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The Whole Book Approach

The Museum's Whole Book Approach (WBA) was developed to expand one's engagement with the picture book as an art form by creating reading experiences that include opportunities to discuss how the pictures, design, and production elements of the picture book form interact with the text to create an artistic whole.

Sharing common ground with Dialogic Reading techniques, also called "Hear and Say Reading", the Whole Book Approach might be called "See, Hear, and Say Reading." By drawing upon the Visual Thinking Strategies' inquiry-based approach to viewing art and the emergent curriculum characteristic of the Reggio Emilia model of education, WBA storytime facilitators engage children in discussions about the text, art, and design of the book, and invite them to ask questions and share reactions while the story is being read. As a result, WBA is an experience of reading with children rather than reading to children. WBA storytimes are truly conversation-times in which the picture book serves as the provocation which engages children in careful observation, listening, and critical and creative thinking.

Traditional storytimes invite children to listen to a sustained verbal narrative while looking at corresponding pictures, thereby creating a composite text of the visual and the verbal in their minds. As yet another way to approach storytimes, the WBA encourages children to attend to and respond to all of the visual and verbal information they gather as the picture book is read aloud. This interactive, art and design-focused reading model allows visual learners opportunities to shine during read aloud times, and it allows auditory learners the chance to stretch as they consider the picture book as a visual form. Furthermore, studies on related Dialogic Reading techniques have shown that pausing during read aloud times to talk about the story aids, rather than hinders, comprehension by providing time for reflection, clarification, and expansion.

For more information on the Whole Book Approach please contact Megan Lambert, Instructor of Children's Literature Programs at meganl@carlemuseum.org or (413) 658-1123.

Further Reading on Whole Book Approach Storytimes:

Children and Libraries, Vol. 4 Number 3, Winter 2006
Lambert, Megan, *InFORMed Reading: Evaluating and Using Picture Books, Beginning Reader Books, and Illustrated Books.*

The Horn Book Magazine
http://www.hbook.com/publications/magazine/articles/may03_robinson.asp

The Riverbank Review
<http://www.riverbankreview.com/fall03/teacher.html>

Further Information about Dialogic Reading Techniques

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/researcha/researchbyagelevel/agetwotothree/AgeTwoThree.htm>

Further Information about Visual Thinking Strategies

www.vtshome.org

Further Information about The Reggio Emilia Approach to the Education of Young Children

www.reggioalliance.org