

The Gift of Creativity

XI TED ELT Conference / TED Atakent College Istanbul / 27-28 April 2019

THE POWER OF PICTUREBOOKS IN ELT

Sandie Mourão

What is a picturebook?

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a reader]. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page."

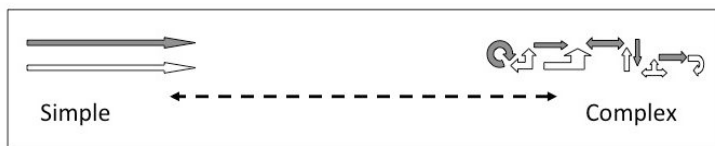
Bader 1976:1)

Picture-word dynamic

Pictures and the words are placed together in a picturebook, to create a compound structure. The result is "a whole that is more than the sum of its parts" (Nodelman 1988: 200).

Pictures show and words tell

A continuum of picture-word dynamic



When the dynamic is at the simpler end of the continuum, the pictures and words show and tell similar information. When the picture-word dynamic moves towards the complex end of the continuum, the pictures and words show and tell different information. They become multilayered, allowing for different interpretations, which means these picturebooks can be enjoyed by old and young.

Simple picture-word dynamic

1. Selected for pre-school and primary ELT;
2. Illustrations synchronize with words;
3. Illustrations are pleasing;
4. Contain predictable, repetitive cumulative language;
5. Concept books covering common primary themes;
6. Provide secure supportive learning contexts.

Complex picture-word dynamic

1. Not usually selected for ELT;
2. Illustrations expand and contradict words;
3. Illustrations are sophisticated and give multiple opportunities for interpretation;
4. Contain rich repertoires of vocabulary;
5. Cover themes suitable for older students;
6. Challenge students.

Picturebooks in the session

Bully

Laura Vaccaro Seeger

Bully doesn't have a kind word for any of his friends. What will it take for a little bull to realize he's being a big bully? A picturebook with few words but a very big message.

Suitable for children from 6/7 to 12 years old.

Piggy Book

Anthony Browne

"Mr. Piggott and his sons are a male chauvinist lot who, outside of yelling for their dinner, don't exercise themselves much around the house. When Mrs. Piggott finally tires of the endless chores that sandwich her workday, she leaves the menfolk on their own, with a note saying, 'You are pigs.' With the cooking and housework untended, they soon turn genuinely porcine, As in most of Browne's art, there is more than a touch of irony and visual humor in both verbal and visual texts.

Blogpost:

<http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/2010/11/pigs-might-fly-thinking-about-roles.html>

Suitable for 10 to 16-year olds.

The Red Tree

Shaun Tan

"Sometimes the day begins with nothing to look forward to... The Red Tree is a wonderful story about solitude and the importance of hope in one's life. The main character, a young girl, goes through the day feeling lost, until she finds 'it' in an unexpected place. What 'it' is, is up to each of us to discover."

See: *Picturebooks for all: a Think Article* on The British Council *Teaching English* website. Retrieved from: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/picture-books-all>

Suitable for 14 to 18-year olds.

References

BADER, B. (1976) *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to The Beast Within* (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company)

NODELMAN, P. (1988) *Words about Pictures*. (Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Press)

Further reading online

MOURÃO, S. (2011) Demystifying the picturebook in *IN English Digital: The British Council magazine for teachers of English in Lusophone countries* (British Council: Porto) pp 11-15. Retrieved from: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/top-stories/english-digital>

Picturebooks in ELT Blog - Sandie Mourão 2010 - 2014

<http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/>

PEPELT21 - Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching

<https://www.facebook.com/PEPELT21/>

Gail Ellis & Jean Brewster (2014) Tell it again! The storytelling Handbook.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/tell-it-again-storytelling-handbook-primary-english-language-teachers>

'Promoting Diversity Through Children's Literature'

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/teaching-kids/promoting-diversity-through-children's-literature>