Developmental agency and interactive children's literature

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As children struggle to make sense of the world, it is an intricately interwoven adult culture that often provides the resources for youthful exploration and understanding. Adults envision children in a particular way, where a child's interests are often seen as foolish or something that should not be taken seriously. As a father, I find myself not only embracing the immature foolishness of my son's imagination but also categorizing the triviality of his rational and childish process. However, children's culture is all about freedom from our projections. Children explore the limits imposed on them in a transformational space where they can translate the complexities of the world around them, controlling the reconfiguration of their outcomes. This ethnological crossroads creates a site of social contradiction explored in picture books. Between the ages 2-6, the preoperational child cannot read and must create meaning as an observer while the adult reads aloud. The child translates and transforms the verbal-visual narratives ultimately creating agency in reconfiguring the meaning to best suit their understanding. To understand my son's agency, I have written an augmented reality picture book which employs interdependent storytelling, where both picture and text are considered concurrently. The words and images are in opposition to one another, challenging him to mediate between text and pictures to develop his own understanding of what is being depicted. I use augmented reality to visually describe the imaginative narrative my son has invented between the verbal-visual lines.

Biography

Jason Porter is an award winning animator and designer. He creates interactive visual stories that span across media platforms including video games, print, web, tv and film, for some of the largest brands the world, such as Disney, Volkswagen, Sprint and Target. The stories he has designs engage the very culture of the new media landscape through augmented reality, virtual reality and machine learning. He completed his Master of Arts in Media Arts from the University of South Carolina where he currently teaches in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. His current research involves young children's literature and new media interaction as a narrative device.

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