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**Children's responses to a picturebook during a small group, co-constructed read-aloud.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education  
At Massey University,  
Palmerston North,  
New Zealand.

Christine L. Braid  
2012

## Candidate's statement

I certify that this report is the result of my own work except where otherwise acknowledged and has not been submitted, in part or in full, for any other papers or degrees for which credit qualifications have been granted.

Christine Louise Braid

## Abstract

This study investigated the responses that 21 nine and ten year old children gave to a picturebook read-aloud in small groups within their classroom. The group sessions involved a co-constructed approach based on the children's interactions with the book and each other. The research questions focused on the ways the children responded to the narrative as well as on how they built on each other's ideas to co-construct meaning. The study looked at these questions in the context of the small group and co-constructed nature of the event.

The picturebook *Luke's Way of Looking* by Nadia Wheatley and Matt Ottley (1999) was read aloud to each group and the responses and discussion from these sessions were recorded. The sessions produced rich data, both in quantity and quality. A framework of analysis based on and adapted from the extensive work of Lawrence Sipe (2008) allowed the data to be categorised, analysed, and discussed. The framework was adapted by considering aspects of the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982) as well as the picturebook elements that the children used for their response. The results are presented in relation to this framework.

The findings revealed that the children engaged with the picturebook in ways that enhanced their literary understandings and their thinking about a book. Using the framework of analysis showed that the children's responses fitted into all the categories that Sipe (2008) established for literary understanding and in a spread that was similar to the responses from his study. The children interpreted the messages from the picturebook by using both the words and the pictures and they achieved complex levels of thought by interacting with each other and with the book.

The picturebook enabled them to make inferences and draw conclusions based on how the illustrator used different elements to convey a message. In particular, the children used colour, light, and symbol to explore ideas about possible meanings in the illustrations. The small group setting enabled them

to engage with the book and with each other with ease. The co-constructed approach meant children shared their ideas as they formed them and they built on each other's ideas to a complex level of thinking.

The findings provide evidence that carefully selected picturebooks are an appropriate resource for nine and ten year old children. The findings also show that the small group and the co-constructed approach are important considerations for developing discussions that value the child's voice in the classroom context. These results have implications for school wide literacy policy and classroom practice.

## Acknowledgements

A thesis is many years in the making, not only during the study and writing period but also in the years before. There are many people who have contributed to this thesis.

I acknowledge the participating school, the generous support of the classroom teacher, and the enthusiasm, engagement, and wonderful words of the children. This thesis is only possible because of this.

My thanks go to my supervisors Brian Finch, Valerie Margrain, and Tracy Riley. To Brian for expert direction, sensible parameters, and unending support; to Valerie for ideas that helped with clarity and simplicity as well as your great eye for the details; and to Tracy for joining the team and bringing the important fresh eyes and mind that pushed me to be more coherent.

To all my colleagues, friends and family who showed interest, gave advice, encouraged me to keep on going, and gave me space to get on with it. You know who you are and I appreciate you.

I acknowledge the picturebook artists and authors whose works contribute such a great deal to children's literacy and lives. Particular thanks in regards to this thesis go to Nadia Wheatley and Matt Ottley for *Luke's Way of Looking*, which is a gem of a book, and perfect for the type of thinking and exploring that was the focus of this study. Matt, your generous permission to use copies of the illustrations has allowed the thesis to carry the essence of the picturebook through it. Alongside these artists and authors, I acknowledge the work of theorists and researchers who show us how important picturebooks are. I particularly acknowledge the work of Lawrence Sipe whose extensive studies are a foundation to this study. May his work live on.

I am, of course ever thankful to Jeff, for all the encouragement, support, and care. I guess I now have to remember how to cook, clean, and shop again. Much love as always to Jem, Markku and Jake and thanks for all sorts of inspiration over the years with your thinking and ideas, as well as for putting up with a mother who so often had her head in some sort of book. You are my favourite people.

## Permissions

The research has the approval of the Massey University Ethics Committee (HEC: Southern B application 11/69). The approval letter can be seen in Appendix A.

Permission to use the children's words as part of this study was gained as part of the information and permission sheets (Appendices C-F).

Matt Ottley, the illustrator, granted permission for the use of the illustrations from the picturebook *Luke's Way of Looking*. The letter seeking this permission is in Appendix H. An email granting this permission can be seen in Appendix I.

## Table of Contents

<b>CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>PERMISSIONS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
LIST OF TABLES .....	10
LIST OF FIGURES.....	10
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.1 RESEARCHER'S MOTIVATION AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.2 AN ENCOMPASSING PERSPECTIVE OF LITERACY</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.3 THE NEED FOR RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>1.4 THE FOCUS OF THIS THESIS</b> .....	<b>16</b>
OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS .....	17
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>CHAPTER OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2 SOCIAL SEMIOTICS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>2.3 PICTUREBOOK THEORIES</b> .....	<b>25</b>
WORDS AND IMAGES .....	25
ELEMENTS OF ART .....	28
<b>2.4 STORY AND NARRATIVE</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>2.5 LITERACY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND STRATEGIES</b> .....	<b>32</b>
MULTIMODAL LITERACY .....	33
<b>2.6 LITERARY UNDERSTANDINGS</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>2.7 READER RESPONSE THEORIES</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>2.8 THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>CHAPTER OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH</b> .....	<b>41</b>
CONSTRUCTIVISM.....	41
CRITICAL THEORY .....	42
<b>3.2 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>43</b>
INTERPRETIVISM.....	43
CASE STUDY .....	44
<b>3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN</b> .....	<b>45</b>
QUALITY ISSUES.....	45
ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS.....	47
EDUCATED CONSENT .....	47
THE PARTICIPANTS.....	48
THE CLASSROOM TEACHER.....	48
THE CHILDREN AS PARTICIPANTS .....	49



THE RESEARCHER AS PARTICIPANT .....	49
GROUP SIZE.....	50
TEACHING APPROACHES .....	51
THE IMPORTANCE OF TALK .....	53
CHOICE OF TEXT .....	54
<b>3.4 CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>3.5 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>58</b>
INTERPRETIVE RESPONSES.....	59
PERSONAL RESPONSES .....	60
AESTHETIC RESPONSES.....	61
TYPES OF THINKING.....	62
<i>Connection 1: Define</i> .....	64
<i>Connection 2: Combine</i> .....	64
<i>Connection 3: Integrate</i> .....	65
<i>Connection 4: Extend</i> .....	65
PICTUREBOOK ELEMENTS.....	65
BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER .....	67
<b>3.6 PROCESS OF ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>CHAPTER SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>4.1 QUANTITY OF RESPONSES .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>4.2 INTERPRETIVE RESPONSES.....</b>	<b>75</b>
USING THE ELEMENT OF COLOUR AND LIGHT .....	76
<i>Types of thinking</i> .....	76
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES USING COLOUR AND LIGHT .....	84
USING THE ELEMENTS OF OBJECT AND SYMBOL .....	84
<i>Types of thinking</i> .....	85
SUMMARY OF THE OBJECT AND SYMBOL RESPONSES.....	97
USING THE ELEMENT OF WORDS .....	98
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES THAT USED WORDS.....	103
TYPES OF THINKING AND CHILDREN’S INTERACTIONS.....	104
SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES IN THE INTERPRETIVE CATEGORY .....	106
<b>4.3 OTHER CATEGORIES OF LITERARY ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>107</b>
AESTHETIC RESPONSES .....	107
SUMMARY OF AESTHETIC RESPONSES .....	110
<b>CHAPTER SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>CHAPTER OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>113</b>
QUANTITY OF RESPONSES.....	113
LITERARY UNDERSTANDING.....	114
TYPES OF THINKING.....	116
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES OF LITERACY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND STRATEGIES .....	117
THE RESOURCE AND THE APPROACH.....	118
THE IMPORTANCE OF TALK .....	122
IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT .....	124
<i>Diversity and inclusive practice</i> .....	125

<b>5.2 DISCUSSION OF METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>126</b>
OVERVIEW .....	126
THE FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS .....	127
LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY .....	129
<b>SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>6.1 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>133</b>
CLASSROOM PRACTICE .....	133
FURTHER RESEARCH .....	137
<b>6.2 CONCLUDING COMMENTS .....</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>152</b>
APPENDIX A ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL .....	152
APPENDIX B FLOW CHART OF RESEARCH PROCEDURES.....	153
APPENDIX C INFORMATION SHEET: PRINCIPAL AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES .....	154
APPENDIX D INFORMATION SHEET: TEACHER .....	157
APPENDIX E INFORMATION SHEET: PARENTS .....	161
APPENDIX F INFORMATION SHEET: CHILDREN.....	163
APPENDIX G LETTER TO FAMILIES GIVING SOME FEEDBACK.....	166
APPENDIX H LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION FOR USE OF IMAGES .....	168
APPENDIX I PERMISSION FOR IMAGES FROM ILLUSTRATOR .....	169
APPENDIX J SELECTION OF RESPONSES THAT MATCH WITH ILLUSTRATOR'S COMMENTS .....	170
APPENDIX K EXAMPLES OF RESEARCHER ROLE IN CO-CONSTRUCTED READ ALOUD .....	171

## List of tables

Table 2.1 <i>Comparing terminologies about the art elements in picturebooks across different theorists</i> .....	29
Table 2.2 <i>How a narrative can be constructed</i> .....	32
Table 2.3 <i>The four codes of a reader (Freebody &amp; Luke, 1990) as applied to print and image</i> .....	33
Table 3.1 <i>Categories of responses of literary understanding</i> .....	59
Table 3.2 <i>Summary of the SOLO taxonomy</i> .....	63
Table 3.3 <i>Types of thinking for analysis of children's responses as adapted from the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs &amp; Collis, 1982) and Sipe (2008)</i> .....	64
Table 4.1 <i>Responses that used colour and light according to type of thinking</i> .....	76
Table 4.2 <i>Responses that used object and symbol according to type of thinking</i> .....	85
Table 4.3 <i>Responses that used words according to type of thinking</i> .....	98

## List of figures

Figure 2.1 The colour red (p. 7) .....	23
Figure 2.2a Bird as object (p. 4)      Figure 2.2b Shadow as wings (pp. 19-20) .....	24
Figure 2.3a Hand as shadow (p. 2)      Figure 2.3b Hand in shadows (p. 4) ....	24
Figure 2.3c Outstretched hand (p. 11)      Figure 2.3d Outstretched hand (p. 14) ...	24
Figure 2.4 Luke's picture and the outside view (pp. 5-6) .....	26
Figure 2.5 A typology of picturebooks to explain the range of ways words and images can work together.....	28
Figure 2.6 A cognitive model of multimedia learning (Moreno & Mayer, 2000).....	34
Figure 3.1 Full range of categories for analysis of responses adapted from Sipe (2008)	67
Figure 3.2 Literary responses across the categories of literary understanding .....	69
Figure 3.3 Children's interpretive responses across types of thinking .....	69
Figure 3.4 Children's responses across picturebook elements .....	71
Figure 3.5 Children's interpretive responses categorised by four types of thinking and three picturebooks elements .....	71
Figure 4.1a Luke painting (p. 3)      Figure 4.1b Luke painting (p. 6).....	77
Figure 4.2 Colour on Luke (p. 6) .....	78
Figure 4.3a Colours on the stairs (p. 10)      Figure 4.3b Colour over double spread (p.11)	78
Figure 4.4 Luke paints colour (p. 3) .....	79

<i>Figure 4.5a</i> Dark Mr Barraclough (pp. 25-26)	<i>Figure 4.5b</i> Mr Barraclough changes (p.29)	80
<i>Figure 4.6</i> Comparing to other texts (p. 6)		81
<i>Figure 4.7a</i> Luke happy (p. 6)	<i>Figure 4.7b</i> Luke unhappy (p. 8)	82
<i>Figure 4.8</i> Meaning of colour (pp. 25-26)		83
<i>Figure 4.9a</i> Butterfly thing and hands (p. 18)	<i>Figure 4.9b</i> Bird on a bike (p. 17)	86
<i>Figure 4.10</i> Constellation images (p. 14)		87
<i>Figure 4.11</i> The emerging creature (p. 18)		88
<i>Figure 4.12a</i> Luke's shadow as wings (pp.19-20)	<i>Figure 4.12b</i> Seeing birds (p. 27-28)	89
<i>Figure 4.13</i> Luke's different painting (p. 3)		90
<i>Figure 4.14</i> Luke paints what he sees (pp.5-6)		91
<i>Figure 4.15a</i> Shadow as large hand (p. 2)	<i>Figure 4.15b</i> Shadow as wings (p. 29)	93
<i>Figure 4.16</i> He paints what he thinks (p. 6)		94
<i>Figure 4.17</i> Inside his art (pp. 27-28)		95
<i>Figure 4.18a</i> He felt he was all alone (p. 11)	<i>Figure 4.18b</i> But when he came here	96
<i>Figure 4.19</i> Title page with eye		99
<i>Figure 4.20</i> Relating left and right (p. 9)		100
<i>Figure 4.21</i> Predicting a change (p. 10)		101
<i>Figure 4.22</i> Scribble on the bird's beak (p. 18)		101
<i>Figure 4.23a</i> I'm free (pp.19-20)	<i>Figure 4.23b</i> Where am I? (p. 22)	107
<i>Figure 4.24</i> Luke's underpants (p. 20)		108
<i>Figure 4.25</i> Natalie drawing in response to book		109
<i>Figure 4.26a</i> Happiness	<i>Figure 4.26b</i> Darkness	110
<i>Figure 5.1</i> Comparison between Sipe's (2008) original study and this study (by percentage)		128



## Chapter 1 Introduction

*Picturebook* as a compound word is used in this study, rather than other terminology such as *picture book* as two separate words, *illustrated book*, or *picture storybook*. The term *picturebook* describes books where the pictures and words are specifically designed to work together to provide the whole message and meaning (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nodelman, 1988; Pantaleo, 2008; Sipe, 2008). Using the term *picturebook* distinguishes this particular resource from other books designed for children such as illustrated storybooks, concept books, or non-fiction texts.

### 1.1 Researcher's motivation as background to the study

My interest in the potential of picturebooks as a teaching and learning tool began when I studied for a Diploma of Children's Literature. I discovered picturebooks required the reader to bring together a number of clues, from both the words and the pictures on each page, and make connections between these. There was a challenge in this reading process that required a high level of thinking. Over the next few years, whenever I used picturebooks in classrooms, I could see the potential these complex texts had for learning. Picturebooks gave the opportunity for children to engage with the text and with each other in discussions, not only helping them with their understanding of a narrative but also helping them to use their thinking skills and strategies in a way that could benefit their learning in general. The discussions that followed a picturebook reading were ones where children engaged with interpreting the text and they used the books as platforms for developing their thinking. The features of a picturebook, combined with a read-aloud approach allowed the children to experience a different type of exploration of a book.

It seemed that picturebooks were not always understood for their complexities and possibilities as a teaching and learning resource. They were often used as a good way to settle the children after lunch and as Sipe (2008) also noted, they were generally seen as a resource to be used with young

children in the first few years of schooling. The potential of picturebooks as a resource for thinking, discussion, and engagement with a wide range of students seemed largely untapped in many classrooms. The reasons for this are multiple and complex, but could include the busy school day, the pressure of standards driving particular practice, and the limitations in teachers' knowledge about the potential of picturebooks. Yet they are such a readily available resource, often purchased with a school's library budget, that utilising their potential makes sense from a fiscal as well as a learning point of view.

These reflections helped form part of the purpose of this study: to explore whether the potential of picturebooks could be included in the literacy learning and teaching in our classrooms for the benefit of all learners.

## **1.2 An encompassing perspective of literacy**

Literacy learning is a vital aspect of children's education in the primary school years and beyond. Literacy has importance because it is foundational to other learning and because it is highly valued by society. A fuller definition of literacy is explored in the literature review chapter to follow but essentially children need the skills to decode the text as well as to use, interpret, and critique the text. It is also important in a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment for children to apply their literacy skills to a range of texts in a variety of modes. An encompassing view of literacy, therefore, regards the ability to read messages from both words and images as necessary for communicating in a current environment.

A focus on interpreting visual images as an important part of children's learning is supported by a growing number of researchers (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Freebody & Luke, 2003; Gee, 2003; Kress, 2003). Children live in a vastly different semiotic world and this is a challenge for educators (Finch, 2008). The interdependence between the elements used in visual texts requires a different conceptual approach than that of the more understood

aspect of reading words in a linear way. Not only is reading now a different kind of act, it demands a way of thinking that depends on different kinds of classification (Heath, 2000). Children bring these different ways of thinking to a picturebook reading situation. The picturebook becomes a resource that can act as a bridge between more traditional understandings of literacy teaching and the view that encompasses images and technologies.

An encompassing view of literacy considers literature use as important for more than helping children to learn to read. Teaching literacy is partly about the technical side of skills and knowledge but also involves “teaching higher order thinking that helps tackle problems of learning and life” (Fisher, 1997, p. 17). This view of literacy learning corresponds with what some researchers have considered as children’s literary understandings (Meek, 1988; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003; Rosenblatt, 1978; Sipe, 2008). Sipe (2008) explained literary understanding as a matter of a reader engaging in literary meaning making, “passionately interpreting stories with increasing sophistication, cognitive power, and delight” (p. 3). This literary understanding allows readers to perceive their own lives in new ways (Sipe, 2008). Literary understandings have an important role in children becoming literate, improving in their ability as responders to and creators of texts, as well as in helping them to understand their lives (Sipe, 2008).

### **1.3 The need for research**

A large amount of literature exists about picturebooks’ construction and meaning but few studies have looked closely at the actual responses children give to picturebooks. Those that have been done show that this is an important and exciting area of research. The results of the study for this thesis add to the field of literature about children’s responses to picturebooks.

Sipe (2008) stated that children’s literature tends to be used for literacy rather than literary education and that he believed there was need for



research around children's literary understanding. He also noted a disturbing trend in education where teaching was becoming more scripted and technicist along with a narrow interpretation of what constituted reading. His concerns were that a narrow view of reading could lead to the reduction of reading aloud to children in school and the ignoring of real books and discussion around them. Yet, without real books, there is no real purpose for reading. Meek (1988) found that children who have had experience with picturebooks that challenge are more competent in reading than those who go straight into reading schemes. Her conclusions were that the richness of the picturebook reading experience was vital to children's overall success as readers. Picturebooks encourage a kind of multi-consciousness that doesn't happen when paying attention to only the words (Meek, 1988).

The above factors are important for schools and educationalists to consider. Educational policies tend to be singularly concerned with outcomes and efficiency in a system that has a bias toward print (Luke, 2002). Finch (2008) has stated that this view has contributed to the limited attention to the viewing aspect of English in the *New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)* and a possible lack of emphasis on an encompassing view of literacy. Given the assertions from above about the changing nature of literacy demands in a 21<sup>st</sup> century world, the area of how children make meaning from multi-modal texts is important.

## **1.4 The focus of this thesis**

The purpose of this study was to gain insights into how picturebooks were beneficial to children's learning. The focus of the study was to gather the responses children gave to a picturebook in a co-constructed read aloud situation in small groups. These responses were analysed and discussed to determine the use of picturebooks in classrooms. The questions that guided the study were:

1. What do the children's responses to a picturebook reveal about their literary understanding of its narrative?
2. What do the children's responses reveal about their thinking as they engage with a picturebook and interact with each other?

The study took place in a suburban mid-decile<sup>1</sup> school with a class of nine and ten year old children. A carefully selected picturebook appropriate for the age group was read aloud to the children in small groups. The responses were audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis.

### Overview of the thesis

As well as this introductory chapter, the thesis includes, in Chapter 2, a review of the relevant literature that is foundational to this study. Chapter 3 then outlines features of the methodology, including the important literature for its background. It includes an outline for the framework used and the process taken for analysis of the responses as well as presenting some quantitative data that helps to form the structure of the results chapter. Chapter 4 presents the results, using excerpts from the children's responses in relation to the framework for analysis. The responses are outlined and described ready for discussion in the following chapter. Chapter 5 has a discussion of the results from Chapter 4, as well as a discussion about the methodology. This thesis ends with chapter 6 that outlines implications for practice, for further research, and a conclusion of the study as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> A decile rating refers to the categorisation of each school based on the socio-economic level of the families represented at that school.



**Chapter overview**

This chapter reviews literature from relevant research fields and sets the study in a socio-cultural context. The context is sociocultural in that the participants interact together and bring their cultural and personal influences to the situation. Beliefs about the ways learners learn; the importance of cultural, interpersonal, and personal contexts; and the ways these factors interact to impact on the learning situation are outlined. These theories consider learners and the influences on them as they engage in a learning context.

In this study, a picturebook appropriate to the age of the children was used to promote discussion. The words and pictures used in such a book are signs and symbols that society attributes meaning to. Therefore, the chapter outlines theories of semiotics and social semiotics to bring a better understanding of signs and symbols as well as an understanding of the picturebook as a cultural resource. The literature about picturebooks, art theory, and narrative storytelling is discussed.

As readers engage with a text and with others in a group, they interpret the text and build their understanding in a way that enhances both their literacy and literary development (Sipe, 2008). Aspects of literacy and literary development are defined and some relevant literature is reviewed. A model that outlines how a viewer processes visual information is also considered. The chapter then considers readers' interactions with texts by reviewing reader response theories and looks at how these contribute to literacy and literary development. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the New Zealand context.

## 2.1 Socio-cultural context

Learning is a complex activity that not only happens in the mind of any one learner (Piaget, 1977) but also is influenced by the interaction of many learners together (Vygotsky, 1978). Socio-cultural theories conceptualise knowledge as constructed through learners' active engagement with the physical, social, and cultural environment of which they are a part. It is through this active engagement and co-construction that a child's thinking develops. The social and cultural contexts are highly influential on learning in this co-constructivist view. Thinking is framed as occurring firstly between people, on an intermental plane, and then as gradually internalized and transformed at the level of the individual, on an intramental plane (Vygotsky, 1934/2004). Learning progresses from the group to the individual, starting as a co-constructed activity rather than as something learners do by themselves. This type of co-constructed interaction underlies this study with its focus on how children build on each other's responses to come to their own understandings about a picturebook. A number of recent studies showed that children engaged in co-constructed learning while interacting together over picturebooks (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; McGuire, Belfatti & Ghiso, 2008; Pantaleo, 2008; Sipe, 2008). Such studies validate the approach chosen for this study with an interaction between the participants and the book that enables the individuals to construct their own meaning from the text.

A key feature of socio-cultural theory is that complex thinking develops through social interaction with a more knowledgeable person. A learner can reach a level above what they would be capable of by themselves through the help of others (Vygotsky, 1978). The assistance acts as a scaffold to the learner for engaging in the task. This scaffolding helps learners to reach independence in a task, with responsibility for new learning supported and then gradually handed over to the learners themselves (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). The group reading event used in this study meant learners had scaffolded assistance from the researcher or the other children in the group.

Socio-cultural theories have been further developed in the latter part of the twentieth century to acknowledge all the layers of influence on the individual for learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry, & Goncu, 1993). Layers of influence involve all the connections in a learner's life: the individual, the family, the school and community, the media and texts, as well as the wider society and political system. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that while theories of learning have attended to the person, the people in the setting, and to the setting itself, the dynamics of the wider systems of influence on the child have been ignored. These systems include the rich cultural and community context, the interpersonal influence as learners engage with each other in the setting, and the active co-construction of each participant's personal learning (Rogoff, et al. 1993; Robbins, 2007). Such interactions are significant to this study because of the way each child's response can influence another person's idea; they are also significant because individuals come to the setting with their own experiences as influenced by their family and by each family's experiences within the wider society. These influences will affect the interpretations the children bring and the responses they give to a text. As an example of this, Arizpe (2009) found that a group of immigrant children responded to wordless picturebooks by making use of their past experiences to interpret the texts, as well as frequent use of home literacy practices.

This study involved the use of a picturebook as a resource that the group engaged with in reading and discussion. Picturebooks convey their messages through two kinds of signs, those of words and of pictures, and an understanding of how people make sense of signs is important for examining children's literary understanding of picturebooks (Sipe, 2008).

## **2.2 Social semiotics**

Semiotics is the study of the meanings of systems and signs (Barthes, 1975, 1977; Kress, 1997; Saussure, 1916/ 1974) and it arose from applying ideas from the domain of linguistics to non-linguistic domains (Kress & van

Leeuwen, 1996). Semiotics is dependent on the presupposition that structural features usually associated with verbal language operate in other systems such as music and art. The various rules for different signs and systems enable us to understand each other's messages and to be part of a cultural group. From a semiotic perspective signs are described as codes with set rules and exact meanings (Saussure, 1916/ 1974); however, from a social semiotic perspective, signs are seen not as codes but as resources for making meaning (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). The picturebook used in a group situation is an example of a resource for making meaning.

Signs are interpreted in the social situation in which they come to life (Halliday, 1978) and are interpreted from a social and cultural perspective. Social semiotics considers that images have assigned meanings and a visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), which are understood by a community (Leborg, 2004). Leborg (2004) stated that signs have no formal syntax or semantics, but Kress (1997) looked at images as being weakly organised with the reading of them requiring awareness of symbolic codes (Kress, 1997; Nikolajeva, 2010). This section further discusses the nature of this organisation and the symbolic code.

Non-linguistic signs have an organised system, but this organisation is different from that involved in the system for words. Saussure's (1916/ 1974) work described a sign as having an observable form, known as the signifier, and an associated meaning, known as the signified. These two forms of a sign combine to create meaning. Barthes (1975) described the layers of meaning in a sign: firstly the layer of denotation, what is seen; secondly the layer of connotation, what is symbolized. For example, in the illustration (Figure 2.1), the colour red in the mouth of the teacher is an observable form (or denotation) of what his mouth may actually look like. This colour also has an associated symbolic meaning (or connotation) about the character's mood or behaviour.



Figure 2.1 The colour red (p. 7)

In a picturebook, such as *Luke's Way of Looking*, readers must observe the signs in both the words and the images as observable forms presented (denotation) and also consider an interpretation for what they might be representing (connotation). Being able to bring meaning is vital for a full understanding of the messages because signs that cannot be linked with an associated meaning will not “cross the threshold of recognition” (Bryson, 1983, p. 151) and will be un-interpreted or misunderstood. Having an awareness of how signs convey meaning helps in responding to a picturebook in a fuller way than is possible without such an understanding. This study aims to explore how children make these discoveries of meaning as they engage together with picturebooks.

In a picturebook, the illustrator uses denotation and connotation to help convey the message of the book (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). *Luke's Way of Looking* uses both these aspects of a sign. The illustrator, Matt Ottley, includes objects in the illustrations (denotative) that become symbolic (connotative) through the book. For example in the illustrations from *Luke's Way of Looking*, birds are objects the illustrator uses in the early part of the book (Figure 2.2a). As the narrative progresses, birds, wings and flight become symbolic motifs that represent Luke's desire for freedom (Figure 2.2b).





Figure 2.2a Bird as object (p. 4)



Figure 2.2b Shadow as wings (pp. 19-20)

Another example of the denotative and connotative aspects of the sign in *Luke's Way of Looking* is the use of hands and shadows. These are included as objects in the picture (figure 2.3a, 2.3b) but they also become symbolic motifs as they are used over many pages (figure 2.3c, 2.3d). The symbols are used to convey a meaning of control versus freedom (Ottley, 2001). In Figure 2.3c Luke's hand is drawn palm up and open in direct contrast to the hand in the painting, which is tightly closed around a small bird. Here the illustrator contrasts the symbol of the open hand with that of the closed hand to create an illustration with layers of meaning.



Figure 2.3a Hand as shadow (p. 2)



Figure 2.3b Hand in shadows (p. 4)

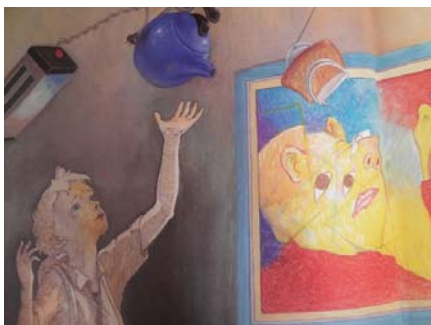


Figure 2.3c Outstretched hand (p. 11)



Figure 2.3d Outstretched hand (p. 14)

The way the illustrator uses these aspects in the illustrations make this picturebook a rich and useful resource for interpretation. The author and the illustrator carefully craft a picturebook to convey the narrative, and the choices about images or signs are important decisions for the creators of the message. An understanding of how we interpret signs and what different signs can mean is foundational to using picturebooks to their potential.

## 2.3 Picturebook theories

Picturebooks are chosen for this study because of the opportunities or affordances (Good & Brophy, 2002) for thinking that they offer the reader and the group. These affordances come from the way the words and the pictures work together. In a picturebook both sign systems, the pictures and the words, “bear the burden of narration” (Huck, 1997, p. 199) and the relationship is such that the picturebook is “more than the sum of its parts” (Nodelman, 1988, p. 199).

### Words and images

In picturebooks, meaning is created through images and words. The interaction is a complex relationship that can be regarded as a “synergy (where) the words change the pictures and the pictures change the words” (Nodelman, 1988, p. 220). In regards to the words of a picturebook, the author is able to utilise the fact that both the words and the pictures contribute to the story. The words can be succinct in telling their part of the narrative because the pictures are involved in the narrative too. For example, the pictures can portray the mood and emotion leaving the words to focus on asserting the facts. As an example from *Luke’s Way of Looking* (see figure 2.4), the words state:

One Friday, Mr. Barraclough told the class to paint what they saw through the window. Luke used his imagination (Wheatley, 1999, p. 5).

The words are a succinct assertion of fact. The illustration adds details, mood and focus. The bright colours in Luke's painting contrast with the monochromatic scheme of the view out the window. The curved lines of the painting give an impression of movement and flow that is not suggested by the actual view outside. The colour reflected onto Luke from the painting brings an element of emotion to the illustration that is not present in the words.



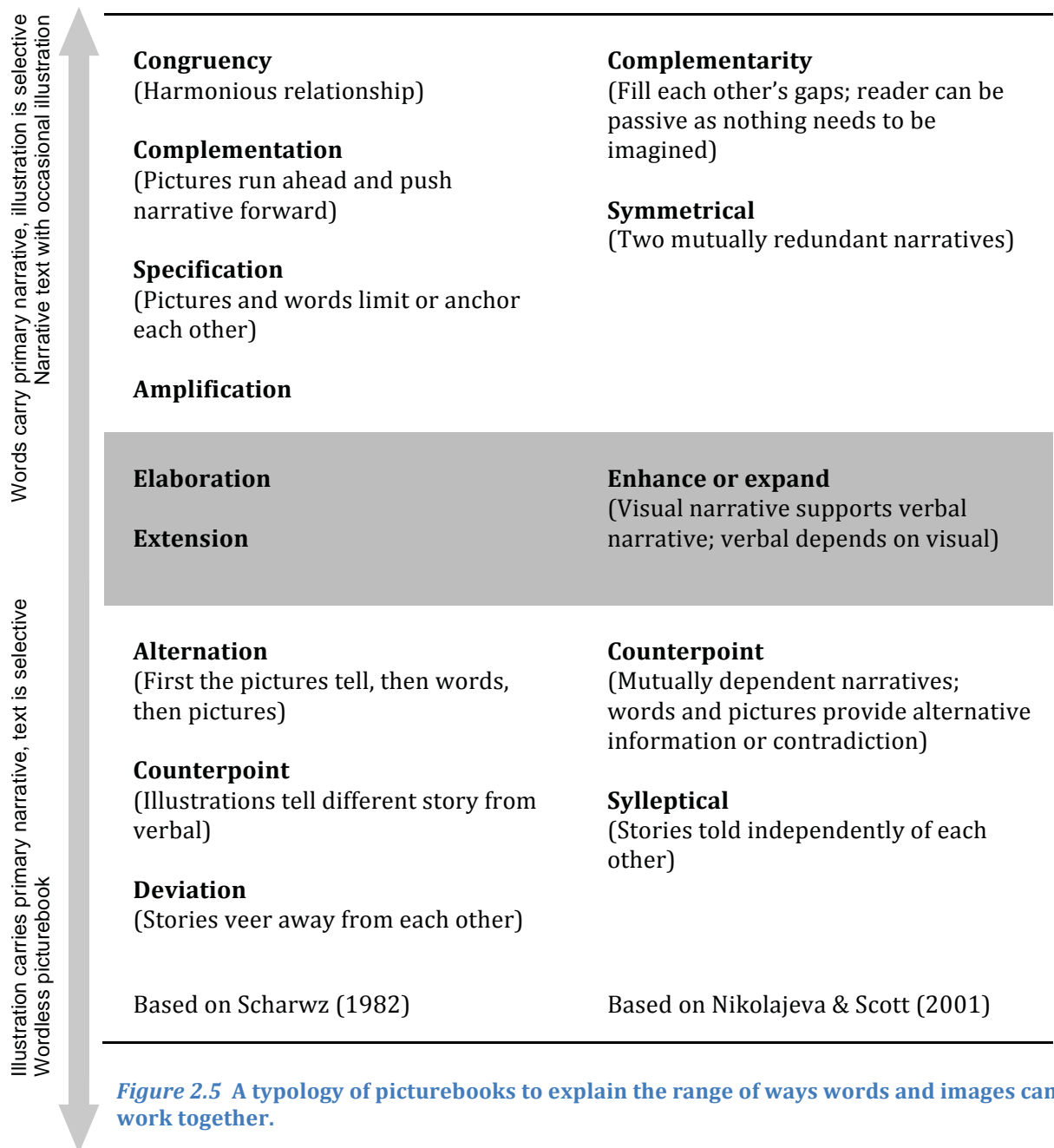
*Figure 2.4 Luke's picture and the outside view (pp. 5-6)*

When placed together, the pictures and the words have an anchoring effect (Nodelman, 1988) on each other. For example, in Figure 2.4 above, the illustration defines what Luke sees as "he used his imagination" by depicting it in Luke's painting. The picture anchors the words by showing the specific details of how Luke uses his imagination, rather than leaving this completely open to readers' interpretations (Nodelman, 1988). The words also anchor the picture by stating that the context is Luke's experiences in art class.

The words and the pictures work as a double act (Grey, 2006) or as a duet (Cech, 1983-84). Pictures convey different aspects of the narrative than the words do and, therefore, interpreting the whole book engages readers in using a high level of literary competence and sophisticated decoding (Nikolajeva, 2010) as they work to make connections what is shown and what is said. Many studies have shown that children can engage in this level of literary competence. One example of such a study is that of Arizpe and Styles (2003) who reported that children in their studies realised that the words and pictures were not telling the same story. The children said the

pictures were the most important element but that the words were needed to take the story along. The children noticed the irony when the words didn't say as much as the pictures showed (Arizpe & Styles, 2008). These two studies by Arizpe and Styles (2003, 2008) showed that the children were involved in complex combining of words and pictures in order to interpret the books. Similar results were found in other studies conducted with children and picturebooks. Pantaleo (2008) and Sipe (2008) both reported findings about children's high-level engagement and interpretation with picturebooks.

Further exploration of the complexity and relationship of words and pictures can be seen in Figure 2.5 below. The figure briefly summarises two theories about how words and pictures interact in a picturebook. The figure shows a continuum of difference between types of picturebooks, with those where the text provides most of the narrative information at the top of the figure and those where illustrations provide most of this information at the bottom. The terms and categories used by different researchers reveal similarities. The figure helps to show the variety of ways picturebooks can convey the narrative and helps to place the book used for this study within this continuum. *Luke's Way of Looking* can be classified in the middle of this continuum, where words and pictures enhance and elaborate each other's narrative. The way an image is able to enhance, elaborate, specify or counterpoint as described in the figure comes from the elements of art that the illustrator uses. Having this knowledge about how picturebooks can be constructed helps both the creator and the interpreter of the book. As a reader of *Luke's Way of Looking*, the viewer needs to ensure they take the messages from both media and be active in the linking of these clues.



**Figure 2.5 A typology of picturebooks to explain the range of ways words and images can work together.**

## Elements of art

As shown in Figure 2.5, the nature of the picturebook is that the pictures are responsible for part of the narrative. For the fullest understanding of a picturebook, therefore, it is both useful and important to have knowledge of the way a picture can give its message. This means having knowledge of the basic ingredients of pictorial art (Nodelman, 1988) and an awareness that everything an artist includes in a picture is a potential carrier of meaning (Doonan, 1993). A number of researchers have explored how illustrators use

the elements of art to create that part of the narrative (Doonan, 1983; Mallan, 1999; Moebius, 1986; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nodelman, 1988; Schwarz, 1982). Some of the terms used by different researchers are compared in Table 2.1 to show how all the terms relate to each other and to locate the terms to be used in this study with those of other researchers.

Table 2.1 *Comparing terminologies about the art elements in picturebooks from different theorists.*

Moebius (1986)	Nodelman (1988)	Doonan (1993)	Mallan (1999)
Position	Size and scale Format Rhythm	Scale Intervals Patterning Linear rhythms	Space Format
Perspective	Perspective		Perspective
Frame	Frame		
Line and capillarity	Line Texture Movement Shape	Shape	Line Shape
Colour	Colour Light  Symbol Visual weight  Style Media	Light/ dark Colour	Colour   Style Media  Cultural context

Nodelman's (1988) terms, along with the consideration of cultural context (Mallan, 1999) were used for analysis of responses in this study. These terms were chosen because they encompassed the largest spectrum of elements to consider. The terms are further explored in the methodology chapter.

Research with picturebooks has shown that children do respond to the elements the illustrator uses. As an example of this, Sipe (2008) reported from a classroom situation with five and six year old children that the selected book's "layout, design, use of media, and style of illustration were a continual source of speculation and interest" (p. 118). He also reported that the children responded to and discussed techniques of movement, space, size and scale to show perspective, and the influence of the use of colour. In all these instances the children showed "they used the illustrations to interpret the words and the words to interpret the illustrations" (Sipe, 2008, p. 126). Arizpe and Styles (2003) reported that children read colours, borders, body language, framing devices, visual metaphors and visual jokes in the pictures. The children also showed they could use all aspects of the book, such as the front and back covers and the endpapers, to help them make an interpretation. Children used the form and content of illustrations in a visual analysis to express their literary understanding of the text (Sipe, 2008). Part of the focus of my study was to investigate how children used the elements of the picturebook for their interpretations. These ideas formed part of the adapted framework that is explained in the methodology chapter and used for the analysis of the results in this study.

Picturebooks are multilayered texts that require active readership. The reader must take an interrogating view of the text, often over repeated readings, because the story becomes most meaningful to the reader when each layer is explored. The layer can be a visual layer, where the illustrations are questioned for the meaning they bring or suggest; or it may be the verbal layer where the words are examined for their possible meanings; or it may be the layer where the two combine. This active readership is demanded by picturebooks because the words force the reader to reinterpret the pictures and then the reinterpreted pictures invite a reinterpretation of the words (Nodelman, 1988). A reader must actively make connections between these aspects and take an attitude of careful scrutiny (Arizpe & Styles, 2008) towards interpreting the narrative of the texts. This scrutiny is required



because in a picturebook, the words, the pictures, and all the parts of the book combine to create the complete narrative.

## **2.4 Story and narrative**

According to Bruner (1986), stories are a way of ordering experience and constructing our reality. We remember much of our experience in and knowledge of the world in the form of story (Rosen, 1986). Pantaleo (2008) described the process of narrative as a way of making sense of our human experience. These views show that the activity of sharing a story and discussing it together is an activity that people authentically engage in. Further to these ideas, Fisher (1997) observed that narrative comprehension is one of our earliest human capabilities yet one of the most complex: “to grasp and digest a story requires repeated acts of focal attention and efforts of understanding” (p. 18). These features of narrative contribute to the workings of a picturebook and add to the reasons they were chosen for this study. The type of thinking and engagement required of participants in storytelling can be seen as vital part of our learning.

In this study, the terms story and narrative are specifically defined. Story is defined as a sequence of events that happen to a person in the real world, or to a character in a created storyworld. The events are sequential and happen in order. Story is the ‘what’ of human experience (Whitehead, 2002). The overall telling and construction of the story is the narrative. It can be represented in a number of forms, time sequences, and from different points of view. Narrative, then, is the ‘how’ of the story and is focused on a telling of some kind (Whitehead, 2002). One story can be told in many different ways, so it can become many narratives. As outlined in table 2.2 below, a narrative is constructed through three aspects: narrative elements; media; and form.



Table 2.2 *How a narrative can be constructed*

Narrative elements	Media	Form
Character, scene, dialogue, description, action, tension	Photographic Film Printed book Words Pictures	Poem Essay Diary Novel Picturebook

*Luke's Way of Looking* can be described as a narrative account of a few days in the life of the main character, Luke. It tells of the events that happen to him over these days, and of the consequences of the events on him and on the other characters. The narrative involves the use of two media: printed words and drawn pictures. The words give an outline of selected events, dialogue, and thoughts of the characters from a third person point of view. In this picturebook form, the pictures are also part of the narrative, giving more details of the events, showing the different settings, and alluding to the characters' emotions and thoughts through the use of visual elements and techniques. The power of this particular narrative is in the combining of the two ways of conveying. Participants must use their understandings of the words to make sense of the print elements of the text. They must also interact with the illustrations to make sense of their narrative role. The reading of a picturebook is a complex task.

## 2.5 Literacy knowledge, skills and strategies

As outlined in the introduction chapter, this study takes an encompassing view of literacy where it is framed as a social practice. This social practice perspective of literacy focuses on the child's engagement with the text and with others to interpret and construct meanings (Pearson & Hoffman, 2011). Specific principles that guide this view include that literacy is seen as developmental and strategic, with a range of skills and strategies taught and utilised. In regards to the range of skills and strategies, Pearson and Hoffman

(2011) acknowledge the four reading practices or codes that are necessary for successful reading (Freebody & Luke, 1990). The four roles of a reader are code breaker, text participant or meaning making, text user, and text analyst or critic. The model was chosen because it is widely acknowledged in the literacy community. It also enabled a view of using multimodal texts and identifies what the reader and the viewer do to interpret the text. Table 2.3 below further describes the roles in regards to both the print aspect of literacy and the visual images aspect.

Table 2.3      *The four codes of a reader (Freebody & Luke, 1990) as applied to print and image.*

	Code breaker	Text participant	Text user	Text critic
Purpose	Getting the message from the page.	Use knowledge and strategies for a text.	Analyse how writers use the features of a text.	Understand what the text is trying to persuade us of.
From print	Use phonological information, vocabulary, word recognition, and decoding skills.	Comprehend the text in literal and inferential ways.	Recognise and discuss different features of types of text.	Understanding how the text structure affects the meaning.
From image	Decipher visual clues and symbols.  Notice individual elements of colour, line, texture, view, and perspective	Exploring composition (arrangement, position, frame) for their possible meanings.	Analysing image, codes, and signs.	Evaluating text as artefact, text as tool for developing knowledge and skills, and intertextuality.

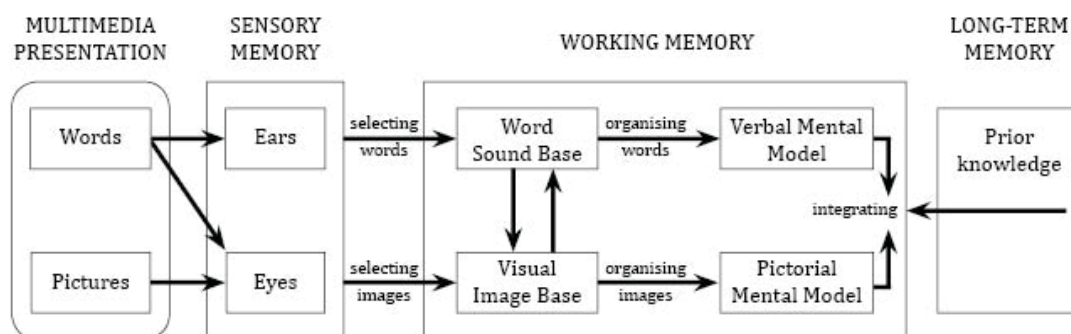
Adapted from Harris, Fitzsimmons, Turbill (2006),

## Multimodal literacy

A picturebook is an example of a multimodal text, where two or more semiotic systems are used in the delivery (Anstey & Bull, 2010). As outlined above, a picturebook utilises two media for its delivery, therefore, the way images and words are processed needs to be considered. Table 2.3 outlined

aspects of the visual aspect of processing and this section further considers how the brain processes images.

Processing visual images, according to Paivio (1986) occurs in a different way to processing verbal messages. Verbal memory deals with information from linguistic systems, while image memory is involved in processing information such as graphics, sounds, tastes and nonverbal thoughts. In regards to how our brains process visual and verbal information together, as one would do with a multimodal text, the diagram by Moreno and Mayer (2000) in Figure 2.6 below outlines a possible pathway. Information first reaches the sensory memory and then is processed in the working memory. According to Sweller (1988) our working memory has limited capacity and cannot process endless amounts of information. Baddeley (1986) stated that working memory includes independent pathways for auditory and visual working memory, thus increasing the capacity of the working memory. The model shows that the brain has working memory in the two modes (verbal and visual) and by utilising two pathways or stores instead of one, information can be processed and remembered in two ways (Paivio, 1986). Ultimately, meaningful learning occurs when a learner selects relevant information in each store, organises the information, and makes connections between corresponding representations in each store (Moreno & Mayer, 2000).



*Figure 2.6 A cognitive model of multimedia learning (Moreno & Mayer, 2000).*

This model gives insight into how the processing of a picturebook takes place in the brain and why a picturebook can be a useful resource for learning. In the situation of children being read a picturebook, the working memory can make these powerful connections from word base and the image base. Reading of a picturebook involves an oscillation between sign systems (Sipe, 2008), translating and connecting clues to create meaning from the text. The picturebook as a resource provides support for the reader by providing two sign systems for its message. There is also a cognitive challenge involved in the combination of the signs and this makes exploration and discussion possible in such a text.

These literacy skills and strategies are vital for the processing of the text. Literacy skills allow for the messages to be received. Once the message is received it needs to be further processed for full understanding. Knowing what the text says is the first part of the process; knowing why and what this means for each reader requires a different sort of understanding from text.

## **2.6 Literary understandings**

Literary understanding is a way of approaching a text that leads to an appreciation and understanding of the literary nature of the text. This creates a literary experience of responding to, interpreting, and transacting with the text for its narrative but also for its “power and delight” (Sipe, 2008, p. 3). Literary responses are those where the participants respond to the text in a way that expands their ideas about the text itself but also about themselves and the world (Sipe, 2008). Rosenblatt (1995) considered this way of appreciating a text as a “personal evocation, the product of a creative activity carried on by the reader under the guidance of the text” (p. 266). It is more than a close reading of a text that sees one correct meaning (Rosenblatt, 1995) and it is more than answering comprehension questions from a teacher or a test (Sipe, 2008). Literary understandings occur as readers read and re-read, driven by the satisfaction that they get from the narrative form. The reader forms significant understandings, carrying the meaning through

linkages made across the whole text in a way that enables them to seek out the resonances (B. T. Finch, personal communication, March, 23, 2012). It is this engagement with the text that positions books not only as resources for learning skills of literacy, but also as resources that enable a reader to explore literary understandings.

Picturebooks give children a range of opportunities to engage in literary ways. Arizpe and Styles (2003) noted many examples of children reading picturebooks as both an intellectual and an affective activity. Pantaleo's (2008) extensive studies documented the responses of both younger and older children to picturebooks, concluding that picturebooks "enriched the development of the students' literary competences" (p. 186). Sipe (2008) identified ways that children responded to text beyond processing the text and beyond comprehending what is written on the page. He noted that children were involved in a range of responses that could be categorised according to aspects that promoted literary understanding. These factors are further discussed below and later in the methodology chapter, where a framework for analysing literary responses is considered.

In a picturebook, the reader is involved in a recursive process, back and forth between the words and the pictures (Nodelman, 1988) and, when reading with a group, back and forth with other participants for further meaning making (McGuire et al, 2008). The type of reading advocated in this study is that of combining literacy knowledge, skills and strategies with literary understanding for an appreciation and interpretation of the text based on its literary quality (Sipe, 2008). The ability to create literary understanding from a text is dependent on the way a reader engages with and makes sense of that text, in essence, how the reader responds to and interacts with the text.

## **2.7 Reader response theories**

Various theorists have conceptualised the interaction between a text and a reader in different ways, with some placing the text as dominant in meaning

making (Ransom, 1941; Richards, 1964, cited by Sipe, 2008). The resulting theories promoted objectivity and a single correct interpretation of the text. Contrasting with this, the reader can be placed as the dominant maker of meaning (Iser, 1978), where there is no meaning unless there is a reader to interpret. In between these two ends of a continuum, the process is framed as an equal partnership between text and reader (Barthes, 1975; Fish, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1978) with neither text nor reader dominant overall. The concept of an equal partnership situates readers as the constructors of their own meanings in co-operation with the text and the author; the resulting interpretation is one of different meanings taken from the same text. These latter ideas gave rise to reader-response theory, which are significant to this study.

Reader response theory is concerned with the experiences and knowledge a reader brings to the text and how those factors influence what they will make of the text and, therefore, what they will take away (Rosenblatt, 1978). This is a transactional process between the reader and the text, a to and fro, non-linear, continuously reciprocal process of making meaning (Rosenblatt, 1995). It is the reader and the text together that make the meaning, not either one alone.

Rosenblatt (1978) conceptualised a continuum between two stances to describe the relationship between participant and text. One stance is an efferent stance where the reader intends to take some information away from the text, which Rosenblatt considers to be a non-literary response. The other stance is an aesthetic or literary stance where the reader lives through and experiences the text. According to Rosenblatt (1978), any reading of a text may fall at different points on this continuum and any text can be read both from an efferent point of view or an aesthetic one, depending on the reader's purpose. The literary experience is an experience of responding to, interpreting, and transacting with the text. It is a 'personal evocation' and a 'creative activity carried on by the reader under the guidance of the text' (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 266). The emphasis is on the relationship between

readers and texts, and between the works as authors created them and as readers then re-create them (Rosenblatt, 1995). Sipe (2008) regards all responses along the continuum as aspects of literary understanding and his framework is further investigated in the methodology chapter.

## 2.8 The New Zealand context

Part of the reason for conducting this study was to relate what had been found in overseas studies to the New Zealand situation. The New Zealand cultural context is unique to New Zealand, as is the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). The New Zealand cultural context includes a multi-cultural society based on a bi-cultural treaty with the indigenous people. Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi is a founding document to be acknowledged in all practices. This includes, of course, all educational practices. In regards to this study, the teaching approach chosen and the resources used were considered for the way they might enfranchise or disenfranchise any particular group. Cultural diversity and inclusive practice are considered in the methodology chapter to follow. The *New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)* has a broad scope and includes eight curriculum subject areas, as well as a range of key competencies, values and principles for schools to consider as they structure their school's curriculum. Alongside the *NZC* are support documents that outline expectations for literacy and numeracy. The results of this study could be considered in regards to how the approach might benefit children in literacy but also more broadly across the curriculum.

## Chapter summary

This study investigated responses children made to a picturebook. This chapter reviewed a range of literature to describe the theories that background the two research questions for this study.

1. What do the children's responses to a picturebook reveal about their literary understandings of its narrative?

2. What do the children's responses reveal about their thinking as they engage with a picturebook and interact with each other?

Sociocultural theories are foundational to understanding the ways learning occurs for the individual as part of a group. Semiotics helps to understand how visual images give a message while multi modal reading theory gives insight into how readers process such images. Picturebook theories give an understanding of the picturebook as a rich resource for the classroom. Theories of social semiotics outline the dynamics of a group of learners as together they explore the book and create meaning. Literacy knowledge and literary understandings are necessary for making sense of a narrative and reader response theories help establish a framework for analysing the children's responses. Consideration of the New Zealand context is important because the studies from the reviewed literature have occurred in countries other than New Zealand.

The literature reviewed in this chapter sets a foundation for this study. Chapter 3 considers literature that frames the methodological base. This includes advocating for the methods used, the research design and the particular approach taken.





### Chapter overview

This study investigated the responses children made to a picturebook in a small group classroom setting. It was set in the wider paradigms of constructivism and critical theory and involved interpretivist methodology. This study employed methods from a qualitative approach supplemented by some quantitative data. The research design outlined shows how the research progressed and what considerations were necessary. The role of the researcher and the ethical issues were considered from the beginning of this research and informed all aspects of the design. The role the researcher took was influenced by theories of interaction and teaching approaches. The framework for analysis built on an existing analysis framework and the chapter shows how it was adapted for this study.

### 3.1      Methodological approach

#### Constructivism

A constructivist paradigm takes the view that the individual actively constructs knowledge and all learning builds on from, and in relation to, what the learner already knows. Constructivism fits with the socio-cultural view of learning, which is the basis of this study and was outlined in the literature review chapter. Social constructivism is based on the belief that learners develop a view of social reality by combining their ideas and experiences with their new learning situation. Knowledge in this sense is created through interactions; meaning is negotiated as individuals engage in this interaction (Wenger, 1998). Knowledge is positioned as something produced by interaction, rather than a set truth to discover. This study explored the meaning individuals made as they engaged with a text in a group setting; the premise that readers bring their own interpretation to a text as outlined in reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) in the literature review chapter is an important foundation. From an epistemological point of view, this reflects a belief that knowledge is constructed with others, that messages can be

portrayed through words and through images and that a reader will interpret these messages. From an ontological perspective, reality is conceptualised as being created by an interaction of all elements and is not just one thing for all time. These views complement the view that the children constructed meanings as they interacted with a text and with others in a group.

### Critical theory

Critical theory is concerned with where the power is situated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). For example, in any classroom activity, someone's selections and someone's vision of knowledge and culture can enfranchise one group's cultural capital and disenfranchise another's (Williams, 1961). Critical theory positions the researcher in a role that shows awareness of whose voices are heard or not heard and who is advantaged or disadvantaged in these selections. This includes a sensitive awareness towards the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, between the research subjects themselves, and in the case of this study in thinking about how the book selected positions itself and the participants.

This study has at its foundation the concept that children's perspectives add a more meaningful understanding to issues concerning children (Smith, 1998). The methodology, therefore, was based on the premise that children have real opportunities to express their views and explore options. I endeavoured for them to not be treated as useful research subjects whose real perspective was invisible (Lansdown, 1994) but to allow them an authentic experience with a book, where their real responses were recorded. In both the data gathering event and the analysis, the model of participation was considered. This included how participants were positioned in relation to the researcher and how the non-dominant voice was heard. With that in mind, this study aimed to privilege the students' voices, both at the time of gathering the data and in the analysis and presentation.

Previous studies involving using picturebooks with children have shown consideration of these critical theory issues as they created a place for

children to express their ideas around a book. Sipe (2008) considered the effect of teacher roles on the responses children gave and on their engagement in discussion. Arizpe and Styles (2003) reflected on their interview questions that may have been of a teaching nature and even leading at times; this showed they were aware of the position and power of the researcher. In this study, the children worked in groups with other classmates they already knew well. The teaching role the researcher adopted was carefully considered and is further discussed in the section on teaching approaches. The picturebook for the read-aloud event was selected for its appropriateness for and benefit to all the children in the class.

### **3.2 Methodology**

The research methods outlined here were chosen for their potential to create a setting that fostered a positive experience for the participants. It was necessary that the participants engaged in a way that allowed them to make responses reflective of their real thoughts. The following methods allowed for the researcher to make an in-depth analysis to gain insight into the individual and the group responses.

#### **Interpretivism**

A constructivist paradigm leads to interpretivist methodology with its particular methods and procedures for gathering and analysing the necessary data. A range of instruments and methods can be chosen, but generally interpretivism implies that the information is gathered within a setting that the participants find usual to their circumstances (Merriam, 1998). These approaches use an inductive approach, seeking patterns from the evidence rather than proving an already established hypothesis. The approach can be described as a social activity, powerfully affected by the researcher's own motivations and values (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996). The participant's voice is valued and the process is interactive.

In this study, the data gathering, the frameworks, the procedures, and the analysis as outlined below are part of an interpretivist methodology. The

study took place in a classroom and used a small group setting that was familiar to children in New Zealand schools. The approach to the reading event was based on the theories of reader response as outlined in the literature review chapter. These theories match the interpretivist methodology because the reader's interpretation is valued over the notion of one fixed or single 'best reading'. This research study aimed for all the children in a group to have their ideas heard.

### Case Study

A case study is the study of a particular, bounded system such as an individual, group, or community (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Stake, 1995). The method suited this research situation because the activity (responding to picturebooks) was embedded in a real classroom context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002). A case study served the purpose of allowing the researcher to "portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 85). The unique responses to a particular picturebook were studied. The real context was a usual classroom and the accessible accounts were the analysed responses. The methods were chosen in order to catch the complexity of the event, giving the reader a sense of being there. It aimed to analyse events in a descriptive way and to understand by observing the detail (Yin, 2002).

A number of factors in regards to case study were considered useful for this study: the blending of a description of events with the analysis of them; the focus on individuals and groups, and seeking to understand their perceptions of events; the researcher's integral involvement; and the attempt to portray the richness of the event in the report (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The case study, therefore, was chosen as the basis of how the research was carried out. The design section looks at how the data were gathered and analysed.

### 3.3 Research Design

The study was carried out in a large, suburban, mid-decile school. Ethics approval was sought and received from Massey University Human Ethics Committee prior to beginning the in-school work (Appendix A). An overview of the steps taken in designing the research was included in the application (Appendix B). The case was designed to incorporate the approach of a co-constructed read-aloud session with a class of nine and ten year old children. The chosen text was a picturebook appropriate for the age and backgrounds of these children. The participating classroom teacher placed the children into groups, with three to five children per group and the researcher worked with one group at a time for 30 minutes each, while the rest of the class were involved in class activities with their teacher. Each session involved the researcher reading the book aloud to the group, allowing the children to respond as it was read. The discussions were audiotaped for later transcription and analysis. Aspects of the quality of the research were examined.

#### Quality issues

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding and making meaning of the data around a specific concept. I chose to report on children's responses because that makes vivid what numbers might obscure (Eisner, 1996) and because of the appropriate and useful insights (Davidson & Tolich, 1999) the particular situation gives. A quantitative study includes factors of reliability and validity; a qualitative study can ensure its methods have equivalent attributes. Guba (1981) outlined attributes that give qualitative studies validity through the concept of trustworthiness. This study used those guidelines to ensure such quality. The features considered were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and aspects of these are considered below in relation to this study.

The methods chosen for this study included the in-class event of exploring the picturebook and the gathering of the children's responses to that event for analysis. Data collection was in the form of audio recording. This allowed

the responses of the children to be captured for analysis by the researcher who was a participant in the case. The audio record was available for the teacher and the children to hear and their impressions of the responses were helpful to the discussion. The audio recording of the reading sessions allowed for credibility and the storage of the transcripts from those recordings allowed continued access to original data, which strengthened that credibility.

Another feature of this study that helped ensure credibility was the careful design of the case study method. The main aspect of this was the co-constructed read-aloud to children in small group settings. This was a familiar setting and approach for all concerned. The children were encouraged to respond to the ideas in the chosen text and in relation to each other's responses. Each response was valued and used as the basis for the next response, a type of iterative questioning, which was outlined as a feature of credibility (Shenton, 2004).

All the children in the class had the opportunity to be part of the co-constructed read-aloud situations, meaning that the research event retained an equitable status for all. This gave a broader sampling of responses to the study. The classroom teacher and I decided that all children would have the chance to be involved in the event, but those without consent formed a group that didn't have their responses recorded. The children with consent formed five groups from which I could get data and this wide range of individual viewpoints gave a rich picture to the study. A rich picture is noted as a way of triangulating via data sources to further ensure credibility in the study (Shenton, 2004). The responses of any particular group or individual could be compared and analysed alongside one of the other groups to gauge patterns or anomalies.

Qualitative research has limitations when it comes to external validity of data because it is difficult to replicate the study for the same results that would allow claims of generalizability, such as is possible with quantitative studies.

Therefore, qualitative research needs to be placed within a meaningful referential framework (Eisner, 1996) to allow for an aspect of transferability. This study replicated what other researchers had previously done in order to have a referential framework to report against. It also used an analysis framework derived from the grounded theory research of Sipe (2008). The interpretation of the data was checked against those of the original study. The inclusion of an element of quantitative analysis in the results allowed some comparison to similar studies.

### **Ethics considerations**

In considering the ethics of this research project, a number of issues helped to shape the design of the study as necessary; two particular aspects are considered here. The notion of all children having the chance to participate and the notion of all participants being well informed of the procedures called for alterations to be made to the design as I considered these implications. One of the features of the ethics considerations was that of ensuring the children knew what they were consenting to be involved with and this was covered by considering how to fully inform the participants.

### **Educated consent**

Researchers can make assumptions that participants understand what is expected of them in the study but it is necessary to fully consider factors that might cause misunderstanding. In order to guard against such assumptions and misunderstandings, a practical information session for the potential participants was designed for this study. This session was based on the ideas in the research of Finch (2008) where an informational video was created to be a concrete example of the things the participants would be involved in (Munford & Sanders, 2001). The information session for this study involved reading the picturebook *Hey Al* by Arthur Yorinks (1986) to the class as a whole and outlining some aspects of how a picturebook gives its message. The children were able to respond to the text in a following discussion and drawing activity. I explained to the children that the research sessions would be similar to this information session but conducted in a small group giving them more opportunities to share their ideas in discussion about the book. I



showed the children an example of a research report that used children's responses to picturebooks in order that they could see how their ideas might be written into a report. Information letters were given to the children and discussed with them (Appendix F). Children were given the chance to choose the name they wanted to be known by in the written report. The classroom teacher was present at this session to ensure the messages were given in a way the children would understand and that the children would feel comfortable about the task.

A number of other factors were considered in the design of this research. These included:

- Selection of participants;
- Researcher as participant;
- Choice of text;
- Reading approach;
- Teacher style and questioning;
- Framework of analysis.

### **The participants**

The researcher approached a local school, chosen because it represented a range of the New Zealand population in regards to socio-economic status and ethnicity. The principal and the researcher selected a teacher and classroom that would be appropriate to the aims of the study. A number of groups and individuals were participants in this study, either with a direct or indirect involvement. The participants to consider were the school, its senior management including the principal, and the Board of Trustees, which is the governing body of the school. Letters of information and approval were organised with the principal (Appendix C). The next participants were the classroom teacher, the children in the class, and their associated family. As the researcher, I was also a direct participant.

### **The classroom teacher**

This research could not have happened without the support and participation of the classroom teacher. Through the ethics process, I

considered many aspects of how the event might impact on the teacher. Possible negative impacts included the impact on the classroom routine and extra work on the teacher's part. The classroom teacher assisted with group selection, confirmation of appropriateness of selected text, distribution and collection of informed consent letters, communication with the researcher about convenient times for the reading events, and discussing results with the researcher after the data was analysed. The process was clearly explained in face-to-face meetings as well as in writing. The information and approval letters are in Appendix D. All efforts were made to limit the negative impacts, but the participation took effort on the classroom teacher's part.

### **The children as participants**

The research design involved children aged nine and ten years old. The group was chosen because children of this age have the capacity to think and discuss complex themes and because there are currently few studies using picturebooks with this age group. The children in the classroom were from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It was important to consider this diversity, as well as diversity in achievement and interest, for the research event itself and for the discussion of results. The children's families were also considered. Letters were given to the families for information and permission (Appendix E). Feedback about the research was sent home after the classroom sessions (Appendix G).

### **The researcher as participant**

The researcher role in this study was that of participant as well as observer and data analyst. Inevitably there is a certain power relationship at play when adults interact with children. One way to minimise this power was to have children work together in groups, thus having the support of each other in the research activity. The use of an educated consent activity allowed the children some familiarity with both the researcher and the type of activity. Offering the children the choice to participate or not gave them some power. In regards to the children feeling comfortable with the audio recording of their voices, the children wanted to try their voices out on the audio recorder before it was used for the activity and then to hear their voices played back. A

small number of the participants asked to be able to hear the whole audio after their group work and this occurred. These aspects helped the children to have some power in the activity.

As researcher, I facilitated the co-constructed read aloud. This was justified because of my previous experience with similar situations. I decided that having the classroom teacher do the read aloud and discussion was too high an expectation. I was able to take a different role to that of the teacher in the classroom:

- I was an invited guest in the classroom;
- I was involved with one group at a time and not in charge of control of the wider class while the reading event took place;
- I outlined to the groups that I was most interested in what they wanted to say about the book and that I wanted them to be able to respond without the usual hands up and without me dominating the event.

In some instances, I gave the children choice about where the reading event occurred as well as control of the pace of the reading and when the pages were turned. This more relaxed approach set the researcher role apart from the teacher role. The aim was to be a facilitator of children's own perspectives (Oakley, 1994) and to "privilege the children's voices ... rather than imprison them in academic discourse" (Nash & Major, 1997, p. 5). The researcher's voice would be positioned as "one in a multiple voiced discussion" (Jones, 1992, p. 31) and, therefore, would be recorded as part of the conversation.

### Group size

Research on group size for reading and discussion helped inform the design for the data-gathering event of this study. Hansen (2004) reported that varying the size of the group for discussion had different effects. Discussion in larger groups allowed participants to share meanings and listen to the

interpretations of others. This had the impact of allowing the participants to re-evaluate or confirm their initial reactions. On the other hand, smaller groups of four to five gave more opportunity for individuals to be heard. A significant finding was that children who were quietest in the large group were often more vocal in the small group (Hansen, 2004). Cochran-Smith (1984) reported that children in small groups participated more and with a more complex discussion than those in whole class situations. Similarly, when children heard and discussed stories in small group situations, they had better comprehension and generated more comments and questions than those who heard the stories in large groups or one to one (Morrow & Smith, 1990). Another example of the effect of group size comes from a study by Phillips, McNaughton, and MacDonald (2001) which showed that children with low progress in literacy who were also unfamiliar with a read aloud situation in the home were often left confused by whole class shared reading approaches. The researchers reported that readings of picturebooks in small group situations yielded better results for these children. This study used small groups of four or five children to create the reading event for the data gathering based on the findings of these previous studies.

Overall, the methods followed in this study were selected to encourage collaboration and dialogue so that children could construct meaning and learn about literature (Peterson & Eeds, 1990). The teaching approach for the event was also carefully considered.

### Teaching approaches

A classroom teacher can use a range of approaches for sharing literature and creating discussions. They can select whether to work in a whole class, small group, or individual situation. Teachers can use a variety of interaction patterns, from more teacher-directed and controlled through to more child-directed and controlled. Dickinson and Smith (1994) described three styles teachers used in the read-aloud approach with young children in a whole class context. The three styles identified were:

- Performative: where the teacher began the read-aloud with questions

and information about the book, read the book with few interruptions, and developed a discussion at the end of the reading.

- Didactic-interactive: involving the children in choral response to features of the text such as rhyme or repetition and the asking of lower level recall questions after the reading.
- Co-constructed: which allowed for large amounts of discussion and analytical talk during the event rather than saving it for before or after the read-aloud.

The style that Dickinson and Smith's study (1994) identified as least effective in vocabulary and comprehension measures was the didactic-interactive style; the style they identified as most effective for vocabulary and comprehension development in a whole class situation was the performance-oriented style. Hansen (2004) noted the importance of allowing the children to hear a story read all the way through without interruption and let the author's work speak before readers bring their own interpretation. However, Sipe (2008) argued for the use of a co-constructed style where the children were allowed to discuss during the read-aloud, rather than always waiting till the end. This practice resulted in a higher quality of talk.

The approach chosen for this study was a mix of these styles. From the co-constructed style the children were able to comment as the book was read, rather than waiting till the end of the book. From the performative style, discussion occurred before and after the read aloud; from the interactive style, the children sometimes chose to join in with the reading aloud. The co-constructed read aloud approach dominated the event and was chosen for a number of reasons. This co-constructed style has similarities to the dialogic read aloud style identified by Whitehurst, et al. (1988) as having most effect on vocabulary and comprehension gains for low-income preschoolers. Talk was included during the reading based on findings from Sipe (2008) who stated that children's conversational turns increased in both quantity and quality when they were allowed to talk and respond during the read aloud. Similarly, Pantaleo (2008) described her chosen research setting as involving an interactive format where children could respond at any time and where

there were no pre-determined sets of questions. This created a situation that allowed a natural extension of talk. These theories maintain that a teacher's view of how children should be able to respond to literature in a classroom setting, that of waiting until the story is finished before they respond, may not be particularly productive for young children; a version closer to what happens with a parent and child in a home setting may be more beneficial (Sipe, 2008).

For this study, it was vital that the children interacted with each other and the book in a way that enabled them to develop their ideas and interpretation of the text. Therefore, a major consideration for the researcher or teacher role was how to ensure the children's voices were heard and not discouraged. In particular, the way all participants interacted, including how I guided the exploration of the text and fostered conversation, was carefully considered. It was also important that the reading event be one where the children explained what they saw and wondered about as each page was read. It was important that researcher voice and explanation did not dominate the event. A dominance of adult instigated questions can implicitly tell the child that their opinions are second to the ideas of text or the adult (Myhill & Dunkin, 2005). The resulting discussion would be in direct contrast to the reader response idea of an equal partnership in interpreting a text (Rosenblatt, 1978).

### **The importance of talk**

Creating literary understanding through reader response relies on the use of talk in a socio-cultural context. Research on talk in classrooms has shown the crucial role of talk in learning (Alexander, 2004; Barnes, 1976; Cullinan, 1993; Halliday, 1978). The work of Douglas Barnes (1976), as a teacher and a researcher, identified the concept of two types of talk: exploratory talk where the speaker uses talk to sort out their own thoughts; and presentational talk, which is crafted for an audience. Exploratory talk is the type of talk that is foundational to this study because the discussion around the picturebook involved children in using talk to activate their developing ideas. This type of talk "will be hesitant, broken, and full of dead ends and changes of direction"

(Barnes, 2008, p. 5). It was important that this talk was valued and accepted and it meant that some of the developing talk was not necessarily well formed. Disjointed thoughts can be the basis of later insights that are crucial to understanding (Barnes, 2008).

These ideas about talk helped in considering how the talk was promoted in the group interactions (Alexander, 2004; Cazden, 2001; Mercer 1995; Wells, 1993). For the purposes of this study, the talk involved developing an open inquiry around the picturebook and valuing of children's responses and ideas to the book. To succeed with this, the ideas of dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2004) were particularly important. Dialogic teaching, involving the dialogue between participants, is based on talk that tests evidence, analyses ideas, and explores values. It also allows and requires that participants listen attentively and responsively to others, frame and ask questions, present and evaluate ideas, and argue and justify points of view. Wells (1985) identified guidelines for adults when working with children in groups and those principles underpinned the group interactions in this study.

- Treat what the child has to say as worthy of careful attention;
- Endeavour to understand what the child means;
- Take the child's meaning as the basis for what the adult says next;

### Choice of text

A picturebook was the chosen resource for this study because of the way it is constructed to tell its narrative as outlined in the literature review chapter. Texts that use this nature of construction help promote the type of reading and discussion desired for this event. During the reading of a picturebook, understandings can deepen on every act of turning from pictures, to words, to pictures (Nikolajeva, 2010). The type of reading children engage in with picturebooks has been reported in a number of previous studies. In Arizpe and Styles' (2003) research, their hunch that children would be good at analysing the visual features of texts was supported by the findings of that

study. They reported that the children spent much time in closely observing the pictures and that the children accepted the challenge that the texts presented through the different layers of meaning. The study showed that children were able to talk about how they ‘read’ the pictures through scanning the whole picture, followed by focusing on important details, and finally by looking more closely for details they may have missed. The study also revealed that children used the pictures for “making deductions, proposing tentative hypotheses, and then confirming or denying these as another clue arises” (Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 194). These examples show that children used images in complex ways for the benefit of their understanding.

### *The chosen text*

*Luke’s Way of Looking* by Nadia Wheatley and Matt Ottley was the book chosen for this study from a wide range of picturebooks that are appropriate for this age group. It was selected for the following reasons:

1. The words in the book do not dominate the page, allowing the illustrations to convey much of the message.
2. The amount of reading aloud is kept to a minimum and the time the children have for their thoughts and discussion is maximised.
3. The illustrations allow for and encourage children to explore them for the message they bring to the narrative.
4. The themes of the book and the age of the main character are appropriate to the age of the children in the study.

*Luke’s Way of Looking* is a story of empowerment created by author, Nadia Wheatley, and illustrator, Matt Ottley. It tells of the main character, Luke, who felt he did not fit in at school, neither with the teacher nor with the other students. Each page reveals more about Luke and his way of seeing the world. The telling of the story on each page comes from the interaction of words and pictures. The words are able to be succinct because the pictures add layers of meaning through the use of visual elements.



The illustrator uses a range of techniques to portray that part of the narrative. The use of varying degrees of colour and light portrays emotion and also focuses the viewer on items of significance. The illustrations on the first pages of the book use dull light and a monochromatic palette. The pictures then get more coloured, reflecting the change in how Luke feels about being in the art gallery in contrast to being at school. The illustrator uses a range of art techniques, from pen and ink, through to coloured pencils, and paint on canvas. Each is used for particular impact (Ottley, 2001). He also uses a range of symbols, in particular birds, hands, and shadows. These elements all bring meaning to the narrative, adding to the characterisation, the plot, and the themes.

The words have a pace and a rhythm that allow for easy reading aloud. Short sentences are used for impact, longer sentences to set the scenes, and dialogue to create character and advance the plot. A repeated phrase by the teacher of, “What’s wrong with you boy?” and the repetition of, “Luke didn’t know. So he said nothing” adds to the impact of the text, especially as these are also used as the final words of the book. The words leave space for the illustrations to add layers for the readers to gather clues and make connections for themselves. *Luke’s Way of Looking* is an example of a picturebook that allows or even demands that readers actively construct meaning.

### **3.4 Cultural diversity and inclusive practice**

The factors considered above are examples of approaches and techniques that are considered appropriate for practice that is inclusive and considers all learners. A culturally responsive classroom is one where all students are enabled to construct knowledge and create new ideas; where they are engaged in purposeful, collaborative and intellectually rigorous work; and where they have the chance to participate as capable thinkers who create new ideas (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Such classrooms engage children as

active learners whose ideas are valued and used (Bishop & Glynn, 2000; Te Maro, Higgins & Averill, 2007).

One aspect considered in regards to diversity was the type of interactions between the researcher as teacher and the children in each group. In particular, the dialogic approach outlined above was used in the research design. Part of this approach involved considering the use of questions as part of the teacher's instructional toolkit. I wanted to beware of the type of questions that can be pre-dominant in classrooms, the ones to which the teacher already knows the answer. Not all families ask questions of this nature and this is particularly true for children from families whose culture differs from the main culture (Vernon-Feagans, Hammer, Miccio, & Manlove, 2001). These children may not understand that they are being asked a question with a known answer and find it difficult to know how to respond (Vernon-Feagans, 1996). These types of questions also situate the power with the teacher because they evaluate the answer (Edwards, 1979). According to Sipe (2008), this is a powerful reason for teachers to speculate and interpret alongside the children rather than dominate the interaction with questions. Questions are a natural and necessary part of the teacher's linguistic toolbox (Mercer & Littleton, 2007) and they are a useful technique for controlling a discussion, for establishing group comprehension, and for maintaining a flow of talk (Wollman-Bonilla, 1994). However, questions must be carefully and skillfully used to avoid both the teacher dominance in discussions and the student passivity that can be the result (Wood & Wood, 1988). The use of a co-constructed approach where the children work together to interpret the text and where all ideas are treated as valuable promotes a more inclusive practice (Au, 2009).

The picturebook has features that make it a useful resource for inclusive classroom practice. Research studies have shown that picturebooks can transcend linguistic and cultural differences because the stimulating combination of words and pictures enables children to look beyond a literal interpretation of the text (McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007). They can bring their

own background knowledge to the discussion. Picturebooks are, therefore, a useful tool for children who have a range of cultural and language backgrounds. This study was designed to incorporate and embody these principles. The book allowed all the children to respond in ways that would be considered as literary understanding. In order to show this understanding more clearly, I use a framework to help analyse what the children did and said as the book was read to them.

### **3.5 Framework for analysis**

As discussed above, to ensure the data was analysed in a trustworthy or valid way, a framework was used for the analysis of the data. This framework was initially developed by Lawrence Sipe (2008) and was established through a grounded theory approach in his studies where the categories arose from the responses the children gave. The framework (Sipe, 2008) was chosen for this study because of the match with underlying theories, the reliability it gave to these results, and to critique the original framework (Sipe, 2008) in another context.

Sipe's framework (2008) described three categories of response for literary understandings. These three categories were interpretive (to create an understanding), personal (to relate to oneself) and aesthetic (to experience the story). The interpretive and aesthetic categories were both sub-divided, making five categories, as outlined in the table below.

Table 3.1 *Categories of responses of literary understanding*

Interpretive:		Personal:	Aesthetic:	
To create an understanding of the story		To relate the story to oneself	To experience the freedom that art provides	
Intratextual	Intertextual	Personal	Transparent: receptive	Performative: expressive
Interpret within	Link across	Personalize from or to	See (or be) through	Perform upon
Interpreting the plot, characters, setting, or theme to make sense of the text	Interpreting this text in relation to other texts	Finding links: text to self or text to life	Receiving the message and being part of the message	Reacting to the message and taking control

Based on Sipe (2008).

Each of the categories is described in more detail below to show the relevance and significance of the framework to this study. In the results chapter that follows, the categories are each exemplified with excerpts from the children's responses.

### Interpretive responses

Children used a range of features from the narrative to form ideas about the characters, setting, events or theme. They interpreted by making connections and using these connections to analyse the text. They used an array of clues in order to bring an interpretation to the text. These were clues from the words, from the pictures, or from connecting both together. In literary response theory, these responses feature on the efferent end of the continuum of response (Rosenblatt, 1996) and are responses that make narrative meaning from the words and pictures (Sipe, 2008). Readers make interpretive responses from within the text being read (intratextual) or between the text being read and another text or texts (intertextual).

### ***Intratextual***

In the responses classified as intratextual, the children constructed narrative meaning from all aspects of the text: the cover and the endpapers (peritext); the individual elements in the illustrations; each illustration in its entirety; the words on the page; and the way the words and the illustrations work together. They analysed the characters or the structure of the narrative, made summaries, or discussed the themes as these emerged across the whole of the text.

### ***Intertextual***

In intertextual responses, readers made a connection with another text they knew. The connections were from another book or from another medium such as electronic game, comic, or movie. According to Keene and Zimmerman (2007), these text-to-text connections help students better comprehend the text they are reading. Text-to-text connections have an impact on literary competence because “the more stories we know, the greater number of critical tools” we bring to a story (Sipe, 2008, p. 147). Two other types of connection with text are outlined in the category of personal responses.

### **Personal responses**

Personal responses were those where children brought their own experiences or knowledge to the text (life to text). Personal responses are important because they show that readers understand about a character or a situation by relating to something that also happened to them. It involves using an understanding from a text for a situation in their life (text to life). Sipe (2008) considered these responses to be a crucial foundation for both enjoyment and understanding of literature. He stated that if teachers encouraged these early attempts at connecting with a text, then the children “may develop the ability to make much more important and meaningful connections as they become more astute and sensitive readers” (p. 153).

### **Aesthetic responses**

Aesthetic responses were those where the children entered into an experience with the book. In an aesthetic response, readers lose themselves in the storyworld or in the act of the reading. These responses relate to those identified by Rosenblatt (1978) as being a lived through experience of the text. It is characterized by a freedom of expression and a type of play. The importance of these responses lies in the freedom the reader feels in the moment and the honesty with which the responses are delivered. By accepting and valuing these responses, which relate more to the emotions, teachers foster a balance to the interpretive responses, which relate more to the intellect. Sipe (2008) divided this category into two sub-categories of types of responses: transparent (a receptive mode) and performative (an expressive mode).

#### ***Transparent response***

Transparent response were defined as those where the children seemed to become one with the text, getting lost in the story or the experience of the text. These responses are often of a tentative nature and not usually intended for an audience. The child might act or respond as a character from the story would. It is a spontaneous expression of emotion. Its role in the literary understanding of text is in the engagement it encourages.

#### ***Performative response***

Sipe (2008) described a performative category of response to text where the children do not take the text seriously as something to understand but rather as a place for play. In these responses, the children responded to the text in an expressive, creative way. At times the children manipulated and controlled the reading of the text, even hijacking it (Sipe, 2008). These responses contrast with the transparent responses as they are intended for an audience and a reaction from that audience. Responses in this category would be playful, using puns or humour and could be disruptive or “mildly subversive” (p. 180). The responses show creativity and high engagement.

## Types of thinking

The children's responses were classified using the above framework, and it then became apparent that within the interpretive category, the different levels of thinking shown in the responses could be more specifically identified through a second level of analysis. Sipe (2008) reported on these behaviours in his research stating that children:

- described,
- evaluated,
- speculated,
- made inferences,
- predicted,
- provided alternative suggestions,
- wondered about, and
- made general evaluative comments.

Sipe (2008) also mentioned the importance of three types of intertextual links that show different levels of complexity:

- associative (unelaborated statement of likeness);
- analytical (making and describing links);
- synthesising (multiple links, generalisations, and conclusions).

The above behaviours and different levels of complexity identified by Sipe (2008) were evident in what the children in this study said. In order to be able to more easily identify and discuss these aspects, a second level of analysis was included in the framework. The above list from Sipe (2008) was compared with the Biggs and Collis (1982) Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy, a widely used framework that defined responses according to different levels of cognitive processing. As learning progresses, it becomes more complex (Biggs & Collis, 1982) and the children's responses from this study gave an insight into this complexity. Table 3.2 below outlines the terms from the SOLO taxonomy that were considered alongside the terms from Sipe (2008) for further analysis of the responses.

Table 3.2 *Summary of the SOLO taxonomy.*

Pre-structural	Uni-structural	Multi-structural	Relational	Extended abstract
Unconnected bits of information.	Simple obvious connections.	Number of connections made.	Connect and relate to whole.	Connect and relate to areas beyond the context.
No sense made of the collecting.	One relevant aspect; simple connections.	Several relevant independent connections.	Integrate into structure of whole text; find commonalities.	Generalise into new domain.
Identify, name.	Describe.	Combine, connect, order.	Check, analyse, apply, argue, compare, contrast, criticise, explain causes, relate, justify.	Create, formulate, generate, hypothesise, reflect, theorise.

Adapted from Biggs & Collis (1982).

A selection of terms from the summary of the SOLO taxonomy (above) was combined with selected behaviours from the work of Sipe (2008). Particular use was made of the three types of intertextual links noted by Sipe (2008) as these were levels that matched with aspects of the SOLO levels (Biggs & Collis, 1982). The other terms from Sipe's (2008) description were compared with those from the SOLO summary and placed in categories that suited. The following Table 3.3 shows the combination of the SOLO and the Sipe terms to make the categories that were used for this study. For the revised framework, the pre-structural category from SOLO was combined with the unistructural because the children's identifying behaviours were seen as a vital part of the first connections.



Table 3.3: *Types of thinking for analysis of children's responses as adapted from the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982) and Sipe (2008).*

1. Define	2. Combine	3. Integrate	4. Extend
Look; notice; identify; label; unelaborated statements.	Make simple links; join; order; organize.	Compare; contrast; predict; infer; analyse; explain causes; relate; check; justify.	Create meaning from multiple links; reflect; assess; generalise; synthesise; theorise or conclude.

These categories were used for the second level of analysis of the children's responses in this study. In the results chapter, examples from children's responses illustrate these types of thinking. The categories are further described below.

#### Connection 1: Define

Children's responses were classified in the define category when the children noticed and named elements, identifying what they regarded significant or interesting. The category has similarities to Sipe's associative link. The children observed, noticed, or identified information in the words or the pictures. This was an initial level of thinking that often built to other levels of thinking and was vital for its role in helping children become better at noticing the clues they would need. It also acted as a sifting and sorting activity, helping the children to decide what would be useful for their understanding.

#### Connection 2: Combine

The responses were classified in the combine category when the children joined two pieces of information to bring understanding to their reading. They combined ideas from their own experience to something in the text, or combined ideas from across the pages of this text. The children linked, joined,

ordered or organized ideas in an effort to better understand the story. They linked ideas from the pictures, or from the words, or between both the pictures and the words. This category includes the making links element of the analytical link of Sipe (2008).

### **Connection 3: Integrate**

The children's responses were classified in the integrate category when they used connections to compare, contrast or analyse the information in the text. The children inferred, predicted, or justified their thinking. They responded to how a character was feeling or changing and interpreted clues from the words, or the illustrations, or the combination of words and illustrations for the construction of meaning. It moved on from combining two pieces of information to thinking what this connection might mean. This category has similarities to describing in the analytical link described by Sipe (2008).

### **Connection 4: Extend**

Children's responses were classified in the extend category when they connected many pieces of information from across the text as well as outside of the text, which then enabled them to bring a new idea to the discussion. This step involved a creation of meaning that was not actually stated in the text. This new idea showed understanding of the themes of the story, or such an attempt. Children generalised ideas about the character, this book, or for themselves. The children reflected, assessed, or theorised. This extended type of thinking often happened as a moment of realisation for the child and for the others in the group. This category has similarities to the synthesising link described by Sipe (2008).

### **Picturebook elements**

In this process of further analysing the responses according to the factors outlined above, I saw that the children used particular picturebook elements for their responses. These elements were contained in Sipe's (2008) description of his model within the interpretive category, outlined in a subcategory he defined as "analysis of illustrations and other visual matter" (Sipe, 2008, p. 117). Sipe (2008) stated that this visual analysis was useful because it showed "how much the children relied on it in their meaning-

making” (p. 118). The elements he identified for analysis were layout, design, media, style, movement, space, and colour. The impact of these elements was identified narratively in the Sipe study but I decided that adding these elements to the framework enabled a more specific way to identify and then discuss the particular visual elements that the children used for their interpretation of the book. The particular visual elements were selected based on picturebook theories outlined in the literature review chapter. They are included in Figure 3.1.

### **Bringing it all together**

In summary, the responses were analysed across three main aspects. Each response was classified into one of five categories of literary understanding (intratextual; intertextual; personal; transparent; performative). From this first level of classification, the interpretive category of responses (intratextual and intertextual) was further analysed according to two other aspects: type of thinking and picturebook element. The full list of elements used for classification is shown in Figure 3.1 by way of visually representing the process that occurred for creating the framework. The elements that featured in the largest quantities in the children’s responses were used for presenting the results in the next chapter.

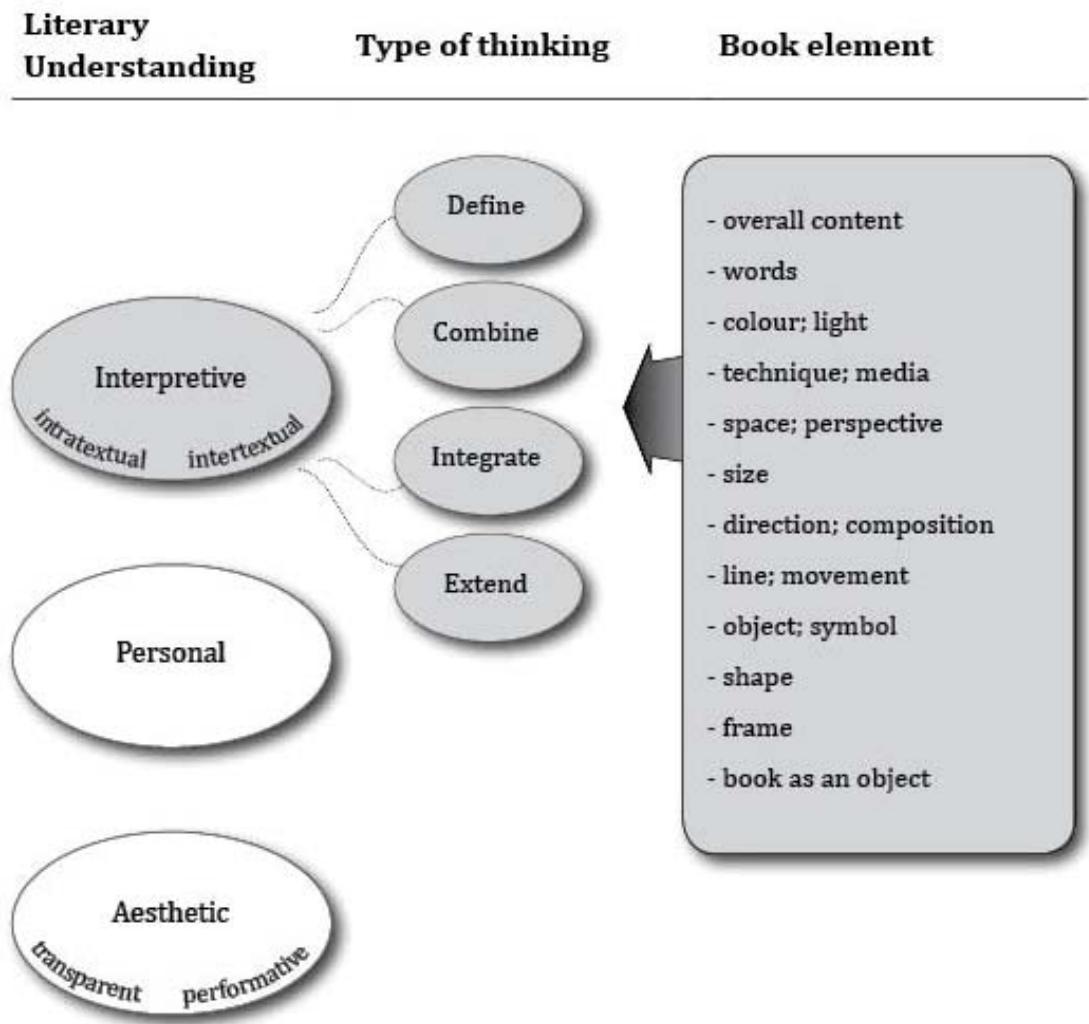


Figure 3.1 Full range of categories for analysis of responses adapted from Sipe (2008).

The process used to analyse and discuss the children's responses, along with a summary of the quantitative results, is considered below as a conclusion to the methodology chapter. The quantitative results allowed me to consider how to present the qualitative results that form the main basis of this study.

### 3.6 Process of analysis

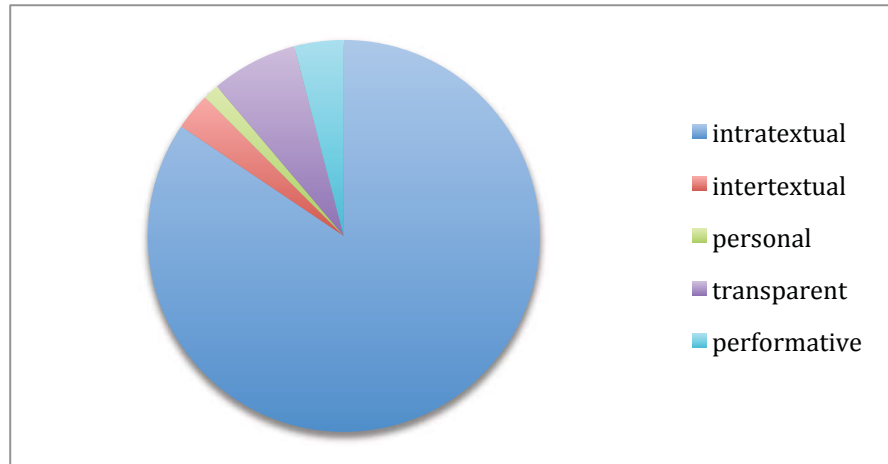
In order to analyse the children's responses, I read the transcripts many times. Each response was categorised according to the adapted framework. Revisions of the categories and codes occurred throughout this process. For example, it became clear that colour and light responses occurred together

and that responses about the objects in the pictures were linked to the element of symbol. Grouping these elements together simplified the coding process. The responses were analysed, firstly in chronological order (i.e. page by page of the book itself) to group the responses into one of the five categories of literary understanding. The responses classified in the interpretive category were further analysed according to type of thinking (i.e. define; combine; integrate; extend) and then according to the picturebook elements that the children used in the response (see Figure 3.1).

Describing the children's responses was the main focus of the data collection, but a quantitative analysis for percentages of responses in each category arose as useful information. The quantitative results helped to shape both the presentation of results and the discussion chapter of this study but is first discussed here as part of the process of analysis. I made the decision to focus the results and discussion chapters on the interpretive and aesthetic results. This decision was made because of quantity of responses, quality of responses, and to give as full a view as possible of the literary engagement of the children.

The data was first categorised according to the type of literary response: interpretive, personal, or aesthetic. The responses, shown in Figure 3.2 below, were classified as follows:

- Interpretive responses: 86% (83% intratextual; 3% intertextual);
- Personal responses: less than 2%;
- Aesthetic responses: 11% (7% transparent; 4% performative).

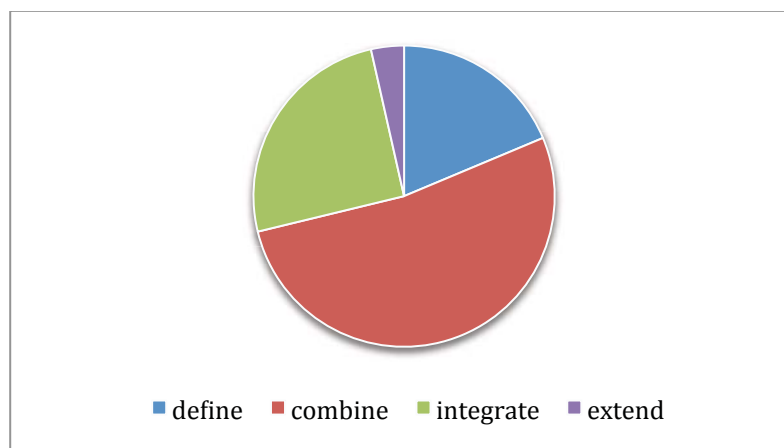


*Figure 3.2 Literary responses across the categories of literary understanding (by percentage)*

Other quantitative data also helped to focus the results and the discussion chapters. Two of these are presented below:

#### 1. Types of thinking by quantity

Interpretive responses were further analysed by types of thinking. The quantitative data for each type of thinking used in the responses is shown in the graph in Figure 3.3. The graph shows that overall the responses in this study were distributed across the types of thinking in the following percentages: Define: 18.5%; Combine: 52%; Integrate: 25%; Extend: 3.5%



*Figure 3.3 Children's interpretive responses across types of thinking (by percentage)*

The data are further examined in the results and the discussion chapters to consider implications for the approach, the picturebook as a resource, and the use of the types of thinking.

## 2. Picturebook elements by quantity

After the first level of analysis, it emerged that of the 13 picturebook elements considered, the ones most evident in the responses were:

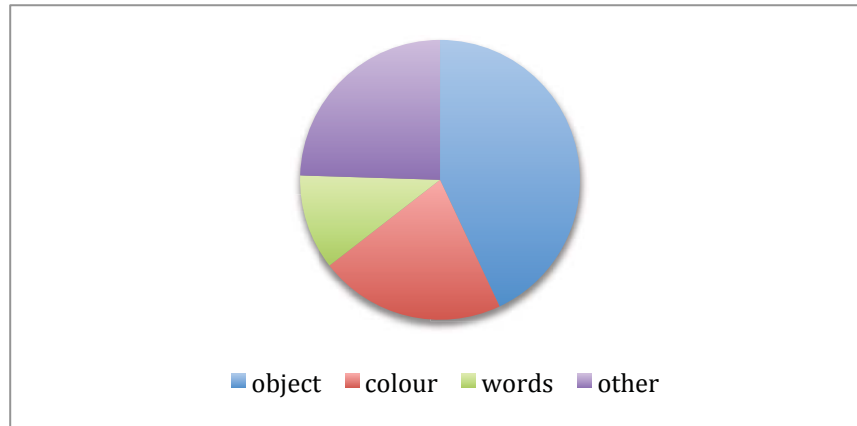
- colour and light; and
- object and symbol

These elements were chosen for reporting and analysis because the quantity of responses would be likely to ensure some longer interactions between the children as well as delivering some quality of response.

The element of words in the picturebook was also chosen for analysis to explore because the synergy of the words and the pictures is a vital aspect of the picturebook genre. Picturebook elements fell in the following distribution:

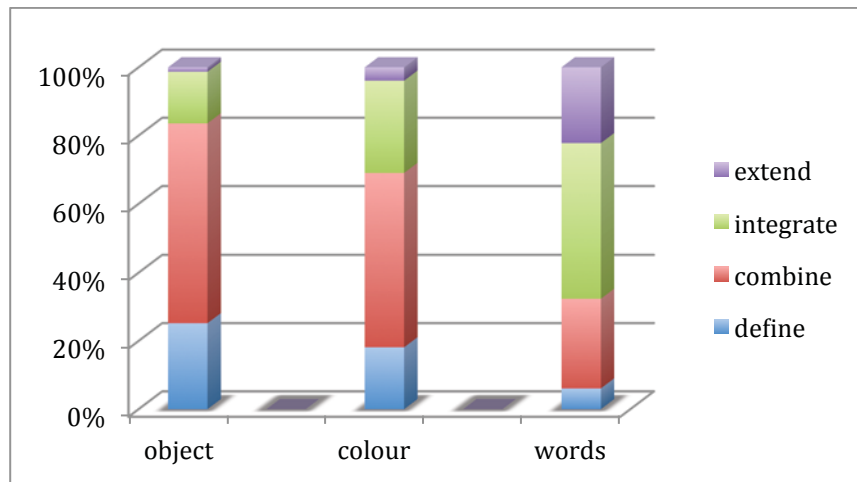
- object and symbol: 43%;
- colour and light: 22%;
- words: 11%.

Figure 3.4 shows the proportions of responses using the picturebook elements chosen for further study.



*Figure 3.4 Children's responses across picturebook elements (by percentage)*

The interpretive category responses analysed by types of thinking and picturebook element are further represented in Figure 3.5 below. The figure shows the percentage of responses for each selected picturebook element in terms of the type of thinking that the responses showed.



*Figure 3.5 Children's interpretive responses categorised by four types of thinking and three picturebooks elements (by percentage).*

This quantitative data helped to direct both the results chapter and the discussion chapter by identifying:

- categories that would have the most data to discuss; and
- relationships between the categories.



The children in this study represented a range of ethnicities and abilities as are usual in a New Zealand classroom. The approach enabled all children to participate and have their ideas valued. One child in the group was considered to be an English Language Learner as her linguistic capability in English limited her achievement in literacy. Her instructional reading level was well below expectation for her year level. She participated in the picturebook discussion in a group of five students. In a 20-minute session, which involved 200 responses across the group, she contributed 33 comments. This quantity of comments was equivalent to the average number of comments from any individual. Of these comments, 50% were in the define category, 38% in the combine category and 12% were classified as the integrate category of thinking. In comparison with the whole cohort, her responses fall more predominantly in the define category and less in the other three categories.

## Chapter summary

This chapter explored and reviewed the literature that relates to the chosen methodology for this study. Building on the ground that the literature review chapter started, this chapter explored the constructivist and critical theories that form the methodological basis. Interpretivist methods and a case study approach set the foundations for gathering the data. The research design was outlined and the procedure was considered. Issues of validity or trustworthiness of the approach and the data were outlined. The process of considering ethical issues was outlined with issues about participants considered. A number of decisions about the reading event itself were made in keeping with the methodological approach. The framework for analysis was discussed in detail and how it was adapted for the purposes of this study was shown. A first level of results was presented in order to select the particular data for further analysis. The next chapter presents and analyses these selected results from the data-gathering event. The results are linked back to both the literature review and methodology chapters and are the basis of the discussion chapter.

## Chapter 4 Results

### Introduction

The chapter presents and analyses the gathered data in relation to the two main research questions.

1. What do the children's responses to a picturebook reveal about their literary understandings of its narrative?
2. What do the children's responses reveal about their thinking as they engage with a picturebook and interact with each other?

The chapter begins with a summary of the process of analysis and the quantitative results with graphs are presented. Selected responses are described and analysed in the interpretive and aesthetic categories. Illustrations from *Luke's Way of Looking* are presented as figures throughout the chapter to identify what the children were responding to. Permission to use these images for the purposes of this study was granted by the illustrator (Appendix I). The results are presented in this chapter and further analysed in the discussion chapter. The interpretive responses are analysed according to the types of thinking shown and the picturebook element used by the child, as was outlined in the methodology chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results before outlining further analysis for the discussion chapter to follow.

### Transcription conventions

The names used for the children are ones they chose to represent their thoughts in this written report. The following conventions have been used:

- Examples of children's talk are mostly separated from running text and indented.

- On occasions when the children's talk is part of the running text, ' ' single quotation marks are used.
- Researcher turns are in italics.
- [ ] Square brackets are used to convey actions that contribute to the talk.
- " " Double quotation marks indicate children quoting from the book's words.
- Ellipsis (...) is used to show the nature of the children's thoughts forming sometimes with gaps or hesitancy.

#### 4.1 Quantity of responses

The results showed that the children were fully engaged with the process of making meaning from this book. There were a large number of opportunities for the children to respond to the book in the groups. The fewest responses recorded for a group was 100 conversational turns per 20-minute session and the most was 200 conversational turns. All children contributed to the discussion and all responses were considered in the interpretation of the results.

Some quantitative analysis of the adult to child responses revealed useful information. Each page showed a different interaction pattern but some typical patterns emerged. For example from one group of three children, the total responses for one page were 40, with 30 from the children and 10 from the researcher. Of these 10 researcher responses, four of the turns were of a nature where the researcher directed the children's ideas or gave input and the remaining six were the researcher responding to the children's ideas as part of the ongoing chain of talk. In 20 of the children's responses, they spoke before the researcher and all but four of these responses resulted in a chain of interaction and talk between the children about the book.

## 4.2 Qualitative data

### Interpretive responses

Responses in the interpretive category involved children in exploring and interpreting the narrative of the text in an analytical way. This meant they looked for the narrative meanings in the book, using clues from the words and the pictures to consider these meanings. The majority of the responses in the interpretive category were intratextual in that the children responded to the narrative of this particular text, processing the ideas across the text. A few of these interpretive responses were of an intertextual nature where the children compared this book with another text in their experience.

Colour and light and object and symbol were chosen as the elements to analyse and discuss. This decision was made for a number of reasons:

1. Colour and light, and object and symbol are significant elements an illustrator uses to convey narrative;
2. *Luke's Way of Looking* utilises colour and light, and object and symbol as elements in its illustrations;
3. The quantity of children's comments that used colour or light, or object or symbol highlighted how important the children saw the elements.

### Responses using the elements of colour and light

Colour and light are elements used by the illustrator to create the mood of a scene, or to create a focus. In *Luke's Way of Looking*, the illustrator creates the mood by use of bright light and primary colours, or by the use of dull light and monochromatic colours. The bright primary colours are used to denote Luke's positive feelings and his imagination. Other pages are sepia-toned with dull light creating a somber mood. In the first few pages, when the overall illustration uses little colour, the artist creates a focus on Luke's paintings by using small pockets of colour. Light is also used to create a focus

on a character or an object. The children's responses showed that they used the elements of colour and light in their interpretations of the book.

### Types of thinking

The responses that used colour and light are presented and analysed according to the type of thinking used. Table 4.1 is a summary of the data for the responses that used the elements of colour and light cross referenced with the type of thinking. This quantitative information helped to inform the analysis and discussion.

Table 4.1 *Responses that used colour and light according to type of thinking*

Picturebook elements	Define	Combine	Integrate	Extend
Colour/light %	18	52	27	3

### Define

*Look; notice; identify; label*

Of the responses that used colour and light, 18% were classified in the define category of thinking. These responses fitted into the define category because the children showed they looked carefully, noticed the details the illustrator used, and labelled what they saw. Two examples are featured below, chosen as a representation of many responses in the define category that used colour and light.

Example 1: Over the first pages of the book (Figure 4.1a, 4.1b), the illustrator uses colour for focusing the reader on vital parts of the narrative, particularly on the character of Luke and his paintings.



Figure 4.1a Luke painting (p. 3)



Figure 4.1b Luke painting (p. 6)

Many children made responses such as 'He's got colour on him' and 'He's getting colours on his body' that showed they noticed the colour in relation to Luke.

Example 2: On page 6 (Figure 4.1b), Prajina's commented that Luke's eyes were blue, which showed she could identify features of significance. The pages prior to this one did not feature any colour on any of the people. Prajina showed she had noticed the details the illustrator had put on the page for a purpose.

The children had previously noted the colour blue featuring on the endpapers and although Prajina did not make a specific connection, her response showed awareness of the importance of the colour and her attention to detail.

### **Combine**

*Link; join; order; organise*

Of the responses that used the element of colour and light, 52% were categorised as combine type of thinking. The children used the element of colour and light, and joined it with other information in the text, to further their understanding of the narrative. Two examples are featured below, chosen as a representation of responses from the combine category that used colour and light.

The children combined clues about what was happening to Luke as the pages turned and more colour appears on him (Figure 4.2).



*Figure 4.2 Colour on Luke (p. 6)*

Georgia: Look. When he's painting, his body is coming into colour.

Antonio: Yeah. Every time he colours brightly, he goes as well.

They joined the clue of Luke's colourful painting with the colour on his arm. Other responses showed that the children were conscious of looking out for links in the changes in the setting. These combine responses were an extension of noticing the colours, with added causal links between the colours and Luke.



*Figure 4.3a Colours on the stairs (p. 10)*



*Figure 4.3b Colour over double spread (p.11)*

Sam: When you turned the page, it's like the colours on the stairs.

This was a response to the illustrator's use of colour across the whole page (Figure 4.3b), in contrast to the previous page where the bright colour was focused in a corner of the illustration (Figure 4.3a). The response showed

children linking ideas across pages in the text, with Sam identifying connections and changes that might be significant.

### ***Integrate***

*Compare; contrast; predict; infer; analyse; explain causes; relate; check; justify*

Of the responses that used the element of colour and light, 28% were categorised in the integrate category of thinking. The children compared and contrasted the illustrator's use of colour and light across pages and used this to infer and explain aspects of the unfolding narrative. Two examples follow and these represent other responses in this category.

Example 1: The children made responses about Luke based on what the words said but also what they saw on the page (Figure 4.4).



***Figure 4.4** Luke paints colour (p. 3)*

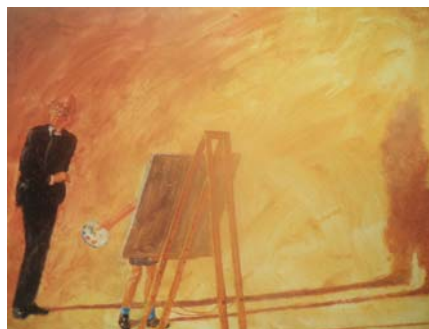
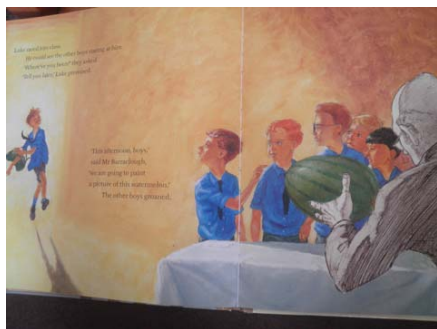
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Cese:    | It's like he's the only one that can see the colour.  |
| Talitha: | He does things differently to other people ... how they're just doing plain and he's doing colours. |
| Georgia: | He's using different colours and doing things odd.  |

In these responses, the children compared the way Luke painted with colour, in contrast with the lack of colour in the other boys' paintings. They made an inference about the character of Luke. Their responses revealed that they inferred he was different and stood out from the others.

A chain of talk showed the children using the clues from the illustrator's use of colour to explain why Mr. Barraclough was still drawn without colour



(Figure 4.5a) and then why he was coloured differently on the final page (Figure 4.5b).



*Figure 4.5a Dark Mr Barraclough (pp. 25-26) Figure 4.5b Mr Barraclough changes (p.29)*

- Sean: Hey look. He's all black and grey still and everyone else is in colour.
- Sheldon: At the first page, it was like all black and white; now it's all coloured.
- Sam: Except him.
- Sean: 'Cause he's evil person.
- Georgia: He's dark and dull; he's still mad.

Both Georgia and Sean's responses built on group responses and were part of a chain of talk about the colours and the characters. The chain of talk culminated in these integrated responses that showed the children making interpretations about the character of Mr. Barraclough.

On the final page (Figure 4.5b), Natalie made a conclusion about why Mr. Barraclough was now drawn with colour, saying, 'Oh yes and he's not cloudy now; he's happy'. She compared and contrasted the changes in the way the character was coloured, related this to her ideas about what that use of colour could mean, and inferred he was now in a happy state of mind. The words stated: "Mr. Barraclough didn't know what to say so he said nothing". Natalie's response showed she referred directly to the visual clues, but perhaps also implicitly to the words.

### *Extend*

*Create meaning; reflect; assess; generate; theorise*

Of the responses that used colour and light as an element, 3% were classified in the extend category of thinking. This was a similar percentage to that for object and symbol, but much less than the percentage for words. The responses in the extend type of thinking showed that as the children used each other's comments about how colour or light was used on the pages, they reached some overall understandings.

In some of the responses, the children made a reference to other picturebooks they were familiar with and this helped them create their own ideas about the narrative of this text.



*Figure 4.6 Comparing to other texts (p. 6)*

- Alex: It's like in the ordinary day one where it's dull at first but when the teacher comes along it's all bright.
- Talitha: Yeah and it's like the ordinary one ... it's like getting all colourful instead of black all the time; he's trying to make it more colourful than being black.
- Alex: He's like the odd one out but the best one.

These comments showed the children had an understanding of Luke as a character and they had opinions about him. They thought Luke was using his art for a purpose: 'He's trying to make it more colourful than being black'. They also brought in an assessment of Luke, that his being different from the others was a good point of difference. These comments showed they

reflected on Luke as the main character and generated an idea of their own about him.

A chain of talk within the group helped children develop their ideas about the plot, the characters, and the theme. Figures 4.7a and 4.7b show a progression in the story with both the colours and the character's feelings.



*Figure 4.7a Luke happy (p. 6)*



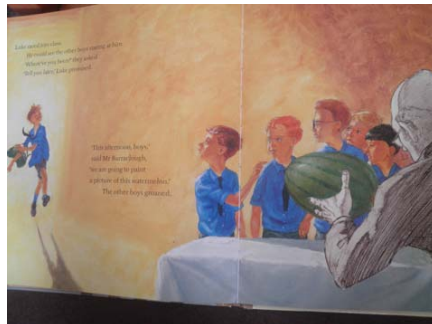
*Figure 4.7b Luke unhappy (p. 8)*

Natalie: When he was painting he was all colourful and stuff and now he's not ... Oh feelings, feelings ... the colours over here showed he was starting to get happy and now he's going to sad. Oh I know, I know. When he's happy his colour's coming but when he's sad his colour goes.

These responses developed from earlier conversational turns of defining and combining comments about the same elements. Natalie's response showed an understanding of the way illustrations portrayed things about the character through the use of colour and light. She made a generalised comment about what she thought this told about Luke: 'When he's happy his colour's coming but when he's sad his colour goes'. The enthusiasm in the delivery of this response reflected that Natalie felt as if she had discovered something new within the text.

In another conversational turn, Natalie attempted a thematic statement, a drawing together of ideas in order to come up with a big idea. This arose

from a chain of talk initiated by the researcher about the page as shown in Figure 4.8. In amongst this chain of talk, Jaiden made an intertextual connection.



**Figure 4.8** Meaning of colour (pp. 25-26)

*Researcher:* So where Luke is it's bright; why might the artist have done that?

*Jaiden:* Oooh I'll show you in the book; there's something real cool ... there's a book out there [leaves the group to get the book to show].

*Natalie:* Ummm maybe because he's the only one ... ummmm ... because it seems like he's the happiness and it goes into that grumpiest thing.

*Jaiden:* [showed the book where it also occurred and used Natalie's words to show how the colour was used across that text] Here's the happiness ... here's the grumpiness.

These two chains of talk showed the children using each other's ideas to make more sense of their own thoughts. The responses showed the children were mindful of the portrayal of the changes in Luke and the contrast with the other main character. The responses also showed the children could transfer knowledge from one text to another, see important links, and generalise principles of how texts convey meaning. This chain of talk was significant to Natalie, shown by her response to these ideas after the session. She asked to draw a picture and she used these ideas of colour and light,

grumpiness and happiness. This is further discussed in the performative responses.

### Summary of responses using colour and light

The book uses colour and light in a way that changes and develops over consecutive pages so the reader is led to notice these changes and consider their significance. The illustrations change from monochromatic and dull light (pp. 1-2) to pockets of colour (pp. 3-10), to colour over most of the page but still with some dark or uncoloured bits (pp. 11-14), to brightness and colour over the whole double page spread (pp. 15-24). The children's responses showed an attention to the colours in the setting and to the way these changed. They readily responded to the illustrator's use of colour and light, often responding to that immediately the page was turned. The first responses were often of noticing and then they used the information from these elements to build up their ideas about the text. They were able to bring significant understanding of the narrative through their use of these elements. The above responses are a representation of the children's growing understanding of how the use of colour and light contributed to the plot, character development, and overall themes.

### Using the elements of object and symbol

Alongside the elements of colour and light, the quantitative data showed that the children also responded to the illustrator's use of object and symbol. Of the responses in the interpretive category, 43% used the element of object or symbol. This represented a large number of the responses. The illustrator used these elements to portray a number of aspects of the narrative. An illustrator uses representations of objects to build up the setting, the characters and the plot. The physical object that is represented has a denotative role in that it is part of creating the scene and story. These objects can also have a connotative role, becoming symbolic in the portrayal of character and theme. An object, therefore, can become symbolic and this helps artists to convey their message. The objects that become symbols in *Luke's Way of Looking* are birds and other winged creatures, hands, and

shadows. These symbols are used in the illustrations to convey meaning (Ottley, 2001) and this aspect requires readers to explore possible meanings. The use of symbols is a way the illustrator adds layers of meaning to the narrative. Apart from objects, other elements of the illustrations can also have a symbolic purpose. In the previous section, an analysis of the children’s responses showed that the way colour was used in *Luke’s Way of Looking* had symbolic meaning.

Types of thinking

The responses that used object and symbol are presented and analysed according to the type of thinking used. Table 4.2 compares the data for object and symbol in relation to the type of thinking. The table shows a similar pattern to the data for colour and light in the combine and extend categories of thinking but with a higher percentage of responses in the define category and a lower percentage of responses in the integrate category.

Table 4.2 Responses that used object and symbol according to type of thinking

Picturebook elements	Define	Combine	Integrate	Extend
Object/ symbol %	25	58	15	2

Define

Look; notice; identify; label

The children responded to the illustrator’s use of object and symbol by noticing and identifying the many objects in the pictures. At each page turn, the children spent time looking and labelling objects they thought were significant. Of the responses that used the element of object and symbol, 25% were classified in the define category of thinking.

Through the pilot text, *Hey Al*, used as part of the educated consent activity for this study, the children had been introduced to the way an artist uses

symbol to portray meaning. In *Luke's Way of Looking* some objects appeared regularly, e.g. hands, shadows, and birds, and this was briefly highlighted to the children. On each page, the children pointed these things out in a defining way. Right through the book, the children responded to objects they considered significant. They identified, labelled, listed, selected, matched or defined these objects. This defining began on the cover where the children looked closely at the pictures to construct meaning. They identified the objects of birds, buildings, gargoyles, and the painting on an easel. These objects have later significance in a symbolic way. On the first pages of the told story the children identified shadows and hands. Birds, shadows, and hands featured as symbols throughout the story so it was important that the children had time to note these things.

At times this noticing was a listing of objects noticed. For example, in relation to Figures 4.9a and 4.9b below, the children first responded with a listing: 'There's a bird there and there'; 'Bird on a bike'; 'A bird ... A parrot'; 'And then those wings'; 'There's hands ... hands ... hands'; 'It's a butterfly thing'; 'It's a wing'.



*Figure 4.9a Butterfly thing and hands (p. 18)*    *Figure 4.9b Bird on a bike (p. 17)*

As a list of objects, the children did not seem to note any symbolic significance, but the noticing and labelling laid the groundwork for further connections to occur.

These responses using define type of thinking showed that the children were alert to how the illustrator might use objects as symbols. In many cases, the



children identified the objects that the illustrator, in his own commentary, had identified as important (Ottley, 2001). A comparison of some of the children's ideas with those of the illustrator's is outlined in Appendix J.

### *Combine*

*Link; join; order; organise*

The children responded to the illustrator's use of object and symbol by linking ideas they had identified in the define responses, and then ordering and organizing these ideas. Of the responses that used the elements of object or symbol, 58% were classified in the combine type of thinking. This is similar to the combine type of thinking for responses that used the elements of colour and light.

A link with other texts occurred when the children noted images in the art gallery that reminded them of a part of their popular culture, a Bey Blades™ game. They were excited to see images that they felt they recognized.



*Figure 4.10 Constellation images (p. 14)*

- Jamie: It's a Taurus ... half bull, half man... that looks like Pegasus; these are constellations; Bey Blades™ is the same as constellations ... that looks like Sagittario; Virgo; Pisces;
- Hamie: Scorpio
- Sam: It's like a Minotaur; it's got person hands.

The children identified significant objects from the illustration (Figure 4.10) and organised these objects together. The link to their popular culture gave a currency to the book and meant they were engaged with the text in a



personal way. In a commentary on the book, the illustrator described the minotaur as a significant inclusion: “The minotaur is inviting Luke further into the gallery as in the story of the minotaur, when one enters the labyrinth, one never comes back - Luke is entering a world from which there will be no going back for him” (Ottley, 2001). The children’s connections could allow for exploring this symbol and its significance in this narrative.

A number of responses in the combine type of thinking category showed an intratextual linking, across a number of page turns. For example, in all of the gallery pictures, the children endeavoured to make connections by combining clues. They spent some time wondering together about the creature emerging from the white cloths.



*Figure 4.11 The emerging creature (p. 18)*

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Caniece: | It looks like they are pulling the bird.            |
| Cese:    | It's like a butterfly 'cause like how it comes out. |
| All:     | Yeah true.  |
| Jordan:  | And this bit's like the cocoon.                     |

These connections were significant because the image (Figure 4.11) was unusual and not immediately easy to interpret. It was a significant image in the book in relation to Luke’s emerging feelings and sense of self. The way the children engaged showed they considered it significant too.

Another page with an image involving wings and flight caused the children to attempt connections by combining clues.



*Figure 4.12a Luke's shadow as wings (pp.19-20) Figure 4.12b Seeing birds (p. 27-28)*

From one group:

- Talitha: A wing ... a wing.  
 Alex: From him.  
 Talitha: Wow. That does look like he's flying.  
 Georgia: Look he's holding on to it.  
 Prajina: It's an angel or something.

And in another group:

- Jordan: He's like a bird.  
 Candice: The shadow is like a bird.  
 Cese: And he's flying.

The children gave attention to the image and attempted to make links between clues. This prepared them for thinking about what the objects might mean and why the illustrator may have put them there. It set a foundation for interpreting the narrative. This linking to birds and flight continued on the page where Luke was painting the watermelon (Figure 4.12b) with a discussion about flying.

- Jamie: Flying seeds everywhere.  
 Antonio: The seeds are flying like birds.  
 Jamie: And the watermelon is like a bird.

These connections showed the children's attention to detail and their attitude that everything on the page was important to the meaning. They combined the images on this page with the symbol of the birds that had been identified as a recurring symbol or motif.

### ***Integrate***

*Compare; contrast; predict; infer; analyse; explain causes; relate; check; justify*

Of the responses that used the elements of object and symbol, 15% were classified in the integrate category of thinking. This was fewer responses than in the integrate categories for colour and for words. The level of thinking in these responses helped children to interpret aspects of the narrative such as inferring about a character and that character's actions or feelings.

A chain of talk showed the children looked carefully at the boys' paintings. They used the information from this close looking to draw a conclusion about the difference between Luke and the other boys. The children discussed how the paintings were constructed and what objects they used.



***Figure 4.13*** Luke's different painting (p. 3)

Natalie: Look at the eyes and the mouth.

Jaiden: And the hair is on an angle and it goes out.

Researcher: *And the other boys aren't doing it like that ... it doesn't look like it.*

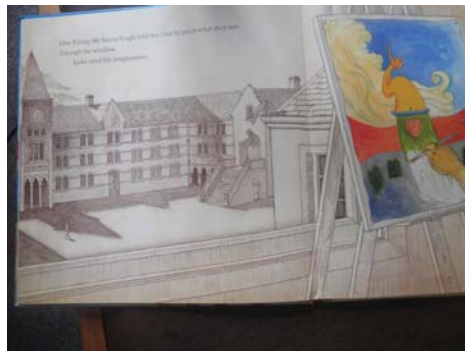
Harry: 'Cause they aren't using their imaginations.

The chain of talk moved from noticing the important features of Luke's paintings, into an inference about the difference between Luke and the other boys. The response was a foundation for considering the importance of this difference about Luke. A chain of talk in another group resulted in a response from Georgia that showed a similar interpretation to the one above.

- Alex: Yeah he does things differently to other people.  
Talitha: Using different colours and doing things odd.  
Georgia: They're drawing a man but he's doing it the way he sees it so he put the ears up there and they are just doing it how he actually looks.

The chain of talk involved the children in comparing, contrasting, and explaining the differences in the pictures. Georgia's response was an explanation about why Luke's drawings were different, building on Alex's idea that Luke saw things in a different way to the other boys.

Other responses from a range of groups showed the children made a similar interpretation about Luke and his artwork. They spent time comparing the painting Luke was doing of the school to the view we have of the school through the window.



*Figure 4.14 Luke paints what he sees (pp.5-6)*

- Jamie: I know why that is like this. He created the world in his mind 'cause look that is a tail.

The same ideas came through from another group.

Georgia: See ... that's how he sees that building.

Caleb: He paints what he sees basically.

Jamie compared Luke's painting with what is actually out of the classroom window. This comparison resulted in the idea that Luke had created the world in his mind rather than it actually existing. Caleb's comments showed he inferred that Luke had another way of seeing the world and that is why his paintings were different.

In other responses in the integrate type of thinking, the children built on earlier combining comments about the art in the gallery to explain how Luke's paintings fitted within the context of gallery art.

Jamie: Oh yes Mr. Barraclough thinks that the painting Luke does is real bad but the ones they're doing are all boring; 'cause famous artists ... I just noticed that famous artists do weird one; like this famous dude he ... instead of eyes he had ears here.

Talitha: It's like him; he paints things differently.

The children related aspects of Luke's paintings to those of the gallery artists. Jamie's response 'I just noticed ...' showed that he was constructing the meaning as the discussion progressed. He made a connection between the 'famous dude' in the gallery and Luke's paintings and inferred that this showed not only that Luke's paintings were good but also that Mr. Barraclough's opinion was wrong. Talitha's comparing response showed she was relating the way Luke painted to the way the artists in the gallery painted.

Children responded to the illustrator's use of shadows throughout the book. Connecting clues about the shadows and using these clues for comparing and inferring continued through to the last page.



Figure 4.15a Shadow as large hand (p. 2)

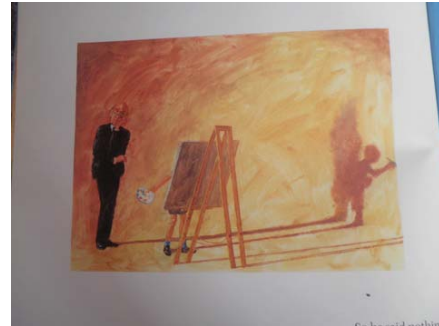


Figure 4.15b Shadow as wings (p. 29)

Jamie: He's got wings ... it's coming from his [pointing to teacher] shadow ... the shadow used to be scary ... now he makes wings.

The children noted how the teacher's shadow had changed and offered a comparison between the pages. They inferred that the first shadows were scary and made a comparison with the smaller shadow of the last page. The comment about the contrast between the shadow being scary and now being wings on Luke's back was significant to the plot and the theme because it made way for the children to show understanding about Luke changing. These comparing and contrasting responses allowed for later elaboration of these ideas.

### **Extend**

*Create meaning; reflect; assess; generate; theorise*

Less than 2% of the responses that used the elements of object or symbol were classified in the extend category. Although these were few in quantity, the addition they brought to the construction of meaning in the discussion was significant. The responses exemplified how the children built on ideas from throughout the discussion to generate a new idea.

In one example, the children noticed the difference in the view out the window and Luke's interpretation of that view. They could see that Luke didn't just put what might be denotative objects in his painting, but painted in a way that was symbolic. He uses curved lines and shapes, with exaggerated clock hands in a way that is reminiscent of the loose flowing style of surrealism (Ottley, 2001). The children showed an interest in and a sensitivity to the meaning conveyed by this picture.



*Figure 4.16 He paints what he thinks (p. 6)*

Georgia: That's how he sees that building.

Caleb: He paints what he sees and he paints what he thinks.

Caleb's extended thinking response was a result of group talk over a number of pages, beginning with the cover. He had attempted to put his ideas into words during an involved group discussion about the cover, at which point Caleb concluded: 'He paints the way he sees things'. Over the next three pages, the group gathered more clues from the illustrations, discussing what Luke was doing in his paintings. Caleb's conclusion that not only did Luke paint differently or even see differently but he thought differently came after the group's discussion over these pages. This is an example of the text teaching (Meek, 1988) because the story was developing in a way that was helping Caleb see more clearly. Caleb was keeping the important points in mind as the story developed and letting clues add up. This chain of talk culminating in Caleb's complex idea was an example of the group discussion, and the text itself, enabling thinking to develop.

Towards the end of the book, Alex revisited an earlier idea and refined the interpretation by placing Luke's emotion at the centre of the idea. Alex explained, 'He's climbing into happiness ... 'cause see his foot is going into it'. The illustration shows Luke climbing into a watermelon filled with paint. Alex extended this idea beyond its denotative factors to generate the idea that the watermelon represented Luke's emotions. An interesting contrast to Alex's idea was another child who responded that the watermelon would 'taste yuk' because Luke had put paint in it. This shows the picture can be interpreted from a denotative or connotative perspective. Alex's response showed a complex idea that extended beyond the physical denotation of paint in a watermelon.

The three comments below are from three different groups and are included here to show that members of each group wrestled with the meaning of this image.



*Figure 4.17 Inside his art (pp. 27-28)*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Sean:    | It's like he's inside his art.   |
| Antonio: | It's like he's in a watermelon with seeds all around.  |
| Alex:    | He's dropping the watermelon into happiness ...<br>because that's his own world so he might want to do it<br>for the watermelon. |

The children related the way Luke was painting the watermelon to his change in feelings. This explanation was important because it helped them



understand many aspects of the narrative: the characters, the plot, and how these revealed a theme.

One group reviewed some of the pages after the book had been read. They were discussing what had made Luke change by the end of the book. They returned to a range of pictures showing the art gallery (Figure 4.17a, 4.17b).



*Figure 4.18a* He felt he was all alone (p. 11)



*Figure 4.18b* But when he came here...(p. 15)

During this review, Jamie and Antonio attempted a summary of the theme and a creation of a new idea.

Antonio: He felt like he was all alone.

Jamie: Before, he must've felt he was all alone and he was the only one who could paint like that but when he came here ...

Jamie built on Antonio's response to form this new idea. The responses combined the inference that Luke felt alone in his school setting with the inference that in the gallery he felt more complete. These responses showed the children had an understanding of the way the experience in the art gallery had given Luke a feeling of belonging.

### Summary of the object and symbol responses

Symbol was an element that children enjoyed engaging with and it did enable them to speculate about narrative meanings for this book. The children linked ideas about object and symbol across many pages, beginning with defining the objects they could see on the page and developing these ideas to think of their significance to the narrative. They looked closely for images of significance from page to page and made comments such as, 'that's the same as the other page'. These connections across pages enabled the children to use object and symbol to construct narrative meaning in a cohesive way across the book. Making such links was vital to a deep interpretation of and literary engagement with the book. The children were able to draw conclusions about the characters and make generalised statements about themes by exploring these symbols. They also showed attention to objects that the illustrator himself noted as significant for the narrative.

From a quantitative perspective, comparing the different types of thinking across the picturebook elements revealed that the children seemed to find it more difficult to draw a conclusion or make an inference about objects or symbols than they did for colour and light. The higher percentage of responses in the integrate category of thinking for colour and light than for object and symbol was an indicator of this in regards to quantity. Colour and light have a physical effect on the eye (Nodelman, 1988). For example, in the case of colour, warm colours advance on a viewer and cool colours retreat. In the case of light, a viewer's eye is drawn to an object that is shown with more light. This physical effect of colour and light may make an interpretation from those elements easier than from symbol, which relies on particular cultural understandings and connotations for interpretation. It may be that a rereading would allow children to further speculate about possible deeper meanings and connections with the symbols.

Using the element of words

As discussed in the literature review chapter, picturebooks rely on the use of two media, the words and the pictures together, to tell the full narrative. *Luke’s Way of Looking* is a book that exemplifies this relationship. In regards to the process of reading an image, Nodelman (1988) described that a viewer sees the picture first as a whole and then as the details that make it up, whereas it is the opposite way with words: details then the whole. It was obvious when the children used the illustrations to help them construct meanings. There were also times when it was apparent that the children were referring to messages given in the words because they utilised the actual vocabulary used by the author in their responses. It cannot be categorically stated that the children used clues from the pictures without relying on the words, but it does seem possible to state that the children read the visual messages first and used these for forming ideas. In analysing the responses above as being those that used object and symbol or colour and light, it is also true that the children would have in mind the words across the various pages. The responses analysed in the category of words are those where it was clear that the children had specifically used the actual words to construct the narrative meaning.

Of the overall responses, 11% were classified as those where children specifically used the words rather than the pictures, or specifically used the words with the pictures. Table 4.3 below is a summary of the responses according to the types of thinking used with words and these qualitative data helped inform the analysis and discussion of the categories.

Table 4.3 *Responses that used words according to type of thinking.*

	Define	Combine	Integrate	Extend
Words %	6	26	45	22

One factor that was clear from the analysis of responses was that a disproportionately high number of the comments that used words were classified in the category of extend type of thinking: 22% as opposed to the up to 3% of the colour and light or object and symbol categories. Of the word responses, 65% were classified in the categories integrate and extend as opposed to 16-30% for colour and light, or object and symbol. Examples of responses from integrate and extend categories are presented below as illustrations of the children's thinking using words while engaging with *Luke's Way of Looking* for this study.

### *Integrate*

Antonio made a connection by putting together the words in the title with Hamie's observations about the image on the title page.



*Figure 4.19* Title page with eye

- Hamie: That might be his skin ... and that might be Luke's eye.
- Antonio: 'Cause it says "Luke's way of looking" ... looking at the whole world.

He makes specific reference to using the clue in the words to explain why the eye features on the page. His explanation was the result of an extensive search by the group of all the clues they found significant both on this title page and on the cover.

Further on in the book, Jaiden made specific reference to the words that had been read and related these to what the page was telling about Luke. Jaiden

alerted the group to the words and how they related to what was shown on the page.



**Figure 4.20** Relating left and right (p. 9)

Jaiden: But can't you see ... that it said he "turned left instead of right" ... and over here it's all shaded and over here it's quite light.

Natalie: Ahhhh ... not ok ... [points to the left of the page] Ok ... [points to the right of the page].

He compared and contrasted the light on one side of the page with the light on the other side with specific reference to the words "Luke turned left instead of right at the corner of Homer Street" (p. 9). Natalie used this idea of Jaiden's and pointed to the different parts of the picture 'OK ... not ok ' showing that she understood Jaiden's point.

Sam responded to the colour seen through the art gallery doors (Figure 4.21) and combined this with words from previous pages, "Luke used his imagination" (p. 5) to make an inference or prediction about what might be in the building.



**Figure 4.21 Predicting a change (p. 10)**

Sam: Maybe he'll like the inside ... it will be like his imagination.

Sam's response built on Sheldon's comment that outside was 'all plain but inside was all colour'. Sam's response not only built on Sheldon's comment but also showed that he was connecting the previous pages, where the words had mentioned "Luke's way of looking" (title) and "his imagination" (p. 5), to this page with its promise of something different. Sam predicted that Luke would find himself in a place he liked, a place that reflected him. He made a complex connection, relating information back and forward in this story and he inferred something significant about the character of Luke.

On another page, the children looked closely at the pictures and then combined the clues from the pictures with what they recalled from the words on previous pages.



**Figure 4.22 Scribble on the bird's beak (p. 18)**

Jamie: What's this scribble?

Researcher: *It's like wire ... like he's all wired up.*

Hamie: Oh and he can't talk.  
Antonio: And he says nothing.

This was an example of an extend type of thinking, beginning with the noticing of the scribble, then listening to the researcher's suggestion that it looked like wire and thinking what this could mean. Hamie's response was that it meant Luke couldn't talk and Antonio then related this to the words earlier in the text: "Luke didn't know what to say so he said nothing". The extend type thinking involved the children hypothesizing that the scribble in the illustration was indicative of Luke being silent at school. The children generated this idea from combining the words and the pictures and they created a meaning that, while coming from the book, was a result of their own meaning making.

Another example of a comment that used words in an extend type of thinking was a moment of realisation from Jaiden about how Mr. Barraclough treated Luke. Jaiden reacted to the words the teacher used when talking to Luke: "What's wrong with you, boy?" (p. 8).

Jaiden: "Boy ..."  
*Researcher: You don't like that Jaiden ... the way he called him "boy"... Is that not a nice way to talk to people?*  
Dylan: Eh boy...  
Natalie: It seems like he is not a nice person.  
Jaiden: It would be like Miss H calling us 'Boy' or 'Girl' ... we wouldn't know what she was talking about.  
Natalie: And the girls would get confused ... 'What girl; what girl? What boy; what boy?'

Jaiden kept this thought in his mind as the conversation diverted into a discussion about the importance of names and about how Luke looked disappointed that his painting had been ripped up. Jaiden returned to the idea of how Mr. Barraclough treated Luke and developed the idea further.

Jaiden:           The teacher could just teach him ... instead of just growling him ... tell Luke what's wrong and all that.

Jaiden seemed to imagine himself in Luke's place, reflect on what this would be like, and then create a solution to the way the teacher was behaving. He was obviously affected by the way the teacher treated Luke. Jaiden was also using the ideas in a way we could classify as personal response, where he related what was happening in the book to what he understands in his own life (text-to-life connection).

### Summary of responses that used words

The nature of a picturebook makes it impossible to separate the two media and categorically state what the children used in their meaning making. The children would have been attending to the words throughout the book and using them, along with the pictures, to construct the meaning of this particular narrative. As mentioned earlier, it did seem the children responded first to the pictures as the page turned. They were able to gain some meaning for the developing plot and characterisation solely from the way the illustrator had used the elements of a picture. However, the specific progression and meaning of this narrative is dependent on pictures and words. The words in *Luke's Way of Looking* allow the reader to be active in the constructing of meaning because they are specifically crafted to work with the pictures in a mutually dependent way. The children's responses as outlined above do show that there were times when they relied on the words for the specific meaning of the page and over many pages. The words that outlined important aspects of Luke's character were utilised by the children in their responses. "... except for Luke, who looked at things differently" (p. 2); "Luke used his imagination" (p. 5); "Luke felt that he could burst with happiness" (p. 19). The repeated phrase of "...so he said nothing..." was used three times through the book and the children's responses showed they realised its significance for what it brought to the narrative.



The combination of words and images means that the children had two pathways by which to process this text. The importance of this will be further explored in the discussion chapter to follow.

### Types of thinking and children's interactions

The types of thinking have been reported and analysed in separate categories but in practice they occurred together in a to and fro chain of talk. An example of this development of ideas across types of thinking is shown below. The children first identified, and then considered meanings in this chain of talk over a number of pages. The children saw shadows as important over a number of pages. They used the picturebook elements of colour and symbol and their comments developed from noticing and labelling (define and combine) to further speculation about this meaning (integrate and extend).

- Alex            Is that supposed to be there or is it a stain? (define)  
*Researcher*   *I think it's always on purpose.*  
Alex            So that's like red over there. (define)  
Georgia        Oh so that's a shadow; that's the wall. (define)

This chain occurred at the beginning of the book and the children were still establishing how an illustrator added meaning to the narrative. On the next double page spread the children continued exploring how the illustrations conveyed the mood of the teacher and his attitude to Luke.

- Alex:            You can tell that guy's getting angry (integrate)  
*Researcher:*   *By the way he's standing?*  
Alex:            No by the way he's like colouring it differently  
                      (combine/ integrate)

Later on in this conversation the talk returned to the idea of the teacher's mood.

Talitha: See I told you he was getting angry (integrate)

*Researcher:* *You can tell that by...?*

Georgia: His shadow (combine/ integrate)

Another chain of responses occurred about objects in the illustration and then the children returned to exploring the mood of the character and the clues in the shadows and in the words.

*Researcher:* *How does Luke look here in his shadow?*

Georgia: Sad (combine/integrate)

Talitha: He looks crooked and bent over while in real life he's straight (combine)

Georgia: Ah I know why; that's his way; but then you can't see the man and so that's the shadow life and that's just him without ... (combine/integrate)

Talitha: He's bent there and he's straight there  
(define/combine)

*Researcher:* *So the shadow life is like another...*

Caleb: Realm (integrate/extend)

The conversation built with each turn and the children listened to each other's comments and then developed the idea with a comment of their own. The children considered the meanings over many pages. The discussion about shadows from the first pages in the book as reported above was considered all the way through the book as indicated by this statement about the shadows on the last page.

Talitha: Now the shadow makes wings (combine/integrate).

These excerpts exemplify the way children responded to the narrative as it developed through the book.

### Summary of the responses in the interpretive category

The results from the interpretive category were described and analysed and the responses showed that the children interpreted the book for its overall narrative meaning. They related to the book, thinking about the characters, the plot, the setting and the theme. The children showed they understood the narrative at a level of comprehension of events, but also that they related to its message in a deeper way. They had an awareness of the characters' feelings, the way they changed in the story, and the overall triumph for Luke at the end of the book. The children behaved in a way that exemplifies the relationship between text and reader (Meek, 1988) and between authorial intent and message constructed (Rosenblatt, 1978). They showed a commitment to this meaning over the whole text (Finch, 2012), exhibiting the behaviour of engaged readers. These ideas will be further discussed in the next chapter.

### 4.3 Other categories of literary engagement

Apart from interpretive responses, the data showed a significant number of responses in the aesthetic category. These responses are described and analysed in the transparent or performative subcategories of the framework's aesthetic response (see Table 3.1).

#### Aesthetic responses

Aesthetic responses are described by Rosenblatt (1978) as a lived through experience of the text. Nodelman (2006) regarded this playful attitude toward the experience of literature as a most important factor. The aesthetic responses in this study showed that the children's aesthetic engagement with the book added to the process of making meaning from it. In this research, 11% of the responses were classified as aesthetic responses, 7% transparent and 4% performative.

#### Transparent responses

Transparent responses were important examples of the children's engagement with the text. Most common was the visceral reaction as a new

page was turned, resulting in a transparent response such as: ‘Wooooooo’; ‘That’s awesome’; ‘Oooo, look’. Sometimes the children responded as if they were present in the story or illustration. One such response occurred on the title page with the fruit bowl, where the children started to claim the fruit they would eat: ‘I would have the watermelon’; ‘I would have the grapes’; ‘I would have the banana’.

Occasionally, the children responded as if they were the character in the story.



*Figure 4.23a I'm free (pp.19-20)*



*Figure 4.23b Where am I? (p. 22)*

Talitha responded to the illustration of Luke flying into the sunshine with ‘Wheeee! I’m free!’ (Figure 4.23a). Hamie responded to the illustration of the man waking up on the bus with ‘Where the hell am I?’ (Figure 4.23b) These responses showed the engagement of the children with the characters and the details in the setting.

At times, the children responded directly to a character in the story such as in the illustration of Mr. Barraclough yelling (p. 7). Antonio responded to the picture as the page turned by saying ‘Ooooo, what a sad guy’. Another page with a picture of Luke walking in the gallery (p. 13) inspired Caleb to respond as if to the character ‘Don’t muck it up. Don’t make a mistake. The words in the text said, “Luke wondered what Mr. Barraclough would say if he were here”. Caleb seemed to be stating what he thought Mr. Barraclough would say. The response was in the background and repeated like a mantra and it

seemed it was a private response, rather than for adding to the group discussion (Sipe, 2008).

*Performative Responses*

The small group setting seemed to allow for some children to respond in a performative way. For example in one illustration, Hamie decided he could see Luke’s underwear and that this was worth pointing out: ‘Undies ... undies ... ha ha ha’.



*Figure 4.24 Luke’s underpants (p. 20)*

He carried the performance over a number of pages. He added to this when he noticed a bald man on the bus: ‘Baldie ... baldie ... ha ha ha ha ha’. In both of these situations he is seen to “wrest the control” (Sipe, 2008 p. 180) of the discussion from the rest of the group.

I’m going to say something funny and if you notice something funny then when Mrs. B. is finished just say it. And remember when it finished, I said Baldie.

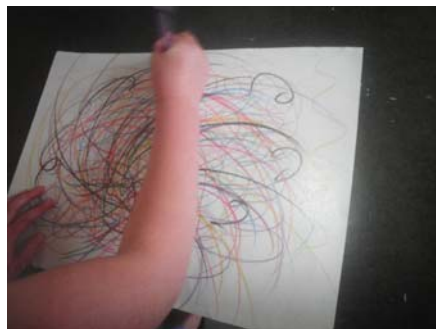
Despite it seeming that Hamie had lost touch with the purpose, his later responses showed he remained engaged. At the end of the book, he was engaged in a discussion about whether Luke had changed during the story.

<i>Researcher:</i>	<i>Has Luke changed in the story?</i>
All:	Yes
Antonio:	Totally

Hamie:	So has that baldy fellow
Researcher:	<i>The teacher has changed as well?</i>
Antonio:	Except for his (Luke's) painting; his painting stays the same.

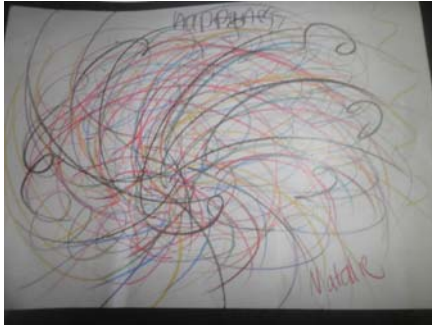
Hamie's response to the discussion about Luke's change was to initiate a comment about the other character on the page. This showed that he followed the group discussion and formed ideas of his own.

Another example of a performative response came from Natalie as she chose to engage in a quick drawing after the session. She created a free flowing picture, reminiscent of the painting where Luke was flying through the air (Figure 4.25). She spoke as she drew it and reviewed how Luke was feeling as he 'flew' through the painting (Figure 4.24).



*Figure 4.25 Natalie drawing in response to book*

She made two such pictures: one that depicted happiness, the other that depicted darkness. In the drawings, she combined the significance of the gallery painting with the ideas that colour and light could represent emotions (Figure 4.26a, 4.26b).



*Figure 4.26a Happiness*



*Figure 4.26b Darkness*

This drawing activity was also significant because Natalie had responded to the painting in the book as ‘it looks like a really good baby painting’. Other children were noticing all sorts of images in the painting ‘a sea horse ... an evil wolf ... a walrus’ and Natalie herself had noticed a bird and an eye before she stated it was like a baby painting. The engagement with the drawing activity, even though short and unplanned, was an indicator that she identified the painting as important to the narrative.

### Summary of aesthetic responses

Aesthetic responses may appear to be behaviour that is off track, insignificant or non-literary but as with Sipe’s (2008) findings, these responses were an example of powerful engagement with the text. The aesthetic response also led to interpretive response at times and the group that had the highest number of performative responses also had a high number of responses in the extend category. This showed that the performative responses did not detract from the level of thinking the children were engaged in. These responses were always spontaneous, often came before any formal discussion, and showed the children were appreciating the text and responding on a visceral level.

## Chapter summary

This chapter gave results in relation to the research questions:

1. What do the children’s responses to a picturebook reveal about their literary understandings of its narrative?

2. What do the children's responses reveal about their thinking as they engage with a picturebook and interact with each other?

The results of this study matched with the reviewed literature around literary understandings, reader response, and thinking. In regards to literary understandings, the results showed children responded in the variety of ways accepted as being part of literary understandings. The children responded to the chosen text with a variety of levels of thinking. They engaged with the challenge of incorporating a wide variety of the clues from words and illustrations and entered into discussions to co-construct meanings. The discussion chapter that follows further analyses these findings in relation to the literature review and methodology chapters and compares this study's findings with those of Sipe (2008).





### Chapter overview

This chapter is a discussion of the findings from the results chapter, relating the research questions to the literature as outlined in the literature review and methodology chapters. The chapter includes discussion about the quantity of responses; the interaction between participants; the effect of the group size; and the use of the interactive read aloud approach. It discusses what the children's responses to the text revealed about their literary understandings and types of thinking. The picturebook as a resource for a range of children and conclusions about the approach is considered in this chapter. The methodology is reviewed, including an examination of its limitations.

### 5.1 Discussion of findings

This research addressed questions about children's literary interpretations as they engaged with a picturebook. The research questions as outlined in previous chapters were:

1. What do the children's responses to a picturebook reveal about their literary understandings of its narrative?
2. What do the children's responses reveal about their thinking as they engage with a picturebook and interact with each other?

#### Quantity of responses

The quantity of responses from the children is an important factor both for data gathering and in regards to implications for practice. The 20-minute sessions each yielded between 100 and 200 turns of talk in groups of three to five children, which gave a wide range of responses to use as data. The quantity of responses is also significant because the responses showed that the opportunity to talk and to build on the ideas of others impacted on the children's learning. The way the children interacted and developed their

ideas showed that talking helped to “discover more about the text than would otherwise be possible” (Chambers, 1993, p. 25). From a socio-cultural perspective, listening to the thoughts of others as they talk helps us form our ideas. It can be difficult to allow all children the time to voice their ideas in a usual classroom day and this study showed that exploring picturebooks in small groups gave the opportunity for this talk. A quantity of responses does not presume quality but it is a helpful precursor.

The quantity of responses from me, as the researcher and adult participant in the groups, was also presented in the results. These showed that as the adult participant in the group, I responded in similar quantities to other participants. My endeavour not to dominate the discussion was successful from a quantity of responses point of view. In regards to type of responses as the adult guide in the group, this is further considered in the consideration of the approach section below.

The quantity of responses for literary understandings, types of thinking, and picturebook elements were presented as part of the explanation of the framework for analysis at the end of the methodology chapter. This examination of the quantitative data gave a first view of the responses and then helped set a direction for this chapter’s discussion of the qualitative results about the children’s literary understandings of the text.

### **Literary understanding**

The importance of literary understanding and engagement was established in the introduction and literature review chapters and featured in both the methodology and the results chapters. In this study, the children’s literary understanding developed through engagement with the text and also engagement with each other. The participants were involved in responding to the text and making interpretations through these interactions, often using each other’s responses for their own response. They engaged with the text from both an interpretive and aesthetic stance, gaining a richness of understanding from the discussion. Literary engagement was also evident in

the way the children made linkages across this text, as they engaged in the cohesive nature of the text (Finch, 2012). The results showed that the children made these linkages, using the information from one page to make sense of another. They referred to images or words from previous pages, using the clues to build an interpretation of the whole text as it was being read. The children's interest in following the narrative and using all the clues from across the text drove the interpretation and the event of this interactive read aloud.

The children in this study showed literary engagement as readers, using the pictures, or the words, or both together to build their understandings across the text in an interpretive way (Sipe, 2008). For example, they noted the ways the characters changed as the narrative progressed and the importance of these changes. They were also able to synthesise the clues from pictures and words across the whole text to generate ideas about the overall themes of the book. The children used their knowledge of books and of narratives in general, along with their developing knowledge of this particular book with its particular narrative to create meaning as they read. Both the picturebook and the interactive approach allowed for this enriched literary understanding and engagement.

It was this engagement with the text and the possibility of developing ideas about the narrative with other participants that was the strength of the small group co-constructed read aloud as an approach and the picturebook as a resource. The children's interpretive responses showed they understood the characters and themes in the story. They saw that Luke was a boy who was different from his classmates and had a different way of seeing the world. Their responses showed they identified with Luke both when he was unhappy and when he discovered a world where he felt happy. They showed they knew that art made Luke feel happiest and school made him feel unhappiest. At the end of the narrative, they were engaged with Luke's success in dealing with his conflict.

Not only did the children make sense of the text in regards to interpreting the narrative but also at times they used the book for their own creative stage (Sipe, 2008). Sipe (2008) stated that this was an act of making the narrative their own and he saw it as an important literary response by children. Finch (2012) noted the importance of this type of engagement with a text that “grows from pleasurable involvement to become an informed view of the whole text” (p. 81). These aesthetic responses allowed for interpretation to be meaningful for each child as they became completely immersed in the text. As discussed in other sections below, this literary engagement was dependent on the interactions within the group and involved the children in a range of types of thinking.

### Types of thinking

The children had multiple opportunities to engage in thinking about this picturebook and to develop ideas through discussion together. Not only were these opportunities present in quantity but also as the children engaged with the book and interacted together, their responses showed that their ideas developed in complexity. The responses showed that all of the framework’s categories for types of thinking (define, combine, integrate, and extend) were evident in the discussions. Responses of higher complexity often built from levels of defining and combining. Closer analysis of the responses in the results chapter showed that the children used each other’s responses like a cognitive climbing frame with one idea leading to another. For example, when the children used object or symbol as a way of responding to the illustrations, they often linked ideas about the object across many pages, in a way that showed they understood the symbolism an object can develop. They needed to keep the importance of the objects in their minds as the pages turned. This is one example of how the children used the information from the text in a connected way. Right through the book, they carried the meaning of the clues across the text as the pages turned and narrative progressed. This type of engagement with the text promotes the type of skills necessary for advanced reading and meaning making.

Each response, no matter what level of thinking, made a valuable contribution to the process of interpreting the text together. The define category gave the children the chance to practice their skills of observing. This skill is essential to all learning and it allows for the next steps to be built on strong foundations. Without noticing, there can be no further connections made; we need to be able to say what we know in order to discover what we don't know (Chambers, 1993). Many of the children's interactions showed they were discovering more about the text by this type of exploration. They interacted together and built on each other's ideas across the types of thinking as shown in the analysis of results. The children were able to make complex connections and create new ideas by engaging together over the book. They constructed meanings together by responding to the way the illustrator and the author conveyed their messages and by building on each other's ideas.

### **Multiple perspectives of literacy knowledge, skills and strategies**

The literature review chapter outlined four roles of a capable reader (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Table 2.6 showed how this was adapted to consider the reader as a processor of texts that are multimodal, where they need to process the words as well as the images. The responses of the children in this study showed that they did engage as readers in keeping with the categories of this model. The role of code breaker, from a decoding words perspective, was taken by the researcher, which allowed the children to focus on code breaking the messages heard and seen. In the visual mode, the children engaged with the illustrations, working to break the code the illustrator used to create the narrative. As the results chapter showed, the children readily noticed and later interpreted elements of the illustrations, particularly using the elements of colour and symbol in their role as code breaker. As text participants, the children in this study interpreted the text. With very little directing, they used the verbal messages as well as the visual images to construct meaning together. As text analysts, they responded in both interpretive and aesthetic ways showing they gained meaning from its

messages and enjoyed it as a text. The picturebook was a resource that enabled such reading behaviours.

As outlined in previous chapters, the picturebook is a resource with features that make it useful for literacy and literary learning. It presents information in verbal and visual modes, which both requires and enables two different forms of cognitive processing from the reader. Moreno and Mayer's (2000) proposal that learning becomes more meaningful when visual and verbal information are presented and processed together is reinforced by the ways the children engaged with this picturebook. In a picturebook, the pictures and the words work in a way that provides this support to the reader. Along with this, the synergistic use of the two sign systems in a picturebook can present a cognitive challenge to the reader. This cognitive challenge is such that the reader must actively engage with the text, oscillating between the words and the pictures for the information (Sipe, 1998) to create their reader's version of the narrative. The way a picturebook works is both a support and a positive challenge for the reader.

### **The resource and the approach**

The chosen text proved to be a valuable resource for these nine and ten year old children to engage with. Right from the beginning of the book, including the cover and the title pages, the responses showed the children were looking closely at pictures and thinking about the words in order to bring meaning to and take meaning from the book. All the children focused on this task. Children used a range of strategies as literary readers in this opportunity with picturebooks. They paid close attention to the details necessary for understanding, showing an attitude of looking at everything as a potential source of meaning.

With only a small amount of explanation about how an illustrator conveys messages through the use of particular elements, the children in this study used these elements for their interpretation of the text. The main elements used were those analysed in the results section: colour and light; object and

symbol. But children also noted the narrative impact of the illustrator's use of frame, direction, size and scale, movement, point of view, composition and media of the picture. The children used the picturebook elements to develop their ideas in relation to the characters, the settings, or the plotline. In some cases, they commented on the elements of the picture in relation to the themes. The children used colour, light, object, symbol, and particular words and phrases in ways that showed the medium and form of the picturebook helped them to construct and develop their own ideas about the narrative and the book overall.

The results of this study showed that the particular picturebook chosen was a resource that children could interpret, not only at a plot level but also its more complex ideas, such as themes. The responses showed the children's understanding of Luke's point of view at the beginning of the story ('He felt all alone because he did everything differently'), to how he felt at the end ('When he came to the gallery he could see ...'). This understanding was also reflected in the transparent category of literary understanding with responses such as 'Wheee ... I'm free ... '. The children responded to the theme of people's differences and of overcoming a situation where you don't fit in: 'It's his way of looking' and 'It's like he's going to find his feet'. They responded to the irony of the gallery art being the same as the art Luke did: 'Mr. Barraclough thinks that the painting Luke does is real bad ... but I just noticed that famous artists do weird one'. The children used the pictures and the words in combination to bring interpretations to the book. Their interpretations were their own but showed some similarity to those that the illustrator and author stated they were trying to convey (Ottley, 2001). This similarity of ideas showed that this picturebook afforded children opportunities to interpret the message being delivered.

Picturebooks require a particular type of approach to each page. The responses showed that the children used visual information on each page. As with Arizpe and Styles (2003) findings, the children in this study approached each page first with a whole scan, taking in the wider meaning. This was



illustrated by their responses as a new page was turned, where they would often react with surprise or wonder at the new vista. These responses showed that they were processing the story page by page and using the new information to add to their growing understanding as the page turned. The children in the Arizpe and Styles (2003) study then went on to look more closely for details that would add more information for the interpreting. The children in this study also looked for more details and applied themselves to finding as many significant ideas as they could. Arizpe and Styles' (2003) study showed that the children then looked for details they may have missed. The responses from this study highlighted how children developed their ideas on each page of the chosen picturebook by using one idea to advance to a more complex idea. The children were committed to finding the clues and then using them to bring as much meaning as they could to the text. These strategies of response the children used are useful to a wide range of learning situations.

The read aloud aspect of the approach used in this study added to these features of the resource of the picturebook. Because the text was read aloud to the children, their cognitive processing load was reduced. The children could listen to the words rather than having to read them, which increased the capacity the children had for thinking (Biggs & Collis, 1982). Working memory and capacity was freed up because the children had the adult support for the code breaking aspect of reading the words. Another method of reducing cognitive load is by engaging in rereading. Concepts of rereading (Calinescu, 1993; Chambers, 1993; Meek 1988) highlight the different thinking and revelations that can occur on subsequent readings of a text. The book is by now familiar to the reader and so the cognitive memory can be applied to deeper thinking rather than ensuring the text is understood.

The co-constructed aspect of the approach allowed children to develop their ideas and engage in natural conversation as the book was read. The socio-cultural nature of the event along with the reader response approach enabled the group members to construct meaning together that they would not have

done alone (Chambers, 1993; Fish, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1985). The approach of promoting active discussion of the book as it was read meant the children could form and develop their ideas with the help of others. It was this discussion about the book that was important as it helped the children to effectively construct meaning with others and to be part of a community of readers (Chambers, 1993; Nodelman, 2003).

This study was concerned with the responses the children made to a picturebook as they interacted with it and with each other. The researcher role was carefully considered so that the children's responses could be predominant. The conversations were collaborations between participants where everyone in the group was a collaborator (Cullinan, 1993). The analysis of the discussions showed that the researcher was one of the collaborators, allowing the children to explore each page and develop ideas together. Some researcher responses gave direction or input but most showed the researcher as part of the group's speculating, and as part of the chain of talk that arose from the exploration (Appendix K). This deliberate approach allowed the text to teach the reader how they are to be read (Meek, 1988) instead of the researcher's opinions leading the discussion. Getting this balance right was difficult at times but, as with usual classroom teaching, decisions about what and when to explain were made as the event progressed. The deliberate decisions about desired interaction patterns made prior to the event meant maintaining the role was easier. The results have implications for classroom practice and are further discussed in relation to the approach and implications.

The sociocultural concept of transformation of participation (Rogoff, 1998, 2003) describes the ways in which a person develops by their involvement in the activity. The children's participation in the event for this study enabled this type of transformation as they developed their ideas about this book and experienced the process of developing their own ideas. Each child's interaction transformed the activity itself because each conversational turn

impacted on the next turn. The results showed that this interaction also contributed to new understandings for each child as they engaged in talk.

### The importance of talk

The children's responses showed examples of the features of talk outlined in the methodology chapter. The children had the chance to respond and interact and have their ideas heard and developed. The talk exemplified the features of exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976) with children's disjointed thoughts becoming the basis for later insights (Barnes, 2008). The results also showed that the participants used talk in ways outlined by Cullinan (1993):

- Talk helps learners learn: the children responded to the book and to each other's ideas in ways that showed their ideas developed as they talked.
- Talk helps children to clarify their thinking: there were many conversational turns that involved the children showing realisation about a new idea: 'Oh I just noticed...' and 'Maybe...' and 'Oh no, I know...'. The realisation came in a chain of talk where children were developing and clarifying their thinking as the narrative and the discussion progressed.
- Talk provides a window on thinking: the quantity of responses meant that the children were able to voice their thinking and explore those thoughts as they expressed it.
- Talk aids comprehension: the children's interpretation of the narrative meaning was evident as the reading of the book progressed.

Facilitating talk after a story is surprisingly difficult (Hansen, 2004) and the process is not always one that evolves in orderly fashion. It can be difficult to find the right balance of teacher and child input in a discussion. Teaching decisions and actions have an impact on the direction of the discussion and the way the children can voice their developing ideas. It is important for the

teacher to consider how the pattern of interaction in an event influences the outcomes for the participants. The interactive pattern chosen for this study was of a co-operative nature, which fits with the socio-cultural and constructivist theories the study was built on. This pattern allowed children's active engagement as together they constructed meaning from the book. The deliberate act of inviting a transaction about the story (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Hansen, 2004; Sipe, 2008) offered all participants the chance to engage in natural response and conversation about a book. The dialogic teaching approach as outlined in the methodology chapter and then evidenced in the results chapter promoted a dialogue between all participants. The results showed that the children engaged in the ways outlined by Alexander (2004) to be desirable for a learning dialogue.

- They listened attentively and responsively to others, as illustrated by the way they built on each other's ideas;
- They framed ideas as speculation or wondering and then looked for further clues as evidence or justification;
- They presented a range of ideas and then evaluated these in light of the narrative.

The aspect of the small group size meant there were times when conventional classroom discussion was abandoned, as Sipe (2008) also found, and the children's preferences dominated both in what they chose to respond to and how they chose to respond. The children at various times took control of the reading event, either by turning the page to signal to the researcher to keep going, or by initiating or joining in the reading aloud. In general, less time was given to management than would occur in a large group situation and the event was focused on the engagement with and interpretation of the book. The situation allowed for the event to progress as a conversation rather than a set of questions and answers. The group size enabled all children to participate, which was an important foundation to the study and to classroom practice.

## In the New Zealand context

As most of the research on children using picturebooks has been conducted outside of New Zealand, the results from this study can demonstrate its applicability to a NZ classroom. The children engaged with the picturebook in ways that were similar to results from the overseas studies, showing that it is a resource that enables children from different settings to develop in their literary understandings. The picturebook as a resource and the small group interactive situation would fit in a New Zealand classroom context. In the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2010), the learning area of English states that children engage with and use language and literature. The key competencies outline that children use language symbols and texts, that they engage in thinking, and that they participate and contribute (Ministry of Education, 2010). The results of this study show that the small group co-constructed read-aloud approach with a picturebook enabled these opportunities in learning. The children engaged in ways outlined in the indicators of the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (Ministry of Education, 2010). These progressions contain a list of indicators expected of readers and writers at each level of the primary school. For the end of Year 6 (the suggested level for the children participants of this study), some indicators that have been illustrated through the reading event of this study are:

- Making connections between their prior knowledge and the concrete examples in a text in order to understand abstract ideas in the text;
- Drawing on several related items of information in order to infer ideas and information that is not directly stated in the text;
- Identify and reflect on writers' purposes and on the ways in which writers use language and ideas to suit their purposes;
- Interpret illustrations.

This applicability to the *New Zealand Curriculum* and its support documents shows that the approach and the resource have a valid place in the New Zealand classroom context.

### Diversity and inclusive practice

The children in this study were representative of the usual diversity in a New Zealand classroom. The children's responses to the text show that the approach allowed all to participate, offer, and develop their ideas. It was an approach that engaged children who were struggling with reading, those who were capable readers, and those who were learning English. Children who are reading below their reading level had the opportunity to engage in comprehension and interpretation at their age level because the teacher read-aloud removed the cognitive burden of decoding the words (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). The way the illustrations and the words work together in the text allowed these children the opportunity to engage in the higher order thinking that they can miss out on when all their processing capacity is used in decoding. On the other hand, the approach also enabled the capable readers to further develop their thinking.

The picturebook as a resource and the small group co-constructed approach enabled a child whose English language was limiting to her reading ability to participate as part of the group response. The group situation was one that offered her opportunities to use new vocabulary immediately, in context, and with support from the group and the illustrations. She was engaged in the reading as an active participant and she made effective contributions to interpretation. The lack of skill in decoding a text at her reading level did not mean an equivalent lack in ability to understand a text at her cognitive level (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). Her responses were mostly of a define type of thinking but she also gave responses from combine and integrate categories. She had many opportunities to use vocabulary in context and listen to ideas of peers. These results have applicability to other children who are not reading at an expected level for their year group. The approach, the resource, and the group size are all things that can be considered in a classroom to enable children to engage in cognitively appropriate tasks when a corresponding lack in decoding would ordinarily disenfranchise them. The approach allowed children to work in groups that were varied in regards to

ability giving the opportunity for children of all abilities to share and develop their ideas together.

## 5.2 Discussion of methodology

### Overview

The methodology chapter outlined the intended research process and the results from this study showed that the qualitative, interpretivist paradigm was appropriate for the data gathering. Case study method allowed the children to be in a situation they were familiar with, which meant they were able to respond to the text in a situation that was familiar to them. The approach also has applicability for classroom practice and could be used as part of the learning and teaching programme.

Qualitative descriptions of children's responses have illustrated the types of thinking and interaction that occurred and these descriptions allowed for subsequent discussion and interpretation. This interpretation of the results is unique to this study and adds to the body of knowledge that is developing around picturebook use and literary engagement with texts. The use of quantitative results arose from the study and enabled the study to be compared to other similar studies as well as to highlight particular trends. Other aspects of the methodology are discussed in the following sections.

As outlined in the methodology chapter, I chose a mid decile multicultural school to work in because the school population represented a range of children in NZ schools. The children had the opportunity to participate or choose not to participate in the event. It was important that they were well informed about what the event would entail so they could make an informed choice about their participation. The educated consent activity, where the children participated in a similar event to the proposed research, set a foundation for the actual data gathering and enabled the children to get to know the researcher before the event. As with other research that used an educated consent process (Finch, 2008), the demonstration lesson for this

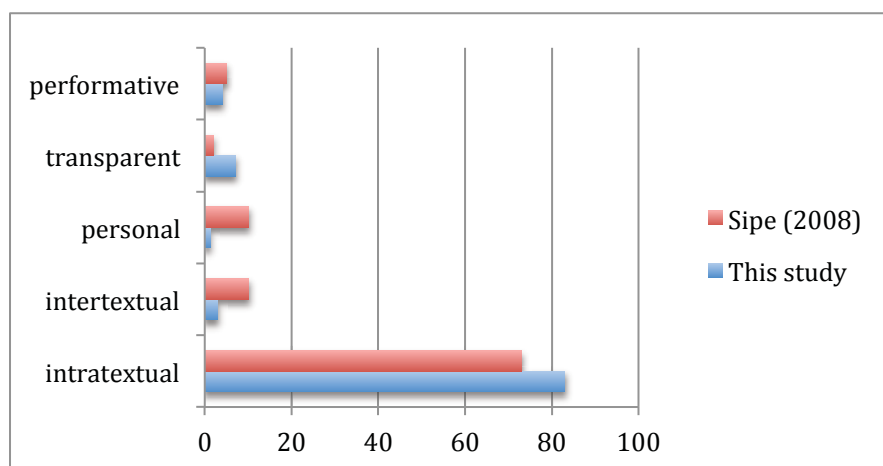
study appeared to successfully outline the process. Two thirds of the class provided consent and they were enthusiastic participants.

The approach to the reading and data-gathering event was carefully considered. The researcher's decision to interact in a dialogic and co-constructive way enabled the children to have many opportunities to express their opinions and share their ideas. In the interactive read-aloud talk was generated in both quantity and quality. The children were at ease with taking the lead in the discussion, as illustrated by the way they responded and talked immediately as each page was turned. The researcher made decisions during the event about when to clarify or extend, or to join in and speculate as part of the interaction. Particular teaching decisions have an impact on the resulting conversation, but the results of this study show that within a natural conversation in a group, the children responded in all the ways identified by Sipe (2008) as part of literary understanding. Their responses showed they engaged with the narrative and they interacted with the text and the ideas it contained.

### **The framework of analysis**

It was important for the trustworthiness of data that the framework was based on theories and evidence as established in the literature review and the methodology chapters. Its main structure is a replicate of that established by Sipe (2008) and its use in this study allowed a comparison to be made with Sipe's (2008) study. The use of this revised framework gave a meaningful referential framework (Eisner, 1996) to both studies and allowed a checking for consistency of results. There were quantitative similarities between the two studies, which showed an aspect of transferability for both studies. This transferability suggests further trustworthiness of the qualitative methodology. Figure 5.1 below shows these comparisons.





*Figure 5.1 Comparison between Sipe's (2008) original study and this study (by percentage).*

As with Sipe (2008), this study found that the largest proportion of responses were of an interpretive nature, particularly in the intratextual category (Sipe named this analytical). The main difference between the two studies was the percentage of personal responses, with this study having very few. Reasons for this could be the unfamiliarity of the researcher to the children, only having one reading session, and that different books inspire different ways of responding. Another comparison showed that the children in this study had proportionally fewer responses classified as intertextual. Those that were made were significant to the discussion so quantity alone does not tell the full story.

The revised framework enabled identification of factors that were considered to be important in children's responses. In the work by Sipe (2008), these factors were described within the analysis but were not identified by categories or analysed quantitatively. Adapting the framework meant these factors could be identified, described and discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The types of thinking indicators and categories were based closely on the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982), and the picturebook elements were chosen from a range of theorists and researchers as outlined in the literature review. Sipe (2008) also identified similar concepts and terms from his work with children and picturebooks. The children used the picturebook elements to make meaning and bring an interpretation to the

text. The responses showed that the picturebook was a medium that promoted a range of types of thinking in the discussion situation. The revisions to the framework enabled this level of analysis and discussion about the picturebook as a resource for thinking in classrooms.

### **Limitations of the methodology**

Even with the use of a framework for analysis, an element of subjectivity exists in categorising the responses because of the human factors involved in interpreting. The data must be viewed in light of this element of interpretation. The use of the framework and the discussing of coding and categories with colleagues added some objectivity.

The researcher's participatory role could be viewed as a limiting factor. The unfamiliarity between the researcher and the class could have meant some children were hesitant to share ideas with an unfamiliar adult. The familiar classroom surroundings and known group members meant this limitation was minimised but is a factor that should be considered in replicating this study. These children in this setting were used to a range of visitors to the classroom which also meant this limitation was minor. The type of reading interaction was familiar to the children and the informed consent activity contributed to this familiarity.

The responses this study collected were limited in both range and depth because the analysis involved only oral responses and only from one reading session. Children would have opportunities to think more deeply and further show the extent of their thinking if the study involved subsequent sessions with the text and other activities such as drawing or writing in response. Meek (1988) stated that children's writing helps us see what lessons children have learned from the texts. Children's drawings have been used in studies by Arizpe & Styles (2003) where drawing in response to the interactive read aloud gave another dimension to the data gathered. Drawing and writing responses could be added to the oral responses. Responses from a range of modes would give a fuller picture about what children gained from the text.

Another limiting factor was the use of only one interactive session for the children to engage with the book. A repeated experience of a text is a different experience to the initial one because readers can give attention to the way the narrative is conveyed rather than following the narrative itself (Finch, 2008). Rereading occurs for a better understanding and interpretation than was achieved on the first reading (Calinescu, 1993). Knowing you will revisit the book allows the first reading session to be exploratory and speculative and allows the teacher to consider different roles and level of support at each reading. It takes away from any notion that a reading of a book needs to be complete and removes the fear of missing something important. Returning to the same book with the same group would give another opportunity for the participants to be guided in developing their thinking about the book further. Arzi and Styles (2003) found in their studies that sustained and repeated exposure to the picturebooks, including multiple passes through the books, were partly responsible for the sophistication of the engagement. The limitation of one reading only in this study was mitigated by the opportunity to look through the book after the first reading for further discussion. Rereading is a consideration for building on this study. The study also only reported on the responses from this one event. It did not compare the responses children made when involved in other reading or cross curricula approaches. This would be something to consider for a longer study.

## **Summary of Chapter 5**

The chapter has discussed the appropriateness of the methodology used in the study with strengths and limitations outlined. The methodology followed allowed children to respond and interact in the co-constructed ways desired. The framework used enabled an analysis of results from a full range of literary understandings and types of thinking. The quantity of responses allowed for children's voices to be heard and for their ideas to be developed. The interactions between participants showed that the small group, co-

constructed read aloud with a picturebook was conducive to a wide range of thinking and interacting by these Year 6 children. The approach was appropriate in a New Zealand context and showed it had benefits for inclusive practice. The children responded to the book with the full range of literary engagement practices as outlined in the literature review and results chapters. Their responses included a range of thinking as outlined in the methodology and results chapters and these showed the appropriateness of a well chosen picturebook for promoting discussion with this age group. The teacher approach and the group size had a positive impact on the outcomes for the children. The conclusion chapter follows and identifies implications and recommendations that arise from this discussion.



## Chapter 6 Conclusion

This chapter draws on the findings in the previous chapters to identify implications and recommendations for practice and for further research. The conclusions are framed in a school context because that is the context of this study. The chapter discusses four implications and suggests classroom practice for each of those. An overall implication relates to professional learning for teachers in regards to each recommendation. Further research projects based on the findings from this study are suggested.

### 6.1 Implications and recommendations

The aim of this study was to investigate children's responses to a picturebook to see what kinds of understandings they developed as they interacted with the book and with each other. After considering the background literature, the results, and the discussion, a number of implications can be drawn. Some of these implications result in practical recommendations for the classroom but also suggest implications for further research.

#### Classroom practice

1. Children's literature has an important place in primary classrooms, not just for the literacy benefits but also for the literary gains for children. Literature is part of the way children develop their literacy but also helps in the broader understanding of life (Fisher, 1997; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003; Sipe, 2008). This means it is something we should not lose from our classrooms. In a time when there is increased pressure to ensure children reach academic standards, teachers might find it difficult to see the purpose of this broader purpose (Wollman-Bonilla, 1994). Yet engaging with and responding to literature as outlined in this study provides benefits and foundations that if removed would make the reaching of standards not only more difficult but also purposeless. To want to read, children must see the point of it and one important purpose is the inherent pleasure that it provides (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). Children's literature needs to be

included in classroom programmes for its own pleasures, as well as for its literacy and literary understandings.

2. The opportunity to engage with books provides a wide range of benefits to children as readers and as thinkers. The way teachers enable this engagement is important. The method outlined in this study, where the children's responses were valued and promoted has an important place as teaching practice in classrooms. Through interactions with the text and with each other, the children experienced the pleasure of the narrative but also the challenge and satisfaction of thinking about the book more deeply. Hansen (2004) noted that children's comprehension, decoding and storytelling ability increased when they were involved in verbal interactions about the story. Allowing and promoting these types of interactions is a recommendation of this study. Children interpret what is important about reading from the tasks they are asked to do (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003) and, therefore, time to be immersed in the book and to respond as a real reader does is vital.

3. The way these interactions were promoted also has implications for practice. Two aspects of the approach enabled these interactions: the co-constructed read aloud and the small group. These were integral to children being able to respond to the text and to build on each other's responses. Myhill and Dunkin (2005) stated:

It is worth considering whether the whole class teaching context is best suited to genuinely higher order and open questioning. An emphasis on pace in whole class teaching can come from management issues and be at expense of pupil contributions (p. 425).

A recommendation that arises from this study is that a small group approach should, at appropriate times, be an opportunity to use a co-constructed read aloud with a picturebook to promote dialogue and discussion.

The co-constructed aspect of the approach, where children's responses are valued, where the teacher's voice does not dominate the discussion, and where the teacher takes a dialogic rather than interrogative stance is recommended as an approach that promotes depth of thinking. Dialogue is a natural way to learn and construct meaning about literature (Peterson & Eeds, 1990) and allows children to develop their ideas in a way that other classroom interaction patterns do not allow.

The read aloud aspect of the approach is recommended because the words in the texts can be complex, even though picturebooks often are considered as books for younger readers. The read aloud approach reduces the cognitive load for the children and their attention can be used for the act of making meaning from the pictures and the heard words. A read aloud approach for small groups can be part of a differentiated approach to literacy teaching and is an important aspect to consider for strengthening children's comprehension abilities when their decoding abilities are developing (Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

4. The picturebook as a resource for literacy and literary instruction could be more widely used across age levels. Nodelman & Reimer (2003) stated that these books are an especially effective way to introduce readers to more complex strategies for interacting with texts. They believe that, through the form of the picturebook, children can be introduced to point of view, theme, irony, character development, and plot structures in a way that both supports understanding and provides appropriate challenge. Picturebooks are texts that require active readership (McGuire, et al., 2008), which is an essential feature of being a capable reader. Alongside the feature of promoting active reading, picturebooks are often a highly motivating text for children of all ability levels and according to Schiefele (1991) higher motivation leads to more complex levels of thinking. Applegate and Applegate (2010) used this link between motivation and complex thinking to raise the idea of thoughtful response to literacy. Their desire to promote lessons that engage children in reading and challenge their minds is echoed



by this study, which recommends picturebooks as part of a thoughtful response.

The combinations of the picturebook as a resource, small groups as the venue, and dialogic co-construction as the approach were factors that contributed to children's success as interpreters and responders to the text in this study. This success is important to their engagement as readers and thinkers.

An implication from the above recommendations is a consideration of teacher professional learning needs. Teachers cannot teach what they don't know (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003) and, therefore, opportunities to develop teacher knowledge are important for success. The professional learning needs would include knowledge of the following:

- Picturebooks: how they work and how to use them;
- Dialogic teaching and co-constructed read aloud approach: creating discussions through dialogue between participants;
- Utilising a variety of approaches for small group teaching time, based on specific needs of children in the class.

Picturebooks: While it has been suggested that teachers' use of picturebooks means the static image aspect of viewing in the *New Zealand Curriculum* may be well covered (Finch, Jackson & Murray, 2003), this does not stand as evidence that resources like picturebooks are used to their fullest potential. The professional learning involved in understanding picturebooks includes knowledge of the elements of art and of how the words and the pictures interact. Exploring a range of picturebooks that promote complex thinking would be an important part of developing this knowledge in context.

Dialogic teaching and co-constructed read aloud: Professional learning for dialogic teaching involves looking at different interaction patterns and considering the impact and the place of each. With the co-constructed read

aloud approach, professional learning involves exploring appropriate approaches for different purposes, having opportunities to see these in action and trial them in a range of learning situations.

Group teaching approaches: There is a wide range of approaches appropriate to use in small group situations for the benefit of the particular learners in a group. Professional learning involves investigating how to differentiate the teaching approach and content for the particular group of learners. Adopting the right approach for the particular need is vital for enabling all children to achieve.

### Further research

This study adds to the body of knowledge about how children respond to picturebooks. It also adds evidence about the small group and co-constructed approach. There are other avenues of research that could continue this study's findings and questions. The following suggestions represent a range of research options:

1. The revised framework of analysis could be used in other picturebook studies to see if it has transferability. A study similar to this one could be replicated with the framework. Using the framework for another picturebook would also enable comparing how particular picturebooks promote different responses according to the framework.
2. There is a need for further research using the co-constructed approach in small groups in a classroom setting. Differentiated teaching is essential to enabling all children to achieve with success. Having ways to offer differentiated opportunities is, therefore, an important strategy for a teacher. The small group setting is a place where focused teaching for the particular needs can occur and where all children get more of a chance to participate. It is by participation and engagement that more powerful learning occurs. The read-aloud approach in small groups that this study used allowed all children to engage in the meaning making with the book.

3. It would be beneficial to investigate how revisiting or rereading of a book impacts on children's understandings. A study similar to this one could be extended by returning to the group sessions with the same book, allowing the children to revisit their initial ideas and build on those.
4. Using the same approach as this study with children of different ages would help in an understanding of the breadth of use of picturebooks as a resource. The co-constructed small group read aloud could be tried with children in Year 7 and 8 classrooms (11-13 year olds) as well as in junior secondary classrooms, Year 9 and 10 (13-15 year olds). It would be interesting to see if responding to picturebooks in this setting enabled children to learn more about responding to other texts.
5. Using the same text across different age levels would also present interesting research information. *Luke's Way of Looking* is a text that could be used for children younger or older than the children in this study. Comparisons to the responses in this study could be made using the adapted framework to investigate the similarities or differences in types of literary responses, types of thinking exhibited and picturebook elements used in the response.

## 6.2 Concluding comments

As a conclusion to this study, I returned to the class to show the children my written report. I took *Luke's Way of Looking* with me and it was interesting to see that a full year after the first reading of this book, a group of boys took the book from me, re-engaged with it immediately, and explored it for the duration of my visit to the class. One of the boys asked me "Do you know of any other books like 'Luke'".

The resource of the picturebook helps children to be readers and thinkers. It can motivate them to be engaged in their reading and interpreting. I conclude by advocating for the use of picturebooks as outlined by Sipe (2008) in his book *Storytime: Young children's literary understanding in the classroom*. He argued "... for a type of reading aloud that involves both active students and active teachers ...

a type of reading aloud that treats picturebooks as highly sophisticated aesthetic objects, rather than mere tools for teaching literacy ..." (p. 6). I hope that this study gives others the impetus and the ideas for using picturebooks in classrooms, particularly for including a small group co-constructed approach, and for continuing the research.

Picturebooks are an incredible resource for the richness they bring to a child's life. They should be used purely for the joy of reading, but this study has also shown the potential of using picturebooks in classrooms as a tool for interaction and thinking. The best books set out to tell a story rather than to teach something in particular; it is in the telling of the story that teaching and learning opportunities arise. This research has given me the opportunity to find out more about this potential from a range of researchers who have also explored the amazing potential of picturebooks. I am now even more convinced of their importance in classrooms.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A Ethics Committee Approval



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

21 November 2011

Christine Braid  
48 Argyle Avenue  
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Christine

**Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 11/69**  
**Exploring student response to picturebooks**

Thank you for your letter dated 20 November 2011.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair  
**Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B**

cc Dr Brian Finch  
School of Educational Studies  
PN900

Dr Valerie Margrain  
School of Arts, Development & Health Education  
PN900

A/Prof Chris Freyberg, Acting HoS  
School of Educational Studies  
PN900

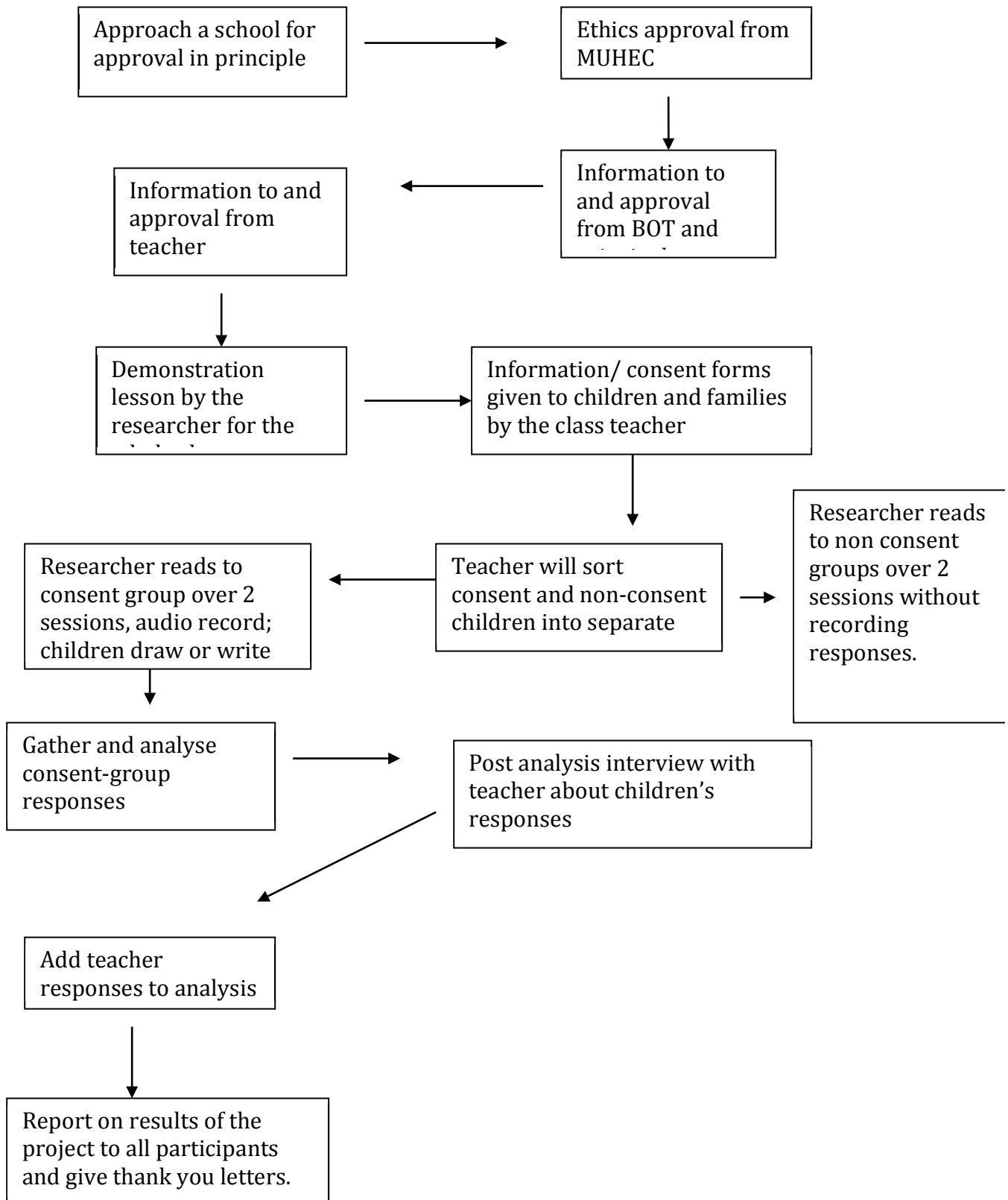
Dr Kama Weir, HoS  
School of Arts, Development & Health Education  
PN900

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Massey University Human Ethics Committee  
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand  
T +64 6 350 5573 +64 6 350 5575 F +64 6 350 5622  
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz  
www.massey.ac.nz

## Appendix B Flow chart of research procedures



## Appendix C Information sheet: principal and Board of Trustees

### [Massey University letterhead]

Christine Braid  
Address

School Principal  
School address

November 10, 2011

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Christine Braid and I am currently studying for a Master's of Education with Massey University. I am asking your permission to spend time in a classroom in \_\_\_\_\_ School to complete an inquiry for my Master's thesis. My supervisor for this study is Dr. Brian Finch of Massey University and his details are included below.

#### **Outline of project**

I am exploring how discussion of picturebooks can promote children's language and literacy development, as well as their thinking and understanding. My aim is to work with a class of year 5 and 6 students, read a picturebook to them, and gather their responses to this book.

#### **Possible benefits**

I am aware that I need to ask for the time and commitment of a class over a two-week period so I would like to outline what I believe to be some possible benefits to the class and the school.

- Research studies show that children gain from working in small groups;
- The children in the class would have the opportunity to engage with another educational professional in their literacy programme;
- The books I intend to use with the children will give them literacy experiences that give them opportunities for thinking and learning;
- The class teacher would be able to observe the sessions and have discussion with me;
- I could report to the staff as a whole about aspects of the project and this might benefit their own teaching.

I would like to work with students in a year 5 and 6 class and with their teacher. I would work with the class at times that best suit both class and school-wide commitments. I intend for this to be completed within a two week time frame as further outlined in the process below. I am hoping this can occur in late November or early December, 2011. I will be audio taping the sessions where I have parent

and the children's permission to use the responses for my thesis. All materials will be kept in accordance with the Massey University Ethics Code.

### **The process**

I see the activity as fitting in with the usual classroom reading programme when the teacher is taking groups of children in a guided reading setting. I would be working with a group of children with the book I have chosen to use while the teacher is working with her set group or groups for that day. Over the week, I would work with each group in reading time when the teacher is not working with that group. This ensures all children have access to the same experiences and that the sessions with me add to the learning in the reading programme rather than intrude into learning.

### **My responsibilities**

- I will follow ethics process according to Massey University requirements;
- The identity of the school, the teacher, and the children will be confidential in my report, using agreed on pseudonyms;
- The class teacher and I will set parameters together and I will contract with her as necessary;
- I will be available for discussion with individuals or groups as necessary and will work with the school needs at all times.

### **Participant's rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- withdraw from the study during the classroom part of the project;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

### **Project contact details**

If you have any questions about this research you are welcome to contact me to discuss it further. I can be contacted by phone or email at the Massey University, Hokowhitu Campus Ph \_\_\_\_\_ or Email \_\_\_\_\_. My supervisor for this study is Brian Finch and he can be contacted at Massey on ph \_\_\_\_\_ or email \_\_\_\_\_. The Ethics Committee details are included below.

Thank you for your consideration of this request

Yours sincerely

Christine Braid

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/69. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)

[Massey University letterhead]

**Exploring children's response to picturebooks**

Consent form

We have read the letter of request for Christine Braid to work in our school with a class of students and their teacher.

We, the Board of Trustees and the principal of \_\_\_\_\_ School, agree to the conditions as outlined in the information letter.

Signed  
BOT chair

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Principal

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date .....

**Exploring children's response to picturebooks**

**Information to teacher**

My name is Christine Braid and I am completing an inquiry for the thesis component of my Master's of Education degree. I would like to work with you and your students to explore student response to picturebooks. I hope this will be a useful learning opportunity for us all.

**Outline of project**

My aim is to work with students in small groups and foster a discussion based on a picturebook I will read them. I am exploring how the books can promote children's language and literacy development as well as their thinking and understanding. I am also interested in how small group discussions allow children to develop their ideas.

My idea is to work alongside you in your usual reading programme for up to two weeks. I would work with the children in small groups at the time you are working with your reading groups.

I would like your help in distributing the consent forms and in grouping the children once these forms are returned.

After I have worked with all the groups, it would be great if we could have a discussion about the students' responses and engagement. This would be up to an hour in length. With your permission, I would audiotape the session and give you the transcript for approval.

You are welcome to observe my sessions with the groups as possible and appropriate.

The students' commitment would involve participating in the group, listening to the book read aloud, joining in with discussion, and making a written or drawn response. I will be audio taping the groups of students where I have permission to use the responses for my thesis. The students who do not give permission would still be involved in the activity but in a group that does not have its responses audiotaped.

I would work in the class at times that best suit your existing programme. I hope this can occur in November 2011.

**My responsibilities**

I will:

- follow ethics process according to Massey University requirements;
- approach BOT and the principal;
- write all necessary information sheets;

- choose and bring the texts I will read and provide the materials for each child to draw or write their responses on; and
- conduct the group sessions and set up the response activity.

Both the text and the response materials will be available in the classroom for the two weeks. The materials will belong to the children and I will copy the ones I have approval to use.

The identity of the school, the teacher, and the students will all be confidential in my report as I will use pseudonyms that we have all agreed on; this might be the child's first name if they prefer that.

### **Participant's rights**

As a participant you are protected by the university's policy of participant's rights as outlined below.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study during the classroom part of the project by making this known to the researcher or supervisor;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time.

You have the right to read my transcript of our discussion and I will then ask you to fill out the release of transcript form below.

### **Project contact details**

If you have any questions about this research you are welcome to contact me to discuss it further. I can be contacted by phone or email at the Massey University, Hokowhitu Campus: Ph \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_. My supervisor, Brian Finch, is contactable at Massey on \_\_\_\_\_. The Ethics Committee details are included below.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Braid

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/69. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)

**[Massey University letterhead]**

**Exploring children's response to picturebooks**

**Teacher consent form**

I have read the information sheet and understand I can ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in the research activity as outlined above.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....



**[Massey University letterhead]**

**Exploring children's response to picturebooks**

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

## Appendix E Information sheet: Parents

[Massey University letterhead]

### Exploring children's response to picturebooks

#### Information sheet for parents

My name is Christine Braid and I am currently studying for a Master's of Education with Massey University.

In your child's class today, I read a book to the students and they completed a task in response to that book. The details of the book are included below. Your child will have an example of today's discussion and response with their information sheet included here.

Next week, as part of their usual reading programme and alongside their classroom teacher, I will read to the students in small groups and we will all discuss the book and complete other tasks. Your child will participate in the book experience with the rest of their classmates.

I would like to audio record the group responses for use in my study. Their responses will only be recorded and used if you and your child agree to this. All the responses are kept secure for the duration of the project and then destroyed in line with University policy.

#### **Participant's rights**

As a participant, your child is protected by the university's policy of participant's rights as outlined below.

They are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If they decide to let their responses be used, they can:

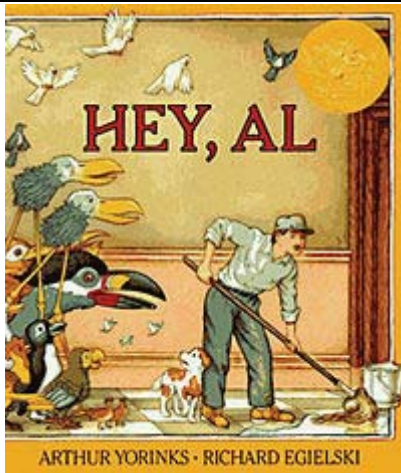
- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw approval for use of the responses by talking to the class teacher at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- choose the name to put alongside their responses. This might be their first name or another one they choose so that their identity remains confidential;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time..

#### **Project contact details**

If you have any questions about this research, you are welcome to contact me to discuss it further. I can be contacted by phone or email at the Massey University, Hokowhitu Campus Ph \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_. My supervisor for the study is Brian Finch who is contactable at Massey ph \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ The Ethics Committee details are included below.

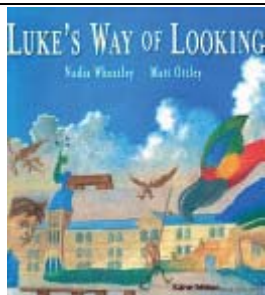
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/69. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz).

### **Information about the books to be used**



*Hey, Al* by Arthur Yorinks and Richard Egielski won the Caldecott Honor Award in 1987.

It is the story of a janitor named Al and his dog, Eddie. Al and Eddie had hard lives, but one day a bird offered to carry them to a magnificent island in the sky. When they arrived, Al and Eddie found it to be a paradise. However, strange things began to happen. Al and Eddie began to resemble birds and they realised the paradise was not all it appeared to be. Al and Eddie wished to return home so they decided to escape by using their newly acquired wings to fly home. Their flight did not go to plan as Eddie crashed into the sea and was lost. Fortunately, Eddie was able to swim home to Al. Al and Eddie were happy to return home.



*Luke's Way of Looking*

by Nadia Wheatley and Matt Ottley

The Children's Book Council of the Year Honour Book.

Luke looks at things differently. When the teacher sees Luke's paintings, he goes ballistic! Then, one day, Luke discovers a place where he feels at home and the whole world changes. The book has vibrant, surreal images and is a fascinating exploration of a boy learning to believe in his own special individuality.

**Exploring children's response to picturebooks**

I enjoyed reading *Hey Al* to your class today. It was fun to look at the pictures and the words and to think about the story and what we thought about it.

Thank you for working with me and for doing some thinking and some drawing or writing about the story.

When we read together next week, I would like your permission to tape what we say when we explore the book together and to use your comments for my project. If you think that would be ok, you can sign on the form that you are taking home. I would also like to use some drawings or writing so you can decide if that would be ok for me to use as well.

Here is an example of how talking is used in work like mine:

Interviewer:	What exactly was in your head at that moment? Have you changed your mind from the first read?
Angus:	I don't think I really saw what the book was like. I thought it was a book for little kids.
Saul:	Now we have read it, I think it was quite good. But when I first saw it I thought it would be a boring book.
Angus:	I couldn't see the pictures properly from where I was sitting. So I didn't know what it was about except for the words.
Interviewer:	Now you have had a chance to see the pictures your opinion has changed?
Saul:	Yes. They seem to bring out the story.

From Arizpe & Styles, 2003 p. 162.

I have also asked your parents for their permission. They might ask you about what we did today. You can show them the drawing or writing you did and tell them about the book I used.

I look forward to working with you.

Christine Braid

**Exploring children's responses to picturebooks**

Today in class, Christine Braid read to us.

.....

.....

.....

She showed us the special way picturebooks work, with the pictures telling one piece of the story and the words telling another piece of the story. When we read a picturebook our job is to put the pieces together and think what the story is about. This is a special sort of reading and thinking.

After she read us the story, we talked about what we noticed, what we thought, and what we wondered.

I notice:

I think:

I wonder:

Christine is coming back next week to read to us in small groups. We will talk about the book and do some drawing or writing afterwards.

[Massey University letterhead]

**Exploring children's responses to picturebooks**

**Consent form: parent/caregiver and child**

We have read the information sheet and understand that we can ask for further details from Christine Braid if we wish.

We understand that we can withdraw permission at any time.

We understand that the children's names and the name of the school will NOT be communicated in any materials and that the materials gathered will be used for the thesis and for academic conferences or publications only.

Child's name .....

We give permission for the following responses to be used in the thesis (please tick):

Spoken..... writing..... drawings.....

**Parent/caregiver:**

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

**Child:**

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please use the name ..... for my responses.

## Appendix G Letter to families giving some feedback

### A thank you and a summary of the research work

This is a note to thank you for agreeing to let your child participate in my research around children's books and how children think and explore with these books.

#### What we did

I read the whole class a book called *Hey, AI* by Arthur Yorinks and Richard Eglielski. In that book we had a look and a think about how the artist used special techniques to tell their part of the story and how this fitted in with but also added to what the author had written.

Two weeks later I returned and read to children in small groups. We read the story *Luke's way of looking* by Nadia Wheatley and Matt Ottley. We looked carefully at each page and discussed as a group all the things we noticed.

#### A summary of the story

In the story, Luke is a school boy who feels different and a bit alone at school. His teacher yells at him and tells him his paintings are bad. Then one day Luke goes to an art gallery and there he finds that many of the art works are similar to paintings he has done and that his way of looking at the world is not so strange after all. He feels at home and also after that he feels better at school and better about his artwork.

#### A summary of the artwork

This is a book where the artist definitely brings a lot of message to the story. We looked at how COLOUR and LIGHT and SYMBOL and FRAME and MOVEMENT and SIZE were used in the pictures and what we thought this might mean. The pages started off dull in colour when Luke felt bad about school, then slowly more colour was added as Luke started to feel better about himself. At the start of the story, the teacher in the book looked very big and his shadow was dark and spooky. By the end, the teacher looked a normal size and his shadow looked like angel wings attached to Luke's shadow. There were images of birds that made us think about how Luke was feeling in the art gallery ... a bit like he wanted to fly.

#### In appreciation

I have copied the cover of the book for the children as a thank you card and they might tell you some of the things they noticed. On the other side of this page, I have written some of the things the children said so you can see the type of thinking and exploring they were doing together.

***Once again, many thanks for allowing me to audio record the children in groups so I could then gather their ideas. This gives me the chance to look at what we can learn about how children engage with and think about books like this. I will continue to work with their thinking as I write up my thesis report.***

Kind regards

Christine Braid

### **What the children said**

The children all listened to and discussed the book really well. I have a lot of good information for my thesis research. I have found out more about how children of this age can think and talk about pictures and words in a story and how they build on what others in the group say to help them think through their own ideas.

#### **Here is an example of some of the things the children said:**

- He's doing a painting and it's blending in...and he's changing stuff
- You can see it but he sees things differently than they really are
- It's Luke's way of looking...it's how he sees the world
- He paints the way he sees
- You can tell that guy's getting angry because he's coloured differently
- See I told you he was getting angry...look at his shadow
- When he's painting, his hand gets more colour in it
- He paints what he sees and he paints what he thinks
- I know...when he's happy he gets more colour; when he's sad his colour goes
- He's turning on fire so he's fire-y angry
- It's red and red's a sign for anger and love
- (The art gallery painting)...it's like him; like he sees things differently
- He's climbing into happiness because see his foot is stepping into it
- He's probably saying he's free he's free
- The art gallery is making him fly
- The shadow used to always look like it was grabbing him and now it just stands there
- Like it's the same but he's made it more creative
- On the cover there's more straight lines than when he gets back to school
- That's how he wants the world to look
- On the first page it was all black and white and now it's all coloured except for him...because he's an evil person
- It's like the painting's going into him and he's all coloured
- It's like that other book, Hey Al, with all the dark then the colour
- Before he must've felt he was all alone and he was the only one who could paint like that but when he came here...
- He created the world in his mind
- I just noticed that famous artists do weird paintings like this
- Colour is starting to take over
- It's like he's the only one who can see the colour

***Good looking; good thinking.***

If you would like any more information please contact me (Christine Braid) at email;  
\_\_\_\_\_ or you can contact my supervisor, Brian Finch, at email:  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix H Letter seeking permission for use of images



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
TE KUPENGA O TE MĀTAURANGA

10 February, 2012

Dear Matt,

I am applying for permission to use some images from *Luke's Way of Looking* for a Master's of Education thesis at this university. The thesis title is *Exploring children's responses to a picturebook during an interactive reading session*.

If you are not the appropriate person to be granting permission over the use of this title could you please refer us on to the correct body.

For the research, the book was used with nine and ten year old children in a New Zealand classroom. The thesis will report on their responses to the words and illustrations as the book was read and discussed. For the purpose of the thesis report and any associated conferences from this work, we seek permission to use some of the images in *Luke's Way of Looking* to illustrate the academic discussion and commentary on the children's responses. A statement acknowledging any permission granted by you would be included.

The pictures would be used in a print, but unpublished, version of the thesis (approx 30,000 words) which will be available for borrowing from University library. It will not be published or sold. In disseminating the results of the research permission is sought to use the same illustrations in professional teacher or academic conferences reporting on the findings about children's responses. Presentations would not normally be printed in hard copy, but shown through PowerPoint™ and would usually use a small selection of images with examples of the children's interpretations. Explicit acknowledgement of permission, if granted, would be included in the presentation. Could you also consider allowing use of one or two images in any potential academic or professional periodical article (usually around 4000 words) reporting on the research?

The preliminary results show that the children engaged closely with the illustrations and made significant meanings, connections with their own experience and connections across the book. These findings will be significant in encouraging teachers to use picturebooks to stimulate thinking.

The use of images from this great book will make the thesis more readable and engaging. We are happy to talk with you to explain further how the images would supplement the academic commentary or to provide sample pages to illustrate this.

Thank you for considering this request,

Christine Braid, BEd, PGDipEd  
Master of Education student

[c.braid@massey.ac.nz](mailto:c.braid@massey.ac.nz)

Brian Finch, MA, EdD  
Senior Lecturer in Literacy  
Supervisor

[b.t.finch@massey.ac.nz](mailto:b.t.finch@massey.ac.nz)

Te Kūnenga  
ki Pūrehuroa

School of Educational Studies  
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 F +64 6 351 3385 [www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix I Permission for images from illustrator

From: info@mattottley.com [info@mattottley.com]

Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 1:47 PM

To: Braid, Christine

Subject: Re: seeking permission to use images

Dear Christine,

Thank you for emailing me. I'm delighted that you have chosen to refer to Luke's Way of Looking in your master's thesis. Please take this email as permission for the use of any or all of the illustrations from Luke's Way of Looking.

Thanks for asking Christine. The book is about to be republished in the Walker Australian Classics series, so it's nice to know that people are still reading and using the book.

Good luck with your thesis.

Regards,  
Matt Ottley

## Appendix J Selection of responses that match with illustrator's comments

Children's responses	Illustrator's commentary on work
<b>Pencil lines</b>	Specific choosing of technique
<b>Lines disappearing</b>	Change in technique as story progresses
<b>Curve lines in clouds, clock</b>	Reminiscent of Van Gogh Surrealists Loose flowing style versus rigid
<b>Bird on bike</b>	Inspired by Dr Seuss
<b>Bird at window</b>	Luke's spirit flying away
<b>Squeezing the bird</b>	Luke's spirit being crushed
<b>Emu on toilet</b>	Physical survival Enlightenment Humour
<b>Luke is looking at it</b>	Luke's gaze is towards but not quite at the angel
<b>Mr Barraclough's shadow makes Luke into an angel</b>	Mr Bs shadow makes Luke into an angel
<b>Luke swinging; wings or angel shadow</b>	Luke finding the angel within
<b>Phoenix, gargoyles</b>	Whole world freeing up for Luke
<b>Luke is facing the same way as the painting, except his hand is open and the painting is holding a bird</b>	Pose of Luke is the same as the panting except for the squeezing of the bird. This refers to Mr. Barracolough squeezing the young Luke's spirit.
<b>Minotaur; bull with human hand</b>	Hand welcoming Luke into the art gallery; minotaur and labyrinth: entering a world from which there is no going back
<b>Mirror</b>	Left brain right brain thinking; worlds merging for Luke
Children (2012)	(Ottley, 2001)

Figure A 1 Comparing children's responses to the illustrator's purpose

Teacher role	Example from this research
<b>Reader</b>	<i>Ok. I'll read it and see if we're right</i>
<b>Manager and encourager</b>	<i>Let's have a look at what we see on the cover...anything there that you want to comment on</i>
<b>Clarifier or prober</b>	J: I know why that is like this; I think that he created the world in his mind; cos you can see that roof it's a tail A: it's all colourful (in the painting); Res: so he created it in his mind... and it's not really like that?
<b>Fellow wonderer or speculator</b>	J: and there's wings Res: ahhh what would those wings be for... H: A butterfly Res: so could this be something to do with a butterfly here? Cos that's like... J: what's this scribble? Res: it's like wire...oh it IS a bird; it's like his beak is wired up; oh maybe that is like Luke and how he feels; like he's all wired up H: oh and he can't talk A: and he says nothing Res: I'd never have thought about that before. You guys helped me see things I haven't noticed before
<b>Extender or refiner</b>	Granny glasses Res: when have you noticed those glasses before? J: No (turns back pages) his teacher Res: his teacher has those glasses? I will tell you the name it says down here...it says this was painted by Clarra Bough Who's that? Res: remember his name was Barraclough and this name is Clarra Bough mmmmmm...ohhhh and we've got his glasses here J: It's him; he drew it