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M is for Metafiction: Using Metafictive Picture Books to Facilitate Emergent Literacy Goals

Susan Hendler Lederer, PhD, CCC-SLP

Moderated by:
Amy Hansen, MA, CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, SpeechPathology.com

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M is for Metafiction: Using Metafictive Picture Books to Facilitate Emergent Literacy Goals

Susan Hendler Lederer, PhD, CCC-SLP
Toni Abruzzino, MS, CFY
Adelphi University
11/1/18
Learner Outcomes

As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

- Define metafiction.

- Identify at least three different characteristics of metafictive picture books.

- Describe how to use at least one metafictive picture book in therapy to facilitate one or more emergent literacy skills

Shared Book Reading


- Supports language and literacy goals for children with language delays (Krashner, 1991; Ratner, Parker, & Gardner, 1993; Whitehurst et al., 1998)
Emergent Literacy Skills

Abilities of children (birth-5) that predict reading and writing development

Emergent Literacy Skills

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge

National Early Literacy Panel (2008)
FOCUS QUESTION

How do **YOU** choose books to facilitate emergent literacy skills?

Lets do a poll!

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**How do professionals choose picture books?**

- **RESEARCH**
  - PS: At random (Damber, 2015)
  - SLPs: Children’s interests and classroom themes (Ukrainetz & Trujillo, 1999)
  - SLPs: Complexity of vocabulary, syntax, and story structure (Schwarz et al., 2015)
  - TEACHERS, PARENTS, LIBRARIANS: Salient Print (e.g., font color, background color, font and letter size) (Tremain, Rosales, & Kessler, 2016)
  - Genre (e.g., narratives, expository texts, wordless picture books) (e.g., Breet-Smith, Olzawski, Swoboda, Guo, & Prenkeville, 2017; Knudsen-Lindauer, 1988)

- **EXPERTISE**
  - Guided by goals (e.g. Rhyming books for phonological awareness goals; ABC books for alliteration goals)
  - Interactive (e.g., lift the flap, repetitive refrains, Press Here)
Let’s consider...

Metafiction

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**What is “Meta”?**

- Ancient Greek word “beyond”
- Meta skills (i.e., metalinguistics, metapragmatics, metacognition) help children access language for academic and social success (Wolter & Timler, 2014)
  - Metalinguistics: thinking and talking about language
  - Metapragmatics: thinking and talking about social interactions
  - Metacognition: thinking and talking about thinking
What is Metafiction?

“Fiction that draws attention to its status as an artefact”

(Waugh, 1984, p. 2)

Metafictive Devices

- Nonlinear plot
- Interconnected stories within stories
- Pastiche (imitating another author/artist)
- Parody
- Indeterminacy (gaps in the story for reader to decide)
- Multiple narrators/character focalizers
- Directly addresses the reader

Pantaleo (2011)
Metafiction & Emergent Literacy Skills

Metafiction & Oral Language: Literacy Vocabulary

- Word knowledge
  (National Reading Panel, 2000)
- Books talk about:
  - Book concepts (e.g., title, author, illustrator)
  - Metalinguistic (e.g., letter, syllable, word, sentence)
  - Literacy socialization (e.g., read, write, book)
  - Literacy artifacts (e.g., glasses, typewriter)
- Help! We Need A Title! (Tullet, 2013)
Help! We Need A Title! (Tullet, 2013)

Metafiction & Oral Language: Story Comprehension/Narratives

- “Ability to define, describe, and sequence events and objects” (Dickinson & McCabe, 1991; Donald, 1991, p. 91)
- Books talk about:
  - Telling a story
  - Story problem(s) and solution(s)
- We’re in the Wrong Book (Byrne, 2015)
Metafiction & Oral Language: Critical Thinking

- Intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully analyzing and conceptualizing information (National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 1987)
- Devices make children critical thinkers (Pantaleo, 2004)
  - Interconnected stories within stories - activate knowledge about other stories
  - Indeterminacy - fill in gaps and co-create the story
  - Directly addresses the reader - be aware of role as a reader
- Open Very Carefully: A Book with Bite (Bromley, 2013)
Open Very Carefully: A Book with Bite (Bromley, 2013)

Metafiction & Print Awareness

- Ability to recognize the function and form of print and relationship between written and oral language (Justice & Ezell, 2000)
- Books talk about (Treiman, Rosales, & Kessler, 2016):
  - Letters & written words
  - Speech bubbles
  - Numbers
- We Are in a Book! (Willems, 2010)
We Are in a Book!  
(Willems, 2010)

Metafiction & Alphabet Knowledge

- Knowledge of names and sounds associated with print letters  
  (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008)
- Alphabet books nurture this skill  
  (Evans, Saint-Aubin, & Landry, 2009)
- Books talk about:
  - The Alphabet/ABCS
  - Letter shapes and sound correspondences
- Z is for Moose (Bingham, 2012)
  - Pokes fun of traditional ABC book
**Z is for Moose**  
*(Bingham, 2012)*

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**Metafiction & Phonological Awareness**

- Ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze auditory aspects of spoken language (i.e., words, syllables, phonemes) *(National Early Literacy Panel, 2008)*
- Books talk about:
  - Rhyming
  - Alliteration
- *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* *(Thomas, 2009)*
Rhyming Dust Bunnies (Thomas, 2009)

Benefits of Metafiction

- Promotes higher level thinking (Pantaleo, 2014)
- Active participants - critically analyze, construct and deconstruct texts (Pantaleo, 2004)
- Develops metafictive awareness (Pantaleo, 2005)
- Ambiguity and complexity promotes reading growth and success (Pantaleo, 2005)
- Pleasurable and rich reading experience (Pantaleo, 2005)
Challenges of Metafiction: All children

- Too complex and sophisticated (Goldstone, 1998)
- Requires children to access multiple representations and meanings/make connections between books (Anstey, 2002)

Challenges of Metafiction: Our kids

- General meta-level challenges (Adams, Lockton, & Collins, 2018; Webster & Plante, 1998)
- Issues with literal and inferential language (van Kleeck, Vander Woude, & Hemmett, 2006)
- Complex vocabulary is problematic for children with weak processing skills (Storkel et al., 2017)
- Adults need to mediate and provide explicit instruction (Storkel et al., 2017)
Bet we can make you read!

“The End”