

Abstract

Picture books are an important part of early language education. In addition, storytelling activities encourage students to communicate in authentic ways and think critically. The three authors---Eric Carle, Leo Lionni and Arnold Lobel---are well-known writers and illustrators of classic picture books such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Swimmy*, and *The Letter* in *Frog and Toad* series. These titles are already popular among Japanese children because they have been selected along with many Japanese authors and foreign authors for use as Japanese language textbooks. These stories also include universal themes such as friendship, love and self-awareness. Additionally, they help young readers further expand their English vocabulary.



Eric Carle

- Major titles (out of 70 books):** *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, *Today is Monday*, *From Head to Toe*, *A House for Hermit Crab*, *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*, *The Mountain That Loved A Bird*, etc.
- Features:** colorful collage illustrations and multisensory features such as: holes, sounds, lights and textures.
- Characteristics:** simple Q & A, short repetitive phrases, universal themes such as: friendship, family, self-awareness, life cycle, etc.
- Titles adopted for Japanese textbooks:** *From Head to Toe*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, 1,2,3 to the Zoo (mostly for special-needs schools) *The Mountain That Loved A Bird* (upper graders)



Leo Lionni

- Major titles (out of 40 books):** *Swimmy*, *Frederik, Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse*, *Little Blue and Little Yellow*, *A Color of His Own*, *Fish is Fish*, *The Biggest House in the World*, etc.
- Features:** beautiful collage illustrations, different types of art technique
- Characteristics:** rich stories and themes, strong messages, 4 Caldecott Honor Awards
- Titles adopted for Japanese textbooks:** *Swimmy* (one of the most beloved picture books to be adopted for Japanese textbooks for many years), *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse*, *Frederick* (popular titles for Japanese textbooks for a long time before)



Arnold Lobel

- Major titles (out of 100 books including fables):** *Frog and Toad* series, *Owl at Home*, *Mouse Tales*, *Mouse Soup*, *Small Pig*, *Grasshopper*, etc.
- Features:** illustrations of beloved two characters of the "adventurous" Frog and the "bumbling" Toad, etc.
- Characteristics:** "friendship" as a main theme, easy and simple but carefully chosen vocabulary and phrases, a few award-winning books
- Titles adopted for Japanese textbooks and extensive reading:** *The Letter* (one of the most beloved picture books to be adopted for Japanese textbooks for many years, All *Frog and Toad* stories are included in HarperCollin's *I Can Read!* series)

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The link to the picture book survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_NHD10bMwC569LiRgbrUPSpXrRqgbkAGZIFWo251ZNY/edit

Learning with Picture Books by Three Familiar Authors Using the Charts (Miori Shimada, Anaheim University)

This presentation aims to discuss and explore the following questions by introducing the picture book categorization charts (based on the the works by three authors) that presenter developed:

- How are picture books useful for teachers in early learners' English classrooms?
- What words/phrases and activities are introduced to young learners of English through the use of picture books?
- How can teachers effectively use the categorization charts the author developed to arrange their lessons?

Literature Review

Why picture books?

Picture books are an important part of early language education (Leeper, 2003)

Storytelling activities encourage students to communicate in authentic ways and think critically. (Shin & Crandall, 2014)
their authentic language and rich quality (Nagai, 2017).

Picture books as multimodal text (Bearne, 2009; Stafford, 2010)

The way to introduce picture books and its application for EFL students (Kiefer, 1995; Ho, 2000; Nikolajeva, 2002)

Methodology (Survey questions)

The presenter has introduced her recently developed charts of the picture books by Eric Carle, Leo Lionni and Arnold Lobel since she started her research in 2004. A questionnaire sheet and an electronic survey have also been created in early 2020 in order to receive feedback from both veteran and novice teachers who looked at these charts. The survey includes Likert-scale items with a 1–5 scale and some open-ended questions for new ideas. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed, considered, and continuously reflected on in the evolution of the categorization charts that are shown below for more effective usage.

Categorization charts (modified by Shimada, 2006 & 2020)

Figure 1. Theme-based chart of Eric Carle books (18 titles out of 40)

| | *Unique features | **Simple & easy | **Series | **Self-awareness | **Friendship | **Family | **Responsibility | **Contrast | **Universe | **Life cycle |
|---|------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|--------------|----------|------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| The very hungry caterpillar | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| The very busy spider | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| I see a song | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| The mixed-up chameleon | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Mister seahorse | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| The tiny seed | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Walter the baker | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Have you seen my cat? | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| My apron | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Draw me a star | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| Papa, please get the moon for me | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| The grouchy ladybug | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| From head to toe | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Today is Monday | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Hello, red fox | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Dream snow | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | |

Figure 2. Content-based chart (Model chart) Content-based chart of *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni

| About the book | EFL lesson ideas |
|---|--|
| 1. Title, author/illustrator | 9. Activities |
| 2. Categories other than themes, titles(s) | |
| 3. Main character | |
| 4. Other special character(s) | |
| 5. Teachable words/subjects | 10. Other relevant book titles |
| 6. Teachable sentences/expressions | *--- Other educational items |
| 7. Special feature(s) of the book | |
| 8. Big book? Yes No | |
| About the book | EFL lesson ideas |
| 1. <i>Swimmy</i> , Leo Lionni | 9. -Big picture of <i>Swimmy</i> (class project) -Arts and crafts (making stamps with vegetables) -Fruit basket -Guessing game of sea animals -Board game based on the story -Discussion on other possible ways to chase big tunas away -Share stories of 'small beats big' |
| 2. Friendship/Solidarity/Responsibility | |
| 3. <i>Swimmy</i> | 10. Bremen town musicians, <i>Issunboshi</i> (A Japanese traditional story) |
| 4. Red little fish, tuna, jelly fish, lobster, strange fish, seaweeds, eel, sea anemones | *DVD/VHS, musical book |
| 5. Nature, body parts, underwater creatures, adjectives to express emotional feelings, verbs and tense | |
| 6. "(Subject) look like (person/animal)" "(Subject) (verb) like (person/animal/plant)" "(Subject) chase (person/animal) away" | |
| 7. Glass painting, stamp, finger print | |
| 8. Big book? Yes | |

Figure 3. Content-based chart of *The Letter & A Lost Button* by Arnold Lobel.

| About the book | EFL lesson ideas |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>The Letter</i> , Arnold Lobel | 9. -Writing a letter to friends -Think of other ways (beside writing a letter) to encourage your friends -Create another story after the ending (Continuation of the story) -Create similar stories by changing animals -Create a Venn diagram of a frog and a toad -Frog quizzes 10. Other stories from 'Frog and Toad' series <i>Where Are You Going? To See My Friend</i> (Eric Carle) |
| 2. 'Frog and Toad' series, Friendship | |
| 3. Frog, Toad | |
| 4. Snail | |
| 5. letter, mail, mailbox, pencil, paper, envelop, anyone/ someone/no one, friend, send, write, take (a letter) to, give (a letter) to | |
| 6. (Subject) am/is/are pleased to (verb), (Subject) make(s) (person) (adjective). | *Arnold Lobel Collection/Box books Coloring book, Read aloud CD |
| 7. None | |
| 8. Big book? No | |
| About the book [3] | EFL lesson ideas |
| 1. <i>A Lost Button</i> , Arnold Lobel | 9. -Share your experience when you lost and found something -Create similar stories by changing a 'lost' object 10. Other stories from 'Frog and Toad' series <i>Have You Seen My Cat?</i> (Eric Carle) |
| 2. 'Frog and Toad' series, Cooperation, Friendship | |
| 3. Frog, Toad | |
| 4. Sparrow, racoon | |
| 5. colors, shapes, button, hole, pocket, sew(ing), scream/shout, meadow, river, tree, woods, home/house, thin/thick, lose/ look for/find | *Arnold Lobel Collection/Box books Coloring book, Read aloud CD |
| 6. Past tense, future tense, That is not my (noun). My (object) is/are (adjective). (Subject) is/are (adjective). Did (subject) (verb) (noun)? | |
| 7. None | |
| 8. Big book? No | |

Results

~Survey question responses (N = 6)~

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|-----|------------|----------------|
| | (weak)1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (strong) | NA (no answer) |
| 1. How effective do you think these charts are when selecting storybooks? | | | | (1) | (4) | (1) |
| 2. How effective do you think these charts are when designing your lessons? | | | | (1) | (2) | (2) |
| 3. (Irrelevant question to this study) | | | | | | |
| 4. Do you think the charts would become more effective if translations are provided? Yes | (4) | | | No | (1) | Yes & No |
| 5. Could you think of any other items that should be included in a chart? | | | | | | (1) |
| Responses: length of the book, level of difficulty, charts that categorize books by grammar points, more spaces where writing is done, categorizing activities, pronunciation activities, focus on one theme | | | | | | |
| 6. In order to expand the charts and make them beneficial for teachers, which way do you think would be the most effective? | | | | | | |
| a) Upload them to the web. | | | | | | (2) |
| b) Upload them to the web and provide online discussion forums. | | | | | | (1) |
| c) Make them into a booklet. | | | | | | (1) |
| d) Upload them on the web and provide video clips to show some demo-activities. | | | | | | (1) |
| e) Both b) & d). | | | | | | (1) |

Discussion & Conclusion

In order to make the answers to research questions more concrete and practical,

*The content-based chart should include more information such as: length of books, levels, grammar points, and activity details, etc.

*The charts seem helpful when applying new picture books. In addition, teachers are interested in referring to the charts in a web format.

*For the evolution of charts, a few more personal information items (gender, age, native/nonnative status, etc.) as well as questionnaire items (preferred book titles, preferred book authors, favorite activities, and activities often done in class) should be added to the survey questions.

*More presentations are necessary for getting feedback on the charts

*The presenter need to approach large teacher groups or organizations to conduct further research activities.

Future Directions

*Provide a website for teachers who have a desire to incorporate picture books into their classrooms more actively.

*Upload the categorization charts and include updated information.

*Increase the charts by other titles by different authors who are familiar to children.

*Offer workshops to apply picture books and give some activities mentioned in the charts, and get more feedback from novice teachers.

*Add a relevant column/section such as "song use" as some books include music or can be sung along.

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