

A Whole Book Approach to Reading Picture Books *with* Children

Presented by Megan Dowd Lambert

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The Whole Book Approach was developed by Megan Dowd Lambert in association with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. As you learn about this dialogic approach to reading *with* children, rather than reading *to* children, consider how design and production elements contribute to your own engagement with the picture book as a visual art form.

Layout and Trim Size

- Portrait (vertical)
- Landscape (horizontal)
- Square
- Shaped

Jackets and Covers

- Wrap-around art vs. dual-image jackets
- Display type
- Contrasting case cover art
- Embossed, foil-stamped, blind-stamped cloth covers

Endpapers

- Single color
- illustrated
- motif
- design

Front Matter and Back Matter

- Frontispiece
- ½ title page; title page
- Dedication and copyright pages

Gutters and Page Layout

- Verso (left)
- Recto (right)
- Double-page spread
- Framing
- Page-turners
- Simultaneous succession and panels

Typography

- Typeface vs. font
- Placement
- Knock-out type
- Speech balloons and intraiconic text

How to lead WBA Storytimes:

Shift your intent as a storytime leader from thinking about the storytime as performance to thinking about it as discussion.

Work to create an environment in which everyone is welcome to speak, and look for and use children's non-verbal engagement with the picture book.

Ask Visual Thinking Strategies (www.vtshome.org) questions and other open-ended questions with embedded design and production terminology to support an inquiry-based engagement with art, design and text:

- *What's going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that?*
- *What more can we find?*
- *Why do you think this book is portrait and this one is landscape?*
- *Can you make a color connection between the jacket art and the endpaper color?*
- *Watch how the pictures use the gutter and tell me what you think about these choices.*
- *Why do you think this book is so tiny and this book is so big?*
- *Watch the use of any frames—what happens to them? Why is this important in the story?*
- *How do words and pictures work together in this book? What do pictures tell you that words do not?*

Paraphrase and link responses to check for clarity, to demonstrate active listening, and to embed art, design and literature-related vocabulary into the reading

Point to parts of the picture and book that are referenced in responses in order to help keep everyone's eyes on the book itself

Use "1-2-3 page turns" and "eyes on art" to keep your group working together.

Let children's spontaneous questions, responses, and reactions drive your discussion.

Turn aberrant readings over to children to puzzle out.

Keep it playful!

Peruse Megan’s website for more Whole Book Approach resources and contact her with questions and thoughts: megan@megandowlambert.com. Please reach out to share your own stories about using the Whole Book Approach in your storytime practice.

On Twitter: @MDowdLambert

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Megan Dowd Lambert earned her BA at Smith College and her MA in Children’s Literature at Simmons College, where she is now a Senior Lecturer in Children’s Literature. She is the author of *Reading Picture Books with Children: How to Shake Up Storytime and Get Kids Talking About What They See* (Charlesbridge 2015), which introduces the Whole Book Approach to storytime that she developed in association with the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. In 2009 she was named a Literacy Champion by Mass Literacy, and she has served on the 2009 Geisel, 2011 Caldecott, and the 2012 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Committees.

Megan won a 2016 Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Honor for her first picture book, *A Crow of His Own*, illustrated by David Hyde Costello (Charlesbridge 2015). Her second picture book, *Real Sisters Pretend*, illustrated by Nicole Tadgell (Tilbury House) was published in 2016 and was named a 2017 Notable Social Studies Trade Book by the National Council for the Social Studies and the Children’s Book Council.

Charlesbridge will publish *A Kid of Their Own*, a sequel to *A Crow of His Own*, in 2019 when they will also publish the first in a planned series of early readers about best friends, Jane and June. Megan reviews and writes for *Kirkus Reviews* and *The Horn Book* and is a Staff Blogger for [Embrace Race: A Community about Race and Kids](#). She lives with her family, including seven children ages 0-21, in western Massachusetts.

