The Presentation with lots of pictures: Visual Literacy & Wordless Picture Books

Using Wordless Picture Books to Enhance Early Literacy Skills

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About Megan

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Learning Objectives

- What is Visual Literacy?
- What are Wordless Picture Books?
- What Skills can Wordless Picture Book teach
- How Can we Use Wordless Picture Books in our Classrooms?
- Examples of Wordless Picture Books
What is Visual Literacy?

- Using images to help students construct meaning. We use these skills when we are viewing photographs, advertisements, or other visuals including television.
What meaning do we get from these images?
What about these images?
What are wordless Picture books?

Traditionally books that contain no or limited text

They tell a sequential story through their images
Wordless picture books

Full-page Illustrations
- This is a type of wordless picture that is initially “easier” to read. The picture takes up the whole page and tells the sequential story.

Gutters and Panels
- Gutters and panels in wordless picture books are reminiscent of graphic novels. Students need to understand some concepts of print in order to read these books.

Where’s Walrus?
A Ball for Daisy
What can Wordless Picture Books teach?
Wordless, or minimal-text, picture books can:

- enable children to explore the art of storytelling and world-building
- Be a medium for expression and creative thought
- be a natural introduction to inferencing, a metacognitive skill that is often taught in the later grades
- help readers practice reading facial cues and studying visual context clues for vocabulary and plot development
- engage visual learners or visually-motivated readers
- alleviate struggling readers who may feel overwhelmed by dense text and long print sections
- offer a launch pad to a lifelong love of other visually-rich formats, including comics and graphic novels

Reference: Open Book Blog (June 14, 2018)
Arizpe (2014) suggested five things that readers of wordless picture books must learn to do:

- **Give**: Give voice to the visual narrative by participating in the story sequence
- **Interpret**: Interpret characters' thoughts, feelings, and emotions without textual support for confirming these ideas
- **Tolerate**: Tolerate ambiguity and accept that not everything may be answered or understood
- **Recognize**: Recognize that there are a range of reading paths to explore through the visual narrative
- **Elaborate on**: Elaborate on hypotheses about what is happening in the narrative sequence
Skills you can teach with Wordless Picture Books include:

- Oral Language
- Concepts of Print
- Reading Comprehension (Predictions, Sequencing, inferencing, questioning, etc.)
- Writing (Creative writing, writing dialogue)
Oral Language

- Oral language is a key component in student’s early literacy development and is the “foundation of literacy” (Alberta Education).
- Deficits in oral language can impair a student's language and literacy development.
- Oral language skills include:
  - Speaking and listening
  - Vocabulary
  - Phonological awareness
  - Syntax (arrangement of words and phrases)
  - Discourse (written or spoken communication or debate)
Ideas to incorporate Oral Language into Wordless Picture Book lessons:

- Model storytelling using wordless picture books
  - how could you start your story? Would you use questions? Dialogue? Onomatopoeia? Once upon a time?
  - Are their points of the story where you could add repetition?
- Have students model storytelling using their own words (*this is a difficult skill for students to master)

Wordless picture books to use to model storytelling:

- Where’s Walrus? (Stephen Savage)
- The Boys (Jeff Newman)
- The Red Book (Barbara Lehman)
- Noah’s Ark (Peter Spier)
- The Umbrella (Ingrid & Dieter Schubert)
Modeling Storytelling

The Red Book by Barbara Lehman
Modeling Storytelling

Tuesday by David Weisner
Ideas to incorporate Oral Language into Wordless Picture Book lessons:

- Use loose parts to enhance storytelling of a wordless picture book
  - Loose parts are materials that can be used in multiple ways. They can be natural or synthetic. They could include: fabric, pompoms, rocks, sticks, beads, buttons, etc.
- Use puppets or felt boards to help model telling the story
Using loose parts to represent Characters
Using loose parts to represent the story
Concepts of Print lesson
Concepts of Print

- Concepts of print can include the text aspect of print; however using wordless picture books we can teach young students the following:
  - Illustrations in a book can correspond to print
  - Every book has a front, back and author/illustrator
  - Teaching sentence structure (we write left to right)
  - Identifying the front and back of the book and top and bottom of the book
  - Turning the pages one at a time, moving from right to left

Books to use for Concepts of Print:
- All Wordless picture books can teach this skill
Vocabulary Development

- Vocabulary development is part of our student’s oral language development.
- Vocabulary development is critical for our ELL students.
- Teachers must explicitly teach and display vocabulary in the classroom.
- Student can learn general academic vocabulary, including signal words and sentence starters for sequencing.
Vocabulary Development Activities using Wordless Picture Books
Vocabulary Development Activities

**Talking chips:**
- In small groups, pull a chip out of a bag and say a word that describes that page. (you may use different coloured chips and have students use different word types. i.e./red chips say a noun, yellow chips say a description word)

**Word Wizard:**
- Divide students into small groups (4 students). Give each student a page from a wordless picture book. Each student is responsible for coming up with some words (2-5) for the page they are given. They share their words with their groups.
Vocabulary Development Activities

*Image Search*

- Either cut up or photocopy the pages to the book and hang them around the room in the order they appear in the book. Next to each page, hang a large sheet of paper. Students then work in pairs, triads or groups of four, and go to one of the pages hanging on the wall. In their teams, they then write words, phrases and/or sentences that go along with the images on that page. Dialogue and thought bubbles can also be added here.
Word Connect

Teach synonyms and antonyms: have students give the antonyms and synonyms for a variety of words.

Divide students into teams. Show students a picture from the wordless picture book using a Document camera (if you have one) and Teacher will give the teams a word like walk. Teams will have one minute to list all the synonyms or antonyms that they can come up with. They will write them down on a large piece of paper and share when time is up.

*Teacher decides how many points you are going to give (if any).
Vocabulary Development Activities

Word Chain

- Students sit in a circle. Teacher will start with a word from the story and students will add words onto it. For example, fly→soar→sail→float, etc. When the chain is broken, start over. This can be a whole class or small group activity.
Vocabulary Development Activities

**Develop sight vocabulary**

- Using the words you have generated from the wordless picture book, have students underline a specific word that's been used many times in the story (you can have them use different color highlighters).

**Review phonics**

- Using the words you have generated from the wordless picture book, have students find all the words that begin or end with a particular consonant, blend, digraph, diphthong, word-family.
Vocabulary Development Activity: Word Lists

- **Character Emotions/Dialogue/Action verbs/Adjectives/Events**
  - Use a thesaurus to find alternate words for the ones students come up with.
  - Use the words to construct sentences.

"Academic Vocabulary"
Word list Constructing Sentences Activity Example
Reading Comprehension Skills

- Predictions
- Sequencing
- Making Connections
- Inferences
- Context Clues
- Questioning
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Evaluating Critically
Sequencing (Beginning, Middle, End)

- Sequencing helps students begin to comprehend what they are reading.
- Sequencing refers to readers identifying the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- It also refers to student’s ability to retell the events in the order they occur.

**Books to use for Sequencing:**

- Chalk by Bill Thomson
- Journey by Aaron Baker
- Pancakes for Breakfast by Tomie de Paola
Sequencing (Beginning, Middle, End)
Activities to teach Sequencing with Wordless Picture Books

- **Before Reading**: Photocopy 5-8 pages of a wordless picture book that students have not read yet. Place them on the carpet and get student to put them in sequence of beginning, middle and end. Ask students for justifications about why they put the pictures that way.

- **After Reading**: Using the same 5-8 pictures have students put them in order from beginning to middle to end. They will use these to retell the story.

- **Alternative**: Teacher will make up a story that is based on the pictures in the book. Photocopy 5-6 pages of the story. Using the teacher’s story, get the students to put it in sequence and justify their explanations.
Student Line-Up Order using Description words

Photocopy a book so that each page of the book is on one sheet of paper.

Once you have the book cut and separated, hand one page to each student. Tell students they may not reveal the page they have to anyone else. Rather, they have to walk around and describe what they see on each page.

As they describe the pages to each other, they are to line up in the order of the books events, from page one through the end of the book. Again, they should not reveal their picture until the very end. Once students have lined up in what they believe is the correct order, have them reveal the pages they have to determine if the order is correct.
Inferencing lesson: Literal vs. Inferential Observations

- Discussion about the difference between literal and inferential observations.
- Use one page in a wordless picture book and discuss the literal and inferential observations that students make. Write the literal observations in one colour and the inferential observations in another colour.
Use Post It notes to enhance observation and critical thinking skills as well as teach your students how to ask questions and make inferences. Copy and enlarge key illustrations in the story. Before you read the book, display these illustrations or hand them out to pairs of students. Encourage students to use the post it notes to make observations (I see), ask questions (I wonder) and make inferences (I think) about what is happening in the illustration.
Examples of:
I see, I think, I wonder
Asking Questions:

- Readers ask themselves questions as they read. As they ask questions, they search for answers and deeper understandings of the book.

Examples of Questions

- I wonder...
- Why...
- What does this mean?
- How come...?

What questions do you have after watching this?
Writing Activities

Creative Writing (stories, newspaper reports, poetry, diaries, police incident reports, prequel/sequel)

Dialogue Writing
Story Writing with video recording

- Students have the opportunity to work in groups and write their story. Then they can film their version of the story.

**Story Writing:** Ask readers to look through the illustrations and write down the story in their words. Depending on their age and ability, have students draft strong leads, introduce characters, describe the setting, relay the sequence of events, use transition words, and consider word choice.
Dialogue Writing

Draw speech/thought bubbles on post it notes and write down what characters might be thinking or saying in the story. Place the post it notes directly on the pages of the book as you read.
Writing Ideas

Record the story inspired by the wordless book. Dictate a story to a teacher, tutor, volunteer, or use computer software that converts children’s speech to print. If an audio or videotape is made, make it part of a lending library and send it home.

Change the format of a wordless book. “Translating” a story from one format to another provides good practice in comprehension. Children could convert a wordless book into a big book or pocket-sized book with a written text. They might try creating a book with moving parts, such as a lift-the-flap book.

Draw a prequel or a sequel. Wordless books help children to develop a sense of story and narrative abilities, particularly if they imagine the past and future of the story.

Focus on the plot. Children can chart or map the plot. Use a paperback copy or duplicated copy of the pictures, cut apart, laminate and arrange in sequence on the floor. One book that is especially well suited to this is Jeannie Baker’s (1991) Window, a story that shows what happens as a country environment becomes increasingly urbanized.
Writing Ideas

Dramatize the story. Children can role play a particular scene or the entire story, invent dialogue between and among characters, or use simple puppets to re-enact the story. Try dramatizing Changes, Changes (Hutchins, 1971) using blocks and toys.

Create a group mural. Draw a mural with cartoon bubble dialogue, a storyboard that is presented in frames, like a cartoon strip, or use cardboard tubes to create a story scroll.

Write a text in a different language. Wordless books are well suited to support linguistically and culturally diverse students and families. Invite parents and their children to invent a story for the wordless book in their first language, and then share the story in both languages with the children.

Revisit the invented text for a wordless book. After children have written a text to accompany a wordless book, they can return to it and make a different story or a story from another character’s point of view.
Writing Ideas

*Use photographs of classroom or center activities.* A series of photographs can become the basis for a wordless book. After the children have arranged the photos to document an event, invite them to write captions for each one.

*Invent original wordless books.* Wordless books support creative expression and can be used to explore different art media and technology. Try having one group of children create the illustrations for a wordless book, then have another group dictate or write a text for the book.

*Make a book with a text into a wordless book.* Convert a new story book or a book that is unfamiliar to the children into a wordless book using strips of construction paper to cover the words. Ask the children to imagine what the author wrote about each picture before actually reading it.

*Investigate an artist’s style.* Gather two or more wordless books by the same author, and then gather the books of different authors. Ask the children to cluster books together by looking at illustrations alone and ask them to explain how they decided. Point out that these things are the artist’s style.
Writing Ideas

Work with older students. Consider a project in which older students, create a wordless big book and present it to young children. Smaller sized wordless books can be produced, laminated, and donated to the library. Older children can also volunteer to type or print the original texts that children create for wordless books.

Contrast wordless books in different media. Use the film version Mercer Mayer’s (1973) Frog Goes to Dinner. The film is live action while the book consists of cartoon drawings. Invite children to compare/contrast the two using a Venn diagram.

Invent a wordless book. Using picture art on the computer, create a wordless language experience story (e.g., Our Trip to the Zoo), then compose a text and make into a big book or story chart.

Reference: Using wordless picture books to support emergent literacy. Mary Renck Jalongo, with Denise Dragich, Natalie K. Conrad, and Ann Zhang
Wordless Picture Book titles

- A Ball for Daisy (Chris Raschka)
- Anno's Journey (Mitsumaso Anno)
- Beaver is Lost (Elisha Cooper)
- Chalk (Bill Thomson)
- Fossil (Bill Thomson)
- Flashlight (Lizi Boyd)
- Flora and the Penguin (Molly Idle)
- Flora and the Flamingo (Molly Idle)
- Flora and the Peacocks (Molly Idle)
- Flotsam (David Wiesner)
- Mr. Wuffles (David Wiesner)
- Sector 7 (David Wiesner)
- Tuesday (David Wiesner)
- I got it (David Wiesner)
- Good Night, Gorilla! (Peggy Rathmann)
- Journey Series (Aaron Becker)
- Mirror (Jeannie Baker)
- Noah's Ark (Peter Spier)
- Rain (Peter Spier)
- Pancakes for Breakfast (Tomie de Paola)
- Rainstorm (Barbara Lehman)
- The Red Book (Barbara Lehman)
- The Secret Box (Barbara Lehman)
- The Lion and the Mouse (Jerry Pinkney)
- Where's Walrus? (Stephen Savage)
- Wave (Suzy Lee)
- The Umbrella (Ingrid & Dieter Schubert)
- The Boys (Jeff Newman)
“Sometimes books with no words have the most to say.”
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Questions?