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Illustration and its Influence on Book Selection

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ILLUSTRATION AND ITS INFLUENCE
ON BOOK SELECTION

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that illustration has on book selection. The subjects were students from a first, third and fifth grade setting in a suburban school district in Western New York State. The children responded verbally as well as in writing to express the characteristics of illustration which influence the process of book selection. This was done through the use of Caldecott award and honor books as well as books with inferior illustration. This research shows a descriptive analysis categorizing related concepts, similarities and patterns in illustration, through subject response at the various levels. The research results also indicate that subjects more readily choose books with quality illustration over those with inferior illustration.

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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that illustration has on book selection among first, third and fifth grade students in a suburban school district in western New York State. The study was designed to elicit student response to those characteristics in illustration which influence book selection at the various levels. The study also indicates whether children are more likely to choose quality illustration over inferior illustration.

Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What characteristics in illustration influence book choice of first, third, and fifth grade students?

2. Are there differences in these characteristics of illustration at the various levels?
3. Do subjects at these various levels choose books which have been determined to contain quality illustration?

Need for the Study

Research has shown that illustration has many and profound effects on children as they interact with books (Harber, 1953; Miller, 1938; Rice, Doan, and Brown, 1981; Whipple, 1953; Woodward, 1989). Little of this research, though, deals with the child's feelings or those qualities that he/she looks for consciously or subconsciously when selecting reading material. Schlager's (1978) comments about selection taking place on an unconscious level and that no child can verbalize the reason for his or her selection is debatable at best and implies that the child goes blindly to the shelves and selects a book without thought. The present study investigates children's verbal and written expression of those characteristics of

illustration that influence the process of book selection. It also indicates whether children are more inclined to choose a book which has been determined to contain quality or artworthy illustration.

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Quality Illustration - For the purposes of this study, quality illustration is defined as those books which have been selected as Caldecott Medal and honor books. "These books have been determined to be marked by eminence and distinction. They are noted for significant achievement, marked by excellence in quality, marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence, and individually distinct" (ALSC Board, 1987).

Inferior Illustration - For the purposes of this study, inferior illustration is defined as those illustrated books which contain two or less of the elements of art as determined by

the researcher.

Element of Art - Color (hue, intensity, value),
value (non-color), line, texture, shape/form,
space.

The Caldecott Medal - Named in honor of the
nineteenth-century English illustrator
Randolph Caldecott, the medal is awarded
annually by the Association for Library
Service to Children, a division of the
American Library Association, to the artist
of the most distinguished American picture
book for children.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study must be considered
in terms of the following limitations: The
subjects of the study were approximately 75
students from a first, third and fifth grade
suburban school setting. Results may vary with
other grade levels, a larger sample or a rural or
urban school setting. Previous viewing or
interactions with a book presented by the

researcher may influence student book choice, e.g. if student has the book at home and has read it. The results of this study are valid with students who are exposed to the same procedure and conditions as the students in this study.

Summary

This study investigated the influence of illustration on book selection on first, third, and fifth grade students, more specifically the characteristics in illustration that influence book selection and the differences at the various levels. It also determines whether subjects will more frequently choose quality or inferior illustration when selecting a book. Definition of terms as well as limitations of the study were also discussed.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Illustration and Pictures in Reading Material

The Developing Reader/Viewer

Although parents have been buying and borrowing books for their children for centuries, today many new parents introduce their infants very early to books. This has resulted in a new publishing phenomenon commonly referred to in the publishing world as "baby lit" - books for infants as young as two months (Jordon & Mercier, 1987) as cited by (Dinsmore, 1988). There are numerous reasons to expose infants to books. Among these is the aid that a book can be to help the infant to build and reinforce concepts related to people, animals, possessions, events and routines through illustration (Dinsmore, 1988). Dinsmore suggests that illustrations for infants should be

attractive, clear in design and free of uncluttered backgrounds, yet placed in an action-oriented context, not pictured as static isolated objects to name. As a child grows and exposure to reading material expands the child is deluged with books both of quality and inferior illustration. Unlike literature for the newborn, there are no clear definitions of what quality illustration means or how illustration can best benefit the developing child. Likewise, there are few guidelines to indicate child preference to help illustrators create books which are appealing to children at various levels.

Picture/Text Interaction

Picture books are a child's prelude to reading. Often, a child "reads" the pictures while the adult reads him or her the story. "The perfect picture book is an art form in which two separate disciplines, literature and art, merge to create a new integrated whole" (Weiss, 1985, p.269). Weiss maintains that "in providing a

visual interpretation for a text, the illustrator needs to understand the text in a very personal way and then be able to communicate this understanding through the picture, which must be prepared with the final printed page in mind" (p.270). Each artist should approach the text in his or her own style and the flexibility of various techniques. One artist says of her illustrations "The picture acts like a living person with whom I can converse. If the picture can talk back to me, it will also be capable of talking to others" (Ellis, 1986, p.100).

Elizabeth Cleaver creates illustrations that make their own text, not in terms of an alternative narrative, but by communicating in a distinctive visual vocabulary (Ellis, 1986). A good children's book rarely has a strong text with weak illustrations or lovely, artistically rendered illustrations unsupported by the story line. It takes both to make a book a positive experience, enjoyed by young and old. This is not to be confused with the "gift book" or the mania for

publishing modern classics of children's literature in lush, expensive, newly illustrated editions (Heins, 1984). A book which causes a positive experience for the reader will be created with these thoughts in mind:

A book which has illustration which emanates from imagery in the mind and the quality of the illustration reflects the intensity of the imaginative experience. The artist must be impelled by the written word; illustration must flesh out character and give substance to setting and emotional depth to incidents and events (Heins, 1984, p. 158).

If you are left with a lingering feeling of some atmosphere or quality after you close the book then you have seen successful illustration as it interacts with the text.

The Effects of Illustrations

There have been numerous studies which have looked at illustration as it applies to comprehension of material, retention of material,

attention while reading and enjoyment of the reader. Many educators are confronted annually with the selection of appropriate literature and texts for their classrooms. In a review of illustration it is important to consider pictures and more specifically, quality illustration that will enhance the reading whether it be in a chemistry book or a fairy tale (Glen and Lewis, 1982).

Although pictures and illustration in reading material for children comes in abundance, the effects of the visual material on the students' comprehension is just beginning to gain attention from researchers. Research supports the obvious (e.g. test scores are higher for those readers who use pictures to gain information either not mentioned or presented ambiguously in the text). This is especially true if the pictured information is spatial and important. In contrast, there is some doubt that merely reiterating pictorially what is adequately discussed in print will improve comprehension

(Koenke, 1987). A study by Harber (1983) examined the effect of no illustrations, complete, and partial illustrations on the reading performance of learning disabled and normally achieving children. In this study, illustrations were found to have a positive effect on the performance of the normally achieving subjects but a detrimental effect on the learning disabled subjects' performance. Similar results were found in Rose's (1986) study where 32 learning disabled students read both an illustrated and a non-illustrated passage and answered comprehension questions after each passage. The results showed significantly more correct answers following the non-illustrated passages. The possible explanations for these findings indicate that learning disabled readers are distracted from the print by the illustrations or that illustrations are inappropriate to the text. A primary characteristic ascribed to learning disabled students is the inability to filter out extraneous stimuli, i.e. distractibility (Clements, 1966; Cruickshank,

1967; Lloyd, Hallahan, and Kauffman, 1980; Russ, 1976) as cited by Rose (1986). This may account for the lower comprehension in the illustrated passages with the L.D. student. Another study researching the effects of pictures on reading comprehension, speed and interest of second grade students indicated that the pictures improved the reading comprehension although they tended to slow down a reader's speed (Rice, Doan and Brown, 1981). O'Keefe and Solman's (1987) study compared story recall as influenced by the absence of a picture, or when related pictures were presented before or after related text. Differences in recall favoring the picture groups suggest that the "immediate placement and association of pictures with text is crucial for pictorial enhancement of comprehension" (O'Keefe and Solman, 1987, p.373). Most studies indicate that for the average normal achieving student, illustration is beneficial. However, even with some discrepancies in various studies, researchers agree that excluding pictures from reading materials would be

detrimental because of the positive effect from illustration on motivation, interest and a fostering of language development (Logan, 1983).

The use of illustrations in instructional material is widespread, although often illustration is not given the attention or analysis which is required for the text. It is generally recognized that illustrations add a dimension to communication which, if not always essential, is at least desirable for enhancement or enrichment in the text book (Duchastel and Waller, 1979). Duchastel (1978) suggests that when considering illustration in instructional texts, function considerations should precede considerations of form. Duchastel (1978) considers that illustration serves in three roles in texts. One is to fulfill an attentional role to motivate the reader. The second role is the explicative role which is where illustration explains or adds something by showing. The third role of illustration is memory enhancement, based on the premise that pictorial memory is less

resistant to forgetting than verbal memory (Paivio, 1975) as cited by (Duchastel, 1978).

These various effects of illustration are seen both in the reader of the instructional text as well as the reader of the picture book (Cancann, 1975; Elster and Simons, 1985; Glen and Lewis, 1982). Applications can be made in both cases and the most recurring thought throughout the research seems to be that for the greatest benefit to the reader, illustration must parallel and complement, not overwhelm the text. Only then can it increase comprehension, retention, motivation, attention and enjoyment for the reader.

Child Style and Sensitivity to Aesthetics and Response

In order for illustration to benefit the child, first it must have value to the young reader. As many children as there are in the world so are the number of personalities, personal

styles and responses to illustration. However, there has been research which attempts to determine aesthetic sensitivity, art style and response to suggest what most benefits the reader. In an experiment to show students that readers interpret words differently, Silverblank (1982) had illustrators segment a poem according to their own aesthetic response and chose to render certain lines and ignore others. When the illustrators clarified the same lines the variety in the interpretation as shown in the illustrations was astounding. In the same manner, the child, in his interaction with an illustration, brings from the book his own interpretation and response.

Art style plays a role in children's picture preferences. Ramsey's (1982) research focused on the differences between children's preferences for art styles with and without accompanying text content. The results of the investigation supported the conclusion that artistic style did, in fact, influence children's picture preferences when picture preferences were related to the book

selection process. Children preferred pictures in the style of a photograph or a cartoon.

Representational and expressionistic styles were less preferred. Realism was also preferred.

Another two-part study examined the beginning of aesthetic sensitivity in the young child. An examination was made of kindergarten children's spontaneous productions; the extent to which certain media, such as paints, brushes, magic markers, pencils or crayons are the preferred mode for either abstract or representational drawings and paintings, and reasons for such preferences (Golomb and Heimund, 1987). The second part of the study examined children's aesthetic judgment of peers' art work and showed that by 5 years of age children are showing a preference for media and style in pictures. Children's preferences for color and other qualities in illustration in research give an indication that children prefer some colors over others and tend to prefer realism or lifelikeness in illustration (Rudisill, 1952). The findings of the study indicate the following

picture preferences of kindergarten through sixth grade children.

1. If two pictures are identical in all other respects, most children prefer a realistically colored one to an uncolored one.
2. If different pictures include the same subject matter and the same colors, most children prefer the one which is treated in such a manner as to give the truest appearance of realism of lifelikeness.
3. If different pictures include the same subject matter, most children prefer an uncolored one which gives them an impression of reality above a colored one which does not seem to conform to reality.
4. If different colored pictures include the same subject matter, most children prefer a less colorful one which gives a greater appearance of reality above more colorful ones which appear less lifelike.
5. There is an increase in unanimity of the preferences with increase in grade level up to Grade IV. This greater unanimity of preference of older children, as compared with younger children, is believed to be due to the former's greater capacity for discriminating reality.
6. Typical adult opinion over-emphasizes the importance of color per se and underemphasizes the importance of other qualities in illustrations for children.
7. Photographs of excellent quality, both colored and uncolored, deserve much wider use than they are at present being given in illustrations for children.
8. These findings do not justify the

statement of a general principle as to comparative preference between photographs and realistic colored drawings because the examples of the two types used in the present study were not of equal quality.

9. Consideration of the first four conclusions above, together with children's stated reasons for choosing or not choosing certain pictures, suggests: (a) In looking at a picture, a child apparently seeks first to recognize its content. (b) Any picture (assuming a certain content) proves satisfying to the child in proportion to its success in making that content appear real or lifelike. Whether is is colored or uncolored is less important than the appearance of realism. (c) A perfect visual representation of realism includes color, and color in pictures proves satisfying to the child in proportion to its success in increasing the impression of realism or lifelikeness.

(Rudisill, 1952, p.451)

In a similar study with a sample of 2496 elementary students in Puerto Rico more emphasis was placed on preference in color. Blue and red were found to be the most favored colors throughout the grades (2nd, 4th and 6th). Children also preferred lifelike illustrations in color which occupied full or upper half of the page, not dividing the printed page (Rodriguez,

Bou, and Lopez, 1953). In Miller's (1979) study seven pictures with the same content, in different media and techniques, were mounted on a large card and shown to 300 elementary students. When they were asked to pick the one they liked the best the following conclusions were drawn:

- (1) Full-color reproductions received more than half the total number of choices.
- (2) The technique in which red was predominant, the photograph, and the technique featuring blue were next highest in favor.
- (3) The wash drawing, the line drawing, and the black-and-white picture received insignificant percentages of the choices.
- (4) The preferences for the photograph increased in the higher grades.
- (5) The boys registered more preferences for the photograph than did the girls.
- (6) The preferences for the photograph tended to increase as mental age increased.
- (7) Data not given here indicate that the children chronologically older registered more choices for the photograph.
- (8) There was a tendency for children of the lower intelligence groups to choose the photograph more frequently than did children of the higher groups.
- (9) In all three grades red was preferred to blue.
- (10) There was a tendency for the boys to choose red and blue more frequently than the girls, but the differences were slight.
- (11) There was a tendency for the children with lower intelligence to choose red and blue.
- (12) The percentage of choices for red and blue tended to decrease as mental age

increased. (13) Data not given here indicate that the children six years old chronologically chose red and blue more frequently than the children of any other age group except the children in the age group of 10.0-10.5. (14) The children with mental ages of seven or more years chose full-color reproductions more frequently than did children with mental ages of less than seven years. (15) The girls preferred full-color pictures more frequently than the boys. (16) There was a tendency for the children with higher intelligence to prefer the full-color reproduction.

(Miller, 1936, pp.281-82)

In a procedure nearly identical to Miller with 3,4 and 5 year old subjects Amsden's (1960) findings on preferences in picture storybook variables indicated the following:

1. Young children may be inconsistent in their picture preferences but a significant number do make consistent choices.
2. A high reliability is possible with the initial test and re-test technique with young children.
3. There are no significant differences in preferences of the children in this study in relation to: sex, socioeconomic status, research population, reading habits in the home, or alertness or activeness of the child.
4. A significant bias is shown for a picture placed on the right.
5. Light tints in illustrations are significantly preferred to bright

saturated colors.

6. Dark shades in illustrations are significantly preferred to bright saturated colors.

7. A photograph is significantly preferred to a black and white line drawing.

8. A fanciful drawing seems to be preferred to a true-to-life drawing though not significantly.

9. A fanciful drawing is significantly preferred to a modified realistic drawing.

10. Three year old children significantly prefer a modified realistic drawing while five year old children prefer a true-to-life drawing when the two are compared.

11. Illustrations with more colors are significantly preferred to those with fewer colors.

12. When a black and white photograph is compared to a line drawing with one color, there does not appear to be any preference for one over the other.

(Amsden, 1960, p.310)

Groff (1977) cites the following studies as finding that children prefer factual, realistic and familiar-appearing illustration to those which are stylized, impressionistic, whimsical or ironic. (Ayer, 1940; Bencentic, 1960; Bou and Lopez, 1953; Clegg, 1968; Freeman and Freeman, 1933; French, 1952; Katz, 1944; Mellinger, 1932; Publishers Weekly, 1939; Rudisill, 1952; Sloan,

1972; and VanderMark, 1929) Citing the conclusions of these various research studies dealing with child preferences in style and illustration has offered a somewhat lengthy but interesting overlapping of findings. These have indicated real preferences which children see in illustration and can be categorized into qualities representative of most child readers.

Illustration's Role in Book Selection

Illustration serves as an impetus to lead the child into reading. Children look at the pictures and talk about what is happening in a book. Compelling artwork invites the reader to ponder particular events in a story (Hands, 1986).

Schlager states in her 1978 article on predicting children's choices in literature that book selection is not made on a conscious level and that no child can verbalize the reason for his or her selection. Unfortunately, this seems to be the consensus when we see the miniscule amounts of

research dealing with how children choose books. Much of the research deals with how schools and teachers select reading materials. This researcher has chosen to bypass those materials as they are not dealing with selection process in discussion within this study.

Book design is one area that goes hand-in-hand with illustration and may have an impact on a child's selection process. This is the coordination of the visual, textual and physical elements to develop a book (Hamms and Lettow, 1989). Beyond that, child preferences in illustration including art style, color and subject matter which have been reviewed may impact reading selection more than we know.

Summary

After reviewing this literature, it is evident that although children were involved in studies as subjects there are very few studies in which children are interviewed or asked to respond to reasons for their book selection. In fact,

little research has been conducted on illustration's role in book selection or any other factors in the selection process. We desire, as educators, not only literate young people but those who have a desire to read. So, it becomes important to be informed regarding the factors that make reading appealing, especially to the young reader. Attention needs to be given to student response in order to find those characteristics in illustration which cause them to reach out and select the book of their choice.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of illustration on book selection among subjects at the first, third and fifth grade levels.

Methodology

Subjects

This study was comprised of 76 subjects, approximately 25 students each from a first, third and fifth grade setting in a suburban school district in western New York state.

Instruments

Materials for the study include:

1. A researcher-developed questionnaire

appropriate to the levels represented.

2. Approximately 100 illustrated books including Caldecott award and honor books, representative of quality illustration as well as books with inferior illustration.

Procedure

The researcher presented the subjects with five illustrated books and asked each subject to respond, in writing, concerning which aspects of the books would influence them to choose the book to read. The subjects were asked not to read the books. The researcher then interviewed all subjects briefly to confirm their written response as well as allow further verbal elaboration.

Then subjects were given four other books representing both quality and inferior illustration and asked to select one book from the group which they would most like to read. A time limit was imposed to prevent subjects from reading the books and to simulate the actual selection process.

Summary

A descriptive analysis was employed to categorize related concepts, similarities, and patterns in illustration as found through responses of subjects at the various levels. An analysis was made to indicate subjects' choice of quality or inferior illustration.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of illustration on book selection among subjects at the first, third and fifth grade levels in a suburban school district in Western New York State. The study was designed to elicit student response to those characteristics in illustration which influence book selection at the various levels. The study also indicates whether children are more likely to choose quality illustration over inferior illustration.

Findings and Interpretations

Preferred Aspects of Illustration

Tables 1, 2, and 3 will address the following questions:

What characteristics in illustration influence book choice on first, third, and fifth grade students?

Are there differences in these characteristics of illustration at the various levels?

Table 1 represents first grade response to elements in illustration which influence the book selection process. Table 2 represents third grade responses and table 3 represents those responses given by grade five.

The following procedure was employed to elicit student response. The researcher presented the subjects with five illustrated books and asked each subject to respond, in writing, concerning which aspects of the books would influence them to choose the book to read. The subjects were asked

not to read the books. The researcher then interviewed all subjects briefly to confirm their written response as well as allow further verbal elaboration. The researcher developed categories according to the elements of art (color, line, value, texture, shape, and space), the principles of design (balance, emphasis, harmony, variety, gradation, movement/rhythm, proportion, and space), as well as topic of illustration, character representation, previous experience, story interest, style and ideas, moods or feeling responses. The blank spaces indicate that there was little or no mention of these elements in illustration.

Table 1
First Graders' Preferences in Illustrations which Influence Selection

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Color	Bright color, light color, pink, purple, red.	Too few colors, dark colors, black and white pictures.
Line	Lots of detail.	Too much detail.
Value		
Texture		
Shape/Form		
Space		
Balance		
Emphasis		
Harmony		
Variety		
Gradation		

Table 1 (continued)

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Movement/Rhythm		Changes to another book part.
Proportion		
Space		
Topic	Animals: birds, cats, dogs, mouse. Nature, train, strawberries.	Subject uninteresting.
Character Representation	Animals depicted as humans.	
Previous Experience	Have read, have the book at home, have tape, seen in other media.	Have read before. Level inappropriate.
Story Interest	Funny. Illustration creates interest.	Can not understand pictures. Looks boring.
Style	Realism. Photography.	Unrealistic. Abstraction in illustration.
Ideas, Moods or feeling responses		

Table 2
Third Graders' Preferences in Illustrations which Influence Selection

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Color	Bright colors, "color that wakes me up", dark colors, many different colors, alternation from black & white to color.	No color, dull pictures, black and white pictures, too dark.
Line		
Value		
Texture	Lots of design.	
Shape/Form		
Space	Background in pictures.	No background, just characters on a plain page. Poor layout or placement of writing.
Balance		
Emphasis		
Harmony		
Variety		
Gradation	Pictures get bigger, seem to grow.	

Table 2 (continued)

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Movement/Rhythm	A lot of action. Alternating pictures.	
Proportion	Letter size – big.	Wording too small.
Space	Use the whole page with pictures. Length of book short.	Too short.
Topic	Animals: snake, cats. House. Monster.	
Character Representation	Crazy characters.	Animals depicted as humans.
Previous Experience	Have seen, have read. Series books.	Level inappropriate.
Story Interest	Humor – funny story. Humorous or interesting title.	Looks boring, dull, pictures unclear.
Style	Eyecatching cover. Stylized, unrealistic, surrealism, collage, realism.	Abstraction.
Ideas, Moods or feeling responses	Looks mysterious, appeal to senses – taste.	

Table 3
Fifth Graders' Preferences in Illustrations which Influence Selection

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Color	Bright colors, colorful, red, pink, white, black, technique - watercolor.	Dull color, not enough color.
Line	A lot of detail.	Not enough detail.
Value		
Texture		
Shape/Form		
Space	Background - show the setting.	No background. Too much room left on page, too much writing, poor layout of picture.
Balance		
Emphasis		
Harmony		
Variety		
Gradation		

Table 3 (continued)

Element	Influence Selection Positively	Influence Selection Negatively
Movement/Rhythm		
Proportion	Overexaggerated, weird illustration, easy to read letters	
Space		
Topic	Animals - cat. Boats, nature, medieval.	
Character Representation	Humorous, interesting characters, cartoon characters.	Block figure and block head characters. Animals in clothing
Previous Experience	Read story before.	
Story Interest	Current, relevant, catchy cover, cute, humor-funny pictures, title appeal, pictures tell the story.	Boring looking pictures.
Style	Stylized, unrealistic, realism - true to life.	Impressionism, hazy figures, sketchy no form illustration, collage.
Ideas, Moods or feeling responses	Texture-smooth waxy pages Mysterious Depth of feeling in faces - expression.	

In grades one, three, and five, there appears to be an overlapping of response indicating specific elements of illustration which influence the subjects' book selection process. At all three levels the subjects preferred bright, colorful illustration to dark or black and white illustration. Dark colors which were vibrant were preferred to dull color.

The subjects included detail in illustration as a positive influence on book selection, although, at the first grade level subjects responded that too much detail might influence selection in a negative manner.

There was response to the element of space at both the third and fifth grade levels as influencing selection both positively and negatively. Subjects indicated that illustration should contain background and suggest a setting for the story. They would be less inclined to select a book which had no background, "just characters on a plain page" or "too much room left on a page." Also, too much writing as well as

poor layout or placement of writing or illustration would affect selection negatively.

The element at the three levels which subjects overwhelmingly indicated as most influencing their selection process was topic of illustration. Subjects looked for topics that were familiar or interesting to them. Animals were the most favored topic mentioned, especially domestic animals. Other preferred topics included nature and modes of transportation. If the topic of the story was uninteresting to the subject, the book would not be selected.

At the first grade level subjects indicated that they enjoyed illustration in which the characters were animals depicted as having human qualities and dressed as people. However, at the third and fifth grade levels the same character representation influenced selection in a negative manner. At these levels "crazy," "interesting," "cartoon" or humorous characters were preferred.

Many of the students at all three levels chose a book with which they have had previous

experience or interaction. They often chose a book which they "have seen," "have read," or have interacted with in another media, e.g. tape, movie. Series books were also indicated in subject response as influencing selection positively.

Influencing selection in a negative way are books whose illustrations appear to the subjects to be at an inappropriate level. These may be books which are too difficult to understand or "too babyish."

At the third and fifth grade levels an "eye catching" illustration on the cover will influence selection as well as title appeal. Within the element of story interest was an indication of preference for humor in illustration. This was mentioned repeatedly across the levels and in all cases indicated positive influence on subjects' selection.

The style element showed a preference for realism at all levels. In grades three and five there was also an indication that students enjoyed

stylized or unrealistic illustration. Abstraction and Impressionism were unfavored styles which had a negative influence on book selection.

At the third and fifth grade levels responses were positive towards illustrations which had "feeling" or seemed "mysterious." Subjects also favored books and illustration that appealed to the senses, e.g. "smooth waxy pages," "made me hungry."

Quality of Illustration

Table 4 addresses the following question:

Do subjects at the various levels choose books which have been determined to contain quality illustration?

Table 4 indicates the frequency of selection patterns by grade levels. For the purposes of this study, quality illustration is defined as those books which have been selected as Caldecott Medal and honor books. Inferior illustration is defined as those illustrated books which contain two or less of the elements of art as determined

by the researcher.

The following procedure was employed to determine selection patterns. Subjects were given four books representing both quality and inferior illustration and then asked to select one book from the group which they would most like to read. A time limit was imposed to prevent subjects from reading the books and to simulate the actual selection process.

Table 4

Frequency of Selection Patterns by Grade Level

Selection Grade Level	Caldecott Quality Illustration		Other Inferior Illustration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	16	64	9	36
3	17	65	9	35
5	18	72	7	28
Totals	51	67	25	33

At the first grade level 16 out of 25 subjects chose books with superior illustration, or 64% chose books with quality illustration and 36% chose books with inferior illustration.

At the third grade level 17 out of 26 subjects chose books with superior illustration, or 65% chose books with quality illustration and 35% chose books with inferior illustration.

At the fifth grade level 18 out of 25 subjects chose Caldecott award or honor books, or 72% chose books with quality illustration while the remaining 28% chose books with inferior illustration.

The total on Table 4 represents a total of the three grades. Out of 76 subjects 51 chose the better illustrated books, or 67% chose Caldecott award or honor books while 33% chose books with inferior illustration. This is approximately a two to one ratio in favor of the books with quality illustration over those with inferior illustration.

Summary

This study was designed to investigate the influence of illustration on book selection among subjects at the first, third and fifth grade levels. The study investigated student response to characteristics in illustration which influence book selection as well as indicating whether children are more likely to choose quality illustration over inferior illustration.

The findings showed an overlapping of response across grade levels indicating specific elements of illustration which influenced the subjects' book selection process.

The study determined that subjects more readily chose books which contain quality illustration. Out of 76 subjects 67% chose Caldecott award or honor books while 33% chose books with inferior illustration.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of illustration on book selection among subjects at the first, third and fifth grade levels in a suburban school district in Western New York State. The study was designed to elicit student response to those characteristics in illustration which influence book selection at the various levels. The study also indicates whether children are more likely to choose quality illustration over inferior illustration.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were made through an interpretation of subject response:

Children choose books with bright, colorful illustration more readily than those with dark or black and white illustration. Groff (1977) cited numerous studies in which similar results were found (Ayer, 1940; Bamberger, 1922; Bou and Lopez, 1953; Freeman and Freeman, 1933; Hildreth, 1936; Lark-Horovitz, 1937; Mellinger, 1932; Miller, 1936; Publishers Weekly, 1939; Rudisill, 1952; and Whipple, 1953).

In general, children prefer illustration with detail. Martin's (1931) study suggests her subjects also preferred illustrations with small figures and minute details as cited by Groff (1977).

Children choose books with background illustration. If a book contains poor layout or placement of writing or illustration a child is less likely to select it. These elements are discussed as the coordination of the visual, textual and physical elements in Hams and Lettow's (1989) study of book design.

Children base selection of a book largely on

topics of illustration. They look for topics which are familiar or interesting to them, such as animals, nature and transportation. Similar findings cited by Groff (1977) suggest that children like eventful illustrations which have objects or animals involved in action or which tell a story, better than stationary appearing or inert ones (Ayer, 1940; Bamberger, 1922; Clegg, 1968; Freeman and Freeman, 1933; Hildreth, 1936; Lark-Horovitz, 1937; Martin, 1931; Morrison, 1935; and Whipple, 1953).

Children at the first grade level are more likely to select a book which contains animals in human roles and attire. Third and fifth grade students more likely will choose illustration with realistic characters or humorous, cartoon type figures.

Many children select a book because they are familiar with the illustration through a previous experience. In general, books with illustrations that appear to a child to be at an inappropriate level are not selected.

Third and fifth grade students indicated cover illustration or design as well as title interest were influential in book selection.

Groff (1977) cites studies which indicate children prefer factual, realistic and familiar appearing illustration to stylized, impressionistic, fanciful, whimsical, or ironic ones (Ayer, 1940; Benecetic, 1960; Bou and Lopez, 1953; Clegg, 1968; Freeman and Freeman, 1933; French, 1952; Katz, 1944; Mellinger, 1932; Publishers Weekly, 1939; Rudisill, 1952; Sloan, 1972; and Van der Mark, 1929). This study concurs with those findings. At each of the levels, students would more readily select a book with realistic, familiar illustrations. At the third and fifth grade there began to be some response indicating students also would choose illustration which was stylized or unrealistic. However, children were not inclined to select books which contained abstraction or impressionism. Similarly, other studies indicate that children opt for the artists' use of clear, definite or

bold outlines for figures and objects rather than for faded, blurred, washed out or otherwise indistinct shapes (Ayer, 1940; Freeman and Freeman, 1933; French, 1952; Martin, 1931; Publishers Weekly, 1939; and Van der Mark, 1929) as cited by Groff (1977).

At all levels children will select a book with illustration which they perceive as being humorous. Similar findings were concluded in Ayers' (1940) study where students were found to be more likely to select humorous illustrations over those which appear sober.

Lastly, in student response at the third and fifth grade levels children were likely to select "mysterious" looking illustration as well as illustration that appealed to the senses.

At the first grade level 64% of the subjects chose books with quality illustration and 36% chose books with inferior illustration. Sixty-five percent of the third grade subjects selected Caldecott award or honor books and 35% chose books with inferior illustration. At the fifth grade

level 72% of the subjects chose books with quality illustration while the remaining 28% chose the books with inferior illustration. Out of the 76 subjects, 51 chose the Caldecott or honor books. Sixty-seven percent of the total subjects chose quality illustration while the remaining 33% chose books with inferior illustration.

Implications for Research

The results of this study were based on responses of approximately 75 students from a first, third and fifth grade setting in a suburban school. Further research should include a larger sample size as well as other grade levels. Responses may also be influenced by rural or urban school locations. Further studies of this nature should continue to include student interviews as a source of data. Although there are many studies on illustration and child preferences, there is very little research dealing with illustrations' role in book selection. Further studies of this type can be invaluable in their application to

illustration in classroom text books as well as picture/story books for children.

Summary

The basic goals of this study were to determine through student response, the characteristics of illustration which influence book selection, as well as indicating whether children are more likely to choose quality or inferior illustration. Schlager's (1978) comment that book selection is not made on a conscious level and that no child can verbalize the reason for his or her selection is clearly debatable, as this study shows. Children's verbal and written responses in this study indicate specific characteristics which not only are preferred in illustration, but which influence book selection. This study also indicates that children are more inclined to select books with quality or artworthy illustration over those with inferior illustration. Children's words contain invaluable

implications for future research of this type.
Educators and researchers often can only speculate
without this valuable source as input.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Student Input Form

Flipping through each book and without reading,
which book is more appealing to you? Why?

What things might cause you to choose this book to
read? (referring to first choice) would you
change anything?

What things do you dislike or might improve the
other books you did not choose?

Thank you for your
cooperation and input
in my study

Linda S. McHath

Appendix B

Medal Books

Song and Dance Man	Karen Ackerman Illustrated by Stephen Gannell
Owl Moon	Jane Yolen Illustrated by John Schoenherr
Hey, Al	Arthur Yorinks Illustrated by Richard Egielski
The Polar Express	Chris Van Allsburg
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble	William Steig
Drummer Hoff	Adapted by Barbara Emberley Illustrated by Ed Emberley
Time of Woder	Robert McCloskey
Frog Went A-Courtin	Retold by John Langstaff Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky
Madeline's Rescue	Ludwig Bemelmans
The Biggest Bear	Lynd Ward
Jumanji	Chris Van Allsburg
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears	Retold by Verna Aardema Pictures by Leo & Diane Dillon

Medal Books continued

May I Bring a Friend	Beatrice Schenk de Regniers Illustrated by Beni Montresor
Where the Wild Things Are	Maurice Sendak
The Snow Day	Ezra Jack Keats
The Big Snow	Berta and Elmer Hader
The Little House	Virginia Lee Burton
Make Way for Ducklings	Robert McCloskey

Honor Books

Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Retold and Illustrated by James Marshall
Mufare's Beautiful Daughters	John Steptoe
Alphabatics	Suse macDonald
The Relatives Came	Cynthia Rylant Illustrated by Stephen Gammell
Have You Seen My Duckling?	Nancy Tafuri

Honor Books continued

Hosie's Alphabet	Hosea, Tobias and Lisa Baskin Illustrated by Leonard Baskin
If All the Seas Were One Sea	Janina Domanska
Frog and Toad Are Friends	Arnold Lobel
In the Night Kitchen	Maurice Sendak
Goggles	Ezra Jack Keats
The Judge	Harve Zemach Illustrated by Margot Zemach
Frederick	Leo Lionni
Seashore Story	Taro Yashima
Lion	William Pene du Bois
A Very Special House	Ruth Krauss Illustrated by Maurice Sendak
On Market Street	Words by Arnold Lobel Pictures by Anita Lobel
Hawk, I'm Your Brother	Byrd Baylor Illustrated by Peter Parnall
Strega Nona	Retold and Illustrated by Tomie de Paola

Honor Books continued

The Wave	Margaret Hodges Illustrated by Blair Lent
Swimmy	Leo Lionni
Blueberries for Sal	Robert McCloskey
Stone Soup	Marcia Brown .N
A Child's Good Night Book	Margaret Wise Brown
Madeline	Ludwig Bemelmans