USING PICTUREBOOKS TO INTRODUCE ART HISTORY AND APPRECIATION CONCEPTS TO YOUNG CHILDREN: A GUIDE FOR HOMESCHOOL EDUCATORS

By

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For my capstone project, I examined how picturebooks could be used to teach art history and art appreciation to very young children. I used an action research model to conduct the study with the purpose of discovering which teaching methods and strategies work best with picturebooks and children. After categorizing a collection of art picturebooks, I conducted several in-person studies with my three-year-old daughter and homeschool students ages five, six, and seven in which we discussed images from art picturebooks and completed art projects related to them. During the interviews based on questions from the Visual Thinking Strategies approach, I recorded observations and later evaluated the children’s art projects by examining how well they reflected the big ideas of the lessons. I also researched existing theories and studies about the use of picturebooks as teaching tools. After collecting and analyzing this data, I wrote an online art picturebook guide for parents and homeschool educators found at www.artpicturebooks.com.
My capstone paper describes my motivation for conducting this project, plus my research process, teaching methods, findings, and recommendations. The children who participated in this project showed interest in and the ability to discuss the art images they saw from the picturebooks while being guided by questions from me. Recommendations for further study include conducting a picturebook study with a larger number of young children. I conclude the paper with final insights on how parents and educators can look at and talk about art picturebooks with their young children.
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Some of the first exposure people have to art is through picturebooks. A picturebook is an aesthetic object in of itself in which the story cannot exist without the illustrations (Sipe, 2001). The term picturebook—as one word—is utilized intentionally in order to emphasize the unity of words and pictures (Sipe, 2001). The best picturebooks become timeless miniature art galleries for the home—a coming together of concept, artwork, design and production that gives pleasure to and stimulates the imagination (Salisbury & Styles, 2012). If storytime and exposure to picturebooks are so beneficial to the development in student visual literacy, narrative, and creativity skills, then why not use them as tools to expose them to visual art appreciation and history (Agoglia, 2008; Sipe, 2001)?

For my capstone project, I examined how homeschool educators can use picturebooks as tools to foster an appreciation for art history in young children. I first chose the picturebooks to use in this study that relate to art, artworks, and artists by categorizing them based on common themes. I then conducted several personal studies with my own three-year-old and three homeschool students ages 5, 6, and 7 using the art picturebooks I chose. After getting an idea of the children’s interests in art picturebooks, I then created five art picturebook lessons and performed all of them with my three-year-old and parts of two of them with the homeschool students. I showed images from the picturebooks to the children and asked them questions based on the Visual Thinking Strategies method to explore ideas such as using art to tell stories as well as exploring identity, fantasy, and time through art (Housen & Yenawine, 2014). I also used the picturebooks to introduce the children to art vocabulary, art media, works of art, specific artists and their influences, art styles and periods, motivation behind works and how they’re a reflection of a certain time period. Existing studies and research including those conducted by Sipe (2001), and Marantz (1992) also contributed to this study. I used an action research model and gathered
and analyzed my data continuously from my personal study and discovered what strategies and techniques worked best.

As an outcome of this project, I created an online guide containing tips on how homeschool teachers (including parents of young children) can use picturebooks to teach an appreciation for art history to young children. This online resource also includes a blog in which I review children’s art picturebooks to help parents and educators decide which books they might find useful, a blog documenting some of my experiences with my daughter and homeschool students during this project, lessons to try at home, a feedback page to help make my lessons stronger, and helpful picturebook references. This is an excellent resource that introduces youngsters to the world of art past and present in a way they will understand and enjoy.

**Statement of the Problem**

In this study, I developed a guide for homeschool educators and parents using picturebooks as tools to teach young children art appreciation and art history. I chose to do this study because there is a lack of information on the Web and in print on how to use picturebooks as a teaching tool for the homeschool teacher and in art history. This problem should be studied because our world is increasingly visual and image-based. Developing the ability to compose, consume, communicate, and think critically in our visually saturated world begins at an early age (Agoglia, 2008). Young children should have visual tools accessible to them like picturebooks to learn about important subjects like art history (Sipe, 2001). Art history is an important part of every person’s cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987). There is certain common knowledge that everyone should know in order to understand each other and to flourish academically and later professionally. Art history is a part of that common cultural literacy, so teaching it to very young children is important (Hirsch, 1987). Preschool is not too early to start by introducing children to
their own personal art histories that usually start at home by finding and discovering family history through personal artifacts and found objects (Hirsch, 1987; Szekely, 1991). The information generated from this study will show how to start this undertaking of teaching art history to young kids by using picturebooks.

**Purpose or Goals of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to discover methods for using picturebooks to teach young children about art appreciation and art history. At a time when children are developing emotionally and socially in search of an emerging identity, images, including those from books, can help shape these things in young children (Thompson, 2003). This is significant for youngsters also while learning art history because learning about artworks from the past and being able to ask questions about them and tell their stories begins to give children the tools to construct and make meaning of their own worlds, past, present, and future (Pazienza, 1986). Learning art history will also give young children the equality of performance they deserve from the start rather than waiting when they are older when it is almost too late to start cultural literacy instruction (Hirsch, 1987). This study resulted in a model that homeschool art educators of preschoolers and early elementary art students can follow that include specific lessons on how to use picturebooks to teach art history principles and concepts such as using art to tell stories, and to explore the themes of identity, fantasy, and time in art.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided my investigation. I answered these questions by using qualitative methods including interviews, observations, and assessing art projects.

1) How can homeschool educators use picturebooks to teach art appreciation and art history to young children?
2) What teaching and learning strategies can be used to teach art appreciation and art history with picturebooks? Sub-questions to my research questions are: What picturebooks are available on art history and art appreciation? Which of these picturebooks are appropriate for young readers? What art history themes and concepts are found in picturebooks that can be used to help young children make meaning of their world?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Although there have been numerous studies conducted on the use of picturebooks, there have been very few on using picturebooks to teach art appreciation to young children and none actually attempting to use picturebooks to teach these subjects with young children. Yet, there is some evidence to suggest this type of study would benefit children culturally, creatively, and analytically (Hirsch, 1987; Saccardi; 2007, Sipe; 2001). Young kids could see what fun it is to learn about the past from a picturebook while telling stories (Sipe, 2001). They would also learn how to discuss, look at, and interpret paintings in simple ways that would give them academic and social skills necessary throughout school and life (Saccardi, 2007). Finally, there is certain knowledge all people should know to function effectively in society and get ahead, and art history should be used in that epistemology (Hirsch, 1987, Gallas, 1991).

Using picturebooks to teach art history is also significant because it would foster young children’s imagination and “the imagination is the gateway to a broader and deeper understanding of what it means to be human” (Sipe, 2001, p. 209). Dewey (1934) argued that the fine arts have been drastically separated from everyday experience and that this separation has led to an impoverishment of human life. Using picturebooks during commonplace and everyday experiences like storytime to teach art history would be a strong way to break down
this separation. Young children would also learn creatively how to construct their own realities through art (Sipe, 2001; Pazienza, 1986).

**Assumptions**

Before beginning this study, I assumed that young children have the right to receive help when trying to understand and make meaning of all the images they see, including those in picturebooks. I also assumed that children would benefit from learning art history and that they’d be able to appropriately connect that learning to present day circumstances such as how art educator Baxter’s (2012) class discovered when learning how to see similarities in contemporary family photos and fine works of art hanging in museums and galleries. I assumed that using picturebooks would make the subject of art history more approachable and relatable to young children. Lastly, I assumed that it is the homeschool art educator’s responsibility to bring picturebooks into the home and use them to have conversations with children about the concepts of art history such as artists’ styles and influences, art as a reflection of a certain period, and how each work of art tells a specific story.

**Limitations**

The study is limited in that it only investigates certain instructional strategies used to teach art appreciation and art history on four children ranging in age three to seven with similar backgrounds. The study also took place during a limited period of time and did not allow for a longitudinal study. It is also limited in that it uses an action research approach, and it is difficult to measure change, which is key in action research (Parkin, 2009). Also objectivity comes into question since I evaluated my own teaching practice. I overcame these limitations by gathering and analyzing data rigorously as well as sharing all of my data for others to evaluate.
**Definition of Terms**

**Art history.** Art history is also called art historiography. It is the historical study of the visual arts, being concerned with identifying, classifying, describing, evaluating, interpreting, and understanding the art products and historic development of the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, the decorative arts, drawing, printmaking, photography, interior design, etc.

Art historical research has two primary concerns. The first is (1) to discover who made a particular art object (attribution), (2) to authenticate an art object, determining whether it was indeed made by the artist to whom it is traditionally attributed, (3) to determine at what stage in a culture’s development or in an artist’s career the object in question was made, (4) to assay the influence of one artist on succeeding ones in the historical past, and (5) to gather biographical data on artists and documentation (provenance) on the previous whereabouts and ownership of particular works of art. The second primary concern of art historical research is to understand the stylistic and formal development of artistic traditions on a large scale and within a broad historical perspective; this chiefly involves the enumeration and analysis of the various artistic styles, periods, movements, and schools of the past. Art history also involves iconography, which is the analysis of symbols, themes, and subject matter in the visual arts, particularly the meaning of religious symbolism in Christian art (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013).

**Early childhood education.** Early childhood education is dedicated to creating educational programs and strategies specifically for children from birth to age eight. Specifically, the educators’ mission is to promote the arts as essential to early learning and to advocate for programs where art experiences are integral to the education of young children (ECAE, 2012).
**Picturebooks.** The term picturebooks refers to literature with a synergistic combination of words and pictures where both the visual and verbal texts are necessary to tell the story (Sipe, 1998).

**Visual literacy.** A term coined by John Debes in the 1960s that refers to the ability to evaluate, apply, or create conceptual visual representations (Salisbury & Styles, 2012).

Yenawine (1997) describes visual literacy as:

The ability to find meaning in imagery. It involves a set of skills ranging from simple identification (naming what one sees) to complex interpretation on contextual, metaphoric and philosophical levels. Many aspects of cognition are called upon, such as personal association, questioning, speculating, analyzing, fact-finding, and categorizing. Objective understanding is the premise of much of this literacy, but subjective and affective aspects of knowing are equally important.

**Visual thinking strategies.** The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) teaching method and school curriculum centers on open-ended yet highly-structured discussions of visual art, that have been shown to significantly increase students' critical thinking, language and literacy skills. Through the VTS individual and group 'problem-solving' process, students cultivate a willingness and ability to present their own ideas, while respecting and learning from the perspectives of their peers. Coined by German-born author and psychologist Rudolf Arnheim, whose primary book shares the same name, "Visual Thinking" stands paramount in Abigail Housen's "empirical research" and resulting theory of aesthetic development. The application of Housen, Arnheim, Piaget and others constitute the genesis and ongoing theoretical underpinnings behind the development of Visual Thinking Strategies methods and curricula (Housen & Yenawine, 2014).


**Literature Review**

This literature review explores how picturebooks can be used to teach art appreciation as well as ways to teach art history to young children. The included literature illuminates what research has already been conducted on picturebook studies and what still needs to be further explored. While researching literature on picturebooks, art, and early childhood education by scholars that have helped inform my study such as Sipe (2001), Saccardi (2007), Marantz (1992), I found a lot of studies describing the value of using picturebooks to teach subjects such as art, reading, and writing. However, I did not find much research on designing an art history curriculum for young children, and virtually no research using picturebooks to teach art history. I wanted to add to the research on picturebook studies by actively researching and designing an online guide for homeschool teachers that specifically describes how picturebooks can be used to teach art appreciation and art history to young children. Issues involved in using picturebooks to teach art and issues of teaching art history to young children discussed in the articles I read that seem most pertinent to my study point out why art history should be taught to very young children, indicate that picturebooks can be used to develop visual perception in early childhood, and suggest how best to introduce young students to artists, works of art, and art styles from the past primarily by learning how to make artworks of the past a story that connects to children’s present stories and lives.

I found a few key concepts and strategies in the literature I reviewed in this study. Mitchell (1990), Sipe (2001), and Saccardi (2007) all discuss reasons why educators can and should teach art history to young children, specifically with the help of literature. Salisbury and Styles (2012) and Marantz (1992) discuss how art educators can use picturebooks as art teaching tools to develop visual perception in very young children. Finally, Sipe (2001), Saccardi (2007),
Pazienza (1986), and Baxter (2012) all discuss how we should approach the idea of introducing artists, works of art, and art styles from the past to very young students mainly by turning artworks of the past into stories that connects to children’s present stories and lives.

**Postmodern Early Childhood Art Education: Incorporating Art History**

Children lead rather complicated lives now where experiences of their everyday lives have a huge impact on their understanding of art. Art history needs to be a part of this understanding and common knowledge, and thus should be integrated into the early childhood art education curriculum (Hirsch, 1987; Gallas, 1991). Dewey (1934) argued that the fine arts have been drastically separated from everyday experience and that this separation has led to an impoverishment of human life. Using picturebooks during commonplace and everyday experiences like storytime to teach art history might be an effective way to break down this separation (Sipe, 2001). Using picturebooks to teach art history is also significant because it would foster young children’s imagination, and “the imagination is the gateway to a broader and deeper understanding of what it means to be human” (Sipe, 2001, p. 209).

Some educators may argue that young children, specifically toddlers and preschoolers, are not developmentally prepared for learning art history. Designing an effective and meaningful curriculum for young children based on their development and stages of learning is something that has been contemplated since acknowledgement of institutionalized education began (Dewey, 1902). However, with the success of several elementary and preschool art educators, such as Saccardi (2007), Styles and Arizpe (Salisbury & Styles, 2012), and Baxter (2012), the idea should not be discounted. For example, Styles and Arizpe conducted a study in which they extensively analyzed the reactions of 100 children to picturebooks, and found that many young children were able to formulate clever and perceptive responses to picturebooks far beyond what
might be expected of them developmentally (Salisbury & Styles, 2012). Baxter (2012) found that her students showed a willingness to deepen their understanding of art through the unconventional method of using personal snapshots to connect with fine works of art at museums and galleries. Through the study of past art, students were able to see how art and life is connected past and present. Repositioning young children’s understanding of art may begin to ameliorate a restrictive view of child art and understanding characterized as either pure expression or a movement through stages toward visual realism (McClure, 2011).

By focusing on the traditional view of development, creativity, and individualism to explain children’s understanding of art by viewing art history as too difficult for young children, including toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners to comprehend, leads to an undervaluation of the children’s ability to understand past art. Early childhood educator Canella (1997) points out that developmental stages, with their implicit assumptions of deficit, marginalize the child as "other." This idea of rejecting the universality of developmental stages to explain children’s understanding of art is gaining popularity and builds upon the beginning postmodern views on art education and visual culture largely initiated by Duncum (2001). In contrast, to this view, Lowenfeld (1964) believed that the teacher must know the child and his or her creative needs in order to understand him to fully connect and that early childhood art education is linked to developmental stages. Perhaps this view is based on where we’ve been and Sipe (2001), Saccardi (2007), McClure (2011), and Duncum (2001) are thinking about art education more in terms of our current world. Sipe and Saccardi have taken chances in their thoughts and teaching practices instead of relying on the accepted traditional way of teaching and believe many young children should and can developmentally handle learning art history and images from their visual culture of picturebooks.
How Picturebooks Develop Visual Perceptions

When used effectively by an adult, picturebooks can be valuable teaching tools that help develop visual perceptions, even in art history, in very young children. According to Styles and Salisbury (2012), the pictures in picturebooks enable children to interpret ideas in a more sophisticated way than might be expected given their age, and there is a huge potential of learning by looking. In addition, leading proponent of using picturebooks, Marantz (1992), found that parents of five year olds have reported that their children have become able to recognize the work of individual picturebook artists and pick them from the works of others after having read and discussed these artists in class. Sipe (2001) also discovered the same findings in his own classroom in which students declared, “Tomie de Paola did those pictures” after viewing a de Paola picturebook even before Sipe began teaching (p. 207). Young students were also noted as recognizing very different styles of illustrations. Sipe’s students could see that de Paola had rounder figures and harsher lines, yet they could see illustrator Jerry Pinkey created a different style. A first grader even remarked regarding Pinkey’s impressionistic and dappled watercolor effect that “he uses a lot of colors, like not just one green but lots of greens, and it looks like it's sparkling or something” (Sipe, 2001, p. 208). Students also began to recognize specific artistic styles and influences in other picturebooks. Months after studying Pointillism and Seurat, one first-grader remarked that the grainy illustrations by Chris Van Allsburg looked like Seurat’s work. In conclusion, young children can visually perceive things such as art styles and influences in picturebooks much more so than educators previously thought based on developmental stage theory. Because of this documented ability in young children, I believe it is possible for them to learn art history by using picturebooks, especially by telling stories.
Introducing Young Children to Art History by Using Art to Tell Stories

Young children learn best through dramatic play and interaction with their environment. Sensory-motor play, practice play, symbolic play, and games with rules are all various types of play identified by early childhood researcher Piaget (Revenson & Singer, 1996). They are ways that young children learn while performing kinesthetic activities. When storytelling is combined with dramatic play to teach art history, young students better retain the information (Saccardi, 2007). Telling stories is one important factor to help people retain information by making information ‘stick’ (Heath & Heath, 2008). According to Heath (2008), “A story provides simulation (knowledge about how to act) and inspiration (motivation to act)” (p. 206).

Storytelling is also an important activity that helps young kids and everyone in the construction of meaning, culture itself, and the world (Walsh, 1993). Art tells a story and teaching young children how to use art to tell stories is a great way to teach them about the world around them. Teaching art history is a part of that world and can be most effectively taught to young children through telling stories, so it seems natural that picturebooks could aid in that storytelling.

One way stories have been used in previous studies to teach art history to young children successfully is by connecting the fine works of art to photographs of children’s family members (Baxter, 2012). Szekely (1991) discovered that children enjoy finding old objects as well as talking and playing with them all while developing their own personal art histories that usually start at home. Other successful methods from elementary educator Saccardi (2007) who has been teaching art history to elementary school children for thirteen years include telling a dramatic story in the point of view of a person or artist from the past and then acting out what was learned and making an art project to reflect that understanding. Young children have the
ability to talk about works of art as a story in simple terms that help them see that those stories of
the past are relevant to them today.

**Application to Research**

From the scholars I have consulted, I have learned about important studies and literature
on picturebooks that can be used to teach art. These scholars discussed how young children
benefit from looking at and reading picturebooks mainly in the classroom. However, there still
needs to be more research specifically addressing how young children understand art history and
how they could learn the subject from a teacher using picturebooks. This will help homeschool
teachers better utilize materials available to them to teach significant subjects to their children,
ultimately setting them up for more academic achievement in the future.

**Methodology**

I used a qualitative research method with an action research approach to conduct my
study. See the IRB forms in Appendix A, interview questions in Appendix B, and consent form
in Appendix C. Expert Maxwell (2004) described qualitative research as offering strengths when
a researcher tries to identify causality in particular cases, realizes the importance of context as
integral to causal process and the role of meaning and interpretive understandings in causal
explanation. I kept these thoughts in mind when conducting and interpreting my research by
remembering that certain variables can create cause and effect relationships. When analyzing
research results in a qualitative study, it is important for the researcher to put the results into
context.

During the Spring 2014 term, I collected and categorized children’s picturebooks related
to art that I chose based on the criteria discussed in the below in the “Subjects” section. For two
months, I introduced these picturebooks to my preschooler in lessons I thought would help her
understand art appreciation and art history. I also discussed two art picturebooks with three
students that I previously homeschool during three online meetings. After activities and questions like the ones described in Appendix B based on the Visual Thinking Strategies, I evaluated my data and changed the lessons accordingly. I then created an online resource for homeschool teachers and parents in which I present tips, lessons, art picturebook reviews, and ongoing experiences of looking at picturebooks during this project. They may leave feedback and fill out a questionnaire based on their experiences with my lessons.

Subjects

The lessons I created for my capstone project are centered around picturebooks that I chose based on the following criteria: 1) the picturebooks must reference art in some manner such as past artworks, stories of artists’ lives, or taking trips and traveling to see art; 2) the picturebooks must be contemporary and published within the past 20 years; 3) the books must collectively reflect a wide range of time periods and cultures; and, lastly, 4) the picturebooks must be fictional narratives. The thirteen books are *Jelly Bean’s Art Museum Adventure* by Kathy Kelly, *Katie Meets the Impressionists* by James Mayhew; *Augustine* by Mélanie Watt; *Journey* by Aaron Becker; *The Cave Painter of Lascaux* by Roberta Angeletti, *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* by Duncan Tonatiuh; *Hadrian, the Dog of Pompeii* by Matthew Frederick; *Art and Max* by David Wiesner; *Henri’s Scissors* by Jeanette Winter; *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* by Laban Carrick Hill; *The Adventures of Bella and Harry: Let’s Visit Venice!* By Lisa Manzione; *Little Mouse’s Painting* by Diane Wolkstein; and *Dream Something Big: The Story of the Watts Towers* by Dianna Hutts Aston.

I also studied 1 preschooler (was a toddler when study began), 1 kindergartener, 1 first grader, and 1 second grader who I once taught in my home. I secured permission to include these children in this study by speaking to their parents. I gave them a detailed description of my

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1 I am using pseudo-names to protect the confidentiality of my subjects.
study and consent forms to approve or deny (Appendix B, C). Participation was absolutely voluntary and results and names of minors will remain anonymous.

**Research Site**

The research study was mainly conducted at my home in Minnesota as well as at a local public library. We utilized several rooms of my home to conduct lessons including the kitchen while sitting at a table, in the den, and in two bedrooms. I conducted the lessons with the three homeschool boys online on Skype while I sat at the kitchen table, and they sat on the couch in their living room.

**Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation**

Once I decided how to connect with and teach young children art appreciation and art history by using picturebooks, I was able to better think about which books to choose in this study. I initially collected data by categorizing all the picturebooks that I chose to decide which to use in certain lessons. The categories I used were picturebooks that discuss an artist’s life, picturebooks that reference specific works of art, picturebooks that discuss art movements or time periods, picturebooks that describe taking trips to locations to see art such as in museums or back in time, and picturebooks that use works of art for *seek and discover* activities or “I spy” purposes. I used existing literature in addition to my own list of books to help create my lesson guide. I also observed my three homeschool children online, my own child at home and at the public library in Minnesota, and took field notes during those observations. I had the five, six, and seven year old boys look at picturebooks at home while I watched on a webcam. I also had copies of the same books and asked them questions and had them complete activities, which are found in Appendix B. I completed this study after IRB (Appendix A) approval and after the parents read and signed the Parental Consent form (Appendix C). I introduced picturebooks
intended for young children to my three-year-old each week during this study and made notes of what she remembered from them, what she told me she saw, and if she mentioned artistic components such as color, artists’ names, or if she told short stories while looking at them. I then created my online guide reference while simultaneously reviewing fictional picturebooks about art on a blog. I offer an area of feedback on the online resource where homeschool teachers can fill in answers to a questionnaire that I created, and I will continue revising my lessons according to the feedback after this project.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

I developed a teaching guide that discusses how parents and homeschool educators can use picturebooks to teach young children art appreciation and art history after I collected my data and analyzed the results using action research methods. The term action research was coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the mid-1940s and is an approach that teachers and facilitators use to critically evaluate problems encountered on a regular basis while teaching to correct those problems most effectively by developing the strongest teaching techniques (Adelman, 1993). I constantly revised my teaching methods and techniques to what connected best with young children.

I utilized action research data analysis strategies where I triangulated my data specifically using data, methodical, and environmental triangulation. First, I interpreted the results of my short interviews with students, my observations, and student artwork. I used several children subjects of different ages to see if that yielded various results. I also constantly changed the environment and setting of where I taught my lessons including the location, time of day, and activity of when I taught the lessons. I kept looking back at the data I collected initially to the data I collected in the end. I looked for comments or observations that stood out that may go
against common beliefs, especially about young children not understanding art history. From there, I created charts to help categorize the data. I developed themes from the data and then subgroups of those themes. Finally, I reflected on and shared all of my findings on my website (www.artpicturebooks.com).

**Findings**

My goal for this study was to discover what methods work effectively when using picturebooks to teach art appreciation and art history to young children. I questioned, how can homeschool educators use picturebooks to teach art appreciation and art history to young children? What picturebooks are available on art history and art appreciation? What art history themes and concepts are found in picturebooks that can be used to help young children make meaning of their world? I will discuss my findings in this section in which I talk about how the children of my study consistently made self-associations with the images that they saw in the picturebooks, how I used every “perfect” moment to teach my lessons, how actively telling stories through art where the children were participants was essential in these lessons, and finally if the children began to develop an understanding of art history.

**Connecting Picturebook Images to the Self**

I looked at 13 picturebooks about art with four young children. I examined and discussed all of the picturebooks with my three-year-old, Evelyn, and two of them with a five, six, and seven-year-old. My observations came from a whole year of looking at picturebooks with my daughter and then completing the five lessons with her from my website www.artpicturebooks.com over the span of two months. I met with the three boys during three meetings online on Skype. The first meeting was unsuccessful because I had the boys meet with me together. Then, I successfully discussed *Katie Meets the Impressionists* with them separately,
and then a week later we looked at and talked about *Journey* again separately. While we were looking at the picturebooks together, I asked the children questions based on the *Visual Thinking Strategies* (VTS) teaching method. I asked questions like, “What is going on in this picture?” “What do you see that makes you say that?” “What more can we find?”

After these questions were posed, each of the children made meaning of the images they saw in the picturebooks by comparing them to activities and experiences of their own lives. For example, back in May 2013 just after my daughter turned two, I noticed she related the characters and figures in picturebooks back to herself or her own relatives. In *Dave the Potter: Poet, Artist, Slave*, Evelyn saw Dave spinning clay at the potter’s wheel and said, “He’s working on wood like grandpa.” Her grandpa has a work bench area outside and Evelyn recently watched in awe as he sawed wood in his backyard. Or when she saw the mouse in *Little Mouse’s Painting* standing at his easel painting, she compared herself to him and exclaimed, “Look he has an easel and paints like me!” Understanding this point will help when using picturebooks to teach art history because educators and parents can integrate student experiences in a way to hook the young children’s interest. Just seeing the little mouse paint at an easel like she does was exciting enough for Evelyn to become engaged in the whole book.

Young children relating picturebook images to their personal lives and experiences also led the way for using that characteristic when teaching art history and art appreciation themes. The five lessons I created explore five different themes found in art. They are storytelling in art, expressing identity in art, fantasy and imagination in art, time and history in art, and finally exploring different art media. The children often identified with these themes, that we explored together by looking at art picturebooks, by thinking about how they related to what they personally liked or disliked and what they’ve seen and done in their short lives.
For example, when I looked at *Augustine* with Evelyn, she learned about the identity of Augustine first and then related that information back to her own identity. While looking at the images of Augustine coloring during her recess period trying to find a way to express herself to her classmates about her own interests and experiences, Evelyn stated, “I like to color too!” She also said, “She’s (Augustine’s) a little girl like me Evelyn.” Then, in *Journey*, she exclaimed that the doors in the images were “red and purple doors but not white like mine. Her door is like our door. The same shape, but not the same color.” I think in just about every book we looked at, Evelyn asked if the main character was her or living in her house. A year ago, she would point to the main characters and ask, “Who is that?” However now, in just about every art project we completed, Evelyn represented a face somewhere within it that was either supposed to embody her or one of her family members. Figures 1 through 5 all reveal elements of these faces within them (See List of Figures, p. 54-55). The few art project exceptions to the tendency of representing her own face still reveal Evelyn’s interests. She claimed that the art projects found in Figures 6 and 7 show her favorite colors of pink and purple as well as her favorite personal item of flowers (p. 56).

The two older boys Max (age 7) and Jacob (age 6) never asked if the characters were representations of themselves, but did connect the images to things that they had seen or to things that they liked and didn’t like. When viewing the image of the girl entering the enchanted forest through her hand-drawn door, Max said, “Oh that looks like a park or something I’ve seen before.” Also while viewing the entire picturebook of *Journey*, Max thought that the main character drew “really weird magical things” that he’d never care to draw. The six-year-old boy, Jacob, also became irritated when he noticed that the girl kept using the color red to draw. “I see
blue and pink, but ugh the same color red. I don’t like that.” They seemed to be focused more on what they didn’t like rather than what they did.

Making Every Moment a Teachable One

Making every moment a teachable one is what usually made or broke lessons for the day. I had to find or create the perfect moment to teach using the art picturebooks. Environmental factors were integral for the success of each lesson. The timing had to be just right, the setting had to be constantly varied, and making it a playful activity rather than formal lesson almost always worked. With my daughter who recently turned three, I had to constantly catch and keep her attention. I found that I could never approach the lesson in the same way three times in a row. Twice was fine, but after that, Evelyn anticipated what was coming and wanted to do something new.

For example, Evelyn enjoyed sitting down and looking at the picturebooks with me at first, but then after a few lessons, she suggested we should play. So, while she was already role playing, I showed her images from art picturebooks and asked her questions about them in whatever character she was pretending to be (Figure 8, p. 57). But after several lessons, this tactic didn’t work as strongly. Therefore, I decided to change the setting, and took Evelyn to the library (Figure 9, p. 57). This change in scenery seemed to recharge her enthusiasm for art picturebooks.

I also had successful lessons with Evelyn while she was building something like blocks or performing in any play activity already that interested her. In fact, she started playing as a result of viewing the images of some of the picturebooks. In Journey, Evelyn saw that the main character found a ring and she said, “It’s a circle like a hula hoop.” Then, she sauntered off to find her own hula hoop to start hula hooping. The same thing happened when she saw the little
In Journey, a girl from Journey bicycling with her new friend. Evelyn had to immediately go and ride her bike. Playing while looking at picturebooks even worked well on Skype with the older boys. One of the boys engaged in constructive play while we were discussing images and built a structure for me similar to one that he saw built in Journey (Figure 10, p. 58). Acting out the book helped him make meaning from the story while calming his nerves, which I will discuss next in the Telling Stories through Art section. Making the lessons something fantastical also helped. When I saw Evelyn was making a fort constructed of blankets, I brought the art picturebooks inside and starting showing her images informally. She made looking at the picturebooks that day a literal adventure by pretending to be sitting around a campfire then flying on a magic carpet ride all while we discussed images from the picturebooks (Figure 11, p. 58).

Then after all of this role playing and pretending during lessons, I tried having a sit-down lesson at the kitchen table where I set the table up like a school desk and said, “We are going to have a lesson like a big girl at school.” That worked like a charm the first time in which Evelyn shouted, “Yay like school!” Constantly improvising to approach the lessons seemed to be an effective teaching method. I even learned a few things by chance. While I was busy writing something, I noticed Evelyn sat down and started looking through the art picturebooks for future lessons that I had left out. She was intrigued and started asking me questions about all of the pages and story, so simply leaving the materials out for young children to find can create the perfect teachable moment.

**Telling Stories through Art**

Focusing on telling stories through art also proved to be beneficial in this study. Dramatically telling a story about the artists and artwork shown in the picturebooks while getting the children to participate in the story was a consistently effective method to use (Figure 12, p.
Including personal items from around the house also helped tell and bring these stories to life visually. In fact, Evelyn just so happened to be pretending to be the kitten Marie from the *Aristocats* movie while she found a ball of yarn. We were looking at the picturebook, *Jelly Bean’s Art Museum Adventure*, together when Evelyn placed the yarn on top of the pages to show what yarn Jelly Bean could have been chasing at the museum (Figure 13, p. 59). She even held the yarn in her hands the whole time we discussed images and pulled the strings as if soothing herself.

Every little nuance aided in telling enticing stories such as enthusiasm, costumes, and role playing. Each item found at home used as a prop helped the children to make meaning of the story that we had read together, but they also began to use those objects to tell their own story and personal art history similar to what Szekely (1991) found in his artroom when teaching art history to young children. Telling stories through art ended up being such an integral component of several classes that I dedicated a whole lesson to the topic in my online teaching resource that could take about three to four weeks to complete. I again asked children questions based on the VTS teaching method during the Storytelling in Art Lesson. I found that all the children naturally told a short story of their own to explain the images that they saw in the picturebooks. Although Lowenfeld (1964) discovered that at beginning stages of childhood development, usually ages two to four, young children make an inventory and list items they see in images and then begin telling stories as they get older, I observed that all the children in my study listed and told stories to an extent. In fact, the oldest child who is seven-years-old was the one out of the four who listed items he saw the most frequently and my three-year-old told the most stories.

During this part of the study, I also learned some things that didn’t work that I fixed for our second meeting, and more things that didn’t work that I will fix in future meetings. While
we met the first time, the atmosphere was chaotic, and none of us could really hear each other as everyone was talking at once. Therefore, I suggested that during the second and third meetings, I should talk to each boy separately. We had long and excellent discussions. I discovered that Max was the realist of the group that liked to point out facts. Jacob was fascinated by the characters in the images and tried to look at the pictures closely to figure out what they were doing. Finally, Henry was reserved and shy being the youngest but related what he saw in the images to things that made more sense to him. For example, when Katie in *Katie Meets the Impressionists* was kneeling and picking up flowers, he made sense of what she was doing by thinking of her position related to an animal he liked, a horse. However, when it came time to creating the art projects, the youngest boy didn’t want to. We had just participated in long discussions about the images, and he said he wanted to complete the art projects alone without me watching. In the end, only the older two boys completed the “Illustrating a Story” drawing because the youngest said that he had forgotten what he had seen.

I asked the children to create an image of the story *Katie Meets the Impressionists*. I wanted to see what image details and information from the story they retained. I also wanted to see how they would interpret the images that they had just viewed into their own art. Who would reproduce what they had seen or who would make the images their own? Evelyn and Jacob depicted the same image in varying ways. They both chose to create the scene where Katie is kneeling and picking flowers while the *Girl with a Watering Can’s* mother scolds Katie for destroying her garden. Jacob drew a composition with the mother and Katie, but he replaced the *Girl with a Watering Can* with a boy, Jean Monet (Figure 14, p. 60). Jean was Claude Monet’s son, and through his eyes, we learned about his father, the artist. Evelyn attempted to depict a hill with soil and flowers in purple (Figure 15, p. 60). However, she continued the story
and made it her own by also drawing stars in the sky because she wanted the story to take place at night. In comparison to Evelyn, the oldest boy Max tried to render his drawing exactly the same as from what he remembered from the story. He depicted the tea party scene outside with the wild flowers surrounding the characters. Max was satisfied with the story and his drawing because there wasn’t anything unrealistic in the story in his opinion although Katie did magically enter the paintings. Over a month after our Skype lessons, Max also drew an image on his own from *Journey* when the young girl enters the enchanted forest through a magical door in a tree that she had just drawn (Figure 16, p. 61). His memory of each detail was impeccable. However, he too added something to his drawing. Between the massive trees adorned with lanterns is the girl with crayon in hand and a caption underneath her of “stupid girl.”

**Development of Art History Understanding**

At the end of this project, I saw understanding form from the children that could show the beginnings of art history learning develop. As per Minnesota Public Schools’ Academic Standards in the Arts, students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 should be able to identify the characteristics of visual artworks from a variety of cultures in history (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008). I introduced this concept to the children while looking at the picturebooks together during our lessons so that they could have the opportunity to develop an appreciation for and knowledge of art history. During our third meeting, the two older boys were able to identify the style of painting in *Katie Meets the Impressionists* as Impressionism when we reviewed the images from the picturebook, and they were also able to identify the artist of *The Luncheon* as Claude Monet. Although Evelyn couldn’t recall such factual information, she did comment that the colors of the paintings in the book were light. A few weeks after I looked at the ancient ruins of Pompeii in the book *Hadrian, the Dog of Pompeii* with Evelyn, she was able to recall what I
had taught her about the scene where Hadrian was sleeping in the Villa of the Mysteries. She studied the image and said, “The people painted these a long time ago on the walls. People are dancing and singing in the paintings. I wish I could paint my walls too.” Almost a month after we looked at *The Cave Painter of Lascaux*, Evelyn found her cave art project (Figure 2, p. 54) that represented the present. When we first completed that lesson, she said, “Today I like the color red, so I will paint my cave red.” Then when she found the cave about a month later, she pointed to the figures inside the cave that she had drawn and said, “There’s me and you. I painted my cave like the peoples a long time ago.”

**Summary Across Findings**

Looking across all of my findings, I see several commonalities and differences among the students. All the students related what they saw to themselves, although at varying degrees. Max enjoyed listing items, while Evelyn preferred telling stories. Homeschool educators can use picturebooks to teach art appreciation and art history to young children by integrating lessons within the children’s interests, making every “perfect” moment of the day a teachable one, and using the picturebooks to show how we can tell stories through art. Finally, I began seeing the children recognize styles of painting in history and the different types of ways people painted in the past. A plethora of picturebooks on art history and art appreciation exist. However, most of the books available present the life of an artist just in a biographical format. I wanted to find books with fictional narratives where the characters interacted with artmaking in a more organic and everyday way. I found books like those that are all included in my lessons on www.artpicturebooks.com, and many of which can be found in the *Children’s Art Picturebook Review Blog* (Figure 17, p. 61).
Numerous important art history themes and concepts are found in picturebooks that can be used to help young children make meaning of their world. Not all of the themes are as obvious as others. Picturebooks as teaching tools are what the adult makes of them, and parents can tailor lessons to fit their needs and illustrate theme ideas. The art picturebooks that I used in my lessons can be used in a specialized way. According to Sipe (2001), these books can be used to introduce children to specific artists of the past, particular artistic styles, or schools of art because they contain references to the history of art in their design and illustration content. Knowing that some illustrations refer to specific works of art enhances our appreciation of the story and also invites us to explore the art of specific artists. Some themes I explored with the art picturebooks that I consulted in my research are storytelling in art, identity, fantasy and imagination, time, and using different art media, yet many more themes exist.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In pursuing this capstone project, I first and foremost wanted to discover if it was possible to teach art history to very young children using picturebooks. I believe anything is possible with persistence and teaching methods designed specifically for the creative needs of each individual child. I also wanted to explore what teaching methods worked well to achieve this goal and to revise those methods constantly to make my lessons as strong as possible. The scholarly literature I consulted suggested that picturebooks could be used as teaching tools, and that very young children have demonstrated an interest in learning about art history. Therefore, I chose to combine these two concepts by looking at art picturebooks with very young children while asking them questions about what they saw. We then completed art projects based on the themes we explored in the picturebooks to further discover if the children understood the big ideas of the lessons. I found that very young children were interested in learning about art
history from picturebooks if the adult made the lessons engaging, fun, and personal to the students. In this section, I will discuss and interpret my main findings discovered during my study.

**Discussion and Interpretation of Findings**

Based on my findings, using art picturebooks to provide an opportunity for children to discover and foster an appreciation for art history can be a success with a motivated teacher. A homeschool educator has to try to engage with a young child while that child is free to roam around and explore. I believe if you set up a comfortable learning environment, then the children will naturally want to come learn and create. As the facilitator in learning, you have to adapt to what the children are doing in real time to fit the purposes of your lesson. Forcing a very young child to sit down and listen probably won’t work well because very young children like to think of doing an activity as if it were their own idea. Proponents of play such as Froebel, Dewey, and Dr. Stuart Brown have influenced contemporary educators such as Alice Meckley, Vivian Paley, Sharna Olfman, and Kathy Hirsch-Pasek that have long been practicing and advocating the importance of play in education and in life (Brown, 2006). When students have fun at learning, they continue to pursue it for its own sake. Constantly improvising and changing the way to approach introducing art picturebooks to young children each lesson was important because the children needed to feel like every lesson was something new and exciting that would hold their short attention spans.

Another key component to add in your lesson of using art picturebooks is play. This idea of understanding by playing dates as far back to the early 19th Century theories of Froebel (1895), and they still can be viewed in practice today. Young children learn so much while playing, which my project helps suggest. Evelyn retained more information during the lessons
where she was actively playing and doing something while listening and looking at the picturebooks. For example, she spontaneously started playing musical instruments at times when we looked at picturebooks and even sang a few songs about the books (Figure 18, p. 62). She also was free to take breaks while looking at picturebooks and played while blowing bubbles and then returned to looking at the images (Figure 19, p. 62). I believe this happened because she was engaged in hands-on learning, which has been documented to have positive effects on children’s learning. For example, hands-on learning has been shown to help students’ learning in the Kindergarten classroom of teacher, LaChance. LaChance had a young student that struggled with language skills, but was a talented artist. Through art projects and play, LaChance saw the student's language skills improve as he answered questions about his creations and illustrations (Cleaver, 2014). That act of doing solidifies information and processes it in your mind. When you combine activities and different senses that require play, movement, music, talking, and listening, it activates multiple areas of the brain. Differentiating instruction expert and former educator, Dodge (2009), believes that the more hands-on the better because children are more likely to retain information if they use more parts of the brain. Evelyn also often scribbled or drew while looking at the art picturebooks (Figure 20, p. 63). A recent research report in the Applied Cognitive Psychology journal stated that volunteers who doodled during a verbal message were 29 percent better at recalling details from the message, so this doodling could have helped Evelyn remain engaged and retain information she heard and saw from the images in the picturebooks (Andrade, 2009).

I also think play is not only interesting and fun for young kids, but that they use it to learn about the world around them while acting things out rather than expressing themselves always with words, which can still be challenging and limiting for them. For example, Bodrova and
Leong (1996) studied a preschool in Denver for four years and discovered that the children displayed the Vygotskian Approach to play while learning. Vygotsky described the emotional aspects of play of how young children acted out scenarios from the real world to better cope and understand it as well as to fulfill wishful fantasies (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Play allows a child to separate thoughts from actions in objects with the use of symbolic props in gestures. Children also practice self-regulation by remaining in their role, which I also witnessed with Evelyn on numerous occasions while she acted out scenes from the picturebooks we analyzed and felt as though she had to stay in character and her role.

As discovered in the *Telling Stories through Art* finding, the youngest child, Evelyn, told the most stories after viewing the images, and the oldest child, Max, made a visual inventory and listed the most items. I interpret this finding as displaying the fact that there are always exceptions to early childhood development models. According to DeSantis and Housen (1996) and the VTS Aesthetic Development Stages, Evelyn would fall into Stage One: Accountive where viewers are storytellers and use their senses, memories, and personal associations to make concrete observations about a work of art that are woven into a narrative. Max did not make many comments and observations that fall into this stage, and he was displaying observations that fell into a pre-Stage One. Then all of a sudden, he jumped to Stage Two: Constructive when he commented on the young girl in *Journey* as doing “weird magical things” that he did not like. In this stage, viewers set about building a framework for looking at works of art using the most logical and accessible tools such as their own perceptions and knowledge of the natural world (DeSantis & Housen, 1996). If something in a work of art does not look the way it is supposed to as it appears in reality, then the viewer thinks it’s lacking or of no value and even weird. Models like these generalize groups, but as a parent or homeschool educator, you should really
look at the development and personality of each individual child. Max likes facts, computers, and math. Perhaps his personality and interests played more of a role than anything in the fact that he didn’t like to tell imaginative stories but preferred making lists very much like counting items. Max’s personality and older age probably were also the reasons why he didn’t enjoy fantasy too much and thought the main character of Journey did weird magical things that he could never envision happening in reality. This is probably also why Max labeled the girl as “stupid” in his drawing and why he remembered the scene in such detail. The critical elements of the images and story are what stuck with him. However, it would be interesting to see if he would have had such a negative reaction to the girl’s magical actions if she had been a boy. This gender issue may also be the reason why Jacob chose to substitute the female character for Jean Monet. Evelyn, on the other hand, has always been more interested in creative activities such as painting, playing music, and pretending. She is still in that stage where anything is possible, which is suggested in her drawing of Katie Meets the Impressionists where she chose to change the scenery by envisioning stars and a night sky because that is what she preferred. Evelyn also has had more practice at looking at the images in art picturebooks with me, which could influence the results.

I also believe that the youngest boy Henry refused to complete the art project because I forgot a few key elements during my instruction that I will revise in the future. I should have made sure he still had a copy of the book while he created his illustration like Evelyn did so that he could have gone back and seen what he had just learned and viewed. I also should have had him do the art project right away after our discussions so that the images were fresh in his mind. Henry also viewed me more of a teaching authority than his mom who tried to implement my instructions but failed because Henry claimed that he had forgotten elements of the story and
didn’t feel like drawing then. However, with me he never exhibited a lackadaisical attitude and always took instructions well. The older boys were probably able to create their drawings regardless because of their age and ability to memorize things.

As I stated before, I found that all children related images in the picturebooks back to themselves. Evelyn did this by far the most frequently and Max did this the least frequently. This finding is probably related more to age than anything else. Evelyn recently turned three yet Max will soon be eight. She is in the egocentric phase of development often described by Lowenfeld (1964). Evelyn wants to know how all of the characters from picturebooks relay to her or if they are actually representations of her. According to Brittain (1976), “Drawings by young children are typically egocentric. Art activities not only reflect a child's inner self: they help form it.” I think this idea of egocentrism isn’t the only factor and reason why young children make self-associations, but it is one major component. It could apply to all aspects of very young children’s lives and actually helps them understand what they might not completely comprehend in images by picking out what elements they have seen before or experienced. Therefore, being aware of this will help homeschool educators and parents connect with very young children while showing images of picturebooks by attempting to pick out aspects of the images that relate to the personal lives of the children.

The children in my study were exposed to introductory art history themes, concepts, and factual information through art picturebooks. All the children became interested in looking at art with me and continued to want to do so even after this project was completed. This could suggest that the children have fostered an appreciation for art history. The older boys also could recall a style of art and specific artist. Perhaps I cannot definitively declare that they understood art history, but I could see an understanding develop that can grow with time. These lessons are
meant to lay the foundation for very young children to learn art history by exposing them to a subject they probably would not normally study at such a young age. The homeschool boys could correctly identify the style of art as Impressionism even when I showed them another picturebook about ancient Roman art and architecture side by side. They commented that the styles of art were different and that the Roman frescoes looked like “easier” drawings. I believe they could remember the information about Impressionism because they identified well with the characters of *Katie Meets the Impressionists*, especially the young boy Jean Monet. Jacob even mentioned that Jean Monet messed up a room like he did once by taking all the paintings off of the wall, and Jean was looking to see if anyone noticed. The scene is actually depicting Jean and Katie peeking into Claude Monet’s studio. There are some painted canvases resting on the floor against the walls. Perhaps Jacob drew this conclusion because he identified with Jean. Through the young boy, Jean, the boys were introduced to the art of Claude Monet and could recall this information.

Evelyn was able to understand that people from the past a long time ago created art, which is a promising start to curating art appreciation. Before completing the art picturebook lessons with me, Evelyn understood the concept of new and old, but she always referred to things in the past as happening yesterday. She started saying that people created art a long time ago even longer ago than yesterday by painting on cave walls and frescos on architectural structures. These were the two scenes that displayed painting techniques that Evelyn said she really wanted to try herself at her home. This is probably the main reason why this information stuck with her. The images of a caveman and fossils in the picturebook, *The Cave Painter of Lascaux*, also helped Evelyn begin to visualize the perception of time and how things are really old and happened in the past.
Significance, Implications, and Recommendations

My findings in this study are significant in that they reveal that young children have the potential of fostering an appreciation for art history while looking at and discussing images of picturebooks with an adult. My findings suggest that picturebooks should be brought into the home and even schools and used as significant teaching tools that hold substance and artistic merit. If used educationally and critically by a parent or homeschool educator, students will encounter endless learning benefits from looking at the illustrations from them. These findings are of value to every parent with a very young child and to all homeschool educators. I would recommend homeschool educators and parents using picturebooks to teach at home informally or formally even more so than they already do. Instead of leaving picturebooks out to be found perhaps by a young child to look at alone, parents and homeschool educators should confidently take those picturebooks and teach with them. Look at the images closely and critically with students while guiding a discussion. For further research, I would recommend conducting a longer study of at least a year with a higher number of young children participants. I’d also suggest for researchers to revisit those students in the future several years from now to see if looking critically at the images of art picturebooks had any effect on their current desire to learn about art. I’d also recommend having many different homeschool educators practice the lessons found on my website with their students to see what challenges and successes various educators encountered. Lastly, examining more picturebooks as works of art themselves, rather than solely looking at picturebooks about art, would be a fascinating way to expand this project in the future.
Conclusion

This project has far exceeded my expectations. I now see that young children have an unprecedented enthusiasm for learning about art history and art appreciation using familiar objects like picturebooks. If used wisely and creatively with the help of an adult, I believe picturebooks hold the potential to teach just about every important subject and theme, not only in art but also in everyday life. I feel that activities like these are much more than fun. They lay the groundwork for young children to continue to be inspired and interested in learning and talking about art all throughout their lives. This project will continue to shape my professional practice as a homeschool educator and my personal practice as a mother. I will always try out new methods of teaching that incorporate what young children naturally do to help them achieve what they are capable of doing. I will also continue to introduce picturebooks to my students and daughter about art and all subjects, continue finding techniques that work, and modifying those that don’t. I’ve just begun everything I’ve wanted to do with this project and will continue to update and expand my teaching methods and techniques found on www.artpicturebooks.com.
References


### Appendix A

#### UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research

**Protocol Submission Form**

*This form must be typed. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.*

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<th>Homeschool Early Childhood Education Picturebook Exercise and Interview</th>
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<td>Kaitlin Gallagher Pozzo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>Master of Arts in Art Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kait.gall@ufl.edu">kait.gall@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>School of Art and Art History, College of Fine Arts</td>
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<td>Co-Investigator(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor (If PI is student):</td>
<td>Craig Roland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address: (If on campus include PO Box address):</td>
<td>101 FAC P.O. Box 115801 Gainesville, Fl 32611-5801</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rolandc@ufl.edu">rolandc@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone #:</td>
<td>(352) 392-9165</td>
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<td>Date of Proposed Research:</td>
<td>January to March 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source of Funding (A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Scientific Purpose of the Study:</td>
<td>The scientific purpose of this study is to learn how picturebooks can be used to teach art appreciation and art history to very young children.</td>
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<td>Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language:</td>
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I will show and discuss picturebooks that are related to art through storytelling with my three former homeschooled students (males ages 4, 6, and 7) and my own toddler (female age 2.5) each week for several months. I will tell dramatic stories that go along with the picturebooks to get the kids used to hearing and then telling stories when looking at art.

I will then ask the following interview questions to the elementary school boys:

In your opinion, what’s going on in this illustration?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can you find?

What do you see in this picture that reminds you of our present world?

How does this remind you of your life?

At the end of the lesson, I’ll have the children write down with the help of their parent what significant thing did they learn that day and if they have any additional questions. Each lesson, I will begin by asking the children, what do you remember from the story from yesterday or the last lesson?

After we have studied a specific artist, I will have the children complete activities like dramatically acting out what they learned, and then have them make an art project associated with that learning.

On an additional day, I will read them a passage from a picturebook without showing them the illustrations. I will have the children illustrate what they see when listening to the story. I will then show them the actual illustrations. We will then compare the kids’ drawings to the illustrations from the actual book. I will then ask:

What differences do you notice between your drawings and the illustrations from the book?

What similarities do you notice between both?

Do these illustrations (yours and those from the book) remind you of anything we have previously studied?

For the toddler interview with my own child, I will show her several picturebooks about art each week. I will ask:

What’s going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

Have you seen this before?

What more do you see?

I will also leave a section on my online curriculum resource where homeschool educators can leave feedback and answer a short questionnaire after trying my lessons.

Questionnaire:

Which lessons were most effective and why?

Which lessons, if any, didn’t connect well with students and could be revised?
In your opinion, why do you think those lessons didn’t connect as strongly with students?

Were your students able to talk about works of art, especially through stories, after using this curriculum?

After you asked students what they remembered from the story from the previous lesson, were they able to tell you something from what you said and taught?

Have your students continued their enthusiasm for studying picturebooks with your help?

Describe Potential Benefits:
The potential benefit of this study is to understand how children look at picturebooks and absorb simple art history knowledge and concepts. We live in an extremely visual world, so visual literacy is significant and can be improved by looking at picturebooks in critical thinking ways. This will benefit parents who want to go beyond reading picturebooks with their children as well as homeschool teachers.

Describe Potential Risks: (If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)

Some children may feel nervous or anxious while being asked questions. Children’s identities will remain anonymous. Only those children along with parental permission, that want to participate may. No one will be forced to participate. The study will occur in the children’s everyday setting at home and at the library along with their parents watching in order to allow children to feel safe and assured.

Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited: I already know all participants and they have agreed to do this study. The two year old is my own child, and the other participants are past students I homeschooled as well as the children of my personal friend. I will present the Informed Consent document as well as the Parental Consent form to their parents.

| Maximum Number of Participants (to be approached with consent) | 4 |
| Age Range of Participants: | 2-7 years old |
| Amount of Compensation/course credit: | None |

Describe the Informed Consent Process. (Attach a Copy of the Informed Consent Document. See [http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02/samples.html](http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02/samples.html) for examples of consent.)

(SIGNATURE SECTION)

Principal Investigator(s) Signature:  

Co-Investigator(s) Signature(s):  

Supervisor's Signature (if PI is a student):  

Department Chair Signature:  

Date: 06/10/2013
July 26, 2013

TO:       Kaitlin Gallagher Pozzo

FROM:     Ira S. Fischler, PhD; Chair
          University of Florida
          Institutional Review Board 02

SUBJECT:  Approval of Protocol #2013-U-0794

TITLE:    Homeschool Early Childhood Education Picturebook Exercise and Interview

SPONSOR:  None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants. Your protocol was approved as an expedited study under category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from the parent or legal guardian of each participant. When it is feasible, you should obtain signatures from both parents. Enclosed is the dated, IRB-approved informed consent to be used when recruiting participants for the research.

It is essential that the parents/guardians of your minor participants sign a copy of your approved informed consent that bears the IRB approval stamp and expiration date.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, including the need to increase the number of participants authorized, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

This approval is valid through July 25, 2014. If you have not completed the study prior to this date, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. Additionally, should you complete the study on or before the expiration date, please submit the study closure report to our office. The form can be located at http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02/Continuing_Review.html. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl
Appendix B

I showed and discussed picturebooks that are related to art with my three former homeschooled students (males ages 5, 6, and 7) and my own toddler (female now age 3) each week for several months. I told dramatic stories that went along with the picturebooks to get the kids used to hearing and then telling stories when looking at art.

I then asked the following interview questions to the elementary school boys:

In your opinion, what’s going on in this illustration?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more do you see?

What do you see in this picture that reminds you of our present world?

How does this remind you of your life?

Each lesson, I began by asking the children, what do you remember from the story from yesterday or the last lesson?

Then, I went back and taught specifically about the illustrations and works of art we viewed as well as discussed them in their original historical context in simple language.

After we studied a specific artist or theme in art by looking at images from picturebooks, I had the kids, mainly my three-year-old daughter, complete activities like dramatically acting out what they learned, and making an art project associated with that learning.

For the toddler and preschooler interview with my own child, I will show her several picturebooks about art each week and discuss what’s going on in the illustrations with her. I will ask her:

In your opinion, what do you think is going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

Have you seen this before?

What more can we find?

I created a section on my online website where homeschool educators can leave feedback and answer a short questionnaire after trying my lessons.
Questionnaire:

Which lessons were most effective and why?

Which lessons, if any, didn’t connect well with students and could be revised?

In your opinion, why do you think those lessons didn’t connect as strongly with students?

Were your students able to talk about works of art, especially through stories, after using this curriculum?

After you asked students what they remembered from the story from the previous lesson, were they able to tell you something from what you said and taught?

Have your students continued their enthusiasm for studying picturebooks with your help?
Appendix C

IRB02 Office  
PO Box 112250  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250

Parental Consent

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the College of Fine Arts and School of Art and Art History Masters of  
Arts in Art Education Program at the University of Florida, conducting research on picturebooks  
as teaching tools of art appreciation and art history to very young children under the supervision  
of Dr. Craig Roland. The purpose of this study is to discover how children view the illustrations  
in picturebooks and absorb art history knowledge from them with the help of a homeschool  
educator. The results of the study may help parents and homeschool early childhood educators  
better understand the extent to which young children comprehend and think about art history and  
what they see in picturebooks, especially how they use them to make meaning of the world.  
Understanding these concepts will help parents and homeschool educators to better utilize  
picturebooks in lessons. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit  
future students. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this  
research.

The participating children will look at and discuss the illustrations in picturebooks with me.  
They will also act out dramatically what we have learned and draw an image based on a story  
read to them. They will not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer. The  
procedure will be presented by me at your home. The 30-minute procedure will take place four  
times during the month of July and four times during the month of August. With your  
permission, your child’s drawing will be photographed during the instructional period, which  
may be used in the final study. Your child’s name will not be documented in any way. Each  
child will be referred to by his or her age and gender in the study. Their identity will be kept  
confidential to the extent provided by law. Results will only be reported in the form of group  
data. Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect the children’s grades or  
placement in any programs.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child’s participation at any time  
without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. No  
compensation is offered for participation. There is no direct benefit to the participant for  
participating in the study. Group results of this study will be available in December upon  
request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at (612) 213-  
7280 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Roland, at (352) 392-9165. Questions or concerns about your  
child’s rights as research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida,  
Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Approved by  
University of Florida  
Institutional Review Board 02  
Protocol # 2013-I-0794  
For Use Through 07/25/2014
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, Raina, Isaac, & Iden Bond, to participate in Kaitlin Gallagher Pozzo's study of using children's picturebooks to teach art history and art appreciation. I have received a copy of this description.

Parent / Guardian

Date: 8/25/13
List of Figures

*Figure 1.* Altered book project from Lesson Three on Fantasy in Art representing Evelyn’s face located at the bottom and her interest in animals.

*Figure 2.* Cave art project from Lesson Four on Time and History representing the present with Evelyn and me painted inside.
Figure 3. Identity image from Lesson Two Art Picturebooks and Me.

Figure 5. Ceramic mask from Lesson Five on Exploring Art Media representing Evelyn's face.
Figure 6. Assemblage project from Lesson Five on Exploring Art Media representing the color pink and favorite items like flowers.

Figure 7. Monoprint activity from Lesson Five depicting favorite colors of pink and purple.
Figure 8. Pretending to bake as Minnie Mouse while we discussed picturebooks.

Figure 9. Conducting our picturebook lessons at the library while playing dress-up.
Figure 10. Looking at picturebooks on Skype while building and participating in constructive play as described by Piaget (Revenson & Singer, 1996).

Figure 11. Discussing picturebooks inside a blanket fort pretending to be at a campfire that turned into a magic carpet ride while throwing a ball on the fort.
Figure 12. Dressing up and acting out a scene from *Katie Meets the Impressionists*.

Figure 13. Finding and holding everyday objects related to an art picturebook while discussing what we see in the images.
Figure 14. *Katie Meets the Impressionists* garden scene by Jacob, 6 displaying *Girl with a Watering Can* replaced by Jean Monet.

Figure 15. Illustrating a Story art project from Lesson One depicting the scene where Katie picks flowers from the garden, but Evelyn chose to represent it at night and included stars as well as flowers.
Figure 16. Journey drawing by Max, 7, with attention to detail and addition of the label “stupid girl” describing the protagonist.

Figure 17. Children’s Art Picturebook Reviews blog from my guide and tips on www.artpicturebooks.com.
Figure 18. Spontaneously taking breaks in between looking at picturebooks to play music.

Figure 19. Playing and blowing bubbles while looking at a Buddhist art picturebook.
Figure 20. Evelyn and I discussing *Hadrian, The Dog of Pompeii* at bedtime while she colors simultaneously.
Author Biography

Kaitlin Gallagher Pozzo has recently completed the Master of Arts in Art Education graduate student program at the University of Florida. She currently teaches art and Italian to homeschooled toddler and preschoolers in the Minneapolis, Minnesota metropolitan area and is a Curiosity Center volunteer at the Minnesota Children’s Museum. The knowledge and experience gained from her studies will help her realize her future plans of creating a non-profit arts-based preschool. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History and Italian from the University of Virginia. While studying fresco restoration in Florence, Italy, her passion for education and teaching began while tutoring and teaching English to children and adult Italian citizens. She has been teaching homeschooled toddlers for five years and her great interest in early childhood education has flourished since teaching her own preschooler. Kaitlin Gallagher Pozzo hopes to add vital research to the topic of early childhood art education.