THE RESPONSES OF FIFTH GRADERS TO JAPANESE PICTORIAL TEXTS

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN LANGUAGE, READING AND CULTURE

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my friends Joy Graves and J. Ronald Hennings for inviting me to Cañon Elementary School in Arizona in 2008. I have had a great time working with the students, teachers, and parents there. I especially appreciate Ms. Hall and her fifth-graders, who welcomed the opportunity to work with me and help me complete my dissertation. Thank you for sharing your ideas, thoughts, and funds of knowledge with me.

I would also like to thank my professors at the University of Arizona, Drs. Kathy G. Short, Perry Gilmore, J. David Betts, Luis C. Moll, Carol A. Evans, Patricia L. Anders, Robert C. Wortman, David B. Yaden, Norma E. Gonzalez, and Ken and Yetta Goodman. Your knowledge and guidance helped me to develop as a learner, researcher, and scholar. I want to give special thanks to Dr. Eliane B. Rubinstein-Avila for her advice, feedback, and encouragement at a great brewed coffee shop in Tucson. I also appreciate Dr. Richard Ruiz's insightful questions and feedback. They always pushed me to move forward.

My warmest thanks also go to my mentor and dear friend, Dr. Yoo Kyung Sung at the University of New Mexico. She always showed me where to look. I enjoyed wonderful conversations with her over coffee, beer, fresh oysters, and locally produced food during national and international conferences. It is always enjoyable to travel with her and her husband, Yong Soo Park.

My colleagues and study group members, Erin L MacKinney, Cathy Amanti, Shireen Keyl, Luz Jimenez, Heidi Bacon, Ke Huang, and Hee Young Kim, have been an integral part of my doctorate program. Thanks to all of you for sharing ideas and thoughts.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, friends, and cats, Shino and Oribe. My dad and mom, thanks for understanding me and supporting my studying abroad in the United States. I appreciate your encouraging me even when you were far away in Japan. Yuka, my sister, thanks for listening to my stories. Amanda and Moryn Holmes, thanks for being with me with wonderful smiles during the last semester of my doctorate program in Tucson. Shino and Oribe, thanks for keeping me company as I read and wrote this dissertation. Kazuma, thanks for continuing to work with me. I look forward to spending the rest of my life with you. I will keep my balance and keep moving for the next chapter of my life.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the responses of twelve fifth graders to Japanese pictorial texts— manga (Japanese comics), anime (Japanese animations), kamishibai (Japanese traditional visual storytelling), and picture books – and their connections to Japanese culture and people. This study took place Cañon Elementary School in Black Canyon City in Arizona. The guiding research questions for this study were: How do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts? and What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts?

The study drew on reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality. Data collection included participant-observation, videotaped/audiotaped classroom discussions and interviews, participants' written and artistic artifacts, ethnographic fieldnotes, and reflection journals. Results revealed that children demonstrated four types of responses including (1) analytical, (2) personal, (3) intertexual, and (4) cultural. These findings illustrate that the children actively employed their popular culture knowledge to make intertextual connections as part of meaning making from the stories. They also showed four types of cultural responses including (1) ethnocentrism, (2) understanding and acceptance, (3) respect and appreciation and valuing, and (4) change. This study makes a unique contribution to reader response as it examines American children's cultural understandings and literary responses to Japanese pictorial texts (manga, anime, kamishibai, and picture books).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this modern age, various graphic forms of texts, such as comics, graphic novels, manga, and anime, have exploded in popularity in the United States (Allen, 2006; Op de Beeck, 2004; Greene & Kohler, 2012; Halsall, 2010; Mullis, 2014; Toku, 2001; Wolk, 2001). Publishing companies that work in the children's market now produce many types of graphic media to make them more available to children and adolescents. Despite this, teachers, librarians and parents often tend to dismiss the mediums as "not legitimate art or literature" (Williams, 2008, p. 14), and as contributing to children's short attention spans and lack of creativity (Gee, 2004; Kenway & Bullen, 2001).

In the meantime, literacy researchers are focusing on the ways children and youth use and engage with a range of popular culture pictorial texts. A growing number of scholars suggest that popular media should be treated "as a resource" (Ruiz, 1984, p. 156) rather than "as a problem" (p. 166) for literacy development, critical inquiry, and cultural understanding (Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Bakis, 2012; Betts, 2007; Botzakis, 2009; Chandler-Olcott, 2008; Chang, 2011; Gee, 2004; Gilmore, 1986; Hammond, 2009; Monnin, 2008, 2010; Sanford & Madill, 2007; Lacasa Martinez & Mendez, 2008; Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006).

While the major focus has been placed on students' responses to graphic novels, comics and video games, their responses to manga, anime, and kamishibai have been neglected in literacy studies even though these texts, especially manga and anime, have swept North America for the past decade. According to Fingeroth (2008), manga sales were estimated to gross $200 million a year in 2008, accounting for two-thirds of the

graphic novels market. Kevin Hamric (2014), a director of sales and marketing at Viz media, a manga and anime entertainment company in the U.S., has reported that manga and anime sales in North America are still up in 2014. As for kamishibai, Kamishibai for Kids, a kamishibai publishing company in the United States, has produced translated English kamishibai to American audiences and actively promoted it in educational settings since 1992. Recently many educators have begun to pay great attention to this unique educational media and explored the role of this media in students' literacy development and cultural studies (Lee, 2003; Clouet, 2005; Geire, 2006).

Despite the popularity of manga and anime among young people as well as kamishibai in educational fields, few studies focus on investigating American students' responses to these texts. In addition, the voices of children are largely absent from studies, and there is lack of instructional models using manga, anime, and kamishibai (Japanese pictorial texts) in classroom contexts in the United States. This study addresses this lack of the research by investigating fifth graders' meaning making from Japanese pictorial texts in the classroom setting.

Purpose Statement

In this study, I explore how children respond to Japanese pictorial texts and what understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts. In order to examine their experiences with the texts, this study aims to describe fifth graders' responses, and to identify and describe factors that impact and shape their meaning making from the texts.

Research Questions

In order to understand children's responses to Japanese pictorial texts, my study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts?
    - What are the elements/patterns of their responses?
    - What knowledge or experiences do they draw on in order to make sense of the texts?
2. What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts?

Definition of Terms

The following terms and their definitions are used in this study:

Text

The term "text" in this study refers to "any chunk of meaning that has unity and can be shared with others" (Short & Kauffman, 2004, p. 50).

Text Sets

Text Sets is a strategy that highlights intertextuality, facilitating the process of searching for connections and understandings of stories (Short, Harste, Burke, & Harste, 1996).

Japanese Pictorial Texts

Japanese pictorial texts include manga, anime, kamishibai, and picture books.

Manga

Manga (mah-n-gah), which literally translates to "whimsical pictures," are comic books originally published in Japan. Recent English-translated manga have preserved the

original Japanese format: the pages are turned left-to-right, frames on a page start at the top right and read from the top right across and down to the bottom left on the page.

Anime

Anime (ah-nee-may) is not synonymous with manga. It simply stands for animation originating in Japan. Manga and anime have sometimes gone hand-in-hand: manga is published first, and then anime is reproduced based on manga stories and aired on TV.

Kamishibai

Kamishibai (ka-mee-she-bye) is a Japanese traditional form of visual storytelling that literally means paper (kami) play at a theater (shibai). Unlike picture books in which illustrations and texts are printed on the same pages, kamishibai illustrations are printed on the front of the storyboard, and on the back of the board is the text to be read. A kamishibai audience looks only at the illustrations while a storyteller reads the text.

Rationale for the Study

My interest in the inquiry into Japanese pictorial texts stemmed from my own personal experiences. Since I was a little child, those media have been major sources of my literacy development, learning about the world, and experiences of multiple cultures by bridging geographical and cultural gaps. At home and school, on a daily basis, I was fascinated with discussions about manga and anime stories with topics ranging from family life and romance to wars and social issues such as age and gender discrimination. I also enjoyed Japanese folktales and well-known global fairytales through kamishibai. I gained knowledge about health, food, and even traffic rules through it. Hence, manga, anime, and kamishibai have offered me ideas on how to think, act, and reflect upon given

situations; which is to say, the media gave me opportunities to learn the world through posing problems relating to myself "in the world and with the world" (Freire, 2000, p. 81) and looking at "the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 83).

As the popularity of manga and anime, and more recently kamishibai, has boomed in the United States, those mediums have begun to be create interest as an academic subject. In 2005, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) called for educators and researchers to acknowledge graphic novels, comics, and manga for the development of multiple literacies skills. In addition to NCTE, Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila (2006), Choo (2008), Grigsby (1998), Ruble and Lysne (2010), Geier (2006), and Clouet (2005) have encouraged educators to become well aware of students' engagement with the texts, and embrace and affirm them as an educational tool to develop critical thinking skills and intercultural understanding.

Discussions regarding Japanese pictorial texts are dominated by scholars in the field of cultural studies (Kinsella, 2000; Johnson-Woods, 2010; Macwilliams, 2008; Drazen, 2003; Yamamoto, 2000), comparative literature studies (Bolton, Csicsery-Ronay, Tasumi, 2007), genre studies (Choo, 2008; Lent, 1999; Ogi, 2003), content analysis (Allen & Ingulsrud, 2009; Berndt & Kummerling-Meibauer, 2013; Natsume, 1997; Ueno, 2006; Grigsby, 1998; Paatela-Nieminen, 2008), and students' literacy development (Fukunaga, 2006; Lee, 2003; McGowan, 2010). Unfortunately, few studies have focused on the role of the media in meaning-making among children and youth (Frey & Fisher, 2004; Hammond, 2009; Moeller, 2011; Allen & Ingulsrud, 2003). In particular, children's voices about these media have been limited. Also lacking in our knowledge

base are qualitative studies on a broader range of children's literary interpretations to these texts in a classroom context. Little is known about the factors that potentially inform or shape their responses. Furthermore, despite an increased awareness of the texts among educators, there have been few instructional models of using the texts in the classroom (Lapp, Wolsey, Fisher, & Frey, 2012). Given that Japanese pictorial texts are the fastest growing popular media among children as well as in educational fields, and given that recent educational research literature has underscored the need to inquire and understand the role of the mediums in which children engage, I chose to focus my inquiry on children's responses and meaning making from Japanese pictorial texts.

This study contributes to ongoing scholarly work that draws on reader response theories, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality. By examining how children respond to Japanese pictorial texts, the present research sheds light on children's literary understanding of Japanese pictorial texts. Additionally, this study contributes to the expansion of reader response theory at the cultural level: readers' childhood cultures are an important resource, which they utilize when interpreting and constructing meaning from a text.

On the pedagogical level, this study provides insight into the ways educators use these texts in classroom settings with elementary students. These insights include meaningful ways to use the texts across the curriculum to further intercultural learning.

What are Japanese pictorial texts?

In this section, I provide some background and define the terms of Japanese pictorial texts including manga, anime, and kamishibai. It is important to distinguish

them because manga and anime look the same and some Western audiences are likely to confuse and interchange these terminologies.

Manga

Manga (mah-n-gah) literally translates to "whimsical pictures" and are Japanese comic books. There are some features of manga in terms of reading direction, visuals, characterizations, and story themes (Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Choo, 2009; Downey, 2009; Goldsmith, 2005).

Features of manga. Recent translated manga have been preserved the original Japanese order: the pages are turned left-to-right, frames on a page start at the top right and read from the top right across and down to the bottom left on the page. Dialogues are laid-out horizontally to read left to right, just like English comic books. As for visual aspects, manga often include dynamic cinematic elements such as close-ups, high angles, flashbacks, flash-forwards, and so on (see Figure 1.1 &1.2), influenced by Western films in the 1940s. Physical drawings of manga characters are distinctive, such as big eyes and unique emotional symbols. For example, a sad manga character looks normal but has some drops of sweat that appear on his/her face or head in order to show feelings of sadness (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.1: Close-ups presented in *銀のスプーン (Silver Spoon)* (p. 17).

Figure 1.2: The girl's flashback presented in *銀のスプーン (Silver Spoon)* (p. 25).

Figure 1.3: Drops of sweat appear on the girl's head that shows her hesitation presented in *銀のスプーン (Silver Spoon)* (p. 39).

Characterization is one of the real hallmarks of manga (Alvermann & Heron, 2001). A manga storyline is complicated and characterization is always not clear, as opposed to the typical character dichotomy of "good vs. evil" in American comic stories. Lastly, manga are generally divided into five spheres according to the target audiences' gender and age: *shonen* (boys') manga, *shojo* (girls') manga, *seinen* (adult men's) manga, *young rediisu komikku* (women's), and *jido* (children's) manga (Natsume & Takeuchi, 2009). The stories involve deeper and complex themes about human nature, philosophical concerns, politics, economics, and people's everyday concerns including jobs, schools, friendships, and romance.

A brief history of manga. Japan has a long tradition of sequential arts, dating back to the Middle Ages when Bishop Toba, a Buddhist priest, drew caricatures of his fellow priests (Schodt, 1996). It has been considered a forerunner of manga. The word "manga" was coined by the artist Katsushika Hokusai in the nineteenth century (Shimizu, 1991). He used "manga" to describe his collections of woodblock-printed drawing *ukiyo-e*, depicting urban life and culture along with dynamic illustrations (Forrer, 2010).

In the 1940s, Western culture, including films and comics, was brought into Japan. Osamu Tezuka, a renowned Japanese manga artist, received a great influence by such Western films, and he began to involve Western cinematic effects in his work, eventually developing the form of manga. In the late 1950s, as modern technology was growing, manga, as well as magazines and animations, became a form of central mass entertainment in Japan (Natsume & Takeuchi, 2009). A collection of manga began to be produced in weekly, biweekly, or monthly form in magazines. Successful manga titles were published in books, and others were adapted into anime. Even to this day, many manga are first published in magazines and then released as books. In 2014 manga and magazines have occupied one-third of published materials of the Japanese publication industry (Dentsu Innovation Institute, 2014).

Anime

Anime (ah-nee-may) is not synonymous with manga. It simply stands for animation originating in Japan. Just as magna, anime includes dynamic cinematic effect, distinctive visual conventions, and complex characterizations. In addition to those elements, the plot is always unpredictable with a long narrative structure, as compared to American animations. A story is told over a long series and audiences can never be sure

what the ending will be. It is not unusual for a protagonist to die or to fail at what they try to do. Like manga, anime also includes the following categories; boys', girls' and children's and adults', with a range of themes including politics, economics, and people's daily life.

Kamishibai

Kamishibai shares a similar attribute with picture books in that they have both illustrations and texts. However, kamishibai means paper (*kami*) play at a theater (*shibai*). This theatrical setting makes this traditional Japanese storytelling a little different from the picture books in terms of its entity, a form of a story panel, techniques of manipulating panels, and theatrical voice and sound effects. Kamishibai is composed of five elements: a storyteller, a bicycle, a wooden-framework, story panels, and music instruments including percussions, strings and winds (see Figure 1.4). The teller usually wears a dark colored outfit, which is typical clothing of a kamishibai performer, as well as other performers at theaters in Japan. The bicycle is used for the teller's transportation in addition to a stage, setting the framework on it during a performance. The story panels are placed in the wooden framework, and the music instruments are played by the teller during a story time.

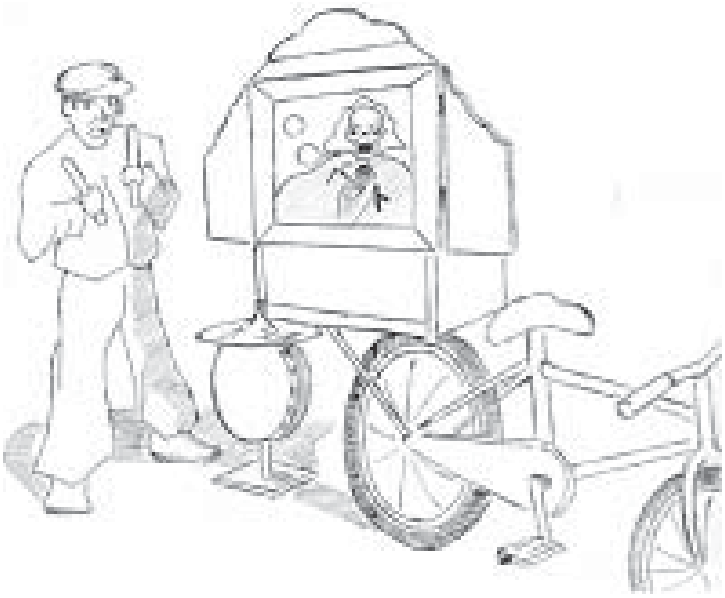


Figure 1.4: Kamishibai performance on the side of street.

Story panels. In general, kamishibai are larger than the average picture book, the standard size is 15”x11” (26.6×38.2cm). Most kamishibai stories consist of 12 to 16 sturdy story panels. Unlike picture books in which readers see illustrations and texts at the same time, a kamishibai audience looks at only illustrations while a storyteller reads texts. Namely, pictures are printed on the front of the panel, and on the back of the panel are texts to be read by a teller. Compared to the illustrations in the picture books, kamishibai illustrations are characterized as drawing main characters with bold and simple outlines as in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Kamishibai illustration of *Hats for the Jizos* (No. 3).

Note. The illustration is what the audience is watching and highlights the main character against a simple background. From the kamishibai story "Hats for Jizos" (No. 3), written by Miyoko Matsutani, and illustrated by Fumio Matsuya.

Techniques of manipulating story panels. There are some techniques in using story panels to enhance cinematic effects for kamishibai stories, such as manipulating a pace of sliding the panels slowly, quickly, or even stopping in the middle (Kata & Oga, 1978). A story is theatrically presented in a narrative form in the rhythmic seven-and-five syllable meter. Illustrated characters' feelings and atmosphere of scenes are described by a teller's voice and music effects. For example, a storyteller changing a voice tone generates characters' emotions such as surprise, anger, fear, sympathy, joy, etc. Silence or sudden pause in the middle of speaking also creates a creepy moment. Musical

instruments such as a wooden-clapper or a drum are also utilized for creating a dramatic scene. The aesthesia information is expressed linguistically in onomatopoeia and mimetic words.

A brief history of kamishibai. Kamishibai is a purposeful sociocultural phenomenon shaped by and linked to larger social and cultural developments of Japanese society. In the 1930s, when Japan was suffering from harsh conditions as a result of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the Great Depression, kamishibai was born as a mass entertainment product that tended to the needs of the society (Yamamoto, 2000). Millions of people lost jobs because at this time. However, kamishibai offered an opportunity for them to make their living. Since the early kamishibai required little equipment—only illustrated story panels—it could be performed by anyone anywhere. Storytellers went to town to town and even devastated places to tell stories and sold penny candies to the audience. Kamishibai eventually became the only entertainment for not only children, but also for adults. It helped them to relieve their frustrations and depression from life's hardship. Later on, storytellers began to travel by bicycles carrying music instruments and story panels in wooden theatrical frameworks.

The kamishibai story themes were roughly divided into two categories: (1) *katsudo*, action and adventure, and (2) *higeki*, melodrama (Yamamoto, 2000; Matsunaga, 1940). The katsudo story was primarily for boys, and it always had a young boy protagonist as a lead character who solved crimes or fought with wild animals or devils. The higeki was a tearjerker for girls and had a girl protagonist who survived in the cruel world. The stories were important motivators in order to keep children coming back day after day; therefore, those were told in serial form. Typically, one story had around 30

episodes, and some ran from 100 to 800 episodes. Kamishibai also gained attention from teachers and parents who often used them as an educational resource at schools, homes, and churches for the development of reading and writing skills (Imai, 1988; Matsunaga, 1940).

The kamishibai popularity gradually declined due to the economic improvement and competition with modern technology in the late 1960s (Yamamoto, 2000). TV, anime, and manga replaced kamishibai and those became the new mass entertainment. Today, very few people use a wooden stage and bicycle, yet many carry story panels by hand and tell stories without a stage on the sides of the streets, schools and libraries (Ishiyama, 2008) (see Figure 1.6). The nature of kamishibai performance has changed, but it never disappeared.

Figure 1.6: Kamishibai performance at preschool in Hyogo, Japan. (2006).

Organizational Structure

In examining the nature of fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I have organized the dissertation with the following chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant theories, studies related to reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality, and research on readers' experiences with various graphic forms of texts. Chapter 3 introduces the research methodology and discusses the curriculum, and the selection criteria for the context, participants and materials. In addition, this chapter discusses the data collection, data sources, and data analysis. In chapter 4, I present and discuss the findings of this study. Lastly, chapter 5 discusses implications for practice, research, and publishers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring the responses of children to Japanese pictorial texts (manga, animations, kamishibai, and picture books) about Japanese people and culture, this study was informed by (1) reader response theory, (2) New Literacy Studies and multimodality, and (3) research on students' experiences with various graphic forms of texts. In the first section of this chapter, I examine multiple approaches to reader response theory and Brooks and Browne's grounded theory of literary understanding. In the second section, I discuss New Literacy Studies and multimodality by examining empirical research studies that investigate students' meaning making from various texts. Finally, I describe the literature related to readers' responses and literary practices with various graphic forms of texts including graphic novels, comics, manga, anime, and kamishibai.

Reader Response Theory

Unlike New Criticism, which emphasizes a text-based orientation to reading literature, reader response theory underscores a reader as an active participant in the meaning-making process with a text. New Criticism, which flourished between the 1920s and 1960s, stressed "one-way transmission of meaning from author to reader through the text" (Sipe, 2008, p. 46). That is, the reader's job is to extract meaning from the text – a process that Paulo Freire (2000) called "banking education" in which a reader is a passive object (depository) to be acted upon by a text (depositor). During the dominance of New Criticism, reader response theory emerged through the work of Louise Rosenblatt (Clifford, 1988). In contrast to New Criticism, the theory focuses more on the reader, that is, the role of the reader as well as his/her individual subjective response to the text.

Louise Rosenblatt is a pioneer of reader response theory. *Literature as Exploration* (1938) is her first book that provided a theoretical perspective that came to be the foundation for reader response theory. Based on numerous studies of students' responses to texts, she continued to develop the theory in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* in 1978. The theory is important for current literary research and pedagogical practice in the field of reading. Many research studies that explore students' meaning-making processes in reading literature rely heavily on the theoretical underpinning of reader response theory.

Given this common assumption, there is no single reader response theory. A number of reader response scholars have different attitudes and interpretations of the roles of the reader, the text, and the context. Some pay attention to the reader's text convention (Iser, 1978; Rabinowitz, 1987) and experience with the text (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995), while others increase focus on the reader's personality and psychological emotions (Holland, 1975), social factors (Fish, 1980), and cultural attitudes, beliefs, and sociocultural contexts (Beach, 1993; Bleich, 1992). In the following section, I expand on five different theoretical perspectives of reader response theory as presented by Beach (1993): "textual", "experiential", "psychological", "social", and "cultural". In addition, I explore grounded reader response theory in a "culturally situated model" offered by Brooks and Browne (2012).

Textual Theories

While giving a reader an active role, textual theorists focus on a text and an author that guides interpretation through the reader's knowledge of literary convention (Iser, 1978; Rabinowitz, 1987). Wolfgamd Iser (1978) was a textual theorist who stressed a

reader's response as invited by a text. According to Iser, one of the reader's jobs is to fill in gaps of what is not said in the text by adopting the process of a "wandering viewpoint" (p. 109) in which a reader wanders back to his/her past reading experience and unfolds knowledge of text convention. The reader fills in the gaps with past reading experience and the textual knowledge acquired from the texts he/she has read before. In this process, the reader also modifies inference and challenges initial perspective. Thus, the text continuously stimulates the reader to fill in the gaps of what the story doesn't tell by adopting the "wandering viewpoint".

Furthermore, Iser (1978) illustrated two kinds of readers: Implied Reader and Actual Reader. The Implied Reader is inclined to respond a text by adopting his/her knowledge of literary convention. By contrast, the Actual Reader may not always fill in the gaps of the text as intended. His/her socio-cultural experience also influences interpretation. That is, the Implied Reader heavily relies on textual knowledge in constructing ideas, while the Actual Reader relies not only on textual knowledge but also past experience.

Another textual theorist, Peter Rabinowitz (1987) focused on an author who shapes a reader's reading experience. Rabinowitz, in *Before Reading* (1987), argued that a reader adopts the process of "authorial reading" (p. 30) in which an author invites the reader to read a text in the author's expected way. The reader seeks what the author has in mind while reading the text, which the author rhetorically creates based on his/her assumptions of the readers' beliefs, values and knowledge of literary convention. Rabinowitz addressed that "authorial reading" occurs when the reader applies four roles: role of notice, role of significance, role of configuration, and role of coherence. The role

of notice is that a reader pays attention to the most important detail in a text. The rule of significance refers to a reader's determination of symbolical meaning in order to grasp a large meaning of details, and the role of configuration is to assemble different elements to make plot patterns consistently. Finally, the role of coherence is that a reader finds overarching themes and meanings. Thus, a reader applies the roles in order to search for an author's intentions and expectations embedded in a text.

In short, textual theorists primarily emphasize a reader's knowledge of literary convention and the role of an author. Iser's (1978) idea of filling in the gaps of unwritten parts of a text by adopting the process of "wandering viewpoint" and his conception of a reader, Implied Reader and Actual Reader, as well as Rabinowitz's (1987) "authorial reading" idea arouse dynamic interaction between a reader and a text.

Experiential Theories

The experiential perspective extends the textual theories discussed above. Experiential theorists explore a reader's process of engagement and response as an experiential experience. Louise Rosenblatt (1982, 1994, 1995) is a central scholar of the theories. Rosenblatt (1994) emphasized transaction with a "poem" (p. 12), created by a two-way process involving a reader and a text. The poem is not an object, but it happens in the transactional process between the reader and the text. The reader actively and creatively constructs the poem by adopting the "selective attention" process (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 271), considering what to pay attention to and what to select. The "selective attention" leads the reader to focus on the information in the text in order to organize the concept. It also guides the reader to pay attention to his/her feeling and thought. For example, a reader may have a lived-through experience by vicariously living in a story or

identifying with characters and getting emotionally involved by sharing feelings and conflicts in order to understand them. The lived-through experience engages the reader in making meaning with his/her own life as well as transforming the ways in which he/she thinks and understands.

In *Literature as Exploration*, (1995), Rosenblatt described the process of "selective attention" as two kinds of stances: efferent and aesthetic. In the efferent reading a reader approaches a text in order to seek evidence and result, answer a question, and abstract the information. This stance is effective in situations where a reader focuses on the facts. In the aesthetic reading the reader focuses on personal. He/she pays attention to various affective aspects such as feelings, ideas, and interests, which are evoked while reading. As Rosenblatt (1994) maintained that "there was not an opposition, a dichotomy, but a continuum between the two stances" (p. 184), these two stances are not opposites yet shape continuum transactions.

"Socio-physical setting" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 79) is one of the factors that effects a reader's response and stance. Rosenblatt (1994) addressed, "Much of our reading also is influenced by the setting, by nonlinguistic factors of which the reader is aware" (p. 78). She went on, "we must recognize that the reader brings to or adds to the nonverbal or socio-physical setting his whole past experience of life and literature" (p. 81). Rosenblatt noted that a range of social and cultural contexts, as well as past experiences and present interests or preoccupations that a reader brings into a text, influence his/her literary response and stance.

Even each reading is unique. Rosenblatt (1994) aptly noted, "A specific reader and a specific text at a specific time and place: change any of these, and there occurs a

different circuit, a different event – a different poem" (p. 14). Transactions between different readers under different circumstances with the same text produce multiple poems. A transaction between the same reader with the same text at a different time and space produces different kinds of experiences. Therefore, a reading event should be viewed as personal, social, and cultural.

In short, for experiential theories such as Rosenblatt's, reading is a transaction between a reader and a text. The theories situate the reader in an active role to construct literary understanding. Namely, the reader does not merely depend on the text but also actively take efferent or aesthetic stances in relation to the text in order to create unique poems.

Psychological Theories

In the 1960s and 1970s with the rise of psychoanalytical and cognitive psychological perspectives, some reader response scholars increased interest in a reader's personal and emotional reactions to make meaning with a text (Holland, 1975). One of the psychological reader response theorists, Norman Holland (1975) advocated psychoanalytic perspectives on a reader's response. In *5 Readers Reading* (1975) Holland stated, "All readings originate in the reader's personality" (p. 40). That is, a reader's personality shapes his/her response. Holland addressed that during reading a reader seeks "identity theme" (p. 57) that reflect his/her personality or emotion. For example, when reading concerns themes of strength and power, it may relate to the reader's gender and the influence of gender on the reader's interpretation. Different identity themes lead readers to create unique interpretations of texts. In short, Holland (1975) argued for the

influence of a reader's personality and emotion in the process of meaning-making with a text.

Social Theories

Between the 1980s and 1990s when the appearance of social constructivist, poststructuralist, feminist and cultural/media studies increased, social and cultural perspectives on transaction between a reader and a text rose. Social theorists emphasized the reader's response that associates with social role and context (Fish, 1980). Stanley Fish (1980), who is a social reader response theorist, focuses on the social context "interpretive communities" (p. 14) that influence a reader's interpretation. The "interpretive communities" including family, classroom, social clubs, and neighborhood are places where the reader belongs as a member. Within a community, a reader constructs meaning by sharing "interpretive strategies" (p. 13), which are not natural but learned, such as finding themes and conferring significances. Members of different communities have different strategies and interpretations. A single reader has a variety of interpretations since he/she belongs to several communities simultaneously. Thus, a reader's interpretation is socially constructed within and across various communities. Hence, social theorists argued that a reader socially constructs meaning by sharing "interpretive strategies" within and across the "interpretive communities" where the reader belongs as a member.

Cultural Theories

Cultural theorists consider that the meaning-making process is shaped by a range of social factors, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and socio-cultural context (Beach, 1995; Bleich, 1992). Cultural theorists such as Bleich (1992) and Beach (1995)

argued that a reader's membership in particular cultural and ethnic community influences his/her response to a text. Beach (1995) explored the responses of high school students who were in regular and advanced classes to the short story *I Go Along* (1989) by Richard Peck. The story portrays a regular class male student, Gene, who reluctantly goes on a field trip to a poetry reading that many of the advanced class students join in. Beach's students showed different approaches to the story. The regular class students perceived the poetry reading as an esoteric affair, apart from their lives. On the other hand, the students in the advanced class showed bewilderment with Gene's lack of motivation going to the poetry reading. They didn't understand why Gene didn't work hard to be a member of the advanced class. Beach claimed that the students' responses are constituted by "cultural modes" (p. 87) that are socially constructed categories through sharing of responses based on their cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes. In other words, the students' interpretations are shaped by their positions in particular social groups and culture. Thus, cultural theorists addressed how a reader's "cultural models" constructed within a certain group or institution influence his/her response to a text.

Culturally Situated Theories

More recently, a grounded theory of culturally situated reader response model has been offered by Brooks and Browne (2012). They claim that reader response scholars have not sufficiently addressed a multitude of social factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and social context and critically examined complicated relationships between these factors and a reader's interpretation. Brooks and Browne have pointed out that Rosenblatt, for example, did not conduct a critical examination in exploring how a

reader's various physical, personal, social, and cultural experiences shapes his/her interpretation.

Brooks and Browne's (2012) culturally situated reader response theory underscores the concept of "Homeplace", consisting of four cultural positions: Ethnic Group, Community, Peers and Family (see Figure 2.1). It reveals a reader's broad range of interpretations of a text. The position of Ethnic Group leads a reader to identify his/her ethnicity, race and culture and bring the identities in making meaning with a text. In order to understand a story character's life in a particular community, the Community position guides a reader to compare the character's life and the reader's real life embedded in a community such as church or school. The place of Family also leads an understanding of a story character by a reader himself/herself situating in a member of the family portrayed in a story, which shows some similar aspects of the reader's real family or culture. The fourth position of Peers is controlled by "the readers' common interests, memberships and values" (p. 82). A reader considers a story character as his/her peer and develops an understanding of the character's emotions and thoughts from a peer's point of view. Thus, four cultural positions embedded in "Homeplace" unfold a reader's range of culturally situated responses. Brooks and Browne (2012) address, "these positions represent various multilayered aspects of one's culture and the multitude of practices inherent within it" (p. 79). That is, "Homeplace" shows that readers present a variety of culturally situated responses even though they belong to the same ethnic group.

In addition, Brooks and Browne (2012) have argued that textual elements presented in literature, especially multicultural books, should not be overlooked. Such books show ethnic cultural beliefs and values, and those shape a reader's understanding.

They have suggested that it is important to critically examine content of the literature and how the textual elements influence a reader's interpretation.

Hence, Brooks and Browne's (2012) culturally situated reader response theory offers useful insight into an understanding of a reader's various interpretations. Further, the framework explores a range of interpretations within similar or the same ethnic group. Beach (1995) has also shared similar idea with Brooks and Browne that each reader's "cultural models" (p. 87) shape his/her reading experience. Thus, the culturally situated reader response theory expands previous reader response theories in order to see a reader's dynamic interpretation.

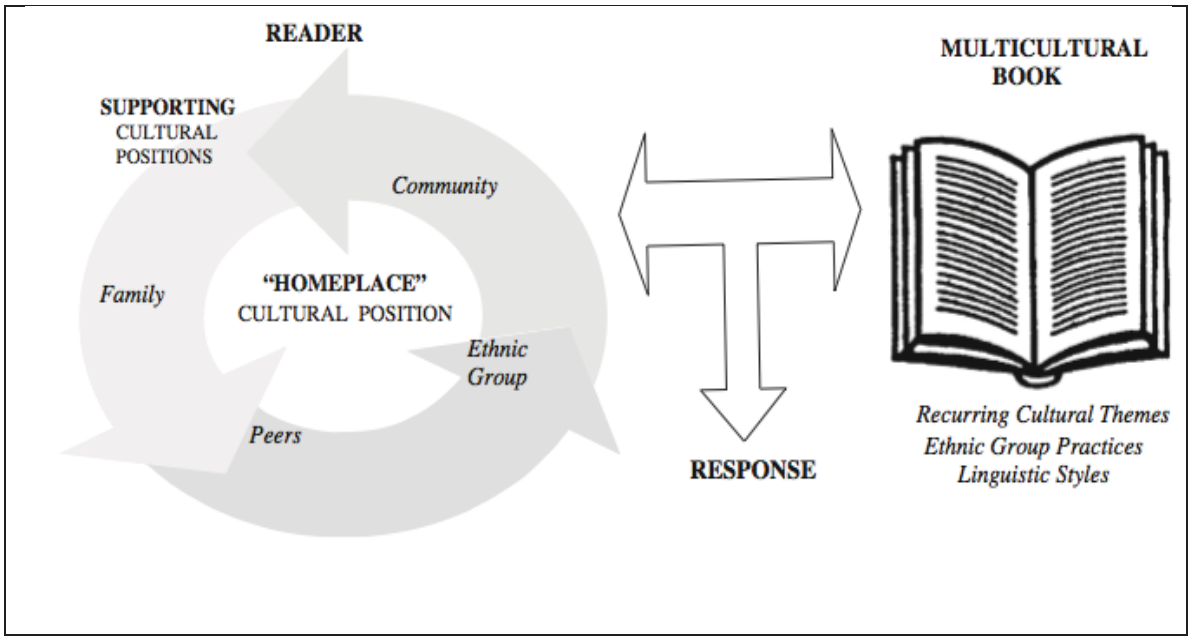


Figure 2.1: Culturally situated reader response model. From Brooks and Browne (2012), p.87.

Summary

Overall, I explored six different approaches to the reader response theory: "textual" (Iser, 1978; Rabinowitz, 1987), "experimental" (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1994, 1995),

"psychological" (Holland, 1975), "social" (Fish, 1980), "cultural" (Beach, 1993; Bleich, 1992), as well as the grounded theory of "culturally situated reader response model" (Brooks & Browne, 2012). From the position of focusing on the relationship between a reader and a text, social and cultural theorists have expanded the theory to include interpretations shaped by a range of socio-cultural factors and contexts. These various perspectives have in common the focus on viewing a reader's meaning-making process. All theorists reject single and objective meaning since all readers bring different psychological emotions, personalities, and cultural experiences. Thus, text is not just ink and paper but it is a medium that a reader transacts with in order to make meaning.

New Literacy Studies and Multimodality

In addition to the reader response theories, this study is grounded in a conception of literacy articulated by New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars, Barton (1994), Gee (1996), and Street (1995), and multimodality (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2003, 2008). Unlike the traditional notion of literacy that was conceptualized from the cognitive and psycho-linguistic approaches, the NLS scholars have reconceptualized literacy as social practices. They have encouraged educators and researchers to broaden the definitions of texts and literacy: shifting from a singular "literacy" to pluralized "literacies" in order to encompass a wide range of literacy practices with various forms of texts. Barton and Hamilton (1998) wrote:

> Literacy is primarily something people do; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not just reside in people's head as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just on paper, captured as texts to be analysed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people. (p. 3)

Furthermore, Gee (2012) described literacy practices:

> There are many different sorts of literacy – many literacies – connected in complex ways with different Discourses. Cyberpunks and physicists, factory workers and boardroom executives, policemen and graffiti-writing urban gang members engage in different literacies, use different "social languages", and are in different Discourses. And too, the cyberpunk and the physicist might be one and the same person, behaving differently at different times and places. (p. 3)

As Barton, Hamilton and Gee, as well as Street (2008), stated, literacy is not a stand-alone measurable mental ability but a social practice embedded in broader contexts that are affected by various social factors such as gender, race and socioeconomic status, across time and space.

Recently, a growing number of New Literacy Studies scholars have explored the role of various forms of text, such as video games, music, movies, comics, manga and animation, in a multimodal approach (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2003), in children's and youth's literacy and meaning-making (Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Alvermann & Xu, 2003; Gee, 2004; Mahiri, 2006; Carrington, 2004; Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Sanford & Madill, 2007; Lacasa, Martinez & Mendez, 2008). According to Kress (2008), multimodality refers to "all the modes available and used in making meaning, in representation and communication" (p. 91). That is, multimodality focuses on modes, such as visual, actional, spatial, and language, that are brought into meaning-making.

Alvermann and Heron (2001), Alvermann and Xu (2003), and Mahiri (2006) showed young children and youth's engagement with animation and music. Alvermann and Heron (2001) explored a high-school boy's meaning making with the Japanese animation *Dragon Ball Z* (Toriyama, 1989). The study indicated that the animation provided him with various opportunities to develop critical inquiry and multiple literacies. The characterizations, settings and plots of the anime were examined from analytical and critical viewpoints. Alvermann and Xu (2003) also examined the

meaningfulness of the TV animation *Dora the Explorer* (Gifford, Walsh & Weiner, 2000), featuring an English-Spanish bilingual young girl, for the development of Mexican cultural understanding and Spanish language skill. In Mahiri's (2006) study, a group of African American girls showed a variety of literacy practices with hip-hop music in high-poverty middle school. His findings revealed that such music provided the girls with opportunities for agentive engagement and ownership of learning. The music connected to the girls' personal identifications and encouraged them to engage in meaning-making in their lives as well as to delve into an array of social issues within their own communities such as poverty and homelessness. Alvermann and Xu (2003) underscored that it is valuable to make popular pictorial texts part of children's school literacy experiences, "Because popular culture texts are part of students' everyday literacies, they hold powerful and personal meanings for students" (p. 150).

Several scholars have studied youth's meaning making with video games (Betts, 2007; Gilmore, 1986; Gee, 2004; Sanford & Madill, 2007; Lacasa et al., 2008). Gilmore's (1986) and Gee's (2004) work with youth playing games outside school contexts revealed the array of possibilities in perceiving gaming as a socially constructed literacy practice. The middle school African American boys in Gilmore's ethnographic study in Philadelphia displayed group literacy practices with the fantasy adventure game Dungeons and Dragons, which involves complex instructions as well as highly technical lexicons. The boys assisted one another in order to obtain necessary skills and knowledge for successful participation in the game. They also demonstrated rich communicative and multiple literacy competences such as cross-referencing, word analysis and comprehension. Gee (2004) found similar patterns in accordance with Gilmore when he

explored youth's engagement with video games. The game players were involved in negotiation of meaning using complex technical terms regarding the games with other players while they simultaneously participated in an offline or online gaming world. The players showed the development of multiple literacies and critical thinking skills. Betts (2007) paid attention to children's and youth's creation of interactive games based on the stories they developed in an out-of-school context in Arizona. The study revealed that the participants collaboratively developed multiple new literacies and creative and critical thinking skills. Thus, Gilmore (1986), Gee (2004) and Betts (2007) as well as other researchers, such as Sanford and Madill (2007) and Lacasa et al. (2008) who also studied youth's literacy practices with video games, maintained that playing games is a socially situated literacy practice. It provides people a range of opportunities with the enhancement of multiple literacies as well as critical, metacognitive, and multidimensional thinking skills.

Furthermore, Mahiri (2000) claimed that popular culture media provides a range of opportunities for children and young people for the development of multiple literacies to access, evaluate, analyze and synthesize information, which are now necessary skills in this global age. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (1996) described an idea similar to Mahiri's:

> Being literate in contemporary society means being active, critical, and creative users not only of print and spoken language but also of the visual language of film and television.... Teaching students how to interpret and create visual texts...is another essential component of the English language arts curriculum. Visual communication is part of the fabric of contemporary life. (p. 5)

Alvermann and Xu (2003) also noted, "When children are not taught to become critically aware of media-produced popular culture texts, their thinking about such texts goes

unchallenged" (p. 148). Developing children and adolescents' multiple literacies with popular culture texts, as well as critical examination and awareness toward how they are positioned by the popular culture texts, are significant in this 21st century.

NCTE and the International Reading Association (IRA) call for educators and researchers to acknowledge a variety of multimodal popular culture texts such as graphic novels, comics, and manga. These mediums invite students to develop literacies and also transfer the skills to other genres. In addition to the NCTE and IRA, several NLS scholars, such as Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila (2006), have encouraged educators to become aware of students' engagement with the multimodal popular media and bring them into school in order to develop critical thinking skills. Reading the texts is very much like playing video games and hip-hop music if we consider them as literacy "domains" (Gee, 2004, p. 18), which are "structured, patterned contexts within which literacy is used and learned" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 10). Alvermann and Heron (2001) asserted that critical reading of unique popular culture texts like comics and manga demand "both the expression and examination of multiple points of view" (p. 121). That is, the mediums provide readers opportunities with the development of critical inquiry from multiple perspectives.

Thus, NLS scholars and educators have underscored that multimodal popular culture texts are able to create literacy "domains" – a space for meaning-making. That is, the texts lead children and youth to decipher images, written languages, symbols, and gestures to communicate meaning.

Summary

In short, I explored New Literacy Studies theory and its related studies. I began by highlighting definition of literacy and its practice, and then discussed empirical studies relevant to the role of multimodal texts including music, animations, and video games in children's and youth's development of multiple literacies, cognitive and critical thinking skills, and cultural understanding. The NLS scholars have suggested that it is important for educators to recognize a wide range of literacy practices that students engage in outside of school contexts as well as pedagogical potentialities of the multimodal popular culture texts.

The combination of reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality made it possible to analyze fifth graders' literary practices with Japanese pictorial texts, in ways that would not be possible with only one framework. Reader response theories helped to examine children's transactions with the texts, casting light on the influence of various social and cultural factors. The framework of New Literacy Studies helped enrich my understanding of socially embedded literacy practices with multimodal texts. Without these theoretical perspectives, it might have been far more difficult to identify patterns across the diverse types of texts. Combining the theories allowed me to see a range of interpretations to the texts and the process of meaning making embedded in the classroom context.

Studies on Readers' Experiences with Graphic Forms of Texts

In this section, I provide a literature review of the popular culture experiences and practices, focusing on graphic novels, comics, manga, anime, and kamishibai, among children and youth in North America. A growing number of literacy researchers and practitioners have inquired into students' engagement and meaning making with various

graphic forms of texts, and they have called for the need to incorporate them into educational contexts. What is currently known about students' experiences with graphic forms of texts, and the roles and functions the texts fulfills among their practices? In analyzing the research literature on children's and youth's practices with graphic forms of texts, I found four consistent themes: (1) graphic forms of texts for literacy development, (2) graphic forms of texts for multiliteracies, (3) graphic forms of texts across the curriculum, and (4) popular culture for literary understanding.

Literacy Development

Actually, connecting popular culture to education is not a new phenomenon in the United States. When the "golden age" of comics came in the late 1930s in the U.S., the majority of children and youth began to engage in the media (Blakely, 1958; Lyness, 1952; Slover, 1959; Witty, 1941). With this popularity of comics, scholars and educators and parents paid great attention to their reading practices in comics.

During 1940s to 1970s, several researchers and educators showed positive attitudes toward students' engagement with comics for their literacy development (Frank, 1949; Haugaard, 1973; Hutchinson, 1949; Malter, 1952; Sones, 1944; Thorndike, 1941; Zorbaugh, 1944). Frank (1949) addressed that comic reading enhanced children's vocabulary knowledge and reading ability. Zorbaugh (1944) also showed the significant role of comics at schools and churches in Chicago: students learned foreign languages such as Spanish and French through comics at elementary schools, and also children studied "Picture Stories of the Bible" at Sunday schools. Frank (1949) argued comics are a meaningful tool to provide readers with opportunities for the development of imagination and creativity. He noted that comics are a part of a child's world and give

children various opportunities to "challenge their interest and broaden their horizons; opportunities for adventure, for fun, for trying themselves out" (p. 214). Thus, comics were considered as an educational material to enhance reading and vocabulary building, supplemental materials to support curriculum, and aesthetic development.

While the research discussed above suggests that comics are valuable educational resources for readers' cognitive and aesthetic growth, several studies disagree (Kuntz, 1941; Logasa, 1946; Reynolds, 1952; Saltus, 1952; Wertham, 1954). Saltus (1952), for example, argued that comics contain limited written texts, contributing to a lack of literacy development, imagination, and creativity in readers. He considered comics as an "inartistic worthless form of literature" (p. 383), and thus should not be accepted as an instructional material in any educational environments. Wertham (1954), a psychiatrist, also claimed that crime and violent comics prevent children's literacy development. He described comics are "death on reading" (p. 121) as follows:

> Reading troubles in children are on the increase. An important cause of this increase is the comic book. A very large proportion of children who cannot read well habitually read comic books. They are not really readers, but gaze mostly at the pictures, picking up a word here and there. Among the worst readers is a very high percentage of comic-book addicts who spend very much time "reading" comic books. They are book-worms without books (p. 122).

Wertham (1954) clearly considered comics as a valueless material, distracting the development of reading process due to their graphic account of horrors and violence. He, moreover, shared his idea that images are subservient to written texts. Reading texts along with images create poor reading habit and even prevent the left-to-right eye movement development, necessary for good reading. Further, Wertham noted comic readers were handicapped in vocabulary building because texts of comic books are poor in language. Reynolds (1952), Logasa (1946) and Kuntz (1941) expressed similar

arguments as Wertham (1954) that there was no evidence that comics would help children's vocabulary enhancement and reading ability. On the contrary, several researchers who were advocating reading comics, such as Malter (1952), Frank (1949), and Zorbaugh (1944), contended that attacking comic books themselves and children's comic reading was unreasonable and unwarranted. Malter (1952) criticized Wertham's emphasis on the comics dealing with crime stories and its negative effects on readers. In fact, Wertham ignored the themes such as humor, adventure, and love-romance and he did not explore children's reading practices with comics involving those themes.

Some studies noted that comic reading did not contribute any positive or negative effects on students' literacy practices (Heisler, 1947; Sperzel, 1948; Witty, 1941; Witty, Smith & Coomer, 1942). The study conducted by Witty (1941) was a comparison of elementary school students' reading ability between who read the most comics and who read seldom. His findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference on reading growths between the two groups. Similarly, Witty, Smith, and Coomer (1942), who explored 224 children's comic reading practices, found that there was no evidence that comics would contribute to their reading and writing development.

In this modem age, researchers and practitioners have paid attention to the role of various forms of texts including comics, graphic novels, manga, anime, and kamishibai in children and adolescents' literacy practices (Armour, 2011; Bitz, 2010; Chun, 2010; Frey & Fisher, 2004; Howard, 2012; Krashen 2004; Krashen & Ujiie, 1996a, 1996b; Liu, 2003; Ranker, 2007; Swartz, 2008). Ujiie and Krashen (1996a, 1996b), Krashen (2004), and Howard's (2012) research revealed that readers' comic and graphic novel reading practices increased book-reading habits for pleasure and enjoyment. Armour (2011),

Chun (2009), and Krashen (2004) confirmed that popular culture texts facilitate second and foreign language acquisition. Armour's (2011) college students in Australia, for example, showed positive attitudes towards manga as a resource for Japanese language learning: "I used manga as the medium to learn the informal, everyday phrases and grammar" (p. 139) and "Compared to traditional classes where we chew on grammar structures with a textbook, it is always more enjoyable to learn by reading a manga or watching movie/anime" (p.140).

Multiliteracies

In addition to the literacy and language improvement, some studies (Bitz, 2010; Bitz & Harvard University, 2009; Casas, 2006; Chandler-Olcott, 2008; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Clouet, 2005; Dallacqua, 2012; Frey & Fisher, 2004, 2010; Geier, 2006; Hughes, King, Perkins, & Fuku, 2011; Lee, 2003; Mahar, 2003; McGowan, 2010, 2012; Pantaleo, 2012; Ruble & Lysne, 2010; Vasques, 2003) describe the role of the popular culture in "multiliteracies" (New London Group, 1996, p. 60), referring to multiple literacy skills developed in the process of multimodal texts designing. In Bitz (2010) and Frey and Fisher's (2004) studies, struggling literacy learners developed strong reading, writing, visual, and critical literacy skills by creative writing in the form of a graphic novel. Frey and Fisher (2004) maintained the powerfulness of student-generated graphic novels, saying "we now realize the power of they (graphic novels) have for engaging students in authentic writing" (p. 24). Similarly, seventh-grade manga and anime fandom attained academic literacy skills through "fanfiction" practice, writing stories drawing on anime and manga characters and settings (Chandler-Olcott, 2008; Chanlder-Olcott &

Mahar, 2003; Mahar, 2003). Their "fanfiction" demonstrated complex and creative storylines, plots, characterizations, and multimodal qualities such as anime-style images.

Ruble and Lysne's (2010) seventh graders were encouraged to gain a range of literacy skills such as critical and analytical literacy, decision-making, and problem-solving in a collaborative anime creation project in the classroom context. Likewise, designing anime/manga related game cards support children to develop school-based literacy skills (Mahar, 2003; Vasquez, 2003). Vasquez (2003), for example, was stuck by Curtis, her six-year-old nephew, and his friend's redesigning the existing Pokémon cards to develop their own versions including strategic use of iconic symbols and abbreviations. She observed that the boys used various literacy strategies such as brainstorming, organizing ideas, sketching, and intertextual reading of manga, magazines, anime, and the Internet, and those were significant functions in the process of card creation practice.

Lee (2003)'s middle school students developed linguistic, communication, and research skills through creating kamishibai in history class. They presented their findings about history of Egypt in a form of kamishibai. Geier (2006), Casas (2006), and Clouet (2005), McGowan (2010) encouraged kindergarteners and elementary school students to create their original stories as drawing illustrations in a form of kamishibai. They strengthened sequence skills and understood a logical progression to writing stories.

Writing short narratives about personal lives in a form of popular culture text also support students' multiliteracies development. Hugers, King, Perkins, and Fuku's (2011) youth, who had been labeled as "not good at reading or writing…not like to read and are reluctant to even try" (p. 601-602), gained a sense of ownership, as well as multiple

literacy skills, by writing "autographics", telling personal stories in a graphic novel fashion. Also, refugee children in Owl & Panther group and youth, whose parents were incarcerated, at the KARE Family Center in Tucson, AZ used literacy creatively, authoring themselves, and thus empowering themselves (Bitz, 2010). Along with photographs of refugee camps and homelands, the refugee children wrote stories that were laced with their personal and family stories and cultural identities. The youth expressed worries and fears in their comic stories, encouraging them to cope with struggles and "get it off their chests". Similarly, adolescents manga enthusiasts participated in the Comic Book Project in New York City enhanced writing, reading, visual, analytical, and critical literacies by writing everyday concerns such as family separation, peer bullying, and teen pregnancy in a form of manga (Bitz & Harvard University, 2009). According to Bitz (2009), the nature of manga and "[its] commitment to the mundane and the ordinary" (p. 31), inspired them to write "real life" stories in manga format.

Across the Curriculum

Popular culture has been utilized as a means of contributing to interdisciplinary thematic units and specific content areas such as history (Carter, 2008; Chun, 2009; Ruble & Lysne, 2010; Swartz, 2008), biology (Cirigliano, 2012), geography (Carter, 2008), math (Armour, 2011; Bitz, 2010; Mahar, 2003; Vasquez, 2003; Yang, 2008), and appreciation of different cultures (Armour, 2011; Bakis, 2011; Bitz, 2010; Bitz & Harvard University, 2009; Ruble & Lysne, 2010). For example, at Imperial County School District in California, mathematic comics featuring "measurement man" and " calculating superheroes" helped children's understanding of math concept (Bitz, 2010).

Adolescents in Yang's (2008) math class appreciated his original comic books, showing complex Algebra concept in a comprehensible fashion. Some youth, in Bakis's study (2011) learned about Iranian people's life style and culture through *Persepolis* (Satrapi, 2003) and history in Uganda through *Unknown Solder* (Decker & Castro, 2012). One student noted, "it is interesting to read about other cultures around the world. It also gave me a chance to see how some cultures view America" (p. 77). In Tucson, educators used comics as a ways to reconnect Pasqua Yaqui and Tohono O'odham youth with their indigenous cultures and languages (Bitz, 2010). Discussions of Native American and modern superheroes encouraged them to develop cultural awareness and native traditions.

In a collaborative interdisciplinary project including history, language arts, science, and visual arts conducted by Ruble and Lysne (2010), seventh graders developed understanding of Japanese history, culture, and society, using Hayao Miyazaki's Japanese anime, *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Princess Mononoke* (2001). *Spirited Away*, for example, encouraged them to build an understanding of Japanese people's cultural values and beliefs, lifestyles, and society through an in-depth-exploration of the people's attitude towards nature and environment shown in the anime. Likewise, through manga, youth learned about various aspects of Japanese culture including technology, fashion, and gender role (Bitz & Harvard University, 2009). Geier (2006), Casas (2006), and McGowan (2010) introduced Japanese folktales through kamishibai to children in the classrooms, which encouraged them to further learning about Japan from various sources such as Internet and books.

Literary Understanding

In addition to the research about students' multiliteracies development with popular culture, various studies have studied their literary responses to the mediums. The studies I present here are focused on readers' interpretations and meaning making with popular culture texts based on their textual knowledge, personal experiences, cultural, and social backgrounds.

Responses based on texts and images. Literacy researchers and practitioners have reported readers' use of their textual knowledge to construct meanings from popular culture texts (Dallacqua, 2012; Frey & Fisher, 2010; Jonker, 2011; Martínez-Roldán & Newcomer, 2011; Pantaleo, 2011, 2012, 2013; Ruble & Lysne, 2010; Versaci, 2008). Dallacqua (2012), for example, conducted a case study of fifth graders responding to the graphic novel *The Arrival* (Tan, 2006). Her study revealed that the students' visual literacy knowledge about point of view, colors, and symbols supported their understanding of situational factors embedded in the story such as war and weak economy, as well as characters' social relationships, life style, and family history. Jonker (2011), a librarian at an elementary school, found results similar to Dallacqua's (2012) study when exploring Bryonna's, a third grader, reading the graphic novel *Owly* (Runton, 2004) to her two-year-old sister at home. Jonker noted that when Bryonna read the story to her sister, she drew on her knowledge of literary conventions and reading strategies such as developing a story sequence and making inference. Jonker (2001) also described a group of fourth graders' reading practices with the graphic novel *Li'L Santa* (Trondheim, 2002) at her library. She found that they actively drew on their textual and visual knowledge, which they acquired from other popular culture texts such as video games and movies outside school context, in order to make meaning with the story.

Dallacqua (2012), Frey and Fisher (2010), Hammond, (2012), Pantaleo (2011, 2012, 2013), and Ruble and Lynse (2010) documented readers' "authorial reading" (Rabinowitz, 1987, p. 30) approach, searching for an author's intentions in a text, when meaning making with stories of popular culture. Pantaleo (2012), a classroom teacher, analyzed seventh graders' oral and written responses to Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Red Tree* (2010). She found that the students developed understanding of the story by seeking the author's assumptions on symbols and colors. Likewise, Pantaleo's (2013) fourth graders explored a set of graphic novels from authorial perspectives. They considered illustrators' intentions of drawing various sizes and shapes of panels, and further they analyzed how those visual elements were associated with the creation of story worlds. The fourth graders also discussed how the graphic novel artists' visual and textual techniques affected on their own interpretations and understanding of the stories.

Ruble and Lynse (2010) found similar pattern with Pantaleo (2012, 2013) when examining seventh graders' literary responses to Hayao Miyazaki's anime, *Spirited Away*. They critically examined the messages contained in the story and how the animator visually portrays those messages. Shannon, a fifth grader, studied by Dallacqua (2012) demonstrated very interesting viewpoints towards Gene Luen Yang's graphic novel *American Born Chinese* (2008). She shouldered an "invisible camera" like a movie director and carefully observed characters' point of views and feelings, "You know how if somebody gets intense, sometime, they'll come in? [She moves her camera forward]. Well, they're starting to back out…and instead of seeing him backing out with him in the picture, you see him alone" (p. 67).

Several studies, such as Dallacqua (2012), Frey and Fisher (2010), and Martínez-Roldán and Newcomer (2011) described readers' "wandering point" (Iser, 1978, p. 109) stance to construct meanings from stories. High school students studied by Frey and Fisher (2010) inferred and visualized actions, dialogues, and messages embedded in "gutter", a space between panels, while reading Will Eisner's wordless graphic novel *New York: Life in the Big City* (2006). Likewise, Dallacqua's (2012) fifth graders added "specific details that were not shown in the panels" (p. 68). She observed that Jason filled in what happened between each panel using his "mind movie" (p. 69), picturing movements and actions in his head. Mexican and Iraqi immigrant children in Martínez-Roldán's and Newcomer's (2011) study demonstrated predictions of characters' thoughts and feelings by adopting the characters' perspectives when engaging with *The Arrival*.

Responses based on personal, cultural, and social experiences. While the studies discussed above suggest that readers drew widely on their knowledge of textual and visual conventions in responding to popular culture texts, other studies illustrate readers' personal, cultural, and social factors what influence their construction of meanings from the mediums (Bakis, 2011; Bitz, 2010; Bitz & Harvard University, 2009; Carter, 2008; Chang, 2011; Chun, 2009; Decker & Castro, 2012; Hammond, 2009; Mahar, 2003; Martínez-Roldán, & Newcomer, 2011; Pantaleo, 2012; Ruble & Lysne, 2010; Seyfried, 2008; Swartz, 2008; Russlle, Bailey & Poole, 2006).

Sixth graders' literary responses to graphic novels explored by Chang (2011) in Toronto, Canada, mirrored the students' personal and cultural identities. One Chinese Canadian student found similar personal experiences with a Chinese American protagonist described in *Chinese Born American* (Yang, 2008), such as struggling with

adjusting to a new culture and language. Some immigrant students reflected on their immigration experiences by positioning themselves as a member of the immigrant family depicted in *The Arrival* (Tan, 2006). Martínez-Roldán's and Newcomer's (2011) study with immigrant children in Arizona showed similar trends to Chang's study when responding to *The Arrival*. The students actively drew on their own immigration experiences in meaning making with the text. In addition, some youth in Bakis's (2011) and Hammond's (2009) studies also drew on personal lives in meaning making with graphic novels. For some students, in Bakis's (2011) study, their personal identities, such as coming of age and independence, were significant factors to construct meanings with the graphic novel *Persepolis* (2003). When Anya, an eleven-year-old girl, created a story in a form of graphic novel, she demonstrated various visual literacy skills associated with her personal experiences and knowledge in her graphic novel story in the classroom setting (Pantaleo, 2012). During her interview she provided her rational for purposeful color selection, such as "I thought blue would reflect the mom is like really calm" (p. 151).

Bitz and Harvard University (2009) observed youth living in Brooklyn and Manhattan to identify their engagement with manga. He found that they embraced manga because of the "lack of superheroes" (p. 29). They developed a sense of affinity for magna characters who were not "superheroes" and went through difficult times such as family separation, peer bullying, and racial discrimination, just like the youth themselves. When reading *Hayate, Combat Butler*, they showed strong emotional connections and developed an empathy with Hayate, who was the manga protagonist and struggled with parental neglect. The youth considered Hayate and put themselves into his the role,

asking each other "Would I forgive my parents for putting me in this situation?", and sharing their views on this dilemma.

Readers' literary understanding were also found to be shaped by various sociocultural factors in youth's transactions with graphic novels (Bakis, 2011; Chang, 2011), as it was to the seventh graders' meaning making with Japanese anime (Ruble & Lysne, 2010) and college students' intertextual reading of graphic novels and documentary films (Decker & Castro, 2012). The youth, in Bakis's (2011) study, for example, developed understanding of the graphic novel story *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986) as making connections with social issues in American society such as "pervasiveness of alcoholism in American society and its effects on nondrinkers" (p. 93). Decker's and Castro's (2012) college students in the history class were shocked by the "reality" of war in Uganda, which were described with realistic images in the graphic novel *Unknown Soldier* (Dysart & Ponticelli, 2009) and the documentary film *Invisible Children* (Russell, Bailey & Poole, 2006). This experience led them to identify the "gap" between the information that popular culture texts convey and American media coverage to the public; that is, they realized how they were positioned by American public media in a certain way. The popular culture such as the graphic novels and documentary films encouraged the students to be "socially and politically engaged in the world around them" (Decker & Castro, 2012, p. 180).

Readers' critical interpretations with regard to stories of popular culture ware also categorized into common themes in various studies (Bakis, 2011; Chang, 2011; Hammond, 2009; Mahar, 2003; Seyfried, 2008). In Chang's (2011) study, some youth pointed out stereotypical images of Chinese characters depicted in *American Born*

Chinese. One said, "Wow! Once again the stereotyping is outrageous!...The story about Chin-Kee just makes me so mad" (p. 94). Some Asian Canadian students also showed frustrations with certain descriptions of Korean people, such as Koreans living in a certain area in Los Angeles, in Mike Carey's graphic novel *Re-Gifters* (2007). Other Canadian students noted how people's attitudes toward popular people reflected the characters' descriptions in *Re-Gifters*: "all popular people are blond, mean, wear fancy cloths, and all the boys like them. In some cases this may be true, but not in all cases…" (p. 65). Similarly, Madison, a young anime enthusiast in Mahar's (2003) study, looked at women's descriptions in anime from a critical lens: "these shows [anime] still have the women looking like Barbie with tight cloths and big breasts" (p. 114). She looked beyond the story to examine social, cultural, and economic factors embedded in the production of anime to improve ratings and sales. In Baki's (2011) study, what youth learned from the graphic novel *Persepolis* was that Iranians' day-to-day lives were much like their lives in the U.S. They claimed, "people in Middle East should not all be associated with images of terrorism" (p. 86) as they initially believed before reading the story (Bakis, 2011).

Summary

Empirical studies have explored readers' experiences with various graphic forms of texts including comics, graphic novels, manga, anime, and kamishibai. Two theoretical frameworks, reader response theories, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality, provided me with useful insights into reviewing the existing literature. In synthesizing and analyzing the research literature, I found the following themes: (1) literacy development, (2) multiliteracies, (3) across the curriculum, and (4) literary understanding.

Although there are strong scholarly research studies about students' experiences with various graphic forms of texts, Japanese pictorial texts are largely ignored in these studies. These studies are largely focused on graphic novels and comic books. With the exception of several recent studies (e.g., Dallacqua, 2012; Bitz & Harverd, 2009; Bitz, 2010), the voices of children are also largely absent from the literature. Further, there is little classroom-based research on graphic texts, usually outside school settings. Also the studies focused on readers' literacy development. There are few studies about children's literary responses to and intercultural learning through Japanese pictorial texts. What are their responses to the texts? What knowledge or experiences they bring into their meaning making with the texts? What understanding of Japanese culture is demonstrated in children's literary understanding? These questions are ones that interest me.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In order to address the first and second research questions to explore fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I employed a qualitative methodology with ethnographic methodology. This section outlines the methodologies I employed in this study and is organized into multiple sections. The first part includes the rationale for selecting qualitative method to address the research questions. I also describe my positionality for this study. The second section explains a research context and the processes used to select participants and texts, identifying the selection criteria and procedures. Descriptions of the data sources, data collection procedures, and data analysis are also included. The last section discusses the issue of trustworthiness and shows a tentative timeline for this research.

Research Design

Qualitative research methodology with ethnographic techniques is appropriate to answer the research questions about examining fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts. This study is also grounded in reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality. Reader response theory emphasizes the role of readers in interpreting and reading texts. When readers experience various popular culture pictorial texts, it would be expected that meanings are considered and constructed by them. New Literacy Studies and multimodality underscore socially embedded literacy practices affected by various social factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status. These theoretical frames are a fit with what Merriam (2002), Creswell (2009), Denze and Lincoln (2000), Marshall and Rossman (2006), and Heath and Street (2008) showed as

the characteristics of an ethnographic approach to qualitative research: focusing on process rather than outcomes, seeking meaning of a phenomenon, and compiling and analyzing data holistically, inductively, and systematically.

The qualitative method is a naturalistic approach that facilitates understanding of human experiences in a real-world setting (Patton & Patton, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe qualitative inquiry as "pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (p. 2). Qualitative researchers attempt to interpret and make sense of socially constructed qualities, processes, and meanings embedded in natural settings. They value and seek meaning of a phenomenon or situation from participants' perspectives in order to obtain in-depth understanding of how the participants experience and interact with their social world. The holistic aspect involves gathering data to identify factors embedded in a situation and sketch a complete picture of the situation. The process of data analysis is inductive. Researchers analyze data to establish concepts, hypotheses, and theories rather than deductively deriving hypotheses to be tested. That is, they build toward theory from "observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). Heath and Street (2008) established that the researchers construct theoretical perspectives through systematic inquiry, observation, and analysis of human behavior.

In my study fifth graders participated in discussions, activities, and interviews within the classroom context. I examined dialogues, anecdotes, and documentations containing the exact words, behaviors, and perceptions of individuals to uncover their experiences and the meanings that they constructed. The qualitative method with

ethnographic techniques was the most appropriate approach for my research to address the research questions.

Role and Stance of the Researcher

I have been in Arizona for several years to complete my graduate work. I am Japanese, born in Hyogo prefecture, and a first-generation college graduate. Before attending the doctoral program at the University of Arizona, I specialized in Chinese language and culture study at a university in Japan and also lived in China for a year to learn Chinese language and culture. I also attended a children's literature course at the university in Japan. I still remember that in the class I analyzed Michael Ende's *Momo* (1985), a story about a life journey of young orphan girl named Momo. I learned so many things from the girl such as importance of listening to stories and people's voices. In 2004 I attended graduate school in Washington State to receive a certificate of Teaching English as a Second Language. During my graduate studies, I took a children and adolescent's literature course as an elective, and the class opened my eyes to the world of literature published in the United States.

Throughout my life, there is no doubt that, in addition to literature, other graphic forms of texts such as manga, anime, and kamishibai have become an integral part of my experiences. I have read and watched a wide range of genres not only for entertainment but also for learning foreign languages (Chinese and English), and learning about culture, society, history, and people's daily lives in the world. There have always been lively discussions at home, school, and the workplace centered on various themes inspired by these forms of visual media. Also, such media is a critical tool in my teaching of Japanese culture and language to children in Arizona. Thus, my background, life experiences, and

social capital, which include the funds of knowledge and rich linguistic repertoire of practices of several communities of which I have been a part, no doubt influence my access to the research site, materials, and the relationships with participants.

From the moment I entered the research site and throughout the course of the study, I endeavored to build rapport with participants; trying to be a part of the setting and establishing my image as friendly, nonjudgmental, and trustworthy. In this study, I served in multiple roles, as a planner, facilitator, participant-observer, and co-learner. I was involved in this study through planning and creating a survey; choosing texts to share; planning and organizing lessons; sharing stories; inviting children to respond to stories, and facilitating interviews with teachers and children. As a planner, I was open to make changes and negotiate with the participants regarding lesson plans as I shaped the overall framework of the study. As a facilitator, I initiated discussions, activities, and interviews, and I also supported the participants' meaning making processes. In addition, I created a non-threatening atmosphere in which participants could feel comfortable honestly expressing their thoughts, ideas, feelings, responses and experiences. As a participant-observer, I not only participated in discussions and activities together with the participants, but also observed them responding to stories through oral, written and artistic mediums from an outsider's viewpoint. As a co-learner, I thought through issues or questions together with participants to build understanding. I didn't take on the role of an authority figure who would grade or judge whether their responses are right or wrong.

In addition, I should not overlook discussing my own Japanese cultural background that I brought to this study. First of all, I, as an insider of the Japanese ethnic group and so shared a different ethnic background from the children in this study, which

could contribute to feelings of disconnection and unfamiliarity between us. It might also create an uneasy or uncomfortable atmosphere. I attempted to make connections between us by introducing stories containing universal themes such as family, friendship, and school life. Moreover, the fact that I was born in Japan might have caused participants to see me as an authentic and authoritative figure with first-hand knowledge and experience about Japan. This could have resulted in the participants relying on me to appropriately interpret stories dealing with Japanese culture. I made an effort not to lead them to respond to the stories in certain ways that I wanted to see, such as not including my personal responses to the stories and avoiding implying any desired direction of response. I allowed the participants to feel open to sharing their responses to the stories in the classroom discussions, activities, and interviews. Moreover, to prevent my insider's perspective from influencing the analysis of the data, I did a peer debriefing with non-Japanese colleagues who weren't involved in this study.

From the beginning, I was clear about my roles with participants, both children and teachers. With children, I made sure that they knew I was interested in sharing stories of Japanese pictorial texts and listening to their thoughts and ideas about stories rather than finding correct answers or interpretations.

Context of the Study

The research site was a fifth grade classroom at Cañon Elementary School in Black Canyon City, Arizona. The site selection was heavily influenced by the fact that I already had a relationship with the principal and the teachers of the school. I have worked in the school as a Japanese culture and language instructor since 2009. I have taught about Japan to the students from kindergarten to fifth grade, and had already established a

rapport with them. The following section provides brief descriptions of Black Canyon City, Cañon Elementary School, and the fifth grade classroom which this study took place. I also describe the teachers' perspectives and experiences with popular culture pictorial texts, in order to preview their attitudes towards the mediums I used in my research.

Black Canyon City, AZ

Black Canyon City is located in central Arizona, approximately 50 miles north of the Phoenix metropolitan area (Leighty, 2007). The city is nestled in the foothills of rugged high-relief terrain that includes mesas at an elevation of 6,000-feet. Agua Fria National Monument occupies the northern part of the city and Squaw Creek and Tonto National Forest are located on the eastern side. Primary access to the city is by Interstate 17, while many paved and unimproved roads and jeep trails provide access to more remote areas.

Black Canyon City was settled by the U.S. settlers in the 1870s (Black Canyon City Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). A famous early settler was Jack Swilling, who was an Indian fighter, miner, rancher, farmer, and developer. He moved from South Carolina in 1871 and established Black Canyon City. In the 1920s, electricity was brought to the city for the Kay Copper Mine, and by the 1960s land development and highway construction replaced the agricultural areas.

More recently, the city is becoming a bedroom community to Phoenix with the continued rapid growth of Phoenix northward. In addition to undergoing rapid population growth, the city is becoming increasingly urbanized. The population is approximately 2,837. It experienced 5.2% growth from 2000 to 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Caucasians make up most of the population. Latinos, American Indians, Asians, and African Americans constitute 7.5% of the city's population, which is significantly below the Arizona state average for non-white populations. Close to 3% of residents speak a language other than English at home. More residents are below the poverty level, as compared to state statistics: 21.5% and 21.1% respectively in 2009 (City-Data, n.d.). Additional demographic data comparing Black Canyon City to the state of Arizona is found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Demographic data by Black Canyon City and Arizona State.

Demographic category	Black Canyon City (n = 2,837)		Arizona State (n = 6,392,017)	
	N	%	N	%
Gender:				
Male	1,464	51.6	3,175,823	49.7
Female	1,373	48.4	3,216,194	50.3
Race or ethnic group:				
White	2,587	91.2	3,695,647	57.8
Black	5	0.2	239,101	3.7
Asian	12	0.4	170,509	2.7
Hispanic	159	5.6	1,895,149	29.6
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0	0	10,959	0.2
American Indian and Alaskan Native	27	1.0	257,426	4.0
Others	47	1.6	123,226	2.0

Age:		
Median age (range)	52.3 (0-85 and over)	35.9 (0-85 and over)

Note: Data compiled from the US Census Bureau for 2007-2011. Racial and ethnic classifications used here are those that are used in Arizona state data compiled for state and federal purposes.

The residents of Black Canyon City have a lower level of education compared with Arizona residents. Table 3.2 and the bar graph in Figure 3.1 below indicate educational attainments of the Black Canyon residents who are aged 25 years old and over, as compared to residents of the state of Arizona (US Census Bureau, 2010; City-Data, n.d.). 30.4% of Black Canyon residents have obtained a high school diploma. 12.7% have graduated with an associate degree, 32% have completed at least some college. 10.4% have a bachelor's degree and 2.6 % have a graduate or professional degree. The percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree and higher are significantly below state average.

Table 3.2: Data of educational attainments (adults aged 25+) by Black Canyon City and Arizona State. Note: Data compiled from the US Census Bureau for 2007-2011.

Variable	Black Canyon City (n = 2,171)		Arizona State (n = 4,087,214)	
	N	%	N	%
Less than 9th grade	61	2.8	269,554	6.6
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	198	9.1	336,073	8.2
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	660	30.4	1,010,731	24.7
Some college, no diploma	695	32.0	1,061,064	26.0

Associate degree	276	12.7	330,894	8.1
Bachelor's degree	225	10.4	688,123	16.8
Graduate or professional degree	56	2.6	390,775	9.6

Figure 3.1: Comparison of educational attainments between people aged 25 and over in Black Canyon City and in Arizona.

Industries that employed the most Black Canyon residents between 2005 and 2009 were construction (12.8%), accommodation and food services (9.5%), and public administration (7.2%) (US Census Bureau, 2010; City-Data, n.d.). The most common occupations were sales and related workers including supervisors (9.4%), retail sales workers except cashiers (7.1%), and driver/sales workers and truck drivers (5.6%).

Cañon Elementary School

Cañon Elementary School is a public school located in the Cañon Elementary School District in Yavapai County. The school provided me with permission to use the real name of the school for this study. It is a small-sized K-8 school, with an enrollment of about 150 students and ten full time teachers during the 2013—2014 school year. Student demographic information for the school consists of 86% of Caucasian, 11% of Latinos, 2% of American Indian, 2% of African American, and 2% of others. Many students are from lower-income families: 59% or approximately 89 students are eligible for free lunches, and an additional 10% or about 15 are eligible for reduced-cost lunches. Each grade has one class with around 10 to 15 students.

As shown in Figure 3.2, the school is a single-story building. The main entrance is located in the center on the south side of the building. Upper grade classrooms are located on the east side of the building and primary grade classrooms are on the west side. The boy and girl's restrooms are on both sides near classrooms. A library and a computer room are next to each other, located in front of the main entrance. They are accessible from both upper and primary grade classrooms. To get to the cafeteria located in the northwest of the school building, students need to go outside through a door. They have a huge playground on the north side of the building. To get there, students need to press a buzzer to ask somebody to open a security door.

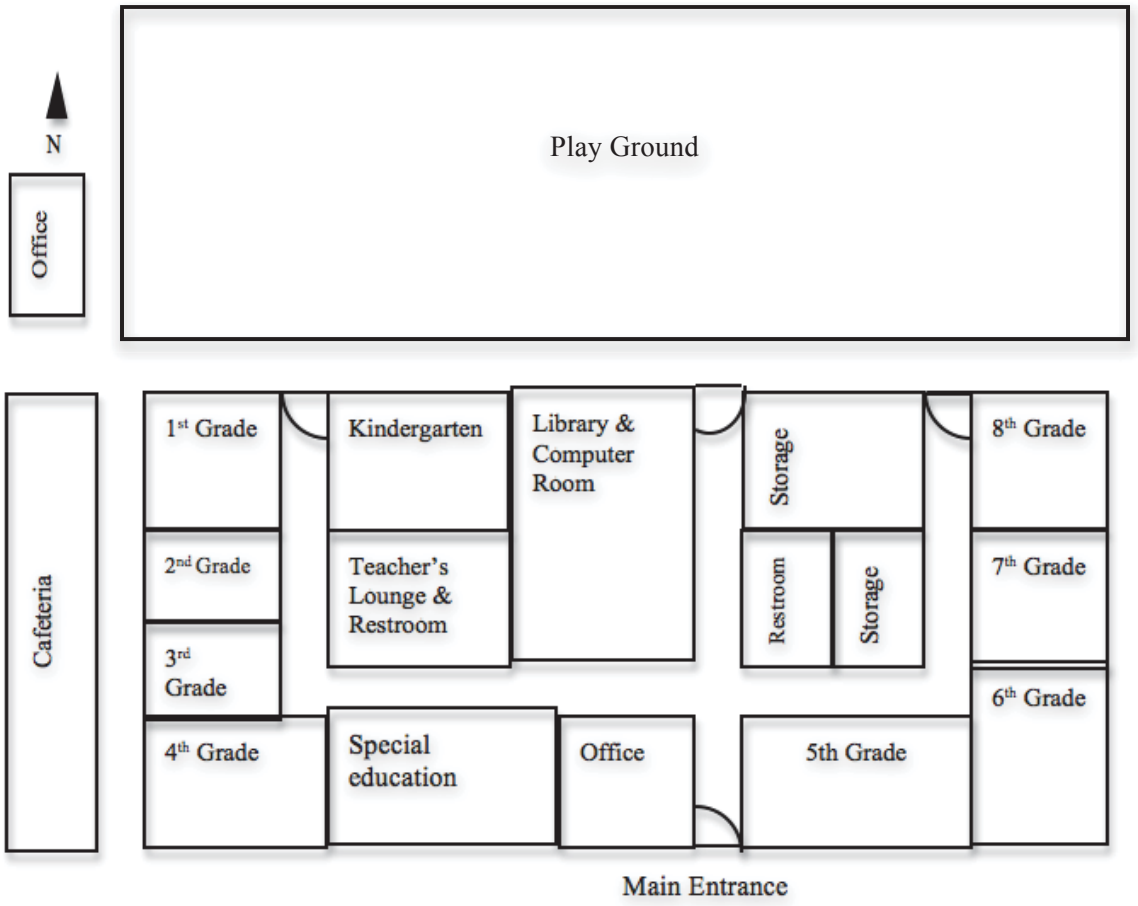


Figure 3.2*:* Cañon Elementary School building map.

The fifth grade classroom is positioned on the east side of the school, next to the sixth grade classroom. Within the classroom, there are three desktop computers for students to use and one laptop computer connected with a SMART Board (interactive whiteboard) for a classroom teacher to use. Around 400 books and reference materials are on the bookshelves located at the backside of the room. In front of the shelves, there is a big white sofa on which students can sit comfortably and read books. Shared classroom supplies, including papers, scissors, glues, pencils, and markers, are located at the backside of the classroom near the bookshelves. Birds, flowers, waterfalls, and trees are painted all over the wall on the west side of the room. The classroom teacher, Ms. Miller, said that she asked a school staff member, who is an artist, to paint the wall. She usually

decorates the wall of the hallway facing the outer side of the classroom with the students' artifacts. The classroom is shown in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 below.

Figure 3.3: Fifth grade classroom.

Figure 3.4: Classroom library at the back of the classroom.

Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences with Popular Culture Texts

In order to get a picture of Cañon Elementary School teachers' perspectives and experiences of popular culture texts, including graphic novels, comics, manga, and anime, I conducted a survey and an interview with each teacher (see Appendix A & B).

There were ten full time teachers, two males and eight females, in the 2013—2014 school year. Of the ten teachers, five were between 31 and 40 years old, two were between 41 and 50, and three were more than 51 years old. As for the years of teaching experiences, two had been teaching 1 to 3 years. One had 4 to 6 years of experience; three teachers had between 7 and 9 years of experience; and four had been teaching for more than 10 years.

All teachers had a classroom library in their classrooms. They kept around 400 books in their libraries. Most of them were picture books, novels, and resource materials. Only a few teachers included some graphic novels and comics in their classroom libraries. For example, a fifth grade teacher, Ms. Miller, who was participants' classroom teacher, had a collection of graphic novels. She said she was going to grow the collection because some of her students were really into it.

Characteristics of the teachers' personal experiences with graphic novels, comics, manga, and animations were as follows: three teachers indicated they currently watched American animations but do not read graphic novels, comics, or manga, and seven teachers showed that they did not read or watch them at all on their own. None of the teachers knew what manga was and had never read it, but some teachers knew Japanese anime and had watched it before. I also asked them if they were interested in using those mediums in their teaching. The majority of the teachers had medium-high or high interest in them.

In the interview, several teachers told me their experiences of using graphic novels, comics, and American animations in their classrooms. They utilized the mediums in order to introduce genres, encourage reading, and develop effective instruction by combining the genres with school subjects such as math and social science. One first grade teacher said she used a cartoon in a social science class a week before this interview.

> Friday I used Dr. Seuss, talking about trees, bubbles, how the air circulating, weather, and trees need water to grow. I do [use cartoons] a lot in the classroom. More they [her students] hear that and look. I combine animations or cartoons and social sciences. They watch and listen. Note taking one is bug's life. They do note taking either write or sketch bug's life at the end of the movie. They get much attention. They actually retaining better.

She valued animations and actively used them in her classroom. However, she never used graphic novels or comic books because she assumed that these were only for older students.

It was also clear that many of the teachers were interested in graphic novels, comics, and animations because they recognized that many students had a great interest in such popular media. With an expression of surprise, one sixth grade teacher said that she had bought a number of graphic novels for her students' independent reading two years ago, but many of the books had disappeared. She realized that her students loved them and kept them at home.

Although the teachers knew the students' high interest in the mediums, they showed a lack of use of them in their teaching. In the interviews, they related the following problems: limited knowledge and limited personal experiences related to the genres, lack of comfort level with using them as educational tools, and lack of accessibility for the genres. One eighth grade teacher bluntly said, "I am not comfortable with it, and I am not familiar with it." One kindergarten teacher also addressed her unfamiliarity with the genres. She said, "I don't know it does educational. It's fun to read, but it doesn't teach them [the students] lessons…" One third grade teacher complained about a lack of availability for graphic novels and comics at a publishing company in a near whisper, "Scholastic reading…[pausing a second] they don't have them…" Another teacher, who was teaching seventh grade, showed her own and her student's frustrations of not being able to find graphic novels at school:

> Actually I have a student who requested that [graphic novels]. So I have one student who is really interested in graphic novels. He is having a hard time to find them. So...[pausing a second] unfortunately we went to the [school] library on

> Friday, we couldn't find anything over there [shaking her head no]. He is kind of upset because that [graphic novels] is what he wants to read…You can give me some suggestions on them because I would like to help him I just don't know where to send them…[shaking her head no and shrugging]

She really wanted to help the student find graphic novels but the school library didn't contain them. She as well as her student was bewildered and disappointed by this situation. She eventually asked for my suggestions. When I gave her a list of free online graphic novels and comics, she appreciated it and was really excited about giving it to her student.

Thus, while the majority of the Cañon Elementary School teachers showed positive attitudes towards graphic novels, comics, and animations as educational materials, their use in the classrooms was limited, except a few teachers like those who taught first and fifth grades. Most of the teachers also showed very little experience with Japanese magna and anime, both for personal and professional reasons. The reasons were related to their limited knowledge and experiences with the genres and lack of access to these types of texts.

Participant Selection

To acquire a comprehensive understanding of fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I used purposeful sampling (Patton & Patton, 2002). Key criterions were age (around ten years old), gender (both male and female), and participants' willingness and their parents' permission to participate in this study. I recruited participants in the fourth and fifth grade combined class of Cañon Elementary School because I wanted to work with children in a school where I had already established a rapport. Working with a familiar school saved time in recruiting participants and getting to know each of them. In addition, participants' willingness to participate in this study, as well as their

parents/guardians' permission, was also important, so I requested their explicit consent to participate in my study.

In the first month, I had twenty-four students in total in the fourth and fifth graders combined classroom: twelve fourth graders and twelve fifth graders. After a month of the study, they split the class into two: fourth and fifth, then I chose fifth grade as a focal group for several reasons. In the classroom, I often had fifth graders asking me insightful questions as they considered issues thoughtfully. Many of the students also often showed their knowledge and experiences with popular culture stories and symbols in order to make connections with me. Some boys asked me, "Do you know Ninja? Is there really Ninja in Japan?" with a great deal of enthusiasm by doing Ninja-like gestures, throwing stars. He said he learned Ninja from cartoons and movies. I was curious about their popular culture knowledge and discourses, drawing on popular culture in the classroom. In the first individual interview with the fifth graders, our conversations ranged from talking about their learning experiences about Japan in the classroom and analyzing stories from critical perspectives and connecting their learning to their own personal life and culture. I really wanted to explore their thinking and learning experiences in the classroom in-depth. Therefore, I chose fifth graders as a focal group.

There were twelve fifth graders, four females and eight males. Many of them have not traveled far beyond their remote community, Black Canyon City. Eight of the participants were Caucasian and four of them were Latino, Irish-German American, African American, and Native American.

The descriptions of them in Table 3.3 are based on my observations in and outside the classroom and the interviews that I had with each participant. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 3.3: Background information on research participants.

Name	Gender	Ethnicity
Bianca	F	Caucasian
Kate	F	Latino American
Mary	F	Caucasian
Nicole	F	Caucasian
Aaron	M	Irish-German American
Bob	M	Caucasian
David	M	Caucasian
Greg	M	Caucasian
Jerry	M	African American
Michael	M	Native American
Peter	M	Caucasian
Sam	M	Caucasian

Note: Names listed here are pseudonyms.

Bianca, aged 11, a female Caucasian, was born in New Mexico. She attended Cañon Elementary School only 2013-2014 school year during my study. After that, she went back to her hometown in New Mexico. Bianca is an energetic and pleasant girl who loves fashion. With a smile, she often showed me her favorite accessories and new hairstyles. Her favorite school subjects are science and math. She said she always looks for interesting math games through multiplication.com. Bianca showed no interest in writing, but she demonstrated excellent writing skills in her journals and other writing activities. For example, she created several palm-sized books about the 2011 earthquake effects on animals in Japan and shared them with classmates. In her free time, she enjoys reading chapter books, riding a bicycle, playing PlayStation video games and Pokémon card games, and hanging out with friends and cousins.

Kate, aged 11, a female second-generation Latino American, was born in Arizona. She speaks a little Spanish with her family members. She moved to Black Canyon City from Phoenix just before this study began. Kate is an insightful, calm, and mature person. She often responded to stories from critical and analytical perspectives based on her personal and cultural experiences. She loves reading all kinds of books including chapter books, graphic novels, comics, and magazines. Especially, she enjoys biography and nonfiction stories. In her free time, she enjoys texting friends and listening to music and playing games on her iPod, playing basketball, and doing video games. She said she used to spend a great amount of time on playing Pokémon card games with her brothers at home. Kate often told me a significant role of basketball in her family. In her cultural x-ray she wrote, "Basketball is my life…it is important to me because a lot of my family play it." She quite often plays basketball with her family members including parents, brothers, grandparents, and uncles and aunts.

Mary, aged 11, a female Caucasian, was born in Black Canyon City. I have known her since she was a kindergartener, so we already had rapport. She is a friendly, quiet, shy, and artistic girl. She likes to play games and soccer outside, and also she has a great interest in arts and loves graphic novels. In the classroom, I often saw Mary to keep graphic novels on her desk and read it whenever she got a chance. During the interview, she expressed how she loves artistic elements in the books: "pictures are really cool, and we see more sometimes funny the pictures show how they are reacting to it, and if they are surprises, happy or sad about it, and also illustrators are sometimes very good at drawing pictures. People do very good jobs." She also told me that she was impressed by manga artists' drawing techniques on characters' facial expressions and movements,

which were detailed and realistic. She asked me how to buy manga in the U.S. because she wanted to keep it at home. Although Mary didn't often show her opinions orally during classroom discussions, she skillfully used multiple modes such as colors and images to express her feelings, thoughts, and ideas.

Nicola, aged 11, a female Caucasian, was born in Black Canyon City. In addition to Mary, I have known her since she was a kindergartener. She was friendly and warm since the first day of this study. Nicola was always eager to talk, expresses her opinions before anyone else, and was willing to help in my work anything she could. In her free time, she enjoys reading chapter books and graphic novels. Her favorite graphic novel is Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Nicola also enjoys listening to music on her iPod and playing video games with her brothers and friends at home. She loves animals. She keeps various animals at home including cats, dogs, birds, parrots, snakes, and iguanas. In the classroom discussions and activities, she almost always drew on her experiences with pets in meaning making from stories we shared.

Aaron, aged 10, a male Irish-German American, was born in Arizona. He has been living in Black Canyon City for six years. He is a cheerful and outgoing, loves dogs, and is proud of his Irish-German identity. During the interview, Aaron often told me stories about his grandparents and family history. He is a highly motivated individual and an avid reader and writer. He claimed not to really like reading graphic novels. He said he always pick up novels for silent reading. His favorite book is Percy Jackson series because it is the most exciting and full of suspense and adventure. Aaron's strong literacy skill was revealed in many activities. For example, when asked to create a personal x-ray, he carefully chose words and phrases as well to represent his cultural identity. In

addition, he enjoyed expressing his opinions by using reasoning and giving evidence during discussions. At home, Aaron plays Xbox video game for a few hours everyday with his friends after he is done with homework.

Bob, aged 11, a male Caucasian, was born in Arizona. He loves video games, card games, graphic novels, comics, and toys. In the classroom, after he was done with his works, he soon brought out a graphic novel and started to read it. Bob also often told me his experiences with video games at home, sharing with me his favorite games. In additions, he always asked me about toys and games that are popular among children in Japan, especially Nintendo DS (handheld game) that he also plays at home.

David, aged 10, a male Caucasian, was born in Arizona. His favorite subjects are science and math. His reading preferences include chapter books, graphic novels, and comics. His favorite graphic novel is *Bone* (Smith, 2005). In the classroom, David was timid and shy. He often said, "I don't know", lowering his eyes when I asked him questions. But, he showed a strong interest in manga and anime, actively asking me questions about their illustrations, characters, and settings from himself. On the last interview, David said he was reading a chapter book for a reading contest held in the school. He seemed to be very excited about it. He gave me a delighted look and proudly said, "If you win, you will get a bike. My sister did!" He was going for the prize this year. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with friends, sisters, and cousins to play Pokémon card games, reading books about Pokémon, and watching its shows at home.

Greg, aged 10, a male Caucasian, was born in Arizona. He moved to Black Canyon City from Phoenix three years ago. He is a very creative, sociable, and responsible person. He always hangs out with the company of other boys. During group

activities, I often saw Greg take a leadership to lead discussions and framed responses. One day, I happened to meet his mother at school. She told me that Greg always talked to her what he learned about Japan such as the history of atomic bomb during World War II described in the nonfiction picture book *Shin's Bicycle*. She seemed very excited about his learning experiences about Japanese culture and language at school. Greg likes reading graphic novels and comic books. He said he loves Marvel comics because they have superhero characters. He also enjoys playing Pokémon card games with his friends and watching its shows on TV at home.

Jerry, aged 11, a male African American, was born in California. He moved to Black Canyon City just before this study began. He seemed to have already established good relationships with classmates when I first came to the classroom. During the interview, Jerry showed a great appreciation towards his classmates; they introduced him cafeteria and library at school and interesting places in the city. He likes math, science, and social studies. In his free time, he enjoys playing Pokémon card games and its game on his DS (handheld game console), reading its magazines and books, watching its shows on TV. On the last interview, he said he was very excited about visiting cousins in California during summer and playing video games with them. Jerry was the only participant who had some knowledge of Japan that he gained from his experiences in California in where many Japanese people have lived. He quite often made connections between what he knew about Japan and stories we shared.

Michael, aged 12, a male Native American, was born in Black Canyon City. He is diligent, articulate, thoughtful, and compassionate. His insightful opinions often opened up discussions and gave classmates new perspectives and understandings. Michael loves

math, especially geometry, multiplications, and divisions. At home he likes reading books including chapter books, graphic novels, and comics. He said he loves graphic novels. He always checks them out at school and reads them from a publishing company. He also subscribes to graphic novels, receiving one graphic novel every week at home. Michael's favorite graphic novels and comics are *Bone* (Smith, 2005) and *Simpsons* (Bates & Boothby, 2005). He said recently he is not really interested in Pokémon, but he got into the shows on TV when he was little. He proudly said, "I watched every single episode."

Peter, aged 11, a male Caucasian, was born in Utah. He moved to Black Canyon City two years ago. He loves math. According to him, he always plays math games on his laptop computer at home. Peter was very quiet and shy in the classroom. During discussions, he seldom spoke up, but he addressed his thoughts and ideas expressively in writings and drawings. During recesses, I often saw his friendly, outgoing, and sociable personality when hanging out with friends in the classroom and playing football at playground. At home and school, Peter likes reading chapter books and graphic novels including action and adventure. He also enjoys playing Pokémon card games, its TV shows, and reading its books with his friends.

Sam, aged 11, a male Caucasian, was born in Arizona. He has been living in Black Canyon City for six years. He is an active and cheerful personality. When I first entered into the classroom, Sam suddenly approached me with a big smiley face and asked me, "Is there Ninja in Japan?" and we talked about Ninja's history and their unique abilities. I felt immediately welcomed. Sam was the person who always made connections between popular culture characters and stories we shared in the classroom.

According to him, the most challenging schoolwork was reading and writing. I soon realized that because he often asked me for help about spelling during writing activities. Sam said he likes to read chapter books including scary stories. In his free time, he loves to play outside with friends, playing football and basketball. He also loves to play card games and watching movies. One day he excitedly said to me, "I have Pokémon cards in my backpack today!" He was looking forward to playing the game with friends.

Ms. Miller, the fifth grade classroom teacher, was also an important reason why I chose fifth graders as my focal group. It was important for me to have an existing personal and professional relationship with her, so that I could conduct research based on my natural disposition and style. Since 2009, my first visit to the school, we had a close enough relationship where I did not feel anxious during my time in her classroom. Ms. Miller was also supportive of my work and allowed me access to her classroom and her time. I could feel a professional connection with her. I knew that Ms. Miller valued children's engagement with popular media such as graphic novels, comic books, and movies in the educational setting. My research focus was children's responses with such mediums, and I knew that Ms. Miller would be willing to make a space for me to share them with her students in the classroom.

Thus, I had twelve fifth graders, four female and eight male, as my research participants who hold culturally diverse backgrounds. Every day of their lives, they engage in various graphic forms of texts such as graphic novels, comics, TV, movies, cartoons, video games, Nintendo DS, digital music players, and computer games with siblings, cosines, friends, and peers. Also, every single student had some experiences with Pokémon, popular culture media from Japan, including its TV shows, magazines,

comics, and card games. They were apparently "Digital Natives" (Prensky, p. 1, 2001), growing up within and around digital world.

Curriculum and Instruction

In order to explore fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I supported them to engage with the texts within a cross-cultural curriculum. The curriculum is framed by the notions of curriculum as inquiry (Short, 2009a; Short, Harste & Burke, 1996) and intertextuality (Short, 1992, 1993), consisting of two phases: 1) creating a context for learning and 2) a curriculum that is international (Short, 2003). Within the curriculum, students were exposed to Japanese culture through a wide range of materials, including Japanese pictorial texts, cultural artifacts, educational websites, and YouTube videos.

Curriculum as Inquiry and Intertextuality

Short (2009a) defined inquiry as a "collaborative process of connecting to and reaching beyond current understandings to explore tensions significant to learners. Inquiry is a stance that combines uncertainty and invitation" (p. 12). She underscored that inquiry is a "stance" that highlights learning as a process. In inquiry-based learning, learners explore tensions, questions, or interests, in order to build new understandings. The model of the inquiry-based curriculum, developed by Short, Harste and Burke (1996), involves three elements: personal and social knowing, knowledge systems, and sign systems (see Figure 3.5). Inquiry begins with personal and social knowing, which is the knowledge that learners bring from their personal and cultural experiences. Knowledge and systems include multiple knowledge regarding history and biology, for example. Learners bring such knowledge to explore issues from a range of perspectives,

in using reflective and conceptual thinking. Sign systems refer to language, music, art etc. Learners select the most suitable sign systems for their purposes of learning to make meaning. Thus, the inquiry-based curriculum encourages learners to make connections to their own life experiences and pose and solve problems collaboratively with other learners together, and then they construct new understandings and take further actions.

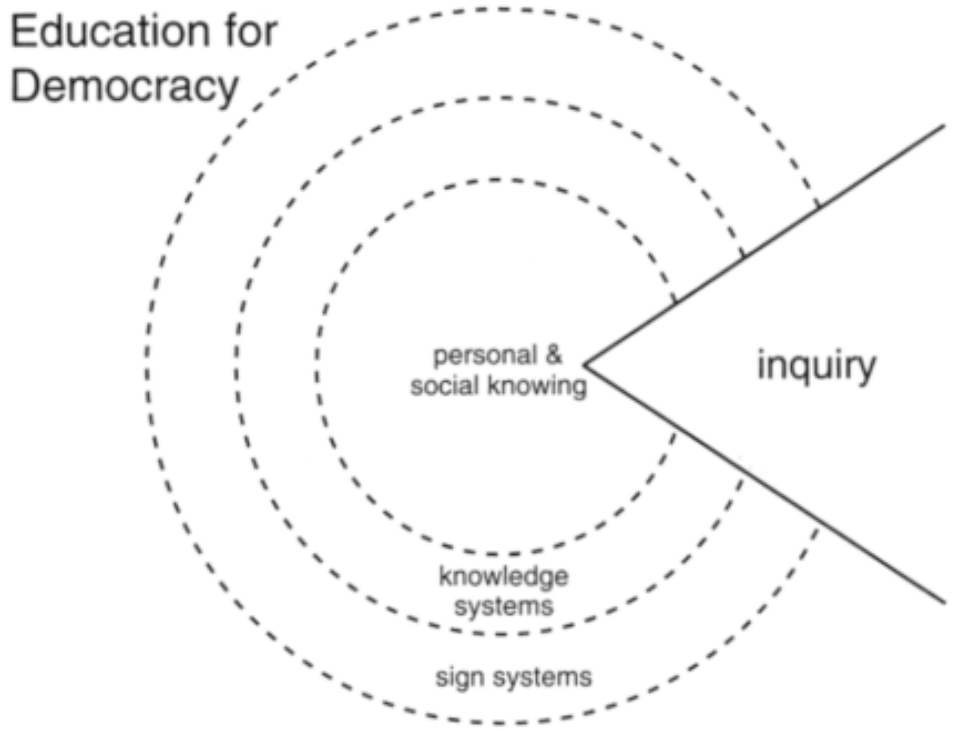


Figure 3.5: Curriculum as Inquiry (Short, Harste and Burke, 1996).

Intertextuality refers to the ways of interpreting texts in light of other texts- whether written, visual, or oral (Short, 1992). Short (1993) underscored the significance of intertextuality in learning:

> We learn something new when we are able to make connections between what we are currently experiencing and something we already know. When we make few or no connections, learning within these experiences is difficult and easily forgotten. On the other hand, if we stay too close to what we already know, we are not pushed as learners into new understandings. For all learners, the most productive learning situation is one in which we stand within sight of what we already know as we push into new territory (p. 284).

Intertextuality creates a powerful learning environment in which learners are able to develop new understandings by connecting their personal experiences, or something familiar to them, to what they are currently experiencing. Similarly, reading texts in an intertextual manner provides opportunities for learners to share connections, create layers of meanings, and think together toward understanding. The greater the range of texts readers explore, the more complex intertextual connections they develop (Short, 1993; Short, Harste & Burke, 1996; Short, Kauffman & Kahn, 2000; Edwards, 2009).

Cross-Cultural Curriculum

Based on these ideas of curriculum as inquiry and intertextuality, I developed a cross-cultural curriculum. In the first phase of the curriculum, I used text sets regarding Japan, a collection of conceptually related picture books used by a group of students in order to create a context for learning (Short, 1993). The text sets activity helped develop students' understanding of Japan by making connections and comparisons between Japanese culture and their personal cultures, as well as among the books. In the second phase of the curriculum, a specific curriculum framework, "A Curriculum that is iInternational" (Short, 2008, see Figure 3.6), guided my study. Within this framework, the students considered intercultural understanding, critical inquiry, and global perspectives through exploration of personal cultural identities, ways of living and thinking within cultures, cross-cultural studies, and global issues.

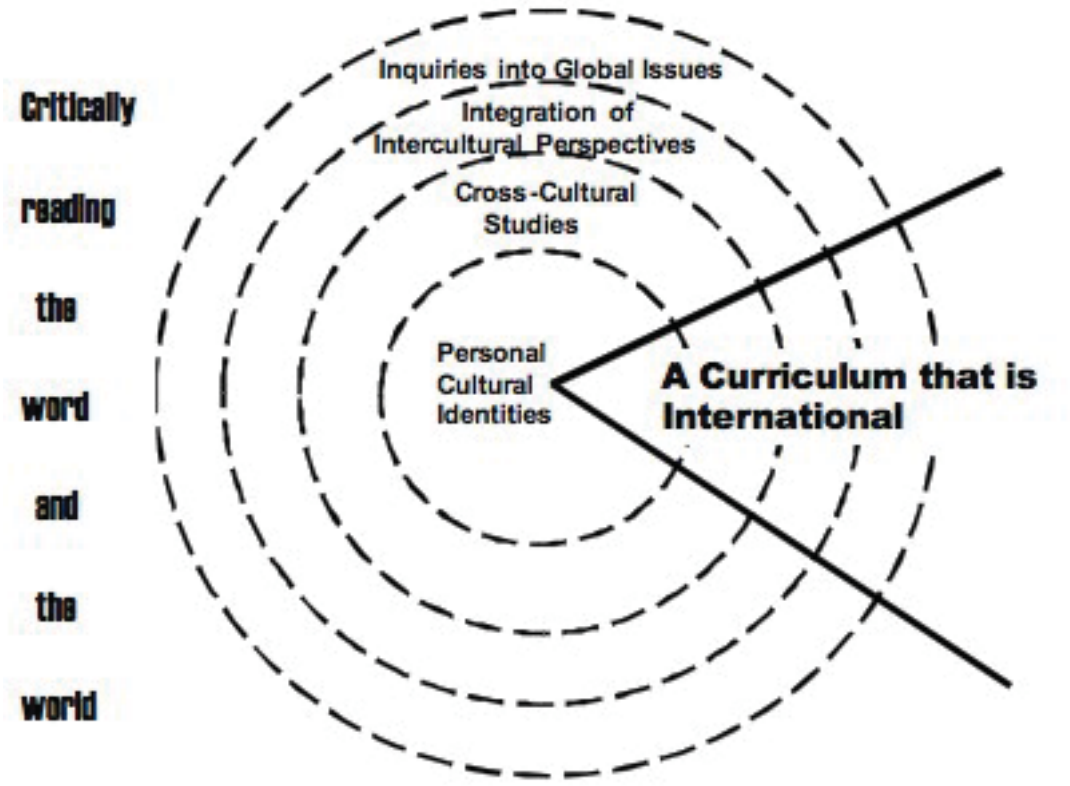


Figure 3.6: A Curriculum that is international (Short, 2008).

Table 3.4 shows learning objectives of the cross-cultural curriculum, and Table 3.5 illustrates the duration of the curriculum and how the course schedules relate to and build on one another.

Table 3.4: Learning objectives of the cross-cultural curriculum.

Sessions	Objectives
1-10	Students will: • Develop understandings about Japan by exploring its history, fashion, traditions, food habit, geography, people's life style, and animals etc. • Recognize common humanity. • Value cultural differences.
11-30	Students will: • Create new understandings about cultural perspectives and global issues. • Develop understandings of the complexity and diversity within Japanese culture. • Develop conceptual understanding of culture. • Develop global perspectives.

Table 3.5: General timeline of the curriculum.

Sessions	Contents	Cultural activities
1-10	Cross-cultural studies through text sets	*Session 1:* Introduction about Japan *Session 3:* History of Japanese paper and origami activity *Session 6:* Japanese kids' school experiences *Session 9:* Animals in Japan
11- 13	Exploration of personal culture through picture books	
14-27	Intercultural perspectives to Japanese pictorial texts	*Session 15:* Japanese language *Session 16:* Diversity in Japanese language and luck symbols *Session 17:* Japanese publications *Session 18:* Japanese housing *Session 19:* Calligraphy *Session 20:* Japanese holidays *Session 27:* Chopstick activity
28-30	Inquiry into global issues	

Hence, throughout the course of the study, I provided lessons framed by the concepts of inquiry-based learning and intertextuality. Participants collaboratively explored a number of texts including Japanese pictorial texts about Japanese culture and people.

Data Collection Procedures

I shared various materials with fifth grade students for 30 class sessions, over a six-month period, twice a week, with each session lasting for 60 minutes. From the first to the tenth class sessions, I went to the fourth and fifth grade combined classroom, after that I went to the fifth grade classroom, focusing on studying their learning about Japan through Japanese pictorial texts. Below is a detailed description of text sets projects, reading Japanese pictorial texts, international experiences, and response activities.

Introductory session: Session 1. On the first day, I explained the purpose and the outline of the study to the students. I also established ground rules with them, telling them to talk freely about what they think and feel; to wait until others are done speaking to talk; raise their hands when they want to talk, etc. After that, I shared general information about Japan, such as nature and climate, holidays and celebrations, school system, and language using the *Kids Web Japan* website.

Exploring text sets: Sessions 2-5. During the first thirty minutes of the second and the third sessions, I invited the students to engage in Japanese cultural activities, such as writing names in Japanese, learning about a history of Japanese paper through a YouTube video, and making *origami* (paper folding). In the other time slot, they engaged in a text sets activity. First, they browsed all text sets and chose one book they were interested in reading closely. Second, I demonstrated the process of responding to the story *Suki's Kimono* (Uegaki, 2003), about a Japanese-American girl celebrating both Japanese and American cultures, at the front of the classroom by introducing with the classroom teacher. We presented our thinking by writing and sketching our connections to the story, noting wonderings and questions using a Graffiti Board (Short, Harse & Burke, 1996), in which each person takes a corner of a paper and writes or draws his or her thoughts and questions. After that, I encouraged the students to express responses to their books using a Graffiti Board in groups, and to share the stories and the responses with group members (Figure 3.7 & 3.8).

Figure 3.7: Graffiti board response strategy.

Figure 3.8: Graffiti board: Land and Ecology group.

Text sets final inquiry: Sessions 6-10. During the first thirty minutes of the sixth and the ninth sesions, I invited the students to learn about Japanese children's school experiences using the *Kids Web Japan* website and animals in Japan using *ABC NEWS* on YouTube. In the other time, they prepared a text sets final inquiry. First, they worked on Webbing What's On My Mind (Short, Harse & Burke, 1996), webbing to organize the connections, issues, themes, or questions using the graffiti boards in groups. Second, using the web and research project sheets (see Figure 3.9), each group decided on one issue or topic that was most interesting to them to explore as a final inquiry. Third, they conducted research collaboratively in groups in reference to literature and the Internet sources. During the research, I encouraged them to record research tools and findings on a research note (see Figure 3.10). Lastly, they organized their findings on posters and then shared them with other groups in the class (see Figure 3.11).

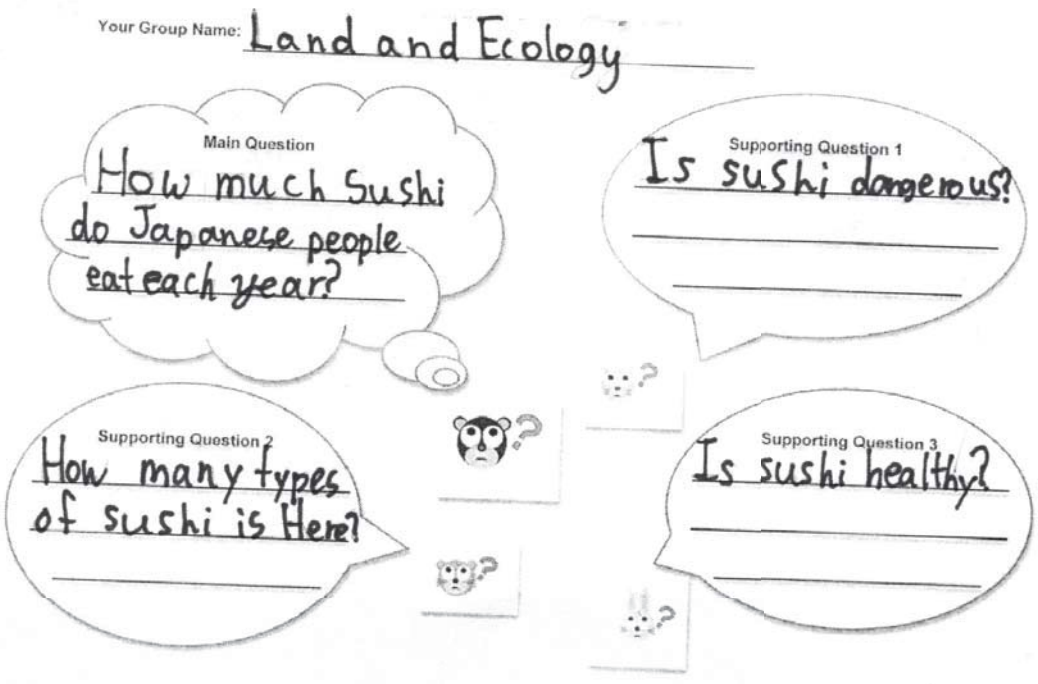


Figure 3.9. Research project sheet: Land and Ecology group.

Research Note

Your Name: _____

Main Research Question: What Types of dogs are in Japan?

Supporting Question That You Research: what is Akita dog?

What I discovered during my research 	Sources (Internet, dictionary, encyclopedia, interview, books, others) 
Akita dog They are bear hunters and deer hunters, also war dogs.	Internet
Akita dog They also look simalar to pit bull when a puppy.	books
Akita dog Power ful corageus and fearless.	note book

Figure 3.10: Research note: Animal group.

Figure 3.11: Final inquiry poster: Land and Ecology group.

Exploring personal cultural identities: Sessions 11-13. From the eleventh to the thirteenth sessions, I encouraged students to explore their personal cultural identities using a Cultural X-Ray (Short, 2009), in which students visually describe their traits, experiences, and identities that make them who they are. First, they explored identities of Japanese-American characters in *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993) and *Tea with Milk* (Say, 1999). After that, I shared my personal cultural x-ray as an example with students. I labeled the outside of my body with aspects of my culture that are evident to others, such as language, age, ethnicity, and gender, and inside with the values and beliefs that I hold in my heart. Then, I invited each student to create his or her own x-ray (see Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12. Cultural x-ray: Aaron.

Sharing Japanese pictorial texts: Sessions 14-27. From the fourteenth to the twenty-seventh sessions, I shared Japanese pictorial texts. Each lesson included three main parts: pre-reading, during reading, and post reading. In pre-readings of manga and anime, in order to develop the participants' background knowledge, I introduced some information about the stories including the title, author, plot, setting and characters, as well as techniques for reading manga such as panel-directionality, through a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix D & E for a printout of the PowerPoint presentation). I also created a space for the participants to reflect on previous learning experiences. Following

the pre-reading sessions, a classroom teacher read aloud a manga story chapter by chapter for 10 to 15 minutes each day. Then, I invited them to participate in post reading activities to let them think and reflect on the stories. The activities include literature discussions, Heart Maps, Venn Diagrams, Graffiti Boards, and Anomalies. During the literature discussions, I created a web on butcher paper to help organize and develop the participants' thinking, as suggested by Griffith (2007). In sharing anime, I used "anime circle" adopted from the procedures of the instruction of literature circles. Students watched anime for 20 minutes, wrote responses on post-it-notes including questions, wonderings, or interesting scenes, and discussed the story using the notes as starting point for discussion in class. I also invited students to Japanese cultural experiences, such as exploration of Japanese language, Japanese publications, housing, and luck symbols using videos on YouTube.

Inquiry into global issues: Sessions 28-30. During the last three sessions, using anime and picture books, students were engaged in an exploration of global issues such as the effects of the 2011's earthquake on Japanese people as well as the effect of the radiation explosion on people in the United States. On the last session, they browsed all of the artifacts they had worked on and the stories they had read over the last six months, and then they drew and wrote their reflections of their learning about Japanese culture and people on Graffiti Boards in groups. In the exploration of Japan through picture books and Japanese pictorial texts, the students learned various aspects of Japanese culture, traditions, and people's life styles. Examining their learning, I found that they were intrigued by the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami depicted in stories. Therefore, I decided to follow what they were interested in during the last few weeks of my study.

First, I encouraged the students to brainstorm a web of effects of the Japan tsunami and earthquake. They came up with effects such as destroyed houses and buildings, missing and departed people and animals, and radiation leaks from nuclear plants etc. Based on those responses, I developed four categories, 1) People, 2) Animals, 3) Second Disasters, and 4) Nuclear Plants, and then students decided on a topic wanted to explore. I also provided a folder including newspaper articles to each group, encouraging them to conduct an in-depth exploration of the topics in groups. For example, a folder on People included articles about how people were rescued, how people's lives were changed after the disaster, and how and where children have continued school lives.

Material Selection

In the cross-cultural curriculum, I chose to share a variety of materials including Japanese pictorial texts, cultural artifacts, educational websites, and YouTube videos. To find appropriate manga, anime, kamishibai, and picture books for participants, I set the following criteria: age appropriateness, readability, genre, and themes, as referenced by Noe's (1995) criteria for selecting quality books for young readers. In this section, I expanded on text selection criteria and process, and I also provide brief descriptions of the materials.

Criteria for Text Selection

As far as age appropriateness was concerned, the following factors guided me to identify stories: characters' age, inclusion of male and female characters, problems characters deal with, and literary quality. I selected stories that contained a young male or female child as a main character who was about participants' age, in order to provide familiarity. I avoided stories that showed violent and pornographic images, which manga

and anime sometimes contain. Further, readability was important because, without comprehension, readers would be unable to respond. The texts must not be excessively complex for the language level of the fifth graders.

In terms of genre, I chose contemporary realistic fiction, modern fantasy, and folktale for manga, anime and kamishibai. Contemporary realistic fiction represents the culture, attitudes, and people living in the present time with a realistic use of language, themes and visuals (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 2008; Hancock, 2004). Also, realistic fiction often contains universal themes such as family life and friendship, which were themes I expected participants would be familiar with and have the requisite background to interpret and understand. As for the genre of modern fantasy, it portrays events, settings, and characters existing in the imagination, yet contains the realities of life. Hancock (2004) stated that fantasy illuminates reality, truths, values, and morality that exist in the real world. Lynch-Brown and Tomlison (2008) also noted that fantasy contains "truths that help the reader understand today's world" (p. 134). Lastly, I selected Japanese folktales because Mildred Butchelder, in a 1966 American Library Association journal, wrote, "To know the classic stories of a country creates a climate, an attitude for understanding the people for whom that literature is a heritage" (Wheeler, 1967, p. 180). I assumed that those three genres, contemporary realistic fiction, modern fantasy and folktale, for manga, anime, and kamishibai would engage participants in learning about Japanese people's lifestyle, culture, beliefs, values, and experiences in many rich, detailed, and authentic ways.

I imagined that it might be a great challenge for participants, who were not familiar with Japan, to experience stories about Japanese culture and people. In order to

build on what they were already familiar with, I introduced stories containing themes that they recognized, and were familiar with or curious about, as the basis of introduction of unfamiliar stories, as suggested by Stan (2002).

Through my teaching experience of Japanese culture to elementary school children in Arizona, I found that many of them had great interest in what Japanese people eat and wear, what kinds of homes they inhabit, and what kinds of animals or pets they have. As a result, I chose stories presenting Japanese homes, clothing, food, and animals. However, providing only superficial aspects of Japanese culture such as food and fashion would present a serious risk to the validity of my findings. Short (2011) argued that if readers are exposed to only surface aspects of one culture and do not move into the values and beliefs, they just gain a tourist-level of understanding of that culture and easily create stereotypes. For that reason, I selected stories that present various cultural elements not only in the "surface" but also "under the waterline" of the iceberg (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997), see Figure 3.13. I expected participants to gain a sense of the diversity and complexity within Japanese culture and to develop emotional connections and empathy, without creating stereotypes.

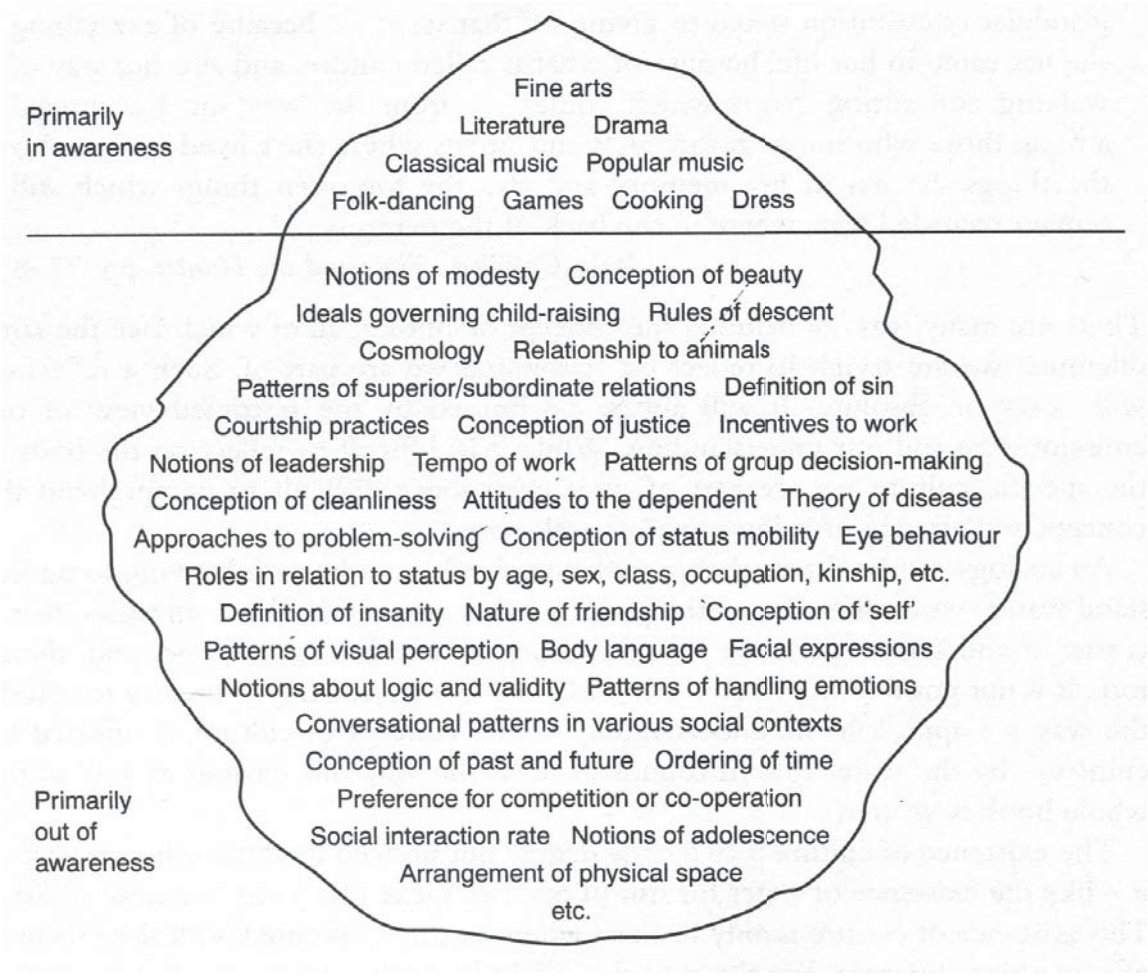


Figure 3.13: The iceberg concept of culture (Fennes and Hapgood, 1997, p. 14).

With these criteria in mind, I examined professional reviews such as "Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature" and "Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies" and "Film Education." I located all of the Japanese stories that were published in these journals within the past 10 years and read or watched them closely. I then determined that the following works would be suitable for my research: *Yotsuba&!* (Azuma, 2009) for manga, *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) for anime, and *Hats for the Jizos* (Matsutani, Matsuyama, & Tamaki, 2002) for kamishibai, as well as 53 children's picture books, which I described below. However, this selection process was inevitably influenced by my personal biases. To minimize these biases, I asked the classroom

teacher, as well as fellow graduate students at the University of Arizona, and an assistant professor who specializes in the study of children's literature at the University of New Mexico to read and watch the stories I selected to confirm they would be appropriate for this study.

Japanese Pictorial Texts

I selected *Yotsuba&!* (Azuma, 2009) for manga, *Ponyo* for anime, and *Hats for the Jizos* (Matsutani, Matsuyama, & Tamaki, 2002) for kamishibai in order to invite the students to have international experiences and exploration of global issues. *Yotsuba&!* is a Japanese contemporary realistic work of fiction about a young orphan girl's exploration of her every day life in Japan, and *Ponyo*, a modern fantasy, is about a Japanese young boy and little female gold fish's life journey. The story also illustrates global issues such as natural disasters and an environmental issue of marine pollution. *Hats for the Jizos* is a well-known Japanese folktale portraying an old couple's generous attitude toward statues.

"Yotsuba&!" for manga. *Yotsuba&!* (Yo-tu-ba-tou) (Azuma, 2009) is a Japanese contemporary realistic work of fiction written and illustrated by Kiyohiko Azuma. This manga series continues to this day and appeals to young children both in Japan and the United States. The story includes various themes such as friendship, family and community life in Japan. It was first published by ASCII Media Works in 2003 in Japan. An English version was released by ADV Manga from 2005 to 2007 and by Yen Press from 2009 to present in North America. I used the one published by Yen Press in this study because, unlike the one by ADV that is Americanized with vocabulary changes, the one by Yen Press leaves some Japanese words untranslated, such as sound

effects. Short and Thomas (2007) suggested that unfamiliar languages can be a meaningful resource in cross-cultural study because the language also shows an aspect of culture.

Yotsuba&! (Azuma, 2009) received an Excellence Award for Manga at the 2006 Japan Media Arts Festival, and was also nominated for the 12th Osamu Tezuka Culture Award and the Eisner Award "Best Publication for Kids" category in 2008. Further, in 2011 *Yotsuba&!* was introduced in *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, a refereed journal published by the International Board on Books for Young Children in the United States.

The main character is an adopted five-year-old girl named Yotsuba, born in a foreign country. Now she lives with her Japanese adoptive father, Koiwai, in an urban city in Japan. Yotsuba is energetic, cheerful, and inquisitive: she explores everyday objects and concepts and constantly searches for new things. In the first volume, for example, she discovers air conditioners, what they are and how they work, doorbells and swings and more. Throughout the daily journey of discovery, she learns about the world around her, and also develops problem-solving and interpersonal relationship skills, guided by her father, neighbors, and friends.

Yotsuba&! (Azuma, 2009) mostly uses straightforward rectangular frames, along with a variety of angles and panel sizes, which convey a wide range of the characters' moods and feelings. Backgrounds are carefully drawn and contain many details. Characters' clothing, facial expressions, behaviors, and movements are described dramatically but at the same time drawn delicately and exquisitely with all kinds of shades of grey and black, lines, and icons.

"Ponyo" for anime. *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010), a Japanese animated film, is a modern fantasy set in Japan. The story was written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki and released by Studio Ghibli in Japan in 2008. Walt Disney Pictures released an English version in North America in the summer of 2009. The film received several awards, such as the Japanese Academy Prize for Best Animation of the Year for 2009 and nominations in many categories for the 2009 Asian Film Award, winning for Best Composer. In the educational field, "Film Education," a publication promoting curriculum-relevant film-based learning in the UK, recommends the use of *Ponyo* for intercultural studies at school. The story covers various themes including friendship, family life, gender roles, hope, empathy, reciprocal acceptance, and even environmental issues of current interest in Japan, such as humans upsetting the balance of nature.

The story focuses on a relationship between Ponyo, who is a female goldfish dreaming to become human, and Sosuke, who is a responsible and compassionate five-year-old boy. The setting is a seaside village in Japan. Ponyo lives in a submarine under the sea with hundreds of goldfish sisters and a wizard father who fights to protect the fragile balance of nature from humans. Her mother, Granmamare, is the Goddess of the Ocean, living somewhere away from the family. Sosuke lives in a hilltop house with his father and mother. One day, Ponyo sneaks out of the submarine and reaches the beach near Sosuke's house. There, she meets Sosuke and they become friends. In the meantime, Ponyo's father finds her and takes her back to the submarine. However, it is too late. Ponyo has already received the power to become human by licking Sosuke's blood on his thumb, which had been cut by broken glass. Ponyo uses the ability as well as her father's magic to escape from the submarine and look for Sosuke. However, Ponyo's use of

uncontrolled power causes a heavy storm and tsunami, which eventually submerge the village and disrupt the harmony of nature. In the end, Ponyo's mother announces that if Sosuke passes a test, Ponyo will be allowed to live with him as a human, but if he fails, she will turn into sea foam. Sosuke is asked if he loves Ponyo even though she is a goldfish, and he answers that he accepts her for what she is. Then, Ponyo's power is taken away and she lives with Sosuke and his family.

Ponyo (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) is remarkable because it was created without computer-generated animation of any kind; animators used only traditional two-dimensional hand-drawn techniques. Gorgeous underwater landscapes and creatures, dynamic and intricate waves, a beautiful seaside town, and realistic movements of characters were all drawn with soft pastel colors using only pencils. Miyazaki's hand-drawn images leave audiences with comfortable and cozy feelings. Another way Miyazaki conveys feeling is through the name "Ponyo," which is an onomatopoeia that expresses what something soft and squishy sounds like when being touched.

The story takes place in a seaside village that Miyazaki was inspired by, Tomonoura, a real fishing town in Setonaikai National Park in Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture located on the southern part of Japan. The setting, story, and music are also influenced by Richard Wagner's opera *Die Walkure* (1870). In addition, the story is inspired by the Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* (1836), so *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) contains some similar aspects of the story. For example, protagonists of both stories are female ocean creatures that want to be human. They also encounter similar kinds of situations such as meeting a male human character, even though the settings are different. One key difference is that *The Little Mermaid* portrays

Christian self-sacrifice, such as when the little mermaid is given beautiful feet in exchange for her tongue and voice, while *Ponyo* doesn't cover such a storyline. Further, *The Little Mermaid* shows conventional gender roles and a patriarchal ideology is strongly reaffirmed, yet *Ponyo* describes female characters as well as young children as powerful and strong with positive intent.

Additionally, *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) portrays an important Japanese cultural symbol, "the ocean." In Japan, the ocean is regarded as a sacred place and always connected to "mother." Japanese people believe that the ocean is "the mother" who gives birth since all life is thought to have begun there. The Ocean is, therefore, often described as "Mother Ocean" in Japan. In addition, Japanese people bless the ocean since Japan is an island country and the ocean has carried resources critical to their daily life from other countries, such as gas, oil, food, and clothing, since early times.

"Hats for the Jizos" for kamishibai. I chose the Japanese folktale *Hats for the Jizos* (Matsutani, Matsuyama, & Tamaki, 2002) for the kamishibai in this study. The story in the kamishibai format was retold by Miyoko Matsutani and illustrated by Fumio Matsuyama in English in 1973. It has been translated into English by Donna Tamaki and published by Twinkle Tales for Kids in North American in 2002. On last day of the year, an old man goes into town hoping to sell a piece of cloth so he can buy special food to celebrate the New Year with his wife. But no one is interested in buying the cloth, and just to have something to take home, he exchanges his cloth for straw hats another man is trying to sell. On the way home, it starts snowing, and then the old man sees six stone statues of the deity Jizo (jee-zoh) while heavy snow is falling. He feels very sorry for them because they look cold and don't even have any food offered to them for following

the New Year's Day holiday. So he covers their bare heads with all five straw hats he has and even gives his own scarf to the sixth Jizo. Back at home the old man and his wife are going to celebrate the New Year with the modest food they usually eat. However, later that New Year's Eve night, they are mysteriously rewarded with abundant food and gifts for the man's unselfish generosity by the deity Jizos. Thus, the story describes Japanese cultural symbol "Jizo," the Deity in Buddhism leading people to salvation. It also portrays the cultural way of celebrating New Year's Day, which still remains in present day Japan. The form of visual storytelling kamishibai itself is also a Japanese cultural symbol.

The illustrations in the story are characterized by drawing a main character with bold and simple outlines; on the other hand, other characters and backgrounds are drawn in softer lines and faded colors. Such illustration techniques lead audience's attention to the main character. The illustrations, drawn with watercolor, effectively reveal the characters' emotions, feelings and moods.

Picture books. In order to create a context for learning, I selected 53 picture books. 22 books came from Japanese Culture and Language Books Kits, developed in 2009 by Worlds of Words at the University of Arizona, and 31 books were chosen from WorldCat library search engine. I located the books into six categories around universal topics as follows: 1) War and Peace, 2) Land and Ecology, 3) Cities and Villages, 4) People, 5) Family and Friends, and 6) Animals (see Table 3.6). Most of the books portrayed unfamiliar cultural and historical contexts to the students; therefore, I decided to locate them based on the topics that are expected to be accessible and understood by all students.

I spent significant time reviewing the literature; reflecting upon the representations of characters and carefully organized the text sets, so that each text set involved multiple voices even though I had initially organized the books related to one big topic. In each text set, I also located the books that were covering a range of genres and themes. The Land and Ecology group, for example, involved contemporary realistic fiction and nonfiction, historical fiction and nonfiction, and informational books including themes of food resources and geography, understanding and acceptance cultural differences, developing family or friend relationship, and caring animals.

In order to encourage the students to explore their personal identities, I chose to share two Japanese-American multicultural picture books with them. One was *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993), a historical fiction, portraying a young Japanese-American boy's tension and difficult life inside and outside of an internment camp in the U.S. during the World War II. The other was *Tea with Milk* (Say, 1999), a realistic fiction, about a Japanese-American girl's cultural conflicts set in Japan. I also shared an American folktale *The Little Mermaid* (Zwerger & Bell, 2004), pairing it with the anime *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010).

Table 3.6: Picture books used in the text sets project.

Groups		Fiction	Non-fiction
1	War & Peace	• *Barefoot Gen** • *Baseball Saved Us* • *The Unbreakable Code*	• *Pearl Harbor Child* • *Sadako** • *Shin's Tricycle* • *Hiroshima and Nagasaki* • *Hiroshima* • *Atom Bomb*
2	Land & Ecology	• *My First Japanese Kanji Book ** • *The Ainu and Fox** • *The Wakame Gatherers* • *How My Parents Learned to*	• *Hiromi's Hands* • *Cooking the Japanese Way* • *A Taste of Japan* • *Food and Recipes of Japan* • *A World of Recipes: Japan*

		Eat	• *Sushi for Kids*
3	Cities & Villages	• *Grandpa's Town** • *Kamishibai Man** • *The Park Bench** • *I Lost My Dad** • *Erika-san* • *Tokyo Friends*	• *New Asian Home* • *Dropping in on Japan* • *Peoples of the World*
4	People	• *Cook Melons Turn to Frogs!: The Life and Poems of Issa** • *The Ainu: A Story of Japan's Original People** • *My Japan** • *Tea with Milk*	• *In Search of the Spirits: The Living National Treasures of Japan ** • *Honda ** • *World in View Japan* • *Cities of the World Tokyo*
5	Family & Friends	• *The Way We Do It in Japan* • *Grandfather's Journey* • *Suki's Kimono* • *The Moon Princess** • *The Boy of the Three-Year** • *Allison*	• *Countries of the World: Japan* • *Southern and Eastern Asia*
6	Animals	• *The Origami Master** • *Ho-LimLim** • *The Adventure of Momotaro** • *The Animals: Selected Poems** • *Guri and Gura** • *The Very Hungry Caterpillar**	• *Hachiko** • *Japan*

Note. * shows the books are from Japanese culture and language book kits, provided by Worlds of Words at the University of Arizona. Retrieved from http://wowlit.org/links/booklists/japanese-language-and-culture-kit-book-list/

Japanese Publications and Cultural Artifacts

In order to invite the students to have international experiences, I provided opportunities for them to explore Japanese language and illustrations using a collection of publications such as novels, picture books, and magazines. Additionally, *origami*, *Ukiyo-*

e illustrations (traditional wood-block paintings), as well as Japanese pictorial texts, were introduced as authentic Japanese cultural artifacts.

Educational Websites and YouTube Videos

When reviewing literature regarding Japan available in the United States, I realized that majority of the books are primarily historical fiction and folktales with very few contemporary images, leaving the impression that Japanese culture is mired in the past with traditional clothing and artifacts as being representative of Japanese culture today. In order to introduce Japanese people's contemporary life styles, I decided to utilize videos on YouTube and educational websites such as an educational website *Kids Web Japan*, provided by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a Japanese non-government organization (see Table 3.7). I also shared several educational websites with the students when they conducted a text sets final inquiry through a webpage I created (see Figure 3.14), taking into the consideration of safety and accessibility. The webpage was developed based on the website, Web Poster Wizard (http://poster.4teachers.org/) provided by the Advanced Learning Technologies project at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. On the personal webpage, I listed some website links and allowed the students to freely open the links that they were interested in.

Table 3.7: Educational websites shared in Japanese cultural activities.

Session	International Experiences	Websites
1	Introduction about Japan	• *Kids Web Japan* http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/index.html
3	Origami	• *History of Japanese paper* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E-atPin7pQ
6	Schools in Japan	• *Kids Web Japan: Exploring schools* http://webjapan.org/kidsweb/explore/schools/index.html
9	Animals in Japan	• *"ABC News: Animal Cafes All the Rage in Japan"*

		http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMd9EzpKedg • *Tokyo-Cat-Café* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dF_DRxlZXBw
16	Japanese Luck Symbols	• *Animal Planet: Stationmaster Cat* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Jtq3fg2Ncs
18	Japanese Housing	• *Typical house in Japan* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rE4IuL6NTg • *ABC NEWS: Japan's Micro Home* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-M51iif6VE

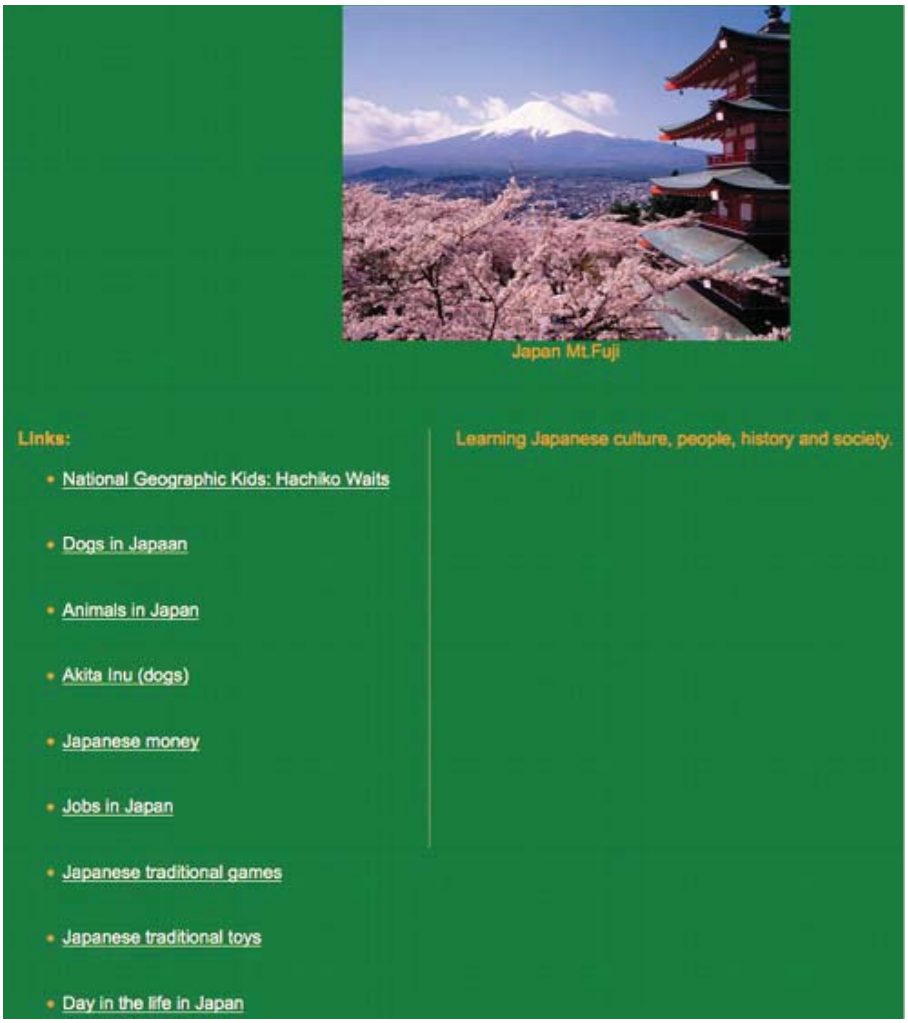


Figure 3.14. Webpage for final inquiry.

Data Collection

In general, there are three types of data collection methods for a qualitative research study: interviews, observations, and documentation (Patton & Patton, 2002).

Employing more than one of the above methods in data collection enhances validity and also builds on the strength of one approach while minimizing the weakness of any single approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002; Patton & Patton, 2002). In order to understand children's reading experiences with Japanese pictorial texts, I collected data from a number of sources. The detailed data sources and data collection procedures were described in the following section.

Data Sources

I collected data from the following sources: participant-observation, videotaped/audiotaped classroom discussions, participants' written and artistic artifacts, audiotaped interviews, and ethnographic fieldnotes and reflection journals. Participant-observation, classroom discussions, and participants' artifacts were primary sources used to capture children's responses, while the other sources served as secondary sources to triangulate the data.

Participant-observation. I was a participant-observer during lessons. The purpose of combining participation and observation is to understand settings from emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives (Pike, 1954). That is, my role was to participate in discussions and activities in order to develop insiders' views of what is happening, at the same time, to observe and describe what is happening standing outside of the settings as an outsider (Patton & Patton, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For example, I led and engaged in discussions together with participants, while at the same time maintaining an objective stance to observe the participants' interactions and experiences.

Videotaped and audiotaped classroom discussions. I led discussions by asking response-centered and open-ended questions. The purpose of this type of discussion was

to understand participants' views and thinking from multiple perspectives (Patton & Patton, 2002). As a framework for discussions, I followed an outline (see Appendix F), which I created by referencing Klein's (1995) response questions for literature discussions. The outline included general questions that were applied to discussions of any texts, and special questions that were intended to move discussions toward specific features of each story. I orally addressed the questions because I did not want participants' thinking to be limited by looking at the questions. Although I prepared a preliminary list of response questions, other questions emerged in the course of discussion and were added or replaced the pre-established ones. I reminded the participants they were free to express their opinions, and that their thoughts and views were valuable and meaningful in this study, that I respected their responses, and that their interests determined the focus of our discussions.

Since I was involved with participants during discussions, it was difficult for me to work with them and to take fieldnotes at the same time. So I captured each discussion on video, and then took full fieldnotes while watching the recorded versions. Marshall and Rossman (2006) noted that videotape is a valuable data source for "discovery and validation" (p. 121). It preserves participants' verbal and nonverbal responses and behaviors such as facial expressions and gestures, nonrecurring or rare events, and complicated interactions that researchers may overlook at research sites. It also refreshes researchers' memories and fills in parts missing from notes that may have been quickly jotted down.

Collections of participants' artifacts. I collected participants' drawings and written artifacts to examine their responses to the stories. The following were activities

that participants participated in so they could express their ideas and thoughts: Literature Logs to write thinking in response to a book, Anomalies to write questions or wonders, Time Lines to organize major events, Venn Diagrams to investigate stories closely, Webbing What's on My Mind to web and organize issues and ideas, Graffiti Boards to write/sketch responses in a graffiti fashion, Heart Maps to study a character, and Cultural X-Rays to explore personal cultural identities and raise conceptual understanding of culture. See Appendix G for instructions of each activity (Short, Harste & Burke & 1996; Short, 2009b). I reminded the participants that free expression of thoughts would be their greatest contribution to this study and that I would not grade their artifacts.

Semi-structured phenomenological interviews. Using an adaptation of Seidman's (2013) three-phase interviews, I conducted three group interviews, one at the beginning, one during, and one after the study was completed. The purpose of conducting multiple interviews was to allow participants to reconstruct their experiences in the classroom while I explored the meaning of their experiences. I prepared a preliminary list of interview questions (see Appendix H), but other questions emerged in the course of study and I added to and replaced the pre-established ones. Each group consisted of two to three children, and each interview lasted about fifteen to twenty minutes.

The first interview was conducted in order to understand the student's individual experiences with various popular culture texts, in and out of school settings. It was a survey to gather an overview of their access and exposure to the texts, purposes and physical settings in which they have engaged, and social settings in which they are likely to engage. I also asked them to elaborate on their likes and dislikes about certain genres or topics. The second interview focused on their experiences with Japanese pictorial texts

in the classroom. I allowed them to reconstruct concrete details of their real-life experiences in the context. The third interview focused on clarifying, confirming, or elaborating on issues and questions raised during the first and second interviews, classroom discussions, and activities. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim to preserve the participants' words and nonverbal signals for further analysis. During interviews, I took fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995), and following the interviews I created notes to elaborate on any immediate interpretations and journal my initial reflections of the interviews (Emerson et al., 1995).

Ethnographic observations. During discussions and activities, I jotted down situations, events and dialogues that stand out. After each lesson, I wrote up my observations into detailed and nonjudgmental ethnographic fieldnotes, including descriptions of what I saw and what participants said and did, while watching videotapes. I then j*ournaled* my personal experience and feelings about the observations. The ethnographic fieldnotes and reflection journals were critical sources for understanding participants' experiences as well as gathering the researcher's insights and reflections (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Dyson & Genishi, 2005). It also helps researchers to identify the processes of events, develop interpretations of events, uncover meanings, find and sort out patterns, and generate ideas and questions for further research (Emerson, et al, 1995; Patton & Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

Based on guidelines outlined by Marshall and Rossman's (2006) methods of data analysis as well as methods by Seidman (2013) and Emerson et, al., (1995) I used a two-phased approach to analyzing my data: open coding followed by analytic coding.

Phase 1: Open Coding

After each lesson, I transcribed the participants' oral responses to texts in the classroom, and divided them according to the pages of the text they refer to. After each group interview, I transcribed the interviews, while dividing them in terms of the groups of the participants. All oral responses and interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the participants' words and nonverbal signals such as laughs, pauses and outside noises. While transcribing, I took notes, recording initial hunches, reflections, and analysis. After the transcriptions are completed, I utilized Seidman's (2013) method of transcription analysis to identify emerging patterns. I also compared the transcriptions with videotaped physical demonstrations, fieldnotes, and artifacts to find significant patterns, connections or issues.

Phase 2: Analytic Coding

The process of analytic coding began when most of participants' interviews and discussions were transcribed, examined, and coded. In this phase, I sought to make connections among coded data, clarify those connections, develop interpretative categories, and summarize findings while taking integrative memos (Emerson et. al., 1995) and integrating all data in order to present answers to the research questions. Table 3.8 illustrates the sources of data and data analysis used to answer the research questions for this study.

Table 3.8: Sources and analysis of data.

Research Questions	Data Source	Data Analysis
1. How do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts? • What are the elements/patterns of their responses? • What knowledge or	• Ethnographic fieldnotes and reflection journals • Audiotaped/videotaped classroom	• Transcribing discussions and interviews • Comparing transcriptions,

	experiences do they draw on to make sense of the texts? 2. What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts?	discussions • Collections of artifacts • Audiotaped interviews	artifacts, fieldnotes, journals and participants' physical demonstrations in videotapes.

Trustworthiness

In this study, I gathered data to build concepts and theories from multiple sources. However, because of the involvement of the human element, there might be subjectivities that had some impact in the process of data collection and analysis. Following the suggestion of Creswell (2009), Creswell and Plano (2011), Marshall and Rossman (2006), I chose the following three ways to minimize the biases and establish the trustworthiness of this study from the standpoints of the researcher, the participants, and the readers of an account.

Triangulation

Patton and Patton (2002) stated, "Triangulation strengthens a study" (p. 247). Creswell (2009) also noted that triangulating evidence from a range of sources and perspectives helps build "a coherent justification" (p. 191). Triangulation corroborates, elaborates, and illuminates the research in question. To confirm my findings and interpretations, I triangulated data from multiple sources such as participant-observation, audiotaped/videotaped discussions, participants' artifacts, audiotaped interviews, and fieldnotes and journals.

Member Checking

Member checking involved asking participants to determine whether the findings are an accurate reflection of their experiences (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano, 2011;

Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To establish the credibility and validity of this study, I shared my analysis of the data and interpretations with participants and ask them to comment on the findings in follow-up interviews and informal conversations.

Peer Debriefing

According to Creswell (2009), peer debriefing provided diverse perspectives and deeper insights that enhance validity and accuracy of a study. I asked non-Japanese fellow doctoral students who were not involved in this study to question my analysis and interpretations of the data, the accuracy of transcriptions, and the relationships I identified between the research questions and the data. Throughout this process, they pointed out what I, as an insider of the Japanese ethnic group, was overlooking while examining the data.

Summary

In this chapter I detailed the methodologies for this study about fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorials texts in the classroom setting. I began the chapter by describing my positionality as a participant-observer and the context of the study including the classroom and school community. I also described participant and material selection criterion and processes, and data collection and analysis.

A qualitative ethnographic methodology was selected for this study, because it provides comprehensive data from a variety of perspectives, such as classroom discussions, individual and group interviews, and students' artifacts. I also detailed the frameworks and process for developing the curriculum and instruction that I applied in this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS ON CHIDLREN'S RESPONSES

In this study I examined the responses of fifth graders to Japanese pictorial texts representing Japanese culture and people. This chapter gives a report of my findings and is structured into two sections that are based on the two research questions. In the first section, I address research question 1: How do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts? In the second section, I address research question 2: What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts?

Literary Responses

In order to discuss research question 1 (how do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts?), I organized the literary responses they made into four categories: (1) analytical, (2) personal, (3) intertexual, and (4) cultural. The first three categories were informed by Sipe's (2000) reader response research, exploring young children's literary understanding of picture books in a large Midwestern city in the U.S. Although Sipe's study and my study differed in terms of participants, data sources, and contexts, those three categories were appropriate for analyzing fifth graders' responses in this study because of one similarity that this study has with Sipe's research. Similar to his work, this study explored readers' conceptual understanding of texts. However, Sipe's categories did not reflect readers' responses to cultural elements portrayed in texts. In order to account for my data, I established another category: cultural response.

In the following subsections, I discuss the results of the study, focusing in turn on each of the four types of responses, including definitions of each category, interpretations

of the results for each response type across the texts, and examples that illustrate each type of response.

Analytical Responses

Analytical response includes responses that emerged while readers analyze and interpret a text as an object (Sipe, 2000). In an analysis of the participants' analytical responses, I found three subcategories: 1) examining illustrations and texts, 2) interpreting stories, and 3) inquiring author's choice.

Examining illustrations and texts. Students employed analytical perspectives on illustrations and texts to expand their understanding of stories.

Manga. In the following conversations, Aaron and Kate expressed curiosity about lines used in the illustrations of manga, *Yotsuba&!*.

1069	Aaron:	… and movements stuff. You have a little wind thing… breath of wind…
1070	Junko:	Wind thing?
1071	Aaron:	It's like breath of wind, "SHUUUUU" [making the sound as moving his arms from right to left and vise versa].
1162	Kate:	… it [manga] has like a lot of details and pictures…so different from how we draw. When we draw we usually draw like usually all circles on the [characters'] face[s]. [Manga] has actual shapes to them. Here a lot of lines and underneath are shadows [pointing to shadows displayed in the illustration]. And our books [American graphic novels and comics] usually they don't take that much time on this. They [manga] get cool.

Aaron analyzed motion lines shown in Figure 4.1, how the lines are drawn and what meanings the lines produce. By describing the lines as "breath of wind" by making sounds of wind "SHUUUUU" (line 1071), he indicated that these lines demonstrate realistic motions or movements that something or somebody produces. Kate showed similar response to Aaron's (line 1162). She directed her attention to various types of

lines, such as thin, thick, or wavy, used for characters' faces and their shadows. She also added that these lines give life to the characters.

Figure 4.1: Motion lines presented in *Yotsuba&!* (p. 38)

In the following conversation, Nicole and Mary expressed their curiosity about characters' realistic movements and behaviors and story settings. Nicole said, "Looks like she [Yotsuba] is running (line 1100), and Mary also added, "you can also tell what they [characters] are doing and what they are talking [based on images]" (line 1241). She further said that a house, which is a setting where manga usually takes place, is not

common to her. Nicole and Mary might not have ever encountered American graphic novels or comic stories that deal with such a setting.

1100	Nicole:	They [manga] are really funny, make the books more funny and more realistic. Looks like she [Yotsuba] is running. And our pictures [of American graphic novels] just like say something she is running…
1238	Junko:	What do you see [in manga]?
1239	Mary:	Black and white but they are so cool.
1240	Junko:	Why do you think so?
1241	Mary:	Because they [manga] are really cool, you can also tell what they [characters] are doing and what they are talking [based on images].
1242	Junko:	Is it different from American comics?
1243	Mary:	[nodding]
1244	Junko:	How's different?
1245	Mary:	All drawings and their eyes, and sometimes they are acting in the houses in the book [manga].

Picture book. The students also analyzed illustrations in picture books. For example, Nicole conducted a close analysis of illustrations in *The Origami Master* (Lachenmeyer & Sogabe, 2008). While analyzing houses displayed in the books, she said, "Houses are different like doors and roofs too. Kinds of straws-ish. Their doors don't have locks. Looks like all doors sliding to open…It looks the bottom [of the door] is like bamboo straws and all like rectangular-ish" (line 15 & 17). She explored how Japanese traditional houses are built and what materials are used for the houses.

Also, Kate examined illustrations in *The Park Bench* (Takeshita, 1989). She examined the kinds of activities people do at a public park, who is there such as children, women, or men, what kinds of things are located there, and what people wear. She also explored what Japanese park have or don't have as compared to parks in the U.S., for example, she identified that parks in the U.S. usually have a dog park but Japanese parks don't.

Interpreting stories. The students interpreted stories by inferring, predicting, or speculating about stories based on images, contexts, or contents.

Manga. In the following examples, Aaron and Nicole inquired about what the characters in manga were doing and Bob made predictions about them.

749	Aaron:	There is somebody on the top of the tower…
750	Bob:	He is going to fix something.
755	Nicole:	Why her [Yotsuba's] eyes are wired?
756	Bob:	Because she thinks she is a danger.
757	Aaron:	She [Yotsuba] is running away?
758	Bob:	Danger.

In the first excerpt above, Aaron pointed to a man who is on the top of a power pole in the picture and wondered what he is doing. Bob soon predicted the event based on the man's behavior (line 750). In the second conversation, responding to Nicole and Aaron's questions (line 755 & 757), Bob made predictions about Yotsuba's feelings and situation by relying on her facial expressions and movements, as well as the context of what is happening to her (line 756 & 758).

The next example shows Jerry's inquiry and prediction about Yotsuba's feeling based on text elements. In his writing response, he wrote as follows:

Jerry: [why] is [she] really loud?

When I asked Jerry why he thought Yotsuba is "really loud", he addressed that he often saw double exclamation marks after her statements, so he imagined that she is always excited and speaks in a loud voice.

Similar to Jerry, Aaron also made an inference about Yotsuba's emotions and feelings based on images. In lines 1080 and 1084, Aaron described her animated emotions along with making the sound "WEEEEEE!" and opening his eyes and mouth

wide. Then, he said such expressive faces show her feelings such as happiness and excitement.

1080	Aaron:	…they [manga characters] like…right here [pointing to Yotsuba in manga] she [Yotsuba] is like "WEEEEEE!" "WEEEEEE!" "WEEEEEE!" [making the sound "WEEEEEE!" as opening his mouth wide and putting his hands around his mouth] [laughing].
1081	Junko:	So…it's more animation like?
1082	Aaron:	Yes [smiling and nodding].
1083	Junko:	This is like a movie or animation?
1084	Aaron:	It's like when they are so happy their mouth[s] goes wide "WAPP!" [opening his mouth wide] It's like "WEEEEEE!" [making the sound "WEEEEEE!" as opening his mouth wide and putting his hands around his mouth].

Anime. When the students were watching anime, they realized that there were so much trash and debris under the ocean. They explored the kinds of trash, and they also made predictions and speculated why there are those things under the water (see Figure 4.2). The scene, Ponyo trying to swim towards the surface, her tail sticking out of the bottles' mouth, and a wave picking up her in a bottle, also encouraged them to consider marine pollution (see Figure 4.3).

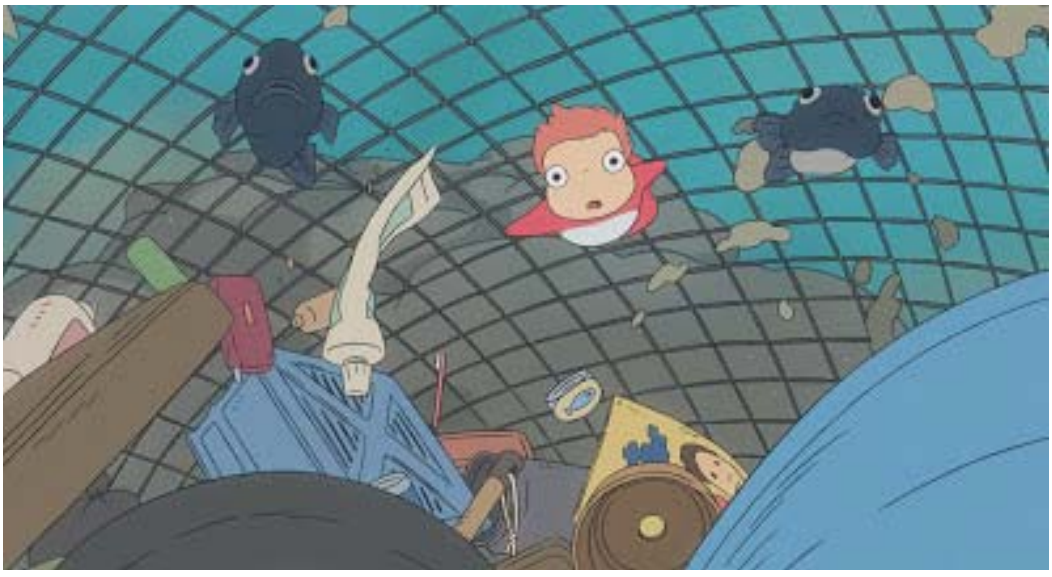


Figure 4.2. Trash under the sea presented in *Ponyo*.

Figure 4.3: Ponyo sticks out of the bottles' mouth presented in *Ponyo*.

Kamishibai. The following conversation occurred while reading aloud kamishibai, *Hats for the Jizos*. The students speculated what would happen next.

1968	Junko:	[reading]
1969	Jerry:	Statues…there are only five [hats]…he [the old man] thinks that he is ganna put the white cap on the last one [statue]…
1970	Junko:	Yes [reading].
1971	Jerry:	Are they brothers and sisters?
1972	Aaron:	No…they are a couple.
1973	Jerry:	Do they have a door [pointing to the Japanese traditional house]?
1974	Junko:	Yes, they have a door [reading].
1975	Bianca:	What's that?
1976	Nicola:	It looks like a turkey!
1977	Everyone:	Yeah…!
1978	Junko:	[reading]
1979	Nicola:	So…maybe in the midnight the statues turned to arrive!

First Jerry made a prediction about what an old man might do to statues based on the illustration shown in Figure 4.4 (line 1969). He also inquired about the characters' relationship (line 1971), and Aaron helped him to clarify that they are a couple (line 1972). Jerry wondered whether a Japanese traditional house has a door, and then Bianca inquired about what a bush covered with snow looks like (lines 1973 & 1975). In line 1978, Nicola predicted what would happen in the end of the story by saying, "So…maybe

in the midnight the statues turned to arrive!". Since the illustrations are not very clear and even show many unfamiliar Japanese traditional and cultural items to the students, it might not be easy for them to clearly identify every single item displayed in the illustrations. Yet, they attempted to make inferences and predictions by relying on the clues provided by the illustrations, as well as the content and context from the story.

Figure 4.4: Kamishibai *Hats for the Jizos* (No. 8).

Picture book. The students explored picture books by inferring, predicting, or speculating about stories. For example, *Tea with Milk* (Say, 1999) encouraged them to explore characters' cultural identities. They especially closely examined Masako, a Japanese-American girl, focusing on physical and inner aspects of her identities. In discussion of her physical identity, the students identified her first and second languages, nationality, and favorite foods and clothing. In discussion of inner aspects of her identity, they talked about what she believes or values and what things are significant to her. These discussions encouraged them to gain an in-depth understanding of the story.

Inquiring author's choice. Some students considered books as products made by an author or an illustrator and wondered about their choice of artistic elements. They still analyzed and interpreted stories as readers, but employed an author or illustrator's perspective in this task.

Manga. In the following example, while reading *Yotsuba&!,* Kate inquired about illustrations that Azuma, the manga author, chose to draw (see in Figure 4.5).

1178	Kate:	On these [panels], why do they [authors]...how do they put details on these pictures like that? There are always just random pictures. And there is a blank. Somebody… and somebody is just standing there? Like that…[pointing to a panel including an illustration of a character standing straight] when we have Japanese version of it, we are looking through it [panels], and it was like different pages…like every chapter would be like has a blank pictures [panels]…[pointing to a page including many panels almost blank] [It looks] like [just] somebody in it like that. Like how they spot.
1179	Junko:	What do you think about such simple panels?
1180	Kate:	I feel weird. They [authors] put so much details in [frames] all other pictures, but one [panel] just be like doesn't seem to be finished. Like…[it] seems [to be] like incomplete. Like they just do it in there or they are not done [with] it yet.
1181	Junko:	What do you think about that from the author's perspective? Why does he draw like this?
1182	Kate:	Maybe…. because they wanna just stuck, one person just stick[s] out or because that wasn't important detail in that chapter…
1183	Junko:	What kind of feelings do you have when you see this kind of illustration?
1184	Kate:	I don't know… it feels weird…like you need looking at those detail pictures and random one just doesn't have details on it and pops up.
1185	Junko:	Maybe…such panels say something?
1186	Kate:	[posing and thinking]…Her [Yotsuba's] emotions…?
1187	Junko:	Here…she looks happy, and here she is kind of wondering…

Using evidence from the illustration, Kate challenges the manga author's choice. She seemed not to understand why he leaves some panels almost blank or with only a few simple visual images although he fills other panels with detailed illustrations. Kate also seemed to get distracted by such panels, saying, "I feel weird" and "[it] seems [to be] like incomplete" (line 1180). In 1182, Kate came up with her own interpretation of the author's choice. She assumed that he uses such panels in order to show unimportant details. I thought that her response was a little superficial, so I made several attempts to encourage her to consider the meanings that such panels produce, by asking, "What do you think about that from the author's perspective? Why does he draw like this? (line 1181) and "Maybe…the illustrations say something?" (line 1185) Then, Kate thoughtfully said, "Her [Yotsuba's] emotions…?" (line 1186) in a different manner. Through posing and inquiring about artistic elements from the author's viewpoint, she showed the beginning of being aware of the role of such blank panels in manga.

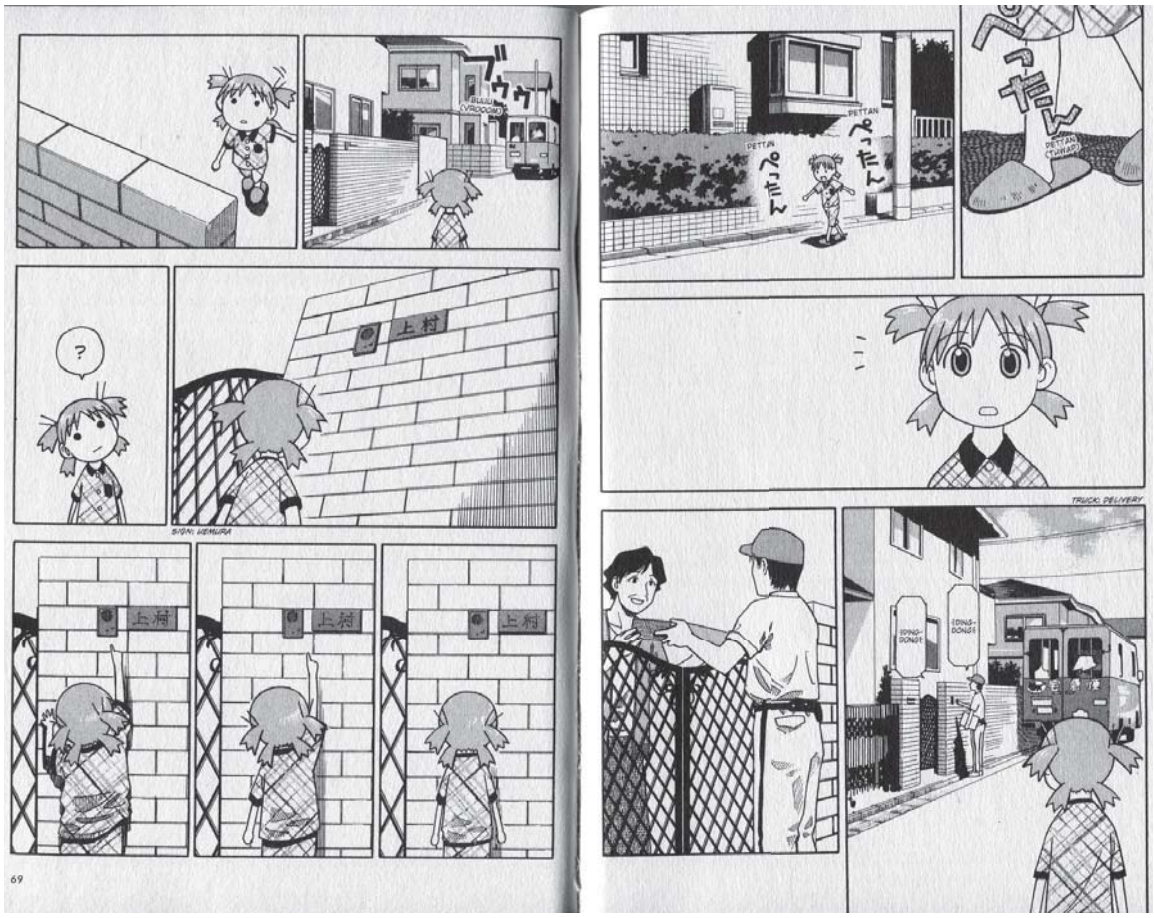


Figure 4.5: *Yotsuba&!* (p. 68 – 69).

In summary, students constructed analytical responses through examining illustrations, interpreting stories, and inquiring author or illustrator's choice.

Personal Responses

According to Sipe (2000), the personal response category includes responses in which readers make connections between texts and their own personal lives. The students in this study connected their personal experiences and lives to construct meanings from stories. They also made links between personal emotions, feelings, and thoughts and elements in texts.

Personal experiences and lives. The students drew on their personal experiences and lives in meaning making from stories.

Manga. In the following conversation, Michael, David and Aaron made personal connections to manga characters. The characters, especially Yotsuba, reminded them of their family members and neighbors.

1017	Michael:	…I go there [neighbor's house] and play too.
1018	David:	I just play like this story.
1052	Junko:	What do you think about the character [Yotsuba]?
1053	Aaron:	I think she is like my little sister. She is a little bit more mischievous because she comes my room and playing Xbox…

Aaron and Kate showed an understanding of Yotsuba's situation by drawing on their own personal experiences. In the story, Yotsuba moves to a new town and her father warns her to stay close and not to follow strangers in an unfamiliar environment, reminding the students of what they were told by their parents when visiting new places. In the writing response, Aaron wrote, "Yotsuba was afraid of stranger danger. My parents told me that too." Kate said, "Some connections are stranger danger and they mentioned that in the book. Also [we should] be careful in new environments that we don't know."

Anime. In the following example, Aaron interpreted anime *Ponyo* by making a connection to his family experience.

1758	Junko:	What do you think about the story, *Ponyo*?
1759	Aaron:	It's like a home away from home.
1760	Junko:	What do you mean?
1761	Aaron:	Where you go somewhere you feel comfortable. Ponyo feels comfortable and the other side above the water, but her home is here [under the water].

In the anime, Ponyo lives with her father under the sea, and one day she finds a place above the water that she feels more comfortable than her home. She always moves back and forth between the two places. After watching the whole story of *Ponyo*, Aaron said, "It's like home away from home." (line 1759). He explained what he meant it by

mentioning Ponyo's situation in line 1761. His response seems to reflect his personal experience; moving between his divorced parent's places. I assumed that Aaron built an understanding of Ponyo's situation by linking to his family experience.

Kamishibai. The following is another example of the students' personal response to kamishibai, *Hats for the Jizos*. Nicole demonstrated her connection with a person who appeared in Bible to the old man in *Hats for the Jizos* as follows:

> 1999 Nicole: This one person. His name is David. And… anything staying his name is so then he…someone told them you can do all things and he wants to the forehead…

Nicole, who is a Christian, talked about David in the Bible. The reason for her to mention him was that she identified a generous and humble old man in *Hats for the Jizos* as similar to David. That is, she drew on her religious knowledge to build an understanding of the nature of character in the story.

Picture book. When the students read *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog* (Turner & Nascimbene, 2004), they made connections experiences with pets to the story. For example, Starllyn reminded her of her pet dog who died from a car accident in Arizona. Her pet loss experience helps her to understand feeling and situation of characters who also lose their pet dog.

Personal emotions. The students also showed their personal emotions in making connections to characters in stories and developing an understanding of them.

Picture book. In the following conversations, Greg and Peter expressed personal emotions and thoughts towards characters in picture books about people's experiences of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, during World War II, including *Shin's Tricycle* (Kodama & Ando, 1995)*, Sadako* (Coerr, 1993)*, Baseball Saved Us*

(Mochizuki & Lee, 1993)*, and The Unbreakable Code* (Hunter & Miner, 1996) (see Figure 4.35). By bringing their personal emotions to the stories, they seemed to develop a strong emotional connections with the characters.

2078	Junko:	What are you drawing?
2079	Greg:	Dropping bombs on Nagasaki and I wrote people are saying "Stop!", like "Don't drop it" or "Help us."
2091	Peter:	They escaped on [the] train…[in a whispery voice]
2092	Junko:	Who escaped by the train?
2093	Peter:	People…I don't know…[in a whispery voice]
2094	Greg:	Some of the people who knew the bombs were coming? They escaped?
2095	Peter:	Yep!

Thus, the students constructed personal responses through bringing their personal experiences and lives to stories and showing personal emotions in response to stories.

Intertextual Responses

The intertextual response category includes responses made when readers relate a target text to other texts such as illustrations, movies, or videos (Sipe, 2000). In this study, the participants showed their abilities to relate Japanese pictorial texts to other texts including graphic novels, movies, or TV cartoons, in terms of plots, characters, story structures, text conventions, or images etc.

Manga. Nicole mentioned a genre for manga (line 1094). She did not directly use the word "realistic" to describe the genre of *Yotsuba&!*, yet she identified the story as a realistic fiction. She also commented that American graphic novels or comics, such as *Bone* (Smith, 2005)*,* often deal with fantasy, but they do not often include realistic stories like manga.

1094	Nicole:	Usually ours [American graphic novels] are fantasy. Like…they are struggling stuff like that. Like there is a book…[a] comic book I read a couple of comic books. The

comic book it called *Bone* and [*Bone* shows] human and a dragon and human subjects and it sees there are white guys. [explaining *Bone*'s characters]

1095 Junko: You are saying this [manga] is more realistic?

1096 Nicole: Yep [nodding].

The students connected manga, *Yotsuba&!*, to other texts in terms of characters. In the following excerpt, Jerry addressed that Yotsuba and Pokémon, a cartoon, looks similar.

759 Jerry: She looks like Pokémon [saying it with a loud voice]!!

I asked why he thinks they look alike. He said that Pikachu, one of the Pokémon characters, and Yotsuba are similar in that they open their eyes wide when they get excited or find something new. Jerry connected manga and a TV cartoon by recognizing characters that look alike and act in similar ways.

By analyzing the illustrations shown in Figure 4.6, Aaron compared and contrasted aesthetic elements depicted in manga and American comics.

1060 Junko: Are there any differences between American comics and Japanese manga?

1061 Aaron: DEFINITELY [in a excited voice with wide eyes]!

1062 Junko: How's it different?

1063 Aaron: Like…this [manga]…it's all black and white. Most of the time [American comics are] not black and white here. And like…the…is just a way their drawing is different.

1064 Junko: How?

1065 Aaron: l like a…it [manga] has close-ups…and sometimes they [American comics] have close-ups but sometimes not as much. And it [American comic] doesn't have like [manga] eyes and stuff. Eyes [in manga are] like "HUUUUU!" [making the sound as opening his eyes wide] Like [eyes] show emotions like that.

2220 Aaron: In American comics books, close up happens only when someone says "Yo!", like [when he/she] get[s] really mad. But in manga [there are] many all close-ups from right here to right there. It are like you see like draw bigger with cameras like stuff. And…Yotsuba is very excited. She is

smiling. You can tell she is trying to be polite, and then right here look like she is mad because her teeth is big.

Aaron pointed to similar and different drawing styles between manga and American comics. He recognized that both books involve close-up shots to describe characters' emotions and situations. Moreover, he contrasted the role of close-ups in these two books. He addressed that, as compared with comics in which close-ups are used merely when someone gets mad and says "Yo!", manga often involves close-up of characters' faces in order to highlight their facial expressions and emotions such as happiness and excitement (line 2220). Aaron connected the target text to another by recognizing and comparing artistic elements.

Figure 4.6: Close-ups presented in *Yotsuba&!* (p.9).

In the following excerpt, Kate realized that Japanese people do not always wear the traditional dress, the *kimono*, but wear t-shirts, jeans, and skirts, like people in America. Manga helped her to reflect on her own stereotypical image of Japanese people.

Kate: Why don't they [the characters] wear *kimono* in manga?

Junko: Japanese people also wear t-shirts and jeans like you guys. We wear *kimono* in like the special occasions like wedding ceremonies.

Anime. The following example shows how Sam and Michael related anime *Ponyo* to another text with which they were familiar, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, an American TV cartoon, because of the similarity in characters.

1013 Sam: The story [*Ponyo*] reminds me of [*Teenage Mutant*] *Ninja Turtles*. What is the one of the turtles? Turtle and rabbit?

1014 Michael: Yeah…

Ponyo reminded Sam of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I had a follow-up conversation with him to find out why he made a connection between the two stories.

2233 Sam: It's a little movies [that] has like curious one [character]. [It] has curious turtles [that] mutated [into] curious like…like her mom [Ponyo's mother] is very serious just like them. They [the turtles and Ponyo's mother] save the world. They are heroes. They [the characters of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*] are like giant turtles. They are like heroes. They [the turtles and Ponyo's mother] have same personalities.

Sam related *Ponyo* to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* because of the similarity in the role of character in the stories. He identified that Ponyo's mother looks like the turtles in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, acting in similar ways as a hero saving humans and the world.

Kamishibai. The next conversation illustrates how students related *Hats for the Jizos*, a kamishibai story, to another story with which they were familiar, *Frosty the Snowman* (Bass, Rankin, & Muller, 1969), an American traditional cartoon.

1979	Aaron:	Oh! Way! They [statues] are disappeared! Miracle! Like the…the old people like the grandpa because like…
1980	Peter:	Remember what is happening [in an surprised voice]?
1981	Jerry:	Yeah! So same! So…that's what I'm saying!
1982	Greg:	It's like a cartoon!…yeah!
1983	Everyone:	[chorusing] *Frosty the Snowman, was a jolly happy soul…*

The conversation occurred when the *Jizo* statues walk away after they leave gifts in front of an old couple's house, in return for their generosity and compassion. When the students saw the scene, Peter immediately exclaimed, "Remember what is happening?" (line 1979), prompting responses from classmates. Although he did not address what was in his mind, Jerry followed by saying, "Yeah! So same! So…that's what I'm saying!" (line 1981) and Greg added, "It's like a cartoon!" (line 1982). Other students seemed to immediately identify what Peter, Jerry and Greg were thinking about. Everyone animatedly looked at each other, nodded their vigorous agreements, and started a big symphonic chorus of the *Frosty the Snowman*'s theme song. When I asked the students in what ways they linked the two stories, they addressed that the statues in *Hats for the Jizos* and the snowman in *Frosty the Snowman* are similar in that they are alive due to a magical hat given by people, and in thanks for it, they take responsibilities of helping the people who suffer from some difficulties. Greg also connected what the characters do in both stories to his real life that the ways people give each other help are depicted in the stories, and it "can be [seen in our] real life" (line 2234).

Picture book. Exploring a text set of picture books about World War II encouraged the students to develop an in-depth understanding of stories and gain new perspectives. Peter and Jerry, for instance, identified symbolical items depicted in each story, such as baseball in *Baseball Saved Us* and Navajo language in *The Unbreakable Code*. And then, they talked about how those are significant to the characters and figured out that those are symbols of a character's strength, giving them power to overcome. Peter said, "He [a Japanese-American boy in *Baseball Saved Us*] hits [the] first homerun at a camp. And it went over a ten-foot fence. He practiced [baseball] a lot. He is good at it and happy now." Jerry stated that a Navajo boy in *The Unbreakable Code* is proud of Navajo language because it was used as a special unbreakable code during the war, and he leaves his reservation with the language.

In the following excerpt, students connected the picture book published in Japan to the picture books about Japan published in the U.S. When read-aloud *Shigeru no Kachan (Shigeru's Mom)* (Jyonouchi, 2012) about a young single Japanese woman and her son's every day life in Japan, Nicole said that the story tells Japanese people's "normal life" (line 700).

700 Nicole: …that one is like normal life.

Nicole seemed to be very surprised that the book shows Japanese people's regular life, which is a theme barely focused in the books from the U.S. Comparing and contrasting the picture books published in Japan and the U.S. led her realization that the contemporary realistic fictions from Japan cover people's everyday life; on the other hand, the contemporary realistic fiction from the U.S. highlight aspects of Japanese traditions.

As a Japanese woman, I had a conflict with descriptions of Japanese female characters in stories published in the United States. They are always described in certain ways as stereotyped "ideal" women who are quiet, conservative, and domesticated, like Masako's mother in *Tea with Milk*. The depiction of females in the story is authentic in light of a particular past time period. However, other books published the U.S., even contemporary realistic fiction, tend to highlight Japanese women as conservative like Masako's mother. I did not want students to make assumptions about all Japanese women in that way. In order to avoid the creation of to create stereotypes and contribute to misunderstandings, I shared *Shigeru's Mom,* a contemporary realistic picture book published in Japan, about a young single Japanese woman working as a truck driver. From the story, students gained new perspective on Japanese women; for example, Aaron stated, "[She is] independent…" They described her as an active, independent, and powerful woman.

Another example of connecting a Japanese picture book to picture books from the U.S. is when the students compared illustrations. When reading aloud *Unko Nikki (Poop Diary)* (Muranaka & Kawabata, 2004), a story about a boy who writes a picture diary of observation on his poop, Peter realized that the images depicted in the book are very different from the images in the picture books from the U.S. (line 875). Aaron described *Poop Diary* as "realistic" (line 877).

874	Junko:	What did you notice?
875	Peter:	Paintings [colors and images] are very different [from other picture books published in the United States].
876	Jerry:	This book talks about toilet. This, I figured out, means, POOP [turning pages and carefully observing pictures and showing the pictures to other classmates]!
877	Aaron:	…realistic…

In addition to above conversation, some students pointed to different colors and ways of drawing across the picture books from Japan and the U.S. Similar to Aaron, they repeatedly used the word "realistic" to describe Japanese picture books. They said that those books often use colorful and vivid colors, yet a lot of picture books about Japanese culture and people from the U.S. use reserved colors. They did not use distinctive terminologies to label the differences, but they seemed to indicate that the Japanese picture books show "contemporary" and "modern" aspects of Japan using vivid colors and illustrations; on the other hand, the picture books about Japan published in the United States highlight "traditional" aspects by utilizing shaded and soft colors.

Nicole and Aaron made a connection between *Hachiko* and *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* (2009), an American film. It is not clear if they knew the film was produced based on *Hachiko*. Yet, they found several similarities in characterizations and plots that the stories were sharing.

243	Nicole:	This [*Hachiko*] is like *Hachi*. Kind of about dogs and husky dogs that died. I watched it long time ago.
244	Junko:	Is that a movie?
245	Nicole:	Yes. There is probably a book too.
246	Aaron:	*Hachi*?
247	Nicole:	Yes, the one is about husky.
248	Aaron:	Husky is died. That is kind of the same concept. Because *Hachi* saves one's life. He got killed…but train… both [*Hachiko* and *Hachi*] [show] the same people.
249	Nicole:	And both [*Hachiko* and *Hachi*] have statues made of them [dogs].
250	Junko:	They made a statue in the United States?
251	Nicole:	I think it's in Alaska.

By recalling and reflecting on the characters' actions and emotions depicted in the American film *Hachi*, Nicole and Aaron built an understanding of the story of *Hachiko*. In the statement "both [*Hachiko* and *Hachi*] have statues made of them [dogs]" (line

249), Nicole showed her understanding of the role of dog statues, playing as a symbol of loyalty and devotion, in Japanese and American cultures.

Thus, the students made intertextual responses through connecting the target text to other texts including American graphic novels and comics, a cartoon, or films through linking themes, plots, characters, and images.

Cultural Responses

The cultural response category includes responses that are made utilizing the students' cultural awareness, knowledge, or experiences. This category enabled me to examine what cultural elements they identified and how they utilized their cultural sources, experiences, and knowledge to construct meanings from texts. I have two subcategories in the cultural responses: 1) identifying culture and 2) cross-cultural connections.

Identifying culture. The students often recognized some cultural items and details portrayed in texts.

Manga. They pointed to different houses and buildings displayed in the illustration of manga. "They [houses] are connected!!" Aaron was surprised at how houses are located side by side in an urban city in Japan. I told him that limited land and space for living have resulted in such crowded housing, especially in big cities. The students also learned about people's lifestyles in Japan through manga. Michael identified a different custom: taking off one's shoes at the entrance in Japanese houses. In his writing response, he wrote, "Family lifestyle [is] more different from mine, we don't take our shoes off before we get inside." Thus, the students identified cultural items and details that were familiar or unfamiliar to them.

Anime. When watching *Ponyo*, Nicole knew that a traffic rule in Japanese society is different from that in the United States. In this scene, Sosuke's mother is driving left side of the road.

1431	Nicole	Oh…so in Japan you drive left side of the road?
1432	Junko	Yes. In Japan drivers sit on the right, opposed to here in the U.S. It's like in England.

In anime, students also identified cultural values and beliefs. Michael, for instance, identified Phony's mother as a god of the sea from characters' religious gestures, putting their palms together in front of their chests and bowing. I explained that they bless the ocean since Japan is an island country and the ocean has always carried resources critical to their daily lives, such as seafood, gas, and oil from other countries. Thus, through anime, they developed an understanding of the ocean as a significant part of the cultural fabric of Japan.

Kamishibai. Kamishibai helped the students to learn about a Japanese traditional holiday, New Years, including when and how to celebrate it, such as Japanese people celebrate New Years on January 1st, 2nd and 3rd and people eat special foods such as rice cakes, fish, and sushi. During the New Years' holiday, there is no school and no work. The students also learned how Japanese traditional houses look, such as made of wood and paper.

Cross-cultural connections. Cross-cultural connections the students made between Japan in stories and their own in the U.S. helped them to develop an understanding of Japanese culture and people as well as a deeper understanding of their own culture.

Manga. Jerry was excited about a Matsuda pick up truck, displayed in the illustration of manga. He realized that the car is Japanese because he had lived in California and he had seen it there.

Manga characters, especially Yotsuba, always reminded the students of Pokémon. When being asked to write or sketch responses to manga and anime, Sam and Jerry drew Pokémon characters. Sam said, "It's a [Pokémon] movie. Everyone likes…we can see the show about the Pokémon…it's on TV [in the U.S.]," and Jerry also added, "It's like a Japanese and a lot of people [in the U.S.] do like … playing [Pokémon] cards." They were very pleased with being able to make a connection with Japan through their favorite popular culture media.

In addition to Sam and Jerry, Nicole drew an illustration of Pikachu, one of the characters in the Pokémon show (see Figure 4.25). I asked her why she drew it, and she answered, "Because Japan has cool illustrations and you guys use anime. So I should choose Pokémon and Pikachu!" She showed an understanding and appreciation of the aesthetic aspect of Japanese culture, and she also recognized Pokémon, her favorite TV show, as an important icon to bridge Japanese and American cultures.

Anime. In addition to identifying cultural items and details, the participants expanded their cultural interactions with texts to another level, by making connections. They identified familiar objects first and then connected them to their personal experiences and lives. The following example shows the students made cross-cultural connections with anime and Pokémon.

1484	Junko:	He [Hayao Miyazaki] is very famous animator in Japan. There are many animations he made. I wanna show you some films he created.
1485	Michael:	[watching a trailer of *Spirited Away*] I have watched this.

1486	Aaron:	[watching a trailer of *My neighbor Totoro*] Is this the same animator[created]?
1487	Junko:	Yes, same animator.
1488	Aaron:	[watching a trailer of *My neighbor Totoro*] It's like a Pokémon! Is Pokémon Japanese?
1489	Junko:	Yes.
1490	Aaron &Sam:	REALLY [in excited voices with widen eyes]?!
1491	Aaron:	I have seen it [a Pokémon TV show] [in an excited voice]!!
1492	Michael:	I have seen one [a Pokémon movie] [in an excited voice]!!

Once they knew Pokémon was from Japan, they started to make a connection between Pokémon and their personal experiences with it in the U.S. such as watching Pokémon TV shows and movies.

Kamishibai. From the kamishibai, *Hats for the Jizos*, the students learned about cultural and spiritual value of *Jizo* statue in Japan, and were encouraged to make a connection between Japan and the U.S. in terms of religious belief. For example, Aaron stated that people in both countries believe in a god despite different religions.

2073	Aaron:	Both [Japan and the U.S.] have gods.
2074	Junko:	That's powerful.
2075	Aaron:	You say *Jizos* and we say Jesus.

In addition to cultural values and beliefs, they explored the role of statues of *Jizos* in Japanese culture, by making a link to the Statue of Liberty in New York. They considered symbolic meanings of both statues, such as what they represent, how people perceive the statues, and what roles they take in Japanese and American societies. Making connections between the Statue of Liberty, which is a familiar icon to the students, to the statue of *Jizos*, which is unfamiliar cultural icon to them, encouraged the students to enhance an in-depth understanding of the *Jizos*.

Picture book. The picture books, *I Live in Tokyo* (Takabayashi, 2001) and *Japanese Celebrations: Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!* (Reynolds, 2006), encouraged the students to understand Japanese traditional holidays by making conceptual connections with holidays in the United States. They, for instance, identified that both countries have holidays related to religions such as Christmas in Japan and the U.S. Also, both have a day of cleaning up beaches; Ocean Day in Japan and Earth Day in the U.S. The students found out people in both countries care and respect nature.

The students identified foods that both Japanese and American people eat from *Tokyo Friends* (Reynolds, 2012) and *Poop Diary* (Muranaka & Kawabata, 2004). Before reading the books, many students tended to focus on unfamiliar foods such as raw fish, sushi, and rice. Yet, the books encouraged them to learn that Japanese people also eat foods that they eat in the U.S. such as pizza, pastas, hamburgers, and salads.

Reflection

In examining fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I was able to identify four categories: 1) analytical, 2) personal, 3) intertexual, and 4) cultural. They analyzed illustrations and prints and also constructed meanings through making personal, intertexual, and cross-cultural connections. Those responses allowed me to conduct a close analysis of what understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts, which are the focus of the following section that discusses research question 2.

Intercultural Learning

In order to discuss research question 2 (What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses of Japanese pictorial texts?), I

organized the responses fifth graders made into four categories: (1) ethnocentrism, (2) understanding and acceptance, (3) respect and appreciation and valuing, and (4) change. These categories were adapted from Fennes and Hapgood's (1996) "continuum of intercultural learning" model (see Figure 4.7), based on my analysis of participants' responses in relation to this continuum. Fennes and Hapgood argued that intercultural learning is a continuous and recursive process, beginning from ethnocentrism and ending with intercultural competence. In some situations, the learning is a spiral; some people can begin in any part of the process or even return to earlier points of the process in a particular cultural context even though they had already gained intercultural competence in other contexts. The categories of "understanding and acceptance" and "respect and appreciation and valuing" are the ones that I adapted from their model since those were the significant processes demonstrated by the participants in this study.

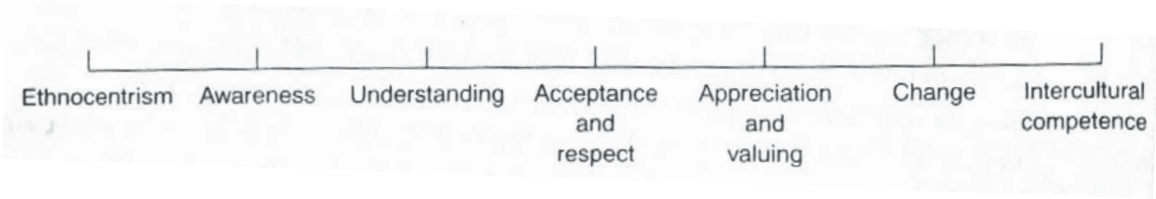


Figure 4.7: Continuum of intercultural learning (Fennes and Hapgood, 1997, p. 48).

In the following subsections, I discuss the results of the study, focusing in turn on each of the four types of responses. In each subsection, I discuss definitions of each category, interpret the results of each response type across texts, and discuss examples that illustrate each type of response.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism differentiates the world into two parts, us and them (Fennes & Hapgood, 1996). At the beginning of the Japanese inquiry, the students often tend to make judgments about Japanese culture according to their own culture. For example,

when they were browsing picture books about Japanese foods, some of their reactions towards sushi and raw fish were aversion. One fourth grader, for example, kept repeating, "I don't like fish. It's dangerous and disgusting!"

Another example of the students' ethnocentric attitudes was seen when they were browsing *The Adventure of Momotaro, The Peach Boy* (McCarthy & Ralph, 1993), a Japanese folktale, and *Barefoot Gen 1: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima* (Nakazawa, 2004), a nonfiction story about the author's experience of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. When they found a new baby boy who is naked in *The Adventure of Momotaro* and naked people burned by atomic rays in *Barefoot Gen*, they were surprised by the very realistic depictions. At the same time, some students showed resistance towards depictions of the naked people, saying "It's not appropriate for us, children!!"

In addition, the students resisted *Grandpa's Town* (Nomura & Stinchecum, 1991), a picture book about the relationship between grandfather and his grandson set in Japan. When the participants saw the image of naked people taking a bath together at public bath, some developed a negative view. The following three events were captured in my fieldnotes and illustrated their attitudes.

> *Event 1:* I saw Bianca, Kate, Nicole, and some fourth graders were expressing confusion and resistance towards Japanese bathing culture. As looking at the image of people taking a bath together at a public bathhouse, they said, "It's DISGUSTING!", "It's STRANGE!", and "It's WEIRD!". Some asked me "Why do you have a public bath [in Japan]?", and I said, "Because it's Japanese culture. At a public bath, people take a bath together but men and women have separate rooms. Family members also take a bath together at home." The students still seemed to be perplexed at the practice. (September 10, 2013)

> *Event 2:* I saw Michael and one fourth grade boy were browsing the picture book together. They were observing the image of the people taking a bath and mumbled shamefacedly to each other. When I asked them what they were looking at, they were trying to hide the illustration from me. But later on, they secretly showed the

> page to me and asked me in a whispery voice why naked people take a bath together in Japan. (September 10, 2013)
>
> *Event 3:* One fourth grade boy brought the book to me in person, showed me the illustration, and asked me why Japan has such public bath practice. He seemed not to understand the social and cultural practice. (September 10, 2013)

The students identified the public bath as a Japanese cultural practice, and they clearly showed a "stance of resistance" (Rogers & Soter, 1997, p. 64) towards it.

In addition to the above events, the following example illuminates the conversation regarding the students' negative perspectives of Japanese bath culture. *Japanese Celebrations: Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!* (Reynolds, 2006), an informational picture book about Japanese celebrations, reminded Nicole of the scene in which naked people take a bath together depicted in *Grandpa's Town*.

1266	Nicole:	Do you guys wear bathing suits? I am just wondering because one of the books [*Grandpa's Town*] that you brought …it has them like the… everyone is bathing all the together.
1267	Ms. Miller:	It's a different from us.
1268	Junko:	It's culture. When we take a bath, women and men take a bath separately...
1269	Nicole:	That's weird…. Because we take a shower by ourselves.
1270	Ms. Miller:	But… small kids take bath with their parents.
1271	Greg:	No…[shaking his head]…I never take a bath with my parents…

Nicole used the word "weird" to express difficulty in understanding the Japanese bathing culture (line 1269). Greg also showed resistance to it as an unacceptable practice (line 1271). Ms. Miller, a classroom teacher, and I attempted to provide different perspectives (line 1267 & 1268), moving their stance from evaluating an unfamiliar cultural practice based on their cultural experience to understanding and accepting it. However, they did not move beyond the stance of resistance. One of the reasons for them to show such attitudes seemed to be that they had not developed yet a conceptual understanding of

culture to fully understand about their cultural practice. After a while, I had an opportunity to talk about the roots of Japan's public bathing culture. I explained that in the past many people could not afford a bathroom in their houses because of tiny living spaces in the limited land as well as the cost for keeping a bathroom at home; thereby public bathes were built and became common throughout Japan. When the students heard the story, they showed some acceptance of the cultural practice, however, they still seemed to have difficulty in fully understanding it.

Understanding and Acceptance

The more participants gained knowledge about Japanese culture and people, the more they were aware of cultural differences and similarities. By analyzing their own and others' cultural identities, they also considered how and why culture affects people's ways of thinking, behaviors, and lifestyles. Identifying cultural differences and similarities and considering cultural ways of thinking and behaviors supported the participants in building an understanding and acceptance of Japanese culture.

Gaining knowledge of cultural details. The students developed an understanding of Japanese culture and people through gaining cultural knowledge about Japan, including people's food habits, their lifestyles and occupations, Japanese language, animals, nature, and weathers.

Food habit. Participants showed great curiosity about Japanese foods introduced in picture books. The following example illuminates fourth graders' curiosity about people's habit of eating rice in Japan.

1	Fourth grader:	Why do Japanese people eat a lot of rice?
2	Junko:	What do you think? Why do we eat a lot of rice? Have you ever seen rice fields in Arizona?
3	Students:	No…[shaking their heads]

4	Junko:	Why don't you have rice fields in Arizona?
5	Fourth grader:	Because of hot and not enough water!
6	Junko:	Yes. We have better weather for growing rice in Japan. We have a lot of rain during summer so we can grow rice during that time.

A fourth grader asked me why Japanese people eat a lot of rice (line 1). Without giving a direct answer, I asked the question back to her, and other students, "What do you think?" (line 2) and "Why don't you have rice fields in Arizona?" (line 4). After line 4, another fourth grader stated her opinion, "Because of hot and not enough water!" (line 5). I supported her based on my knowledge that rice is a primary staple food in Japan because of favorable weather conditions for growing rice (line 6).

Continuously, students showed interest in Japanese food, and they focused on studying about it, especially sushi. The figure 4.8 is a poster in which they displayed their learning about it using picture books. Through an in-depth exploration, students gained various knowledge about sushi, and they also knew that people's habit of eating raw fish is strongly related to the geographical reason that Japan is surrounded by the ocean and so seafood is the most accessible source of food for Japanese people. This study, further, led them to the realization of their misconception: it is not true that eating raw fish is dangerous. On the poster they showed their finding, "DID YOU KNOW?: Did you know the meat uses in sushi is raw. The raw meat can rarely cause illness and sickness."

Figure 4.8: Japanese food inquiry: Food and Ecology group.

The Japanese food inquiry also encouraged the students to identify their own food habits in the U.S. Nicole realized that people in Arizona eat a lot of meat because it is inexpensive, as compared with fish, which is expensive because Arizona is far from the ocean. A fourth grade student, who moved to Arizona from California two years ago, realized the different food habits between in Arizona and California as follows:

427 Fourth grader: …now we just eat bunch of meats [in Arizona].

430 Fourth grader: …our school [in California], we used to be right across the street from the sushi place.

431 Junko: So you often ate fish and sushi?

432 Fourth grader: Yeah. Me and my dad makes like he gets rice and put special kind of sauce and shrimps put together.

By reflecting on their own food habits in the U.S., they developed more understanding of how people's dietary patterns are influenced by geographical and economical conditions in their countries.

Lifestyles. In addition to people's food habits, participants identified various lifestyles in Japan. When reading manga, Michael identified a different custom, taking off shoes in the entranceway at home. In his writing response, he wrote:

Michael: Family life style more different from mine, we don't take our shoes off before we get inside.

When one forth grade student was browsing *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog* (Turner & Nascimbene, 2004), a nonfiction picture book set in Japan in the early 1900s, she noticed that the characters wear Japanese traditional clothing, *kimono*.

241 Fourth grader: I learned the Japanese people wear …[pointing to *kimono* illustrations and looking at me] sometimes.
242 Junko: *Ki-mo-no*.

Other students also recognized characters in *kimono* depicted in folktales and historical fiction or nonfiction picture books including *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (Say, 1989) and *The Origami Master* (Lachenmeyer & Sogabe, 2008) and contemporary fiction or nonfiction books such as *Suki's Kimono* (Uegaki & Jorisch, 2005) and *Japanese Celebrations: Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!* (Reynolds, 2006). From those books, the students learned that people in the past used to wear *kimono* on a daily basis, and some people wear it only on special occasions in present-day Japan.

Participants also showed interest in houses and buildings depicted in texts. In the following conversation, Nicole paid attention to Japanese traditional houses displayed in the illustration of *The Origami Master*.

13	Nicole:	I like the houses look too.
14	Junko:	Why?
15	Nicole:	Houses are different like doors and roofs too. Kind of straws-ish. Their doors don't have locks. Looks like all doors sliding to open.
16	Junko:	Do you remember we talked about the paper…the Japanese paper *washi* before [in the class]? Those [the doors displayed in *The Origami Master*] are also made of *washi*.
17	Nicole:	Yeah...it looks like cool. It looks the bottom is like bamboo straws and all like rectangular-ish.

The conversation occurred right after I introduced Japanese traditional houses through a YouTube clip in a class. By making connections to the clip, Nicole closely analyzed the houses depicted in the book and learned what kinds of materials are used for those houses.

Some students pointed to Japanese modern houses displayed in the illustration of manga *Yotsuba&!*. When I showed the illustration in Figure 4.9, Aaron was amazed at how houses are located side by side in an urban city of Japan, which is very different from those in his community, Black Canyon City. After Aaron's statement in line 763, I provided the information that limited land and space for living have resulted in such crowded housing in Japan.

763	Aaron:	They are connected!
764	Junko:	Connected? Houses?
765	Aaron:	Yeah.
766	Junko:	Yeah…Japan is a small island…there are not enough space to build spacious houses like in the U.S., so houses [in Japan] look like connected…

Figure 4.9: *Yotsuba&!* (p. 4 –5)

In the following example, Jerry was very excited about a car shown in the illustration of the Figure 4.2 because the car is familiar to him. He said that it is a *Matsuda* pick up truck made in Japan and he had often seen it in California when he had lived there.

735 Jerry: Looks like *Matsuda*!

The students also learned traffic rules from *Ponyo*, anime. For example, Nicole asked me, "…in Japan you drive left side of the road?" (line 1431) When they were watching the scene in which a character dries left side of the road in Japan, they recognized that the traffic rules are different from in the U.S.

Occupation. Participants explored occupations in Japan. As shown in Figure 4.10, they listed popular jobs in Japan including policemen, tour leaders, delivery people,

construction workers, store staff at McDonalds, and people working at a train station, which they found from the Internet. The students also showed great curiosity about the uniform of each occupation. For example, they found out that the McDonald's uniform in Japan is different from in the United States. They also inquired about the train station uniforms and discovered that their uniforms were different according to rank and position.

Figure 4.10: Occupations in Japan: People group.

Language. From the beginning of the study, many students were very intrigued by Japanese language. They often asked me "How do you say a strawberry in Japanese?" "How do you write a doggy? One day, Nicole said, "how closer our language[s], like our language [English] and Japanese language [are]." She seemed to find out some

connections between the two languages. In order to understand her connections and also to see how other participants respond to the Japanese language, I provided them with an opportunity to engage in Japanese language inquiry. First, I introduced three main written scripts including *kanji* (adopted from Chinese characters), *hiragana* (syllabary), and *katakata* (syllabary and used to write loanwords and foreign names), using language charts such as Figure 4.11 below. Next, I asked the students to browse various texts including picture books, novels, newspapers, manga, and kamishibai written in Japanese or bilingual Japanese-English. I also read-aloud some Japanese picture books in Japanese to participants.

Figure 4.11: *Kanji* chart.

When I explained *hiragana*, participants first started to search for connections between Japanese and English sounds. For example, Jerry found out that ち (chi) is similar to C sound in English. When I was introducing *kanji* next, they were trying to make sense of it by making connections to the shapes of English alphabets. In the

conversation below, they made predictions on the meaning of 木 (a tree) while they were looking at Figure 4.12.

801	Junko:	[showing Figure 4.5 木 "tree"] What does it look like?
802	Nicole:	A, J…
803	Aaron:	Sound like G
804	Michael:	Looks like T
805	Nicole:	Looks like cross the river.
806	Jerry:	Looks like T and A combined.
807	Kate:	Looks like a stick figure…like
808	Jerry:	Looks like a superman!!
809	Everyone:	Yeah!!!!
810	Jerry:	Looks like a cross [making a cross].
811	Junko:	It means tree and it pronounces "ki".
812	Kate:	Looks like T [sound]!

Nicole, Aaron, Michael, and Jerry were searching for English alphabetical symbols similar to the 木 shape including A, J, G, and T, and then Kate and Jerry started to connect visual images of 木, with familiar items such as a stick, superman, and cross. They could not figure out what it means, so I told them it means a tree. Immediately they agreed with it because they saw 木 looks like a tree. In other words, they realized that it is symbolically represented by one tree. Thus, making connections between Japanese and English languages encouraged them to identify the concept of *kanji*, and further to explore it.

木

Figure 4.12: 木 “tree”.

Through the experience of learning about Japanese language, participants developed a deeper understanding of the concept of language; for instance, they learned that *kanji* is a pictograph and each *kanji* character is simplified drawings of what is being written. I also encouraged them to explore how one *kanji* character was historically and pictographically created and evolved, using the Figure 4.13.

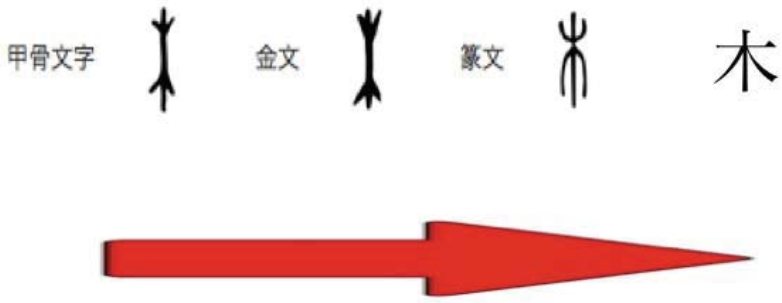


Figure 4.13: History of *Kanji*: 甲骨文字(inscriptions on animal bones and tortoise carapaces), 金文(Chinese bronze inscriptions, type of lettering used on metal objects), 篆文(seal-engraving style writing)

When I explained *katakana*, using Figure 4.14 including the images of MacDonald, Cokes, and a hamburger, Aaron asked me the following questions.

798 Aaron: Is that McDonald? There is the same marking with hamburger. Does it mean the same thing? It says [a] burger?

Pointing to the McDonald's sign, Aaron figured out the "M" sign signifies a hamburger, like in the United States. I assumed that, in addition to his personal experience with McDonald in the U.S., knowledge of the Japanese language that he had gained in the previous language lesson possibly gave him some understanding of the universal language of symbolism. Also, participants expanded cross-cultural interactions to a further level of exploration and inquiry. They showed great curiosity about Japanese language from the beginning of study. Once the students knew that *kanji* is highly symbolic, they started making close examinations of *kanji* characters included in picture books, novels, and newspapers.

Figure 4.14: *Katakana*.

For example, as shown in Figure 4.15, a participant showed great curiosity about *kanji* introduced in *My First Japanese Kanji Book* (Sato, 2009). He was really excited about exploring and making predictions on the meanings of each *kanji* character based on its shape.

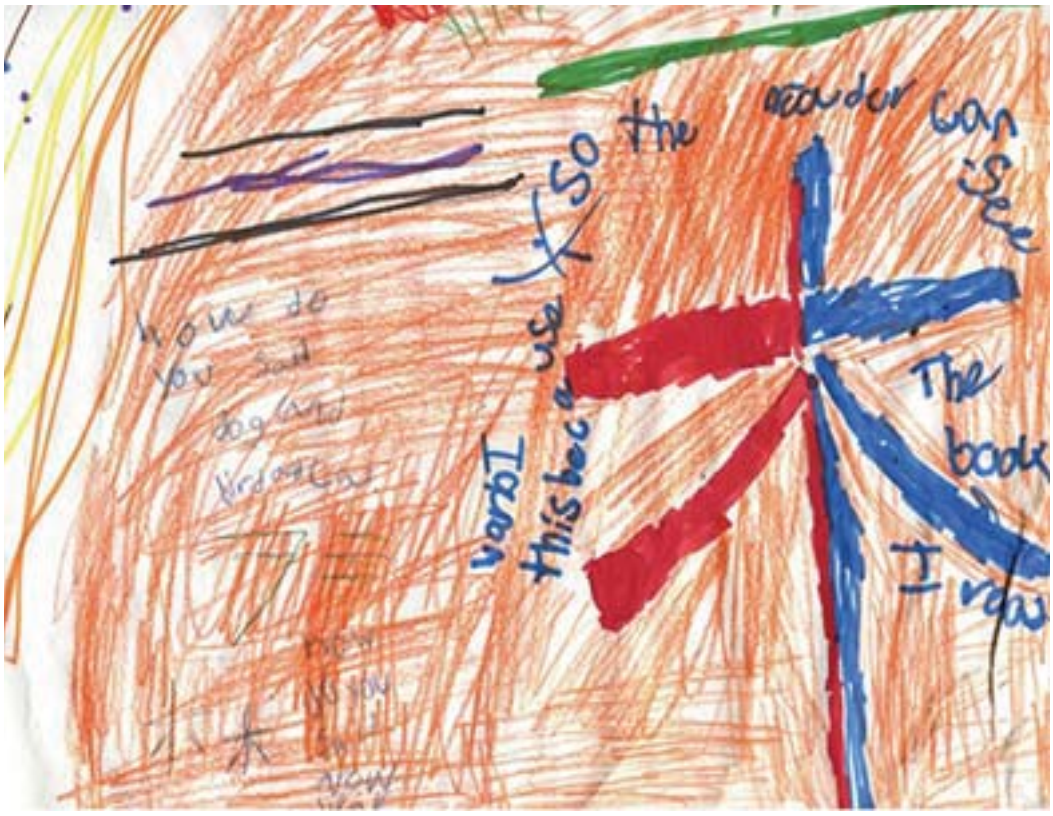


Figure 4.15: Graffiti board.

In the writing response, Greg wrote his finding that in the Japanese language, one *kanji* character has one meaning, for example, 犬 means a dog (see Figure 4.16). Understanding of *kanji* as symbolic form of writing led him to further inquiry about the Japanese writing system as follows: "I learned that 犬 means [a] dog and that one letter is one word so that sentences would be a lot shorter than others [English language]."

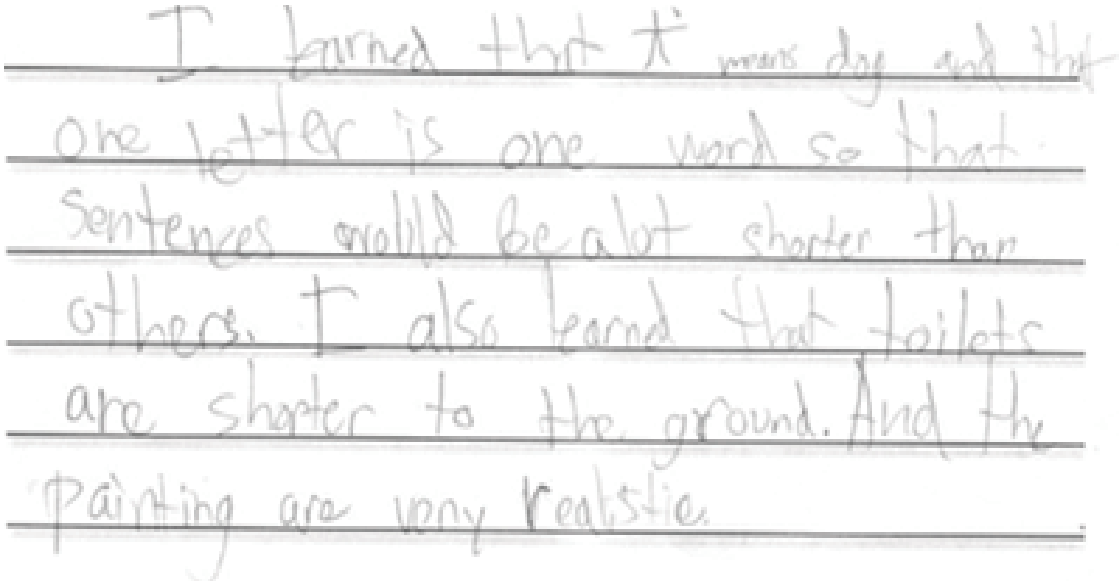


Figure 4.16: Writing response: Greg.

Animals. The students also identified animal species in Japan. In the following conversation, for example, Nicole, Aaron, and two fourth graders discussed animals in Japan. Using their graffiti board (see Figure 4.17), they were searching for patterns and connections across a text set of picture books, including *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog* (Turner & Nascimbene, 2004), *Ho-Limlim: A Rabbit Tale from Japan* (Fujimura & Tejima, 1990), *Guri and Gura* (Nakagawa & Howlett, 2006), and *The Origami Master* (Lachenmeyer & Sogabe, 2008).

157	Nicole:	Mine is about a single bird, no more than one animal.
158	Aaron:	Mine is about a bunny rabbit.
159	Fourth grader:	Mine has a real animal.
160	Aaron:	There are animals in all of stories. All of them are main characters. What about Nicole? Mine is somewhere mountain in Japan.
161	Nicole:	Mine is took place somewhere in Japan.
162	Fourth grader:	Here is mine. Mine is Tokyo Japan.
163	Fourth grader:	Mine is about two rats. Two rats go on a picnic.
225	Aaron:	The animals are popular [in Japan] like in America.

The students demonstrated multiple intertextual responses across the books in terms of characters and settings. Through looking for connections, Aaron found out that all of the books are about animals, and even protagonists of these books are animals too (line 160). This recognition helped him identify how animals are popular in Japan (line 225).

In addition, this intertextual reading encouraged the students to identify animal species in Japan. In the following excerpt, a fourth grader noted that animals living in Japan and the United States are similar.

> 299 Fourth grader: they [the books] are all [about] animals and they are all same in Japan [and in the United States].

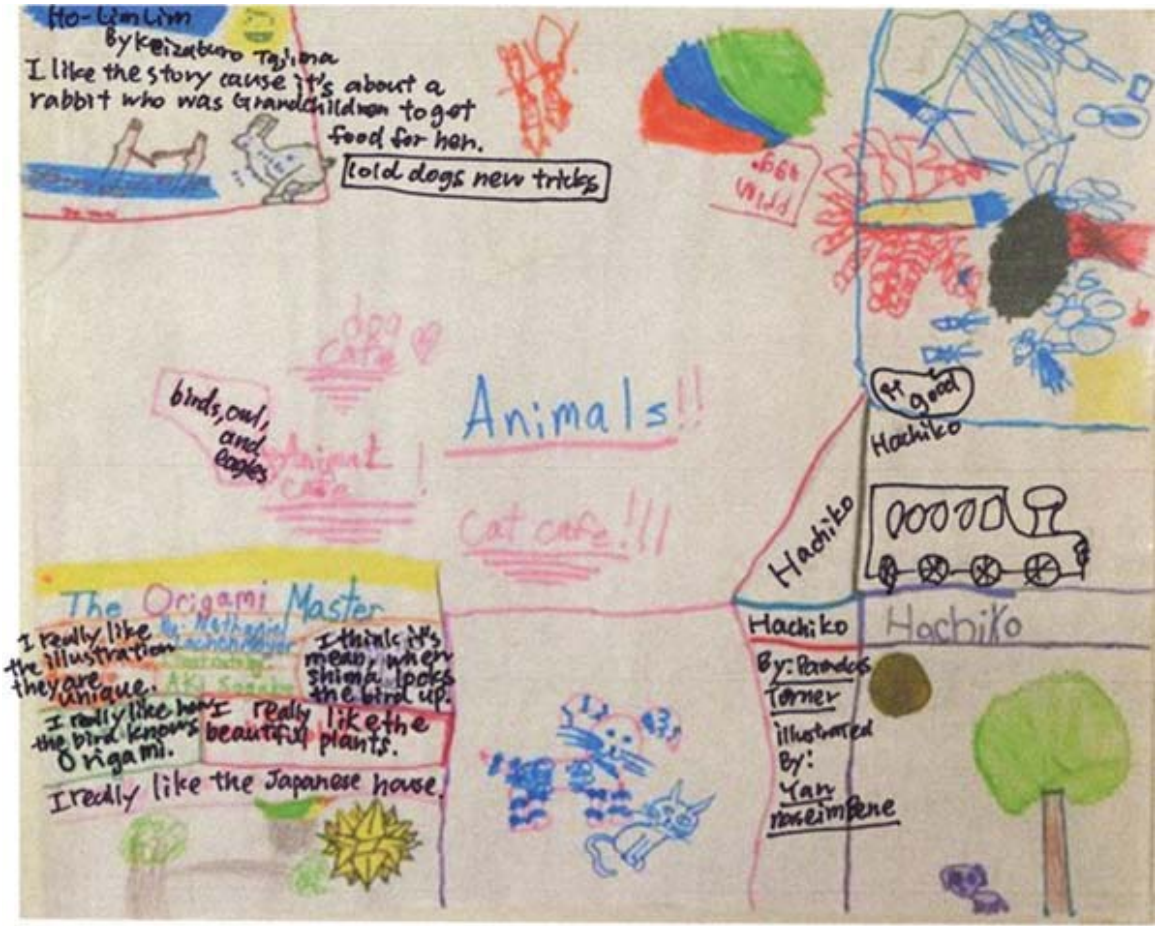


Figure 4.17: Graffiti board: Animal group.

Natures and weathers. The following example illustrates how Nicole attempted to identify cherry blossoms displayed in the illustration of *The Origami Master*, by making connections with her personal experience in Arizona.

41	Nicole:	I saw the flowers like this [pointing to cherry blossoms displayed in the illustration of the book cover] in Flagstaff or Prescott [in Arizona]. I don't know when but maybe…I saw those [flowers].
42	Junko:	This is a Japanese national flower.
43	Nicole:	I think our national flower is a cactus flower. I think. Those have a little white and yellow flower on the top.

After I introduced cherry blossoms as a Japanese national flower, she came up with Arizona's state flower, cactus blossoms, and explained how it looks. She learned that both Japan and Arizona have representative flowers.

A fourth grade student identified an unfamiliar weather, snow, depicted in *Hachiko*. From the picture book, she learned that Japan has four seasons including spring, summer, autumn, and winter like in Arizona, but the difference between the weather in Japan and in Arizona, especially Black Canyon City that she lives, is that Japan has a lot of snow in winter.

236	Fourth grader:	I also found Japan has snow [showing the illustration of snows to her group members and me].

In summary, participants learned about unfamiliar Japanese cultural items and facts such as food habit, people's lifestyles and occupations, Japanese language, animals, and natures and weathers from Japanese pictorial texts. They further gained an in-depth knowledge about Japan by identifying similarities as well as differences between Japanese and American cultures, which are discussed in the next section.

Recognizing similarities, as well as differences. O'Herron (2014) argued that "understandings of similar and difference are both needed in a world marked more and

more by diversity and complex interdependencies". Understanding cultural similarities and differences is significant for intercultural learning. In the Japan inquiry, participants demonstrated an acceptance of Japanese culture by recognizing and understanding of similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of Japanese people, in terms of people's lifestyles, social practices and rules, and relationship to animals.

Modern lifestyles. In the following example, Sam pointed to unfamiliar and familiar foods described in *Tokyo Friends* (Reynolds, 2012), a contemporary realistic fiction about an American and Japanese girls' exploration of Tokyo, Japan. He recognized that people in Japan eat pizza, like American people, as well as Japanese foods.

50	Junko:	What did you find here [in *Tokyo Friends*]?
51	Sam:	I like this [the book], it was happy…and I liked how [the book] show[s] different like American food then... this breakfast, different buses, I also like they [Japanese and American girls] became friends. And I liked how do they… all those are different. I like how [the book] showed like you know [they are] eating food together. I liked the how you [Japanese people] eat the pizza and Japanese food kind of mixed!
52	Junko:	You found a lot.
53	Sam:	I also found different foods.

While reading aloud a Japanese picture book うんこ日記 *(Poop Diary)* (Muranaka & Kawabata, 2004), I invited the students to make predictions about the story based on the illustrations.

911	Junko:	What do you see here?
912	Kate:	Dinner.
913	Peter:	Is it like a green beans and egg rolls?
914	Jerry:	I like egg rolls!
915	Peter:	Me too!!
916	Bob:	This is very interesting!!
917	Junko:	This is a poop of Monday. Do you see something greens here? He ate seed weeds [so his poop is green colored].

918	Sam:	I like seed weeds!
919	Peter:	Guacamole!
920	Junko:	He ate spinach. So it's green too.
921	Aaron:	Fruits? Mushrooms?
922	Junko:	Thursday. He ate cucumbers.
923	Michael:	Zucchinis!
924	Aaron:	Banana!
925	Peter:	Salad!
926	Junko:	[showing Figure 4.18] What are they [mother and her son] cooking?
927	Michael:	Fries!
928	Kate:	Sushi!

In this conversation, the students made various predictions on what a boy eats every day, by observing a picture diary of his poops. Through the exploration, they found out similar and different foods that people eat in Japan and the U.S. They also built a sense of familiarity by recognizing kitchen equipment, such as a microwave and refrigerator, calendars, and family photos stuck to the refrigerator door with a magnet, which are displayed in the illustration of Figure 4.19. *Poop Diary* offered the students meaningful opportunities to have a glimpse into aspects of people's daily life in Japan, which is similar to the participants' lives in the United States.

Figure 4.18: Cooking in the kitchen presented in *うんこ日記 (Poop diary)* (Muranaka and Kawabata, 2008, p. 15).

Figure 4.19: Kitchen presented in *うんこ日記 (Poop diary)* (Muranaka and Kawabata, 2008, p. 21-22).

When reading aloud *Suki's Kimono* (Uegaki & Jorisch, 2005), a contemporary fiction picture book about a Japanese-American girl wearing a *kimono* to school in the U.S., the students wondered whether children wear their *kimono* to school in Japan. I told them that they do not wear a *kimono* but school uniforms or t-shirt, jeans, and skirts to school, and they wear a *kimono* only on special occasions such as summer festivals. During the discussion, I noticed that some students showed the attitude that Japan has such traditional dress but not in the United States, so I gave them a space to reflect their own cultural practice as follows:

149	Junko:	I wonder if American people have traditional clothing like *kimono*.
150	Nicole:	Halloween costume!

In the conversation above, the students realized that they also have "traditional" and "cultural" dress, such as Halloween costume, like *kimono* in Japan. This realization encouraged them to identify that they have "culture" in the United States.

Social space. When Kate was browsing *The Park Bench* (Takeshita, 1989), a contemporary realistic fiction picture book about a public park in Japan, she was surprised that Japanese park has similar objects, such as benches and water fountains, with parks in the United States.

7	Kate:	Is the park really in Japan? Do you have bench and water fountain? Do you plant in the park?

Through an analysis of people's activities at a park described in the book, Kate also recognized that a park plays as an important social space for people in Japan, such as hanging out or playing with friends, similar to in the United States.

In the following excerpt, Kate found that *The Park Bench* does not depict a dog park. She asked me whether Japan has dog parks, like in the United States.

114 Kate: You guys have dog parks in Japan?
115 Junko: Dog parks? We have…but very few…You have many dog parks here [in the U.S.].
116 Kate: We take dogs to the dog park.

Kate's finding that *The Park Bench* does not show a dog park, led her the realization that a dog park is not common in Japan, which is different from in the U.S. where dog parks are common. We discussed together the reasons why Japan does not have the park and the U.S. has it as follows:

- The limited land of Japan has resulted in limited space for dog parks.
- The notion of park is different in Japanese and American cultures: a park is for people in Japan, but it is for pets as well as people in the United States.

We first came up with the idea that geographical causes are related to whether a dog park is common or not common. Furthermore, we talked about a dog park as being related to people's relationship to pets in both countries. Considering pets as an extended member of a family is common in the U.S. and that idea supports creating a space for dogs at a park; on the other hand, such notions towards pets are not as common in Japan as in the U.S., so a space for dogs is not generally provided at a park.

Relationship to animals. *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog* (Turner & Nascimbene, 2004) reminded a fourth grader of losing her pet dog from a car accident several years ago in Arizona. By relating her pet loss experience, she deeply cared about the characters, who also suffer from pet loss grief. She showed the deep understanding of the characters' feelings by situating herself as one who loses a dog in the story.

303 Fourth grader: There was a dog named Lucy and she got hit by a car. That reminds me of *Hachiko*.
304 Junko: Very sad…

The poster shown in Figure 4.20 was created by Nicole, Aaron, and two fourth graders, who showed great interest in animals in Japan. They focused on exploring dogs

in Japan, using nonfiction and fiction picture books and the Internet. They loved the Hachiko story, so they conducted an in-depth research on the Hachiko dog and its statue built in Tokyo. They also studied about pet dogs in Japan by making a comparison with those in the United States. They noted that more recently many people have been having close relationships with dogs in Japan, which is similar to in the United States.

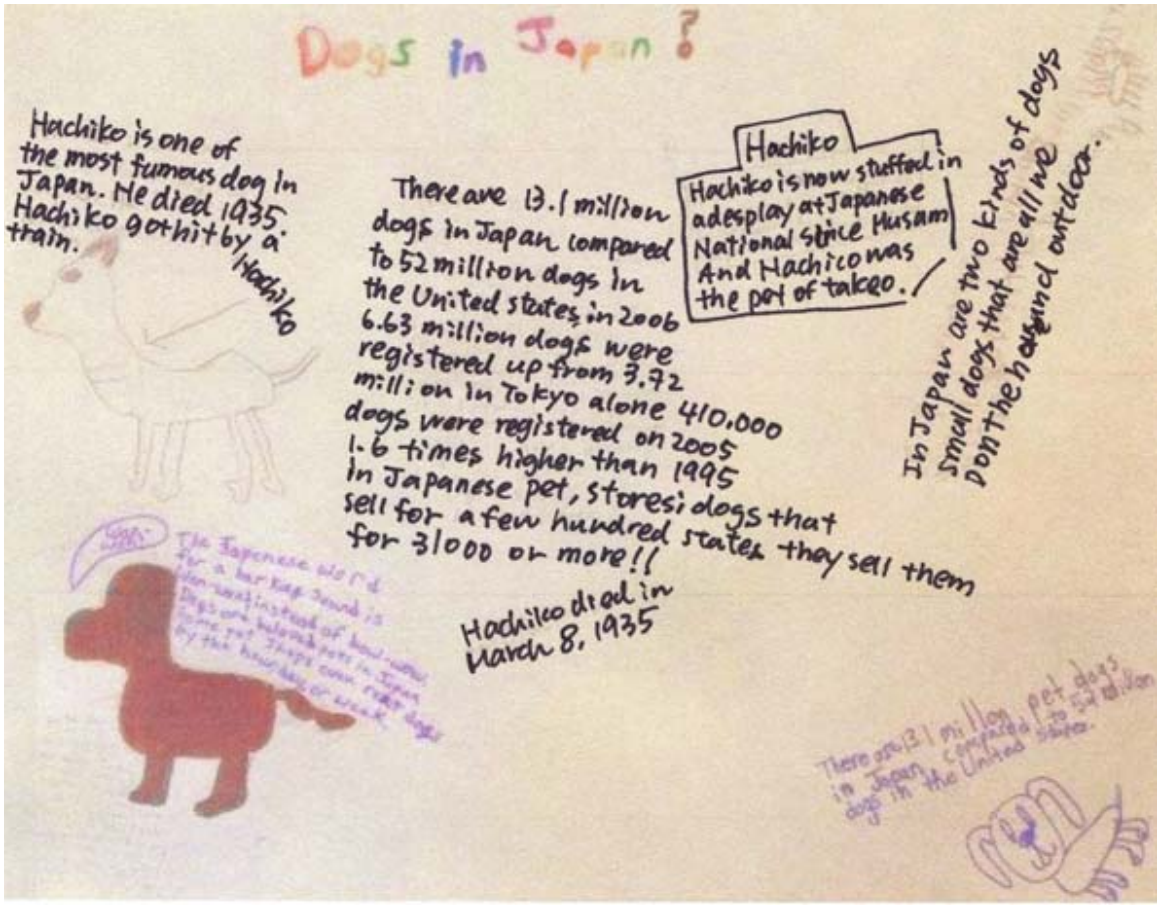


Figure 4.20: Final inquiry poster: Animal group.

Social rules. Kate, Greg, and Aaron showed an understanding of Yotsuba's situation, having difficulty in adjusting to a new environment, described in manga *Yotsuba&!*, by drawing on their personal experiences. In the writing response, they expressed as follows:

Aaron: Yotsuba was afraid of stranger danger. My parents told me that

too.

Kate: Some connections are stranger danger and they mentioned that in the book. Also [we should] be careful in new environments that we don't know.

Greg: We need to be careful in new environment[s] that we don't know. was trying to help find someone [the missing person] was a bad person.

In the story, Yotsuba's father tells her what to do in an unfamiliar place, such as not to follow strangers, and that reminded the students of what they are told by their parents. Thus, understanding a character' situation by making connection to the students' personal experiences helped them to see similarities in social environments in Japan and the U.S.

Holiday traditions. The participants explored Japanese holidays using the two picture books, *I live in Tokyo* (Takabayashi, 2001) and *Japanese Celebrations: Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!* (Reynolds, 2006). During the read-aloud of the books, they identified different holidays and holiday activities, as compared to those in the United States. After the read-aloud sessions, I encouraged the students to consider cross-cultural commonalities across Japanese and American holidays in the following activity: the students in a pair are provided 10 cards having the name of Japanese holidays and 14 cards having the name of American holidays, and then they sort out the cards according to connections, themes, and patterns, not by country or holiday (see Figure 4.21).

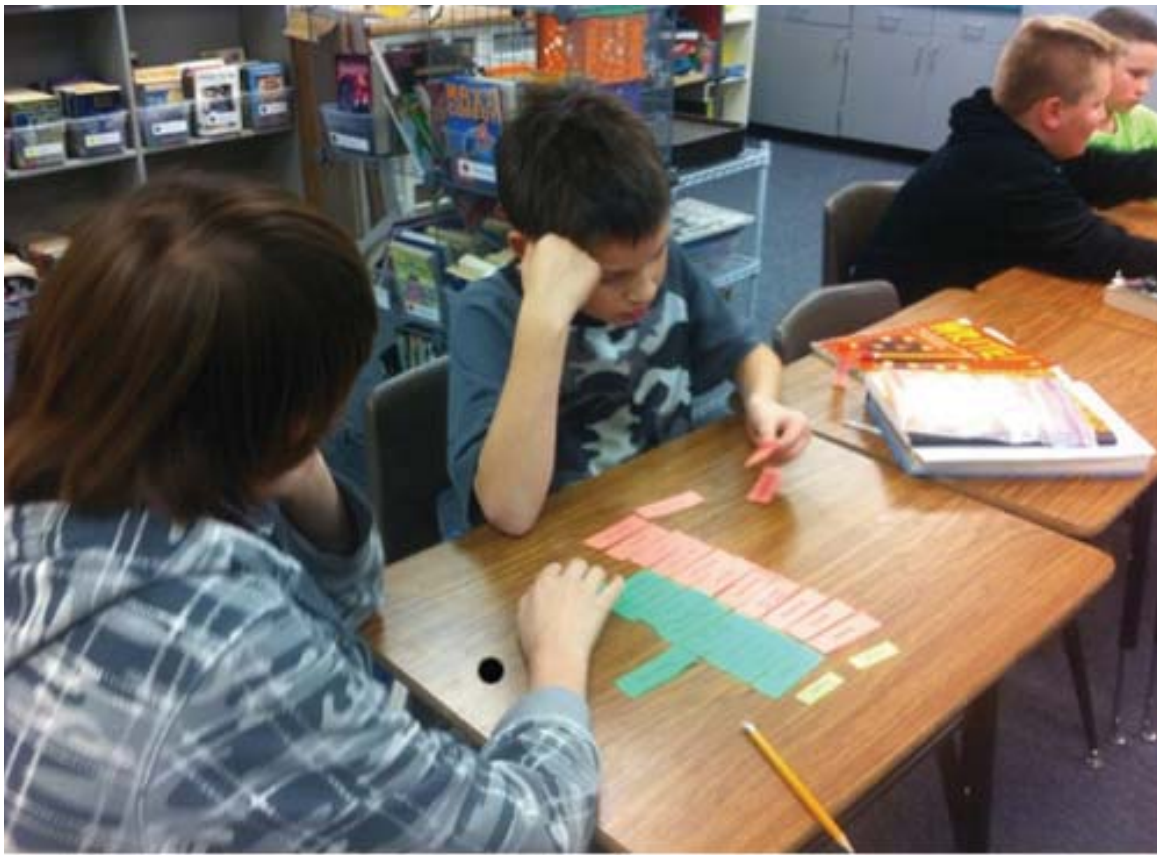


Figure 4.21: Activity of sorting holiday cards.

After the pair works, using the comparison chart (see Figure 4.22), they shared connections they came up with as follows:

1334	Junko:	What kinds of themes do you have?
1335	Nicole:	Earth Day, Labor Day, Coming of Age Day, President Day, Respect for Seiner People Day, and Ocean's Day are all "give respect". Like President Day is giving to respect to a president, and the Earth Day and Ocean's Day is given we try to clean up the earth.
1336	Junko:	You [Peter] were saying something about Earth Day and Ocean's Day too…[making an attempt to elicit Peter's response that I heard in his pair work]
1337	Peter:	Both are like cleaning up the earth… and caring and sharing….[in a whispery voice]
1338	Junko:	What about Mary and Michael's group?
1339	Michael:	There is "kid's respect".
1340	Aaron:	"World respect" too.
1341	Nicole:	"Giving love" on Valentine's Day.
1342	Kate:	Both have Christmas.

1343	Nicole:	Christmas and Easter celebrate religion, so they have "religion".
1344	Junko:	What do you see here [pointing to a comparison chart]?
1345	Michael:	There are a lot of holidays, and there are adjectives to describe the pairs of holidays.
1346	Junko:	there are many connections too.
1347	Michael:	[Nodding].
1348	Junko:	What do you think [about the chart]?
1349	Michael:	I see the…that…there are lots of holidays in Japan and U.S.A., and connection is that go with similar things.

Searching for comparisons and connections encouraged the students to identify not only different but also similar holiday activities in Japan and the U.S. For example, they recognized similar social activities, such as clearing up trash and caring for nature and the environment on Ocean Day in Japan and on Earth Day in the U.S. (line 1337). Also, their thinking clearly shifted from making surface connections between the holidays in both countries to understanding the holidays as conceptually connecting by themes such as kids' respect and giving love to people, supporting the students to develop intercultural understanding.

Figure 4.22: Comparison chart of holidays in Japan and the U.S.

Kamishibai also encouraged the students to learn about a Japanese traditional holiday, New Years Day, such as when the New Years Day is held, how to celebrate, what people eat, and what they do during the days. The students were especially curious about foods such as rice cakes and fish eaten during the holidays, and they were also interested in Japanese traditional houses made of wood and paper.

In summary, participants built cross-cultural perspectives by identifying, understanding, and accepting differences and similarities between their lives in the U.S. and people's lives in Japan. Despite many cultural differences, the students were aware of human commonalities that bring us together as human beings.

Notion of modesty and mutual cooperation. Participants recognized similarities between the nature of characters in the story and people in their lives. For example, they identifies that how characters *in Hats for the Jizos*, a kamishibai story, help and care each other to overcome difficulties can be seen in life. Peter said that it "can be [seen in our] real life" (line 2234).

In the following conversation, Nicole and Greg talked about the characters in *Hats for the Jizos*.

1987	Nicole:	It's like about the old man and woman and…they kind of doing nice things in New Years.
1988	Junko:	Yes, that's right.
1989	Greg:	Be happy with what you have.
1990	Junko:	Yeah.
1991	Greg:	They [the old couples] give it [hats] to someone [the statues] who doesn't have anything. So you have something they don't have…and…you can give it [something] to them [someone who does not have what he/she needs] and get really really much better than just like that.

In line 1987, Nicole described what the old couple did to the statues, giving hats to them, as a nice thing. Greg also added, "Be happy with what you have" (line 1989), indicating the old couple's humble life. He continued to say his opinion in line 1991, "They [the old couples] give it [hats] to someone [the statues] who doesn't have anything…you can give it [something] to them [someone who does not have what he/she needs]." He showed what he learned from the story, the importance of living by helping and caring each other.

Exploring cultural identity. In addition to identifying differences and similarities between the participants' lives in the United States and people's lives in Japan, they became gradually aware of how and why culture is significant to people, by exploring character's cultural identities in stories and the students' personal identities.

Exploring characters' identities. Using a cultural x-ray (see Figure 4.23), the students explored cultural identity of a young Japanese-American woman named Masako in *Tea with Milk* (Say, 1999), a picture book story about her challenging transition from America to Japan from the middle to late 1900s. They closely examined her physical and visible aspects and inner aspects of cultural identity. They first explored Masako's outer aspects including languages she speak, a nationality, favorite foods and clothes as follows:

570	Junko:	What language does she [Masako] speak?
571	Nicole:	English and Japanese.
572	Jerry:	Mostly English.
573	Junko:	What is her nationality?
574	Nicole:	San Francisco?
575	Junko:	Like…nationality is I am Japanese and you are American.
576	Kate:	She is Japanese-American.
585	Junko:	What are her favorite foods?
586	Nicole:	Spaghettis and pancake.
587	Sam:	And tea with milk.
588	Junko:	What is her favorite clothing?
589	Nicole:	She likes bright and shiny staff. It not like *kimono*.

This next conversation shows the students' exploration of inner aspects of Masako's identity. Their discussion was focused on exploring her struggle to search for her own American heritage and her place in the country of her parents, Japan.

590	Junko:	She [Masako] doesn't like *kimono*... What about inside her heart? …What things she value? and Why?
591	Nicole:	She is more like more like [a] city girl not county girl. I don't know how to explain that…
592	Junko:	What is [an] important thing in her life?
593	Aaron:	Tea with milk?
594	Junko:	What does "tea with milk" mean to her?
595	Aaron:	It means like…it is like her favorite drink.
596	Nicole:	Maybe [tea with milk] reminds her America and her family in San Francisco.
597	Ms. Miller:	What is the strong thing that she believes?
598	Nicole:	Being able to be herself? She wanted to be more like more

		like not wearing *kimono* like being herself staff that.
599	Junko:	She wants to be independent?
600	Nicole:	Yeah...
601	Ms. Miller:	Did she like the idea that only being able to never drive a car or…?
602	Jerry:	No…
603	Ms. Miller:	What things she value?
604	Kate:	Working?
605	Ms. Miller:	She likes to make choices? What else?
606	Nicole:	Driving cars because she is not allowed in Japan. They [her Japanese parents] didn't like her driving cars…
630	Junko:	What kinds of things are important or significant to her?
631	Aaron:	Driving cars and having jobs.
632	Junko:	Yeah…maybe to be independent…
633	Nicole:	Kind of being equal to man because in Japan they [men] have better jobs and I saw the guys driving cars in Japan but girls should not. It's kind of being equal to man.
634	Junko:	She wants gender equality. What about parents?
635	Aaron:	They are okay with not driving cars and having better jobs,
636	Nicole:	Not being equal.

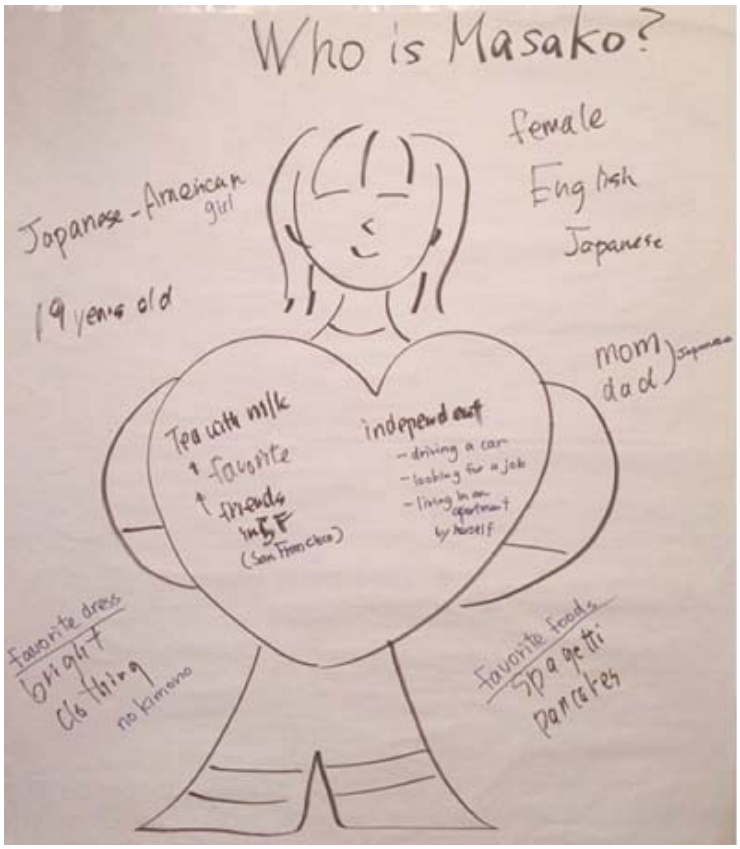


Figure 4.23: Cultural x-ray of a story character in *Tea with Milk* (Say, 1999).

The participants had insightful discussions about values and beliefs that Masako holds in her heart, such as asserting individuality and independence by finding a job and rebelling against undesired assimilation to Japanese culture. They also considered the role of "tea with milk" in her life. In line 596, Nicole said that it reminds her of her home country, America. She seems to describe "tea with milk" as Masako's significant cultural symbol, showing her cultural identity, value, and belief. Thus, the exploration of Masako's identity depicted in *Tea with Milk* encouraged the students to identify inner and outer aspects of her identity and to consider how her values and beliefs influence her life. Additionally, the book provided them with insight into Japan-American cultural differences such as gender roles.

Exploring participants' personal identities. After the analysis of a story character's identity, I encouraged students to explore their own personal identities because Kathy Short (2009) argued "All learners, adults and children, must explore their own cultures before they can understand that culture matters in the lives of others around them" (p. 3). I invited the students to reflect and explore carefully their own identities by creating cultural x-rays. On the outside of the x-ray, they listed nationality, birthday, birthplace, languages they speak, family members, and gender etc. Inside their hearts, they placed the things that they value and believe. They were also encouraged to describe the reasons why they value or believe these. For example, Figure 4.24 shows Aaron's x-ray. His heart showed that he believes in the importance of education, family, and pets. He wrote about his pets: "My dogs are special to me because they comfort me when I am sad and are super cute!" Jerry described that he recognized how friends are important to him when he moved to Black Canyon City from California: "They [friends] showed me

around when I first came here, to Black Cañon. All these are important to me because the all care about each other and cheer each other up when we're down [sad]." (see Figure 4.25). Kali, in her heart, wrote how her and her family members value basketball as a family sport, "Basketball is my life. I'm in a basketball team. It is important to me because a lot of my family played it. Basketball is a shared family experience." (see Figure 4.26).

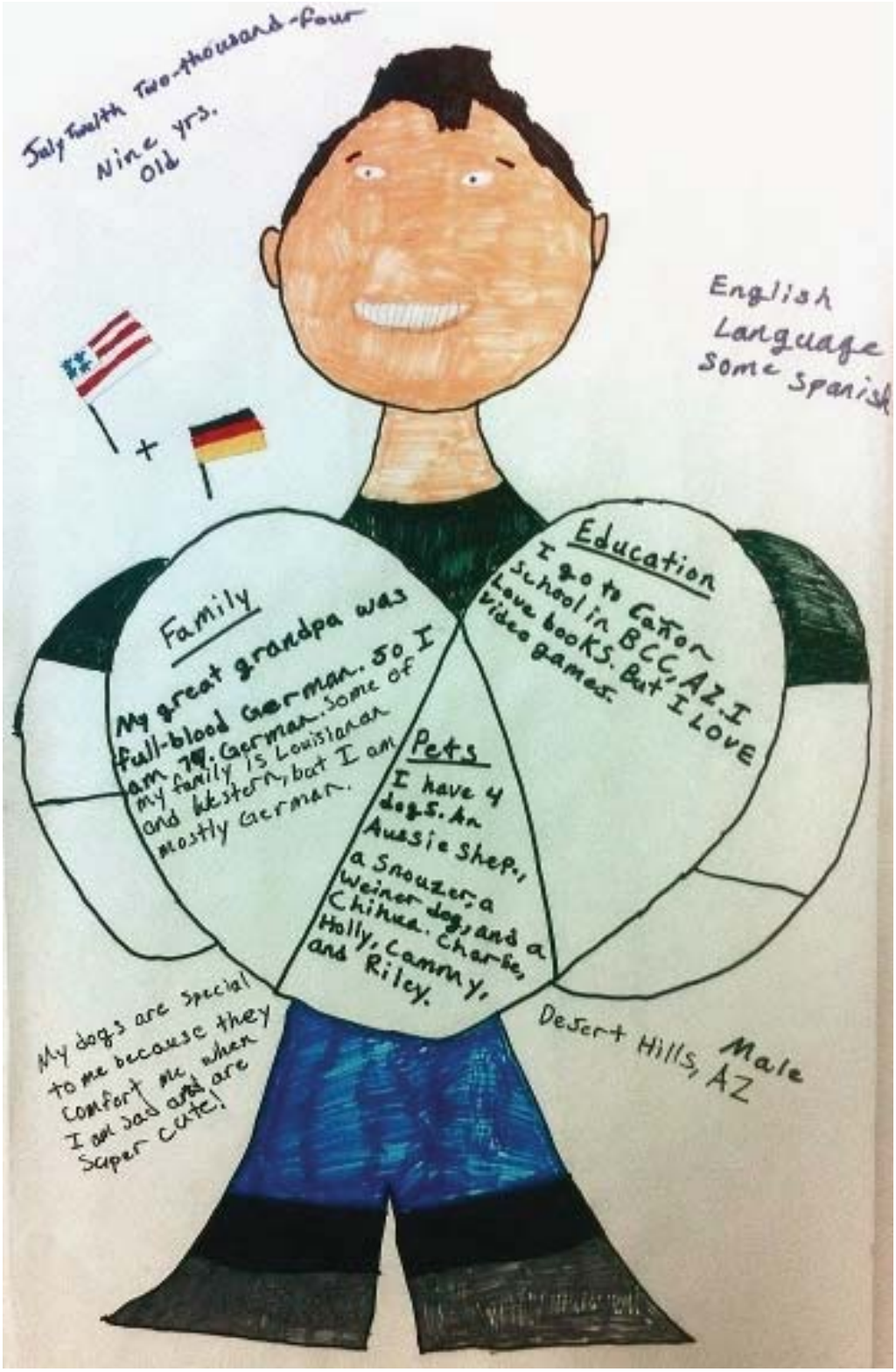


Figure 4.24: Cultural x-ray: Aaron.

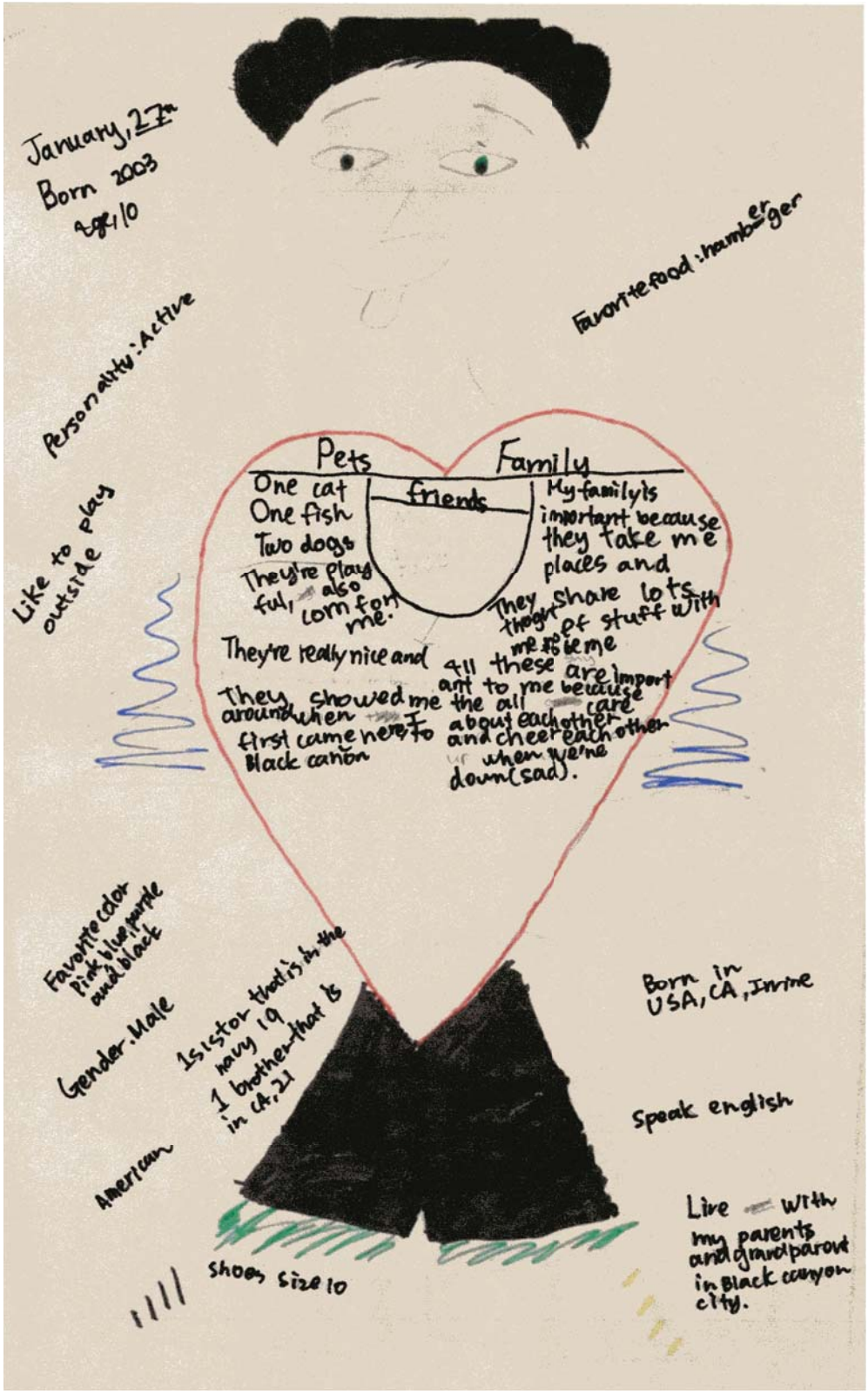


Figure 4.25: Cultural x-ray: Jerry.

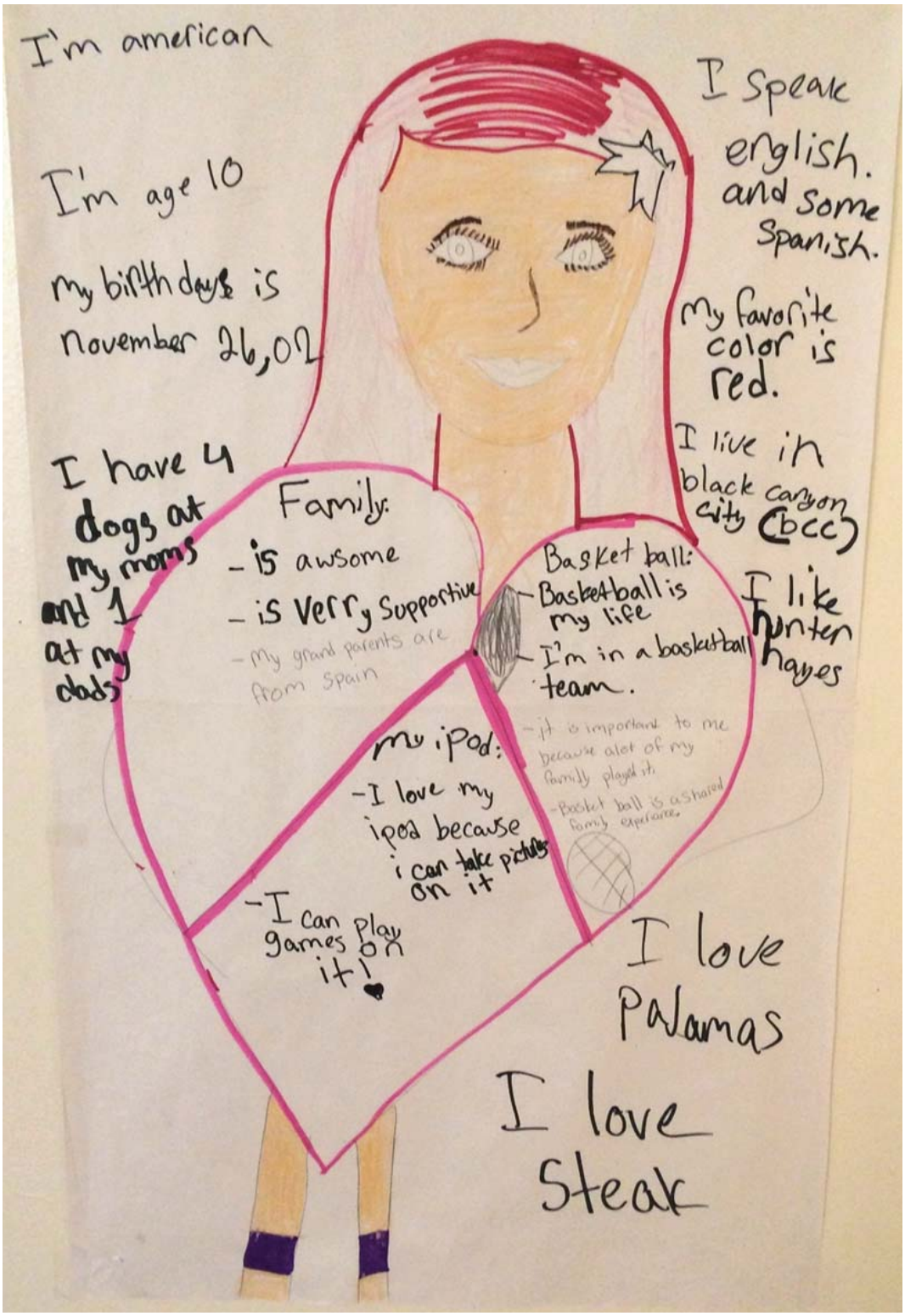


Figure 4.26: Cultural x-ray: Kate.

Exploring the cultural identities of a story character and the students' own identities was meaningful for them. When analyzing the cultural identity of Masako, a Japanese-American woman depicted in *Tea with Milk*, they learned how culture influences her thoughts. The analyses of the students' own personal identities using cultural x-rays encouraged them to recognize the importance of culture to them. In addition, sharing x-rays with classmates provided them a significant space and time to think about culture. They were more aware that each person has his/her own personal cultures, broadening and enhancing views of each other as well as themselves.

In summary, the participants developed an understanding and acceptance of Japanese culture through exploring Japanese cultural details and recognizing cultural differences and similarities between the students' lives in the United States and people's lives in Japan. In addition, exploring cultural identities of a story character and the student's own identities supported them to build an in-depth understandings of themselves and others, enhancing awareness of how culture is important to people. In the next section, I discuss respecting and valuing Japanese culture and people, which they also demonstrated in their intercultural learning.

Respect and Appreciation and Valuing

Fennes and Hapgood (1996) said that people respect and value culture when they develop an understanding of cultural diversity and complexity. Participants showed respect and value for Japanese culture by learning and understanding diversities and complexities within Japanese culture, such as cultural values and beliefs, language, and social and historical issues.

Cultural values and beliefs. The participants explored and built an understanding of Japanese cultural values and beliefs, such as the role of a sea god in Japanese culture. First, anime, Ponyo, and two picture books, Yoh Shomei's *あのひのこと (The Things Happened on That Day): Remember March 11, 2011* (2012) and Eisaku Endo's *あくしゅだ (Let's Shake Hands)* (2013) encouraged them to learn about the role of the sea and the sea god in Japan. Also, they learned about the role of the statue of *Jizo* in Japan through *Hats for the Jizos*, a *kamishibai* story.

The Sea God. In the example below, Michael recognized Ponyo's mother playing two roles, a mother and a sea god, in anime *Ponyo*.

1515	Junko:	Who is Ponyo's mom?
1516	Bianca:	She is beautiful and pretty.
1517	Michael:	She is a sea god?
1518	Junko:	Yes, she is. How do you know that?
1519	Michael:	Because the guys [shipmen] when they saw her [Ponyo's mother], the guys did this [putting his palms together in front of his chest and bowing].

I encouraged the students to discuss the role of Ponyo's mother because she is one of the important characters in the story. Michael identified her as a god of the sea (line 1517), and then he supported his claim based on his observation of the characters' religious gestures. Looking at the scene shown in Figure 4.27, he said, "Because the guys [shipmen] when they saw her [Ponyo's mother], the guys did this [putting his palms in front of his chest and bowing]" (line 1519). After the discussion, I turned to have a follow-up conversation with Michael in order to know why he recognized that the shipmen's gestures signified religious meanings. He said that the YouTube clip about Buddhist shrines and temples in Japan that I showed in the classroom before helped him recognize it.

Figure 4.27: Sailors bowing to a sea god presented in *Ponyo.*

After watching the whole story of *Ponyo*, I shared a Japanese-English bilingual picture book *The Things Happened on That Day* (Yoh, 2012), a story about a little boy who loses his grandfather from the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. *Ponyo* and the earthquake story were connected by a theme centered on spiritual meaning of sea. Therefore, after the read-aloud of the picture book, I encouraged the students to work in pairs to create a comparison chart, searching for ideas, themes, patterns, and connections across the two stories, in order to develop understandings of the stories and gain new perspectives. In the following conversation, David and Mary were exploring the stories using their comparison chart as shown in Figure 4.28.

1605	David:	Both [*Ponyo* and *The Things Happened on That Day*] have kids and both have tsunami.
1606	Mary:	And both have sea.
1607	Junko:	Do you see any differences?
1608	David:	One [*Ponyo*] has a kid running on the water.
1609	Mary:	And…the other one [*The Things Happened on That Day*] has the kid who has a grandpa.
1610	David:	And the other one [*The Things Happened on That Day*] is trying to find parents.
1611	Junko:	What is the theme of the stories?
1612	Mary:	He [a boy in *Ponyo*] has one [Ponyo] and he [a boy in *The Things Happened on That Day*] has a family and puppy.

1613	David:	I know good one too. Bad weather is coming.
1614	Junko:	Both of them?
1615	David:	Yeah...everything is gone.
1616	Junko:	Everything is gone?
1617	Mary:	Yeah…
1618	Junko:	How [does] the boy [in *The Things Happened on That Day*] think about the ocean?
1619	David:	He [a boy who loses his grandfather from tsunami] still likes the ocean even though it [tsunami] destroyed the sea...[and his grandfather].
1620	Junko:	What about in *Ponyo*? How do people [characters] think about the ocean?
1621	Mary:	He [a boy] whose friends and parents are missing in tsunami] likes it.

Comparisons and intertextual thinking helped David and Mary identify the tsunami and sea as important connections across the stories, *Ponyo* and *The Things Happened on That Day*. They also found the tsunami and its effect on characters' lives as key elements. At the end of the conversation, I purposefully shifted their focus to considering the protagonists' stances towards the sea in both stories (lines 1618 & 1620). The purpose of this attempt was to encourage them to consider the role of the ocean in Japanese culture. They realized that protagonists in both stories worship the sea although they go through a difficult time caused by the tsunami (lines 1916 & 1621).

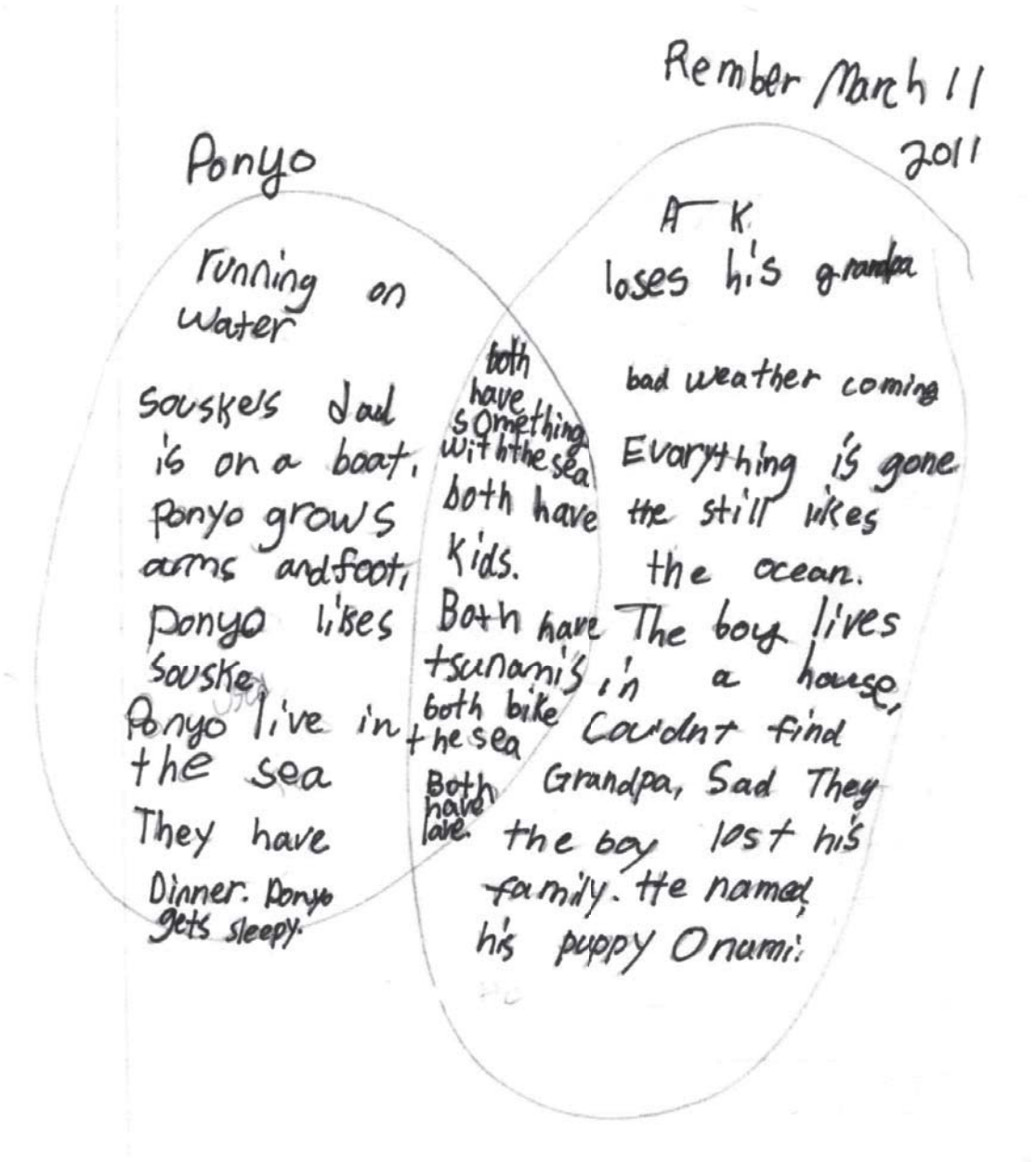


Figure 4.28: Intertextual analysis of *Ponyo* and *The Things Happened on That Day* using a comparison chart: David and Mary

After the intertextual reading of *Ponyo* and *The Things Happened on That Day*, I shared a Japanese picture book *Let's Shake Hands* (Endo, 2013), which depicts a little boy's exploration of nature. The book is connected with *Ponyo* and *The Things Happened*

on That Day by the theme of relationship between humans and nature. As shown in the conversation below, participants responded to the story by linking to two other stories.

1756	Junko:	What does sea mean in each story [*Ponyo*, *The Things Happened on That Day,* and *Let's Shake Hands*]?
1757	Aaron:	Wait…March one [*The Things Happened on That Day*], it [sea] reminds him [a boy] of the person [grandfather who dies in tsunami].
1758	Junko:	What about [the role of the sea] in *Ponyo*?
1759	Aaron:	It's like a home away from home.
1760	Junko:	What do you mean?
1761	Aaron:	Where you go somewhere you feel comfortable. Ponyo feels comfortable and the other side above the water, but her home is here [under the water].
1762	Junko:	What about [the role of the sea in] *Let's Shake Hands*?
1763	Nicole:	That's an elephant's thing…
1764	Kate:	It's really weird creatures.
1765	Junko:	What about the relationship between the human [a boy] and the sea? Are they friends?
1766	Aaron:	Yeah…*Shake Hands* and *Ponyo*…actually, even though the sea killed the grandpa [in *The Things Happened on That Day*], he [a boy] remembers what happened but he still likes the sea…respects the sea.

I asked the question, "What does sea mean in each story [*Ponyo*, *The Things Happened on That Day,* and *Let's Shake Hands*]?" (line 1756) to the students because "sea" was a main connection they found across the three stories. Aaron stated that the sea reminds a boy of his beloved deceased grandfather in *The Things Happened on That Day*, and the sea reminds Ponyo of her home in *Ponyo* (lines 1757 & 1761). In line 1765, I encouraged the students to consider of the role of the sea in *Let's Shake Hands*. Aaron mentioned its role in *The Things Happened on That Day*, instead of in *Let's Shake Hands*, saying that the boy "still likes the sea…respects the sea" (line 1766). He got off the track, yet I saw his idea was thoughtful and important. He said that the boy likes and respects the sea although it is a source of his grandfather's death, indicating people's underlying beliefs and values towards the sea in Japan.

In the discussion above, I noticed that there was not so much discussion around the story of *Let's Shake Hands*, so I went back to it. The following conversation occurred when I encouraged the students to respond to a huge unshaped monster-like creature (see Figure 4.29), playing an important role in the story, by giving the background information of the book—it was written and published after the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami (line 1800).

1800	Junko:	What does this one [pointing to a monster-like creature] represents? Like…this story was written after the earthquake [in Japan].
1801	Aaron:	It's the hands of like all the stuff that may be caused by the earthquake and tsunami.
1802	Junko:	Yeah…tsunami…they [a boy and tsunami] are trying to shake hands?
1803	Jerry:	Trying to make peace?
1804	Junko:	Yeah.
1805	Jerry:	Truth?
1806	Junko:	Yeah.
1807	Aaron:	Peaceful…[in a whispery voice]

Aaron described the monster as a creature born from disasters by saying, "It's the hands of like all the stuff that may be caused by the earthquake and tsunami" (line 1801). I also expressed my own inquiry, wondering if the boy and tsunami try to shake hands (line 1802). After line 1803, Jerry and Aaron speculated what their handshake signifies, such as "Trying to make peace" (line 1803), "Truth" (line 1805), and "Peaceful" (line 1807). This discussion provided the students with a meaningful opportunity to think about the role of nature and the relationship between nature and humans in Japanese culture. In addition to *Ponyo* and *The Things Happened on That Day*, *Let's Shake Hands* was a key picture book that helped shift their thinking to deeper meanings of the sea in Japan.

Figure 4.29: A monster and a boy shaking hands presented in *あくしゅだ* (*Let's Shake Hands*) (Ando, 2013).

The Statue of Jizo. Before reading aloud *Hats for the Jizos*, I introduced the title in Japanese, "Kasa Jizo". I explained "Kasa" for a hat and "Jizo" for a statue. Jerry was curious about pronunciations of those words, reading it slowly and trying to pronounce each word carefully. Then he figured out that "Jizo" and "Jesus" were phonologically linked in connected speech (line 1952 & 1956). I assumed that such a connection was influenced by his religious background.

1951	Junko:	The title is "Kasa Jizo". "Kasa" means hats and "Jizo" means a statue, so the title is "Hats for the Jizos". This is a [Japanese] folktale.
1952	Jerry:	The hats for "Jesus"?
1953	Junko:	Hats for the "JI-ZO-Z".

1954	Jerry:	"JI---ZO---Z"?
1955	Junko:	Yes, "JI-ZO-Z".
1956	Jerry:	Jesus?
1957	Junko:	Not "Jesus" but similar pronunciation.
1958	Jerry:	"JI--ZO--Z"?
1959	Junko:	Yes.
1960	Jerry:	Mmmm…

The following conversation started with my question, "Do you know the Statue of Liberty?" (line 1998). By linking to the familiar cultural icon, the Statue of Liberty, for the students, I encouraged them to explore the role of the *Jizo* statues in Japanese culture.

1998	Junko:	Do you know the Statue of Liberty?
1999	Michael:	In New York?
2000	Junko:	Yeah. Do you know that in New York?
2001	Nicole:	Yeah.
2002	Aaron:	What if somebody go[es] over there [New York] in the New Year's Day and put a hat on it [the Statue of Liberty] and [the statue] give[s] them [somebody who puts a hat on the statue] some staff.
2003	Junko:	That's an interesting idea! What represents the Statue of Liberty? Have you ever seen the Statue of Liberty?
2006	Students:	Yes.
2007	Nicole:	I haven't been there [New York], but I saw it like on pictures. This actually the Statue of Liberty was made because we had wars in the U.S. and the statue was made for our liberty.
2008	Junko:	Yes, that's right.
2009	Nicole:	So…the Statue of Liberty is a symbolic of freedom!
2010	Junko:	Yes.
2013	Aaron:	Right?
2014	Junko:	Right? You mean human right?
2015	Aaron:	Yeah.

Interestingly, at the very beginning of the conversation, Aaron created an imaginary world by linking the *Hats for the Jizos* story to the Statue of Liberty. In line 2002, he imagined a scene in which somebody puts a hat on the Statue of Liberty on New Year's Day and he or she receives favors from the statue. After the Aaron's statement, I encouraged the students to consider symbolic meanings of the Statue of Liberty. Nicole

and Aaron said that it represents freedom and human rights (lines 2009 & 2013). In addition to Jerry's connection between *Jizo* and Jesus in the previous excerpt, Aaron's imaginary world and sharing symbolic meanings of the Statue of Liberty were significant for students in beginning to probe cultural values and beliefs on the *Jizo* statues in Japan.

In order to help students build a deeper understanding of the statue of *Jizo*, I explained its role in Japanese society based on my knowledge: people believe in it as a protector of children and travelers (lines 2024 & 2026).

2024	Junko:	The statue of *Jizos* in Japan, those are like protectors.
2025	Greg:	They are like they are like they are like protectors?
2026	Junko:	Yes, they are protectors of children and travelers. Parents, they believe that the statues they protect children. So, they pray for children's successful future, health, and achievement of goals.
2027	Sam:	Is it like a god?
2028	Junko:	Yes, it's like a god. Do you know a saint?
2029	Nicole:	Is it just a one from the Bible?
2030	Aaron:	NO!
2031	Nicole:	I think [it's] Bible's Jesus.
2032	Junko:	Do you know a saint?
2033	Students:	[silence]
2034	Teacher:	It's kind of an angel.
2035	Everyone:	Oh…yeah yeah.
2036	Junko:	It's like a saint in Buddhism. Do you know Buddhism?
2037	Aaron:	Oh! Does it exist in Africa?
2038	Junko:	Not in Africa…
2039	Aaron:	I thought it's in Africa…maybe some…[some people are Buddhists] but…[probably very few]
2040	Junko:	Many Asians are Buddhists.
2041	Nicole:	The Statue of Liberty is in New York and the statues of *Jizos* are in Japan.
2042	Junko:	Yeah.
2043	Greg:	Both are statues…
2044	Junko:	Yep.
2045	Michael:	People present there and they look up to them [the *Jizo* and the Statue of Liberty].
2046	Nicole:	They both real.

Starting line 2027, Sam, Nicole and Aaron inferred what *Jizo* would be by bringing in their religious background. In line 2036, I provided further information about *Jizo* as a figure of Japanese Buddhism. To this new information, Nicole and Greg identified a "statue" as a symbolical link between *Jizo* and the Statue of Liberty (line 2041 & 2043). The following Michael's statement, "People present there and they look up to them [the *Jizo* and the Statue of Liberty]" (line 2045), indicates his realization of spiritual value in both statues in Japan and in the United States.

Nicole assumed that *Jizo* was a non-existent statue because the story was folktale and included a fictional account of that the statues walk and sing a song. Based on my knowledge and experience in Japan, I corrected her by saying, "if you go to Japan, you will see many *Jizos* on the streets and everywhere in Japan" (line 2022). This conversation helped her to learn that *Jizo* exists in Japan. In addition, she might learn that true items or facts could be included in folktales.

2021	Nicole:	There are statues of *Jizos*. The book is not real and the Statue of Liberty is real.
2022	Junko:	I have to say that if you go to Japan, you will see many *Jizos* on the streets and everywhere in Japan.
2023	Nicole:	Oh…never mind. Both are real.

Diversity in Japanese language and literacy practice. In the following conversation, Nicole wondered if all Japanese people speak the same Japanese language no matter where they live.

792	Nicole:	Is there different language in Tokyo Japan? [People in] Each place [speak] in Japanese?
793	Junko:	They speak [the] same Japanese language.

I responded to Nicole that all people speak Japanese in Japan. Right after the conversation with her, I thought that I should tell her Japan has many local dialects

although standard Japanese has spread throughout the nation. So, I introduced geographical dialects using the map as shown in Figure 4.30.

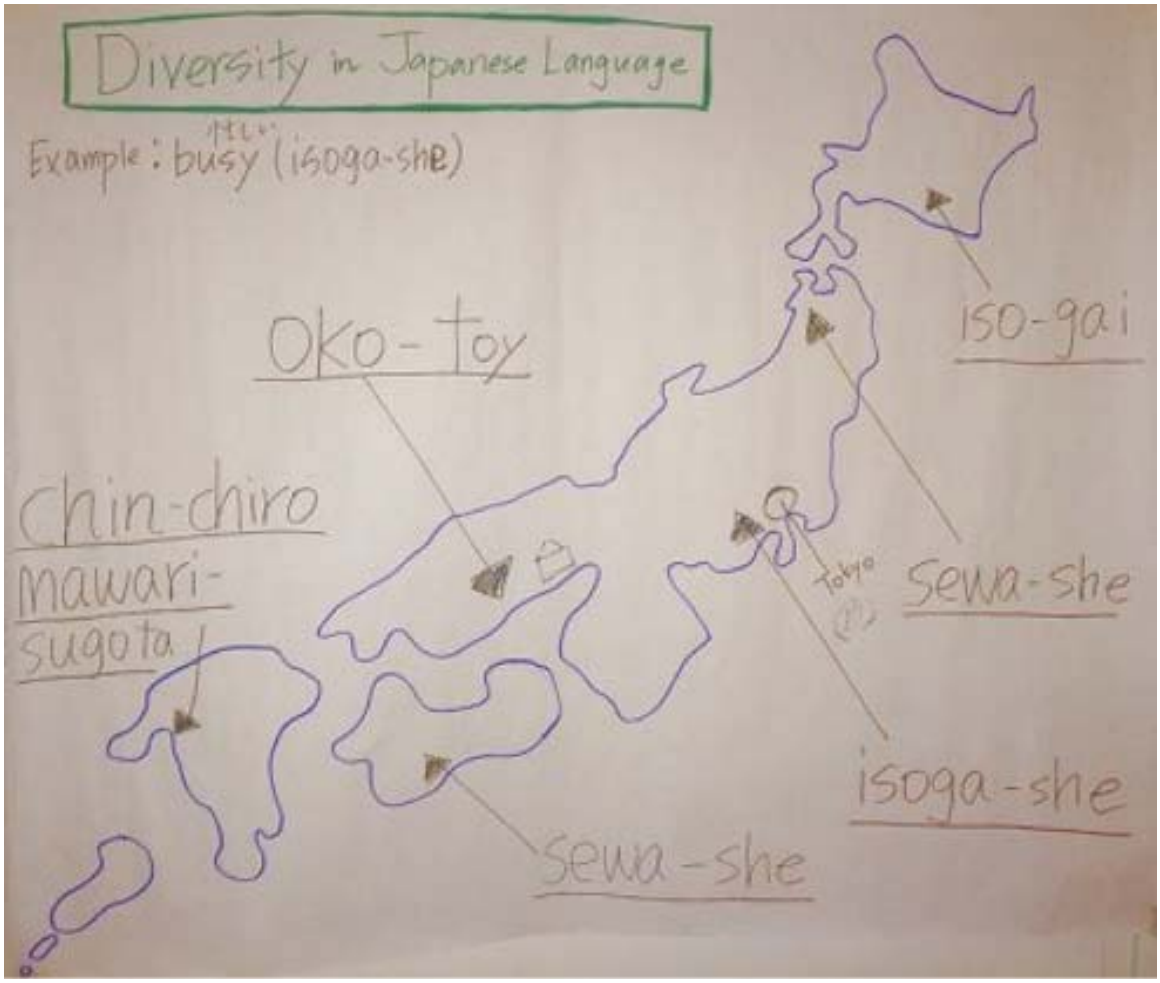


Figure 4.30: Diversity in Japanese language.

Taking *isogashii*, means busy in English, as an example, I introduced how the word is spoken differently in various regions in Japan. I also explained how geography impacts Japanese language: Japan consists of multiple smaller islands and people on each island developed local dialects when they had limited transportation from island to island in the past. The discussions led to investigations of Japanese dialects to further reflect on dialects in the U.S. Some students realized that America has local dialects too. The classroom teacher helped them to understand how people in the U.S. speak differently in

various states, as giving some expressions spoken in Arizona and Maine as examples. Thus, by reflecting their own language, the students showed an understanding of and appreciation for the rich diversity in Japanese language.

After the close examination of Japanese language, I engaged the students in browsing a range of texts, including picture books, novels, and newspapers etc, written in Japanese or bilingual Japanese-English. Many of the students' initial responses to those texts were regarding the directionality for reading in Japanese. For example, in the following conversation, Kate was inquiring into the directionality for reading in a Japanese picture book (line 885). Jerry responded to her by saying "It's like this" [tracing the letters from top to bottom], by bringing in his knowledge that he gained from Japanese friends in California (line 886). I also told her that there are basically two directionalities in which Japanese can be written and read, from top to bottom and from left to right.

885	Kate:	…it goes downward or reading like this way [tracing each letter in a picture book from right to left] or like this [tracing the letters from left to right]?
886	Jerry:	It's like this [tracing the letters from top to bottom].
887	Junko:	And…this one is read from left to right.
888	Kate:	Why do they put top to down too?
889	Junko:	We have both [read or written] from top to bottom and left to right like English [showing some books as examples].

The participants were also aware of right-to-left directionality and vertical writing system of language in manga. When Aaron saw the manga title *Yotsuba&!* written from top to bottom in English (see Figure 4.31) , he recognized that even when a Japanese word was translated into English, sometimes it was written down vertically, retaining the Japanese style. He also expressed confusion about reading the title from top-to-bottom.

1076	Aaron:	How goes up and down and all that…and usually like I can

glance something and I know what it says…so this [*Yotsuba&!* , the manga title] [reading slowly the title as tracing each letter from top to bottom]…I am like..."phew!" [sighing]…wait a minutes!

Figure 4.31: Book cover of *Yotsuba&!*.

The following conversation occurred when I showed *kamishibai* storyboards and wooden-framework to participants, before sharing the story. They expressed great curiosity towards the artifacts because most of them had never seen them before. Only one student, Jerry, stated that he had seen them before at a Japanese store in California.

1936	Junko:	Today I wanna share with you this [showing *kamishibai* storyboards and its framework].
1937	Jerry:	What? Is this like the putting pictures behind the board?
1938	Sam:	OH MY GOD!!
1939	Junko:	Have you ever seen it before?
1940	Jerry:	Yes, I have!
1941	Junko:	Oh, really? Where?
1942	Jerry:	…I think Chinese…Japanese store!
1943	Nicole:	…Is it like a game?

1944	Sam:	Is this a movie?
1945	Junko:	No, it's not a movie.
1946	Sam:	Is it a book?
1947	Aaron:	Is it a picture book?
1948	Michael:	It is a slide show [in a loud and excited voice] !!
1948	Junko:	Yes! Do you know storytelling?
1949	Aaron:	Yep!

As soon as I showed the storyboards and framework, the students started to predict what it would be one after another, such as a game, movie, and picture book. They learned that there is *kamishibai* storytelling in Japan, in addition to literacy practices with other readings including books and newspapers.

Kate expressed interest in a novel written in Japanese. In the excerpt below, she was browsing ドリーム・ギバー (*Dream Giver*), which is a Japanese-translated Lois Lowry's novel, *Gossamer* (2006).

992	Kate:	What does it say? You read this way, right [tracing the book title from left to right] ?
993	Junko:	Yes.
994	Kate:	What does it mean? What does this book like?
995	Junko:	The title is *Dream Giver*.
996	Kate:	Do you know Lois Lowry's *Dream Giver*? Is that the one there is usually [an] old guy on the front?
997	Junko:	Yes, yes.
998	Kate:	Yeah, I read that!
999	Junko:	The author is very famous in Japan.
1000	Kate:	So...this is a foreigner book!

Kate asked me about the directionality for reading in the book title and its meaning (line 992 & 994). Although the original English title was *Gossamer*, I mistakenly told her that the title was *Dream Giver* in English—I just literally translated. When I told her the author's name, Lois Lowry, she recognized him and said, "this is a foreigner book!" (line 1000), identifying it as an international book in Japan. She learned that Japan also has international books translated from other languages.

When I asked the students to sketch or write final responses to their learning about Japanese culture and people in a graffiti board on the last session of the study, some of them drew pictures of Pokémon.

2100	Junko:	Nicole, what are you drawing?
2101	Nicole:	I am drawing *Pokémon* in the anime.
2012	Junko:	Why?
2013	Nicole:	Because Japan has cool illustrations and you guys use anime. So I should I should choose *Pokémon* and *Pikachu*.

When I asked Nicole why she was drawing it (see Figure 4.32), she said, "Because Japan has cool illustrations and you guys use anime. So I should choose *Pokémon* and *Pikachu*" (line 2013). She also wrote, "Japan has cool illustration." near her Pikachu illustration. She showed an understanding and appreciation of aesthetic aspect of Japanese culture.

Figure 4.32*:* Graffiti board: Nicole.

Social and historical issues. When the students were watching the opening scene of *Ponyo*, showing tangled and floating trash under the water (see Figure 4.33 & 4.34), they looked really shocked. I also saw some students' inquires about the trash in anomalies (see Figure 4.35), "Why is there so much trash?" After they finished watching the whole story, I provided them a space to discuss marine pollution.

1768	Aaron:	Most people in U.S.A. think about the ocean as personal trash can thing…Like most people…
1770	Kate:	It has a lot of trashes and swimming. It means a lot...
1771	Michael:	The Ocean has a lot of animals.
1777	Michael:	Coral trees get destroyed by boat motors…I saw it on TV.

By describing the ocean as a "personal trash can", Aaron claimed that many people have dumped waste there in the US. Kate and Michael said that the ocean is a place for swimming, trashing, and animal habitat. In line 1777, Michael also added, "Coral trees get destroyed by boats motors…I saw it on TV." He was reminded of the destroyed coral trees on TV. The discussions did not delve into the issue deeply and could not sustain the discussion further, but *Ponyo* provided them an opportunity to pose, inquire, and raise awareness on the environmental matter in Japan and in the United States.

Figure 4.33: A ship is gathering trashes under the sea presented in *Ponyo*.

Figure 4.34: Trashes and debris under the sea presented in *Ponyo*.

Figure 4.35: Anomalies about *Ponyo.*

The Figure 4.36 was a graffiti board showing Greg, Jerry, and Peter's responses to a text set regarding World War II, including the four key books: *Shin's Tricycle* (Kodama & Ando, 1995)*, Sadako* (Coerr, 1993)*, Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki & Lee, 1993)*, and The Unbreakable Code* (Hunter & Miner, 1996). On the top-left corner, for example, Greg drew an illustration of atomic bomb explosion in Hiroshima, Japan, described in *Shin's Tricycle*. He presented how people experienced and dealt with grief and sadness

coming from their son's death in the bomb. Along with the illustration Greg wrote as follows:

> Boom! I in my opinion Shin's tricycle is a very sad story. The part that was the saddest part is when Shin and Kimi got bond up. And how his Papa could not save him [Shin]. Cause [Because] if he gave him the water he would die. The things I like about it [the story] [is] that they made a funeral long [years later] that had his tricycle on top of his grave.

When I observed their group discussion, they shared characters' painful emotions as a key connection across the stories. They also commented that these stories describe people's World War II experiences from multiple perspectives: characters in each story suffer from different issues and problems related to the war at different places. For example, *Shin's Tricycle* describes a little Japanese boy's death in the atomic bomb in Japan, and *Baseball Saved Us* portrays a Japanese-American boy's experience of discrimination within and outside of an internment camp in the U.S. They also learned that an atomic bomb was dropped not only in Hiroshima but also Nagasaki, Japan.

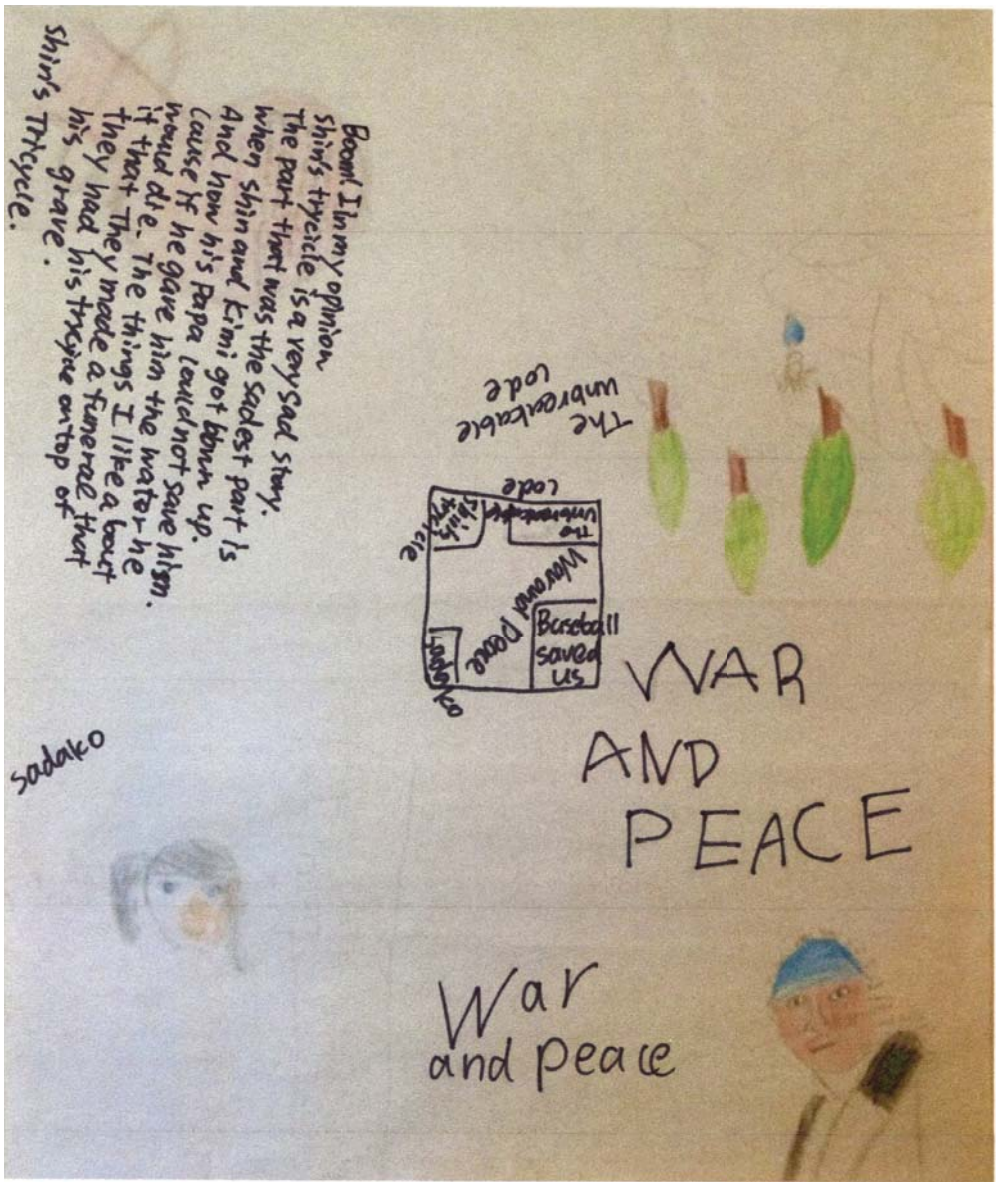


Figure 4.36: Graffiti board: War and Peace group.

In summary, students showed respect and value towards Japanese culture by exploring diversity and complexities within Japanese culture. They learned the role of the sea in Japanese culture through anime *Ponyo* and picture books. They also developed an understanding of the role of *Jizo* statues in Japan, by making links to the Statue of Liberty in the U.S. and the students' religious backgrounds. In addition, students explored diversity in Japanese language and literacy practice with various graphic forms of texts.

They also posed, inquired, and explored social and historical issues, such as marine pollution and World War II from multiple perspectives.

Change

Change refers to the development of new attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Fennes & Hapgood, 1996). As students developed an understanding, accept, and value Japanese culture, they began to show curiosity and enthusiasm towards the culture.

Interest in Japanese culture and people. Sam showed huge interest in fast-food restaurants in Japan. In the following excerpt, he wondered what kinds of first-food restaurants there would be in Japan.

2134	Sam:	…Do you guys [Japanese] have first foods?
2135	Junko:	Yes. [We have] like…Pizza Hats and McDonalds.
2136	Sam:	You have Pizza Hats? You have Pizza Hats [in a surprised voice]?
2137	Teacher:	Do you have Taco Bell?
2138	Junko:	[shaking the head] No…we don't have Taco Bell. We have Burger King and [other] Fast Food [restaurants].
2139	Sam:	Maybe you can have a taco fish!
2140	Junko:	That's good idea [laughing]!
2141	Sam:	[smiling] That's would be awesome… fish tacos. That would be great!

Sam learned that Japan has the same fast-food restaurants as in the U.S. such as Pizza Huts and McDonalds. When he knew that Japan did not have Taco Bell, he proposed his idea, creating a taco fish, by drawing on his knowledge about fish as Japanese people's primary food.

One day I introduced Hayao Miyazaki, an animator of *Ponyo*, and his anime works such as *Spirited Away* (2001) and *My Neighbor Totoro* (2002). A few students showed familiarity with these. While watching a trailer of *My Neighbor Totoro*, Aaron said, "It's like a Pokémon!" (line 1488). He soon asked me, "Is Pokémon Japanese?" and

I said, “Yes.” REALLY?!” (line 1490) Aaron and Sam excitedly exclaimed. Immediately the classroom burst with excitement and delight because they just learned that Pokémon was from Japan. It was clear that they had not known that their familiar popular culture media, *Pokémon*, was from Japan, and they were very excited about this new knowledge.

1484	Junko:	He [Hayao Miyazaki] is very famous animator in Japan. There are many animations he made. I wanna show you some films he created.
1485	Michael:	[watching a trailer of *Spirited Away*] I have watched this.
1486	Aaron:	[watching a trailer of *My neighbor Totoro*] Is this the same animator [created]?
1487	Junko:	Yes, same animator.
1488	Aaron:	[watching a trailer of *My neighbor Totoro*] It’s like a Pokémon! Is Pokémon Japanese?
1489	Junko:	Yes.
1490	Aaron &Sam:	REALLY [in excited voices with widen eyes] ?!
1491	Aaron:	I have seen it [a Pokémon TV show] [in an excited voice]!!
1492	Michael:	I have seen one [a Pokémon movie]!! [in an excited voice]!!

Honestly I was shocked that students did not know where Pokémon came from. Since they frequently referred to it during discussions and activities, I had assumed that they knew, of course, it was a Japanese anime character. The realization of “Pokémon is from Japan” was eye-opening as they were able to be more aware of and became authorities on many aspects of Japan, and were so proud to learn about Japanese culture and people.

Kate showed interest in shopping malls and clothing in Japan.

796	Kate:	Do you guys have malls [in Japan]?
797	Junko:	Yes, we have.
798	Kate:	Do they have lots of clothing? More than here [in the United States]?
799	Junko:	Yeah…but I think mostly same...

The above conversation occurred when browsing a text set about cities and villages in Japan. After the conversation, I found out that the books she browsed included limited information about shopping malls and clothing young people wearing in Japan. I assumed that, therefore, she inquired about them.

In the following conversation, Nicole wondered about children's experience with *kamishibai* in Japan (line 2054).

2054	Nicole:	Do you guys…[Japanese] kids often use the story?
2055	Junko:	In Japan, kids create stories and they present the stories in this form.
2056	Nicole:	Oh! That's cool!

Through the experience of *kamishibai*, students learned about not only a storytelling tradition in Japan but also kids' literacy practices with it in present-day Japan.

The students who were interested in a Japanese family explored it using a text set. They also studied about kids' contemporary lives in Japan using newspaper articles. In a poster as shown in Figure 4.37, students demonstrated their learning about Japanese family activities, listing various places that many families visit for fan. On the left side, they put a famous electronic street in Tokyo, which have "a bunch of games in each building", and a cat café, which is the latest trendy place that people have coffees while watching and playing with cats. On the right side, they drew downtown, Tokyo Disney Land, and Pikachu Street.

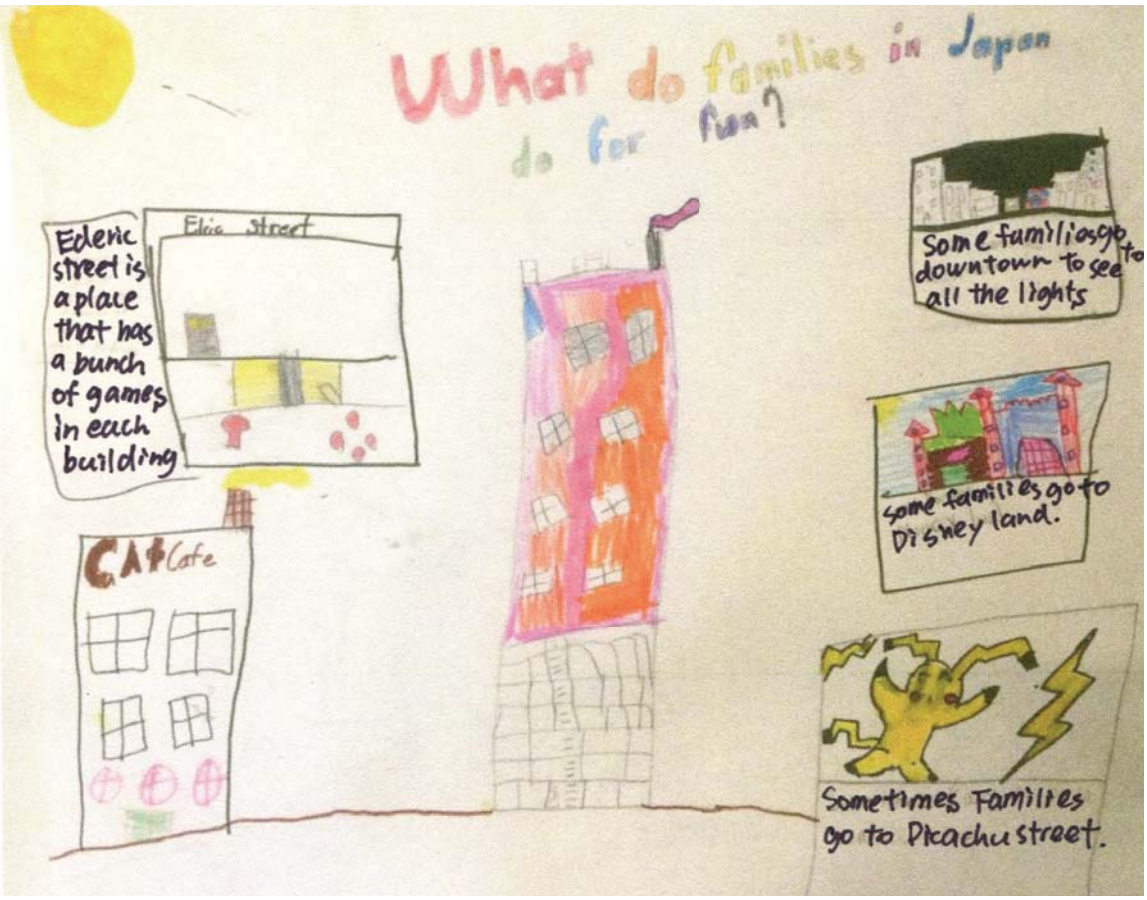


Figure 4.37: Final inquiry about families and friends in Japan: Family and Friends group.

Interestingly, Japanese toys, which were not listed on the poster, such as Ultraman figures (Japanese anime characters), Star Wars puzzles, and Legos were dominant topics in the students' discourses while they were working on the poster. Bob, for example, excitedly talked about DS, a handheld game released by a Japanese company, such as what kinds of DS software he had played before. Examining the poster and their dialogue, I found out that they had a great curiosity about contemporary cultural practices of Japanese families and kids, and such curiosity expanded connections and understandings of Japanese culture and people. Furthermore, I discovered that the text set about Japanese families included limited information about people's contemporary life styles; therefore,

students heavily relied on newspaper articles recently published on web to identify the families and kids' lives in present-day Japan.

2122	Sam:	It's a [Pokémon] movie. Everyone likes…we can see the show about the Pokémon…it's on TV [in the U.S.].
2123	Junko:	Why are you drawing Pokémon?
2124	Jerry:	It's like a Japanese and a lot of people [in the United States] do like a… playing [Pokémon] cards.

When I asked them to sketch or write about significant things, Sam and Jerry engaged in drawing *Pokémon* (see Figure 4.38), describing it as popular media among American kids (lines 2122 & 2124). Their responses indicate me that they recognize *Pokémon* as a symbol of aesthetic aspect of Japanese culture, and they also perceive *Pokémon* as a cultural bridge between Japanese and American cultures.

Figure 4.38: Graffiti board: Jerry and Sam.

Inquiring social issues. *Ponyo* also discussed a tsunami, caused by two children's love for each other. Although it is a fantasy tsunami, the scenes of gigantic

waves and flooded houses reminded the students of the real disaster, the Japan earthquake and tsunami in 2011. They started wondering what happened to people when the earthquake happened and whether I was in Japan when it happened. Therefore, I decided to provide them with an opportunity to engage in a study about the natural disaster. The following conversation occurred when the students were exploring the event using newspaper articles.

1890	Aaron:	Like…the houses were destroyed… and…buildings are destroyed.
1891	Junko:	Yeah…
1892	Aaron:	And… people were dying…
1893	Junko:	Yes.
1894	Aaron:	Is there a nuclear plant in Tokyo?
1895	Junko:	Not in Tokyo. It's in Fukushima [pointing to Fukushima prefecture on a map of Japan hanging on the whiteboard].
1896	Aaron:	Oh…I thought it was in Tokyo because they usually keep the big stuff in some capitals.
1897	Junko:	Yeah…but Tokyo is a busy city and there is no place to put the nuclear plants there.
1898	Aaron:	Oh…I see…
1899	Junko:	Anything else? What happened on people?
1900	Nicole:	Lots of people found dead. Lots of people were dead.
1901	Jerry:	Many people were missing, like 15000 people were missing.

The students were shocked by the fact that a great number of people died or are still missing and houses and schools were destroyed in the devastating event. They could not believe that such situations existed for people in the world today.

In the following conversation, students talked about what happened to the people living near the nuclear plants in Fukushima Prefecture afterward. They brought up sad aspects of their lives, and at the same time, they found some hope—children have been going back to school. In line 1913, Kate, herself as an elementary school student, seemed to develop emotional connections with the children.

1911	Michael:	People left behind near the nuclear plant were able to go back to their houses and they have to protect from radiation. And when they were in their houses, they were gathering the things and they have to throw away the food because of the radiation…
1912	Nicole:	After the earthquake a lot of people were not found like 15000 were not found but nobody saw them. They could be still lost…
1913	Kate:	And…good thing…kids go back to school. Like it says… that's a good thing.
1914	Michael:	Yeah.
1915	Kate:	It my article says some children living in the areas devastated by the quake is now going back to school.
1916	Junko:	Now [they are] going back to school.

After the discussion above, students organized the impacts of the disaster into four different categories: 1) people, 2) animals, 3) nuclear plant, and 4) second disaster. They chose a topic that interested them and spent two weeks reading newspaper articles and studying the effects of disaster in small groups. For example, Nicole, Bianca, and Mary focused on studying about the effects of disaster on animals. After they conducted the research, they synthesized their findings and understandings by sketching, writing hand-sized books using sticky notes, and pasting photos showing rescued dogs in the poster (see Figure 4.39). Examining the poster, they also showed great interest in how people took actions for rescuing animals, such as feeding and watering them, creating shelters to protect them from the devastated place, and searching for pet adopters. They learned that such actions have important results. They were, furthermore, wondering about these animals' lives with new families, imagining they would be in need of good care and support with new people at new environments. Bianca wrote, "When the animals get a home they will need to get used to their new home and their family."

Figure 4.39: Final inquiry about animals during the earthquake in Japan: Animal group.

When Michael was asked to sketch or write his final response to his learning about Japanese culture and people, he drew floods and tsunami with blue and red colors, seemingly presenting horrible tsunami waves and people's emotions such as fear and anxiety (see Figure 4.40). With his classmates, he shared it as "very memorable disaster of Japan", by thinking reflectively about the boy who loses his grandfather in the tsunami depicted in the story of *The Things Happened on That Day* (line 2148).

2080	Junko:	What is this?
2081	Michael:	I'm trying coloring flood.
2082	Junko:	Why?
2083	Michael:	Because a flood is very…it was very important thing to find out but people who knew it was coming climbed up on the school and houses and high places and just like a cat.
2148	Michael:	This is a flood of…tsunami of the one city in the book [*The Things Happened on That Day: Remember March 11,*

2011] that a…true based on the flood that killed the kid's grandpa. Anyway…it was very memorable disaster of Japan.

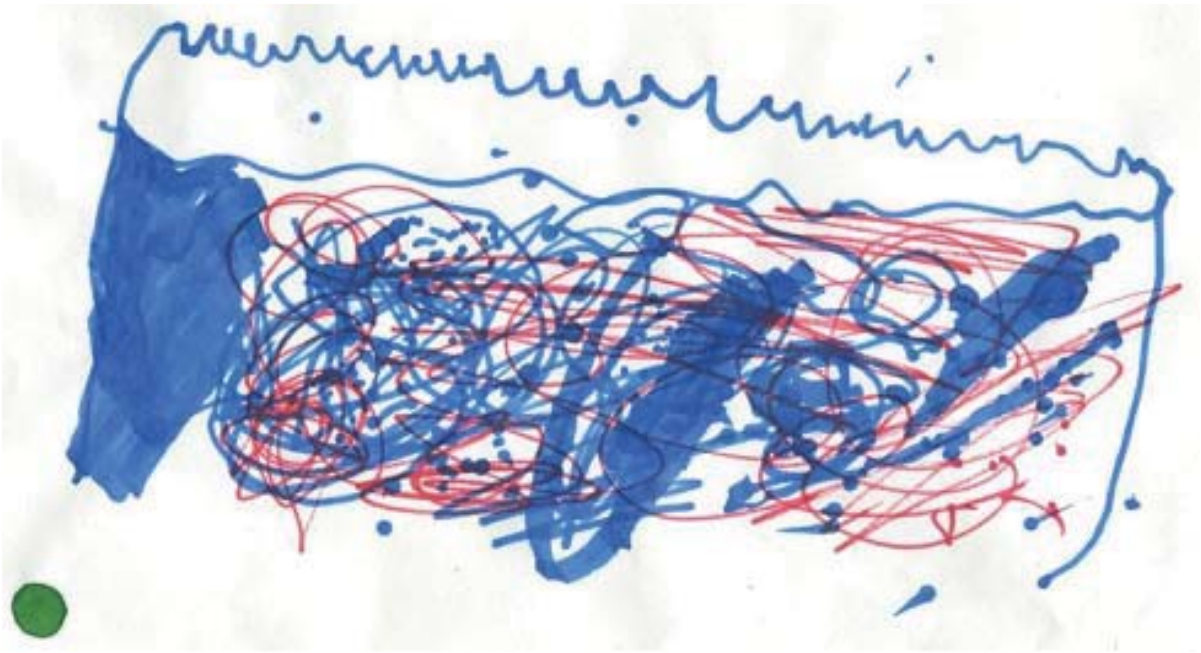


Figure 4.40: Final inquiry about second disaster of the 2011 earthquake in Japan: Second Disaster group.

This study about the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami provided meaningful opportunities for the students to build on their knowledge and consider the event from multiple perspectives. These experiences helped them to develop emotional connections and understanding with the people and animals suffering from the disaster in Japan.

When Greg was reading an article about the possible effects of radiation from the Fukushima nuclear plant on other countries, he found out that the radiation would reach to the west coast of America in 2014. When he found this information, he immediately voiced concern. But, when he learned the radiation would have no health risks, he was excited to address to the classmates, "The radiation comes from Japan to the United States but it's not harmful!" (line 1930) as follows:

1930 Greg: The radiation comes from Japan to the United States but it's not harmful!
1931 Nicole: WOW!!!
1932 Greg: Yes, it's right there. Don't worry, there is not got here.
1933 Nicole: WOW!!!

Greg engaged in more research on the nuclear disaster, together with Aaron and Michael. When they were researching, they discovered that nuclear plants are located in Arizona, as well as other states in the U.S. They were very shocked into a more realistic view of radiation, and they moved from considering the radiation as a problem "beyond" themselves to an "immediate" issue relevant to themselves. They started to be very worried about the health risks for themselves, their relatives, and friends living in the states where nuclear plants are located. They wondered what would happen if they were exposed to radiation, and this led them to an in-depth investigation of the health effects of radiation. On the poster (see Figure 4.41), they wrote, "Radiation can kill you in seconds, or even instantly. Sometimes it can cause cancer and make you suffer till you're dead. Harmful bomb still continue to trouble people." alongside a map of the United States highlighting locations of nuclear reactor. Thus, the radiation problem in Japan led to their awareness of nuclear plants in their community, AZ, and further consideration of the effect of radiation on people and themselves.

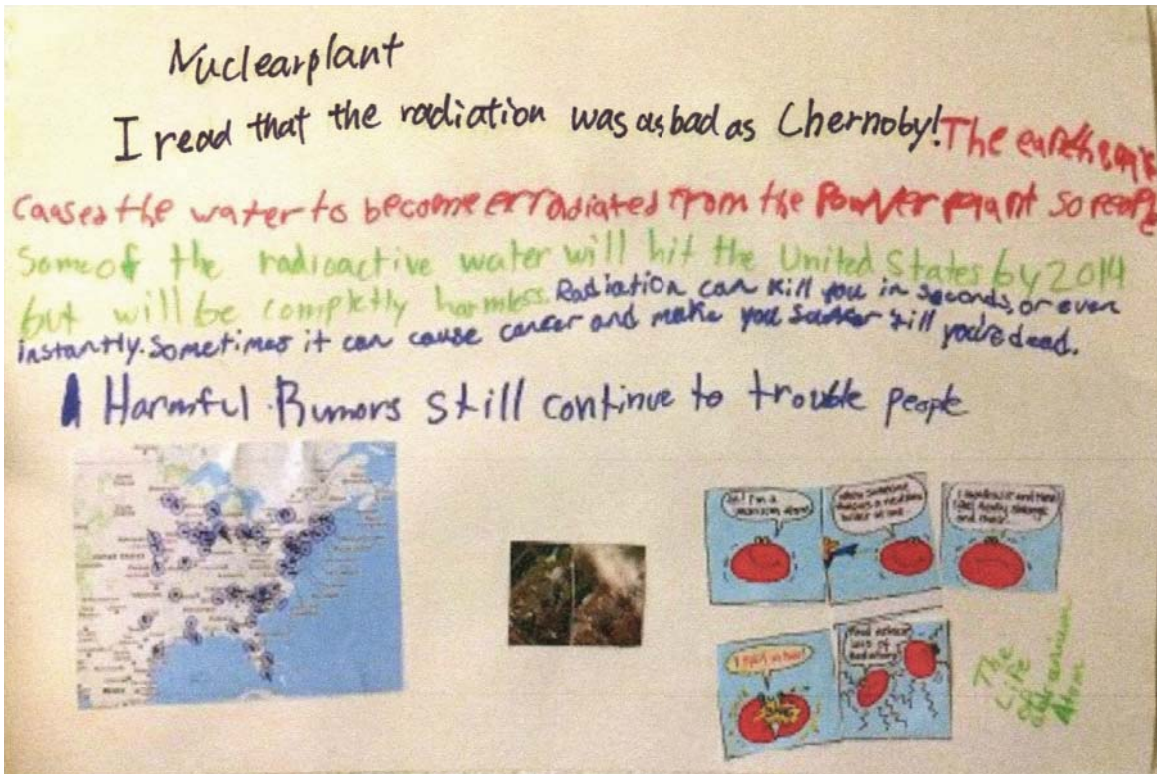


Figure 4.41: Final inquiry about nuclear plant: Nuclear Plant group.

Developing emotional connections and a sense of caring. On the last day of the study, I asked students to write or sketch the most significant thing to them throughout the study of Japan. By reflecting learning about Japan, Greg and Peter symbolically expressed their responses through visual images as shown in Figure 4.42, and they moved into in-depth dialogue. When I asked Greg what his airplane symbolized, he stated that people in Nagasaki are asking for help when the bomb is dropping from the plane (line 2079). He also brainstormed what the people thought and said when the bomb was dropped. He wrote their voices asking for help and angry such as "don't drop it!!" and "help us!!!" Similar to Greg, Peter's focus on drawing is a train that people are taking in order to escape from the bomb. Greg and Peter were the students who extensively explored *Shin's Tricycle*, *Baseball Saved Us*, and other books in the text sets about World War II. These stories seemed to affect them on a much deeper level and developed

emotional connections and a sense of caring because they had to put themselves in the situation.

2078	Junko:	What are you drawing?
2079	Greg:	Dropping bombs on Nagasaki and I wrote people are saying "Stop!", like "Don't drop it" or "Help us."
2091	Peter:	They escaped on [the] train…[in a whispery voice]
2092	Junko:	Who escaped by the train?
2093	Peter:	People…I don't know…[in a whispery voice]
2094	Greg:	Some of the people who knew the bombs were coming? They escaped?
2095	Peter:	Yep!

Figure 4.42: Graffiti board: Greg and Peter.

The following conversation was captured when Greg was sharing this graffiti board (see Figure 4.35) with classmates. By drawing on knowledge and information that he gained from the text sets covering the World War II topic, he shared his drawing as "one of the sadness moments ever" (line 2147). When Greg was having difficulty in

pronouncing the name of the city, Hiroshima (line 2145), Jerry clarified the name with a confident air looking at me, sounding like they had to pronounce it in the correct way in respect for Japanese people including me (line 2146).

2145	Greg:	This is my picture of Japanese atomic bombs and amm.... I drew Nagasaki and Hi-ro-shi-….Hiro-shima…
2146	Jerry:	It was HIROSHIMA [helping Greg to clarify the name of Hiroshima]!
2147	Greg:	And…I drew one of the saddest moments ever.

Thus, studying World War II using the text sets including nonfiction and fiction picture books immersed students in the event and encouraged them to build on their knowledge and develop a sense of caring, emotion, and sensitivity towards the people involved in the event with their hearts. They also gained pluralistic views on the event.

Reflection

The fifth graders showed four types of responses including (1) ethnocentrism, (2) understanding and acceptance, (3) respect and appreciation and valuing, and (4) change while exploring Japanese pictorial texts. Engagement with Japanese culture and people through Japanese pictorial texts and text set activities provided the students, who had had little knowledge and experiences of Japan, supported to develop understandings of Japanese culture and people. In the first stage of this study, the classroom was filled with negative and positive stereotypes towards Japanese culture. As I also expected, they heavily focused on commenting on the differences between Japanese culture and their own cultures in the U.S. Exploration of their own personal cultures became a springboard to consider culture conceptually. They also began to seek for connections as human commonalities, value cultural differences, and gain new perspectives. In the next section,

I discuss my major findings while situating this study in the field of reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality

Discussion

My study examined the responses of twelve fifth graders to Japanese pictorial texts in a classroom context. I was able to capture and convey a glimpse of not only *how* or in what ways they produced responses but also *what* understandings of Japanese culture were demonstrated in the students' inquiries and responses. In this section, I discuss the findings by looking at relationships between *how* and *what* the students discussed Japanese pictorial texts.

Multimodal Literacy Practices with Manga

The students' four types responses (analytical, personal, intertextual, and cultural) were similar across the Japanese pictorial texts, except for manga *Yotsuba&!*, which received the largest analytical responses. The students actively participated in meaning making through analysis of multiple modes embedded in manga such as visual, actional, spatial, and linguistic, including sound effects, facial expressions, gestures, perspectives, positions of images and texts, panel layouts, and spaces. That is, the data illustrated which modes they chose to focus on and how they used the modes in order to construct meanings.

Some students, for example, examined motion lines, closely looking at what kinds of motion lines are drawn and where the lines are positioned, in order to understand characters' behavior and movements. These responses clearly indicate that, for the students, modes situated in manga are not just illustrations, but they are "communicators of analytical thinking" (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p. 32) and social semiotics as a resource for

thinking (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Also, manga invited the students to use reading comprehension strategies such as prediction, inference, and speculation to construct meanings. They developed an understanding of characters' feelings and situations by applying the strategies, in addition to the semiotic modes.

Lived-through Experiences through Realistic Manga World

"Usually ours [American graphic novels] are fantasy. Like…they are struggling stuff like that…They [manga] are really funny, make the books more funny and more realistic," said Nicole. Mary also added, "…[the characters] are acting in the houses in the book [manga]." They noted that unlike American graphic novels, which often highlight fantastic elements, manga involves realistic aspects of people's lives. This feature of manga encouraged students to make connections between their lives in the U.S. and manga characters' lives in Japan, by using "lived-through experiences" (Rosenblatt, 1994) — vicariously living in the story by sharing feelings with the characters. O'Herron (2014) argued that in intercultural learning "understandings of similarities and differences are both needed in a world marked more and more by diversity and complex interdependencies." In this study, manga was a critical resource for students to enhance the recognition of human commonalities with Japanese people.

Intertextual Knowledge of Popular Culture

The data indicated that the students actively used popular and familiar media figures and stories of TV cartoons, movies, graphic novels, and comics and so on in order to construct meanings from Japanese pictorial texts. That is, their intertextual knowledge about popular culture played a significant role in meaning making processes. For example, Sam related anime *Ponyo* to an American TV cartoon, *Teenage Mutant Ninja*

Turtles, with which he was familiar because of the similarity of the characters. He recognized that Ponyo's mother looks like turtles in the cartoon, acting in similar ways as heroes saving humans and the world, and that encouraged him to develop an understanding of the role of Ponyo's mother in the anime story.

Another example of connecting the students' popular culture knowledge to the target texts is when the students were reading manga, *Yotsuba&!*. Jerry excitedly said, "She looks like Pokémon!!", speaking about how a girl protagonist, Yotsuba, and Pokémon (a Japanese media franchise including TV shows, movies, video games, manga, and a card game) look similar. I asked him why he thought so, and he said that Pikachu, one of the Pokémon characters, and Yotsuba are similar in their facial expressions and behaviors when they get excited or find something new. By making such a connection, he developed an understanding of Yotsuba's personality and situation.

Significance of Kid Culture

Students who are 10 to 12 year-old children often use "kid culture" (Short & Kaser, 1998, p.189), a generational culture of children's own age level, in meaning making from Japanese pictorial texts. That is, their experiences and knowledge about popular culture media, sports, fast foods, family, peer, or neighbors play a significant role to make connections and transact with Japanese culture and characters in the stories.

Making connections with characters. Some students related to Japanese characters portrayed in Japanese pictorial texts by using their kid culture including playing sports or games with siblings, friends, or neighbors. When reading manga Michael stated, "…I [also] go there [his neighbor's house] and play too," and David said, "I just play like [the characters in] this story [too]." In addition to Michael and David,

Aaron addressed an experience with his younger sister at home, saying "I think she [a five-year-old girl protagonist in manga] is like my little sister. She [his sister] is a little bit more mischievous because she comes my room and playing Xbox [a video game]!!" In an anime session, Aaron made a connection with Ponyo, a gold fish girl, by drawing on his experience, as a child, with divorced parents. He stated that Ponyo, who always looks for her place, reminded him of the experience of moving between his divorced parent's houses every once in a while, which helped him to build an understanding of Ponyo's feeling and situation.

Thus, the kid culture was powerful mediator to make connections with the story characters who are also children and have similar kid culture with them. Communicating with characters using kid culture made them aware that, despite many cultural differences, they have similarities as human beings with the Japanese characters and that such similarities bring them together.

Building a cultural bridge. The students' kid culture also supported them in making connections with Japan. The students were very familiar with popular culture media such as graphic novels, comics, and animations. Such experiences were valuable in the classroom, encouraging them to connect to Japanese popular cultural texts, manga and anime. Although they were not familiar with the contents and contexts of the texts, familiarity with those types of texts created a sense of connection to Japanese culture.

Popular culture figures, Pokémon, also encouraged them to connect to Japan. One day in the classroom Aaron asked me, "Is *Pokémon* Japanese?" and I said, "Yes." Then everyone exclaimed, simultaneously, "Really? I have seen that [in the U.S.]!" It was clear that they had not known that Pokémon, a popular media figure that was very familiar to

them, was from Japan, and they were very excited about this new information. The realization that "Pokémon comes from Japan" became an eye-opening experience as they were more aware of Japan and even gained authority on learning about many aspects of Japan by actively linking to Japan using Pokémon.

When students were asked to write or sketch responses to Japanese pictorial texts, some of them drew Pokémon. Sam said, "It's a [Pokémon] movie. Everyone [in the U.S.] likes…we can see the show about the Pokémon…it's on TV [in the U.S.]," and Jerry also added, "It's [Pokémon] like a Japanese and a lot of people [in the U.S.] do like … playing [Pokémon] cards." In addition to Sam and Jerry, Nicole also drew an illustration of Pikachu, one of the characters in the Pokémon show. I asked her why she drew it, and she answered, "Because Japan has cool illustrations and you guys use anime. So I should choose Pokémon and Pikachu!" The students were very pleased with being able to bridge Japanese and American cultures through their kid culture related to experiences with the Japanese popular culture, Pokémon.

Japanese Pictorial Texts "as a Resource" for Intercultural Learning

Fennes and Hapgood (1996) argued "We have pointed out the need for intercultural learning in our societies. The question is where to start and how" (p. 49). The findings revealed that the students demonstrated intercultural learning through Japanese pictorial texts, as well as other materials such as cultural artifacts, educational websites, and YouTube clips. In the first stage of this study, they gained knowledge about Japanese culture and people, and they were also aware of cultural differences. In the middle stage of the study, they developed conceptual understandings of culture by considering how culture matters to the students themselves and others. For example,

Aarons' statement "Both [Japan and the U.S.] have gods." indicates this understanding. He said that although people in the U.S. and Japan believe in different religions, both of them believe in the spiritual value of gods and that matters to them, influencing their lives, ways of thinking, and behaviors. In the last stage of the study, anime, especially, encouraged the students to inquire into social issues related to the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster in Japan. The nuclear plant and radiation issues in Japan increased students' awareness of nuclear plants in Arizona as well as other states in the U.S., leading them to further consideration of the effects of radiation on their lives.

The data did not show the students' accomplishment of an "intercultural competence" (Fennes & Hapgood, 1996, p. 48), which would be developed by learning and communicating with other cultures and people from different countries, because of a lack of time. Yet, they developed new attitudes and behaviors and perspectives, such as openness towards Japanese culture, emotional connections and a sense of caring with Japanese characters in the stories, and further respect and value of multiple cultural perspectives, which are significant for interculturalism (Allan, 2003; Case, 1993; Fennes & Hapgood, 1996). Japanese pictorial texts provided the students with an "opportunity to go beyond a tourist perspective of gaining surface-level information" (Short, 2009, p. 1) about Japanese culture, and supported them to develop intercultural understanding.

Intertextuality in Japanese Pictorial Texts

The findings of this study show the power of intertextual reading of Japanese pictorial texts. The picture books created a context that made the students' learning with Japanese pictorial texts meaningful. The knowledge about Japan that they gained from picture books supported their in-depth exploration of cultural details and items,

examination of complexities and diversities within Japanese culture, and consideration of difficult issues presented in Japanese pictorial texts.

The data also showed that the students learned multiple aspects of Japan including people's contemporary life styles, history, traditions, and cultural values and beliefs. At the end of this study Greg said "…[in Japan] there are different things that we don't know about and about its family and about history and what's happened and what's going on now." Several scholars such as Sung (2009), Sung and Son (2012), and Cai (1994) argued that multicultural and international literature published in the U.S. includes an excessive abundance of folktales and historical elements. They expressed concerns that the lack of balance among genres may reinforce stereotypes and negative perceptions of other cultures in readers. When browsing picture books about Japan published in the U.S., I also had similar concerns about them: many of the picture books heavily focus on traditional and historical images of Japan. Yokota (2009) stated the importance of inclusion of a variety of genres, perspectives, and voices in intercultural learning. In this study, intertextual reading of Japanese pictorial texts showed historical and traditional elements through picture books and modern Japan through manga and anime. Thus, intertextuality in those mediums provided balanced features of Japanese culture for students.

Summary

In this chapter, I shared findings and results of my study. The first section showed four types of responses such as analytical, personal, interetextaul, and cultural that the students employed in meaning making with Japanese pictorial texts. The second section examined the students' understandings of Japanese culture, based on Fennes and

Hapgood's (1997) continuum of intercultural learning including ethnocentrism, understanding and acceptance, respect and appreciation and valuing, and change. By cross-examining those data, I found that the students actively examined semiotic modes embedded in manga in order to construct meanings. They also developed intercultural understanding through Japanese pictorial texts, by using their popular culture knowledge and kid culture. In addition, the data showed significance of intertextual reading of the texts and picture books for intercultural learning.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore the two research questions: (1) How do children respond to Japanese pictorial texts? (2) What understandings of Japanese culture are demonstrated in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts? In this chapter I provide a summary and discuss implications for the study.

Summary of Study

This study examined the responses of twelve fifth graders, four girls and eight boys who are from ten to twelve years old, to Japanese pictorial texts at Cañon Elementary School in Black Canyon City in Arizona. The Japanese pictorial texts include contemporary realistic fiction *Yotsuba&!* (Azuma, 2009) for manga, modern fantasy *Ponyo* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) for anime, and Japanese folktale *Hats for the Jizos* (Matsutani, Matsuyama, & Tamaki, 2002) for kamishibai. The students also explored picture books about Japan published in the United States and in Japan. They were exposed to Japanese culture through those various graphic forms of texts in a cross-cultural curriculum framed by the notions of curriculum as inquiry and intertexuality.

This study was informed by reader response theory, New Literacy Studies (NLS), and multimodality. Reader response theory views a reader as an active participant in the meaning-making process with a text. NLS and multimodality broadens the definitions of texts in order to encompass various literacy practices. Combining these theories allowed me to explore students' responses to Japanese pictorial texts and their process of meaning making with the texts within the classroom context.

I employed a qualitative methodology using ethnographic techniques in order to capture the discussion of their construction of responses. The data collection consisted of fieldnotes, transcripts of classroom discussions and recorded interviews, and students' written and artistic artifacts. I conducted open coding followed by analytic coding to analyze my data, to find patterns and connections, and to integrate the data to answer the research questions.

The first question on how children respond to Japanese pictorial texts involved examining students' response patterns according to four types of responses: (1) analytical, (2) personal, (3) intertextual, and (4) cultural. In the analytical response, students examined illustrations and texts and interpreted stories by inferring and speculating in order to develop an understanding of stories. They also analyzed images and texts from an author's or illustrator's perspective, exploring their choice of artistic elements. In addition to the analytical response, students demonstrated personal and intertextual responses in their meaning making processes. They made connections between their lives in the U.S. and characters' lives in Japan, and they also linked target texts to other texts such as movies, cartoons, graphic novels, and comics in terms of plots, characterizations, and themes. The last response category, cultural, includes responses made by employing students' cultural awareness, knowledge, or experiences. These responses further helped me explore what students discussed about Japanese pictorial texts.

To capture the second research question on understandings of Japanese culture in children's inquiries and responses to Japanese pictorial texts, I explored students' meaning making processes and I categorized their understandings of Japanese culture

according to Fennes and Hapgood's (1996) four types of responses including (1) ethnocentrism, (2) understanding and acceptance, (3) respect and appreciation and valuing, and (4) change. At the beginning of this study, students demonstrated resistance towards cultural practices in Japan, such as public bathing, by making judgments based on their own culture. As they obtained knowledge about Japanese culture and people, they were gradually aware of differences and similarities between people's lives in Japan and their own lives in the United States. Explorations of the students' own cultural identities also enhanced their understanding and acceptance of cultural differences.

Further, respect and appreciation and valuing of Japanese culture were also revealed in students' responses and attitudes. Learning about diversities and complexities within Japanese culture, such as people's beliefs of a sea god and diversity in Japanese language, encouraged them to develop thoughtful perspectives and thinking. By the end of this study, many students created a sense of caring and showed emotional connections with people in Japan. Thus, four types of responses were revealed by the analysis of the students' responses to Japanese culture and people presented in Japanese pictorial texts.

By cross-examining how students discussed and what they discussed, I came to six findings: (1) multimodal literacy practices with manga, (2) lived-through experiences through realistic manga worlds, (3) intertextual knowledge of popular culture, (4) the significance of kid culture, (5) Japanese pictorial texts as a resource for intercultural learning, and (6) intertextuality in Japanese pictorial texts. First, students actively engaged in exploration of visual, action, spatial, and linguistic modes embedded in manga. They used those semiotic modes as a way of thinking and developing an understanding of stories. Next, highlighting realistic aspects of people's lives by using

lived-through experiences, a feature of manga, encouraged students to make connections between their lives in the U.S. and manga characters' lives in Japan. It made them aware that, despite many cultural differences, they have similarities as human beings with Japanese people.

Third, the data showed that students actively used familiar media figures and stories to build their understandings of stories of Japanese pictorial texts. Their intertextual knowledge of popular culture played a significant role in their meaning making. Fourth, "kid culture" (Short & Kaser, 1998, p. 189) related to students' experiences with popular culture, sports, and fast foods played a key element in making connections with characters in stories and developing emotional understanding with them. Kid culture also helped students to build a cultural bridge between American and Japanese cultures: the students tried to make connections to children in Japan through their cultural experiences. Fifth, the data demonstrated that Japanese pictorial texts served as a meaningful educational medium for enhancing students' learning about Japanese culture and people in the classroom context. Finally, the study showed the power of intertextuality in Japanese pictorial texts, providing students with opportunities for engagement in rich and powerful dialogue and learning about Japanese culture.

Implications for the Study

This section presents and discusses implications for educators, publishers, and research, and also offers recommendations for future research. On the pedagogical level, this study provides frameworks for teaching learners to experience Japanese pictorial texts in educational settings. In addition, this study offers suggestions for publishers, and

further contributes to ongoing scholarly work that draws on reader response theory, New Literacy Studies, and multimodality.

Implications for Curriculum and Pedagogy

The findings of this study offer several pedagogical implications for teachers and teacher educators in terms of (1) working with children who have rich experiences with popular culture, (2) implementing classroom practices, and (3) the criteria for selection of Japanese pictorial texts.

Intertextuality. Using an intertext that a reader knows well, one that fills in the gaps that need to be filled to understand a text encourages one to modify and transform one's understanding (Riffaterre, 1990). Short's (1993) study about third and sixth graders' responses to text sets of picture books revealed multiple layers of intertextuality in terms of elements of stories, illustrations, and authors' and illustrators' lives. The students enhanced their critical and analytical reading skills in "searching to make sense of their worlds and their own learning processes" (pp. 18–19).

In my study, students' knowledge and experiences of popular culture were significant intertextual resources in meaning making with Japanese pictorial texts. Their popular culture knowledge and experience worked as an intertext, facilitating their understanding of target texts, issues, and culture. Students' experiences with American graphic novels, cartoons, and movies, for example, enhanced their reading of Japanese pictorial texts through their search for connections and their comparisons between the texts. In addition, intertextuality using popular culture figures such as Pocket Monsters helped students build a cultural bridge between Japan and the United States, providing them with new perspectives and understandings of Japan.

In classroom contexts, teachers and teacher educators need to be aware of students' rich knowledge and experiences of popular culture texts and value them as a resource, rather than ignore them as non-legitimized text. This practice will facilitate students' learning and further produce new understandings, perspectives, and ideas.

Practices to encourage intercultural learning. The next implication is related to classroom practice. Glazier and Seo (2005) argued that multicultural literature tends to isolate mainstream American students because of unfamiliar contents and contexts and a lack of knowledge about cultures portrayed in the literature. Although Japanese pictorial texts are a different medium, they contain similar aspects in terms of the representation of cultural elements. If the texts are introduced to readers without providing background information about Japan, this may result in readers' isolation, misunderstanding, resistance, and superficial appreciation of cultural differences. To prevent this, teachers and teacher educators need to support students in experiencing the rich and diverse culture of Japan alongside interactions with texts. In this study, I discussed several ways to introduce these texts in the classroom. These include presenting Japanese culture through photographs, YouTube video clips, and newspapers, as well as introducing authentic cultural activities such as origami, calligraphy, and learning how to use chopsticks.

In addition, this study offered insights into response strategies that enabled students to engage with stories from Japanese pictorial texts. The strategies, such as Graffiti Boards, Anomalies, Time Line, Webbing What's on My Mind, Heart Maps, Literature Logs, Cultural X-Rays, and Venn Diagrams (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996), encourage them to produce a broader range of literary interpretations. One of the

strategies that educators can use with students is Graffiti Boards, which involves sketching or writing responses to stories on large sheets of paper and sharing them with peers. In this study, students used this strategy while exploring text sets of picture books in groups. They sketched or wrote quotes, ideas, or comments on the board, and then shared responses in groups using the graffiti. In the process of sharing responses, they collaboratively developed in-depth understandings and built new perspectives by searching for connections and comparing their responses. In addition to Graffiti Boards, Heart Maps was a valuable strategy to enhance their understanding of characters and their cultural perspectives. After watching anime, each student explored one or two anime characters' values, beliefs, or issues. They then shared their maps and discussed the characters.

Japanese pictorial texts also encourage significant connections for Japanese-American students and English or Japanese language learners. Japanese-American students can relate to the stories and see familiar cultural elements in the texts, encouraging them to take pride in the stories and stay connected with their Japanese heritage and culture (Yokota, 2009). The texts can also be meaningful materials for English language learners, allowing them to learn English visually and aurally. Students who are learning Japanese as a second or foreign language can also benefit from the texts. Studies conducted by Armour and Iida (2014) and Armour (2011) in Australia revealed that manga and anime were effective for adult Japanese language learners and highly motivated them to engage in Japanese language and culture. In the United States, the media and kamishibai written in Japanese may also be useful tools for children and adult

Japanese language learners. The texts enable them to learn aspects of Japanese language, culture, and society.

What do teachers, teacher educators, and librarians with no knowledge about Japan need to know about Japanese pictorial texts to be able to integrate them effectively and meaningfully in their teaching or libraries? Those who are less familiar with Japanese pictorial texts and Japanese culture can seek help from resources such as books, the Internet, or insiders of Japanese culture. The following are useful Internet resources regarding Japan:

- National Association of Japan-America Societies (http://www.us-japan.org/index.html) provides information about Japan for teachers, teacher educators, and librarians. They also offer educational resources such as curricula and teaching materials for classroom contexts.
- About Japan: A Teacher's Resource (http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/page/japaneducation_home) provides K-12 teachers, teacher educators, and librarians with information about Japan, including school life, holidays, art, architecture, geography, food, economy, and history. It also gives them practical teaching resources and ideas.

Connection to the Common Core State Standards. The responses of students indicate that engagements with Japanese pictorial texts can be connected to Common Core State Standards. The texts can be used in schools that adhere to state standards and can be added to the list of texts in the state standards. As an example, I show how Japanese pictorial texts meet Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts in the fifth grade (Arizona Department of Education, 2013).

Grade 5 students in the Reading Literature strand analyze "how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text" (5.RL.7) and describe "how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described" (5.RL.6). Manga, for example, encourages students to meet these criteria. In the present study, students critically and analytically examined manga through multimodality, exploring meanings produced by symbols, space, or written texts. They also considered how visual elements would affect their interpretations from an author's viewpoint, taking an authorial reading approach (Rabinowitz, 1987). For example, when reading manga, Kate looked at some illustrations through the lens of the illustrator and challenged his artistic choices. She noticed that some panels included a few simple images, while others included illustrations that were complicated, detailed, and animated. She was confused by the gaps and concerned that the illustrator did not complete the drawings. Eventually, Kate realized the illustrator's intentions were embedded in these illustrations and began to consider the role of the illustrations in the story.

In the strand of Reading Informational Texts, Grade 5 students "integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably" (5.RI.9). In this study, students demonstrated learning about environmental issues such as marine pollution through anime, picture books, informational texts, and newspapers. Although the strand highlights the role of informational texts in learning about a topic or an event, the intertextuality of various texts, including informational texts as well as fiction and nonfiction anime and picture books, provided students with a meaningful opportunity to explore issues from multiple perspectives. Informational texts and newspapers gave students facts regarding the event,

whereas stories from anime and picture books allowed them to experience the event from the characters' perspectives. Although that the strand focuses on informational texts, I encourage educators to teach students about events using various texts and genres.

In the Writing strand, Grade 5 students "write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences" (5.W.3). In the studies of Bitz (2010) and Frey and Fisher (2004), students enhanced their literacy skills by creating original graphic novel stories. Creating student-generated stories in the form of manga or kamishibai can also be meaningful for literacy development. Thus, Japanese pictorial texts meet several state standards and can be used in classrooms.

Selection of Japanese pictorial texts. The last implication is related to the selection of Japanese pictorial texts, especially manga, anime, and kamishibai. Teachers and teacher educators need to be alert and cautious about the contents and contexts of these popular culture texts, as these texts sometimes include violent and pornographic images that are inappropriate for children. In addition, genres and themes should be considered because different genres can serve different purposes and roles in teaching. Similar to literature, manga and anime have genres such as contemporary fiction/nonfiction, historical fiction/nonfiction, autobiography, and fantasy. Stories are largely divided into five categories according to target audiences' gender and age: *shonen* (boys), *shojo* (girls), *seinen* (adult men), *young rediisu* (women), and *jido* (children).

These stories tackle a wide range of themes including people's everyday concerns and social and cultural issues such as racial discrimination. Boys' and men's manga and anime focus primarily on action, adventure, science fiction, and sports, while girls' and

women's manga and anime cover the themes of comedy, dating, and family life. Children's stories usually describe fantasy, school experience, and friendship. It is important to note that such categorizations have recently become ambiguous (Natsume & Takeuchi, 2009). Boys' manga and anime include love and romance, whereas girls' manga and anime involve sports and action. People read their favorite stories regardless of genre classifications. For teachers and teacher educators, I suggest boys' and girls' manga and anime for upper elementary grades and children's manga and anime for lower grades. But, students can still read or watch their favorite manga or anime regardless of grade level division. In the following sections, I introduce some of the manga and anime available in English in the United States that involve contexts appropriate for educational settings.

Manga. I recommend six manga titles for upper elementary grades: *Astro Boy* (Tezuka, 2002), *Slam Dunk* (Inoue, 2008), *One Piece* (Oda, 2003), *Boys over Flowers* (Kamio, 2003), *Sailor Moon* (Takeuchi, 1998), and *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1984). For lower elementary grades, I recommend two titles: *Doraemon* (Fujiko, 1974–1996) and *Yotsuba&!* (Azuma, 2009–present). For further information, *MANGA HERE* (http://www.mangahere.co/) is a website with many helpful resources. Over 10,000 stories are available as free e-books in English.

Upper elementary grades. Astro Boy is an example of a science fiction story. It portrays a futuristic world where high-tech robots and humans co-exist. Atom, a powerful cyborg boy, fights against crime and injustice; at the same time, he struggles with his robot identity, finding it difficult to fit in the human world. The story invites readers to explore the social and ethical issues resulting from the effects of technological

revolutions in the domain of human-robot interaction. *Slam Dunk* is about a boy's high school basketball team. It imparts to readers the importance of collaboration and communication in team sports. The boys grow physically and mentally by assisting one another in overcoming difficulties. *One Piece* takes readers on an adventurous journey with a young man named Monkey D. Luffy and a group of pirates. Luffy explores the ocean in search of the legendary treasure, One Piece, to become the next Pirate King. The story also presents various social issues related to war, power and dominance, territory, religion, and discrimination.

Boys over Flowers portrays a girl's high school experience. A female protagonist is always bullied by upper-class peers due to her lower socioeconomic status. She struggles with emotional and physical hardships. The story also describes how she overcomes such difficulties with help from her family and friends. Meanwhile, *Sailor Moon*, a blend of action, comedy, and romance, is a story about a group of teenage girls who are special warriors from another world. They bravely fight for justice against the "Dark Kingdom" to protect the Earth. They take on enemies and at the same time search for their own identities. Finally, the story of *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* is set in the future, 1,000 years after excessive industrialization destroyed civilization. Some people have survived, yet the environment remains heavily polluted. Nausicaa, a princess of the Valley of the Wind, struggles to maintain peaceful coexistence between humanity and nature. The story encourages readers to consider the development of civilization along with environmental pollution and natural destruction.

Lower elementary grades. Doraemon is a long-running children's manga. The story starts with Doraemon, a cat-like-robot, who comes from the future to see Nobita.

Doraemon was sent by Nobita's great grandson to help Nobita, who struggles with his studies and is bullied by peers. Doraemon has magical tools such as a facsimile that brings information from future libraries. He uses these tools when Nobita needs help. The story involves unrealistic aspects; however, through Nobita, readers vicariously experience everyday issues and engage in problem solving. *Yotsuba&!*, which I used for the young children in this study, can also be read by students from lower elementary grades.

Anime. I recommend six anime titles for upper elementary graders to watch: *Sailor Moon* (Takeuchi, 1998), *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 1984), *Princess Mononoke* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2001), and *Dragon Ball Z* (Toriyama, 1989). For lower elementary graders, I recommend *Doraemon* (Fujiko, 2014) and *Pokémon* (Shudo & Tanaka, 1998).

Upper elementary grades. The stories of *Sailor Moon* and *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* are the same as those in the manga format that I discussed earlier. *Princess Mononoke* is set in Japan in ancient times. Humans live with animals and nature peacefully, as they believe that the gods are present in nature. Gradually, the world changes; humans destroy nature and a war starts between humans and angry forest gods. The story invites students to consider environmental issues and the coexistence of humans and nature. It also encourages them to reflect on issues of gender roles and identities. *Dragon Ball Z* is an anime TV series with over 300 episodes. The story narrates an orphan boy's journey to protect the Earth against villains such as intergalactic space fighters, conquerors, and monsters. The story deals with the themes of power and dominance, oppression, survival, and hardship. It also gives students a glimpse into how

the boy develops relationships with his adoptive father and friends through mutual care, support, and trust. The characterizations and story lines are complex, which enables students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

Lower elementary grades. Doraemon started airing on TV in North America in the summer of 2014. The story tackles the same themes as the manga form, such as children's school life, family life, and friendship. *Pokémon* is an anime TV series about a 10-year-old boy's journey to become a Pokémon Master in the world of Pokémon, where Pocket Monsters and humans live together. To be a professional Pokémon trainer, the boy is given a Pikachu, one of the Pocket Monsters. The boy and Pikachu start traveling around the world to join battles and become stronger. During the journey, the boy and Pikachu face various conflicts involving human relationships, other Pocket Monsters, and magical creatures. They overcome these difficulties, and the boy becomes a skillful Pokémon Master. Pikachu also gains various skills and strategies to become a strong monster.

Educators can find anime for use in classrooms at the Hampton Roads Anime Society (http://hras.studiojab.com/suggested-anime-for-children/) and Virtual Japan (http://www.virtualjapan.com/wiki/List_of_Japanese_anime). They can also learn more about Hayao Miyazaki's works at http://www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/. Aside from *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* and *Princess Mononoke*, his other anime works are also available in English. These high-quality stories portray various social, cultural, political, and environmental issues from the child protagonists' points of view, inviting children to explore the issues and encouraging them to become critical thinkers.

Kamishibai. Kamishibai stories translated and published in the United States focus on Japanese folktales. For example, *Momotaro, the Peach Boy* (Matsutani, Futamata, Tamaki, Lindquist, Lindquist, Vukov, & Lindquist, 1998) is about a boy who is born from a peach and raised by an old couple. When he grows up, he fights with demons. *The Bamboo Princess* (Iwasaki & Endo, 1992) is a story about a girl who is born from a bamboo and raised by an old couple. These stories encourage students to explore Shinto, Buddhism, and nature spirits, providing insights into the roots of cultural values and beliefs in Japan.

Teachers and teacher educators can obtain English versions of kamishibai through the website of Kamishiba for Kids (http://www.kamishibai.com/). The website provides an up-to-date guide to kamishibai. The site is run by elementary school teachers and kamishibai publishers and translators in the United States. Another source is the International Kamishibai Association of Japan (www.geocities.jp/kamishibai/index-e.html), a global union of educators around the world who study kamishibai. They promote teaching strategies and resources with the use of kamishibai in classrooms for multiliteracies development and cultural studies. In addition, the Japanese American National Museum (http://www.janm.org/janmkids/) and Storycard Theater (http://www.storycardtheater.com/) are great places to get information about kamishibai.

Japanese pictorial texts can be meaningful cultural resources to teach children about Japanese culture, people, and society. Based on the purposes and goals of each lesson, teachers and teacher educators need to examine diverse genres and themes and choose the most appropriate ones.

Implications for Publishers

When I was gathering picture books about Japan published in the United States, I found that the books fall into three categories—"diaspora, global, and touristic literature" (Sung & Son, 2013, p. 76), Diaspora literature describes the lives of Japanese people who emigrate overseas and their descendents and biracial families, including *Grandfather's Journey* (Say, 1993), *Hiromi's Hands* (Barasch, 2007), and *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993). Global literature illustrates people in Japan, portraying their lives today and in the past; examples include *The Park Bench* (Takeshita, 1989), *The Wakame Gatherers* (Thompson & Wilds, 2007), *Hiroshima No Pika* (Maruki, 1982), and *Sadako* (Coerr, 1993). Touristic literature includes books that introduce Japan from the perspectives of Japanese people and people from other countries such as *My Japan* (Watanabe, 2009), *Erika-san* (Say, 2009), *Tokyo Friends* (Reynolds, 2012), and *My Awesome Japan Adventure: A Diary about the Best 4 Months Ever!* (Otowa, 2013). In a close examination of these books, I arrived at three conclusions about these books: (1) staying on the Five Fs culture, (2) accurate, but not authentic, and (3) limited kid culture.

Staying on the Five Fs culture. Many picture books repeatedly cover the categories of the five Fs, including traditional food, festivals, fashion, famous people, and folktales, staying at the surface level of Japanese culture. By relying on those images, authors and publishers fail to balance the traditional with contemporary aspects of Japanese culture. This lack of balance may contribute towards readers forming a superficial appreciation of Japanese culture and even stereotypes rather than coming to explore and understand the diversity and complexity within the culture such as cultural values and beliefs, social rules, and family relationships (Hapgood & Fennes, 1997).

In addition, I found that many of the nonfiction texts about Japan available in North America were published over ten to twenty years ago and do not seem to be updated, such as *Kodomo: Children of Japan* (Kuklin, 1995), *World in View: Japan* (Walker, 1993), *Cities of the World: Tokyo* (Kent, 1996), and *World Cities: Tokyo* (1990). Informational texts heavily rely on visual images to introduce people's lifestyles and cultural details, greatly impacting readers' perceptions of cultures. Children need to books that reflect current trends in order to provide accurate and authentic information; otherwise, readers create misinterpretations of the country and people of Japan.

Accurate, but not authentic. The picture book illustrations frequently depict traditions as being representative of Japanese culture today. That is, cultural stereotypes, such as the wearing of the *kimono* (traditional Japanese garment), are described as if they are characteristic of life today. This may reinforce these stereotypes and contribute to misunderstandings about modern lifestyles in Japan. Also, particular cultural icons including *kimono* and sushi are often presented in books and function to create a sense of exoticism around Japanese culture. In addition, overrepresentation of the icons may create stereotypical views on readers, suggesting that Japanese people always eat sushi. In fact, for many Japanese people, sushi is not an ordinary food but a meal that they have on special days such as birthday parties. Furthermore, the attitudes of several characters do not reflect the values and beliefs that play out in the daily lives of most Japanese today. For example, some stories, stereotyped traditional cultural values are placed on gender roles, such as the depiction of Japanese women as quiet, conservative, and domesticated. This is not an authentic portrayal of Japanese women.

Limited kid culture. Lastly, I found that the books provide important features of Japan such as lifestyles, traditions, customs, and historical events but limited aspects of children's contemporary childhood experiences within and around the culture. In addition, as Sung and Son (2013) argued about literature about South Asia that marginalizes "peer interactions" (p. 79), picture books about Japan have limited depictions of peers. My findings in this study revealed that students' childhood experiences played significant resources to connect and transact with child protagonists in the stories of picture books, as well as Japanese pictorial texts. If the books include more depictions of children's cultures and peer interactions, such as playing computer or video games, watching cartoons, or playing Pokémon card games, readers' transactions with them can be richer and have more cultural experiences. This, further, leads them to appreciate the similarities, as well as differences, of cultures and develop greater cultural understandings and perspectives.

Limited numbers of picture books show contemporary lives of Japanese and Japanese-American people and children. Stories about cultural values, beliefs, and people's social relationships are also needed for readers to develop an understanding of diversity and complexity within Japanese culture. Furthermore, while values and practices are presented accurately as part of Japanese culture in books, their authenticity is problematic. Short and Fox (2003) addressed the significance of readers' "meaningful engagements with high-quality children's books that are culturally authentic and accurate" (p. 22). Further, Mo and Shen (2003) argued that global literature needs to be authentic and accurate, involving "cultural values and issues/practices that are accepted as norms of the social group" (p. 200).

I hope that publishers in the United States respond to these trends and provide picture books that reflect diverse aspects of Japanese culture, the contemporary nature of Japan, and children's varied lives, experiences, and cultures. Those provide readers with meaningful opportunities raising authentic and accurate cultural awareness and appreciating cultural differences and human commonalties.

Implications for Research

The findings of this study support and extend existing research on reader response theory, New Literacy Studies (NLS), and multimodality. Research in the fields of reader response theory and literacy have revealed very little concerning the responses of children to Japanese pictorial texts in the classroom communities. In an analysis of readers' responses, reader response theorists have directed their attention to psychological, textual, social, and cultural factors, exploring how those inform or shape readers' responses. The ways in which readers' intertextual knowledge about popular culture and out-of-school literacy practices influence their responses have been left off from the studies. My study contributes to the expansion of reader response theory at the cultural level. Exploration of fifth graders' responses to Japanese pictorial texts revealed that their popular culture knowledge and practices with those graphic forms of texts are factors that should be paid attention to in an analysis of their meaning making.

Also, my study contributes a non-traditional approach, combining the theoretical notion of reader response theory, NLS, and multimodality, to inquire into the nature of children's responses and literacy practices. Combining the theories made it possible to explore students' responses to Japanese pictorial texts in classroom settings. Children today are "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001, p. 3), experts with digital language of

computers, video games, the Internet, and graphic novels because they have grown up within digital culture (Prensky, 2014). In everyday life children have transacted with various graphic forms of texts to communicate meanings. Reader response theory, NLS, and multimodality are meaningful in order to understand their experiences with various forms of texts in a range of sociocultural contexts.

Future Research Directions

This study leads to further research in the areas of reader response and literacy. First, studies with more diverse populations in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, social backgrounds, and country of origin would contribute to expanding our understanding of readers' responses to Japanese pictorial texts to explore: How do sociocultural factors influence responses? Do readers' responses differ by those factors? In addition, this study examined children in a rural public school in Arizona. Because of socialization and differing social interactions, other school contexts, such as an urban elementary school, may reveal different results from those found in my study. Further, this study lasted around for six months. A longitudinal or follow up research involving more Japanese pictorial texts would produce richer data and provide a more comprehensive description of children's responses.

Next, this study used picture books in order to create a context for supporting students' learning with Japanese pictorial texts. Using other genres such as wordless picture books and realistic fiction/nonfiction and historical fiction/nonfiction novels could also provide opportunities to examine their responses, and may show different results from those in my study. Also, studying children's intertextual reading of a movie and a book would be interesting. For example, *Ponyo*, anime, is created by a Japanese

animator in Japan, based on Hans Christian Andersen's *Little Mermaid*. The study would provide opportunities to explore readers' responses of intertextual reading practices. What are their interpretations of the stories? What knowledge or experiences do they draw on in order to make sense of the stories? Do their cultural or social factors affect their response? If so, how?

Using multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006), a close analysis of children's multi-modal literacy practices with Japanese pictorial texts and other popular culture media would be interesting. Although the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, and scholars, such as Mahiri (2006), have called on educators to integrate new media literacies into classrooms, few resources currently exist for them to incorporate these literacies. How do children respond to the texts? What understandings, interpretations, and literacy practices are demonstrated in their responses? This study would provide teachers and teacher educators with frameworks for using those texts in classroom contexts, thus developing understandings of the ways in which children engage and make meaning of differing texts. This study would also provide literacy scholars and researchers with new insights into children's multi-modal literacy practices with popular culture texts, opening up a new discussion in popular culture pedagogy, as well as in the field of literacy and reader research.

Lastly, Japanese pictorial texts can be used for different purposes and goals in the following content areas: language arts, history, social studies, science, visual arts, and Japanese or English language. When the texts are used in different areas, children would show different responses, attitudes, and perspectives. For example, anime, *Ponyo*

(Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2010) and *Princess Mononoke* (Miyazaki & Suzuki, 2001) can be used in social studies, providing opportunities with exploring issues related to the destruction of nature, gender roles and identities, and power and dominance to explore: How do children respond to the issues? What understandings of the issues are demonstrated in their responses? In addition, manga and kamishibai can be used in language arts to develop multiliteracies. Students may create their original manga or kamishibai using images and writings to explore: What are their literacy practices with creations of manga or kamishibai? In addition, Japanese pictorial texts can be effective tools for the language learning visually and auditorily in Japanese or English language classroom.

Conclusion

It is my hope that the findings of this study will help teachers, teacher educators, and scholars and researchers in the field of reader response, New Literacy Studies, multimodality, and popular culture pedagogy to understand children's responses to Japanese pictorial texts –manga, anime, kamishibai, and picture books. The findings showed that fifth graders' intertextual knowledge of popular culture acted as a key for growing their cultural awareness and consciousness when engaging with Japanese pictorial texts. The results also indicated that the texts could serve as valuable points of departure for the development of critical inquiry. In addition, the texts themselves connected to the knowledge and interests of students. Despite the fact that they were not familiar with the contents and contexts embedded in the Japanese texts, the form of the texts was where they had some familiarity and experiences and this made them accessible for and learning about Japan and Japanese culture.

Some educators tend to ignore or negatively view those types of popular culture texts as contributing to children's short attention spans and a lack of creativity and imaginations (Gee, 2004; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). In addition, the texts are often ignored in educational settings because of educators' lack of background knowledge (Lapp, Wolsey, Fisher, & Frey, 2012). I hope that the findings in this study raise the awareness of schools, teachers, librarians, and teacher educators to value and embrace the texts as rich resources. If Japanese pictorial texts are assigned as educational texts in literacy contexts, they will become powerful materials. Teachers and teacher educators can make their instruction more engaging and effective for a wide range of learners today.

Dyson (1997), who studied young children's use of popular culture superheroes in their literacy practices, addressed that teachers should not be afraid of "children's worlds and children's concerns" (p. 185). In her study, children developed critical perspectives and understandings about the symbolic worlds while they were encouraged to bring their own cultures in learning. In addition, Short and Kaser (1998) argued for the importance of "providing space in the classroom for kid culture" (p. 190), and Sung, Kim, and O'Herron (2014) underscored the need to embrace and affirm childhood cultures as "significant cultural domains". They stated that it is important for educators to acknowledge and value kid culture, encouraging children to explore connections among the cultures and to become reflective and critical learners. In educational contexts, it is significant for educators to have courage to see who children are in classrooms, and to take into account what they bring into classrooms and their broader and richer experiences and knowledge within popular culture. I believe that when children feel their

cultural identities have places in classrooms, they gain authority on learning and classrooms to become powerful learning environments.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY PROTOCOL (TEACHER)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Gender:
   a) Female
   b) Male

2. Age:
   a) 20-25
   b) 26-30
   c) 31-40
   d) 41-50
   e) More than 50 years

3. Race/Ethnicity:
   a) Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)
   b) African American
   c) Hispanic
   d) American Indian
   e) Asian/Pacific Islander
   f) Prefer not to answer
   g) Other

4. How many years have you lived in Arizona?

5. How much teaching experience do you have?

6. How many years do you teach at Cañon Elementary School?

CLASSROOM-BASED QUESTIONS

7. What grade level do you teach in the 2013-2014 school year?

8. How many students do you have in your class?

9. What is the ethnic ratio?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH READING

10. What kind of personal reading do you do on your own outside of school?

11. Did you read graphic novels, comics, manga or watch animations as a child?'

12. Do you currently read graphic novels, comics, manga, or watch animations?

13. Please rate your current interest (1-low to 5-high) in reading graphic novels, comics, manga, and animations.

Graphic novel

1	2	3	4	5
(low interest)				(high interest)

Comic

1	2	3	4	5
(low interest)				(high interest)

Manga

1	2	3	4	5
(low interest)				(high interest)

Animation

1	2	3	4	5
(low interest)				(high interest)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (TEACHER)

LITERACY-BASED QUESTIONS

1. How many books do you have in your classroom?

2. What kind of books do you have?

3. What is the reading block? How long? When? Which books?

4. What kind of reading do you typically assign? How long?

5. What are your impressions about graphic novels, comics, manga, and animations?

6. In the last school year, did you use graphic novels with some or all of your students? Or did some of your students bring them to read independently?
   A. If so,…..
   a) What kind of graphic novels did you use?

   b) How often did you use?

   c) For what purposes did you use?

   B. If no…..
   d) Would you ever consider assigning a graphic novel? Why?

   e) If no, why?

7. Do you have any graphic novels available in your class?
   a) If so, why?
   f) If not, would you ever consider assigning a graphic novel at school? Why?
   b) If no, why?

8. Would you be willing to use graphic novels in your classroom?
   a) If so, why? How would you use? For what purpose? (e.g., ELL, struggling readers, primary reading, supplement to reading program, motivation, visual literacy, writing, 21st century visual worlds, harness students' natural interest)

   b) If not, why?

9. Do you have any comics available in your class?
   a) If so, why?
   b) If not, why?

10. Would you be willing to use comics in your classroom?
    a) If so, why? How would you use? For what purpose?
    b) If not, why?

11. Do you have any animations available in your class?
    a) If so, why?
    b) If not, why?

12. Would you be willing to use animations in your classroom?
    a) If so, why? How would you use? For what purpose?
    b) If not, why?

13. If you had a student who read a lot of graphic novels, manga or animations and suggested that you read one, what would you do?

APPENDIX C

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION SLIDES FOR *Yotsuba&!*

Yotsuba&!

1. Title
2. Author
3. Plot
4. Setting
5. Characters

Title

Yotsuba&!
(Yo-tsu-ba-to)


Japanese version


English version

Author

Kiyohiko Azuma

Plot

Yotsuba, 5-year-old girl, moves to a new city with her adoptive father.

Yotsuba meets new neighbors.

Yotsuba befriends neighbors.

Yotsuba's daily life is adventure!!!

Every day, Yotsuba discovers new things, air-conditioning and swing.

Setting

- Japan
- Urban city

Characters

Yotsuba
(5 years old)

Neighbors

Asagi

Fuuka

Koiwai
(Yotsuba's adoptive father)

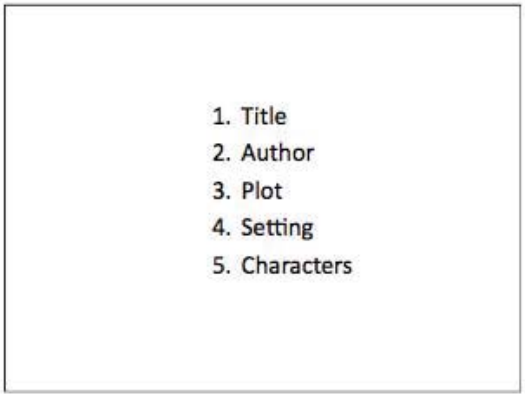
Ena

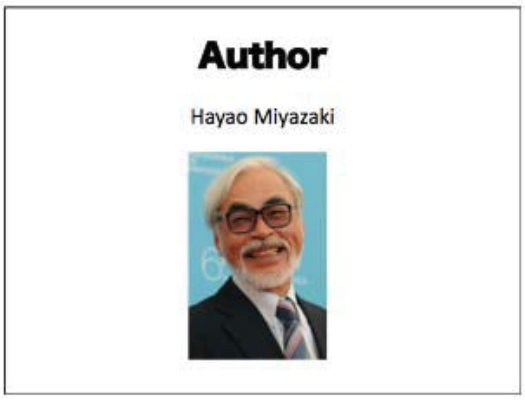
How to read manga?

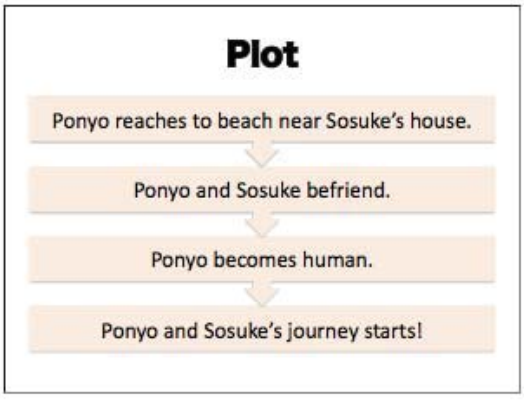
Can you guess how to read this page??

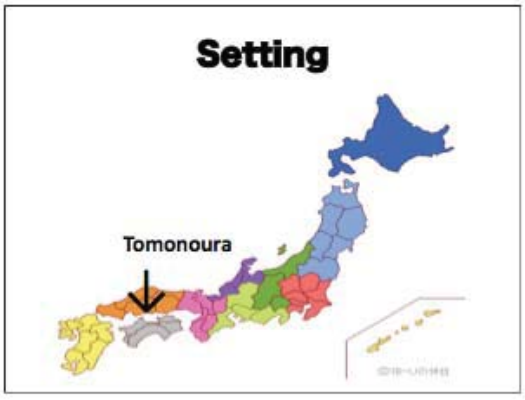
APPENDIX D

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION SLIDES FOR *Ponyo*

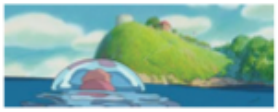








Tomonoura
Fishing Village



Characters

Ponyo
(Goldfish)

Sosuke
(5 years old)

Lisa
(Sosuke's Mother)

Gran Mamare
(Ponyo's mother)

Fujimoto
(Ponyo's father)

Koichi (Sosuke's father)

Ponyo's sisters

APPENDIX E

OUTLINE OF DISCUSSIONS WITH JAPANESE PICTORIAL TEXTS

I. Before Reading/Watching
1. Read the title, author, and illustrator
2. Ask the participants to predict the story
   - What do you think this story would be about? How can you tell?
3. Ask them if they have any comment to make about the cover or story.
   - Do you have things to want to say about this cover?

II. During Reading
1. Share texts and illustrations with the participants.
2. Invite them to respond to the books while reading aloud. (Stop one to three places to bring up questions, wonderings, or connections related with the story or the participants.)
   - What do you notice?
   - What do you think the story is going to end? How? Why or why not?
   - Does this remind you of anything you have done before?
   - Have you ever felt like the character in this story?
   - Do you have anything that you want to say about the story or illustrations?

III. After Reading/Watching
1. Encourage them to share questions, puzzles, wonderings, or connections related to the story or the participants.
   - What do you notice?
   - How did you feel while reading/ watching stories? Why did you feel that way?
   - What happen in the story?
   - What was the sequence of events?
   - Which part was MOST important in the story? Why?
   - What other ways might the story has ended?
   - Do you know a place like the one in the story? Where is it? Describe it.
   - What is the main thing the author is saying?
   - Do you have anything that you want to say about the story or illustrations?
   - Is there anything you like or dislike about the story?
   - Is there anything that puzzles you?
   - Is there any questions or wonderings?
   - What was your favorite part? Why? What was your least favorites part? Why?
   - Are there any differences or similarities across the stories?
   - Did anything that happened in the story ever happen to you?
   - Does anything is the story remind you of something from your own experience, a TV program, a movie, or another book you have read?

2. Special questions of each story
   Yotsuba&! (Manga)
   - Who are the main characters? Describe them.

- Have you experience of moving to a new town? What did you feel?
- How are car, food, people and their cars different or similar, as compared to your country?
- What do you know about global warming?

Ponyo (Anime)

- Have you been to the coast in U.S? Look for images of fishing villages in the U.S. and compare them with a fishing village in Ponyo. How are they different or similar? What are the buildings and houses like in the village in Ponyo?
- How are car, food, people and their cars different or similar, as compared to your country?
- What would you done with Ponyo if you were Sosuke?
- What do you think Sosuke's idea?
- How would you feel if you were Sosuke or Ponyo?
- Why does Ponyo want to be human?
- What does Ponyo's father do? What does he want to do? Why?
- Chopsticks activity.
- Who is Ponyo's mother?
- What do you think Sosuke's idea that he accepts Ponyo for what she is?

Hats for the Jizos (Kamishibai)

- Why did the old man go to town?
- Why do you think he put hats on each of Jizos?
- Why did Jizos come to the old couple's house?
- What did they feel when they saw Jizos coming?

3. Different activities depending on the reading/watching materials.

APPENDIX F

RESPONSE STRATEGIES

Adapted from Kathy G. Short, Jerome Harste, and Carolyn Burke. (1996). *Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquires*. Heinemann. Kathy G. Short Retrieved from http://uacoe.arizona.edu/short/

I. Venn Diagrams (Investigation)

Read and discuss a text set of books and talk about similarities and differences across the books. From these discussions, develop broad categories to use on a comparison chart – What is bout the set of books that you want to look at more closely to compare the books? A venn diagram (two circles that overlap in the center) focuses the comparison on one major issue at a time. Both pictures and words are used.

Materials

- A large sheet of chart paper
- Markers of various colors or pastels or colored pencils

II. Time Line (Invitation, Tex-based Response)

Create a time line to organize the major ideas or events of the story or to connect the story with other events in history. Can also create a time line to show highs and lows in tension and suspense in story.

III. Heart Maps (Investigation)

After an initial discussion of the book, the group chooses a character or a group of characters that they would like to think about further. On a big piece of paper the group maps that character's heart. The group discusses values and beliefs held by the character and what people or events are important to the character's life. These are mapped into a heart shape, using spatial relationships, color, and size to show the relative importance of each idea and the relationships between ideas.

Materials

- A large sheet of chart paper for each group
- Markers of various colors or pastels or colored pencils

IV. Graffiti Boards (Connection)

Students learn from capturing and exploring "what's on their minds." As they interact with people and texts, they search for patterns that connect their current experiences to past events, texts, and feelings. Through these connections they are able to make sense of those experiences. They also attend to difference, to the "yet to be understood." As students read or engage in an experience, their initial thinking and responses can easily be lost, fleeting in and out of their minds. They need a way to quickly capture these

responses that does not require them to organize their thinking or express that thinking in formal ways. Through quickly capturing their initial thinking by jotting words and thoughts and sketching images, they can then revisit that thinking to share with others or to organize that thinking through a web or chart.

Materials

- A large sheet of chart paper for each group
- Markers of various colors or pastels or colored pencils

How?

1. Students engage in some type of shared experience, such as reading from a particular text set or shared book set, participating in a science observation or experiment, working through a mathematical problem-solving experience, or listening to a musical composition.

2. During the shared experience, students sit in small groups at tables with a large piece of chart paper in the middle of the table. At various points throughout the experience, students are invited to stop and write their observations and reflections on the paper in the form of graffiti. Each person takes his or her own corner of the paper and works alone, sketching and writing images, words, and phrases that come to mind. There is no particular organization to those images and words. They are simply written randomly on the graffiti board.

3. Students within each small group share their thinking with each other, using the graffiti board as a reference point to remind them of their thinking.

4. The experience can be extended by creating an organized web, chart, or diagram of their connections from the unorganized thoughts and images on the board.

V. Neighborhood Memory Maps (Investigation)

Our memories connect us to the experiences that are significant in our lives and shape how we think about ourselves and the world. Mapping these memories provides a vehicle for exploring the inscape of our cultural and personal memories. Listening to others tell their stories allows us to travel the landscapes of the world. Memory connects us to the values and events that define our cultural identities and creates bridges that connect us to each other. We learn about and value the funds of knowledge from our families and communities that we each bring to the classroom. This knowledge provides the potential for these funds of knowledge to be integrated into our relationships and the curriculum as resources for learning.

Materials

- A large piece of paper for each group
- Markers of various colors or pastels or colored pencils

How?

1. Teacher ------ Draw your own neighborhood as a child in front of your students, and, as you draw, tell stories about growing up in that neighborhood.

2. Ask another teacher or adult in the room to briefly share their neighborhood memory map so that children see more than one way to draw their maps.

3. Ask children to draw a map of a neighborhood that is significant to them. Their neighborhood can be large or small, outdoors or indoors – their backyard, a room in their house, a city block or subdivision, a small town, a beach or forest area, etc.

4. Ask children to label the stories on their maps – the places where something happened that is a memory. Young children can dictate the labels. Some children may need to share their maps orally with a partner to discover their stories before they are ready to create labels.

5. Encourage children to share their stories in pairs and then add other labels to their maps.

6. Children can choose one story from their maps to develop into a complete oral or written story to share publically with others in a book, family newsletter, video, etc.

7. Children can also talk about similarities and differences in their memories and maps across their classroom community.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CHILDREN)

1st Interview

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What kind of reading do you like to do?

   newspapers, magazines, nonfiction books, online (websites etc), picture books, comics, graphic novels, others
4. Do you read comics or watch animation? If yes, why? If no, why?
5. Do you read comics or watchi animation for pleasure? If yes, why? If no, why?
6. Where do you usually read comics or watch anime? Why?
7. Do you read comics or watch anime with somebody? With whom? Why?
8. What kinds of stories of comics or anime do you like best? Why?
9. What is the name of your favorite comics or animation? Why?
10. Name any comics or anime you have read more than once. How many times?
11. Write the name of any comics or anime you didn't like and tell why?
12. Do you ever read comics or anime because one of your friends said it was good?
13. Give the names of some comics or anime you have at home.
14. What are your hobbies and collections? Why?
15. Do you read a comic if you have seen the movie, TV program, animations, video games based on it? If yes, why? If no, why?
16. Name some of the movies, animations, games you have liked the best.
17. What do you want to be? Why?

2nd Interview

1. What do you think about the story you have read? Why?
2. Do you have any difficulty reading manga? Why?
3. How do you like or dislike the story? Why?
4. Do you have anything to say about our study?
5. Is there anything that puzzles you stories or anything about Japan? Why?
6. Is there any questions or wonderings about stories or anything about Japan? Why?
7. Tell me about what you notice about Japanese culture.
8. Do you find any differences or similarities between your culture and Japanese culture?

3rd Interview

1. What do you think about the stories you have read or watched?
2. Tell me about what you notice about Japanese culture.
3. Is there anything that puzzles you stories or anything about Japan? Why?
4. Is there any questions or wonderings stories or anything about Japan? Why?
5. Do you find any differences or similarities between your culture and Japanese culture?

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