschool teachers encounter while using picture books as teaching resources in drawing lessons. Tang (2021) observed that preschool teachers dedicate a considerable amount of time to explaining picture book narratives in drawing lessons. Lu (2021) emphasised that a significant challenge in using picture books for drawing education in preschools is the absence of clear teaching objectives. Zeng (2020) further pointed out that many preschool drawing teachers lack awareness of effectively integrating picture books into their teaching. While these studies have identified these issues, they do not offer clear and specific strategies for improvement in practical teaching scenarios.

2.7 Theories Related to Study

This study delves deeply into the processes and strategies of using picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity. Specifically, it focuses on identifying the available elements in children's picture books and exploring the

practical challenges of teaching drawing by using picture books. The study is mainly founded on four theoretical principles.

2.7.1 Children's Art Development Theory

Lowenfeld's theory of children's art development is an essential aspect of art education that carries significant implications. According to Lowenfeld (1957), children's art is a reflection of their mental and capabilities growth, and research on children's art should be conducted in conjunction with these areas. By developing children's general creativity through art, Lowenfeld emphasised cultivating creativity in a natural and effective way. According to Lowenfeld, teachers should play a supportive and motivating role in teaching rather than imposing adult views and ideas on children. It is worth noting that Lowenfeld emphasised the process of art creation rather than the results, which is an essential aspect of developing children's creativity. In summary, the impact of Lowenfeld's theory on art education cannot be overstated, and it remains a vital component of the field today.

Diverse viewpoints on children's art development can shape varying perspectives on children's art education. Previous studies also reveal a strong correlation between literacy and drawing (Kampeza & Delserieys, 2020), by interpreting their art work, children can express more comprehensive in showcasing their thinking (Taylor & Leung, 2020). Previous studies have pointed out that, evaluating children's artwork solely based on visual results can result in incomplete interpretations (Salisbury & Styles, 2020), as children's drawing intentions and performance capabilities are expressed

through language, sounds, gestures, and movements (Vila-Gimenez, 2019; Vila-Gimenez & Prieto, 2020). Similarly, children's drawing should be viewed as a tool to complement different forms of expression and communication, such as writing, singing, and movement (Taylor & Leung, 2020; Horn & Giacobbe, 2023). Thus, encouraging children to explore diverse forms of expression can help them gain a more profound development of their creative capabilities as well as potential creativity and literacy.

2.7.2 Piaget's Constructivism Theory

Piaget's constructivist theory emphasises the value of discovery learning in the development of intelligence. According to Han (2023), discovery learning offers children the opportunity to explore and invent knowledge, leading to improved learning outcomes. They further pointed out that successful discovery learning requires a continuous focus on goals, questioning, and reflection. Similarly, drawing involves identifying contradictions and new problems, taking risks to solve challenges, and forming a representation of the world (Zuo, 2024). Drawing is not a random process but demands careful observation and attention to detail. Through meticulous drawing, children can engage in discovery learning, enhancing their learning experience. Therefore, by incorporating discovery learning into drawing teachers' teaching methods, they can create a more captivating and compelling learning environment in line with Piaget's theory.

In the past, children were regarded as blank slates to be filled with knowledge. However, modern understanding is more nuanced, and the truth is

far more complex. Constructivists posit that knowledge is not fixed but a dynamic and personal experience (Hou, 2023). Based on this view, a single work of art can have many interpretations, and children must discover information themselves to truly learn.

From a constructivist perspective, drawing is recognised as a vital avenue for discovery that plays an essential role in children's cognitive development, facilitating their ongoing exploration and understanding of the world around them. During drawing activities, children actively experiment with various techniques and expressions. This practice not only fosters the construction of new knowledge and experiences but also develops their comprehension of their surroundings. For instance, throughout the creative process, children closely observe the shape, colour, texture, and other characteristics of objects, and these careful observations enable them to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of those objects. Furthermore, the challenges and problems encountered during drawing serve as opportunities to stimulate children's creativity and innovation. They must engage in observation, analysis, and practice to discover solutions.

Piaget's theory places significant importance on the self-motivation that children demonstrate during their cognitive development. This growth is a dynamic construction process, where children continuously integrate new information into their existing cognitive frameworks (assimilation) or adapt these frameworks to accommodate new information (adaptation) through

positive interactions with their environment. In the realm of children's drawing learning, this self-driven cognitive growth holds particular significance. Children independently select the content and methods of their drawing based on personal interests and intrinsic needs. This initiative not only develops them to actively identify problems and gather relevant information for analysis, but also prompts them to formulate hypotheses and test them, thereby progressing into a new stage of knowledge innovation. Additionally, while drawing, children engage with environmental factors such as painting materials, tools, and spatial dimensions, which leads them to continually adjust their drawing techniques and cognitive frameworks to address new artistic needs and challenges. Moreover, the act of drawing serves as a process through which children consistently construct and refine their cognitive structures. This constructive engagement fosters the formation of internal representations and cognitive patterns, allowing them to achieve a deeper understanding and interpretation of the world surrounding them.

In addition, Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights that children continuously construct cognitive structures through their interactions with the environment. Drawing, as a form of creative expression, offers children a platform to express their thoughts and emotions freely. During the drawing process, children engage their imagination to transform their inner feelings and ideas into visual representations. This experience not only fosters their creativity and imaginative abilities but also develops them to explore new

drawing techniques and methods of expression, thereby facilitating the ongoing development of their cognitive structures. The creativity inherent in drawing manifests in various elements, including the use of lines, colour selection, and shape combinations. Through the unrestricted combination and creation of these elements, children can convey their unique ideas and emotional experiences. This creative outlet helps nurture their creativity and problem-solving skills, establishing a strong foundation for their future learning and life experiences.

Although drawing is a non-verbal form of expression, it is closely linked to the development of literacy. Firstly, drawing provides a valuable means for children to convey their thoughts and emotions. When children have yet to fully master language skills, they can articulate their inner worlds and perceptions of the external environment through their drawing. This method of expression fosters their communication abilities, laying a solid foundation for literacy development. Secondly, the processes of observation and reflection during drawing significantly develop children's literacy. As children engage in drawing, they must carefully observe their surroundings and use a paintbrush to represent what they see. This practice not only sharpens their observational and attentional skills but also develops them to use language to describe and explain their observations. The interaction between language and imagery deepens their understanding and retention of concepts, further promoting their literacy. Additionally, drawing serves as a medium for language learning. For

instance, preschool teachers can develop children's language expression by guiding them to articulate descriptions of their drawings. Furthermore, showcasing and appreciating exemplary drawings can expand children's linguistic repertoire and enrich their aesthetic experiences.

In summary, Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights the significance of self-motivation in the cognitive growth of children. Drawing, as a form of creative expression and an avenue for engaging with the environment, not only fosters the construction and development of children's cognitive structures but also cultivates their creativity, imagination, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, it is closely associated with the advancement of literacy, providing a strong foundation for the overall development of children.

2.7.3 Children's Drawing-Speech Development Correlation Theory

The relationship between children's drawing and language development is a crucial factor in promoting children's literacy. Wang's Children's Drawing-Speech Development Correlation Theory (1996) offers a profound perspective on how drawing positively affects literacy development. This theory underscores the profound connection between artistic expression and language acquisition. It posits that both drawing and language serve as essential forms of expression throughout a child's growth, demonstrating a clear correlation at various developmental stages. For instance, during the graffiti period (approximately ages 1 to 3), children's drawings are primarily instinctive, with little to no relationship between their drawings and their verbal language. However, during the symbolic period (around ages 3 to 4), children

begin to create simple shapes and can utilise basic language to describe them. At this stage, the connection between drawing and language becomes increasingly evident, as children use drawing to convey their thoughts and emotions, while language aids them in understanding and articulating the meaning behind their drawings. According to this theory, drawing develops children's focus, observation, and cognitive abilities, enabling them to comprehend and utilise language more effectively. Additionally, drawing facilitates the visualisation of experiences and emotions, augmenting vocabulary and self-expression skills. Moreover, drawing develops children's curiosity, promoting their eagerness to acquire new knowledge and vocabulary, ultimately developing their literacy.

Furthermore, the development of drawing skills and language abilities are mutually reinforcing (Wang, 1996). By drawing, children can communicate their emotions and ideas in a way that may be challenging to articulate verbally or in writing, thus enhancing their multiple literacy and language proficiency. Moreover, as their language skills progress, children gain more tools and strategies to express themselves through art, enabling them to convey their intentions and feelings more precisely (Gegensaren, 2021). This implies the significance of social processes, such as teacher guidance and peer collaboration, in the learning process. First and foremost, teachers play a vital role in helping children develop their observational skills and language expression by guiding them to observe, analyse, and articulate their thoughts

on the content of their drawings. This guidance not only deepens children's understanding of drawings but also fosters their creativity and literacy. Additionally, peer collaboration serves as a crucial avenue for learning. By engaging in drawing, discussing, and sharing their drawings with classmates, children learn to collaborate, communicate, and express their ideas effectively. This collaborative experience not only nurtures their social skills but also ignites their creativity and literacy.

In early childhood education, the roles of social processes like teacher guidance and peer collaboration vary across different stages of development. For instance, during the graffiti and symbol periods, children may require increased support and development from teachers to nurture their interest in drawing and develop their expressive abilities. As they progress through the early stages of school, and as their language and cognitive skills improve, children will benefit from collaborating and sharing with peers, which further fosters their social skills, creativity and literacy.

Wang Dagen's theory illuminates the intrinsic relationship between drawing and language development, offering valuable insights for educators and parents to better comprehend the distinct characteristics of children's artistic and linguistic growth at various stages. Through drawing, children can convey their thoughts and emotions, fostering their creativity and imagination. Simultaneously, advancements in language facilitate a deeper understanding and description of their artistic expressions, enhancing their ability to

communicate effectively. However, it's important to note that not all children benefit equally from drawing; some may lack interest or aptitude for the medium, which can limit their ability to express their thoughts and feelings through drawings. Additionally, certain developmental stages may be more conducive to the interplay between drawing and language. For instance, a notable correlation exists between children's drawing and language development during the semiotic and early learning phases, while this connection may not be as evident in other stages of development.

Wang Dagen's theory aligns closely with Piaget's constructivist theory, which posits that individuals gradually construct knowledge through interactions with their environment. Piaget emphasised that children undergo processes of assimilation and adaptation as they engage with the world around them, thus enhancing their creativity. When integrating Wang Dagen's theory with Piaget's framework, it can recognise the vital role that drawing plays in children's cognitive development. Through drawing, children not only express their thoughts and emotions but also engage positively with their environment, facilitating their knowledge construction and understanding. For instance, when children create a simple drawing, they may be exploring and making sense of the shapes and structures present in the world. By observing and comparing these shapes with other objects, they continually refine their drawings, thereby enhancing their spatial cognitive skills. This creative process aligns seamlessly with Piaget's concepts of assimilation and adaptation.

In summary, children's drawing-speech development correlation theory not only emphasises the close connection between drawing and language development, but also implies the importance of social processes in learning. Through social processes such as teacher guidance and peer collaboration, children can better develop their drawing and language abilities, while cultivating their creativity, literacy and social skills.

2.7.4 Guilford's Theory of Creative Abilities in the Arts

The ability to think creatively is a powerful tool that can bring about transformative change in the world (Dietrich, 2019; Mehta & Dahl, 2019; Walia, 2019). Guilford published the pioneering research of creativity in the 20th century. After that, creativity has been elevated to a scientific research area, leading to a deeper understanding of its fundamental traits. Thus, Guilford's seminal work, "*Creativity*" (Guilford, 1950), is widely respected in the Western psychology community as a pioneering contribution to modern formal research on creativity.

According to Guilford's (1957) theory, creativity is characterised by three primary features: fluency, flexibility, and originality. Fluency refers to an individual's ability to generate a large number of solutions quickly and accurately when facing challenges. This requires a high level of cognitive flexibility, which is the capacity to switch between different modes of thinking to adapt to new situations (Weiss, 2021). Flexibility enables individuals to approach problems from various angles, making them more open-minded and adaptable.

Originality is the third feature of creativity, which is the ability to think independently and come up with unique solutions. This requires a high level of personal creativity, which allows individuals to think beyond conventional or traditional approaches to problem-solving. In other words, originality is a hallmark of creativity and is characterised by the capability to combine existing knowledge, ideas, and experiences in new and innovative ways. Therefore, creativity is a complex and multi-faceted concept encompassing various cognitive and personality traits.

The fundamental traits of creativity have a wide range of practical uses across various domains, including education, business, and the arts. For example, an individual endowed with fluency might tackle a drawing theme by utilising rich colours to convey their perspective in their drawings. Alternatively, a person with flexible thinking may opt to express the same drawing themes through diverse compositions or drawing techniques. As an inventive artist blessed with a high level of individual creativity, they may produce one-of-a-kind drawings featuring distinct styles and themes.

To sum up, Guilford's theory of creativity provides a new perspective on understanding and cultivating creativity. It is also a powerful reference that can help individuals come up with unique and innovative solutions to a variety of challenges. Children can develop their potential capabilities by developing the core characteristics of creativity - fluency, flexibility, and originality - resulting in positive growth.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the development and utilisation of picture books in preschool education in China, as well as the teaching of drawing in this context. It also explores the impact of using picture books in drawing lessons on children's literacy and creativity, and the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Based on the above analysis, it is concluded that the teaching of picture books in preschool education has progressed slowly in China, and using picture books to teach drawing is still in the exploratory stage. The literature indicated that current preschool education in China does not carry out a unified teaching guideline by using picture books in drawing and does not provide standardised teaching materials and books for preschool drawing teachers. In addition, the current methods used to teach drawing to preschool children are almost the same, with a teacher-dominated drawing class and children being guided to copy what they see from their teachers' drawings. This approach means that teachers play a more dominant role in their classes, which could lead to children learning passively and communicating less with one another.

After conducting a thorough literature review, it has revealed that there is a dearth of standardised guidance on how to incorporate children's picture books into preschool drawing lessons in China in order to develop both literacy and creativity. Nevertheless, research has demonstrated that utilising picture books in drawing instruction can have a significant impact on the development of these skills. Regrettably, due to the lack of standardised guidance for integrating picture books into preschool drawing lessons in China, this practice

is not widely utilised. This study aims to address this gap by providing guidance to preschool teachers on how to incorporate picture books into drawing lessons, by identifying the available elements in picture books that can be utilised by preschool drawing teachers, and by exploring the challenges faced by preschool drawing teachers.

The objective of this research is to explore the potential elements in picture books that can be used to develop creativity and literacy among preschool children. This study will not only enrich the variety of teaching approaches in preschool education but also cultivate and provide practical teaching references for developing children's literacy and creativity in preschool education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the use of picture books as a tool for developing literacy and creativity in preschool children's drawing lessons. The methods for data collection are presented in this chapter, where it is explained that this research takes a qualitative approach in order to explore the available elements in picture books that can be utilised by preschool teachers to develop children's creativity and literacy. The researcher conducted a two-week visit to a public preschool in order to gain insight into the methods used for teaching drawing in preschool drawing lessons. The specifics of this visit will be elaborated upon later in this chapter, along with an explanation of the data collection methodology and analysis techniques used in this study.

3.2 Background of the Public Preschool

This public preschool is situated in the northern region of China, in Tai'an City, which is located in Shandong Province (Figure 3.1). The preschool is a Model Preschool, which means that it is a leading institution in the province that comprehensively implements educational policies, explores educational principles, and shares experiences to guide other preschools in the region (Huang, 2023). Model preschools such as this one, normally set precedents for

effective teaching strategies and methods (Model Preschool, 2021). It is worth noting that this preschool is also the central preschool in Tai'an City, which further highlights its importance in the region's educational landscape.

In 2022, the preschool had a total of 81 teachers, 17 classes and 773 students. Specifically, the preschool has seven classes in Grade 1, catering to children aged 3 years old, five classes in Grade 2 for children aged 4 years old, and five classes in Grade 3 for children aged 5 years old. These details, as shown in Table 3.1, provide a comprehensive overview of the different age groups and the number of classes available for each age group.

Table 3.1: Overview of the Preschool

Grade	Number of Classes	Children's Age	Number of Children
Grade 1	7	3 years old	238
Grade 2	5	4 years old	260
Grade 3	5	5 years old	275



Figure 3.1: Map of China

However, this research is concerned with children's drawing and picture books. Next, it will show specifically about children's picture books areas and how preschool teachers deal with children's drawing, arts and crafts in this preschool in two parts:

Part 1: The children's picture books library

The preschool has established a fantastic independent children's picture book library that offers a wealth of reading materials to both children and teachers (Figure 3.2). The library is a treasure trove of classic children's picture books from around the world, including titles like "*Three Monks*", "*No, David!*" in its Chinese version, and many others that cater to different interests and reading levels. It also includes books on early childhood education, such as "*Guidelines for Preschool Education*", and other professional development materials for teachers.

The preschool's library is a diverse and inclusive space that provides an enriched learning experience to the children. The teachers, in collaboration with parents, organise various parent-child activities regularly. These activities include parent training, reading sessions, and exchange activities, among others. Each Grade and Class has its own schedule for these fun and educational activities. The library not only promotes reading but also develops cultural exchange and community building. Overall, the preschool's picture book library is a wonderful resource that fosters a love for reading and promotes a well-rounded education.



Figure 3.2: Children's Picture Books Library

Part 2: The areas of picture books and children's drawing exhibition

Each classroom in the preschool has a designated area for children's picture books (Figure 3.3). These picture books are divided into two parts: one is provided by the preschool, and the other is contributed by the children to share with their peers. As a result, the assortment of picture books is frequently updated and changed.



Figure 3.3: Children's Picture Books Reading Area in Classroom

The corridors and walls of the main teaching building (Figure 3.4) are all displayed children's art work. The majority of the pieces are children's drawings, and they are all exceptional, having been chosen by the teachers as exemplary work from the drawing lessons. Additionally, there is a designated exhibition space for children's drawings (Figure 3.5) located outside each classroom. Following each drawing lesson, the drawing teacher selects the most representative drawings to showcase here. This area serves to develop children's creative passion for drawing. Usually, parents are permitted to visit this area when they pick up their children. Through these displays, parents can gain insight into their child's progress in preschool. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, parents are no longer permitted to visit the preschool without emergency circumstances.



Figure 3.4: The Corridors in the Main Teaching Building



Figure 3.5: A Part of Drawing Exhibition Area

3.3 Two-Week Visit to the Preschool

To conduct this study, the researcher spent two weeks observing how drawing is taught in this preschool. This particular preschool is a Practical Training Base for the researcher's university, which means they have a contract to assist and train preschool teachers to improve their teaching skills and professional development. The preschool warmly welcomed the researcher and assisted with the research. In 2022, the researcher's university and preschool collaborated on a project called the "Picture Book-Smart Teaching Project". This project aimed to develop preschool teachers to use picture books in their teaching across five areas: music, drawing, dancing, sports, and language. The project involved a scientific research team of three professors, six university lecturers, one principal, two deputy principals, and three preschool teachers. Over the course of a year, from September 2022 to September 2023, the team worked together to achieve the project's goals. Ultimately, the project aimed to

improve the development and growth of preschool children by creating a more creative and interactive learning environment. As a member of the research team, the researcher was responsible for the drawing teaching area. Therefore, the relationship between the researcher and the team members is very friendly. Thanks to this convenience, in the data analysis stage of this study, in order to ensure that there is no bias or error in the data coding and analysis sections, the researcher invited members of the drawing research field of this team to help the researcher double check.

During the two-week observation, the researcher visited and observed class 1 in Grade 3, which had 56 children and three teachers. The children's ages ranged from 5 to 6 years old. The ages of the three teachers in this class are 25, 35, and 41 years old. This class was selected for two reasons. Firstly, the age distribution of the teachers in this class accurately reflects that of all teaching teams in the preschool. In this preschool, various age groups reflect distinct educational backgrounds, levels of education, and educational philosophies. This diversity not only develops the understanding of the professional growth characteristics and educational behaviours of teachers across different age groups, but also offers substantial support for the training and development of preschool teachers in the future. Secondly, the children in this class were found to be more active both in the classroom and during outdoor sports performance compared to children in other Grade 3 classes. This preschool conducts exercise activities every morning, where children line up

according to their class order and engage in collective exercises. Observations during this time revealed that the activity levels of the children in this class were notably higher, and their behaviour patterns were consistent. This indicates that they possess stronger engagement in learning and a solid foundation in comprehensive abilities. This approach is closely aligned with the research objective of investigating how picture book teaching can develop children's creativity and literacy.

Throughout the two-week duration of the visit, the researcher typically takes a seat in the classroom corner to observe the whole process of the drawing lessons. By observing how children draw in the drawing lessons, learning the interaction between the drawing teachers and the children, and engaging in conversations with some of the preschool teachers, valuable insights are gained. The researcher have been in this preschool for two weeks. Since the purpose is only to see how to teach drawing in preschool drawing classed, the researcher just watch without interference the teaching.

During the researcher's observations of drawing lessons in this preschool, it was discovered that the teaching approach was teacher-centred. Although the teachers used different methods, such as pre-teaching activities like touching and smelling an apple before drawing, the final steps for drawing an apple were always the same. The teacher would draw the appropriate details on the blackboard one step at a time, and the children would copy the drawing on their drawing papers. It is worth emphasising that most of the teachers

generally expected the children to replicate their drawings exactly as they drew on the blackboard, which resulted in all the children's drawings being nearly identical to one another.

In one drawing lesson, a drawing teacher try to use picture books to practice the students' drawing skills and imagination. However, the teacher encountered some issues. Firstly, this drawing teacher found determining which picture book would be most suitable for her teaching in the drawing lesson was a problem. For example, when the teacher taught the children how to draw fruits, she selected a classic picture book titled "The Caterpillar is Hungry". During the lesson, the teacher noticed that some of the children drew not only apples or pineapples but also caterpillars. Since the teacher had only instructed the children to draw fruits, not caterpillars, she began questioning the appropriateness of the picture book. As a result, the teacher decided to stop referring to the picture book later in the lesson.

The second problem that this teacher encountered was related to the selection of teaching methods. Specifically, the teacher was uncertain about whether she should complete reading the story before starting to teach drawing. If she started with picture books and read the story, children would have limited time to practice drawing. On the other hand, if the story remained unfinished, the children would continue to ask questions such as "What happens next?". These are some of the genuine challenges that preschool drawing teachers encountered while using picture books to teach drawing,

which this research aims to address.

3.4 Methodology

The selection of Class 1 in Grade 3 for this study was carefully considered. The reasons for choosing this particular class have been explained in the previous two-week visit section. In China, the academic year is divided into two semesters, each lasting for 20-22 weeks. To analyse the significance of using picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons, a time frame of at least half a year is necessary. Anything shorter than this time frame may not be sufficient to detect any significant changes in children's literacy and creativity. This study is critical because it aims to determine which elements in picture books can benefit in developing children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons and if preschool teachers can practically use the available elements in picture books in their teaching methods.

The study has been designed to observe classroom activities, interview drawing teachers, and interact with children for 21 weeks. To achieve this, the researcher was required to enter the drawing classroom and observe how teachers utilise children's picture books to teach drawing and how children learn to draw using these books. The primary objective is to collect data that is useful in understanding how to develop literacy and creativity among preschool children by using picture books, making the researcher's study crucial to the advancement of teaching by utilising picture books in drawing lessons. An ethnographic approach is the recommended method to ensure that the data

collected is authentic. This approach involves investigating the teaching environment and using various data collection techniques to gain an in-depth comprehension of the actual situation, ensuring that the collected data is applicable and valuable. Mane (2017) notes that the ethnographic method provides the necessary depth and authenticity to make the research findings useful. Therefore, this research aims to provide valuable insights into how picture books can be used to develop literacy and creativity among preschool children.

3.4.1 Ethnography as a Methodology

Ethnography is a qualitative research methodology involving the researcher using observation and interaction to obtain relevant data from participants in real-life contexts (Adler & Adler, 2019). In educational research, ethnography is a qualitative research method in which researchers conduct in-depth research on the spot to carry out participatory observation and truthful description (Wang & Wu, 2024). In other words, researchers need to integrate into the work and life of the research participants, observe and collect materials under natural conditions through observation, interviews, records, and other methods. The process of implementing ethnography includes preparing for observations and interviews, collecting and classifying data, analysing and interpreting data, and writing conclusions (Wang, 2016). The main form of the ethnography method in educational research is a case study, and participant observation and interview are the primary methods of obtaining research materials (Wang & Wu, 2024). More importantly, Pole and Morrison (2003)

pointed out that ethnography emphasises detailed descriptions and theories gained from the analysis of data.

This study is considered exploratory since there are currently no established guidelines regarding the use of picture books for teaching drawing in preschools. Furthermore, there is a shortage of research in China that delves into how preschool drawing teachers utilise picture books in their lessons. The main focus of this research is to investigate the potential elements in picture books which can be used in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity, as well as identify the challenges that preschool drawing teachers may encounter when incorporating picture books into their lessons.

This study is being conducted from an internal perspective to gather first-hand data and establish a comprehensive database that accurately records the ethnographer's authentic experiences. The data collection process includes context-specific language, such as the terminology used by preschool teachers in their settings. For instance, teachers frequently use the phrase "drawing is blurred" to describe children's drawings that are dirty or messy. In ethnographic research, it is essential for researchers to map academic terms to their corresponding "dialectal utterances" in context-specific language.

This research employs a third-person perspective when analysing data and presenting results to ensure effective communication within the academic community. A third-person perspective (also known as the third person perspective) is not a term specifically used for data analysis. In China, it

usually refers to observing and describing things or events from the perspective of an observer, rather than from the first person perspective of the participant or the second person perspective directly related to it. It helps to improve the objectivity, comprehensiveness, and accuracy of analysis. By adopting an external perspective, the research retains its impartiality and upholds its scientific integrity.

3.4.2 Data Saturation

The concept of theoretical saturation holds great importance in qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that the decision to stop sampling different groups completely hinges on the degree of theoretical saturation of categories. Saturation refers to the point where sociologists have no further new data available in the process of developing generic attributes. The process of developing generic attributes concludes when sociologists run out of new data, and repetition confirms that the category has reached saturation. Researchers can then focus on collecting more diverse data to determine saturation. Judgments are based on a broad range of data related to categories.

Glaser and Strauss were pioneers of the positivist paradigm, emphasising “repeatability” and “verifiability” as crucial factors in achieving theoretical saturation. Through their work, they demonstrated a deep understanding of the internal characteristics of qualitative research, ensuring the “comprehensiveness” and “completeness” of theoretical categories (Morse et al., 2002).

3.4.3 Participants

To gain a deeper understanding of the methods used in teaching drawing at preschools, the researcher first conducted a two-week visit to a public preschool in China. After this initial visit, Class 1 in Grade 3 at the same preschool was selected for observation, as the teachers were familiar with the researcher and provided permission for the observations.

Preschool teachers:

Preschool teachers have a unique advantage in understanding the learning performance and basic situation of children as they live and learn in the same setting on a daily basis (Liu, 2021). As Yang (2021) demonstrated, preschool teachers who are the closest observers can conveniently gather first-hand information on children's drawing ability and literacy in their class. In this study, a public preschool that serves as a Practical Training Base for the researcher's university, with five classes and 15 teachers in Grade 3, was selected. Since the preschool is a Practical Training Base for the researcher's working university, most students majoring in preschool education who graduate from this university tend to seek employment at this preschool. Consequently, many of the teachers in this preschool hold bachelor's degrees in preschool education from the researcher's working university. The courses taught by the researcher are mandatory for students in the preschool education program, that means every graduate in this field is a former student of the researcher. As a result, it is inevitable that there are many teachers in this preschool who are the researcher's students. Among these 15 teachers, six are

students of the researcher. To avoid the researcher's pressure on these teachers when observing in the classroom, they were excluded from participation in this research. These teachers may feel pressure when working with the researcher, and this could affect their teaching activities and the progress of the research. Therefore, a total of nine preschool teachers in Grade 3 were ultimately interviewed for this study, as they were not students of the researcher.

It is important to note that at this preschool, each class is overseen by a team of three teachers who are responsible for all teaching activities. The teachers are divided into three age groups: 20+, 30+ and 40+. It is important to note that at this preschool, each class is overseen by a team of three teachers who are responsible for all teaching activities. The teachers are divided into three age groups: 20+, 30+ and 40+. The basic information for all nine preschool teachers can be found in Table 3.2. In this study, three primary interviewees were selected from the same teaching team that was observed. Their ages are 25, 35, and 41, respectively, which align with the age distribution of teachers across all teaching teams at the preschool. In this preschool, various age groups reflect distinct educational backgrounds, levels of education, and educational philosophies. This diversity not only develops the understanding of the professional growth characteristics and educational behaviours of teachers across different age groups, but also offers substantial support for the training and development of preschool teachers in the future.

Table 3.2: The Basic Information of Participants (Preschool Teachers)

Number	Code Name	Gender	Age	Working Years	Educational (major)	Qualifications
1	CH	female	24	1	Bachelor (Preschool education)	
2	CE	female	25	2	Bachelor (Preschool education)	
3	HU*	female	25	1	Master (Preschool education)	
4	LU	female	28	5	Bachelor (Preschool education)	
5	QI	female	32	10	Bachelor (Preschool education)	
6	LA	female	35	10	Master (Preschool education)	
7	ZI*	female	35	11	Bachelor (Preschool education)	
8	FE	female	41	19	Junior college (Preschool education)	
9	BI*	female	41	21	Junior college (Preschool education)	

Note: * indicates the main interviewees

Preschool children:

The participants in this research include the children in Class 1 of Grade 3 in the selected preschool. Eventually, the researcher selected six children randomly between the ages of 5 and 6 years old, and this group was found to be most suitable for the study. The reasons for this are as follows: firstly, compared with children in Grade 1 and Grade 2, the children in Grade 3 are more proficient in using language (Ma, 2021), and are easier to understand the content and roles of children's picture books (Shen, 2021), so that they can understand and answer the questions asked by teachers easier (Ji, 2021). Secondly, when it comes to the selection of children's picture books, compared with the Grade 1 and 2, the children in Grade 3 are no longer limited to simple daily life themes when choosing the content of the picture books, but can be extended to picture books reflecting social life (Wang, 2019). Therefore, there

are more meaningful and educational children's picture books available for teachers to choose from in Grade 3 (Duan, 2021). Thirdly, "Guidelines on Children's Learning and Development of 3 to 6 Years Old" (The Ministry of Education of China, 2012) pointed out that preschool children in Grade 3 are required to be able to listen to the teacher or other people in the class. The document highlights the significance of developing children's listening skills and offers educational recommendations tailored for children aged 3 to 4, 4 to 5, and 5 to 6. For instance, a key suggestion for language expression for 3 to 4-year-olds is to learn how to say hello. In contrast, for children aged 5 to 6, who are in Grade 3 of preschool, the recommendation is to provide more opportunities for listening and speaking through activities such as reading picture books, engaging in games, and storytelling. Therefore, this study selected Grade 3 children for observation because children in this age group already have certain language expression and comprehension abilities. The basic information of the six children mainly observed is as follows (Table 3.3):

Table 3.3: The Basic Information of Participants (Preschool Children)

Number	Code Name	Gender	Age (Years Old)
1	AN	Female	5.5
2	BM	Female	6
3	CY	Female	5
4	DL	Male	6
5	EK	Male	6
6	FJ	Male	5

3.4.4 Participant Observation

This study used an ethnographic approach with participant observation as the main data collection method. Specifically, the researchers utilised participant observation to record teachers' teaching and children's learning performance during drawing lessons. By actively participating in various activities and even taking on specific tasks, researchers can fully integrate themselves into the environment and systematically comprehend the intricate interpersonal dynamics and multifaceted issues that arise within it (Chen, 2023).

Classroom observation is an important method for the researcher to analyse children's performance in drawing lessons and teachers' teaching behaviour. In this study, The researcher entered the observation place as a classroom assistant and participated in the observation from the internal perspective adopted by ethnographers. The researcher assisted preschool teachers in the selected classroom in order to get comfortable with the children, and used the form of Classroom Observation Recording and Analysis (Appendix A), daily dairies, notes, photos, the electronic recorder, and collected drawings to record. The sample of classroom observation records translation can be found in Appendix B. The participation observation in this research is divided into three stages as shown in Diagram 3.1. The first stage: description observations, that is, a detailed understanding and description of the preschool environment and teachers; the second stage: focused observations, that is, multiple observations in the drawing classroom; the third stage:

selective observations, that is, mainly observed the randomly selected six children to facilitate the in-depth study.

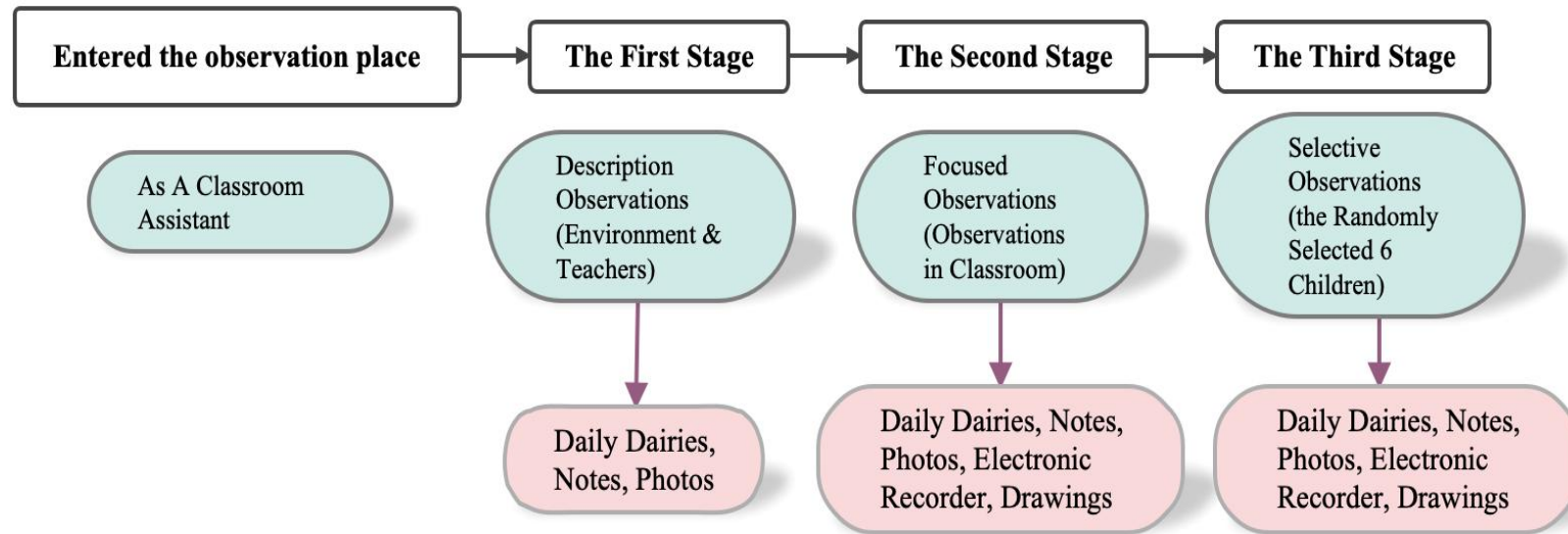


Diagram 3.1: The Procedure of Participation Observation

The September semester at this preschool offers a drawing curriculum on Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons each week, with each lesson lasting 30 minutes. A ten-minute break precedes each lesson, during which the researcher engages with the children and records their progress. The teaching team in this class utilises a rotating system for the teaching tasks of drawing lessons. The specific arrangement is shown in Table 3.4. The drawing lessons consist of various drawing activities that align with the themes assigned to each week. For example, if the theme for a week is focused on comprehending colours, the drawing teacher selects a picture book that is abundant in colours and emphasises the use and importance of colours. The drawing teaching plan for September semester in 2021 in this preschool is shown in Appendix C.

Table 3.4: Drawing Lesson Teaching Settings

Week Number	Tuesday	Friday	Week Number	Tuesday	Friday
1			12	BI	BI
2			13*	HU	HU
3	HU	HU	14*	ZI	ZI
4	ZI	ZI	15	BI	BI
5	BI	BI	16	HU	HU
6	HU	HU	17	ZI	ZI
7	Holiday		18	BI	BI
8	ZI	ZI	19	HU	HU
9	BI	BI	20	ZI	ZI
10	HU	HU	21	BI	BI
11	ZI	ZI			

Note: * indicates that due to the epidemic, the classroom drawing lessons have been suspended

The researcher assisted the preschool teachers in a selected classroom to ensure the children felt at ease with their presence. It should be noted that the term “assist” here only refers to assisting preschool teachers in handling some trivial matters that do not affect teaching design and implementation, such as distributing watercolor pens before drawing classes, and guiding children to the restroom during the class. The researcher utilised daily dairies, notes, photos, electronic recorders, and videos to record. Due to uncontrollable factors such as public holidays, preschool open days, and an epidemic situation, only 28 offline drawing lessons were recorded in this study. All data was recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed using Nvivo 12. The photos and videos served as supplementary aids to assist with recalling specific details that needed to be explained or clarified by the researcher. Following the classroom observation, the researcher carefully reviewed the audio and video materials, transcribing them word by word in Chinese, and checked whether the observation notes and physical materials were completed.

3.4.5 Interview

This study also employed semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers to gain insight into their use of picture books as a tool for developing creativity and literacy in drawing lessons. As the children are very young and cannot be adequately interviewed, the researcher engaged them in informal conversations to gather their ideas and thoughts on the subject matter.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with preschool teachers before and after teaching drawing using children’s picture books. The purpose of the

after class semi-structured is to collect feedback from the teachers about the challenges of teaching drawing by using picture books. During the research process, a general interview plan and questioning framework were used to ensure the research stayed on topic. Interview questions can be found in Appendix D and Appendix E. To facilitate the collection of interview information, the entire communication with each teacher was recorded using the mobile phone recording function. This helped ensure that the interview data was complete and easily accessible for later analysis.

3.4.6 Quality Control

3.4.6.1 Trustworthiness of the Study

Ethnographic research methods involve conducting fieldwork to accurately describe research phenomena. However, because of its focus on description, it is not always replicable. Although the credibility of ethnographic research has been debated, it is universally accepted that trustworthiness must be considered, regardless of the research method. In this research, trustworthiness is used to evaluate the researcher's presentation of research results. This research collected different type of data involving teaching reports, field notes, interviews, and classroom observations to ensure that the data obtained is consistent and reliable.

In addition, in order to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. The researcher collected and analysed data in an realistic, objective, and fair way. The researcher spent an entire semester living in the local area, building rapport with the participants and gaining valuable insights into their realistic

world. This allowed the researcher to obtain genuine, in-depth, and meaningful information about the participants' experiences. The use of ethnographic research methods highlights the significance of establishing strong relationships with participants, which is essential for the credibility and authenticity of this research. During the data analysis process, the researcher always maintain an objective and fair attitude, avoiding the influence of subjective biases and preconceived notions on the research results. For example, be cautious and prudent when interpreting data, and not easily draw conclusions or make judgments.

This study did not limit the participation of any particular child or preschool teacher in Class 1 Grade 3, nor did it exclude any relevant phenomena from the observations and interviews. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher regularly met with her supervisor and co-supervisors throughout the data collection process, discussing updates and emerging problems based on the information she gathered through the fieldwork. Additionally, one of the co-supervisors in China visited the preschool regularly, which helped to increase the trustworthiness of the data collection procedure.

To sum up, this study was conducted with the utmost care to ensure its trustworthiness, and it is believed that the findings reflect the real experiences of the participants.

3.4.6.2 Work as A Team

As explained in the Two-Week visit to the preschool, there is a research team for the Picture Book-Smart Teaching Project in this preschool, which involves a group of researchers from the university and preschool. In the data analysis stage of this study, in order to ensure that there is no bias or error in the data coding and analysis sections, the researcher invited members of the drawing research field of this team to help the researcher double check. For example, review these materials, including field notes, periodic reports, translated data and recorded videos, to see if there are biases or ambiguous coding. Team members provided thoughtful and constructive feedback on any inquiries.

3.4.6.3 Data Translation

All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and thoroughly checked by members of the Picture Book Smart Teaching Project team. The interview transcripts were then returned to the interviewees for review and revisions. The researcher took utmost care to ensure that the interviewees' privacy was respected and that only the information they wanted to share was included in the research. Lastly, the transcripts were carefully worded based on feedback from the three main interviewees, guaranteeing that the data was precise and comprehensive.

It is important to note that all participants in this study spoke Mandarin, so the data was initially translated and coded in Chinese. The researcher translated it into English initially. In order to guarantee the precision and correctness of

this translation, the researcher requested the help of a professor and a lecturer from the School of Foreign Language at the researcher's university. Both translators hold doctoral degrees in English Language Teaching, and they worked together to ensure that there were no omissions of crucial information or inaccuracies in the original transcripts. After careful consideration and cross-verification, the translation that was ultimately selected for this study was the version that all three translators agreed upon.

3.5 Research Process

3.5.1 Preliminary Preparation

Prior to conducting research, the researcher visited the preschool to determine the class in the selected preschool that would be focusing on. During this visit, the researcher took the time to familiarise with both the preschool teachers and children. Establishing positive relationships with observation participants is a critical skill that a researcher must possess before entering the observation site (Pole & Morrison, 2003). The researcher then engaged in discussions with the preschool teachers to gain insight into their activity goals, picture book selection, teaching plans, and so on.

3.5.2 Data Collection

Step 1: Conduct semi-structured interviews with teachers before drawing lessons.

During these interviews, the researcher aims to understand teachers' attitudes towards using picture books to teach drawing, their plans for incorporating picture books into their lessons, their psychological preparations, and their anticipated challenges and strategies for addressing them. Interview

questions can be found in Appendix D.

Step 2: Chat with children before drawing lessons.

Based on conversing with children to learn about their attitudes towards learning to draw through picture books. The researcher tries to find out whether the children enjoy using picture books to learn how to draw.

Step 3: Observing as an assistant teacher

This involves gathering information on the teachers' choice of picture books, the content and method of teaching drawing with picture books, children's performance in drawing lessons, and how picture books can be used to develop creativity and multiliteracies.

The researcher entered the classroom to be observed as an assistant teacher, intending to make it easier for the children to accept the presence of a "stranger" in their environment. Although the researcher participated as an assistant teacher, she had no specific teaching responsibilities. Her tasks primarily involved preparing drawing paper for the children before drawing class, distributing coloured pens, and cleaning up afterwards—activities that were unrelated to actual teaching. Most of the class time, the researcher was sitting at the back or side of the classroom to observe the proceedings.

Step 4: Collect children's drawings from drawing lessons taught with and without using picture books.

Step 5: Chat with children after drawing lessons.

Through the conversation, the researcher collected feedback on children's experiences, thoughts and what they learned from using picture books to learn how to draw.

Step 6: Conduct in-depth interviews with drawing teachers after drawing lessons.

The researcher collected teachers' feedback on using picture books to teach drawing, their experiences with the approach, and any challenges they encountered during the lessons. Interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

In contrast to step 1, which emphasises the interviewee's overall attitude, planning, and psychological preparation, this step is centred on feedback and the challenges associated with the specific use of picture book methods. Combining step 1 and step 6, it offers a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' experiences and feelings from both macro and micro perspectives. Furthermore, while step 1 captures general opinions and sentiments, step 6 delves into specific usage experiences and feedback. This interplay between the two sets of data enriches the research, making it more comprehensive. Ultimately, step 1 lays the groundwork by providing the researcher with preliminary insights and background information, while step 6 builds on that foundation to explore further. The integration of both semi-structured interviews results in a more in-depth and detailed analysis.

3.5.3 Coding and Data Analysis

In this stage, the main objective is to organise and analyse data through qualitative research methods. Qualitative research involves using the researcher to thoroughly explore social phenomena in natural settings, employing various data collection techniques, and using induction to analyse data and interpret the behaviour and significance of the research subject through interaction (Liu, 2017). Qualitative researchers typically utilise inductive qualitative coding to uncover patterns and identify categories based on a deep understanding of the data, following widely accepted coding procedures (Mihas, 2019; Celik et al., 2020; Mezmir, 2020; Timmermans & Tavory, 2022). This study employed the qualitative data analysis methods of Pole and Morrison (2003) and Woods (2005) to code and analyse the data.

3.5.3.1 Organising Data

The initial step involves reading through the data and filtering out any irrelevant information. For example, the data that the interviewees mentioned in the interview are not relevant to this study, such as dance, drama performances and so on. The filtered data is then renamed using the “time+name+data type” format. Next, the data is carefully reviewed, and detailed notes or impressions are written down to assist in determining which pieces of information are valuable. Lastly, the selected information is compiled into Microsoft Word documents, indexed, and renamed “time+name+data type+initial ideas”.

3.5.3.2 Open Coding

During the initial coding stage, the qualitative data underwent inductive coding. Open coding is used to decompose research data, understand the differences and similarities between each part of decomposed research data through inspection and comparison and calibrate and conceptualise its connotation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through this process, each component of the research data was presented conceptually. As the analysis progressed, additional concepts were identified through open coding. Similar concepts about a specific social phenomenon were combined to form categories.

In order to design a codebook, the researcher analysed and categorised data from the first two interviews of three preschool teachers (a total of six interview transcripts), identifying common themes. This initial six interviews data, along with the theme list, was then reviewed by a member of the Picture Book-Smart Teaching Project team for a second round of coding. The focus was on clarifying any ambiguous or high-inference themes, with any disagreements resolved through discussion until a consensus was reached. The final codebook and corresponding transcripts were then presented to the chief of the Picture Book-Smart Teaching Project research team for review. Both the team leader and the two coders acknowledged that the codebook could be revised and expanded at any time, with new codes added during subsequent coding. NVivo (v. 12) was utilised during this stage. Due to time constraints, the researcher separately coded the remaining qualitative data in two rounds,

with a two-week interval in between.

The open coding work of classroom observation data started on September 6, 2022, with the first focused on a girl named AN(1). AN(1) is a cheerful and active student who is not afraid of unfamiliar teachers, including the researcher, a new assistant teacher in the class. However, after a week, the researcher discovered that AN(1) is the daughter of a teacher in this preschool and is more familiar with the environment than the other children. The second child of open coding was BM(2), another cheerful girl who frequently offered to assist the teacher with organising drawing materials during lessons. While coding AN(1) and BM(2), CY(3) was selected. CY(3) is a more introverted student who likes to share her drawings with teachers.

The researcher then selected DL(4) and EK(5), two male students from the class. Finally, the researcher focused on FJ(6), CY(3)'s desk-mate and flat neighbour. FJ(6) likes to bring picture books from home to the preschool, even if they are not needed for lessons.

During the open coding stage, the principle of openness was maintained when coding other data materials, such as handwritten notes. This allowed for the presentation of as many potential concepts as possible, resulting in a total of 32 concepts related to children's literacy in using picture books to learn drawing. These concepts include hesitation, emergence of new words, fluency, evaluative language, repetitive language, imaginative language, language of thinking during the drawing process, unclear expressions, detailed description,

expressive narration, and so on.

In addition, there are a total of 77 concepts related to children's drawings in using picture books to learn how to draw, such as unusual drawing details, meaningful patterns, imitating, smooth lines, empty pictures, confident expression, rich colours, colour modelling, colour matching, generalisation ability, multiple perspectives, and so on.

Lastly, there are 68 concepts related to problems encountered by preschool teachers when using picture books to teach drawing. These concepts include the selection of picture books, introduction of teaching methods, appreciation of picture books, selection of drawing tools, use of comprehensive materials, classroom experience, problem setting, classroom evaluation, evaluation feedback, individual guiding principles, knowledge limitations, ability to use picture books, skill application, student differentiation, teacher experience, picture book extension, and so on.

After conducting 14 weeks of classroom observation, it was found that there were no new insights regarding children's literacy and creativity. Additionally, interviews with three main preschool teachers were coded and compared with data from six non-main preschool teachers, but no new concepts were discovered. According to Strauss & Corbin's (1990) theory, the research data had reached saturation. As a result, the open coding was completed on July 16, 2023. The qualitative data was then inductively coded, generating a total of 179 codes, which were classified into four categories

(Table 3.5).

Table 3. 5 Four Categories in Open Coding

Number	Category	Number of Themes
1	Children's literacy	32
2	Children's creativity	77
3	Teachers' perceptions of teaching drawing by using picture books	2
4	Problems encountered by preschool teachers	68

3.5.3.3 Pattern Coding

The next crucial step in analysing qualitative data involves identifying relationships and connections between categories. This stage is essential to the research process, as it elevates the analysis and interpretation of data to a conceptual level. In ethnographic research, coding focuses on discerning patterns and order in the data, ensuring the research is rigorous (Saldana, 2021). Patterns, sometimes referred to as “models”, play a similar role (Pole & Morrison, 2003). During this phase, researchers rearrange the themes identified through open coding and thoroughly verify the relationships between them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Pattern coding is a commonly used method, but it has been criticised for relying on the researcher as the coding instrument (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to address researcher bias during pattern coding to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the study. Researcher bias may arise from their background, experience, expectations, or emotional predispositions, all of which can influence coding decisions and the final analysis. To minimise

this potential impact, the following provides a detailed explanation of specific rationales and steps for addressing researcher bias:

Firstly, the researcher conducted a comprehensive literature review before commencing pattern coding. This involves meticulously gathering and studying literature from relevant fields to gain a profound understanding of the research topic. Simultaneously, it is important to take note of coding methodologies and potential bias issues highlighted in the literature to avoid them in this research. By examining and referencing literature from relevant fields, the researcher can acquire insights into past coding practices and theoretical frameworks, thus laying a more thorough and impartial foundation for the coding process. This approach assists researchers in pinpointing potential sources of bias and making necessary adjustments to the coding methods.

Secondly, consideration of theme frequency and similarity is an important aspect of data analysis. By analysing theme frequencies and similarities, the researcher can identify patterns and trends in the data without being influenced by personal biases. This study coded the data based on the actual distribution of the data rather than relying solely on subjective judgment. For example, the researcher conducted manual calculations to analyse the frequency and similarities of themes in the data. This involved calculating each theme's number and proportion of occurrences, and then identifying similar themes using methods such as cluster analysis. The results of these analyses serve as a

basis for formulating coding rules to ensure the objectivity of the coding process. The purpose of doing so is to ensure the objectivity of the coding process.

Thirdly, the researcher's experience. Although experience may bring bias, the researcher, as an experienced teacher, can better identify nuances and potential problems in the data. Drawing from past experiences, the researcher utilised them to develop the accuracy and consistency of the current coding work. As an experienced drawing teacher, I can leverage my extensive professional knowledge and hands-on experience during the data encoding process to accurately discern subtle nuances in colour, brushstrokes, composition, and spatial relationships in drawings. Additionally, this expertise enables a deeper interpretation of the emotions and symbolic meanings embedded in the artwork.

Finally, collaborate with members of the Picture Book Smart Teaching Project team for review and discussion. This collaborative approach develops the credibility and objectivity of the study. These members include two university professors and two associate preschool directors with extensive expertise and experience. After I finished editing the data, I invited two of them to help me to check if my data analysis is free from bias and errors. Their valuable input and suggestions on coding rules, data analysis, and interpretation help the researcher identify and correct potential bias issues. It should be noted that they are not the Chief of the Picture Book Smart Teaching

Project, nor did they participate in my doctoral research.

In summary, the study identified four key concepts related to children's literacy, as outlined in Wang's drawing-speech development correlation theory (1996): flexibility, diversity, completeness, and richness of expression. Additionally, according to Guilford's theory of creative abilities in the arts (1957), this study identified three concepts related to children's creativity: flexibility, fluency, and originality. The research also uncovered challenges faced by preschool teachers during the teaching process in three timelines: before, during, and after drawing lessons. Refer to Table 3.6 for further details. The pattern coding process was concluded by August 27, 2023.

Table 3.6 Pattern Coding Results

Theme	Children's Literacy	Children's Creativity	Problems Encountered by Preschool Teachers
Concept	Flexibility of expression	Flexibility	Before drawing lessons
	Diversity of expression	Fluency	During drawing lessons
	Completeness of expression	Originality	After drawing lessons
	Richness of expression		

3.5.3.4 Interpretation and Writing

Upon completion of the steps above, the researcher documented the process in writing, with the intent of sharing the findings with others. The purpose of this stage is to show the "story" of classroom observation and interviews in order to construct the research results. The first task in this stage

is to identify the main storyline. For this research, the focus is on how picture books can be used in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity. The main storyline is then divided into two short stories: one from the perspective of preschool children, which is preschool children's performance of literacy and creativity through learning by picture books in drawing lessons, and the other from the perspective of preschool teachers, which explores the challenges they face in helping children to develop literacy and creativity through picture books in drawing lessons. The second short story is an extension of the first, with a main focus on understanding the challenges and problems that preschool teachers encounter. Throughout the narrative, various themes are explored, all of which are connected to the main storyline, and the correlation between them is thoroughly described.

The results of selective encoding of the two short stories are as follows:

Story 1: Preschool children's performance of literacy and creativity through learning by picture books in drawing lessons

Story 2: Challenges that preschool teachers face in helping children to develop literacy and creativity through picture books in drawing lessons

In the writing process, the following items were paid attention to:

1. It is necessary to ensure that the use of ethnography accurately reflects the reality of classroom activities, conveys the meaning behind them, and explains the processes involved.

2. When writing about data collection results, it is essential to follow the

timeline of events and provide context about the classroom activities. Logical connections between events should also be emphasised.

3. To provide a holistic, immersive description of observations and interviews that captures the dynamic nature of the classroom.

4. Ethical considerations should be taken into account in the writing process. The presentation of drawing activities in this study inevitably involved the main body of classroom activities: teachers and children. Handling ethical issues in the writing process is an essential yardstick for measuring the success of writing (Han & Yan, 2022). Ethnography writing should hide the true information of the subject of class activities as much as possible (Liu, 2021). If it is necessary to present it, permission from teachers, children, and their parents should be obtained. Table 3.7 offers an overview of the research procedures.

Table 3.7: Research Procedure

	Step 1 Data collection	Step 2 Data coding and analyzing	Step 3 Interpretation and writing
September, 2022	√	√	
October, 2022	√	√	
November, 2022	√	√	
December, 2022	√	√	
January, 2023	√	√	
February, 2023		√	√
March, 2023		√	√
April, 2023		√	√
May, 2023		√	√
June, 2023		√	√
July, 2023		√	√
August, 2023		√	√
September, 2023		√	√
October, 2023			√

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The success of qualitative research is influenced by the rapport established between the researcher and participants. As such, it is crucial for researchers to exercise caution in several key areas, including the ethical norms governing their interactions with participants and how they ensure fairness and responsibility. While ethical considerations may vary depending on the level of disclosure involved in the research, it is important to recognise that a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible, as scholars hold differing opinions on the matter.

In this research, Chen's (2023) ethical standpoint was adopted. When it comes to ethical and moral issues in practice, adaptability is key, and it's impossible to establish fixed rules and norms beforehand. As a result, the most important thing for researchers is to remain conscious of ethical and moral concerns that may arise, to be able to identify them quickly, to understand their responsibilities, and to take appropriate measures to address them. With this in mind, the researcher ensured full respect for participants' rights and privacy throughout the data collection process, with a particular emphasis on the following points:

Firstly, it is important to approach the research situation flexibly and appropriately based on the circumstances. When reaching out to preschool teachers for this study, the researcher was mindful of their concerns and sensitivities towards the goals and intentions of the research. Even though there had been prior contact with some teachers during a two-week visit to the

preschool, they still had questions and expressed hesitancy. The researcher addressed their concerns by honestly and simply explaining the purpose and intention of the study. As the relationship between the researcher and preschool teachers grew stronger, more details about the research were gradually introduced.

Secondly, respect and commitment to participants. In order to achieve this, the researcher in this study took several measures. In the beginning, the researcher contacted each preschool teacher in advance to solicit their opinions and tried to accommodate their preferred time and location for the interview. During the interviews, the researcher made sure to obtain audio or video recordings only with the approval of the interviewees. The researcher also assured these preschool teachers that the data collected would be used solely for personal use and would never be made public. In addition, the final research results will be presented anonymously to protect the identity of these preschool teachers. If a preschool teacher was found to be in a difficult or complex mood, the researcher immediately cancelled the recording and instead used handwritten notes. Through these efforts, the researcher found that by fully respecting and understanding the preschool teachers, they could establish a closer and more relaxed rapport, which led to more meaningful information being conveyed.

Thirdly, conducting fair and objective evaluations of participants and data collected in qualitative research is essential. The aim is to reflect the actual

situation of the participants while removing any subjective impressions or judgments of the researcher. As the researcher interacts with participants of varying personalities and temperaments, it's essential to avoid taking positions that may lead to biased evaluations. Instead, the researcher should strive to maintain an objective and fair evaluation throughout the study. This approach ensures that both participants and data materials are evaluated objectively and fairly.

Fourthly, since the study includes interacting with children, photography, audio recordings, and using their drawings, obtaining explicit parental consent is essential to meet ethical standards when conducting research with young participants (below 18 years old). Given the large size of the class, comprising 56 children, the researcher and the preschool headteacher organised a meeting with the children's parents. During this meeting, the researcher thoroughly explained the research's content, objectives, methods, risks, benefits, and measures for protecting information. The researcher also provided opportunities for face-to-face questions and emphasised the importance of confidentiality, ensuring that parents clearly understood their rights and the procedures for revoking consent. This study was conducted with the full understanding and voluntary consent of all children participant's parents. Throughout the research period, the researcher maintained open communication with parents, providing timely updates and safeguarding the rights and interests of participants. After the conclusion of the research, the

researcher committed to sharing feedback with parents about the findings. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure transparency in the research process, respect the rights of parents, and protect the well-being of young participants.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology, detailing the process of ethnographic data collection and analysis. The data was organised and coded through four stages - organising data, open coding, pattern coding, and interpretation and writing - resulting in an explanation of the performance of using picture books in drawing lessons to develop preschool children's literacy and creativity. It also highlights the challenges faced by preschool teachers in employing picture books as a teaching tool in drawing lessons.

This chapter delves into the results section of this research, presenting how preschool children's literacy and creativity were developed through picture books in drawing lessons. Qualitative description mainly describes the meaningful "story" that occurred in the drawing classroom.

Additionally, this chapter discusses the problems and challenges preschool teachers encountered when using picture books to teach drawing. According to the teaching process, the problems and challenges are divided into three stages for discussion: before drawing lessons, during drawing lessons and after drawing lessons. It is important to note that this study investigated the

problems and challenges faced by drawing teachers within the overall framework of using picture books to teach drawing in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity. In other words, the problems and challenges encountered by preschool teachers discussed in this study are only part of all the problems encountered in using picture books to teach in preschool. These challenges are only related to how to develop children's literacy and creativity by using picture books to teach in drawing lessons.

4.2 Preschool Children's Performance of Literacy and Creativity Through Learning by Picture Books in Drawing Lessons

4.2.1 Children's Literacy

Wang (1996) proposed children's drawing-speech development correlation theory when studying the relationship between drawing and language development of children and adolescents aged 1-18 years old. He highlighted that drawing is considered a form of figurative written language, particularly during early childhood (3-6 years old) when figurative thinking is predominant, effectively supporting language development. It's important to understand that preschool children cannot yet read and write using words. Instead, for 3-6 years old children, literacy encompasses a combination of various languages and drawing. Through multiple languages and drawings, preschool children can articulate their ideas and thoughts. Thus, the concept of literacy in this study encompasses diverse non-textual forms (Larson, 2006), such as body language, oral skills, and expression of emotions, and drawing to convey meaning.

4.2.1.1 Flexibility of Expression

The flexibility of expression is a crucial aspect of developing children's literacy. It reflects their capacity to adapt language content and form according to various situations and needs during communication, ultimately enhancing their ability to achieve effective communication outcomes. This adaptability not only assists children in expressing themselves more clearly in social contexts but also develops their literacy.

In this study, the flexibility of expression is primarily explored through two aspects. First, the content expressed in the language. The content of children's language expression demonstrates how they select appropriate topics, details, and perspectives to convey information based on their needs. They might modify the content of a story, adjust the level of detail in their descriptions, or choose specific vocabulary depending on the age, interests, and comprehension levels of their audience. For instance, when narrating an adventure story to peers, they may emphasise action and adventurous elements, while when sharing the same story with their parents, they might focus more on emotional and detailed descriptions.

Second, the form of language expression illustrates children's ability to utilise various vocabulary, sentence structures, intonation, and nonverbal cues (such as body language, facial expressions, and vocal modulation) when communicating. They may adapt their pace, volume, and tone in response to situational changes, thereby capturing the audience's attention more effectively

or conveying specific emotions. Additionally, children might employ rhetorical devices like metaphors and personification to make their expressions more vivid and engaging.

The Complete Narrative--Storyline

This study characterises a complete narrative as a comprehensive and vivid storytelling of a story through the seamless integration of words, drawings, and storyline in children's picture books. When explaining a complete story, children's picture books combine the text, pictures, and flexible dialogues in the book to describe the entire story, combining them well and making the story both comprehensive and interesting. Additionally, the storyline is described in this study as the main clue that conveys a story from the beginning to the end. It establishes the fundamental structure of the story, guiding the reader or listener to engage with the protagonist's experiences and adventures. By studying the complete narrative through the incorporation of dialogue, visual and drawing content, as well as language expression forms from picture books, children can develop their ability to use imaginative descriptive language in their daily conversations. These descriptive languages highlight children's vivid imagination and distinct perspectives. They bring the imagined world to life through various forms of literacy, including drawing and body language. Additionally, these expressive forms reflect children's observations and perceptions of the world around them. They skillfully blend everyday occurrences with fantastical elements to craft captivating stories and scenes. For instance, the girl CY refers to in the subsequent text shares her

“love” for her mother both before and after class. Before learning by using picture books in drawing lessons, children’s language expression forms were mainly based on factual descriptions. However, after engaging in drawing lessons that utilised picture books, the children began to incorporate similar language expression forms found in the picture books into their conversations. These forms often included imaginative descriptive sentences, and the content they learned from these picture books had a lasting influence on their daily conversations. Even if picture books are no longer used for intensive learning after drawing lessons, the usage of imaginative descriptive language still has a long-term influence on children’s performance in their daily conversations and subsequent lessons. The research data analysis indicates that the complete narrative of a picture book has a significant role in children’s literacy, particularly regarding their imaginative descriptive language and ability to convey their imagination through drawings. This influence is not limited to the description of picture book content during drawing lessons but extends to the imitation of the picture book’s content in conversations outside of the classroom.

During a conversation with the researcher before one drawing lesson, girl AN mentioned that she was not interested in the picture book (“*Guess How Much I Love You*”) that the drawing teacher was going to use. She explained that she had already read it with her mother a week before and found it unappealing. “My mum and I read this (picture book) last week...it is just about

a little bunny and her mum, they both love each other.”

The girl, CY, was sitting quietly on her small chair. When she was asked about which rabbit loves the other more, the little rabbit or the mother rabbit, she replied, “I don’t know. I haven’t read this picture book yet”. Her desk-mate, the boy FJ, became interested in the conversation and happily said, “I think the little bunny loves his mum more”, and “I just love my mum more”. When the researcher asked the children, “How much do you love your mum?” most of them remained silent, but a few whispered, “I love my mommy very much”.

During a drawing lesson, the teacher took on the role of a mother rabbit using a mother’s voice and instructed the children to act as baby rabbits, engaging in an imitated dialogue.

During this lesson, the drawing teacher read this picture book to the children. She emphasised the expression of love in the story and asked for two volunteers to show how the baby rabbit and the mother rabbit express their love. She encouraged the children to imagine and create new content based on the story and asked them questions such as “What new method did the baby rabbit come up with when she was defeated by its mum?” and “Do you have any new methods?” The teacher then assigned a drawing exercise to the children, asking them to draw how they would express their love for their mother.

During the drawing lesson, the girl named AN showed great attentiveness and interest in the activities. Her participation in the class was exceptionally

high this time. Additionally, the girl named CY and the boy named FJ mimicked a mother rabbit and a baby rabbit jumping to determine who had more love.

After this drawing lesson, the girl AN was asked if she liked the picture book. She nodded excitedly and imitated the jumping posture of the mother rabbit in the book. She exclaimed, “I can jump higher than my mum because I love her more!”

In the drawing of girl CY, there is a big red love heart on her drawing paper. There is a small pink love heart inside the big red love heart, and there are many tiny pink love hearts around the big red love heart. She explained, “This big red love heart belongs to my mummy, and this small one belongs to me. My love heart cannot compare with my mummy’s because hers is too bigger than mine. I have many small red love hearts. I can add up to a bigger love heart, and when they are added together, it’s bigger than mommy’s, so I love my mummy more” (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1: Girl CY's Drawing

During a chat that occurred after a drawing lesson, a boy named FJ expressed his realisation to the researcher that he loved his mother very much. He explained that his love for her is greater than nine apple paper cuts.

Three weeks later, during another drawing lesson, the teacher asked the boy EK what his father looked like. EK replied, “My dad is as tall as a pile of apple paper cuts”.

Sentence Patterns--Expression Form

Sentence patterns pertain to the various ways of articulating thoughts or conveying meaning. In this study, however, the term does not refer to the typical speech of children, but rather to the changes in their expression as they learn to draw through picture books following drawing classes. Research indicates that the transformations in children's expressions are predominantly reflected in their speaking styles. By engaging with the language found in picture books, children acquire new ways to express themselves, allowing them

to incorporate these novel sentence patterns into their everyday conversations.

Before the drawing lessons, most children in the chat used simple oral language, such as short sentences or even single words. For example, Regarding the question, “Do you have any good friends?” girl BM replied with “Many”, girl CY said, “Two”, and boy FJ loudly exclaimed, “XXX” (who is a boy in their class).

During this drawing lesson, the teacher read the picture book “I Have Friendship to Rent” to the children. She then set up activities to imitate the language used in this picture book. She used a toy gorilla she had brought to class earlier and placed it in the middle of the classroom. The teacher asked the children, “Who would like to rent the toy gorilla’s chat time?” The children then interacted by using language similar to that used in this picture book. For instance, girl AN asked, “Gorilla, can I rent your friendship for an hour? Can it be cheaper?” These sentences were taken from the story plot in the book, where a little girl rented the friendship of a gorilla for an hour. When paying, the little girl asked, “Can it be cheaper? I only have one yuan (RMB)”.

When girl AN returned to her seat, she accidentally stepped on girl BM’s shoes. However, girl BM did not feel any pain. She then said, “It’s strange. It doesn’t hurt at all”. This sentence is an imitation of this picture book. Girl AN tried to help girl BM wipe off the black footprint on her white shoes, but she could not. She also imitated the dialogue from this picture book, sighing, “It’s strange. Why can’t I wipe it off?”

During the break in the drawing lesson, FJ was chatting with another boy when a third boy (who was not the main focus of this research) approached and asked why FJ had left without finishing his drawing. “I didn’t snatch your blue watercolour pen. You haven’t finished drawing yet, but why did you leave?” FJ explained that he had not left, then the two boys laughed and continued drawing together. This interaction reminds the researcher of a line from this picture book where a character says, “I don’t want to take money from Mimi, I am going to treat her to cookies, but why did she leave?”

Following their drawing lesson, the children started to mimic the language used in this picture book and began creating their language innovations. However, mastering these sentence patterns requires consistent practice and extension beyond the drawing lessons. If they do not continue practising constructing new sentence patterns, children will quickly forget how to use them in conversations.

One week later, during one drawing lesson, the girl BM was accidentally touched by another girl while helping the teacher distribute coloured pens. The sentence “It’s strange, it doesn’t hurt at all”, which was imitated from the picture book by her in the last drawing lesson, did not appear. She simply told the girl that she had been touched and reassured her that it was okay and didn’t hurt.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the content of picture books used in drawing lessons can increase children’s imaginative description,

thereby guiding children to broaden their thinking and imagination in response to problems, which can exercise children's imagination ability and imaginative description language in their literacy. The ability of imaginative description can be used even after the lesson, and without continuous exercise it can still have a lasting influence on children's performance in their literacy. On the contrary, the sentence pattern conversion methods that children learn by following the expressions in picture books will soon disappear in children's literacy performance if they do not receive continuous intensive training after drawing lessons. In other words, without constant reinforcement training, children cannot maintain the new sentence pattern learned from the picture books for a long time. Diagram 4.1 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

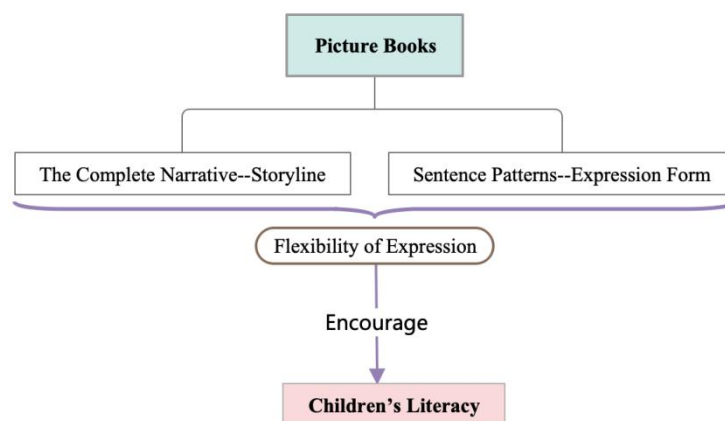


Diagram 4.1: The Elements about Flexibility of Expression in Picture Books That can Develop Children's Literacy

4.2.1.2 Diversity of Expression

The concept of diversity of expression encompasses the vast array of forms and structures found in natural languages, each with its own unique set of grammatical rules and vocabulary. Furthermore, there are distinctions between various languages, such as Chinese, English, and French. However, this research explores children's diverse language expression after learning to draw by using picture books in drawing lessons, including body language, oral skills, and expression of emotions.

Body Language

The way children express themselves through body language can be influenced by the storylines presented in picture books. The researcher paid particular attention to the differences in children's behaviour before, during, and after drawing lessons. This includes children's attention while drawing lessons, children's literacy, their attitude towards learning through picture books, their behaviour between lessons, and their communication with peers. Data analysis indicates that before learning with picture books in drawing lessons, most children did not use body language frequently, particularly exaggerated gestures. Instead, they sat upright and waited for the teacher to start the class. Communication between children was limited to quiet conversations, with little to no body language interaction. Even when expressing emotions like happiness or anger, body language wasn't used to develop their language expression.

On DL's birthday, his mother brought a big birthday cake to this class (Figure 4.2). As DL entered the classroom, the two teachers in this class positioned the cake on the table typically reserved for textbooks, immediately capturing the children's attention. One of the teachers explained the cake's significance and announced that it would be shared after the drawing class, before stepping away to retrieve the drawing textbook from the resource room. During this time, DL received heartfelt birthday wishes from his teachers and classmates. The girl Ann and several other children extended their congratulations, but the boy EK made unkind remarks about the cake, which upset DL. Fortunately, another teacher quickly intervened, encouraging the other children to express their appreciation for the cake, which helped restore DL's cheerful mood. Soon after, the drawing teacher entered the classroom, and the drawing class officially commenced.



Figure 4.2: The Photo of Boy DL's Birthday Cake

The picture book used for this drawing lesson is “The Lion Can’t Write”. The main plot of the story is about a male lion who wishes to write a letter to the lioness to express his fondness for her. However, the male lion is unable to write, so he seeks help from various animals to write the letter for him. Unfortunately, he is not satisfied with any of the letters and becomes angry. In the end, he expresses his love through nonverbal and oral communication. During the lesson, the teacher asked the children about what they look like when they are angry. Girl AN was showing that she was angry with her hands on her hips and stamping her feet. Suddenly, boy DL began crying and could not be consoled despite the teacher’s attempts to calm him down. This incident disrupted the normal flow of the lesson, so the teacher quickly finished reading the book and set up a drawing activity with the theme “I’m Angry”.

After this drawing lesson, the teacher cut the big birthday cake for each child in the classroom. Meanwhile, the boy DL distributed each piece of cake to each child in front of the table. The children went to get it in order according to their seats. When it was boy EK’s turn, boy DL suddenly put down the cake on the table, then put his hands on his hips and said loudly, “My cake looks good!”.

Although this was a classroom episode, it made the researcher realised that boy DL was angry at the beginning but did not show his anger. He just sat in his seat silently. After reading a picture book about male lions and how his classmates show anger, he learned how to release his body language and oral

language to express his emotions.

When the researcher spoke with boy DL after the drawing lesson and asked if he enjoyed the picture book, he replied, “I like it. The male lion taught me how to show my anger”, while putting his hands on his hips to demonstrate.

In this drawing class, Girl CY drew a giant panda with its mouth open and all its teeth exposed (Figure 4.3). She explained that the panda was angry because there was no bamboo. On the other hand, Boy DL drew a picture of himself with an angry face. When the researcher looked at his drawing, he explained that he had drawn himself and was angry because the boy EK had said his cake was not good. He pointed at his drawing and asked the researcher if he looked very angry in his drawing. After chatting with the researcher, Boy DL appeared to relax a lot.



Figure 4.3: Girl CY's Drawing

After six weeks, the boy DL got angry again because of the messy watercolour pens in one drawing lesson. This time, he did not put his hands on his hips as he did previously. Instead, he silently went back to his seat and expressed his frustration. It seems that the ability of using body Language to express can not long-term influence children's diversity of expression if they do not receive sustained and relevant training after drawing lessons.

Oral Skills

The language used by the protagonist in a story in picture books has a direct impact on children's oral skills. Picture book stories often feature short and easy to understand language, making it easy for children to imitate and retell. After participating in drawing lessons, children can share the story with family or friends, reinforcing what they have learned through oral practice and enhancing their expression skills. Additionally, the characters in picture books often go through a range of emotions, such as joy, sadness, and anger. These emotions are conveyed through oral skills, offering children a model for emotional communication. As children engage in the learning process, they can learn how to use oral skills to express their emotions, thereby strengthening their emotional communication abilities.

The previous part mentioned a drawing lesson where a boy named DL was dissatisfied with the evaluation of his birthday cake by another boy named EK. Before the lesson, DL sat on his little chair with his head down, feeling angry. However, he learned to express his emotions better by imitating the male lion's expression in the picture book. He learned how to use body

language and oral skills to express his anger. When he met EK again during the cake distribution process, he used the sentence patterns used by the male lion in the picture book which is “I’m so mad, I’m really mad”. He changed it to “I’m so mad. I really don’t want to give you my birthday cake”.

Two weeks later, boy FJ finished his drawing and was excited to show it to his teacher in one drawing lesson. However, in his hurry to show it, he accidentally broke his drawing. FJ got angry and exclaimed, “I’m so mad! I broke my drawing. I’m really mad”.

Five weeks later, girl AN needed to use a red watercolour pen during a drawing lesson, but unfortunately, another girl was using it. AN could not get hold of the pen and got upset. She exclaimed, “I’m so mad, I’m really mad”. Although she did not put her hands on her hips, the sentence was identical to what the male lion had said in the picture book.

Expression of Emotions

Children can develop their confidence in daily conversations by mimicking the emotional expressions and language of characters in picture book stories. Analysing the data indicates that most children do not use exaggerated expressions when conversing before learning by using picture books in drawing lessons, and they do not typically use exaggerated language in their daily conversations. However, when picture books cover how to express emotions, children can be influenced to incorporate these expressions into their communication, leading to increased confidence in their drawings and daily conversations.

During one drawing lesson, the teacher used the picture book *“How Do You Feel”* to teach the children how to imitate exaggerated expressions. As the class started imitating the funny expressions from the book, the children became more active and started making faces. However, one student, Girl CY, is very quiet and reserved. Usually, she does not like to laugh and speak softly and avoids eye contact. In this drawing lesson, she did not participate in making faces with the rest of the class. However, towards the end of the lesson, the teacher suggested that everyone make happy faces. To everyone’s surprise, the quiet girl CY raised her chin with a smile and joined in. After completing her drawing, she proudly showed it to the teacher. Her drawing was a huge smiling mouth with many children inside, each of them smiling.

After the lesson, when the researcher chatted with her, she kept smiling. When asked if she was happy, she nodded vigorously and answered with a big smile, “Yes, I am very happy! All of my drawings are of happy children. I can’t wait to take it home and show it to my mummy”.

However, nine weeks later, the teacher organised all the children in this classroom to celebrate the girl CY’s birthday and to sing the happy birthday song to her. Although she was very happy, she did not imitate the expressions of exaggerated language in the picture book to express her feelings. The other children in the class also appeared to have forgotten how to use these exaggerated expressions to convey their emotions.

The analysis above reveals that the body language, oral skills, and emotional expressions of the protagonist in a picture book can significantly influence children's daily conversations. It can assist children in expressing their emotions in various ways, improving their confidence, and promoting the flexible use of sentence patterns in daily communication. By imitating the protagonist's body language, children learn to express emotions non-verbally. By mimicking the protagonist's oral skills, children learn to express emotions by changing sentence patterns. By imitating exaggerated emotional expressions from the protagonist, children exercise their expressive confidence in daily communication, enhancing their literacy. However, only the influence on children's oral skills can persist without practice. Body language and emotional expressions require continuous practice after lessons to avoid forgetting to use these diverse language expression methods. The reason for these differences occur may be that children's oral skills, due to their frequent use in daily life and extensive language environment support, can often persist and be consolidated without additional practice. In contrast, due to body language and emotional expressions relatively low frequency of use and lack of the relevant environment created by using picture books in class, children tend to forget to use these diverse forms of language expression after class. Diagram 4.2 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

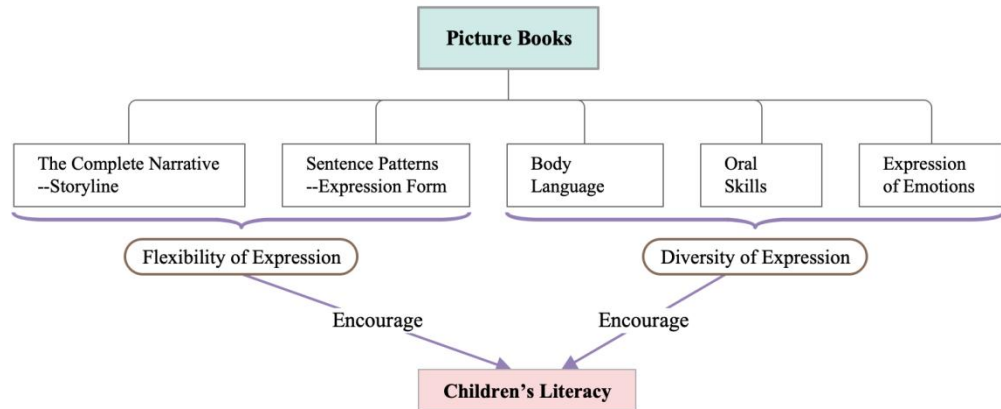


Diagram 4.2: The Elements about Diversity of Expression in Picture Books That can Develop Children's Literacy

4.2.1.3 Completeness of Expression Sentence Patterns

Completeness of expression in communication requires children to possess not only the fundamental components of sentences, such as subjects and predicates, but also to ensure that their sentence structures are complete and capable of conveying information. For instance, when a child expresses, “I like this toy”, they construct a complete sentence that includes the subject “I”, the predicate “like”, and the object “this toy”, effectively articulating their preferences. In the process of achieving clarity and completeness, children must organise their language and think logically, which develops their cognitive abilities and fosters creativity.

The sentence patterns used in picture books are thoughtfully chosen to assist children in developing a strong language foundation and enhancing their expressive skills. Simple, easy-to-understand sentence patterns often appear in picture books, such as “This is...”, “He is doing...”, “She likes...”. By repeating these patterns, children can better remember and comprehend them, enabling

them to imitate and use them in their daily lives to articulate their observations and emotions.

Additionally, picture books contain descriptive sentence patterns such as “This apple is red and very sweet” or “The kitten’s fur is soft, and it is playing”, which help children learn to vividly and concretely describe the characteristics and behaviours of things in their surroundings.

Furthermore, picture books illustrate various emotional expressions like “I am happy”, “I am sad”, and “I am angry”, which assist children in recognising and understanding emotions and expressing their feelings using language. As children’s language skills improve, picture books gradually introduce connectives and transitional sentence patterns such as “then”, “because”, and “so”, helping children to organise their thoughts and make their expressions more coherent and structured in daily conversations.

Correct sentence patterns are essential for clear communication. Data shows that young children often mimic their teachers’ short imperative sentences, such as “bring the book” or “bring the water”, without fully understanding and grasping the word order rules. Teachers can use picture books to help children comprehend these basic rules more easily.

One morning, before the drawing lesson, the teacher asked the children to line up for a drink of water. She instructed them to hold their water cups and called out to some children to come forward quickly and join the line. “hold the water cup”, “Come here quickly”, and “Come and line up”. After drinking

water, the children returned to their seats and started chatting. Some discussed the cartoons they had watched the day before, while others talked about their breakfast. Boy FJ was recounting his experience from the previous night to girl CY. They both found it funny and burst out laughing. Boy FJ said, “It’s funny, my mum”. “Go over there, come back, hold it”, and “laughed a lot, we”.

The teacher used the picture book *“I Like Books”* in today’s drawing lesson. When reading the picture book, the teacher particularly emphasised the word order rules of the sentences displayed on each page of this picture book, “I like weird books. The first word the little monkey used here was ‘I’; the little monkey talked about himself and said he liked it. What does he like?” The children said in unison, “Weird book”. The teacher continued, “So, when we talk, we must first say who your protagonist is, and then say what he or she wants to do”. “Now, let’s see this sentence, listen, ‘want to eat candy’, please guess who wants to eat candy?” The boy EK said, “It’s me”, and the girl CY said, “It’s you, the teacher”. The teacher replied, “Why does everyone talk about different people? Did we say the protagonist of this sentence? Who is the protagonist?”, “If I want to eat candies, what should I say in the right word order rules?” the girl CY said, “The teacher wants to eat candies”.

During their chat after this lesson, the children naturally put into practice the word order rules they had learned from the protagonist in the picture book. For example, they used the correct order of subject, predicate, and object. Boy FJ took his drawing and said to the researcher, “Look at the eyes on my

drawing; I like these eyes very much” and “These eyes look like my mum’s eyes”.

A week later, on a rainy day, boy FJ wanted to give his teacher an umbrella and said, “Umbrella, here, for you” and “Get wet, you will”. He seems to have forgotten how to use the word order rules he learned a week ago.

To sum up, the sentence patterns used in picture books provide children with rich language learning materials. By imitating and practising these sentence patterns, children can express themselves more completely in daily conversations and improve their language expression and social skills. However, the findings indicate that mastering word order rules requires consistent practice. Otherwise, children will find it challenging to use them skillfully in their daily conversations, which could limit their literacy development.

Story Plot

Picture books are an excellent way to teach children to observe and describe things from different perspectives. The storylines in picture books can show the same event from various angles, which can help children improve their ability to explain things completely. For example, in the picture book “*Why Don’t You Flower*”, Little Bear’s non flowering radish did become a delicious meal for Little Rabbit’s family. By learning to describe the same thing from different perspectives, children can improve their completeness of description of the things they observed, thereby enhancing the completeness of their expression. This completeness is reflected in the comprehensive

description of their drawings, for instance, the girl An mentioned in the following text described the sun from different perspectives in her drawing. The influence of the sun is explained in different parts of her drawing.

When the teacher used the picture book “*Why Don’t You Flower*” to teach in the drawing lesson, the teacher analysed this page in the picture book from different perspectives (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4: One Page in Picture Book “ Why Don’t You Bloom”

“ A strange thing happened on the ground. The little bear found a flower seedling in the garden but it did not bloom. In order to make it bloom, the little bear watered it every day, held an umbrella to protect it from the sunshine, said hello to it in the morning, and said good night to it in the evening. But no matter how carefully it was taken care of, the flower seedling just wouldn’t

bloom”. Meanwhile, “In the underground, a rabbit discovered a huge carrot growing at home, and the rabbit family began to enjoy the carrot feast... until they were too full to move hardly”. “ Later, the little bear pulled up the flower seedlings that did not bloom and found out that the flowers had fallen over”. After that, the teacher guided the children to draw a big sun and asked them who would like the sun and who would not.

In the drawing made by the girl named AN, there is a yellow sun in the centre of her drawing paper, along with small flowers, a big green tree, and butterflies at the top of the paper. Below the sun are raindrops, caterpillars, and a dough. She explained her drawing in this way: “Flowers like the sun because grandma said they can only bloom on sunny days”, “Big trees like the sun because we can sit under them to enjoy the coolness during summer”, “Butterflies like the sun because they love to fly under it”, “Rain does not like the sun because when the sun comes out, the raindrops disappear”, “Caterpillars do not like the sun either, as their home is under the ground”, “Donuts also do not like the sun. Last time, my donut melted under the sun, and the chocolate melted and soiled the floor”.

In this drawing class, the girl not only learned to use the subject-predicate-object structure to present complete sentences, but also learned the causal sentence patterns repeatedly used by the drawing teacher when explaining this picture book to express her views.

However, this ability to observe and describe things from multiple

perspectives in drawing only lasted for this lesson. In the following drawing lesson, most children reverted to drawing from a single angle.

Through the above analysis, it is clear that children can develop a grasp on basic word order rules from picture books sentence patterns, such as subject-predicate-object, by using picture books during drawing lessons. These can promote the completeness of children's language expression, thereby improving children's literacy. However, if the lessons on word order rules are not reinforced outside of class, children may quickly forget what they learned. In addition, the story plot of picture books can train children to observe and describe things from multiple perspectives. This can assist children in improving their completeness of description. This is also regarded as an important condition for improving children's completeness of expression in their literacy. Unfortunately, this ability to observe and describe from multiple perspectives can not last long in children's literacy performance. It requires persistent practice after drawing lessons. Diagram 4.3 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

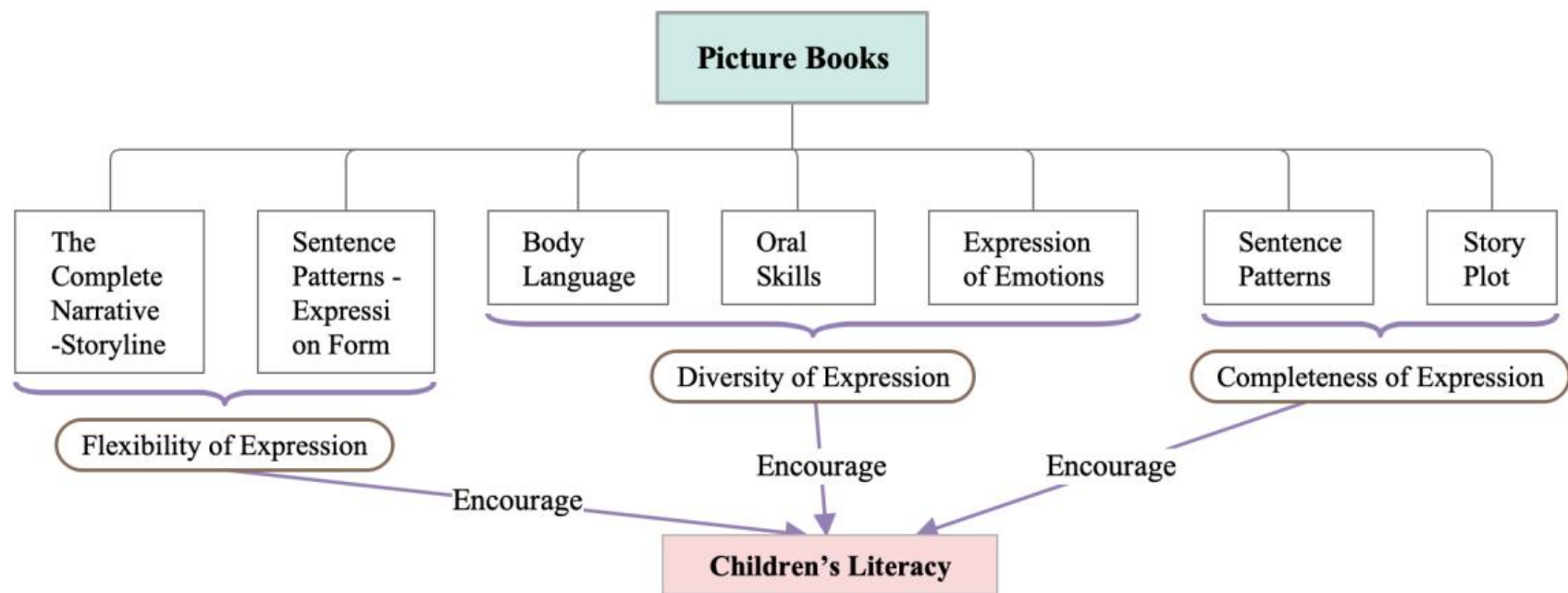


Diagram 4.3: The Elements about Completeness of Expression in Picture Books that can Develop Children's Literacy

4.2.1.4 Richness of Expression

There are words and phrases in picture books, particularly the adjectives and adverbs. By learning the use and expression of these words and phrases, children will benefit from their vocabulary development. Rich words and phrases can develop children's literacy performance. Thus, enriching children's words and phrases plays an extremely important role in promoting the development of children's language ability. The more words and phrases children master, the more active words they can use in their daily conversation, and the better their literacy will develop.

Words and Phrases--Vocabulary Development

Preschool children's literacy requires to be built on the basis of vocabulary. Only by mastering enough vocabulary can preschool children express their thoughts and feelings accurately. Therefore, preschool teachers should help the children accumulating vocabulary in a variety of ways.

The picture book was used in today's drawing lesson is "*What To Do When You Grow Up*". There are many words from this picture book that children can hardly come into contact with in daily life in their place, particularly with their local dialect, such as "big whale", "mane", "field", "four oceans" and so on. After reading the picture book together, the teacher began to guide the children to draw. This lesson's classroom drawing exercise was a theme drawing, which is "What will you do when you grow up".

A large area of blue appeared in the drawing of girl AN (Figure 4.5). When she explained her drawing, she said, "...when I grow up, I want to work

in the sea...”, “I want to see what is at the end of the sea.” She used the new word “end”, which learned from this picture book.

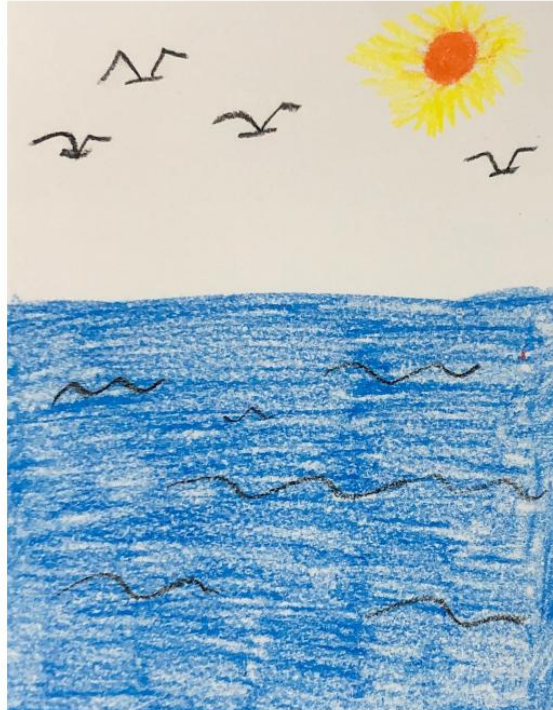


Figure 4.5: Girl AN's Drawing

A blackboard and three books were showed in the drawing of girl BM. She said, “I want to be a teacher”, “I want to share all the funny things with my classmates in my childhood.” She used the word “share” which was used in the picture book.

Through analysis of the data, it was found that children can master the vocabulary which learned through picture books in drawing lessons for a long time. Even if there is no continuous vocabulary training after drawing lessons, these vocabulary words can be well remembered by children after a few

months.

In the first week of November, when the teacher pointed to the lion's mane in drawing lesson and asked, "Who can tell me what this is?" No child responded. The children didn't seem to recognize the word "mane". The teacher thereupon explained the word by using this picture book. Eight weeks later, on the day of the preschool anniversary ceremony, the teachers prepared graduation dolls for the children. The boy DL held a little lion and said, "Look, this lion's mane is so beautiful." He still remembered the word "mane" which learned in the drawing lesson three months ago. This indicates that children have accumulated rich vocabulary through picture books, and these vocabulary will be remembered by children for a long time.

Using picture books in drawing lessons can not only increase children's vocabulary, but also help children better accumulate adjectives and adverbs. One day, before the drawing lesson, the researcher asked the girl CY, "Do you want to stand up and tell the children a story in this class? Your drawing teacher needs one volunteer to tell a story during today's lesson." The girl CY immediately shook her head and said, "No". When the researcher asked the reason, there is no specific reason was given by girl CY. Nevertheless, her desk-mate boy FJ said, "I know why" and "She is afraid of talking", then girl CY replied immediately, "Not afraid". But she never gave a reason why she did not want to tell a story to everyone in the drawing lesson.

The picture book used in this drawing lesson is "*Be Brave to Express*

Yourself". There are many adjectives and adverbs in this picture book. When the teacher talked about the word "shy", she drew a little girl's face on the blackboard, and then used the red colour to fill the face. "The little squirrel is shy, and the little bear said that the squirrel's face has turned red...children, we can learn from the little bear, what happens when you talk with shy?", Boy DL used the words "hemming and hawing" to answer, the girl AN said the word "coy". In addition, the teacher also emphasised the adverbs used in the picture book, "The little squirrel is shy, how can she tell her mum that she wants to be brave?", the girl BM said, "quietly". All the words, such as, hemming and hawing, coy and quietly, were presented in the picture book they used in this lesson.

After this drawing lesson, when the researcher was chatting with the children, Boy FJ came over and told the researcher, "I know why the girl CY did not want to tell stories to everyone. She is shy when she speaks." The girl CY herself added, "I will quietly become courageous." In this lesson, the children also learned how to use some new adjectives, such as "beautiful", "courageous" and "novel".

However, through analysis of research data, it was found that if these adjectives and adverbs that children learn through picture books in drawing lessons are not continuously trained after class, children will stop using them in their later conversation.

One day after three weeks, a girl in this class wore a beautiful skirt. The

girl AN had been looking at the skirt with envy. When the researcher asked, “Do you like this skirt? Why?”, she replied, “very nice”. The researcher reminded “Is it beautiful?” She replied, “Yes, yes, I forgot how to say this word...”.

Through the above analysis, it can conclude that the vocabulary in picture books can not only help children better express their views in their daily conversation, but also help children accumulate vocabulary and increase their confidence in expression, thereby improving literacy for children. However, if keeping in remembering and using these words in children’s daily conversation, they need to continue to practice memory for these newly learned words, especially adjectives and adverbs. Diagram 4.4 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

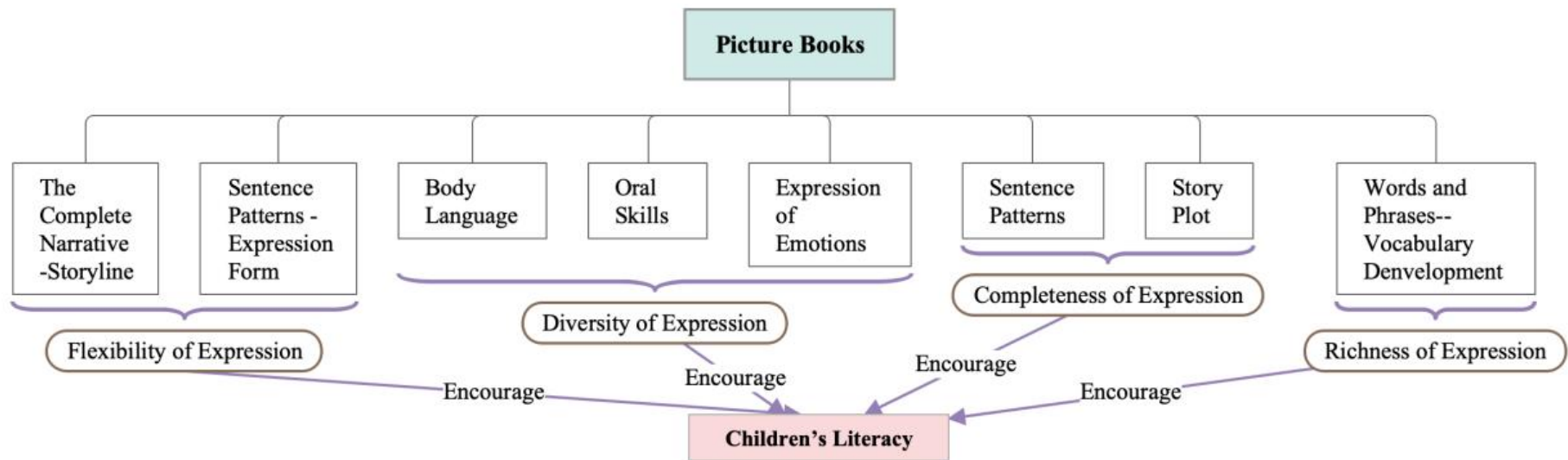


Diagram 4.4: The Elements about Richness of Expression in Picture Books that can Develop Children's Literacy

4.2.2 Children's Creativity

Creativity is an original thinking activity that is meaningful to society and others. Examples of individuals with exceptional creativity include Edison, Galileo, Newton, and Beethoven, who have made significant contributions to human society. However, creativity is not solely measured by the greatness of one's achievements. The ability to transform ordinary materials into exquisite products as a skilled craftsman, design a stunning building as an architect, or create colourful drawings through children's imaginations are all forms of creativity.

Extensive research on creativity has been conducted by Guilford (1957). In this study, children's creativity in their drawings was coded using Guilford's coding method for children's creative abilities in the arts. According to Guilford, the core of creativity is divergent thinking. The behaviour exhibited by divergent thinking represents a person's creativity, which has three characteristics: flexibility, fluency, and uniqueness (Guilford, 1957). This study focuses on identifying elements in picture books that can develop children's creativity by analysing their performance in drawing lessons and the drawings they create after using picture books to learn drawing.

4.2.2.1 Flexibility

According to Guilford's Theory of Creative abilities in arts, creativity is characterised by three primary features: fluency, flexibility, and originality (Guilford, 1957). This study explores the connection between children's flexibility in drawing and flexibility in thinking in picture books. It aims to

understand how these two characteristics influence each other and contribute to the development of children's creativity.

The flexibility in drawing is mainly reflected in three main aspects. The first is the variety of material selection. Children can use various materials when drawing, such as coloured pencils, watercolours, oil pastels, and so on. Each material has its unique expression effect, requiring children to adjust their usage strategies during the drawing process flexibly. The second is the breadth of the creative theme. The themes of children's drawings can involve daily life, natural landscapes, fantasy worlds and other fields. This wide range of creative themes requires children to have a rich imagination and flexible thinking. The third is the innovation of expression techniques. When children draw, they can try different expression techniques, such as the thickness of lines, colour matching, and light and shadow processing. All of these require children to have high flexibility and creativity.

The concept of "flexibility in thinking" in this study refers to the degree of flexibility in children's intellectual activities, specifically manifested as their ability to solve problems from multiple perspectives, directions, or aspects using different methods. This includes the flexibility of the starting point of thinking, that is, children can draw inspiration from different elements in picture books to start creating; The flexibility of the thinking process refers to the ability of children to flexibly adjust and optimise their thinking paths in drawing; And strong ability to generalise and transfer knowledge, skills, or

experiences from picture books to one's drawing. At the same time, when the original way of thinking cannot solve the problem, children can actively change their thinking and reconsider the problem from other perspectives, which is also a manifestation of the flexibility of thinking transformation. Therefore, flexibility in thinking not only helps children unleash their creativity and imagination in drawing, but also promotes the development of their logical thinking, problem-solving, and innovative abilities.

The potential to improve children's flexibility in drawing is complementary to the flexibility in thinking in picture books. Improving the flexibility in drawing can stimulate children's imagination and creativity, providing them with more inspiration and materials in drawings. Concurrently, developing flexibility in thinking in picture books can nurture children logical thinking, providing them with clearer and more organised ideas during the drawing process.

Preschool teachers can develop children's drawing flexibility in preschool drawing lessons through picture books. After thoroughly analysing research data, this study concluded that picture books could be used in drawing lessons to improve children's drawing flexibility in three aspects: the ability to incorporate the composition design — multiple visual perspectives, setting representational skills—the connection between objects, as well as colour tone and colour combination.

The Composition Design--Multiple Perspective of Visual Representation

Picture books are valuable for developing children's thinking of consider things from every angle, as they offer multiple perspectives on a story. Preschool teachers can utilise these diverse perspectives to develop children to think critically and analyse connections between ideas. This approach fosters broad and deep thinking, cultivating creativity and enhancing their ability to consider multiple perspectives.

During one drawing lesson, the drawing teacher used the picture book "*Good News, Bad News*". This book only contains the words "Good news" and "Bad news". The teacher guided the children in identifying good and bad news throughout the reading session. For example, the book tells the story of a rabbit and a mouse who decided to have a picnic under a big tree. Suddenly, an apple falls from the tree and hits the mouse's head. The teacher then asked the children who encountered the good news and who encountered the bad news. Girl AN correctly answered that the mouse encountered bad news because its head hurt from being hit. Boy EK pointed out that the mouse was crying in the drawing, indicating that it was bad news for the mouse. Meanwhile, boy DL recognised that the rabbit was holding the apple happily, indicating it had good news.

The teacher prompted the students to approach the problem from multiple angles. "Children, look at this page. A lot of apples fell down from this tree. Besides the mouse and rabbit, who else may be affected, good news and bad news?" The room fell silent for a moment before the teacher added, "Only one

apple hit the mouse's head, but so many apples have fallen here. Who else might be hit?" after this question, the class immediately became live and active. Girl BM chimed in, "The ground will be hit. It has received bad news". Girl AN added, "The feet of the big tree will be hit and hurt. The big tree has received bad news." The children continued to contribute actively and enthusiastically, suggesting, "There was an apple on the picnic blanket. It was also hit." "The grass on the ground could be hit too.", and even imagining other possible recipients of the apple shower, such as "the little ants on the ground will also be hit", "the ant's home will also be hit", and "the picnic food they brought was also hit".

Upon completing the picture book, the teacher picked up a lollipop prop and posed a question to the children, "Do you think the lollipop represents good news or bad news?" Without hesitation, most of the children answered, "Good news". The teacher then assigned a drawing exercise for the lesson, encouraging the children to consider how others, including small animals, may perceive the lollipop differently. "Take a moment to draw your interpretation of whether the lollipop is good news or bad news," she instructed.

In Figure 4.6, girl CY created a drawing featuring a large mouth with teeth that have bugs crawling on them. Adjacent to the mouth was a cheerful depiction of herself. When asked about her drawing, she explained that she received good news because she likes lollipops, while her teeth received bad news because the bugs would eat them. Figure 4.7 featured a drawing by the

boy FJ, which showcased a big lollipop with flowers on the bottom and little bees on the top. Boy FJ explained that the small flower had bad news because it could not stand up under the weight of the lollipop, while the bees received good news because they could collect lots of nectar from the sweet treat. This exercise in interpreting picture books allowed the children to learn how to analyse things from different perspectives.



Figure 4.6: Girl CY's Drawing



Figure 4.7: Boy FJ's Drawing

Even though the children in the drawing lesson quickly learned to think from multiple perspectives, they may not use this skill to draw if they don't receive ongoing training after class.

In one drawing lesson two weeks later, all the children were instructed to draw with the topic "You Got a Box of Candy". Despite the teacher suggested children to think creatively about different ways to convey this drawing theme, most of the children still only drew happy face with candy box. It was interesting to note that all drawings were presented from the same perspective (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.8: Children's Drawings with the Theme of "You Got a Box of Candy"

Setting Representational Skills--The Connection between Objects

Picture books are a wonderful medium where each page displays a unique drawing. Drawing, as we know, involves composition and the relationship between objects. As children study the relationship and composition between each object in picture books, they can hone their analytical skills and develop a flexible design approach in drawing composition. This, in turn, nurtures their creativity and unlocks their artistic potential.

During the classroom discussion of the picture book *"Flying Hat"*, the teacher drew attention to a particular page (Figure 4.9) and asked the children, "Have you noticed the bridge in the picture?" Girl AN responded by saying, "Yes, the boy is chasing his hat across the bridge." When the teacher asked how they knew it was a bridge, Boy DL pointed out the water below it.

Meanwhile, Boy EK excitedly added, “And there is a fat man rowing a boat in the water!” Girl CY chimed in, “It’s a small river with small fish and a mummy duck. You can only stand on the water if you’re on the bridge.” Girl BM observed, “There are snowflakes in the sky above the bridge.”

After listening to the children’s answers, the teacher concluded, “We saw small fish, small boats... and knew that this was in the river, and then, there was a sky with snowflakes floating on it, so even if this bridge is different from the ones we have seen, we can still know, it is just a bridge.” The teacher then explained to the children, “When we draw in the future and come across an object we don’t know how to draw, can we represent it by expressing the relationship between other objects?” To illustrate this point, the teacher gave an example.

“Teacher: Now, please draw summer on paper

Child 1: Summer is a word, I can’t write it

Child 2: How can I draw summer?

Teacher: Children, please think about it. What are there in summer?

The children answered: Watermelon, fan, ice cream.....

The teacher used this example to help children understand the relationship between objects and images, inspiring them to use imagination and simple common objects to describe abstract concepts, thereby developing their creativity.”



Figure 4.9: One Page in the Picture Book “Flying Hat”

At the end of this lesson, the children eagerly shared their drawings. One drawing which was picked as the outstanding drawing by the drawing teacher was created by girl CY, who drew a circle with boots and a duck wearing boots beside it (Figure 4.10). When asked about her drawing, she explained that she wanted to depict a mud puddle but struggled with drawing it. Instead, she drew boots capable of stepping in mud puddles, as she was confident in her ability to draw boots.

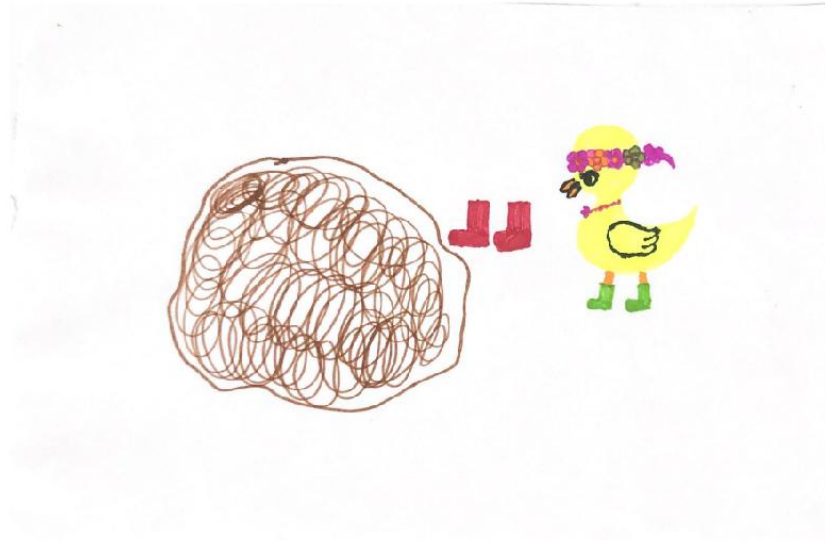


Figure 4.10: Girl CY's Drawing

This lesson effectively exercised the children's analytical skills when drawing. However, the data analysis shows that without continued practice, it is challenging for children to showcase their analytical abilities in their artwork.

Two weeks later, during another drawing lesson, boy DL struggled to start with his paintbrush in hand. The teacher asked if he needed assistance, to which he replied, "Teacher, I can draw biscuits, but how do I draw delicious biscuits?" The teacher reminded him to think about how he feels when he eats delicious cookies, and he responded with "happy". Despite this, he still found it challenging to draw happiness. He added, "But I can't draw happy either."

Colour Tune and Colour Combination--Colour Matching

Picture books with rich and vibrant colours can help children express their feelings using different colours. With colour training, children can not only improve their drawing skills but also learn how to convey their emotions

through the use of colours.

The picture book “*Wings of color*” recounts the adventures of a calf and its friend a bird who journeyed from their lush green meadow to a world bursting with hues. As they traversed the dark night, they beheld white snowflakes, and later, they marvelled at the blue sea... During a lesson, the teacher used this book and asked, “What do these colours remind you of in your daily life?” and “Select your favourite colour and create a shape based on your imagination.”

One of the girls, AN, drew a red shape (Figure 4.11). She associated red with peppers, apples, and balloons. When the teacher approached her, she inquired, “How do I draw a fire?” Meanwhile, the boy DL drew a blue shape (Figure 4.12). Blue evoked images of a river, a cup, a coat, and a slipper in his mind.

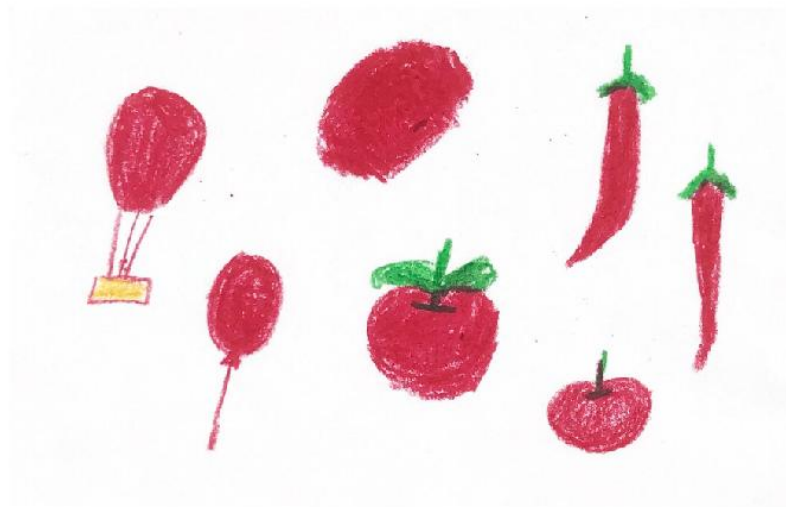


Figure 4.11: Girl AN's Drawing



Figure 4.12: Boy DL's Drawing

During her drawing session, girl CY incorporated a lot of pink elements into her drawing, such as a big pink heart, a pink balloon, and a pink skirt. However, she eventually reached a point where she felt stuck and did not know what else to add in pink. Sensing her frustration, the teacher approached her and offered some assistance. “Do you need any help?” the teacher asked. CY responded, “Teacher, I don’t know what else to draw in pink.” The teacher gave her a helpful suggestion, “What do you want to be pink? Then draw it.” Encouraged by this advice, girl CY went on to add a pink apple, a pink bear, and a pink leaf to her drawing.

When finishing this week’s first drawing lessons on Tuesday, the teacher also taught the class about different shapes and colours by showing them cut-out shapes made of colourful paper, such as a big tree, a house, and a rectangle, and asking if they could change their colours in this weeks second drawing lesson on Friday in this week’s drawing lesson. (Figure 4.13)

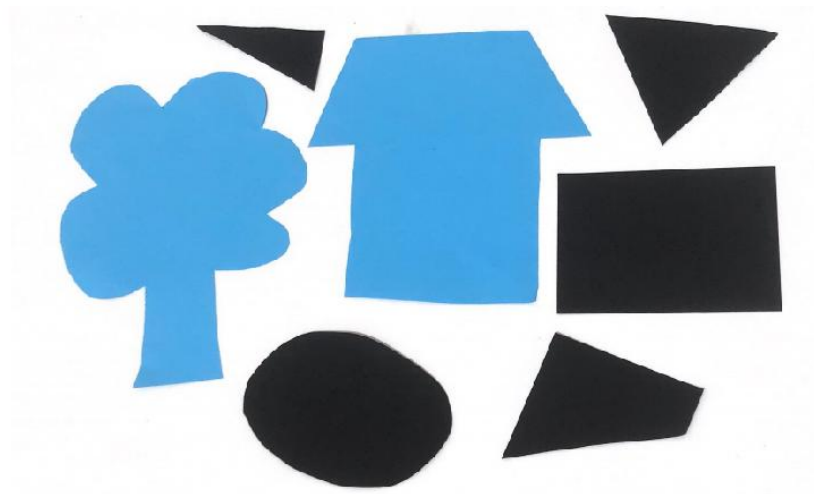


Figure 4.13: Shapes Cut from Cardboard

Boy FJ created a magnificent tree with colourful leaves scattered on the ground. Interestingly, his drawing also featured two endearing caterpillars - one blue, the other green (Figure 4.14). Boy FJ explained, “These two little buddies are inseparable. They live in a cosy black abode, hidden under the leaves.” It was only upon close inspection that the researcher noticed a minuscule black circle nestled beneath a leaf of a specific hue.



Figure 4.14: Boy FJ's Drawing

Following the lesson, girl CY eagerly presented her “Pink World” drawing to the researcher, passionately explaining each object within it. In contrast, when the researcher questioned boy EK’s drawings, which were dominated by black and dark blue circles, he expressed his discontent. He confessed to being scolded by the teacher for running around in class, leaving him unhappy, which he conveyed through his drawing.

The ability to express emotions through colour and the confidence gained in drawing from picture books will remain with children for a significant time. Children will show greater confidence in their colourful drawings even without ongoing colour expression practice during following lessons.

Two weeks later, girl CY drew another impressive piece featuring a large pink tree with colourful flowers at home. She brought her drawing to the classroom, and proudly introduced it to a teacher, she explained that the tree could bloom flowers in any preferred colour. She asked the teacher, “What colour flowers do you like?” the teacher replied, “Purple.” then she confidently added a purple flower to the tree, displaying her drawing skills with pride.

Upon analysing the data information above, it becomes evident that utilising multiple perspectives in picture book storytelling offers children the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and cultivate multiple perspectives. This, in turn, develops their creativity.

Furthermore, the relationships between different elements and objects on each page of a picture book can spark children’s imaginations and promote

their analytical abilities, as well as their flexibility in designing compositions. These are all vital components of creativity.

Additionally, the colours in picture books can help children express their emotions and increase their confidence in drawing, which is also a critical element in encouraging children's creativity. It is worth noting that the confidence gained from utilising colours to express emotions children learn from picture books can have a lasting impact on a child's drawing performance, even without consistent practice.

However, the abilities to think from multiple perspectives, analysis, and flexible composition design require regular practice after drawing lessons to maintain and improve upon. Otherwise, it is difficult for children to show these abilities again in the following drawings. Diagram 4.5 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

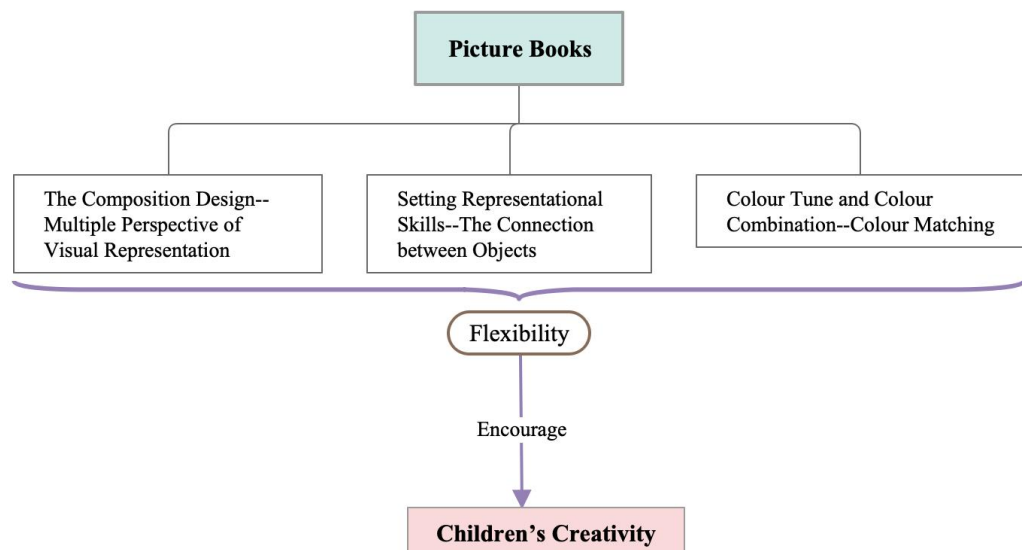


Diagram 4.5: The Elements about Flexibility in Picture Books that can Develop Children's Creativity

4.2.2.2 Fluency

Fluency refers to an individual's ability to express themselves clearly when encountering new ideas or concepts. Developing fluency can develop one's ability to think independently and explore unfamiliar topics (Guilford, 1957). Through data analysis, this study has found that picture books have the potential to develop children's ability to draw fluently, specifically in two ways. Firstly, the straightforward and logical expression involved in storytelling can promote children's ability to express themselves clearly and logically through drawing. Secondly, resemblance of the shape, especially the imagination of storyline and drawing can expand children's creativity and confidence in their artistic abilities. These factors play a critical role in developing fluency in children's creativity.

Straightforward and Logical Expression -- Clear Expression and Coherent Thinking of a Story

Despite the minimalistic composition and concise language utilised in picture books, they possess a powerful ability to convey logical storytelling through their illustrations. By learning from picture books, children can develop their expressive skills and improve their logical thinking regarding their drawings.

The picture book "*Stuck*" depicts a young boy in a predicament when his kite becomes lodged in a tree. Despite his best efforts, the young boy is unable to retrieve his kite, resorting to using a variety of creative and unconventional tactics that ultimately prove unsuccessful. For example, he tried to knock it down with his shoe, but the shoe also got stuck. After that, he tried to knock

down the kite with many things, including a gorilla, a ladder, a boat and so on. The illustrations throughout the picture book are simple yet effective, conveying the author's message that the young boy could not get the stuck kite with everything he threw.

After reading the book together, the teacher prompts the children to recall what the boy used in his attempts to retrieve the kite and challenges them to use a watercolour marker to draw the size of all the things the boy threw into the tree.

The children were given a task to draw, and the teacher assisted them in determining the size of objects thrown by the young boy. Once they completed the drawings, the teacher asked if there was a regular pattern of the sizes of the shapes they drew. Girls BM responded by saying that the objects were getting bigger and bigger. The teacher then asked why the boy was throwing bigger objects. Another girl in the class, who was not the main focus, said the young boy was doing so to quickly get his kite. The teacher then asked if the kite had been knocked down, to which almost all the children shook their heads. The teacher then asked if there was anything stuck in the tree that could help the young boy retrieve the kite. After a brief silence, girl BM suggested that the boy could climb a ladder. The teacher then asked why the ladder had not helped the boy, to which the boy EK responded that the boy had thrown the ladder into the tree instead of using it. This caused the entire class to burst into laughter. Before the drawing exercise, the teacher asked the children to

consider what they would do if they were the boy and what they would throw if they planned to continue throwing objects.

The children in the class had different ideas on how to retrieve the stuck kite. Girl AN drew a tall man on the tree with explaining that the man was her father who would help her. Girl BM drew another kite, which she referred to as a friend of the stuck kite that could assist in freeing it. Girl CY drew a group of adults and children under the tree with explaining that she would ask the grown-ups for help. Boy FJ drew a boy pushing the tree, indicating his ability to shake it and bring the kite down. Boy EK drew a yellow ball of thread, Sun Wukong, whom he planned to invite to help retrieve the kite. Each drawing demonstrated a child's logical thought process in solving the problem and presented their ideas clearly.

The finding showed that the logic of thinking about problem-solving that preschool children learned through the picture books used in drawing lessons was easily grasped by the children during the teaching process. It is interesting that the straightforward expression and logical thinking evident in their drawings have a profound and lasting influence on their performance in subsequent drawing lessons without requiring persistent practice.

During a drawing lesson two months later, the teacher posed a question to the class: "Can you visualise picking off the white clouds?" The children came up with various imaginative ideas, which they incorporated into their drawings. The resulting drawings featured ladders, adults, and multiple tools designed to

help them pluck the clouds from the sky.

In the final lesson of this semester, the class was asked to draw a hamburger. Most children's drawings are simple and straightforward. For instance, Boy DK's hamburger was depicted solely using coloured lines (Figure 4.15.) His drawing avoids excessive details and complex color combinations, and instead uses a straightforward and logical expression to present the basic form and color of the burger, with a concise and clear characteristic.

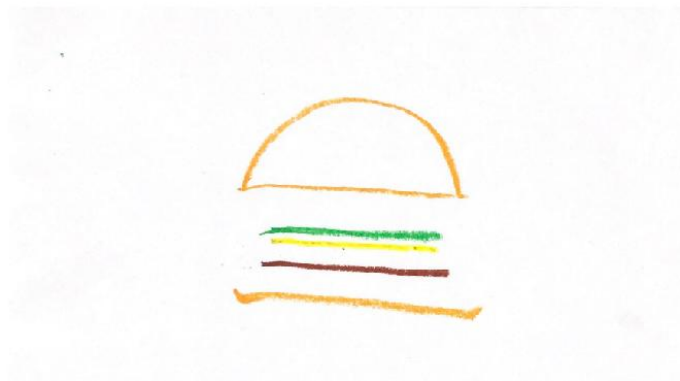


Figure 4.15: Boy DK's Drawing

Resemblance of The Shape -- The Imagination of Storyline and Drawing

An ordinary shape or drawing can become fascinating when infused with imaginative elements. Picture books, through their use of vivid colours, uncomplicated design, and daring creativity, create a captivating world for children. In addition, the imaginative storylines of these picture books develop children to make connections between disparate ideas, enhancing their associative ability and fostering their creativity.

During a drawing lesson, the teacher chose to use a picture book that the children had previously studied in Grade 1--*Little Blue And Little Yellow*. Some whispers arose in the classroom when the teacher showed this picture books. The children wondered to one another whether the teacher had made a mistake or if the lesson would be boring, such as “we have all learned it”, “Do you think the teacher made a mistake?”, “it’s boring”, and so on.

However, the teacher quickly reviewed the picture book in the beginning of this class and then drew a large yellow lemon on the blackboard, following this picture book’s content. She developd the children to imagine what the lemon could be transformed into and to draw their ideas. Boy FJ added a propeller and turned the lemon into a helicopter (Figure 4.16). Girl CY transformed the lemon into the head of an adorable kitten (Figure 4.17). And boy DL changed the lemon into a yellow fish (Figure 4.18).



Figure 4.16: Boy FJ's Drawing

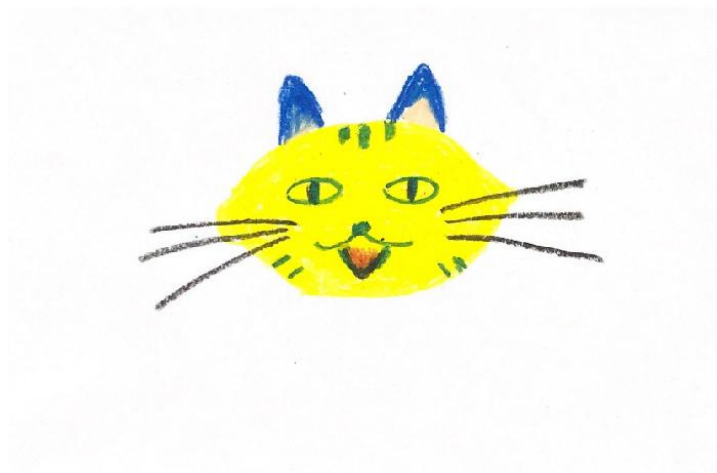


Figure 4.17: Girl CY's Drawing

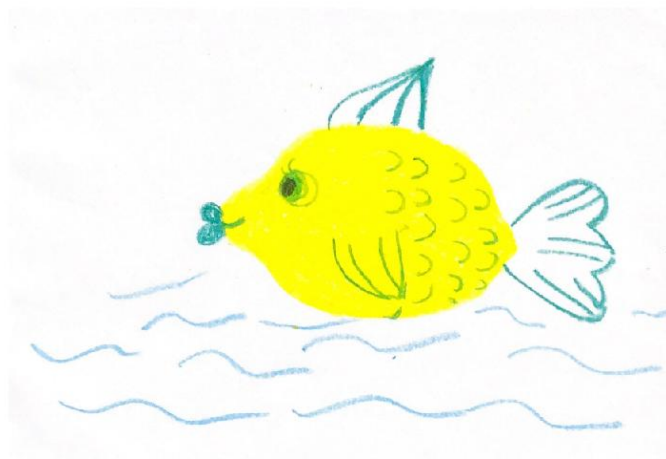


Figure 4.18: Boy DL's Drawing

The children cultivated vivid imaginations through the colourful pages of their picture books and the guidance of their teacher. Their drawings were imaginative and captivating. However, without consistent practice in subsequent drawing lessons, the impact of their rich imagination may diminish. Without regular practice, children's drawings become mere imitations of the objects depicted in the picture books. For instance, if a tree is featured in the

picture book, the tree in their drawings may resemble the picture book representation in every detail.

Additionally, when using the picture book "*Mr. Broccoli's Barber Shop*" as a teaching tool, the teacher developed the children to draw inspiration from the story's content. The resulting children's drawings were imaginative and captivating. This picture book follows the tale of Mr. Broccoli, a resident of a vegetable town who runs a successful barber shop. He uses his creative abilities to give each of his customers a unique and satisfying hairstyle. The drawing lesson's theme was "The Divergent Associations of Broccoli". The drawing teacher presented an actual broccoli to the class, allowing everyone to observe it from different perspectives and even breaking off a small piece to reveal its inner structure. With this inspiration, the children began to draw.

The children showcased their creativity during the drawing lesson by incorporating broccoli into their drawings. Girl AN drew a beautiful broccoli tree with small broccoli flowers as leaves, while Girl BM drew broccoli clouds floating in the sky. Girl CY's creation was a green broccoli handbag intended for her mother, and boy DL decorated each room of his broccoli tree house. Boy FG's drawing was a broccoli hydrogen balloon. The evaluation session was filled with confidence and satisfaction as each child enthusiastically shared their unique, broccoli-inspired masterpiece.

However, this kind of imagination ability gained through learning from the picture book can not long-term influence children's creativity performance

if they do not receive sustained and relevant imagination training after drawing lessons.

One drawing lesson after three weeks later, the tree house was mentioned in the selected picture book. However, this time, the teacher did not go into detail about the structure of the tree or develop the children to view it from different angles. As a result, when the children drew a large tree, it resembled a basic green tree, similar to what they had seen in this picture book.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that incorporating picture books into drawing lessons can have a positive influence on children's expression and logic skills. Additionally, this approach can effectively exercise their imagination and develop their confidence in their drawings. These factors are crucial for fostering creativity, which is vital for children's development. However, it is important to note that improving imagination requires ongoing training beyond the drawing lessons in order for children to master and effectively apply it in their drawings. Diagram 4.6 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

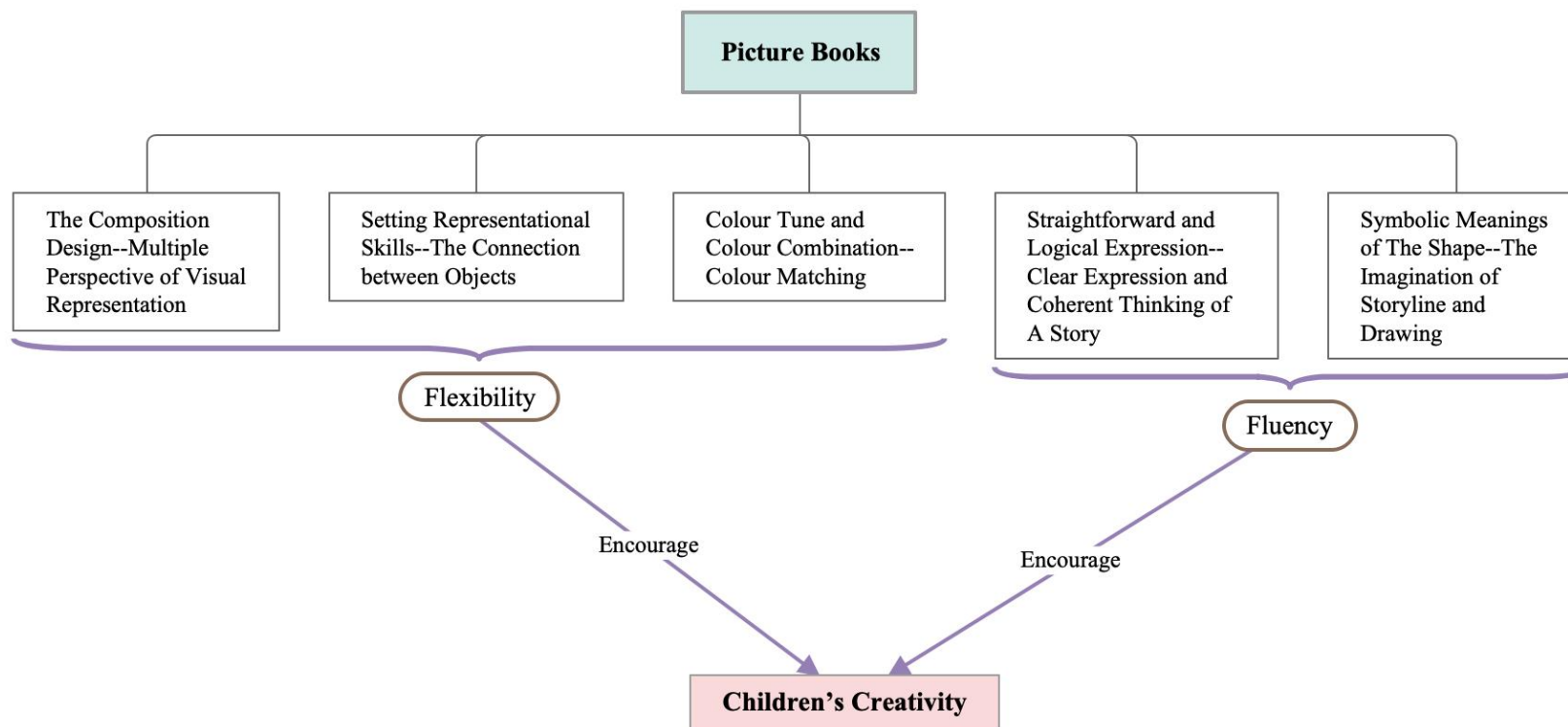


Diagram 4.6: The Elements about Fluency in Picture Books that can Develop Children's Creativity

4.2.2.3 Originality

Guilford (1957) pointed out that originality is the key and highest characteristic of analysing creativity. The analysis of children's drawings shows that originality is most evident when children are developed to approach problems from a unique perspective and pay attention to details. This approach broadens the scope and depth of children's creative thinking in drawing. Additionally, using picture books as a basis for drawing composition helps to break down limitations in children's thinking and promotes the reconstruction ability of drawing composition. This ability is a critical component of originality in children's creativity.

The Composition Design--Unique Perspective

Each picture book's drawings offer a distinct viewpoint to convey the story. Through data analysis, it has been discovered that such diverse perspectives can stimulate and expand their thinking. For instance, when a picture book features illustrations depicting stories from multiple angles, children can learn how to approach problems from varying perspectives. This fosters a broader breadth of thinking and promotes creativity among children.

In the picture book, "*I Only Love You*", a little rabbit runs away from home after arguing with his mother about chores and responsibilities, such as not cleaning his room, brushing his teeth, washing his face, and doing morning exercises. He visits many friends but finds their homes uncomfortable until he stays with his cousin, where he is more comfortable but still uneasy. Eventually, the little rabbit realised that he is homesick.

During a classroom discussion of one page in this picture book (Figure 4.19), the teacher asks why the little rabbit left the home of his friend, the little squirrel. The children quickly determined that the little rabbit could not climb the tree where the squirrel's house was located. The teacher uses this observation to teach the importance of considering different perspectives when approaching future problems. the drawing teacher said, "Climbing trees is very easy for little squirrels, but it is not easy for a little rabbit!" "When we think about problems in the future? Can we try to think about the problem from a different perspective?"



Figure 4.19: One Page of the Picture Book "I Only Love You"

For the drawing activity in this lesson, the teacher gave children the freedom to create an open-ended drawing. The teacher suggested children to image that one day, they picked up three tomatoes on the street and planned to

give three individuals. The challenge is to draw their expressions as they receive the tomatoes.

Girl CY decided to give her first tomato to her mother. She asked the teacher to help her write the following words next to the tomato: “Mummy happily said that we can have tomato and scrambled eggs for dinner.” Her second tomato was gifted to her classmate A, with whom she had a recent disagreement over a dance performance. Although she did not explain the drawing in more detail, she depicted two girls holding hands and smiling together (Figure 4.20). As for the third tomato, she placed it in a basket with explaining that perhaps the basket had lost the tomato.



Figure 4.20: Girl CY's Drawing

Boy DL gave his first tomato to his mother, who has been eating it to lose weight. He said, “My mummy has always eaten tomatoes recently. She is losing weight. If I can still pick up a cucumber, I will pick up all my mummy’s

dinner.” His second tomato was given to his puppy, whom he considers a good friend and knows loves tomatoes. The third tomato went to his father, who questioned where they came from, causing boy DL to feel frustrated with his disbelief. he said, “This is my daddy. He is asking me where the tomatoes come from. He always does not believe me.”

By analysing the various perspectives presented in picture book storylines, children can learn to approach issues from different angles, ultimately developing their a broader breadth of thinking and critical thinking skills. However, these abilities require consistent practice after the drawing lesson in order for children to effectively apply them to their drawings.

Several days later, all the children in this class participated in a drawing activity centred around the theme of “A Happy Day”. They drew together on a huge piece of white paper. While most children drew their interpretation of a happy day, one girl drew a cat’s joyful day, showcasing her unique perspective and creativity.

The Details of Drawing

Picture books often use drawing details to metaphorically illustrate the story plot, which can develop children’s critical thinking skills. In the book “*I Have Friendship to Rent*”, the teacher prompted the children to carefully observe the illustrations after outlining the main storyline about a gorilla and a little girl. She said, “Children, do you notice any small animals that appear on every page with the gorilla?” After a while, almost all the children discovered the little mouse. “There is a little mouse on every page!” “It’s a little mouse!”

The teacher then asked, “If the little girl moves away, will the gorilla have no good friends?” Boy EK responded, “But the little mouse is not his friend. They don’t play together”. To this, the teacher replied, “Maybe the gorilla hasn’t realised that he has a good friend right next to him, waiting to be discovered.”

On the last page of this picture book (Figure 4.21), the gorilla and the little mouse are shown waiting to find their next friend. The teacher concluded, “They have been waiting for someone to take the initiative to discover that they are good friends.”

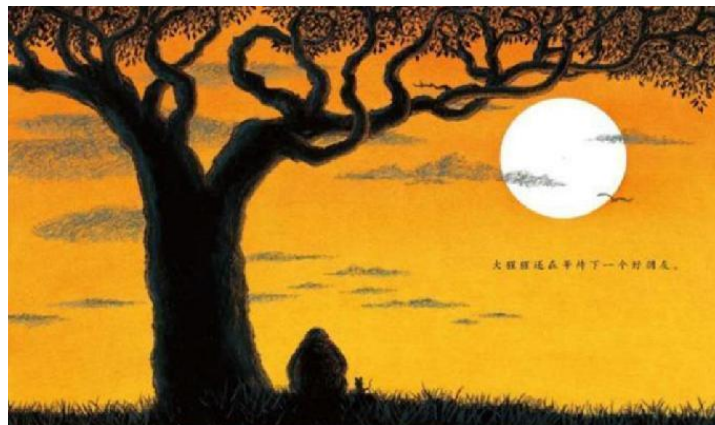


Figure 4.21: The Last Page of Picture Book “I Have Friendships to Rent”

In this drawing lesson, the children were asked to consider whether there might be hidden friendships waiting to be discovered. Interestingly, the children’s performance during the lesson differed from their usual approach to drawing. After the teacher introduced the classroom assignment, there was a thoughtful pause before anyone reached for the watercolour markers.

After the children had completed their drawings, the researcher noticed that most drawings depicted a particular boy or girl. The drawing teacher dedicated two classes to allow each child to explain the significance of their drawings. In almost every drawing, the children revealed that the protagonists in their drawings were representations of their potential friends. For instance, Girl BM explained that the girl in her drawing was one auntie's daughter who sold fried chicken. During a previous visit, the girl had secretly given her a fried fish ball, which was incredibly delicious. Girl BM decided to reciprocate by bringing her a candy she loved and asking her to be friends. This example demonstrated that the child had put a great deal of thought into her drawing and realised that the girl wanted to be her friend as well.

The Composition Design--Drawing Composition

According to the data, preschool children can develop their drawing skills by learning the techniques of drawing composition from picture books. This ability to modify and design the composition expression in their drawings helps improve their reconstructive drawing ability. This is an essential aspect that develops children's creativity.

During the drawing lesson, the teacher used the picture book "*Something From Nothing*", read the story of Grandpa and Joseph with the children, and developed them to create their own "lucky little gloves" in their drawings. After completing their drawings, the teacher connected the storyline of the little mouse family with Grandpa and Joseph's story, showing the children how two stories can be presented on one drawing paper. The second part of the

classroom exercise involved the children thinking about who else could have their “lucky little gloves” and adding a second storyline to their original drawing. The children were thrilled with this drawing lesson and did not want to stop drawing even when bell for the end of class rang.

Boy FJ drew a pair of blue gloves and included four different scenes within his drawing. In the first scene, he drew himself playing football while wearing blue gloves. In the second scene, he portrayed his sister’s teddy bear donning the gloves. The third scene featured a basketball, and the last scene showcased a blue bear. FJ explained that these gloves were magical and could produce many basketballs, which he enjoyed playing with. Additionally, the gloves could create numerous bear toys for his younger sister, who was fond of them (Figure 4.22). His initial drawing was then reconstructed into four separate drawings, each highlighting one of the scenes. It was the first time boy FJ had attempted to design a drawing in such a way, and he proudly recounted the details of his creation to the researcher after this drawing lesson.

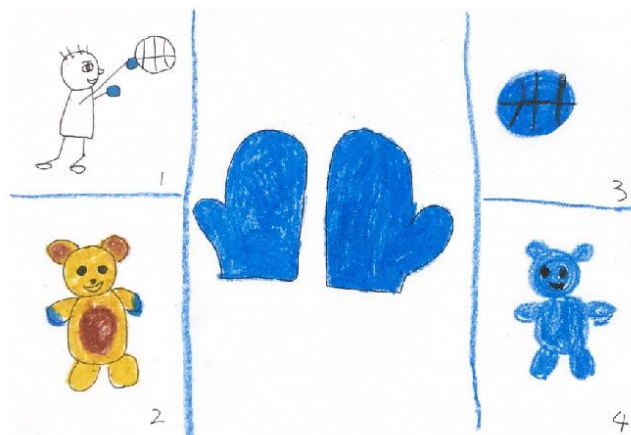


Figure 4.22: Boy FJ's Drawing

Colour Tune and Colour Combination -- Usage of Colour

Picture books offer a delightful opportunity for children to revel in the vivid hues of drawings. Through data analysis, it has been revealed that preschool drawing teachers utilised picture books in drawing lessons to teach children how to convey their feelings through colours. This approach equips children with the ability to employ vivid shades to express their emotions in their drawings, thereby enhancing their emotional expression. Since emotional expression is a crucial component of children's creativity, this approach can develop children's creativity and inspire them to explore their artistic talents.

In the colourful picture book "*The Color Monster*", emotions are depicted as little monsters that cannot be seen or touched but can be felt. This picture book illustrates that different colours can represent different emotions, such as yellow for happiness, blue for sadness, red for anger, and so on. Teachers guided children to create their "emotional bottles" by drawing their little monsters and assigning colours to represent their emotions through this picture book. After finishing their drawings, the teacher assists the children in labelling their emotional bottles with the corresponding emotions (Figure 4.23). The teacher collected all the children's drawings at the end of this drawing lesson.

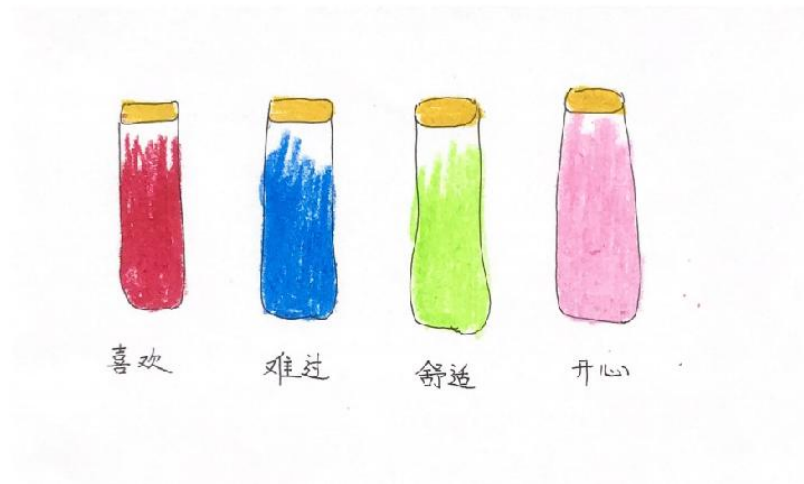


Figure 4.23: Girl BM's Drawing of Her "Emotional Bottles"

The second drawing lesson in this week is three days later. It was a continuation of the first drawing lesson. During this session, the teacher returned the drawings of "Emotional Bottles" created in the last class and introduced the theme for this drawing lesson: "What were you doing last night?"

In Figure 4.24, it shows girl AN's drawing of a green sofa and table, placed in the center of the page. As she pointed out the figures within the drawing, she explained that the woman in red clothing was her mother, who was slightly upset with her father for not removing his shoes upon entering. To remedy the situation, her mother proceeded to mop the floor. The man in white clothing is her father, who remained quiet throughout the night. At the same time, the girl herself is represented in black clothing (Due to limited drawing time in class, she did not actually draw this part on the drawing paper but instead gestured and explained it with her hands.), feeling a bit frightened due

to her parents' lack of communication. It is noteworthy that girl AN utilised various colours to convey each character's emotions in her drawing.



Figure 4.24: Girl AN's Drawing

At the centre of boy EK's drawing, there is a cheerful red dog. When asked about it, he shared, "That's my grandma's puppy. He's super happy because he had a feast of bones last night. Grandma took me to a wedding, and we brought back many bones for him to enjoy...The orange one is my grandma, and she was delighted when I told her that we could attend the puppy's wedding someday. She laughed so happily...I think she's just as excited about the wedding as I am!" boy EK used different colours to express his grandmother's emotions.

In girl BM's drawing, she still use red to express anger in her drawing (Figure 4.25).



Figure 4.25: Girl BM's Drawing of "My Angry Mum"

Through the use of this picture book, children have the opportunity to learn how to express their emotions through an array of colours. They are also able to create "Emotional Bottles" to categorise their feelings and learn to release their emotions through drawing. This encourages children to develop their expressive abilities and ultimately improve their creativity.

Based on the analysis above, picture books offer distinct perspectives that can broaden children's thinking capabilities. Moreover, the intricate details of the illustrations can prompt children to contemplate deeply. Additionally, the composition of the drawings in picture books can support in developing children's ability to reconstruct images in their drawings. Finally, children can learn to express their emotions through the use of various colours by observing the rich colour usage in picture books. Diagram 4.7 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

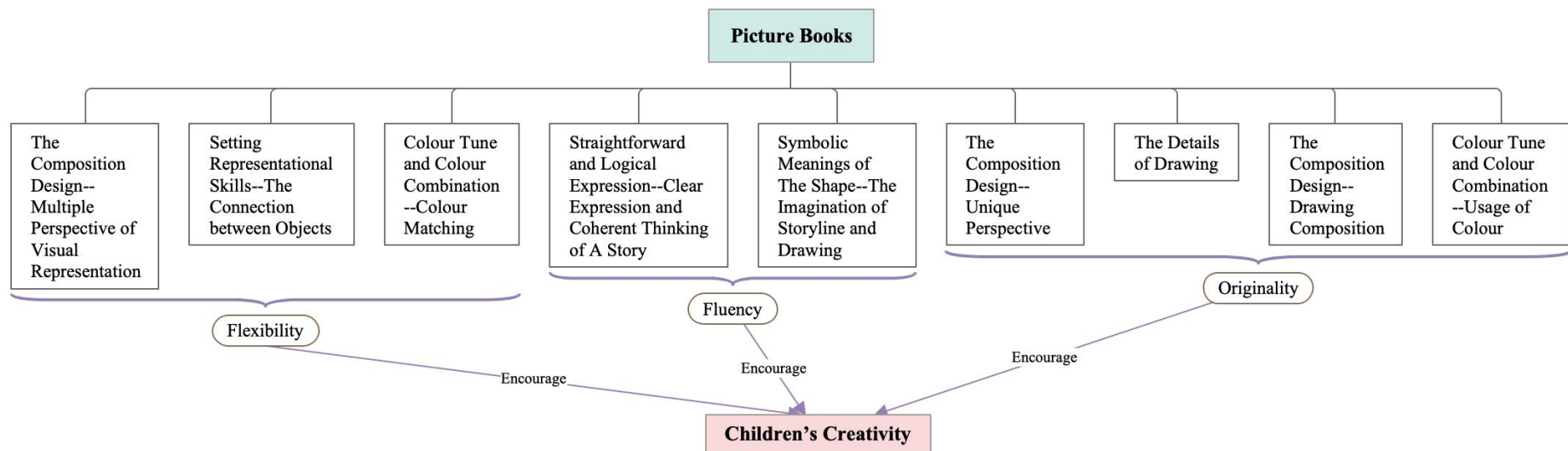


Diagram 4.7: The Elements about Originality in Picture Books that can Develop Children's Creativity

4.3 Challenges that Preschool Teachers Faced in Helping Children to Develop Literacy and Creativity Through Picture Books in Drawing Lessons

4.3.1 Before Drawing Lessons

Before drawing lessons refers to the process of teaching preparation by using picture books to teach drawing in drawing lessons. This process includes teachers' knowledge preparation and pre-teach preparation.

4.3.1.1 The Lack of Basic Theoretical Knowledge

A strong and comprehensive theoretical and professional foundation of knowledge is essential for preschool teachers. They must possess extensive knowledge of children's development, including an understanding of how children learn and grow in areas such as literacy and creativity, in order to effectively nurture and develop their diverse abilities. By understanding the development of characteristics and educational approaches appropriate for children of varying ages, teachers can provide more personalised and scientifically-based guidance for preschool children.

Knowledge about Children's Development

For preschool teachers, a thorough understanding of children's development, particularly in the area of cognitive development, is essential. By grasping the unique characteristics of preschool children, drawing teachers can expertly guide children's learning and behaviour, identify and address potential issues with their drawings, and provide targeted support through the use of picture books.

The data indicates that the limitations in cognitive ability, comprehension skills, and language expression among Grade 3 preschool children not only

impede their direct understanding of the complexities within picture book texts but also impact their logical reasoning, imaginative engagement, and semantic interpretation of storyline. For instance, during a drawing class by using the picture book “*Something From Nothing*”, the drawing teacher aimed to inspire the children’s creativity and imagination by recounting the tale of Joseph and his magical blanket that transforms into a coat. However, the children became confused about several key aspects of the story, highlighting the challenges.

In this drawing lesson, the teacher recounted how Joseph’s magical blanket, once comfortable and warm, had become worn and old. Joseph’s mother wanted to throw it away, but his grandpa transformed it into a magical coat. The children were understandably confused. Boy EK asked if the coat would be old and worn like the blanket, while Girl AN wondered why Grandpa did not just buy a new one. The teacher explained that the blanket was still magic, with some areas broken and others still good. Despite this, the children remained puzzled. Girl CY whispered to her classmate, wondering why the teacher described the blanket as shabby when only some parts were broken and why this old blanket could be made into new clothes. The teacher struggled to explain how to identify unbroken areas on a ragged blanket suitable for making a coat without prior preparation.

Boy EK’s question reflects his difficulty in distinguishing the surreal element of “magical changes” from the concept of actual use and loss of items, indicating his challenge in understanding the combination of fantasy elements

and realistic logic in the story. Girl AN's question reveals her limitations in understanding the characters' behavioural motivations and emotional values in the story, and may not fully appreciate the importance of grandpa's emotional attachment to old objects and creative expression.

Furthermore, the confusion of girl CY not only demonstrates her cognitive limitations in the concepts of item reuse and creative transformation, but also reveals her difficulty in understanding complex information (i.e. partial damage to the blanket and the possibility of overall reuse). Even though the teacher tried to explain how to visually recognise and use the undamaged parts of the blanket to make a coat, the children still felt confused, which further indicates that their ability to concretise and logicalize abstract concepts still needs to be developed.

During a semi-structured interview, teacher HU expressed her concern about selecting picture books for teaching. She mentioned that while she comes across many picture books that seem suitable for teaching, she worries if the children will be able to comprehend the hidden meanings in the picture books. To avoid any confusion, she prefers choosing picture books that are easy for children to understand.

“When I choose picture books, I sometimes find a lot of picture books that I think are suitable for teaching, but I am worried about whether the children can understand the hidden meaning of the picture books... So, in order to avoid these troubles that may be encountered in my teaching

process, I tend to choose picture books that are very easy for children to understand.” (preschool teacher HU)

Therefore, when facing children of this age group, preschool teachers not only need to have rich imagination and vivid storytelling skills to attract their attention, but also need to flexibly use various teaching strategies such as physical demonstrations and role-playing to help children overcome cognitive barriers in an intuitive and simple way, better understand the story content and its deep meaning, and effectively respond to these challenges.

Knowledge in Teaching by Using Picture Books

Effective utilisation of picture books for teaching drawing requires systematic theoretical knowledge. This ensures that preschool teachers can deliver high-quality drawing lessons. The effective integration of picture books into drawing lessons in preschools necessitates that teachers possess a systematic and comprehensive theoretical foundation. This theoretical foundation includes not only the selection and evaluation of picture books, ensuring they align with the age, interests, and developmental stages of young children, but also the ability to translate the elements found within these books into engaging practical activities for teaching drawing. Teachers should guide children to create through observation, imagination, and expression. Additionally, a profound understanding of the developmental characteristics of children’s artistic psychology is essential. This knowledge enables preschool teachers to employ scientific methods that promote the simultaneous advancement of children’s drawing skills and mental well-being. Equally

important is the mastery of teaching strategies and techniques, as teachers must design activities that are both enjoyable and inspiring, thereby igniting children's interest in drawing. Finally, a thoughtful approach to evaluating and providing feedback on children's drawing is a vital component of the theoretical framework. This process helps to develop children's drawing abilities and build their confidence. In summary, a well-rounded theoretical foundation is crucial for preschools to effectively utilise picture books in drawing education. Unfortunately, some teachers lack such knowledge, leading to subpar lessons. Data analysis reveals two main areas where teachers struggle: the lack of facilitating discussions, responding to children's questions ability and the lack of guidance on using picture books effectively ability.

In the first place, preschool teachers are concerned about the ability to interpret picture books during their lessons effectively. It has been observed that some teachers struggle to fully comprehend the content depicted in these books, which in turn can lead to either oversimplification or over-complication of the material being taught. Additionally, some teachers tend to focus excessively on the literary value of picture books, potentially overlooking the learning interests and abilities of the preschool children.

For example, During the lesson, by using the picture book of "*Miss Rumphius*", the teacher continued to emphasise this picture book's literary worth, highlighting its themes of life meaning and principles. She explained the meaning of the content, "This picture book tells a flashback story", "Making

the world beautiful is a great dream”, “Miss Rumphius is not afraid of other people’s incomprehensible words, but still working hard to sow flower seeds” and so on. Despite the lesson being aimed at preschool children, the teacher’s emphasis on this picture book’s literary value caused some children to become restless and whisper to one another. Another assistant teacher had to help restore order to the class. Unfortunately, the over-emphasis on this picture book’s literary value may have reduced the children’s overall understanding and engagement with enjoying the story, leading to a lack of interest in learning drawing.

Based on the interview data, it shows that preschool teachers may not have a thorough understanding of the emotions and themes presented in picture books, which can result in insufficient support for children in learning to draw from picture books. For example, when discussing the picture book *“I Have a Friendship for Rent”*, one teacher described the final page where the gorilla and little mouse sit on the lawn waiting for a new friend to join them. The teacher explained, “They didn’t realise that each other was actually good friends.” and “The little mouse is accompanying the gorilla and waiting for the gorilla’s new friend to appear.” One child expressed his doubts, “The gorilla and the little mouse are already friends. Otherwise, why would the little mouse wait with him?” Despite this, the teacher chose not to address the question and continued the lesson.

During the interviews, some teachers expressed uncertainty about their ability to interpret picture books for their students effectively. Teacher HU mentioned that although they enjoy picture books, they worried about striking the right balance when it comes to interpretation. Teacher HU explained that she does not want to limit children's creativity by analysing the content too deeply, but she also does not want to overlook the significance of using picture books as a tool for teaching drawing. This has left her feeling confused about the best approach to take.

“Although I like picture books, I still have concerns about interpreting picture books for children. If I interpret the content too deeply, I am afraid of limiting children's creativity. Still, if I interpret them too superficially, I am afraid that picture books will not play a role in children's literacy, especially in drawing lessons...if I analyse the drawings of picture books on each page, I am afraid that I will not have enough time. But, if I do not analyse, I think the significance of using picture books to teach drawing will not be reflected, so I got so confused about this...” (preschool teacher HU)

In the second place, it is essential to improve the literary expertise of preschool teachers when it comes to picture books. The data analysis shows that preschool teachers have insufficient training in systematic picture book literature education neither in their studying period nor in their career period, which ultimately leads to a restricted knowledge and comprehension of this

genre of literature.

During an interview, Teacher BI expressed some challenges she faced when it comes to explain the content and drawing styles of certain picture books with accuracy. This can sometimes make it difficult for her to guide children in meaningful discussions around the themes expressed in picture books before drawing practice. As a result, children may end up imitating the drawings in the books instead of being developed to develop their own creativity and literacy skills. Although the final drawings may satisfy parents, it is not necessarily the best approach for encouraging children's development.

“I don't think I can accurately explain the meaning of the content in some picture books. Sometimes, I don't even understand the drawing styles of the picture books, so I can't explain these well to children. Because of this, I sometimes cannot guide children to conduct meaningful discussions around the themes expressed in picture books before drawing practice. The final effect of this kind of teaching in children's drawings is that they draw exactly the same as the drawings in the picture books; they are just imitating the drawings in the picture books... actually, the teaching effect is not bad (laughing). Compared with children's doodles, their final drawings that imitate the drawings in the picture books sometimes are satisfactory to parents. However, it is definitely not good to develop children's literacy and creativity.” (preschool teacher BI)

Additionally, a lack of understanding of picture books may cause the

teacher to miss opportunities to guide preschool children in developing their imagination and expression skills, thereby affecting the development of children's creativity and literacy. For example, teacher HU mentioned once she used the picture book "*Miss Rumphius*" to teach, she encountered some difficulties in understanding the author's portrayal of the beautiful world of flowers depicted in this picture book.

"From the drawings, I couldn't feel the beauty of the flower world described by the author, and it was difficult for me to clearly explain in the language to children how beautiful the world of flowers is. So, when I finally arranged the classroom drawing exercises, I could only guide the children to draw a beautiful world of flowers from their views. The teaching results of this lesson were not good. Most of the children were imitating the last few pages of the picture book." (preschool teacher HU)

If preschool teachers are not proficient in understanding picture books, it may hinder their ability to conduct drawing activities with colourful picture books in drawing lessons. This could potentially limit the children's imagination and drawing expressions, which may impact their literacy and creativity development. During a discussion about her literary proficiency, teacher ZI mentioned that she had not been trained in literary achievement during her university or post-employment training. As a result, she feels unable to fully appreciate the beauty of certain picture books, including drawing forms, composition, language, and meaning. This lack of understanding also makes it

difficult for her to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the picture books to children.

To sum up, some teachers struggle with effectively interpreting picture books, which hinders their ability to fully grasp the content. This can lead to an inadequate understanding of the appropriate difficulty level of picture books or an overemphasis on literary value that overlooks children's actual learning needs. Such issues not only compromise the quality of instruction but may also diminish children's enthusiasm for learning. For instance, when teachers excessively focus on the literary aspects of picture books, it can create a chaotic classroom environment, ultimately affecting children's comprehension and enjoyment of the story. In addition, many preschool teachers lack adequate training in systematic picture book literature, resulting in a narrow understanding of both the content and artistic styles of these works. This makes it challenging for them to facilitate meaningful discussions and creative activities with children. Consequently, this not only restricts the development of children's imagination and creativity but may also impact their literacy.

4.3.1.2 The Inadequate Teaching Preparation

Data analysis reveals that preschool teachers encountered several challenges and difficulties when using picture books to teach drawing in drawing lessons during the teaching preparation stage. These include limitations within the teacher's own knowledge structure and knowledge development. Furthermore, they struggle with choosing appropriate picture books, determining suitable teaching methods, setting clear teaching objectives,

and practically utilising teaching resources.

The Selection of Picture Books

Selecting the suitable picture books can be a challenge when it comes to using picture books to teach drawing in drawing lessons. Analysing data reveals that preschool drawing teachers often face issues in choosing appropriate picture books, such as picture books that are too difficult for preschool children, picture books whose content does not align with teaching objectives, and picture books that lack rigorous quality control.

One challenge in selecting picture books for teaching drawing is determining their appropriate difficulty level. According to data analysis, some preschool teachers tend to rely heavily on popular best-selling picture books, which may not always be the best fit for children. For instance, drawing teachers may choose books based on their popularity on websites, which can lead to inappropriate difficulty levels and unexpected outcomes in the classroom.

When describing the problems encountered with an inappropriate selection of picture books in one semi-structured interview, teacher HU expressed her depression of the chaos during her drawing lesson, noting that many of the children did not follow classroom rules and were disengaged with the selected picture book. Despite considering the picture book she selected to be of high quality, with language that could develop deep thinking, and recommended by several preschool educational apps, she found that the children did not respond well to its content. The drawing exercise section in

this lesson mostly relied on knowledge from the previous lesson, and many of the children failed to follow the intended theme. That made teacher HU concluded that relying solely on best-selling books was not the best approach, as many of the children ended up imitating the drawings in the picture book rather than expressing their creativity.

“I really did not expect this class to be so chaotic. Most of the children did not abide by classroom disciplines and were not interested in this picture book. I think this picture book is quite a good one, and the language can also make children think deeply. Besides, this picture book is strongly recommended by many apps for children in preschool to read. For example, I think this sentence has a deep and meaningful sense, ‘they forget, I am still a child’, but when I read it to the children, they did not respond at all. I just found that they may have difficulty understanding the meaning of this sentence, so the following drawing exercise was almost based on what they learned in my previous drawing lessons. Most of the children did not follow the theme of this drawing lesson...I should not believe so much in best-selling books... most of them imitate the drawings in picture books, so the children’s drawings in this lesson do not show their creativity.” (preschool teacher HU)

In a post-teaching interview, Teacher BI expressed concerns about the choice of picture books for her lesson. She observed that the picture book’s level of complexity may have made it difficult for children to appreciate the

drawings. Additionally, the picture book's muted colour scheme may not have appealed to children who typically prefer bright colours. The language and sentence structure in the picture book may have also been a challenge for the children to remember. Despite the picture book's potential to stimulate creativity, her drawing lesson did not appear to help children improve their literacy or creativity.

“This book seems to have been chosen incorrectly. It is a little bit difficult for children to appreciate this type of drawing. After all, the colours are not so bright...as you know, children like bright colours, and the language and sentences in this picture book are too long, it also caused the children to be unable to remember the expressions of the sentences. So, at the end of this drawing lesson, it looks like the children did not learn how to use the colours from this picture book. The reason why I chose this picture book is because of my imagination about the colours used in it. I thought it could stimulate children's creativity, but it didn't work. Moreover, the sentences in this picture book are indeed too long and it is difficult to remember these expressions, so I think this lesson does not seem to be helpful in improving neither children's literacy nor their creativity.” (preschool teacher BI)

The second aspect to consider is selecting picture books' content for children. Picture books come in various types, such as wordless, black and white, cognitive, emotional, and so on. According to the data, preschool

teachers encountered challenges when choosing picture books for teaching. Teacher ZI shared her experience in a semi-structured interview.

“I sometimes deliberately choose wordless picture books so that by guiding them to self-interpret the content of the picture books, they can exercise their expression skills, thereby improving their literacy. However, this approach doesn’t always yield the desired results. Children’s language skills are still developing; sometimes, they mimic my words during drawing lessons. It’s hard to tell if this is helpful or not.” (preschool teacher ZI)

Teacher BI also expressed confusion when choosing picture books. As a teacher, she strives to develop children’s drawing skills in her drawing lessons, while also hoping to enrich their emotional expression and learning of basic knowledge in daily life through picture books. Thus, she often chooses picture books which emphasise emotional expression and basic knowledge. However, she has noticed that sometimes, this way does not yield the desired results, and the children’s drawings do not meet her expectations. For example, children often neglect the creation of drawings, resulting in they can’t finish drawing at the end of the class. This leads to the parents sometimes expressing dissatisfaction with their children’s drawings, which makes her second-guess her choice of picture books for the lesson.

The third is the issue of the quality of picture books, as some may contain hidden risks despite appearing high-quality. The collected data on picture

books used in this preschool has shown that some children's picture books translated into Chinese may have typos and errors in grammar that can confuse children who are in a sensitive period for literacy development. Incorrect sentences can cause confusion about word order rules and negatively impact literacy. For instance, teacher BI shared in the interview.

“I discovered an error while using a picture book in one lesson. The sentence structure was incorrect, but children often imitate the protagonist's tone in the story. I had to spend extra time correcting this mistake, which was a challenge.” (preschool teacher BI)

Sometimes, preschool teachers may not be aware of the hidden risks in the content of picture books when preparing for drawing lessons, which may decrease the learning results of the lesson. For example, teacher BI shared her experience with a picture book she used.

“I intended to teach the children about the bravery and resilience of the seven brothers as they overcame various obstacles. However, during the drawing activity, I discovered that some children were drawing violent scenes, using wood to hit people or setting them on fire. These actions were not portrayed as dangerous in this picture book, and the children also emulated the seven brothers' humorous and playful tone. I was shocked.” (preschool teacher BI)

[She added] “As the children explained the stories behind their drawings, I felt overwhelmed. This picture book's plot revolves around

the seven brothers using their intelligence and courage to defeat their enemies. I do not want to promote the idea of harming others among children.” (preschool teacher BI)

Teaching Methods

The data analysis reveals that most of these preschool teachers use a teacher-dominated approach, typically involving the process of “reading picture books - replicating individual drawing”, when teaching drawing by using picture books. They simply read aloud and explain the content to the children. This approach does not allow children to explore picture books independently and puts them in a passive receiving position. As a result, teaching activities become monotonous and fail to stimulate children’s interest in learning drawing. When children are in a passive state, their literacy and creativity in drawings are also limited. Therefore, the oversimplification of picture book teaching methods is a significant factor restricting the teaching results of children’s drawing learning. The data also indicates that most teachers rely too much on teacher-dominated approach and overlook the participation of preschool children during their drawing lessons.

“...Looking back now, it seems that, yes, in all my drawing lessons, the method of teaching picture books follows a pattern: read the picture books to children first and explain any difficult contents encountered during the reading process. If I cannot find the difficult parts, then continue reading, and until finished reading, there will be a question-answering session during the reading procession, but basically, the questions were set up in

advance according to the answers in the picture books.” (preschool teacher HU)

“Sometimes, I will play a piece of music or video to arouse the class atmosphere in the first few minutes of my drawing lessons and then follow to explain the picture book, but this is rarely the case. When someone is coming to my class, I will do this. Usually, my teaching is just step by step... at the beginning of my drawing lesson, I read the picture book to the children. Then, when we encounter something that is difficult for the children to understand, I will set up a question-answering session to guide them in understanding this relatively difficult content. This is the process of my teaching in drawing lessons... The main reason why I chose this teaching method is that my teaching abilities are not very good, and I don’t think I can master other good but complex teaching methods.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“There are some books on the website that provide some methods and suggestions for preschool teachers to use picture books in teaching, but usually these are too general. There are many teaching methods from the web suggestions, but when it comes to using picture books in my drawing lessons, I found it is not as simple as it was described online, maybe because I did not understand it thoroughly... I tried these methods, which I learned from the website many times. But the teaching results were just average in my normal drawing lessons, so I do not want to try it again, at

least this semester. I am teaching drawing by using picture books just based on my experience now... read picture books to the children first...”
(preschool teacher B1)

Furthermore, the data analysis has revealed that when preschool teachers endeavour to incorporate picture books into their drawing lessons during the preparation phase, they tend to rely heavily on teaching reference books. Teaching reference books for picture books serves as an important component of supplementary educational resources, specifically designed to develop teachers’ understanding and mastery of picture book content. These references provide in-depth interpretations of the challenges and key teaching points associated with picture books, offer a variety of teaching methods and strategies, and illustrate practical applications through case studies. By utilising these teaching reference books, preschool teachers can improve the quality of their teaching and foster their professional development. However, there are some limitations to consider. For example, there is a risk of overlooking the individual differences among children, an overdependence on reference materials that may stifle teacher creativity, and varying quality among available reference books. Consequently, when using teaching reference books, preschool teachers should adapt and innovate based on the specific context to ensure effective teaching and promote the holistic development of children.

“I liked reading picture books when I was in university, so I have read a lot of picture books, but I rarely interpreted picture books for the purpose

of teaching. When I was in university, it was just a hobby. Reading picture books for me was just entertainment, just like watching a movie... But after I started working, I found that I had to use picture books to teach. I actually lack confidence because I do not know how to choose suitable picture books for my teaching. I'm not sure if the contents I am teaching about are what children really need because I haven't learned how to use picture books in early childhood teaching.” (preschool teacher HU)

“For teaching drawing by using picture books, I usually choose picture books with a teaching reference book series directly based on the teaching reference book's settings. If there is no suitable content for what I plan to teach, I may not choose to use picture books. And if there are no teaching reference books, I am not confident in how to use picture books to teach.” (preschool teacher BI)

Setting of Teaching Objectives

One common issue in preparing to teach with picture books is setting unreasonable teaching objectives. Preschool teachers may set objectives that are either too simple or too difficult, making it hard to achieve the desired teaching results. Data analysis has revealed three primary problems encountered by teachers when setting objectives for drawing lessons. These include over-emphasising imitation from picture books, which can neglect children's creativity; placing too much emphasis on children's drawing skills, which can neglect their imagination; and focusing too much on the drawing results, which can ignore the learning process and children's performance.

These objectives can limit a preschool teacher's ability to pay attention to a child's performance during the teaching process, which can hinder the development of children's literacy and creativity.

Based on the data analysis, it is revealed that preschool teachers tend to follow a consistent approach when teaching drawing through picture books. This typically includes demonstrating the drawing skills before allowing the children to practice, followed by the children imitating the teacher's drawings. At the end of the drawing lesson, the teacher would evaluate the children's drawings. Furthermore, during the teaching preparation stage, preschool teachers frequently prioritise the objective of facilitating drawing imitation as part of their lesson plan.

"I usually set up that children can imitate my drawings as one of the teaching objectives. Because of this, when I prepare drawing lessons, I will prepare demonstration drawings of the key points that the children will draw in this lesson in advance. I would like to provide an easy way for children to draw, allowing them to imagine and express themselves. But, many children tend to imitate what I draw during drawing lessons. If I don't demonstrate, some of them may be able to draw, and some may not. In order to avoid the children thinking their drawing is too bad because it will affect their interest in learning drawing, I sometimes show the children how to draw what they want to express, such as how to draw a bag." (preschool teacher HU)

“Sometimes, when I find children’s drawings that are not satisfactory to me, I will guide the children to imitate the drawings in picture books. I know this guide way may ignore the development of children’s creativity, but if the children fail to draw a decent drawing in my drawing lessons, I will feel that my teaching in this lesson is ineffective, giving me so much pressure. That is why I consider imitating drawing to be one of the important elements of my teaching objectives.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“Under normal circumstances, my teaching objectives emphasise imitating the drawings from picture books because if children are allowed to draw casually, it is likely that most of the children’s drawings will not be as good as expected. When the children show their casual drawings to parents, sometimes, parents may be dissatisfied and doubt my teaching ability.” (preschool teacher BI)

Furthermore, based on the interview data, it was shown that preschool teachers perceive drawing education as a curriculum that imparts drawing skills to children. They unanimously agreed that once children have undergone a considerable period of training in drawing, they possess the ability to create a complete drawing, which essentially signifies the attainment of preschool-level drawing education.

“When I prepare for my drawing lessons, I pay main attention to how well the children have mastered the drawing skills they learned from the drawing lessons and whether they can draw a complete and satisfied

drawing.” (preschool teacher ZI)

During the researcher’s classroom observations, it was discovered that over-emphasising the training of drawing skills can reduce children’s interest in learning drawing. This can transform the once-engaging activity into a tedious task and may even impede a child’s ability to imagine and create. As an example, the lesson on drawing utilised the picture book “*Miss Rumphius*”. The drawing teacher chose not to provide an in-depth explanation of this picture book during the lesson. Instead, after reading this picture book together, the drawing teacher developed the children to create their own imaginative flower world. During the children’s drawing process, the drawing teacher only guided children’s drawing composition and the using of colours, but did not guide children how to use imagination to create their own colourful world. When children used non-traditional colours, such as drawing leaves in red or tree trunks in pink, the drawing teacher corrected them, which resulted in a decline of the children’s enthusiasm for drawing. By the end of this lesson, most of the children’s drawings resembled either the drawing teacher’s drawings or the picture book’s drawings, and they showed less interest in their own creations. This highlights the importance of balancing drawing skills with the cultivation of imagination and creativity to keep children engaged and interested in drawing.

Additionally, it was discovered during interviews that preschool drawing teachers tend to place greater emphasis on children’s drawing outcomes while

teaching drawing. As a result, the ability to create a satisfactory drawing is often used as a key indicator of successful teaching outcomes when developing instructional goals.

“Children’s drawing results are a very important factor for me in judging the success of my drawing lessons. If everyone’s drawings are complete and tend to be satisfied, then I would say my drawing lesson is very good. Complete means that the drawing is clean, the drawing details I demonstrated or that appeared in the picture books are all displayed on children’s drawings, and the entire drawing looks like a finished drawing. I think the most important teaching objective is to guide the children to complete a satisfactory drawing.” (preschool teacher HU)

When answering the question of whether the teaching objectives paid attention to children’s performance in the learning process and creative process, most of the preschool teachers emphasised the importance of children’s drawing results as a factor in judging the success of their drawing lessons.

“In my drawing lessons, I may pay attention to children’s performance during my teaching process, but the teaching objectives of my drawing lessons mainly focus on children’s drawing results and skills.” (preschool teacher HU)

“When preparing for my drawing lessons, the teaching objectives mainly emphasised drawing results. Regarding the creative process, I really had no special plan to achieve what kind of objectives.” (preschool

teacher ZI)

“It seems that I have ignored children’s performance in literacy and creativity. When preparing for teaching, I mainly emphasise the teaching objectives of children’s drawing skills and drawing results.” (preschool teacher EI)

While the cultivation of creativity and literacy is often highlighted as a primary goal in early childhood art education and training, many teachers tend to overly concentrate on teaching specific drawing skills during their actual teaching. This trend is mainly due to a misalignment in the prioritisation of educational objectives, which places excessive emphasis on mastering drawing skills rather than fostering holistic, long-term qualities in children. Furthermore, traditional teaching models in preschool education in China emphasise the teacher-dominated approach, such as the “demonstration imitation” method, which restricts children’s creativity and subjectivity. The evaluation systems in place are often limited, relying solely on drawing skills as the basis for assessment, thereby neglecting the development of children’s emotional expression, creativity, and literacy.

To address these issues, it is essential to realign educational goals to focus more on the lifelong benefits and potential growth for children, prioritising skill development over mere knowledge transmission. Additionally, reforming the teaching methodology to incorporate flexible

and diverse approaches can stimulate children's initiative and develop them to create through observation and exploration. Lastly, enhancing the evaluation system is crucial; it should emphasise process-oriented assessments, acknowledge the unique traits of each child, and develop the expression of creativity and individuality from various perspectives, ultimately promoting comprehensive development.

Insufficient Utilisation of Teaching Resources

Preschool teachers often face the problem of insufficient utilisation of teaching resources while using picture books to teach drawing lessons. Some teachers fail to properly use the teaching resources and equipment provided by this preschool, which limits the richness and variety of practical teaching by using picture books. This preschool offers a wealth of teaching resources and equipment designed to support preschool teachers in their teaching. These tools not only develop teaching effectiveness but also address the diverse needs of various educational activities, strengthen teachers' professional skills, and contribute to the long-term development of the preschool. For instance, multimedia classrooms utilise advanced audio-visual technology to present abstract and complex concepts clearly and engagingly, facilitating children's understanding and stimulating their interest in learning. Additionally, the rich visual and auditory experiences provided by these resources stimulate children's imagination and creativity, fostering their overall development. These devices are well-suited to accommodate a wide range of teaching activities.

“The preschool provides teachers and children with multimedia teaching equipment, and it’s also equipped with intelligent voice speakers. Recently, an electronic intelligence library was set up, and there is also a small theatre for children’s performances. Yes, there are many teaching resources for us to use. However, when I prepare my teaching, I usually do not consider this relatively new equipment. For example, the picture book in this lesson is quite suitable for acting out, which can also increase children’s language expression opportunities. However, I am not very confident using these teaching resources, so I have not tried to use them. I prefer to use multimedia to assist my teaching.” (preschool teacher HU)

“I think the teaching resources provided by the preschool are not enough, and the number of picture books is not enough. In fact, I do not like to use multimedia equipment to show the content of the picture books to the children. If the preschool can provide every child with picture books, I don’t even need a computer multimedia device. I just need a blackboard to show the children how to draw... that will make the children pay more attention to my teaching. However, I know that my teaching method is not particularly good at promoting children’s imagination. I admit that I paid less attention to children’s innovative ability than their drawing skills...” (preschool teacher BI)

“I think the teaching resources provided by the preschool are insufficient. In fact, the preschool provides a lot of teaching resources,

including a small performance theatre, but it is difficult for me to use it in my drawing lessons, especially when I use picture books to teach; I usually use multimedia. The training I received in university on the use of teaching resources seems to be mostly for the use of multimedia; I don't remember there being training related to these theatres, activity equipment, or novel smart devices when I was a student. So I don't have much confidence in using these teaching resources to teach..." (preschool teacher ZI)

Furthermore, observation and experience can serve as valuable drawing activities and educational methods within the context of preschool drawing instruction. In this context, observation and experience refer to the careful examination of the structure or movement of objects and the acquisition of knowledge through hands-on practice, emphasising meticulous observation and personal experience.

Most teachers agree that observation and experience can promote children's understanding of the knowledge they have learned in drawing lessons. For example, teacher HU likes to take children to the botanical garden to sketch, but she had holding off later in this semester due to winter. Instead, she provides related teaching aids for children to observe and experience. As for the frequency of these outdoor activities, she typically organises them once or twice per spring semester, as it can be challenging to maintain discipline and ensure safety.

“I like to take the children to the botanical garden in the preschool to sketch, but it is winter now, and I am afraid that the children will catch a cold, so I will not take them out recently. But I always bring related fruits and vegetables or some related teaching aids to assist children in understanding what I am trying to teach. In the spring and autumn, I like to take children to the flower garden, botanical garden and vegetable garden in this preschool to sketch. But, I usually organised outdoor activities once or twice in a spring semester, not too many, because it is difficult to control the children’s discipline and safety. There are too many children in one class.” (preschool teacher HU)

Based on interview data, it is crucial for teachers to prioritise the safety of preschool children during lessons due to age limitations. Activities such as outdoor observation and sketching may pose potential safety risks. As a result, most teachers choose alternative methods of observation and experience, such as using pictures or physical displays in their drawing lessons.

“Sometimes, when I need to display some vegetables and fruits, I will go to the preschool’s canteen to borrow related vegetables and fruits. But I usually use pictures to display and rarely use real objects. It is a little troublesome and does not mean much. I feel that the real objects are almost the same as the pictures. For me, sometimes the physical display is not as good as the pictures... I think in my drawing lessons, I still lack some teaching skills in using real objects to show children... I did not take

children to sketch outdoors in drawing lessons, mainly because I was worried about safety issues.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“When it comes to sketching, I did not take children out of the classroom, and I always feel unsafe, so I really have not used these outdoor resources.” (preschool teacher BI)

“I just use white drawing paper and watercolour markers. After all, these are not harmful to children and the classroom hygiene environment. Besides, the children in Grade 3 are already skilled in using these drawing tools, so it does not require too much explanation on how to use it, and the children’s drawings with watercolour markers are satisfied with me, their parents and other teachers in this preschool. We are all satisfied, so why not enjoy doing it?” (preschool teacher BI)

Besides, teacher ZI majored in fine art education at university, and she is good at traditional Chinese painting. However, she rarely tried to let children use various drawing tools in her drawing lessons.

“Each drawing tool has its characteristics. In the first few years when I became a preschool teacher, sometimes I would let the children try various drawing materials, but in the past few years, I stopped doing this because the effect was not very good, especially the classroom hygiene would be greatly affected. For example, I once let the children use Chinese painting pigments to draw, and the purpose of that drawing lesson was to broaden children’s drawing ideas and improve their creativity. As a

result, even though the children wear smocks to prevent Chinese pigments from getting on their clothes, some pigments still drip on their clothes, shoes, and the floor. Besides, the feedback from parents at that time was not very good. Most of them felt that the children had soiled their clothes and were not easy to clean. When I finished the daytime work that day, I cleaned the classroom. I was also exhausted, and the pigments in the classroom were everywhere, so I was no longer willing to use these uncontrolled drawing materials in my drawing lessons.” (preschool teacher ZI)

From the above analysis, in the preparation of using picture books for drawing teaching, teachers have begun to encounter some challenges. These challenges mainly fall into two categories. Firstly, preschool teachers may need more theoretical knowledge to teach drawing with picture books. This can manifest in a few ways, including insufficient understanding of how children interpret picture books, difficulty interpreting the books themselves, and a need to improve literary skills. Secondly, preschool teachers may be unprepared to teach with picture books. This can result in issues such as choosing inappropriate picture books, lacking confidence in teaching methods, setting unrealistic goals, and not utilising available teaching resources. Diagram 4.8 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

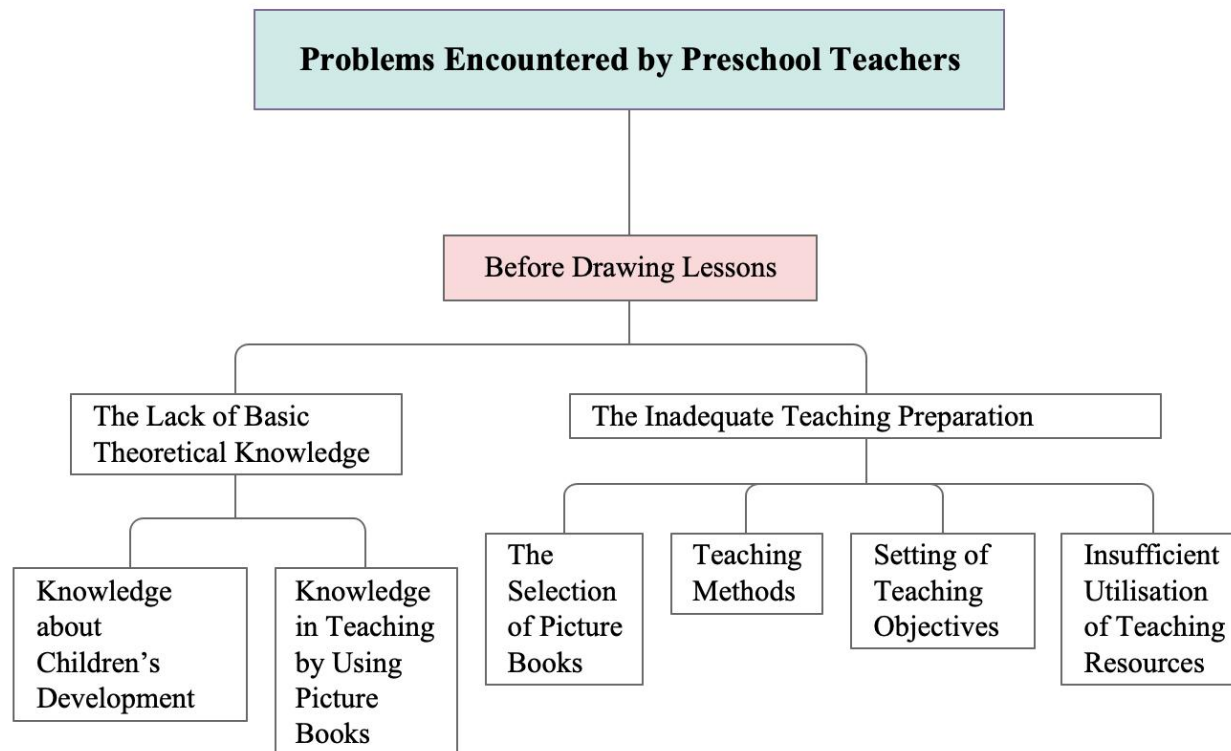


Diagram 4.8: Problems Encountered by Preschool Teachers Before Drawing Lessons

4.3.2 During Drawing Lessons

In this study, “during drawing lessons” refers to the process of teaching by using picture books in drawing lessons. However, preschool teachers have encountered several challenges during this process. These challenges include a stylised teaching method, a lack of ability to set up open-ended questions, inflexible teaching methods, and a lack of experience dealing with children’s personalised differences.

4.3.2.1 Stylised Teaching

According to data analysis, preschool teachers believe that standardised procedures are necessary to maintain an orderly and stable teaching environment. Stylised teaching refers to a lesson that is meticulously structured and executed following specific steps and processes. It organises instructional content following a defined plan, ensuring that students progress along a predetermined learning pathway. This type of course typically features clear educational objectives and well-defined teaching steps, all designed to help students systematically acquire knowledge and skills. However, unexpected emergencies may arise during the teaching process, requiring teachers to break from the standard approach. The thoughts of children, particularly those aged 5-6, can vary greatly, and they may express themselves without thinking things through due to imperfect self-control. As a result, preschool teachers often encounter unexpected situations while teaching.

For example, During one drawing lesson, teacher HU used the picture book *“I Am a Happy Fish”* to guide the children in drawing various types of

fish. She demonstrated how to draw different kinds of fish before letting the children draw freely in class. When she drew the clownfish, Girl AN asked, “Teacher, the clownfish’s best friends are small crabs and big lobsters. How do you draw them?” Teacher HU did not respond. After asking again and getting no reply from teacher HU, the girl AN felt she had not received the teacher’s attention and development. After that, she got depressed and did not come up with any other novel ideas in this lesson. When she finished drawing, the researcher found that her drawing was the same as the small fish demonstrated by teacher HU. Except for the stylised small fishes taught by the teacher, there were no other small sea animals in her drawing.

Following the class, the researcher held an in-depth interview with teacher HU. While discussing a teaching episode, she described as follow:

“At that moment, I heard the girl AN’s question but chose to ignore it as I was fully focused on teaching. When I was preparing for my teaching, my drawing demonstration did not include how to draw the other sea animals except some small fish, so I was a little nervous, which made me feel a bit uneasy about my drawing abilities. I was not confident I could adequately draw crabs and shrimps that would satisfy the children, so I continued with my lesson without pausing to answer her question.”
(preschool teacher HU)

[Later, she added] “I know that this approach might dampen the children’s enthusiasm for drawing, but my stylised teaching method has

brought a lot of benefits to my drawing classes. It enables the students to create satisfactory and complete drawings by the end of the course.” (preschool teacher HU)

[Additionally, she expressed] “I recognise that this teaching method may not develop children’s creativity. Neglecting their questions may cause them to be hesitant when creating drawings, which can limit the development of their imaginative skills.” (preschool teacher HU)

Although stylised teaching has drawbacks for children’s creativity development, teachers believe the benefits outweigh them.

“In order to facilitate and organise children’s activities in the classroom, I tend to use a stylised teaching method to order all my teachings. Sometimes, I do pay too much attention to discipline and regulations. I think I am a little bit strict with the children, but this is very helpful when I am teaching. I do not need to spend a lot of time emphasising classroom discipline so that I can focus on my teaching most of the time.” (preschool teacher BI)

“I know that stylised teaching is not conducive to developing children’s creativity. For example, when teaching by using picture books, I usually set up question-and-answer sessions, but if a child suddenly interrupts with questions when I am teaching, I will choose to ignore the child’s questions, which indeed interrupts the children’s thinking process and is not conducive to the development of their literacy and creativity. However,

stylised teaching allows teachers and parents to see the teaching results quickly. Although the children copied the model drawings prepared by the teachers, the result was that the children, parents, and teachers were all very happy. Although I know this kind of stylised teaching method greatly limits the development of children's imagination and creativity, I sometimes prefer this teaching method. It makes sense to my drawing lessons.” (preschool teacher ZI)

4.3.2.2 Setting Up of Open-Ended Questions

Utilising open-ended questions has been shown to foster problem-solving skills in children, ultimately developing their creativity. However, upon analysing the data, it was found that none of the three preschool teachers possessed the proficiency to incorporate open-ended questions into their teaching. These teachers provided personal insight into their approach to implementing open-ended questions within their curriculum.

“The purpose of setting up open-ended questions is to emphasise children's autonomous learning ability. However, I found that some children are not good at autonomous learning in practice; it is difficult for them to think or understand the problem by themselves. If the questions are not easy for children to find answers in picture books, it will reduce children's interest in learning to draw so that the teaching effect will decline.” (preschool teacher BI)

“Children's independent inquiry ability in art education is very important. Setting up open-ended questions can guide children to think

actively. When I use picture books to teach, I sometimes prefer to guide children to think actively by setting up open-ended questions. However, I encountered a problem in the actual teaching process; I found that it would be a waste of teaching time if children were allowed to think freely about the answers to questions, leading to insufficient drawing time. When class is over, children cannot finish their drawings.” (preschool teacher HU)

“I recognise the importance of setting up open-ended questions during the teaching process, stimulating children to think and explore actively, thereby promoting creativity. However, I rarely set up open-ended questions during my real teaching process. In the beginning months when I started to use picture books to teach, I tried to set up open-ended questions while reading picture books, but sometimes the results were not good. Maybe the questions I set are too difficult, and I always feel I cannot master this teaching skill. So, in the following lessons, I only use open-ended questions when setting up classroom drawing exercises. When reading picture books that require children to pay attention to some details of drawings in picture books, I will also set questions, but the answers to these questions can be found in the picture books easily.” (preschool teacher ZI)

In addition, based on classroom observations, it is discovered that the most commonly used strategy by teachers when teaching with picture books is

questioning. However, it was found that teachers predominately ask closed-ended questions, such as “Is it true?” or “Do you think so?” This approach not only hinders children’s ability to learn independently but also reduces their interest in learning by asking “boring questions”. Furthermore, teachers often use suggestive language in their questions, for example, “yes or no?”, which restricting children to only answer yes or no. This limits children’s thinking and reduces opportunities for them to express their opinions. This approach is not conducive to developing children’s literacy and creativity. During the observation, it was noted that if there were too many closed-ended questions in one lesson, the children paid less attention in class, and the teaching process was often disrupted by the need for managing classroom discipline. It was also observed from the teachers’ questions that the teacher focused not on children’s literacy and creativity performance in the teaching process but on what they prepared to teach during the teaching preparation stage.

4.3.2.3 Fixed Teaching Methods

When using children’s picture books in drawing lessons, it is important to find ways to stimulate and keep preschool children’s attention. Some children may not be initially interested in the picture book’s content or may have trouble focusing for extended periods. To address these challenges, preschool teachers should consider multiple teaching methods that use picture books to guide learning. However, data analysis shows that many teachers rely on a unified teaching approach, which is a teacher-dominated teaching method. The

teacher-dominated approach follows a set sequence of activities: reading the picture book aloud, demonstrating drawings on the board, and then assigning a drawing theme for the class exercise. While this teaching method offers children some opportunities for language learning through activities like reading picture books aloud, it tends to limit their creativity and literacy development. This approach requires children to create drawings based on the teacher's demonstrations or a predetermined theme, which becomes challenging for them to express their creativity in drawings. Furthermore, teacher-dominated classrooms diminish children's chances for meaningful communication with both their teachers and children, hindering their ability to develop expressive skills through drawings. It is essential for preschool teachers to use varied teaching methods that develop children's creativity and literacy.

“Sometimes, the picture books I used in my drawing lessons have been read by some children at home with their parents. It was impossible for me to change the picture books temporarily, but these kids found the lesson boring because they had already read the book. This issue always confuses me when I use picture books to teach drawing. I think the picture book I selected that most children have not been exposed to should still be taught regularly according to the teaching process which was set up in my teaching preparation stage. I don't like to disrupt my teaching process, which will make me very stressed in teaching.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“I play the dominant role in my drawing lessons. Children do have personality differences, such as different interests and hobbies. Sometimes, the picture book reading sessions or drawing activities I set cannot meet all the children’s requirements, but I think if my teaching can meet the needs of most children in my lesson, then it can not considered as a failed teaching.” (preschool teacher BI)

“My classroom teaching methods do lack flexibility. I always follow the teaching preparation content, which I have already done in my teaching preparation stage. I am worried about to arise teaching accidents. For a new teacher like me, I have only been here for less than a year, and what I am most worried about is teaching accidents. Therefore, although I know that my teaching methods are not various, I still prefer to use conservative teaching methods, which is a teacher-centred teaching method, to ensure that my teaching results are acceptable.” (preschool teacher HU)

4.3.2.4 Dealing with Personalised Differences

The personalised differences among children are evident in various aspects such as cognition, interests, and learning styles, which hold particular significance in drawing classes and greatly influence the effectiveness of drawing teaching. Cognitively, children exhibit varying levels of perception, imagination, and memory regarding artistic phenomena, resulting in differing speeds and qualities in mastering drawing skills and creating drawings. When it comes to interests, children have diverse preferences for drawings; some may

favour drawing as a form of self-expression, while others may show a strong inclination towards handmade crafts. These preferences directly impact their participation and enthusiasm in the classroom. Furthermore, the differences in learning styles necessitate that teachers employ flexible and varied strategies in drawing teaching to address the unique needs of children, whether for independent or collaborative learning experiences.

According to the analysis of classroom observation data, in drawing lessons, there are many creative children who are classified as “poor children” by preschool teachers or intentionally ignored because of their “hyperactive” and “naughty” behaviour. This phenomenon caused these children to be discriminated against by other children in the classroom. Particularly, the teacher may even criticise or punish them to serve as a warning to others.

Boy EK is an active and energetic child, but occasionally, he can be mischievous in the classroom. He enjoys making funny faces or unusual noises to capture his classmates’ attention. During interviews, his preschool teachers expressed a sense of helplessness when managing his behaviour, which has led to a less-than-favourable evaluation of boy EK. This impression has also been manifested in his teachers’ assessment of his drawing abilities.

For example, in one drawing lesson, after the teacher assigned the classroom drawing practice task, boy EK drew for about three minutes. He stood up and began running around the classroom. The teacher immediately stopped him, but boy EK requested a blue watercolour marker. The teacher

noticed his blue watercolour marker was missing, so she retrieved one from the locker and placed it on boy EK's desk, reminding him to raise his hand if he needed help. However, a few minutes later, boy EK suddenly stood up and shouted, "Teacher, my yellow watercolour marker cannot be used anymore. I want a new yellow one." This time, the teacher was a little frustrated with his behaviour and scolded him, asking him to sit down and wait. The teacher did not immediately go to get the yellow watercolour marker for boy EK.

Instead, the teacher perceived boy EK's poor performance as a teachable moment and decided to offer a disciplined education to the class. She reminded the children that it is important to avoid this kind of behaviour and not follow boy EK's performance. Later, she gave boy EK a new yellow watercolour marker, but the boy's drawing (Figure 4.26) in this lesson showed some concerns. In his drawing, a yellow rabbit was yelling at something, and a white rabbit had unusually large black ears. When the researcher asked the meaning of his drawing, he explained that the white bunny had turned its ears into a sailboat to escape the scolding of the big rabbit.

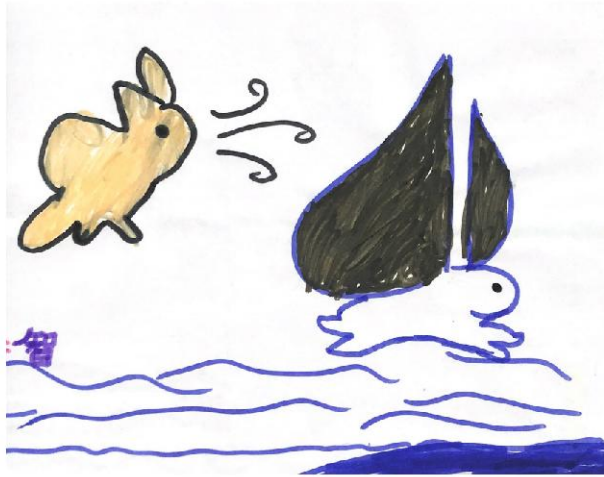


Figure 4.26 Boy EK's Drawing

In the end of the daytime work, the researcher and three teachers in the focused classroom habitually worked together to tidy up. The researcher stumbled upon a small drawing (refer to Figure 4.27) on boy EK's desk during the cleaning process. The researcher collected and discussed the drawing with boy EK in the next day. During the conversation, the researcher showed the drawing to boy EK, who responded with a melancholy explanation: "Yesterday, the teacher scolded me, and the other children did not want to play with me."



Figure 4.27 Boy EK's Drawing

Neglecting the personalised differences of children and applying uniform teaching requirements and methods can stifle their imagination and creativity, ultimately diminishing their individuality in drawing and creation. Additionally, overlooking personalised differences may hinder children's comprehension and interest in drawing, which in turn impacts their language expression and literacy development. Consequently, in preschool drawing lessons, failing to recognise these personalised difference can significantly undermine the effectiveness of picture book instruction in developing children's creativity and literacy. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to pay close attention to the distinct characteristics of each child, employ a variety of teaching methods, utilise picture books as a tool, and stimulate their creativity and literacy to promote their overall development.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the challenges faced by preschool drawing teachers are mainly concentrated in four areas. Firstly,

stylised teaching can limit the development of children's creativity. Secondly, while preschool drawing teachers believe that open-ended questions promote literacy and creativity, they rarely implement them in their teaching. Thirdly, preschool drawing teachers' methods lack flexibility as they tend to use the teacher-dominated approach. Finally, preschool drawing teachers struggle to deal with personal differences, especially when teaching children with strong personalities. Diagram 4.9 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

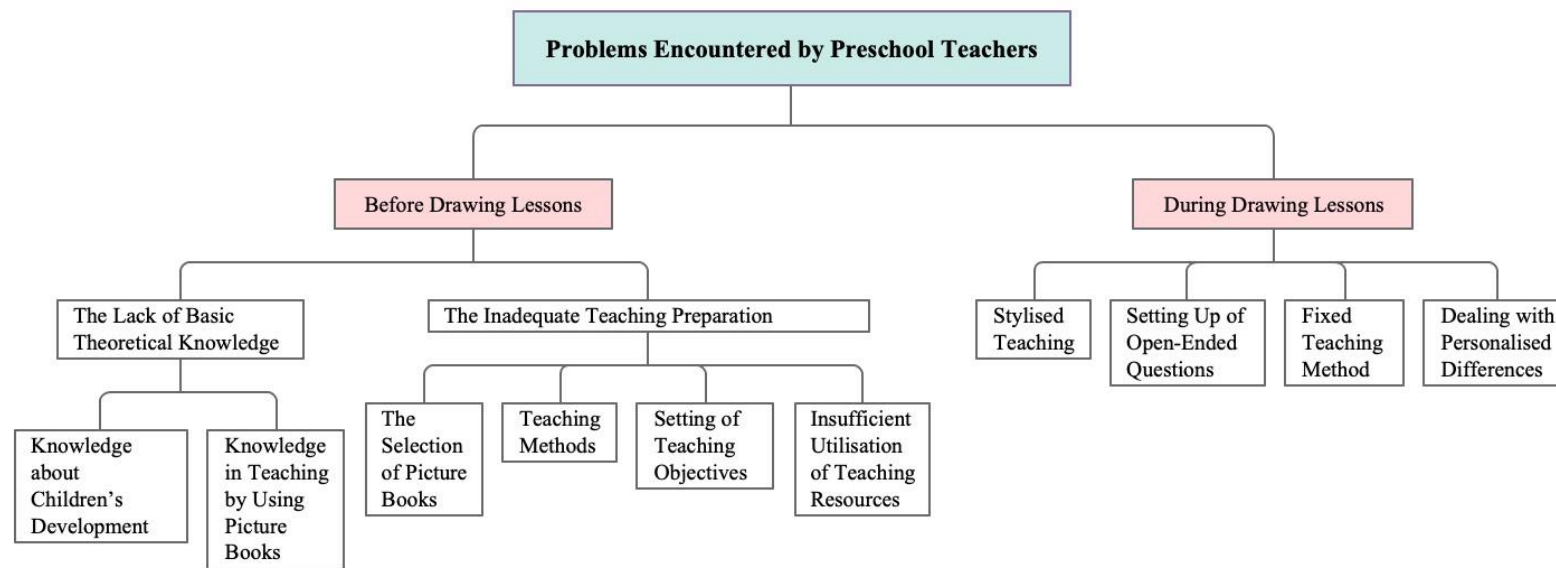


Diagram 4.9: Problems Encountered by Preschool Teachers During Drawing Lessons

4.3.3 After Drawing Lessons

After class means that a drawing lesson of using picture books to teach drawing is finished. However, when the class is over, it does not necessarily mean that the drawing activities using picture books have ended. There are often extension activities that follow. According to the analysis of interviews with preschool teachers, they also faced difficulties after class, particularly in evaluating children's drawings and extending the use of picture books.

4.3.3.1 Evaluation

At this preschool, it is mandatory for teachers to evaluate the children's performance in each lesson and record it after the class. During a discussion about evaluation content, Teacher HU stated,

“As you can see in this lesson, the drawings that I did not comment on were either unfinished or poorly drawn. Like this one, there is only one single black line ball.” (preschool teacher HU)

She pointed to the researcher the drawing (Figure 4.28) from all children's drawing exercises, which she collected at the end of this lesson.

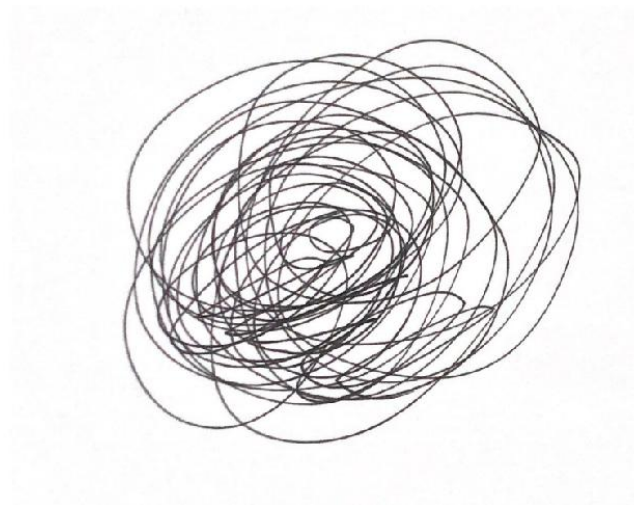


Figure 4.28: A Child's Drawing

Regarding the content of the evaluation, the three teachers unanimously agreed that the result of the drawing was the most important evaluation element.

“...Finally, I will evaluate the children’s drawings in terms of colour, line, composition, and some drawing skills like that.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“I think parents’ satisfaction with their children’s drawings is an important reference standard for my evaluation. Generally, we let the children take their drawings home after school. If the drawings are terrible, their parents will be unhappy. So, when I evaluate, I deliberately emphasise what kind of drawing is satisfactory to me, and then the children will work hard on this direction in the next drawing lesson.” (preschool teacher BI)

“I definitely pay attention to the drawing results first because my evaluation also depends on what the children can learn from my teaching, and parents’ recognition of my teaching will also be reflected in satisfaction with their children’s drawings.” (preschool teacher HU)

The analysis reveals that preschool teachers employ various evaluation methods to assess children’s drawing performance. Notably, teachers prioritise the completeness and quality of children’s drawings, particularly Teacher Hu, who distinctly identifies unfinished or subpar pieces. The outcome of a drawing lesson also plays a crucial role in the evaluation

process, encompassing factors such as colour, line work, composition, and drawing skills. This highlights the emphasis placed on the final presentation of children's drawing. Moreover, the satisfaction of parents with their children's drawings is incorporated into the evaluation framework. Teachers believe that parental feedback not only reflects the children's drawing abilities but also influences their perception of teaching quality. Consequently, when evaluating, teachers consider ways to guide children in creating drawings that align with long-term expectations.

However, these evaluation approach tends to focus heavily on the final results of children's drawings. An overemphasis on children's final drawings negatively impacts their creativity and literacy development. Such an evaluation method can restrict children's imagination and creativity, causing them to shy away from experimenting with new styles and expressions, thus stifling the cultivation of their innovative spirit. Additionally, a disproportionate focus on drawing results diminishes children's opportunities for verbal expression through drawings, hindering their ability to integrate language and artistic skills and ultimately affecting their literacy development.

To foster growth in these crucial areas, preschool teachers should consider adjusting their evaluation methods. They ought to place greater emphasis on exploration, expression, and creativity throughout the

drawing process, thereby cultivating a more open and free creative environment for children.

4.3.3.2 Picture Book Extension Activity

Extension activity encompasses a variety of educational programs organised by preschools that occur outside regular classroom hours. The purpose is to enrich children's knowledge, broaden their horizons, develop their abilities, and foster their interests and hobbies. While these activities are typically aligned with classroom teaching content, they extend beyond the knowledge acquired in the classroom. The goal is to provide children with the opportunity to learn new concepts, acquire new skills, and develop new interests in a relaxed and enjoyable environment through methods such as practice, exploration, and hands-on experience.

Picture book extension activity refers to utilising picture books as a medium to help children gain a deeper understanding of picture books' content. These activities develop children to expand their literacy and creativity through a variety of creative activities. The scope of picture book extension activity goes beyond simply reading; it includes diverse thematic activities, such as crafts, role-playing, outdoor exploration, and storytelling. Such activities can ignite children's interest in reading and their enthusiasm for creativity, facilitating a better comprehension of picture book content while nurturing multiple intelligences, including multiple literacies, social abilities, and hands-on capabilities.

The significance of the picture book extension activity for children's

development is that it stimulates children's interest and motivation toward learning, thereby laying a solid foundation for their future education and life experiences.

Data analysis shows that preschool drawing teachers need to gain knowledge of picture book extension activities and pay more attention to the importance of picture book extension activities.

Limited Knowledge of Extension Activities Approach

Utilising picture books as a tool for extension activities in teaching can significantly assist children in applying newly acquired knowledge to their daily lives. These activities play a vital role in enhancing the educational experience by creating a diverse and engaging environment that fosters deep learning and creativity in children. Teachers can leverage this approach in a relaxed and free atmosphere, ultimately promoting the development of children's literacy and creativity.

The data shows the different perspectives of three teachers on using picture books for extension activities in their teaching. While teacher HU occasionally arranges extension activities based on picture books, teacher ZI tends to choose story-based picture books that lend themselves well to children's performances. Teacher BI, however, does not prefer to use picture book extension activities in her teaching.

"I sometimes set up picture book extension activities and usually organise children to perform the content of the picture books. There is a small theatre in this preschool. I often take the children there to rehearse, but

until now, only making performance in this classroom and the extension activity was set up only once...” (preschool teacher HU)

“The picture books I chose this semester are basically story-based picture books. These types of picture books generally have a certain storyline and are suitable for children’s performances. So, my picture book extension activities are generally performances. There are fewer picture books of other types in our preschool, so there are fewer picture book extension activities of other types for me.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“I have not carried out the extension activities of picture books, and I do not think the extension activities of picture books is an important element for my teaching.” (preschool teacher BI)

The Neglect of Picture Book Extension Activities

The picture book extension activities are designed to expand children’s understanding and appreciation of the picture books by encouraging them to explore the story and its characters in more detail. Children can develop their creativity, critical thinking skills, imagination and literacy by engaging in activities such as playing, dancing, or role-playing. According to the data, the three teachers were found to be unaware of the important role that picture book extension activities can play in enhancing children’s drawing teaching and learning.

“To be honest, after teaching by using picture books in drawing lessons, there is no requirement to set up the relevant extension activities according to the drawing lesson in this preschool. So, since the picture

book extension activity is not a mandatory activity, that is fine. I think that means the picture book extension activities are not so important for my teaching.” (preschool teacher BI)

“My ordinary work is actually very busy, and I hardly have time to carry out picture book extension activity, so I usually ignore this section.” (preschool teacher ZI)

“I think extension activities of picture books are significant for children’s learning. It can help children consolidate the knowledge, literacy, and creativity abilities they have been trained in drawing lessons. But I really do not have time to carry out picture book extension activities, so I suggested parents help the children complete the relevant picture book extension activities. This can also promote their parent-child relationship.” (preschool teacher HU)

Based on the findings above, the evaluation process over-emphasised teaching results, particularly the outcome of children’s drawings. Additionally, the extension activities associated with picture books were limited in type, with children often only performing the content of the picture book. Moreover, preschool drawing teachers do not pay enough attention to the extension activities, which will make these newly trained abilities unable to get continuous exercise. Without persistent practice, it is different to develop and consolidate children’s literacy and creativity trained in drawing lessons. Diagram 4.10 is the specific diagrams discussed in this section.

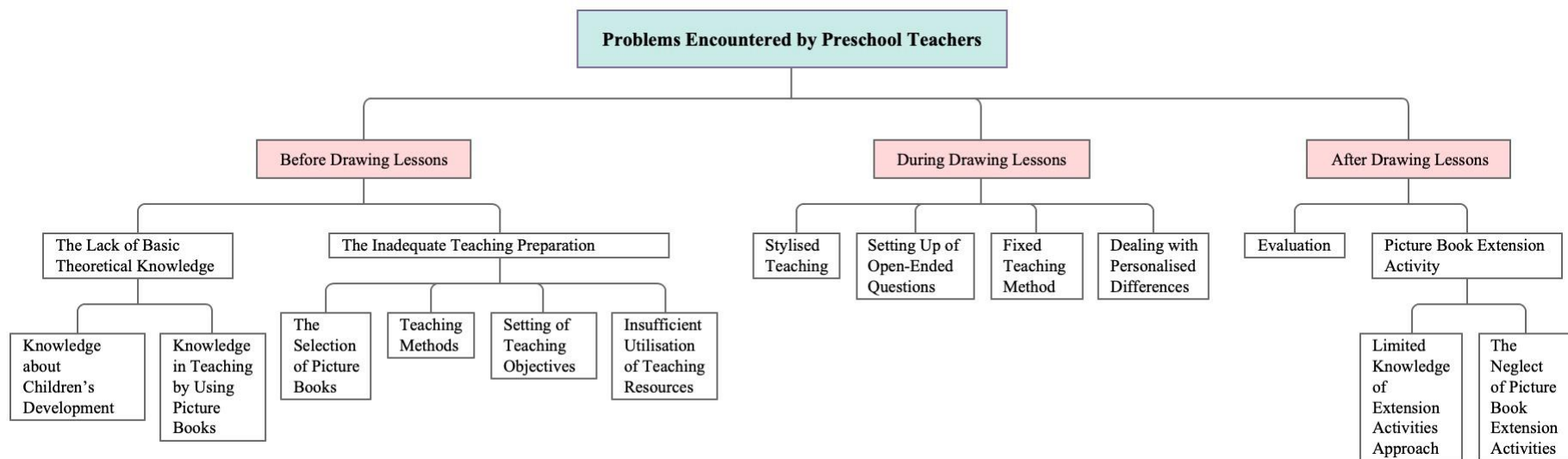


Diagram 4.10: Problems Encountered by Preschool Teachers After Drawing Lessons

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In China, an increasing number of preschool teachers recognise the value of using picture books to teach young children how to draw. However, it is important to note that not all picture books are created equal quality. To develop children's creativity and literacy, it is better for preschool teachers to carefully select picture books that are engaging and stimulating. By analysing the performance of preschool teachers and children in drawing lessons where picture books were utilised, as well as the challenges faced by preschool teachers in promoting children's literacy and creativity through drawing lessons, this study collected valuable data and feedback. Next, it will discuss the findings shown in these results that are worth learning and thinking about.

The purpose of this study was to analyse how picture books can be utilised to teach drawing to preschool children and identify the elements in picture books that can be used to develop children's creativity and literacy. The study involved observing and interacting with children in the classroom to identify the elements that promote literacy and creativity in picture books. In addition, the researchers conducted in-depth and semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers to explore the challenges they faced in improving

children's literacy and creativity by using picture books to teach in drawing lessons. The study concludes with a discussion of the insights and findings obtained from the research.

The results of this study are significant for both parents and preschool teachers. According to the findings, the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, words and phrases in picture books are essential elements in picture books in enhancing preschool children's literacy. Moreover, the composition design, colour tone and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of drawing, and resemblance of the shape in picture books play a vital role in developing preschool children's creativity in drawing lessons. Although this study does not guide how to use these elements to teach drawing, the presence of such elements can serve as a clear teaching direction for preschool teachers when preparing drawing lessons with picture books. Ultimately, these findings can assist preschool teachers in developing children's literacy and creativity in a practical way through picture books in drawing lessons.

According to the data, there are several issues that teachers face when using picture books to teach drawing. In addition to the need for improvement in teaching skills, teachers also lack theoretical knowledge on the subject and have limited evaluation capabilities.

The findings imply that promoting children's literacy and creativity while drawing lessons with picture books is a shared responsibility that falls not only

on preschool teachers but also requires the cooperation of universities or colleges, preschool leaders, and parents. It is, therefore, essential to address these challenges through collaborative efforts to ensure that children receive the education they deserve.

This chapter first explores the main elements in picture books that can develop children's literacy in drawing lessons. Followed by this, it identifies the main elements in picture books that can develop children's creativity in drawing lessons. Lastly, it delves into the challenges that preschool teachers faced when utilising picture books to teach drawing to develop children's literacy and creativity.

5.1 The Elements in Picture Books Can Be Used to Develop Children's Literacy

The importance of developing children's literacy cannot be overstated. This research has shown that picture books can play a crucial role in encouraging literacy among preschool children in drawing lessons. Specifically, the study highlights five critical elements in picture books that can develop children's literary skills: the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, words and phrases. By emphasising these elements, children can develop their imagination, communication, and comprehension, ultimately leading to improved literacy.

The complete narrative and sentence patterns in picture books are essential for developing children's expressive flexibility. Through these elements, children can learn to describe things from different perspectives and

develop a more comprehensive expression. This is in line with previous research that emphasises the importance of expressive flexibility and completeness in developing children's literacy (Wang, 1996). Recent studies have also shown the usefulness of picture books in improving preschool children's literacy (Evans, 2020; Ommundsenm et al., 2021; Noble, 2023). This study takes it a step further by highlighting the specific elements that make picture books such a powerful teaching resource. By improving children's imagination and multi-perspective observation and description skills, picture books can instill a development in preschool children's literacy. Therefore, drawing lessons can play a crucial role in encouraging children's literacy by incorporating the complete narrative and sentence patterns elements from picture books. By skillfully utilising these elements, preschool drawing teachers can develop children to express themselves vividly, think creatively, and understand meanings more deeply, setting them up for success and a lifetime of learning.

Additionally, the importance of sentence patterns, particularly the diversity of expression, in picture books on children's literacy cannot be underestimated. Previous studies support the positive role of sentence patterns in picture books for children's literacy development from various perspectives. Montag's (2019) study suggests that children's picture books feature more complex and less frequently used sentence structures, such as passive sentences and relative clauses, compared to direct speech. This complexity exposes

children to syntactic structures they are unlikely to encounter in everyday conversation, thereby enhancing their literacy. Taylor and Leung's (2020) research highlights the importance of multimodal elements (including images and text) and social interaction in children's literacy development through picture books. This suggests that picture books are not merely a means of conveying text; they also foster children's understanding and application of complex sentence patterns through the interplay of visual and auditory components. Shen (2021) uses "Water Doll Roaming" as a case study to investigate how children actively learn sentence patterns from picture books during language activities in preschool. This study underscores the potential of picture book reading to develop children's active engagement in language learning, thereby advancing their language development.

These studies confirmed that language expressions in picture books could develop children's literacy. Apart from this conclusion, this study further identifies the specific elements in picture books--the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, words and phrases--that can significantly contribute to the development of children's literacy in drawing lessons. These elements show the diversity of expression in picture books, including the body language, oral skills, and expression of emotions. According to this study, picture books are valuable learning materials for developing children's literacy. By utilising different forms of expression, children can learn to transform patterns and create sentence structures in daily

conversations, which are essential for encouraging children's literacy. Also, imitating the protagonist's actions in picture books can develop children's emotional expression and confidence, leading to the multiplicity of children's literacy.

Wang's children's drawing-speech development correlation theory (1996) points out that flexibility, diversity, completeness, and richness are important factors in developing children's literacy in drawing. This study points out the presentation forms of these important factors in picture books, as well as how to promote the development of children's literacy in drawing classes. Therefore, it is evident that picture books are significant in developing children's literacy. This study provides critical insight into the valuable elements in picture books that can be used in encouraging children's literacy.

Previous studies indicate that the language used in picture books can develop children's literacy. For instance, Ding (2021) examined picture book reading activities from a semiotic perspective. She noted that picture books, as a blend of language and images, offer rich linguistic input and imaginative opportunities for young children. This combination aids in developing their language comprehension and expressive abilities while also stimulating their creativity and imagination. However, her analysis focused on semiotics rather than the diverse language expressions present in children's drawings. Similarly, Yang and Zhang (2019) highlight the significance of experiential picture book reading, asserting that children's active involvement and emotional

engagement during reading can deepen their understanding of the content. This process not only develops language comprehension but also fosters visual literacy and creativity through the visual elements and narratives found in picture books. They also addressed how sentence structures in picture books can raise awareness and improve children's literacy, though their discussions were confined to the context of picture book reading activities.

This provides a theoretical basis for this study, that is, picture books can be used to develop children's literacy. However, their research was not focused on the use of picture books in drawing classes, so they did not analyse which parts of the picture books could be used for drawing teaching. This study provides a detailed indication that the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, and words and phrases in picture books can promote children's literacy development. Specific and detailed guidance has been provided on which elements from picture books can develop children's language literacy in drawing classes.

This study aims to delve deeper into the use of picture books in children's drawing classes to promote multiple literacy expression. It can assist children in grasping word order rules in sentence structures and training them to observe and describe things from various perspectives, ultimately enhancing the richness of their language expression in drawing. These skills are essential for children's literacy development and can be nurtured through picture books in drawing lessons.

Furthermore, the words and phrases, particularly the adjectives and adverbs, used in picture books play an essential role in children's vocabulary development. This provides a solid base for the development of children's literacy. As previous studies have shown, vocabulary in picture books can develop children's literacy (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Dowdall et al., 2020; Lv, 2021), and this research supports this claim. Cultivating children's rich language expression through picture books can improve children's language expression development and lay the foundation for children's literacy.

To summarise, picture books can promote children's literacy, and certain elements, particularly the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, and words and phrases in picture books, can develop children's literacy development.

5.2 The Elements in Picture Books Can Be Used to Develop Children's Creativity

Children can unlock their imaginative potential through picture books, which offer inspiration through six key elements: the composition design, colour tone and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of drawing, and resemblance of the shape.

Firstly, the composition design of drawings in picture books can help children develop a broader perspective, train them to think flexibly and develop their creative thinking, which is essential to flexibility. Guilford (1957) posits that flexibility is an essential component of children's artistic creativity, as it

allows individuals to consider problems from multiple perspectives, resulting in a more open-minded and adaptable mindset. Through multi-perspective compositions, picture books can stimulate children's imagination and creativity, encouraging them to approach problems from various angles.

This assertion is supported by various research findings. Jing and Tang (2017) underscores the significance of picture book instruction in fostering the development of children's creativity. The design of composition offers an expansive imaginative space wherein children can narrate stories through vibrant imagery and concise textual elements. This amalgamation of visual and textual components serves to stimulate children's visual imagination, facilitating the generation of associations and creative thoughts during picture analysis, ultimately enhancing their creativity. Evans (2020) investigates how picture books can transcend the limitations of the page to spur children's cognitive and creative responses through the interplay of visual and textual elements. Furthermore, Noble (2023) examines the process by which children engage in drawing activities after reading picture books, highlighting the necessity for children to transform visual information into creative expressions. This phenomenon reflects the significant role of drawing's composition design in developing children's creativity.

Additionally, Song (2019) delves into how picture book pedagogy can promote the development of children's innovative capacities. She points out that composition design in picture books stimulates children's imagination and

creativity by providing rich visual stimuli, enabling them to actively construct and create during the reading process. It is noteworthy that the existing literature has not sufficiently explored the composition design in picture books within the context of drawing education, and this study aims to address that gap by pinpointing specific elements of the composition design in picture books that can develop children's creativity in drawing lessons. These elements include the multi-perspectives and unique perspectives of drawings in picture books, which offer children new ways of seeing and understanding the world around them. This study provides valuable insights for preschool teachers, who can use picture books more practically to develop children's creativity in drawing lessons.

Secondly, children's creativity can be developed by learning how to use colour via colour tune and colour combinations in picture books. Not only do the colourful picture books inspire children, but they also help them build confidence and emotional expression through drawing. Chen (2019) investigated the influence of the "Enlightenment of Love" art course on the development of self-confidence in 8- to 9-year-old migrant children. She posits that colour, a crucial element of drawing, significantly contributes to enhancing children's confidence. Colour not only captivates children's attention and ignites their creative interest, but also facilitates emotional expression and exploration of their inner worlds. This, in turn, fosters a sense of achievement and satisfaction in their drawing practice, further developing their confidence.

Therefore, in drawing classes, it is essential for teachers to prioritise the teaching and guidance of colour to support the development of children's confidence.

While previous research suggests that the use of colours in picture books can develop children's confidence, there remains a lack of studies examining how colours in the drawings of picture books can develop children's creativity. This study provides factual and compelling evidence. Consequently, learning the use of colour in picture books plays a positive role in encouraging children's creativity in drawing lessons. This new finding expands the knowledge of developing preschool children's creativity in drawing lessons and underscores the importance of colour tone and colour combination in picture books to develop creativity.

Thirdly, the representational skills and straightforward, logical expression elements found in picture books play a crucial role in developing creativity among preschool children. These elements resonate with children's natural sensitivity and curiosity towards colours, shapes, and narratives while also supporting their developmental needs for symbolic thinking during the pre-computational stage (ages 2-7). Through vibrant colours, varied shapes, and cohesive narrative clues, picture books enable children to establish visual cognition, stimulate imagination, and foster cognitive flexibility and creativity.

Mukhammadzhonovna (2022) underscores the significance of nurturing creativity in early childhood education, highlighting logical thinking and

imagination as essential components. Logical thinking equips children to comprehend and analyse problems, while imagination allows them to explore new possibilities, fostering holistic development. Salisbury and Styles (2020) noted that the visual narrative art of children's picture books, through the integration of images and text, stimulates children's imagination and develops their logical thinking skills, facilitating a deeper understanding of story plot development. Inomjonovna (2022) emphasises the development of children's creativity and aesthetic awareness through artistic activities, indicating that artistic creation necessitates both logical thinking for drawing and execution, as well as imagination for conceptualisation and expression. This synergy promotes children's growth in art and creativity. Overall, logical thinking and imagination are two crucial facets of creativity. While logical thinking empowers children to analyse and resolve problems, imagination enables them to freely explore and innovate new ideas. Engaging in picture book reading and artistic activities allows children to develop their storytelling and creativity, thereby enhancing their creativity and expressive capabilities.

Additionally, these elements assist children in grasping concepts such as reversibility and conservation, thereby enhancing their logical reasoning skills. Consequently, picture books serve not only as significant tools for entertainment and learning in preschoolers but also as vital resources for their creativity development, closely aligned with Piaget's theory of cognitive development stages. This study confirmed this point.

Fourthly, the details of drawing and the resemblance of the shape from picture books can be used as valuable elements to develop children's creativity in drawing lessons. These elements can train children's critical thinking and associative ability. They can also help children develop a deeper understanding of the meanings behind specific shapes and objects, enhancing their drawing skills and imagination.

Xing (2023) found that children's creativity can be developed through learning drawings from picture books. However, she did not specifically point out what elements in drawings from picture books can be used to develop children's creativity. In contrast, the results of this study were particularly noteworthy, as it revealed that six key elements -- the composition design, colour tone and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of drawing and the resemblance of the shape -- could develop children's analytical abilities, develop their flexibility in drawing composition, increase the depth of their thinking, and assist in developing their reconstructive abilities. These discoveries carry significant implications for preschool teachers. By recognising these available elements, preschool drawing teachers can easily pinpoint essential teaching contents in picture books that can develop children's creativity in drawing lessons.

It is noteworthy that, after a semester-long collection, observation, and analysis of children's drawings, the elements found in picture books can be

classified into two categories based on their roles in children's drawing creation: sustainable role and unsustainable role. The concept of "sustainable role" means that once mastered, the role of these elements develops children's drawing, creativity and literacy for a long time. In other words, even without further guidance and practice on specific elements, these contents still can develop children's drawing creation. For instance, the teacher used the picture book *"The Color Monster"* to teach different emotions that can be expressed with different colours. A child drew her "Emotional Bottles" during this drawing lesson to express her ideas. In her drawing, she used red to express angry. In the subsequent weeks, the teacher did not emphasise the usage of colour to express emotions any more. A few months later, This child could still use red to express anger in her drawing. Conversely, the "unsustainable role" is seen as the abilities trained in drawing lessons gradually evaporate without persistent practice after drawing lessons. For example, the drawing teacher developed children to consider a problem from multiple perspectives using the book *"Good News Bad News"*. Then, the children drew with the drawing theme: Do you think having a lollipop is good news or bad news? Most of the children's drawings showed the good and bad of candies from different perspectives. However, a month later, when children were asked to draw with the theme of "You got a box of candy", most of the children showed that they like to eat candies from a single perspective and seemed to have forgotten that candies can also be bad for teeth.

One possible explanation for this phenomenon could be that despite the lack of formal training in sustainable role abilities acquired through drawing lessons, children may inadvertently practice these skills in their daily lives, thereby strengthening and reinforcing them over time. Another potential explanation is that these sustainable role abilities may have been acquired by children in earlier grades, with drawing lessons in Grade 3 serving to refresh and re-exercise these skills. In contrast, unsustainable role abilities are introduced for the first time in drawing lessons, requiring timely practice in order to maintain proficiency.

5.3 Problems Encountered by Preschool Teachers When Teaching Drawing by Using Picture Books in Drawing Lessons

The aim of this study is to find how to develop children's literacy and creativity by using picture books to teach drawing in drawing lessons. The challenges preschool teachers faced in using picture books to teach drawing are inevitable issues that need to be explored in this study.

This study has identified three main challenges faced by preschool teachers in utilising picture books to teach drawing. Specifically, the lack of basic theoretical knowledge, the lack of teaching skills, and the lack of evaluation ability. These obstacles demand careful consideration and immediate attention. It will discuss these issues below.

Firstly, preschool teachers play a crucial role in children's early education. However, the lack of basic theoretical knowledge in teaching with picture books poses a significant challenge to their teaching by using picture books in

drawing lessons. The findings indicate that preschool teachers need to acquire essential knowledge regarding children's understanding, setting teaching objectives, selecting appropriate picture books, and knowledge of teaching with picture books. This knowledge will not only support their preparation for teaching drawing by using picture books but also develop their teaching abilities. Similarly, previous studies supported this view that Chinese preschool teachers are struggling with interpreting picture books and selecting appropriate ones for teaching (Gao & Wang, 2022; Li, 2023; Tan, 2023). This deficiency in basic theoretical knowledge can reduce preschool teachers' teaching outcomes and their teaching confidence. Thus, it is essential to provide training and development opportunities to address this issue to support using picture books to teach drawing in preschool education.

Furthermore, this study highlights an unexpected finding that preschool teachers lack knowledge about children's understanding ability. Chen and Liu (2023) pointed out that the course of children's development is a compulsory course for students majoring in preschool education, providing important guarantees for evaluating the quality of the construction of preschool education majors in universities, colleges and preschool teachers' training schools in China. This study also adopts this perspective, assuming all preschool teachers have completed this course and passed the assessment. However, there should be reason for this issue to be reflected. One possible explanation is that while universities, colleges and schools offer courses on children's development, the

practical application of this knowledge may not be as straightforward. Therefore, it is essential for universities, colleges and schools to revisit their curriculum design and incorporate the knowledge with practical learning. In conclusion, enhancing preschool teachers' basic theoretical knowledge of teaching with picture books, particularly offering training and development programs that focus on practical teaching, is crucial to the success of preschool education.

Secondly, improving preschool teachers' teaching skills in using picture books as valuable and practical teaching resources to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons is crucial for enhancing children's learning experiences. However, many preschool teachers struggle with teaching methods, displaying weaknesses in six areas: using a single teaching method, following stylised teaching, difficulty setting up open-ended questions, inflexible teaching methods, difficulty dealing with personalised differences, and ignoring picture book extension activities.

Gao and Wang (2022) pointed out that when using picture books for language teaching, teachers lack effective questioning strategies and question-answering abilities. Su (2022) mentioned that picture books are often used in language teaching in preschool, and few people associate them with drawing activities. Therefore, teachers find it difficult to master effective teaching methods that combine picture books with drawing teaching. Zhang and Chen (2022) pointed out that teachers often overlook the interests and

needs of children when designing teaching activities, and tend to use the teacher-dominated approach, requiring the adoption of diverse teaching methods. These studies are all based on picture book reading activities and picture book language teaching activities, however, this study is based on the context of using picture books to teach preschool drawing lessons in China.

Field observations conducted by the researcher have revealed that the selected preschool offers a wealth of diverse teaching resources, including a small theatre, flower gardens, and an electronic library. However, during actual classroom observations and interviews with preschool teachers, it became evident that these resources are not being fully utilised due to the teachers' limited teaching abilities. To address this inconsistency, there is a pressing need for preschool teachers to develop their capacity to effectively use these teaching resources in various picture book activities. By improving these skills, preschool teachers can significantly enrich the learning experience for children, ultimately developing their literacy and creativity.

Thirdly, developments are needed in the evaluation methods used by preschool drawing teachers, particularly in terms of their lack of comprehensiveness. This is crucial for ensuring children receive the highest quality drawing education possible. One issue that has been identified is that teachers often place too much emphasis on children's drawings rather than children's overall performance in class. If preschool drawing teachers focus excessively on the outcomes of children's drawings while neglecting a

comprehensive evaluation and reflection of their overall performance, it can negatively impact the development of children's creativity and literacy. This will stifle children's creative thinking, provide insufficient development for their creative expression, and restrict the development of their imagination, ultimately diminishing their creativity. Additionally, this will hinder children's ability to integrate language and imagery, limit the development of literacy, and reduce their motivation and enjoyment of learning, which in turn affects their literacy development. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to evaluate children's overall performance comprehensively, nurture their creative expression, cultivate literacy, and establish a learning environment that supports their holistic development and growth.

Tan (2023) pointed out that Chinese preschool drawing teachers tend to focus too heavily on drawing results, which limits their ability to provide a comprehensive evaluation. Zhang and Chen (2022) emphasised the importance of preschool teachers' reflective ability in evaluation, and they attribute the overemphasis on results to a lack of reflection. However, the findings of this study suggest a different explanation. The reason for overemphasising results in evaluation depends on the external pressures from parents, children, colleagues and so on. For example, parents' recognition of their children's drawings is positively related to their recognition of teachers' teaching abilities. Therefore, it is essential to consider the outside pressures when improving the evaluation methods employed by preschool teachers to ensure that children

receive a comprehensive evaluation of their learning performance.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This pioneering study delves into the innovative use of picture books to develop children's literacy, creativity, and drawing skills in preschool. Through a multifaceted analysis that explores both the perspective of learning to draw through picture books and teaching drawing with picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in preschool, this study provides a holistic and distinctive insight into the potential of picture books in Chinese preschool's drawing lessons.

This study takes an ethnographic approach to identify the particular elements in picture books that can develop children's literacy and creativity through drawing. Moreover, it explores the challenges preschool teachers encountered when using picture books as teaching resources in drawing lessons. Therefore, this study serves as an invaluable reference for preschool teachers seeking to incorporate picture books into their drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity.

Next, it provides a brief overview of this study, as well as its implications, limitations, and possible avenues for future investigation.

This study collected and analysed data about four specific research questions. As such, the results derived from the study address the questions mentioned earlier and provide meaningful insights.

Research Question 1: What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's literacy?

Picture books are valuable resources for promoting preschool children's literacy in drawing lessons. According to the results of this study, there are mainly five key elements in picture books: the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, and words and phrases. More specifically, the diversity of expression, including body language, oral skills, and expression of emotions. These identified elements can be utilised to train children's multiple abilities, including imaginative description, word order rules, emotional expression, vocabulary development, and other abilities, thereby developing preschool children's literacy. In brief, engaging and well-crafted picture books provide a strong foundation for preschool children to develop their literacy and set them up for academic success in the future.

In the realm of preschool education in China, an educational philosophy that emphasises the comprehensive and harmonious development of children aligns closely with research findings on the development of children's literacy through the use of picture books. This study indicates that the elements in picture books play a significant role in developing children's abilities in imaginative description, understanding word order roles, emotional articulation, and vocabulary expansion. This aligns with the objectives of China's preschool

education, which seeks the literacy development of children.

Moreover, the findings not only address the textual and linguistic aspects of picture books but also highlight the crucial role of expressive diversity. The research findings offer guidance for preschool teachers to use picture books to develop children's literacy.

Research Question 2: What elements in picture books can be used to develop preschool children's creativity?

Picture books play a crucial role in encouraging preschool children's creativity in drawing lessons. The findings of this study showed six essential elements in picture books that can be utilised to develop children's creativity in drawing lessons, including the composition design, colour tone and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of the drawing and the resemblance of the shape. These available elements can be used to develop children's multiple abilities, such as thinking from different perspectives, analytical skills, logical thinking, imagination, and other abilities. Thus, these six key elements in picture books provided opportunities to develop these abilities in preschool children. By incorporating these elements, it can develop children's creativity and help them become more analytical, imaginative, and flexible in drawing. For example, preschool children can learn the relationship and composition between each object in drawings shown in picture books, which can develop their analytical and flexible design skills in drawing composition, ultimately leading to the development of their creativity.

In conclusion, the six elements mentioned above are essential for developing preschool children's creativity in drawing lessons. By encouraging the development of multiple abilities, preschool children can become more imaginative and analytical in drawings. Therefore, children's creativity can be developed by learning to draw through picture books in preschool drawing lessons.

In the context of preschool education in China, the results have important practical significance. By integrating the elements that can be utilised in picture books explored in this study into teaching practice, preschool drawing teachers can design creative and inspiring drawing teaching activities to promote the development of children's creativity.

Research Question 3: Can these elements be classified into different types?

Picture books are valuable and practical teaching resources for developing children's literacy and creativity in preschool drawing lessons. By focusing on five key elements -- the complete narrative, sentence patterns, diversity of expression, the story plot, and words and phrases -- picture books can develop children's literacy in drawing lessons. Likewise, by paying attention to six essential elements -- the composition design, colour tone and colour combination, setting representational skills, straightforward and logical expression, the details of the drawing and the resemblance of the shape -- picture books can develop preschool children's creativity in drawings.

It is worth noting that these elements can be divided into two categories based on their roles in children's drawing creation: sustainable role and

unsustainable role. For example, the multi-perspective visual representations found in picture books can help train children's ability to think from multiple perspectives. However, without continued practice after drawing lessons, children's drawings may revert back to a single perspective. On the other hand, the use of colour can expand children's emotional expression, and once they master it, they can skillfully express their feelings without consistent practice.

This classification not only helps preschool teachers understand the role of picture books in preschool children's drawing education, but also provides a basis for developing targeted teaching strategies.

In summary, picture books are valuable elements for developing children's literacy and creativity in preschool drawing education. Making reasonable use of these explored and available resources based on their characteristics can promote the development of children's abilities, especially literacy and creativity.

Research Question 4: What challenges do preschool teachers face when using picture books in drawing lessons?

According to this study, incorporating picture books into preschool drawing lessons can develop children's literacy and creativity. However, preschool teachers have encountered challenges when using picture books to teach drawing, which can be classified into three categories.

Firstly, the lack of necessary theoretical knowledge of picture books limited preschool teachers' teaching preparation, reducing their teaching confidence about using picture books in drawing lessons. However, providing

training and development opportunities to preschool teachers can address this issue and equip them with a comprehensive understanding of children's cognitive abilities, clearly defined teaching goals, careful selection of suitable picture books, and familiarity with different teaching approaches by using picture books in their teaching.

Secondly, preschool teachers displayed weaknesses in the teaching methods they adopted by using picture books in drawing lessons in six areas: using a single teaching method, following stylised teaching, difficulty setting up open-ended questions, inflexible teaching methods, difficulty dealing with personalised differences, and ignoring picture book extension activities. By addressing these issues, universities, colleges, and preschools can provide more training activities on diverse teaching methods by using picture books to support preschool teachers.

Thirdly, it would benefit preschool teachers to develop their evaluation abilities, especially the comprehensive evaluation. Rather than solely emphasising children's drawing outcomes, preschool teachers should consider evaluating children's overall performance in drawing lessons. Implementing a more complete evaluation at the end of each drawing lesson can reasonably and practically assist in developing children's literacy and creativity.

It is worth noting that this study has highlighted two crucial issues that demand prompt attention. Firstly, despite being trained on the course of children's development involving children's comprehension, preschool

teachers seem to experience difficulty in implementing this knowledge in the real teaching practices. Secondly, most of preschools provide a variety of teaching resources, but preschool teachers often face a shortage of support to utilise these resources efficiently.

This research has uncovered several challenges that preschool teachers encounter when using picture books as a tool to teach drawing in China. These challenges include insufficient theoretical knowledge regarding picture books, inadequate teaching methods, and limited evaluation capabilities. To address these issues, the research advocates for systematic training focused on picture book teaching to boost preschool teachers' confidence and competencies in teaching.

Additionally, the research emphasises the importance of flexibility in teaching methods, encouraging teachers to adapt their strategies based on the interests of each child, thereby better catering to their individual needs. Furthermore, the study recommends enhancing the comprehensiveness and diversity of the evaluation system by implementing a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism. This approach aims to provide a thorough understanding of children's learning situations and progress, enabling targeted feedback and improvement suggestions for teaching practices.

These suggested measures not only assist preschool teachers in effectively utilising picture books for painting instruction but also underscore the innovative nature of this research, offering fresh ideas and directions for the

advancement of preschool education in China.

6.1 Implications

This innovative study aims to address the research gap in teaching drawing by using picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in preschool education. By identifying the elements in picture books that can be utilised to promote children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons and exploring the challenges that preschool teachers encountered when using picture books in drawing lessons. This study provided a comprehensive understanding of how picture books are used in preschool education drawing lessons in China. Previous studies have mainly focused on the impact of picture books on reading and children's literacy, but this study expands on that by highlighting how picture books can be used practically in drawing. Thus, this study contributes to the field with implications in the following aspects.

Firstly, it benefits for the related curriculum construction and training of preschool education. Picture books are essential for teaching resources in preschool education. However, this study explores the problems encountered by teachers when using picture books for teaching drawing, particularly pointing out the lack of teachers' abilities. The findings of this study indicate that preschool teachers need to improve their basic theoretical knowledge and teaching skills required for drawing lessons using picture books. It is imperative to address these issues through improving curriculum construction and training. Systematic course training can assist preschool teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and teaching skills to provide high-quality

teaching. For example, in the realm of teacher training, it is advisable to expand the training curriculum to encompass the psychological development of young children, to develop the understanding of contemporary educational concepts, and to improve teachers' professional skills. Emphasising diverse training methods and establishing a robust teacher evaluation system will comprehensively elevate the professional competence and teaching effectiveness of preschool drawing teachers. Regarding curriculum development, it aims to promote the localisation of picture book drawing teaching, strengthen the integration of curriculum resources, refine the curriculum evaluation system, and ensure that the curriculum effectively fosters the holistic development of young children. These strategies are not only targeted but also highly actionable, carrying significant importance for enhancing the quality of preschool education. Therefore, the challenges faced by preschool drawing teachers identified in this study serves as a reference to support the improvement of relevant courses and training sessions in universities, colleges, and preschools.

Secondly, this study provides a noteworthy addition to the field of preschool education by introducing how to use picture books in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity. Drawing is an important ability that allows children to express themselves freely. By incorporating picture books into drawing lessons, teachers can engage children enjoyably and interactively while encouraging literacy and creativity. The findings of this

study have significant implications for teaching practices in preschools' drawing lessons, as well as for the development of future research in this field. For example, how do we design drawing activities based on the elements that can be utilised in the picture books explored in this study? What teaching methods apply to the elements that can be used in different picture books?

Thirdly, this study analysed the available elements in picture books that can be used to develop children's literary and creative in drawing lessons. The findings expand the understanding of how picture books can be powerful teaching resources in preschool education to cultivate diverse abilities among children. It fills the current gap in this field.

Fourthly, the findings in this study provide a new understanding of the insufficient teaching resources during the teaching process. This discovery presents teaching resource providers with fresh insights into constructing more reasonable teaching materials. Especially how to guide teachers to make reasonable use of the rich teaching resources in preschools.

Fifthly, the important practical implication of this study is that it highlights the potential for preschool teachers to transform their drawing lessons by incorporating picture books. This study provides practical teaching suggestions that can develop children's literacy and creativity. By incorporating available elements from picture books, preschool drawing teachers can make their lessons more purposeful.

Sixthly, The theory of creative abilities in the arts points out that fluency, flexibility, and originality are important for developing children's creativity. This study increased this theory by finding out the different elements in picture books to support the development of these three important factors. Besides, the children's drawing-speech development correlation theory emphasises four characteristics of children's literacy, which are flexibility, diversity, completeness and richness. This study extends this theory by pointing out different ways to help children maintain the four important factors to develop literacy.

6.2 Limitations

The purpose of this study is to explore how to use picture books to develop children's literacy and creativity in preschool drawing lessons. To achieve this, the study uses qualitative research with an ethnographic approach, which involves participant observation, semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, as well as drawing and note analysis, among other methods. It is noteworthy that no research on this subject has been conducted, making this an exploratory study. Despite the study's limitations, its findings are invaluable. Also, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges faced by the researcher during this study.

On the one hand, this study utilises a qualitative research approach involving long-term field observation to collect relevant data. This includes observation records, field diaries, interview transcripts, and manage related data. This approach allows for the capturing of both the inner thoughts and

external behavioural performance of the participants. Although the drawing process of the selected cases was not videotaped, the use of naked-eye observation enabled the researcher to capture key behavioural nuances, albeit some drawing behaviours may have been missed or ignored. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research methodology employed, and future research may benefit from integrating both qualitative and quantitative research to explore this issue further. The researcher faced a significant challenge due to the massive amount of data collected, which required a meticulous and time-consuming sorting process. Nonetheless, the researcher successfully sorted the materials promptly and efficiently, dedicating over 21 weeks to the task.

Additionally, this study was conducted in a public preschool and focused on using picture books to teach drawing. While this research is designed to provide valuable insights into the teaching process and challenges encountered by using picture books in drawing lessons, it does not compare the use of picture books in public and private preschools. This limitation narrows the scope of interpretation of the research findings. To address this limitation, further research can explore using picture books in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity in private preschools in China. Although there are more public preschools than private preschools in China, the picture book teaching situation in private preschools cannot be ignored because of their presence.

On the other hand, children's literacy and creativity are important abilities for their academic and personal development. However, these abilities can be influenced by various factors, including preschool education, individual attributes, family education, and so on. This study only focuses on the factors within the preschool environment that develop children's literacy and creativity, with a particular emphasis on how picture books can be used in drawing lessons. Thus, the other affected factors were not explored in this study. The findings of this study are based on a semester-long observation of the participants and a comprehensive analysis of interviews.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into using picture books in drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity in preschool.

6.3 Recommendations

Picture books possess the potential to transform the methodology of teaching drawing in preschool education in China. Although there are challenges to overcome, such as limited teaching methods and evaluation ability, this research has identified available and practical elements from picture books that can be used to develop children's literacy and creativity in drawing lessons. Nevertheless, further studies are needed to improve and expand the findings of this research. Thus, this study has thrown up four research areas in need of further investigation:

First, The participants in this study were limited to the children and teachers in Grade 3 in preschool, and the participant children's age range is 5-6

years old. To further expand the scope of research, future studies can consider including a more diverse age range and explore additional possibilities for participant age groups. This would result in more comprehensive findings and further the understanding of the impact of picture books on children's drawing education.

Second, the development of preschool children's literacy and creativity is a highly complex process that requires extensive research using multiple evaluation methods to ensure accuracy. While literacy and creativity are considered as normal abilities, there is still considerable debate surrounding their development and evaluation. Thus, this area requires in-depth discussions and long-term research to generate meaningful results. Although this study's conclusions are in its early stages, it presents a foundation for ongoing improvement and revision in future research.

Third, educating preschool children is a complex process that requires more than just teaching content. In addition to the educational content, the development of preschool children's literacy and creativity depends on their teachers' teaching styles and attitudes. However, this study did not take these influential factors into account. Further study could explore ways to minimise the influence of these factors on teaching.

Fourth, this study aimed to identify the elements in picture books that can be used in preschool drawing lessons to develop children's literacy and creativity. It also explored the challenges that preschool teachers faced in

teaching using picture books. Further research is needed to delve deeper into this topic. Categorising picture books and drawing activities into different types and developing corresponding teaching procedures will help satisfy the specific needs of preschool drawing teachers in their teaching.

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Appendix A Observation Checklist

Observation Checklist

Observation object	Class 1 Grade 3	Observation date		Subject	
Course contents	(the name of the picture books	Teaching objectives			
Observation Point	(Objective description of the teaching process)		Analysis of advantages and disadvantages of teaching	Teaching suggestion	
1. Before the lesson					
2. During the lesson					
3. After the lesson	(teacher)	(children)	(after-class activities)	extension	
4. Reflection					

Appendix B Classroom Observation Translation (1)

Observation: drawing class "Wings of color" (Part 1)

Class observation

Date: September 13, 2022

Class time: 10:00-10:30 am

【9:50 】

After Teacher Hu, Teacher Bi, and I helped Teacher Zhang distribute watercolour pens, crayons, and drawing paper to each child's desk, Teacher Hu and Teacher Bi went to the back area of the classroom to rest. (the back area of the classroom is where teachers rest, and usually, teachers who don't have classes will rest and wait there)

I sat on the side of the classroom and assisted Teacher Zhang during the art class.

【10:00】

Teacher Zhang walked to the front of the classroom and placed her picture books and teaching aids on the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom. As usual, she opened the PPT. The PPT showed the first page of the picture book "Wings of Color" used in this lesson. Teacher Zhang took out a wooden toy pony and a plush toy bird. The children were attracted by the two toys she took out.

She introduced "They are two good friends, Dante the calf and Martin the bird. In this lesson, let them take us to see what colours the world is.

【10:02】

After a brief course introduction, Teacher Zhang officially started the lesson. She put every page of this picture book in the PPT and began to tell the story to the children page by page. This picture book tells the adventure story of a calf and his friend from the lush green grassland to a colourful world. They travelled through the night and saw white snowflakes. Later, they marvelled at the blue sea... The whole book is a large block of colour to render the various colours of this world.

"On the vast green grassland, there is a white calf full of yearning for the outside world. The white colour is particularly conspicuous against the green background. The warm sunshine sprinkles on the grassland. They are about to set off and are about to start a colourful journey..."

The children were all looking at the picture book on the screen carefully.

As the pages are going on, some children start to stop looking at the screen. Chen and Feng were chatting in a low voice, and Teacher Zhang called Feng's name to remind him to listen to her.

Teacher Zhang attracted the children's attention to the curtain with a question. "The black night and white snow form a contrast in the picture on this page. Children, what colour is the sky in the top corner of the picture on this page?"

The children answered "blue" almost at the same time. Teacher Zhang "On this dark night, a corner of the blue sky indicates the colour of the next trip."

The children became quieter and followed Teacher Zhang to go to the next page of the picture book.

"You can see that there are green-blue, grey-blue, and purple-blue in this picture, so the blue sky can also change, right?" The children were attracted back to the picture book by this question.

"Finally, we came to the colourful fields. It turns out that there are so many colours in this world waiting for us to discover."

Teacher Zhang carefully told the story of each page and guided the children to observe the pictures on each page carefully. After telling the story of this picture book, Teacher Zhang began to guide the children to do drawing activities.

【10:17】

Teacher Zhang took out a lot of small cards of different colours and shapes.

Zhang "What do these colours remind you of in daily life?"

The children were all answering, and it was hard to hear what each child said.

Teacher Zhang: "I heard that everyone has different answers. I like purple, so I will use purple to draw a shape now. Guess what it is?"

Teacher Zhang said as she drew an eggplant. Before the drawing was finished, the children said "eggplant" in unison.

Teacher Zhang then drew a lollipop.

The children also answered correctly.

Teacher Zhang "I drew an eggplant based on purple, and also thought of the purple lollipop I ate yesterday. I have finished my drawings. Now please choose your favorite colour and create a shape based on your imagination."

【10:20】

The children began to choose paintbrushes. Since the teacher chose crayons when she was drawing, I observed that most of the children chose crayons.

An chose a red crayon. She associated red with a pepper, an apple, and a balloon. After she finished drawing, I observed her looking around in her seat, as if she was looking for someone. The teacher also observed this situation.

When the teacher approached An, she asked, "Teacher Zhang, how do I draw fire?"

Teacher Zhang squatted in front of her and whispered to her, and I couldn't hear their conversation clearly.

Dong drew a blue shape. He also drew images of a river, a cup, a coat, and a slipper. He was so busy drawing that he didn't notice that his deskmate had taken his other coloured pens.

Bi drew purple. In addition to a purple eggplant and a purple lollipop as the teacher drew, there were also large areas of purple, just shapes, and it was hard to tell what was drawn. She looked at what others were drawing and helped other children find different coloured crayons.

Chen and Feng are deskmates. Feng seems to have something to say to Chen. Feng keeps whispering to Chen, and Chen occasionally nods or responds with "hmm". Chen is always paying attention to her own drawing and looks like she does not want to join in the conversation with Feng.

Chen drew pink, a big pink heart, a pink balloon and a pink skirt. However, she eventually got stuck and didn't know what else to draw in pink. The teacher, sensing her frustration, approached her and offered help.

Teacher Zhang: "Do you need help?"

Chen: "Teacher Zhang, I don't know what else to draw in pink."

Teacher Zhang "What do you want to make pink? Then draw it."

Chen added a pink apple, a pink bear and a pink leaf to her work.

Feng just drew a green lollipop.

Kai didn't draw anything, sometimes poking his companions with his fingers, and sometimes playing with the crayons while talking to himself.

【10:30】

Zhang "Okay, kids, I see that some of you have finished your drawings, and some have not. Those who haven't finished can choose to continue, and those who have finished can go get some water. Those who have finished, please write your name and raise your hand."

Teacher Zhang began to collect the finished drawings. I observed that, as always, when the teacher asked the children who had finished their drawings to raise their hands, even those who had not finished their drawings raised their hands and waited for the teacher to collect their drawings.

【10:40】

Teacher Zhang ordered the collected works, wrote the date, and put them on the storage rack in the classroom (this is the preschool's requirement for children's classroom homework).

【Conversation with the child after class】

Me: "You seem to like chatting today. What makes you so interested? This picture book?"

Feng: "Teacher Xia, my mum bought me this picture book last weekend, but she and Teacher Zhang tell it differently. I also drew a picture with my mum, 'my good friend', and I kept telling Chen how my mum told me about this story."

Me: "Is it different?"

Feng: "It's very different! My mum told me to find a good friend in the future so that I won't be lonely. Teacher Xia, who is right, my mum or Teacher Zhang?"

Me: "Oh, umm, how does Teacher Zhang tell this book?"

Feng: "Teacher Xia, didn't you listen carefully in class?"

I threw back my head with laughter, but Feng didn't laugh. He looked at me seriously and said, "You have to listen carefully in the future, otherwise you have to stand up to listen to the class" (sometimes the teacher will let the children who don't follow the rules stand up to listen to the class as a punishment)

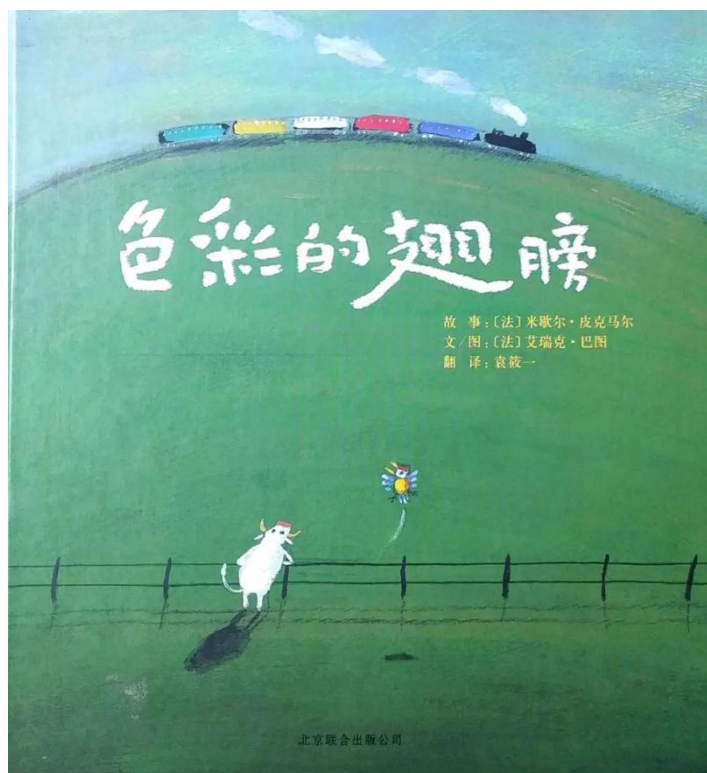
Me: "Okay, I will listen carefully next time. Can you tell me, now?"

Feng quickly ran to his chair and stood there motionless. I was stunned until he said, "Stand like this." When I realised he was teaching me how to stand like a punishment, I couldn't help laughing. Feng saw me laughing, and he laughed with me, and asked me "What are we laughing at?" That makes me burst out laughing again.

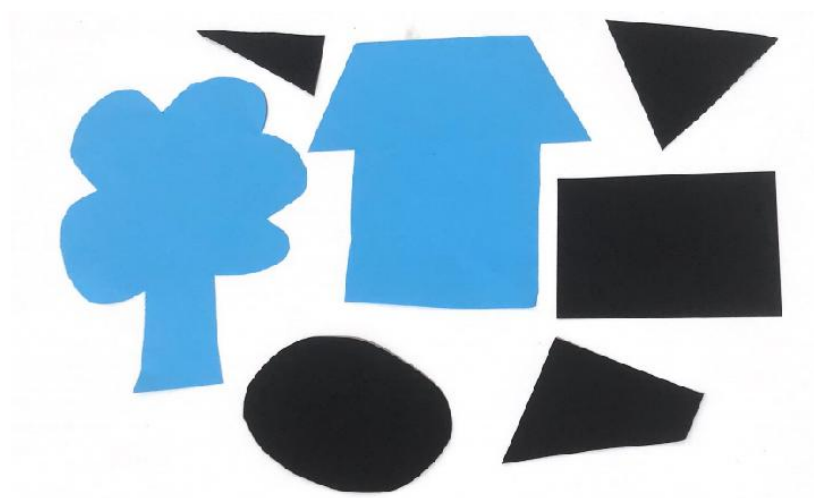
It was time to drink water, so the conversation ended.

【Today's post-class reflections】

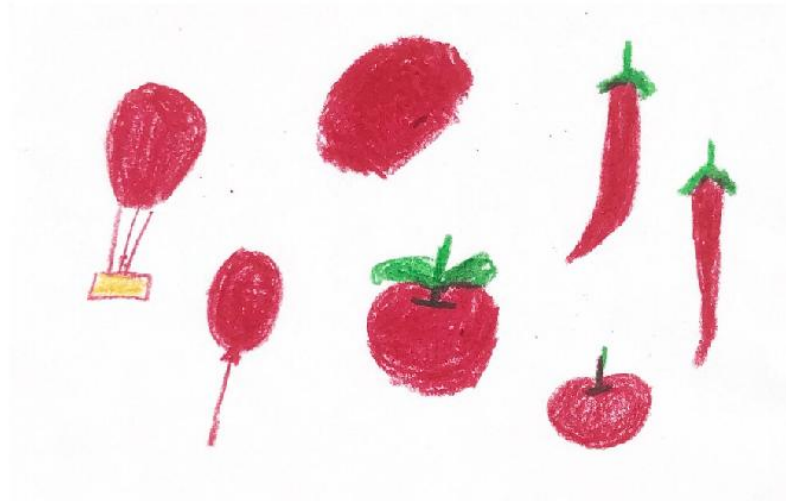
Sometimes the picture book prepared by the drawing teacher is the same picture book that parents read to their children at home, but the knowledge that parents teach their children through the picture book is different from the knowledge emphasised by the drawing teacher in the drawing lesson, which causes the children to wonder which one is correct.



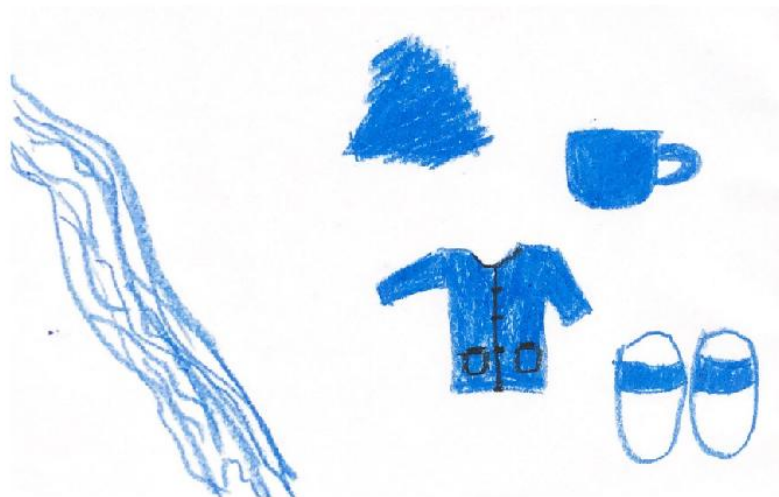
Wings of color



Shapes Cut from Cardboard



Girl AN's Drawing



Boy DL's Drawing



Girl BM's Drawing



Girl CY's Drawing



Boy FJ's Drawing

Classroom Observation Translation (2)

Observation: drawing class "Wings of color" (Part 2)

Class observation

Date: September 16, 2022

Class time: 16:00-16:30 pm

【15:50 】

After helping Teacher Zhang place the watercolour pens, crayons and drawing paper on each child's desk, I sat on the side of the classroom while the other two teachers went to a meeting. This afternoon, only Teacher Zhang and I were responsible for all activities for all children in this class. At 13:00, the other two teachers (teacher Hu and teacher Bi) went to another campus for a meeting.

【16:05】

Teacher Zhang walked to the teacher's table in front of the classroom and turned on the computer. The first page of the picture book used in the previous class immediately appeared on the screen connected to the computer. Teacher Zhang quickly told the children about the book again.

Since the children woke up from their nap at 14:00, the two of us were tired of waking up the children, helping them to tidy up their clothes, checking whether their shoes were worn on the wrong sides and folding the quilts, tidying up the beds, pouring water for the children, taking them to the toilet in turns, distributing fruits and biscuits (14:10-14:30), and so on. From 14:40 to 15:40, Teacher Zhang also took the place of Teacher Hu who was at a meeting to teach an outdoor activity lesson.

Perhaps due to being too tired, this lesson officially started 5 minutes late. Teacher Zhang did not repeat the picture book carefully and patiently as before, but quickly reviewed the contents of this picture book with the children.

【16:08】

Teacher Zhang "Children, in the last lesson, we chose our favorite colors based on the content of this picture book and used them to draw some shapes. In this lesson, I will lead everyone to play a color-changing game. Please associate the different shapes you drew in the last class with more different things, such as food, animals, people, etc., and then change its colour to form a colourful and beautiful drawing."

After that, Teacher Zhang began to distribute the drawings from the last lesson to everyone.

I observed that after the children got their drawings, no one started to draw. Then, Teacher Zhang picked up Dong's last lesson's drawing (Teacher Zhang often showed his drawings to everyone). She held up Dong's drawing and guided the children "For example, in this drawing, there is a blue river, slippers, a coat, and a cup for drinking water. Can we change the colour of these items? Now, who wants to change the colour of this slipper?"

An raised her hand and answered, "Pink, pink is the colour of the little princess".

Teacher Zhang "Then who wants to change the colour of this coat?"

Dong immediately answered, "Blue, I like blue the most."

I found that he was too anxious and did not raise his hand (the teacher asked everyone to raise the right hand before answering each question).

Teacher Zhang, "Okay, pink slippers, blue coat, let's guess, in this drawing, who took off the pink slippers to play in the river? Who took off the blue coat? Whose cup was left here?"

The children began to answer, and the classroom became very noisy.

After a short pause, about ten seconds, Teacher Zhang said, "Children, new drawing paper has been placed on the table. Let's play the color-changing game on the new drawing paper. Please draw what you drew in the last class on the new drawing paper with different colours."

【16:12】

The children started to draw.

Most of the children just changed the colour of the objects they had drawn last week and drew them on new drawing paper. Some children were talking quietly.

Teacher Zhang walked around the classroom and observed the children's drawings, but she only guided the children on how to draw when the children raised their hands to ask questions.

Kai was very naughty in this class. He always sat restlessly on his chair, ran to the table of the classmate next to him to get the coloured pencils (there were already prepared coloured pencils on his table), and then ran to the window to look out. Teacher Zhang patiently reminded him not to run around and pay attention to his drawings at first. Later, because the times he ran were too frequent, Teacher Zhang scolded him impatiently.

Zhang "Kai, if you still run around, I will punish you to stand in the corner of the classroom."

After that, Kai was in a very low mood. He sat in his seat and started drawing with a brush.

【16:25】

Teacher Zhang reminded: "Children, the class is almost over, and those who haven't finished your drawings need to speed up."

Usually, in each Friday's drawing lesson, the teacher will try to ensure that every child will draw a complete drawing because the teacher will select 5-10 best drawings after class and hang them on the display wall outside the classroom. Parents can see these displayed drawings when they come to pick up their children from preschool. Every child will feel proud of being selected, and some parents will even take photos in front of the wall of drawings. The teacher will also take photos of the selected drawings and send them to the parents' WeChat group (WeChat is a major office tool in China). The children who are not selected will take their drawings home to let parents know what they have gained in preschool this week.

【16:30】

Teacher Zhang: "Please write your name, and you can move freely after writing."

Feng walked towards me with his drawing. He drew a magnificent tree with colourful leaves scattered on the ground. Interestingly, there are two cute caterpillars in his drawing - one blue and the other green.

Feng "They are good friends and play together every day. They live in a cosy black residence, hiding under the leaves."

I noticed after careful observation that there was a tiny black circle under a leaf of a specific hue.

The girl Chen also took her drawing and was eager to show it to me. I saw that she drew a "pink world" and she enthusiastically explained each object in it.

I took the initiative to ask Kai about his drawing after class. His drawing was mainly black and dark blue circles. He admitted that he was scolded by the teacher for running around in class, which made him unhappy, and he conveyed this through his drawing.

The drawings of Feng and the 4 children who were not mainly focused on children in this class were selected by Teacher Zhang and posted on the display wall, and the rest of the children took their drawings home.

【16:40-17:00】 Dinner

【17:00-17:30】 children Leave the preschool

【Today's post-class reflections】

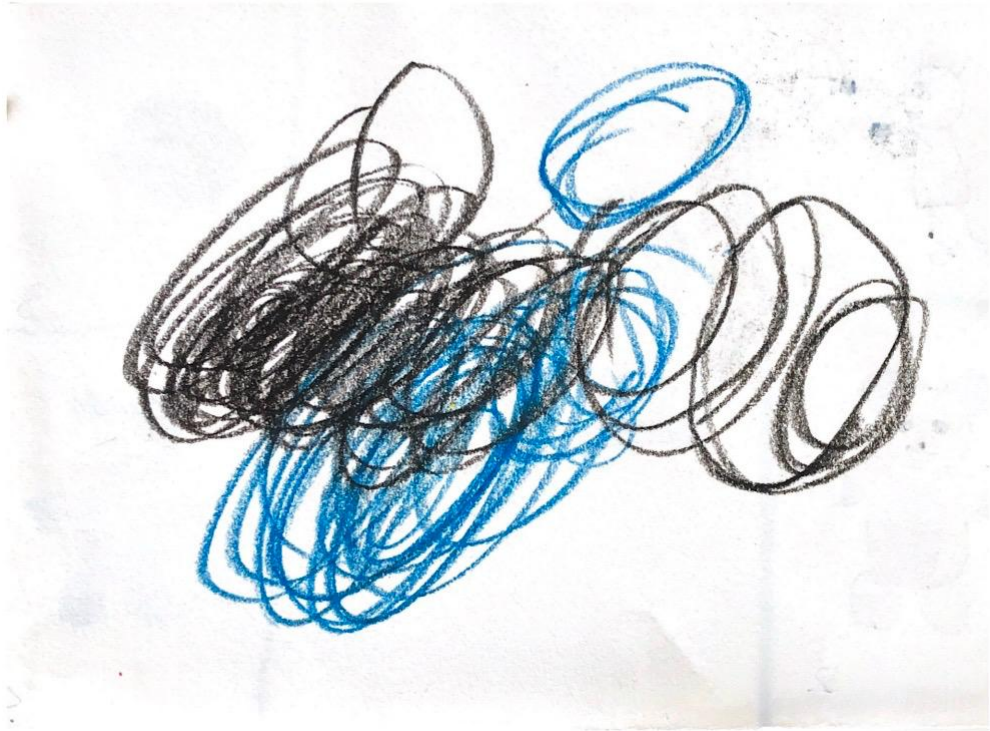
Two teachers managing a class of 56 children can be really exhausting. Just want to die, I am so tired that I don't want to do anything.



Boy FJ's Drawing



Boy DL's Drawing



Boy EK's Drawing

Appendix C Teaching Plan

2021-2022-1 学期 大班美术课教学计划				
2021-2022-1 semester Drawing course teaching plan for Grade 3				
周 weeks	日期 date	绘画主题 drawing themes	周二 绘本 Tuesday-name of picture books	周五 绘本 Friday-name of picture books
1	2022.8.22-26	无学生(教师集体备课)No students (teachers prepare lessons in group)		
2	8.29-9.2	学生 9.1 开学 (教师准备开学事宜) Students will start school on September 1 (teachers prepared for the start of preschool)		
3 HU	9.5-9	形状大小的关系 The relationship between shape and size	《猜猜我有多爱你》 (Guess How Much I Love You)	《大树上的难题》 (Stuck)
4 ZI	9.12-16	五彩缤纷的世界 Colorful world	《色彩的翅膀》 (Wings of color)	《色彩的翅膀》 (Wings of color)

5 BI	9.19-23	绘画中的语言表达 Language expression in drawing	《我有友谊要出租》 (I Have Friendship to Rent)	《我有友谊要出租》 (I Have Friendship to Rent)
6 HU	9.26-30	绘画中的构图 Composition in drawing	《你为什么不开花》 (Why Don't You Flower)	《爷爷一定有办法》 (Something From Nothing)
7	10.3-7	放假 holiday		
8 ZI	10.10-14	用绘画表达情感--开心 Expressing emotions through drawing - happiness	《你感觉怎么样》 (How Do You Feel)	《我是一条快乐的鱼》 (I Am a Happy Fish)
9 BI	10.17-21	用绘画表达情感--愤怒 Expressing emotions through drawing - anger	《不会写字的狮子》 (The Lion Can't Write)	《不会写字的狮子》 (The Lion Can't Write)
10 HU	10.24-28	用绘画表达情感--喜爱 Expressing emotions through drawing - favorite	《我喜欢书》 (I Like Books)	《我喜欢书》 (I Like Books)
11 ZI	10.31-11.4	画理想 drawing Ideal	《长大以后做什么》 (What to do when you grow up)	《两朵白云》 (Two white clouds)
12 BI	11.7-11	画故事 drawing story	《勇敢表达自己》 (Be Brave to Express Yourself)	《勇敢表达自己》 (Be Brave to Express Yourself)
13 HU	11.14-18	线上 online teaching (city locked down)	十分钟教学视频展示《蝴蝶的蜕变》教师自制绘本 Ten-minute teaching video showing	取消 cancel

			the teacher-made picture book "The Metamorphosis of a Butterfly"	
14 ZI	11.21-25	线上 online teaching (city locked down)	十分钟教学视频展示《一朵小花》 教师自制绘本 Ten-minute teaching video showing the teacher-made picture book "A Little Flower"	取消 cancel
15 BI	11.28-12.2	绘画中的多角度构图 Multi-angle composition in drawing	《好消息，坏消息》 (Good News, Bad News)	《西兰花先生的理发店》 (Mr. Broccoli's Barber Shop)
16 HU	12.5-12.9	绘画中物体间的关系 The relationship between objects in a drawing	《会飞的帽子》 (Flying Hat)	《小蓝和小黄》 (Little Blue And Little Yellow)
17 ZI	12.12-12.16	用色彩表达情感 Use colors to express emotions	《情绪小怪兽》 (The Color Monster)	《情绪小怪兽》 (The Color Monster)
18 BI	12.19-12.23	用色彩表达情感 Use colors to express emotions	《红色棒棒糖》 (Big Red Lollipop)	《花婆婆》 (Miss Rumphius)
19 HU	12.26-12.30	画故事 drawing story	《我只爱你》 (I Only Love You)	《树屋》 (The Tree House)
20 ZI	2023.1.2-6	停课排练校庆节目（周六上午校庆演出，周天上午同画一幅画活动“快乐的一天”） Classes are suspended to rehearse the school anniversary program (school anniversary performance on Saturday morning, and the "Happy Day" activity of drawing together on Sunday morning)		
21 BI	1.9-13	本周所有课都停止，为了迎接新年，本周活动是手工制作灯笼和面人。 All classes are stopped this week. To welcome the Chinese 2New Year, this week's activity is to hand-make		

	lanterns and dough figurines.
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Appendix D Interview Questions (Before Drawing Lessons)

Interview Questions 访谈提纲	
第 1 部分 绘本 Part 1 Picture Books	1. 这节美术课，您打算使用哪本图书？ Which picture book do you plan to use in this drawing lesson?
	2. 为什么选择这本图书？ Why did you choose this book?
	3. 还有更好的选择吗？ Is there a better option of the picture book?
	4. 你计划在这节课如何使用这本图画书呢？ How do you plan to use this picture book in this drawing lesson?
第 2 部分 教学设计 Part 2 Teaching Design	1. 你给这节课设计了哪些亮点？ What highlights will you design for this lesson?
	2. 你在这节课做示范性的绘画吗？ Will you do a demonstration drawing in this lesson?
	3. 你认为这节课使用绘本对你的挑战在哪里？ What challenges do you think you will meet by using picture books in this lesson?
	4. 这节课你采用哪些教学方法？ What teaching methods will you use in this lesson?
	5. 这节课您会利用哪些教学资源？ What teaching resources will you use in this lesson?
	6. 你对这节课设置课后延伸活动了吗？ Do you set up after-school extension activities for this lesson?
第 3 部分 解释性讨论 Part 3 Interpretive discussion	1. 您对在美术课上使用绘本教学的理解是什么？ What is your understanding of using picture books in drawing lessons?
第 4 部分 决策性讨论 Part 4 Decisional discussion	2. 这节课您对在美术课上使用绘本教学所设置的教学目标是什么？ What teaching goals have you set for using picture books in drawing lessons?

Appendix E Interview Questions (After Drawing Lessons)

Interview Questions	
第 1 部分 客观问题 Part 1 Objective question	1. 你预设的教学过程都进行了吗? Did you carry out the teaching process you planned?
	2. 这节课有意想不到的事情发生吗? Did anything unexpected happen in this lesson?
	3. 这节课你做示范性绘画了吗? Did you do a demonstration drawing in this lesson?
	4. 你对孩子们的表现满意吗? Are you satisfied with the children's performance?
第 2 部分 反思性问题 Part 2 Reflective question	1. 如果满分十分, 你给你今天的绘画课打多少分? 为什么? If the full score is 10, how would you rate your drawing lesson today? Why?
	2. 在教授这节课时, 你觉得最具挑战性的部分是什么? What was the most challenging part for you in teaching this lesson?
	3. 当你收集孩子们的课堂绘画时, 你有什么感受? How did you feel when you collected the children's classroom drawings?
第 3 部分 解释性讨论 Part 3 Interpretive discussion	1. 你在课堂上会使用开放性问题进行提问吗? 为什么? Do you use open-ended questions in your lesson? Why?
	2. 如果重新用这本绘本上一次绘画课, 你会改变什么? 保持什么不变? If you were to use this picture book again for a drawing lesson, what would you change? What would you keep?
第 4 部分 决策性讨论 Part 4 Decisional discussion	1. 你认为这节课你的教学目标实现了吗? 为什么? Do you think you achieved your teaching objectives in this class? Why?

