

# The silence of digital practices in contemporary fiction picture books

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## Abstract

Contemporary childhood exists in a rapidly changing literacy context in the digital age, where digital devices and technology are progressively used at home (OECD 2019). In the global context, digital technology is greatly emerging in children's lives, including the way of their play, learning, communicating and entertainment (Marsh et al. 2016). In this paper presentation, the author who is a researcher in the intersection of digital literacy and children's literature, engages in autobiographical narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), where she tells and retells her stories of reading contemporary fiction picture books, focusing on digital practices in both written text and illustrations. Such experiences are reflected and compared to her experiences of reading contemporary academic articles and reports on digital literacy studies in early childhood education. She noticed that there is a significant missing of digital lives and practices in contemporary fiction picture books, which contrasts with the prevalence of children's digital usage in the contemporary post-typographic era.

As children's fiction is infused with ideology, the text instills values and beliefs in young readers, which, further, will shape children's sociocultural development (Stephens 1992). For this reason, it is critical for future research to examine the ideological message and cultural discourse in relation to digital literacy practices in children's fiction work. Because the gaps and differences between the ideologies of digital usage in children's literature and children's digital literacy practices reality could cause confusion to our young readers.

This article highlights the silence of digital lives and practices in today's fiction picture books and this research urges writers, illustrators, educators, and parents to pay attention to the gaps between digital practices in today's children's real lives and the contemporary fiction picture books.

## Key points

- There is a significant missing of digital lives and practices in contemporary fiction picture books, which contrasts with the prevalence of children's digital usage in the contemporary post-typographic era.
- It is critical for future research to examine the ideological message and cultural discourse in relation to digital literacy practices in children's fiction work.

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