

Unlocking a literary experience through sensory engagement with interactive digital picture books

The presentation will share findings relevant to educators from my recently completed PhD study which investigated the potential for literary experiences from interactive digital picture books. The research found sensory engagement and participation in quality interactive digital narratives can light the way for access to literature and promote critical thinking in new and illuminating ways.

The study used the research question ‘In what ways can interactive digital picture books prompt an aesthetic literary experience?’ to investigate reader access to literature from three case studies including virtual reality picture book experiences; augmented reality picture books; and the experience of picture book apps. The study was conducted using qualitative case study methodology. Participant groups included creators; academics; judges of picture book awards; interactive media experts; and young people aged 13 to 15 years of age. Transactional Theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Radical Change (Dresang, 1999) informed the study methodology. However, during data analysis it became clear that the perspective of sensory literacies (Mills, 2015) was critical to the understanding of the reader experience of picture books in interactive form. The research builds on the concepts of sensory literacies to show how multisensory reader participation in interactive picture books can facilitate an aesthetic literary experience.

The research presentation will outline the qualities of interactive digital picture books of the three case studies and discuss the implications and opportunities for their use within an education setting. The findings of the research show how readers can potentially have access to imaginative, multilayered narratives rich in imagery and relevant to how they interact with the world in interactive form. In this way interactive digital picture books can broaden the options for access to a literary experience for readers in a digital age.

Dresang, E. T. (1999). *Radical change : books for youth in a digital age* [Book]. New York : H.W. Wilson Co., 1999.

Mills, K. (2015). *Literacy Theories for the Digital Age : Social, Critical, Multimodal, Spatial, Material and Sensory Lenses*. Multilingual Matters.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem : the transactional theory of the literary work* [Book]. Carbondale : Southern Illinois University Press, ©1978.