

# Advantages of Preschool Teachers in Picture Book–Based Dramatic Play: An Activity Theory Perspective

Liu Boya, Loy Chee Luen, Chang Xiaoli

Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: [loy.cl@fpm.upsi.edu.my](mailto:loy.cl@fpm.upsi.edu.my)

DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v15-i1/27371>

*Published Online:* 08 January 2026

## Abstract

Picture book–based dramatic play, as a form of early childhood education integrating language expression, artistic creation, and social interaction, has garnered significant attention in recent years for cultivating preschool children's comprehensive competencies. This teaching approach not only promotes language development and imagination building among preschool children but also provides new practical avenues for preschool teachers to engage in teacher innovation. This study, grounded in Activity Theory, aims to explore the advantages of preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play teaching. Employing qualitative research methods, the study selected 30 preschool teachers from kindergartens in central and eastern China as participants. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis for coding and refinement. Based on the six core dimensions of Activity Theory, the findings identified six teaching advantages: teacher innovation, goal alignment, resource coordination, rule guidance, collaborative growth, and role synergy. This study offers a new theoretical perspective on applying Activity Theory within early childhood education contexts. Furthermore, it provides practical guidance for designing picture book–based dramatic play curricula and fostering creative learning among preschool children.

**Keywords:** Preschool Teacher, Picture Book–Based Dramatic Play, Activity Theory, Early Childhood Education, Qualitative Research

## Introduction

In recent years, with the overall improvement in early childhood education quality and the continuous renewal of pedagogical concepts, the education sector has gradually shifted from the singular transmission of subject knowledge toward the cultivation of comprehensive abilities and creativity (Niland, 2023). As contemporary early childhood education increasingly emphasizes integrated and experience-based learning, the exploration of picture book–based dramatic play addresses both pedagogical innovation and educational necessity. This approach meets the growing need to cultivate preschool children's creativity, collaboration, and emotional expression in authentic learning contexts while simultaneously enhancing preschool teachers' instructional competence and reflective capacity. Recent studies confirm

that the integration of picture book narratives and dramatic play supports the development of imagination, communication, and social awareness among preschool children (Aksoy & Azaklı, 2025; Mahsan & Liu, 2025; Crawford et al., 2024; Chen, 2022). Moreover, it provides preschool teachers with opportunities to innovate teaching strategies, link artistic expression with cognitive development, and construct more inclusive, child-centered learning environments. Thus, investigating the advantages of preschool teachers in picture book-based dramatic play is not only theoretically relevant to Activity Theory but also practically significant for improving teacher training, curriculum design, and the quality of early childhood education.

Against this backdrop, integrated teaching has emerged as a significant trend in early childhood education. Particularly, the integration of arts education, language education, and social learning has opened new avenues for preschool children's creative expression and social construction (Aksoy & Azaklı, 2025; Schmidt et al., 2024). Among these, the integration of dramatic play teaching and picture book teaching has gained increasing attention. Picture book-based dramatic play, as a comprehensive teaching approach centered on story as a medium, performance as a vehicle, and creative experience as its core, has been proven to significantly enhance preschool children's language expression, emotional resonance, and social interaction (Chen, 2022; Mahsan & Liu, 2025).

Despite the high educational value demonstrated by picture book-based dramatic play in early childhood education, several practical challenges persist. First, the role of preschool teachers in picture book-based dramatic play teaching remains ambiguous. Some educators lack experience integrating dramatic play teaching with picture book teaching, resulting in disconnects between curriculum design and instructional objectives (Hoel & Jernes, 2024; Chen, 2022). Second, insufficient curriculum resources and environmental support—such as the absence of systematic picture book selection criteria and dedicated dramatic play spaces in some kindergartens—hinder the implementation of teaching activities (Aksoy & Azaklı, 2025; Hutagalung et al., 2020). Finally, disparities exist between teachers' innovation awareness and curriculum implementation capabilities. Some educators struggle to organically integrate picture book content with children's performances during activities, hindering the development of creative expression among preschool children (Fang et al., 2024). These challenges indicate that current picture book-based dramatic play teaching practices remain in an exploratory phase.

Theoretically, dramatic play is broadly defined as a social learning activity grounded in imagination and role-taking, through which preschool children develop language, cognitive, and social competencies via imitation, reenactment, and creative expression (Arias et al., 2024; Hutagalung et al., 2020). Picture books, meanwhile, serve as educational media integrating visual art and linguistic narrative, capable of stimulating preschool children's imagination and aesthetic experiences (Akyol, 2024; Schmidt et al., 2024). Picture book-based dramatic play emerges as a comprehensive educational form integrating these two elements. Preschool teachers guide preschool children to transform picture book content into performance scenarios, unifying story comprehension, emotional resonance, and creative expression (Chen, 2022; Mahsan & Liu, 2025).

This study, grounded in Activity Theory, aims to explore the advantages of preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play teaching. Theoretically, it contributes to expanding the application of Activity Theory within early childhood education's arts instruction domain and deepens understanding of the intrinsic mechanisms within teachers' instructional activity systems. Practically, it provides empirical guidance for preschool teachers designing, implementing, and reflecting on picture book–based dramatic play teaching curricula, thereby creating more inspiring and integrated learning environments for preschool children.

### **Literature Review**

Activity Theory has been widely applied in educational research in recent years to analyze the dynamic interaction between learners and teaching environments. Centered on the learning activity system, this theory comprises six fundamental dimensions: subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labor. It reveals the systemic interactions between individuals and their environment within educational activities (Liu et al., 2024). Research indicates that the Activity Theory framework effectively explains teachers' innovative behaviors and social interactions in teaching practice. It has been applied across educational levels to analyze processes of instructional improvement and knowledge transformation (Andrews et al., 2021). Furthermore, Activity Theory has been utilized to explore teacher role repositioning and the formation of learning communities during educational reform (Pettersson, 2021), providing theoretical support for teacher professional development and curriculum innovation.

Picture book teaching, as a vital pedagogical approach in early childhood education, significantly promotes preschool children's language development, aesthetic abilities, and social growth. Research indicates that picture books stimulate children's imagination and emotional resonance through narrative contexts and visual storytelling (Akyol, 2024; Hoel & Jernes, 2024), and aid preschool children in developing emotional expression and peer collaboration skills under preschool teacher guidance (Mahsan & Liu, 2025). Concurrently, dramatic play is widely recognized as a vital pathway for preschool children's creative learning, promoting holistic development in cognition, language, and social interaction through role-play (Arias et al., 2024;

Niland, 2023; Chen, 2022). Picture book–based dramatic play integrates the contextual narratives of picture book teaching with the experiential nature of dramatic play, forming a comprehensive teaching model that combines language expression, imaginative creation, and social cooperation (Şeren et al., 2025).

This model not only enhances preschool children's expressive abilities and creativity but also strengthens the preschool teacher's subject consciousness in instructional interactions and classroom innovation (Aksoy & Azaklı, 2025; Schmidt et al., 2024). However, research indicates that preschool teachers still face challenges in picture book–based dramatic play teaching, including insufficient goal alignment, limited resource coordination, and inadequate role synergy (Chen, 2022). These constraints hinder the sustained improvement of teaching quality and innovative development.

Although research on applying Activity Theory in education has grown increasingly abundant, systematic analysis of its application in picture book–based dramatic play teaching remains relatively scarce. Current studies predominantly focus on individual preschool teachers' instructional innovations and interactive mechanisms (Aksoy & Azaklı, 2025; Crawford et al., 2024), lacking comprehensive examination of elements such as subjects, objects, tools, and rules within the teaching system. Particularly, the interactive relationship between picture book–based dramatic play teaching and Activity Theory remains understudied, leaving the formation mechanism of its pedagogical advantages poorly understood.

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, utilizing Activity Theory as its analytical framework, to explore the pedagogical strengths of preschool teachers in picture book-based dramatic play instruction. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding individual experiences and contextual meanings, revealing the complex and dynamic action logic of preschool teachers in authentic teaching situations (Gasco-Txabarri & Zuazagoitia, 2023). Semi-structured interviews were employed to explore variations in preschool teachers' experiences and cognitive patterns within the teaching system, thereby illuminating the formation process and underlying structure of teaching advantages.

The study sample comprised 30 preschool teachers from central and eastern China, each possessing over three years of teaching experience and prior involvement in picture book–based dramatic play activities. All participants voluntarily joined the study. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee, strictly adhering to academic ethics standards to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in data collection, recording, and analysis.

Data collection employed semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interview outline was designed based on the six dimensions of Activity Theory (subject, object, tools, rules, community, division of labor). Questions covered preschool teachers' goal setting, teaching resource utilization, classroom interaction, role allocation, and collaboration methods in picture book–based dramatic play instruction. Interviews were conducted in quiet conference rooms, with each participant interviewed individually for 30 to 40 minutes. All sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed into written materials after participant confirmation, and ultimately yielded 30 complete interview transcripts numbered sequentially as T1–T30.

During data analysis, the research team employed thematic analysis and utilized Nvivo 15 software for data organization and coding. First, researchers repeatedly reviewed the T1–T30 interview transcripts to identify initial concepts related to the six dimensions of Activity Theory. This was followed by open coding and clustering. Throughout coding, researchers continuously compared responses from different preschool teachers to identify shared experiences and distinctive characteristics. To ensure credibility and confirmability, the research team repeatedly validated the thematic findings through peer debriefing and member checking. This process ultimately yielded several thematic units reflecting the primary advantages of preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play instruction.

## Result

After two rounds of thematic analysis, this study, grounded in the Activity Theory framework, ultimately identified six advantages from 30 preschool teacher interview transcripts (T1–T30): Teacher innovation, goal alignment, resource coordination, rule guidance, collaborative growth, and role synergy. These themes reveal the multidimensional advantages exhibited by preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play instruction, reflecting their comprehensive capabilities and intrinsic motivation in instructional design, classroom implementation, and team collaboration. Detailed analysis of the six themes follows.

### *Teacher Innovation*

Analysis reveals that keywords such as “innovation,” “exploration,” and “creation” appeared 32 times in the interviews. Preschool teachers widely believe that picture book–based dramatic play provides opportunities for teaching innovation, enabling them to flexibly apply personal experiences and ideas.

T2 stated: “Before, I just read picture books verbatim. Now I adapt stories into mini-plays, letting preschool children choose roles to act out. The classroom atmosphere is completely different.”

T5 shared: “I tried merging the plots of two picture books and had the children create the ending. They were all incredibly excited.”

T8 added: “When children's performances surpassed my expectations, I would improvise lines or plot twists on the spot. This flexibility makes teaching feel more vibrant.”

Teacher innovation reflects preschool teachers' capacity for proactive reflection and creativity in teaching, driving the dynamic evolution of instructional contexts.

### *Goal Alignment*

Analysis revealed that keywords such as “goals,” “direction,” and “focus” appeared 24 times. Preschool teachers widely reported that picture book–based dramatic play made it easier to understand and implement teaching objectives.

T4 stated: “When adapting a picture book for performance, I first clarify what skill I want to cultivate in the preschool children—such as cooperative awareness or language expression.”

T7 noted: “The themes in picture books are essentially teaching objectives. For instance, many stories lend themselves to performances that foster a sense of sharing.”

T12 added: “Now when writing lesson plans, I align picture book themes with child development goals—no longer treating them separately as before.”

Goal alignment helps preschool teachers maintain directional consistency in activity design and implementation, naturally integrating teaching content with preschool children's developmental objectives.

### *Resource Coordination*

Keywords like “resources,” “integration,” and “sharing” appeared 27 times in the interviews. Preschool teachers believe picture book–based dramatic play promotes flexible resource utilization and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

T10 said: “I recreate scenes from children's favorite picture books in the classroom—like building a ‘forest’ corner—to immerse them in the story.”

T16 added: “We use cut-out pictures from old picture books to make character cards and also ask for help making costumes for performances.”

T19 further noted: “Several classes in the kindergarten now share picture books and scenery materials, significantly increasing resource utilization.”

Resource coordination reflects preschool teachers' ability to proactively mobilize and coordinate resources within the educational system, enhancing the openness and collaborative nature of education.

### *Rule Guidance*

Keywords like “rules,” “order,” and “discipline” appeared 19 times. Preschool teachers widely noted that picture book–based dramatic play effectively helps preschool children understand rules and learn cooperation.

T3 stated: “During performances, I let the children establish their own rules—like who goes first or who delivers lines—and they're very enthusiastic.”

T15 noted: “Through role-playing, preschool children learn why they need to line up and listen to others finish speaking.”

T22 added: “Before, they saw rules as restrictions. Now, through acting, they understand ‘rules make the story flow better.’”

Rule guidance not only establishes classroom order but also helps preschool children internalize social norms through play.

### *Collaborative Growth*

Keywords like “collaboration,” “growth,” and “mutual support” appeared 22 times in the interviews. Preschool teachers widely believe that both children and teachers grow through picture book–based dramatic play.

T6 said: “After each activity, I reflect—the children's performances teach me how to guide them better.”

T13 added: “We teachers exchange ideas during rehearsals, inspiring each other.”

T25 further noted: “Children gain confidence through performance, and I find fulfillment in witnessing their growth.”

Collaborative growth reflects the educational relationship where preschool teachers and children mutually learn and motivate each other, embodying a two-way developmental process in teaching.

### *Role Synergy*

Keywords like “role,” “division of labor,” and “collaboration” appeared 25 times in the interviews. Preschool teachers widely felt that picture book–based dramatic play enhanced coordination and complementarity among roles.

T1 said: “I play supporting roles during performances to help children get into character, making their acting more immersive.”

T9 added: “Our preschool teachers have clear divisions of labor—one guides the activity while another handles music, creating excellent synergy.”

T27 further noted: “Preschool children learn to listen to and respect others during the role-assignment process.”

Role synergy manifests in the collaborative interactions between preschool teachers and preschool children, as well as among preschool teachers themselves, reinforcing the holistic and fluid nature of teaching activities.

Six teaching advantages reveal the creativity, goal-orientation, and collaborative characteristics demonstrated by preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play instruction. These advantages collectively construct a dynamic advantage structure within the preschool teacher's instructional system, providing rich empirical support for understanding their teaching practices.

As shown in Table 1, the six advantages identified in this study align with the six dimensions of Activity Theory, illustrating how preschool teachers' practices in picture book–based dramatic play are systematically structured within an activity system.

Table 1

*Correspondence Between Advantages and Dimensions of Activity Theory*

Dimensions of Activity Theory	Advantages in Picture Book–Based Dramatic Play
Subject	Teacher innovation
Object	Goal alignment
Tools	Resource coordination
Rules	Rule guidance
Community	Collaborative growth
Division of labor	Role synergy

**Discussion**

This study, grounded in the framework of Activity Theory, identifies six teaching advantages demonstrated by preschool teachers in picture book–based dramatic play instruction: teacher innovation, goal alignment, resource coordination, rule guidance, collaborative growth, and role synergy. These teaching advantages correspond to the six dimensions of Activity Theory: subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labor—collectively revealing the mechanisms through which preschool teachers achieve teaching optimization and educational innovation within the teaching system.

First, teacher innovation reflects the agency of the subject within the activity system, serving as the core advantages of picture book–based dramatic play instruction. By redesigning picture book story structures and creatively transforming performance formats, preschool teachers integrate narrative storytelling with artistic expression, thereby stimulating preschool children's imagination and desire for self-expression. This pedagogical innovation not only demonstrates preschool teachers' creativity and self-reflective capacity in curriculum implementation but also fosters preschool children's proactive exploration in performance, language, and emotional expression. Teacher innovation thus serves as the intrinsic driving force behind the sustained development of picture book–based dramatic play.

Second, goal alignment corresponds to the object dimension of Activity Theory, emphasizing preschool teachers' systematic grasp of educational objectives and their ability to adapt these goals to specific contexts during teaching activities. Picture book–based dramatic play centers on story themes, helping preschool teachers clarify instructional direction and flexibly adjust pathways to achieve objectives within activities. Research reveals that preschool teachers with strong goal alignment capabilities effectively integrate language development, social learning, and emotional education objectives, ensuring teaching activities genuinely serve preschool children's holistic growth. This demonstrates that

preschool teachers' goal awareness serves not only as the starting point for instructional design but also as a key driving force for classroom emergence.

Third, resource coordination reflects the effective utilization of tools within the activity system. Preschool teachers flexibly integrated diverse teaching resources—including picture book texts, teaching aids, stage settings, and multimedia materials—during picture book-based dramatic play instruction, thereby creating contextualized, immersive learning environments. Some preschool teachers further incorporated family and community resources into the teaching process, facilitating cross-boundary flow and sharing of educational resources. This resource coordination capability enhanced instructional continuity and sustainability, providing robust support for deepening picture book-based dramatic play.

Fourth, rule guidance corresponds to the rules dimension in Activity Theory and serves as a crucial component for promoting preschool children's social learning. Through role assignment, scenario guidance, and conflict resolution, preschool teachers enable children to naturally comprehend and internalize social norms during performance. Unlike traditional external control, picture book-based dramatic play embeds rule learning within character experiences and story development, enabling preschool children to form normative awareness through autonomous exploration. This flexible rule guidance effectively balances classroom freedom and order, providing a more authentic educational context for preschool children's social growth.

Fifth, collaborative growth corresponds to the community dimension of Activity Theory, reflecting the mutual development achieved between teachers and preschool children through pedagogical interaction. Preschool teachers are no longer mere knowledge transmitters but collaborators and reflective practitioners within the learning community. Through co-acting and co-creating with preschool children in picture book-based dramatic play, teachers gain new pedagogical insights, while children develop self-expression and cooperative awareness through interaction. Collaborative growth constitutes the “generative link” within the educational system, embodying the essential characteristic that teaching is learning, and that teaching and learning mutually construct each other.

Finally, role synergy aligns with the division of labor dimension in Activity Theory, reflecting the dynamic collaborative mechanism between preschool teachers and preschool children in teaching activities. Preschool teachers flexibly switch roles in picture book-based dramatic play according to instructional needs, serving as facilitators, participants, storytellers, or performers. This role synergy enhances emotional resonance and expressive flow in the classroom, enabling preschool children to experience the meaning and value of role interaction within collaborative contexts. Through collaboration and complementarity, they jointly construct an open, inclusive, and creative teaching system.

Based on these findings, future preschool teacher training and curriculum design should prioritize three key areas: First, establish mechanisms for sustained teacher innovation and reflection among preschool teachers, encouraging them to exercise subjectivity and creativity in teaching; Second, refine the picture book-based drama teaching resource system to achieve multi-level resource coordination. Third, promote the development of learning

communities, strengthening the dynamic interaction between preschool teachers and preschool children through collaborative growth and role synergy.

### **Conclusion**

This study employs Activity Theory as its theoretical framework. Based on qualitative interviews with 30 preschool teachers, it explores six teaching advantages they demonstrate in picture book-based dramatic play instruction: teacher innovation, goal alignment, resource coordination, rule guidance, collaborative growth, and role synergy. Findings reveal that picture book-based dramatic play serves not only as a teaching format integrating artistic expression and social learning but also as an educational mechanism fostering preschool teachers' professional growth and instructional reflection. Through this activity, preschool teachers can unleash creativity within story-performance contexts, achieve precise alignment of teaching objectives with resources, and form a mutually beneficial learning community through interactions with preschool children.

Theoretically, this study enriches the application of Activity Theory within early childhood education, particularly by offering new perspectives on analyzing the interactive relationship between the preschool teacher's instructional system and the context. By integrating the six dimensions of Activity Theory with picture book-based dramatic play teaching practices, this study reveals the formation mechanism of teaching advantages. It demonstrates that preschool teachers' instructional behaviors are not isolated individual actions but result from the systemic interplay of elements such as the subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labor. This theoretical integration offers a new framework for understanding teacher innovation and the dynamics of educational systems, while also providing a reference for subsequent scholars in theoretical research within the fields of arts education and situated learning.

At the practical level, this study offers insights into how preschool teachers can optimize instruction through picture book-based dramatic play. Findings indicate that this approach effectively fosters teachers' professional reflection, innovative capacity, and collaborative awareness, providing actionable pathways for teacher training and curriculum reform. Educational administrators can leverage these findings to strengthen the cultivation of teacher innovation and resource coordination within curriculum standards, thereby promoting sustained professional development for preschool teachers within collaborative environments characterized by mutual growth and role synergy. Simultaneously, this research offers preschool children a more creative, contextual, and socially interactive learning environment, enabling comprehensive enhancement in language expression, emotional resonance, and social development through performance and imagination.

While this study contributes theoretically and practically, several limitations exist. First, the research sample primarily consists of preschool teachers from central and eastern China. Differences in geographical and cultural contexts may limit the generalizability of findings. Second, while the qualitative approach reveals rich experiential insights, quantitative validation is lacking. Future studies could employ mixed methods to further examine causal relationships among teaching advantages. Finally, this study primarily focused on the teacher perspective, insufficiently incorporating the diverse viewpoints of preschool children and

parents. Future research could adopt a multi-subject approach to construct a more comprehensive teaching ecosystem model.

Future research could deepen in three directions: First, through cross-cultural comparison, explore the adaptability of picture book-based dramatic play across different educational systems; Second, integrating longitudinal studies to analyze the dynamic evolution of preschool teachers' teaching advantages across professional development stages. Third, leveraging educational technology and digital resources to develop multimodal teaching platforms integrating virtual interaction and creative performance, thereby expanding the innovative potential of picture book-based dramatic play in future early childhood education.

## References

- Aksoy, Ş., & Azaklı, T. K. (2025). Investigation of psychosocial risks with creative drama practices based on picture storybooks in the preschool period. *Education Mind*, 4(1), 114–125. <https://doi.org/10.58583/em.4.1.10>
- Akyol, T. (2024). Promoting young children's right to participate in the classroom through picture books. *Child Indicators Research*, 17, 1217–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-024-10117-6>
- Andrews, D., Walton, E., & Osman, R. (2021). Constraints to the implementation of inclusive teaching: A cultural historical activity theory approach. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(13), 1508–1523. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1620880>
- Arias, M. A., Neira-Piñeiro, M. D. R., Pasarín-Lavín, T., & Rodríguez, C. (2024). A drama-based intervention to improve emotional intelligence in early childhood education. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 40, 13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-024-00906-6>
- Chen, X. (2022). Chinese drama pedagogy in early childhood education: From picture book to process drama. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, 10(3), 175–181. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijla.20221003.14>
- Crawford, P. A., Roberts, S. K., & Lacina, J. (2024). Picturebooks and young children: Potential, power, and practices. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 52, 1273–1279. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01701-0>
- Fang, H., Wu, Y., Dong, Y., Li, L., Gong, Y., Wang, J., & Wu, J. (2024). Enhancing resilience in rural Chinese preschoolers: A randomized controlled trial of play-based picture-book reading intervention for 4-5-year-olds. *Early Child Development and Care*, 194(7-8), 852–867. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2024.2354794>
- Gasco-Txabarri, J., & Zuazagoitia, D. (2023). Introduction to research-based practice: A study of students in the early childhood education teaching degree programme. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 13(2), 26. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2023-0029>
- Hoel, T., & Jernes, M. (2024). Quality in children's digital picture books: Seven key strands for educational reflections for shared dialogue-based reading in early childhood settings. *Early Years*, 44(3–4), 480–494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2023.2172552>
- Hutagalung, F., Lai, L., & Adams, D. (2020). The effects of dramatic play on vocabulary learning among preschoolers. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, 5(1), 294–314. <https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol5iss1pp294-314>
- Liu, W., Yang, F., Qin, M., Pulie, N., Zhang, J., & Zhang, X. (2024). The effect of tablet app on preschoolers' symbolic number abilities development: Based on activity theory.

- International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 40(22), 7610–7622.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2023.2266794>
- Mahsan, I. P., & Liu, X. (2025). Fostering creativity through cultural narratives: A qualitative study on the impact of Chinese folk picture books in early childhood education. *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering Management & Applied Science*, 14(9), 153–162. <https://doi.org/10.51583/ijltemas.2025.1409000020>
- Niland, A. (2023). Picture books, imagination and play: Pathways to positive reading identities for young children. *Education Sciences*, 13(5), 511. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13050511>
- Pettersson, F. (2021). Understanding digitalization and educational change in school by means of activity theory and the levels of learning concept. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26, 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10239-8>
- Schmidt, A. C., Pierce-Rivera, M., van Huisstede, L., Marley, S. C., Bernstein, K. A., Millinger, J., Kelley, M. F., & Restrepo, M. A. (2024). What's the story with storytime?: An examination of preschool teachers' drama-based and shared reading practices during picturebook read-aloud. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 52, 1525–1543. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01554-z>
- Şeren, N., Çetinkaya, F. Ç., & Yıldırım, K. (2025). Promoting gender equality in preservice teachers through creative drama activities integrated with children's picture books: A mixed-methods research. *European Journal of Education*, 60(1), e70039. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.70039>