



Tell Me a Picture: Increasing K-3 Vocabulary through Wordless Picture Books and Artist Prints

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by Rebecca V. Looney

Introduction

Many young students struggle in my art class to find the right words to describe objects or points of interest in a piece of art. Often they tell me "it's there," and I have to follow up with "Where's *there*?" in order for the rest of the class and for me to locate the specific object to which they are referring. At such times I am hoping they will answer with a location word, such as *over*, *under*, *left* or *right*, yet students do not have the background knowledge of English that allows them to easily communicate to me about an illustration, drawing, painting or sculpture. They come from backgrounds in which parental interaction and support are sometimes not substantial; some students are raised by relatives and shuffle from house to house. Some kindergartners come to our school never having been to preschool or in a structured educational setting at all. Some are non-native speakers of English. In addition to the art room-specific vocabulary (line, shape, form, value, etc.), all of my students need to learn everyday vocabulary too—especially prepositions of location.

This curriculum unit can be used with students from kindergarten through third grade, and it will be equally useful to both classroom teachers and art teachers. In these grades the majority of students who are learning to read, write and interact socially start doing so in their early elementary years. Teachers, by integrating learning about art and about literacy in both their classroom setting and in the art room, can help students to expand their vocabularies beyond what they already came to school knowing. By the end of this unit, I am confident they will be able to describe locations in a piece of art and in the illustrations of a book. I am constantly surprised at how infrequently I see wordless books in classroom libraries throughout the schools I have worked in and visited. They are so beneficial to students of all ages that I would think their presence would be vast. I have chosen specifically to use artist prints and wordless books in my art classroom so that the students can focus on creating detail and using their own words to describe the story unfolding through the pictures.

I use works of children's literature that tell a story without words so that students will be able to link illustrations with their own interpretations of text: there are many "stories" that may come from the same book, depending on the specificity of the illustrations. Students will be able to write their own versions of what is occurring in the story and talk about what they see in the illustrations. Artist prints (reproductions of works of art as large-scale laminated posters) are a ubiquitous part of art classrooms, but they are often underused.

This unit also involves using reproductions of artist prints displayed on an overhead projector at the beginning of class or shown at the front of the room. I offer several strategies to teach using them on a daily or weekly basis, depending on how often teachers see their students. Students will be able to place titles with the work based on the imagery they see. The more students are able to talk and write about a piece of art, the better their abilities become to write and speak about other academic subjects. This skill helps build vocabulary and fluency, which are skills that their classroom teachers are teaching them to build through their literacy lessons and small-group instruction.

Background

I have been teaching art in the New Haven Public School District for seven years. Before I taught art, I was a teacher of English as a Second Language for three years. I have used pictures and illustrations with my ELL students extensively to communicate ideas, vocabulary, concepts and emotions to them. When I am teaching, I often stop and explain the meaning of words that may be unfamiliar. I can also use my knowledge of Spanish to clarify definitions for my Hispanic students, something their classroom teachers are unable to do if they themselves do not speak the language. We in fact have fifty-two students at my school who receive services as English Language Learners (ELL). Not all of these students receive services due to parents' right of refusal, the parents' right to say their children do not have to have English taught to them as part of a separate class. Such students will try to learn through the inclusive setting of their classroom without additional support. They tend to have a hard time grasping the grammar and colloquialisms in English. Students, regardless of a language barrier, don't often see the connection between what their enrichment teachers teach and what they are learning in their classroom. By the completion of this unit, there will be a more concrete connection between the two.

I am an avid reader and creator of art and love to impart these habits to my students as often as I can. As a K-8 art teacher, I use books in all my classes, whether it be picture books for emerging readers or non-fiction biographies of artists for middle-school students. The connection of literacy to art is one I feel is very important to the intellectual and creative growth of my students. As students learn to respond to art using appropriate vocabulary, they will become more adept at interpreting not just works of art, but literature, culture, conversations, and the world around them. Wordless picture books and artist prints are two artistic forms that I feel will positively impact my students' vocabulary acquisition during the course of this unit.

In the past few months, I have started reading more wordless books to my younger students to learn the basis of their prior knowledge. Previously, I had used excerpts from wordless graphic novels with older, middle-school age students (*Goodbye Chunky Rice* by Craig Thompson and *Sweaterweather* by Sara Varon), but not with younger ones. I thought the students wouldn't be able to overcome the lack of words and would shut down. In fact, the opposite has been proven to be true. With one of my kindergarten classes, I was able to read three pages before they even asked, "Hey, where are the words?" This was a great sign: it showed that my students are not dependent on words to tell a story. I read the book *The Chicken Thief* by Beatrice Rodriguez with both kindergartens and first graders, and they responded very positively to all the questions that I asked about the story. They were able to identify the main characters and the setting easily. I also asked if the students would help me create dialogue for the characters based on what they saw in the picture. They were eager to do this after I explained carefully what I meant. Students in first grade even started to attribute feelings and emotions to the characters without prompting. This is a higher-order thinking skill that I was

impressed to see the students using during my class. One student pointed out that the fox character was "lucky" that he had not gotten caught yet. This was a perspective I had not considered, so I was intrigued that a six-year-old picked it up! When Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman* was read and discussed in my kindergarten class, the students were able to create imagined dialogue between the boy and his mother in the story by deciphering the context clues in the illustrations preceding and following the picture in question. This is just one of the great moments I've had while reading wordless books to my classes. The students are apt to pick up on details that they might have overlooked when being read the text at the bottom of the page in a traditional picture book. Once the unit is introduced formally, students will have an even better understanding of the importance of books without words. They will be able to carry over this knowledge to looking and responding to artist prints as well as other books in their classrooms.

When using artist prints with young students in the past, for example, I have shown a class of kindergarteners the painting *Paris through the Window* by Marc Chagall and written a list of words on the board that included sight words such as "cat" and "man" as well as words like "window" and "train" for them to volunteer to come up and tell me where in the work they were located. This also gave the students a chance to practice using their prepositional phrases, which I emphasize to them.

Every year, New Haven Public School third graders take two field trips to the Yale Art Gallery and/or the Yale Center for British Art to practice their skills of interpreting and responding to artwork. The wonderful docents and education department members do an excellent job encouraging students to think beyond the superficial to really observe and do so introspectively. I have had the pleasure this year to accompany the third graders from my school on the first of their two visits, and they were wonderfully astute observers of all the artwork that was discussed! Unfortunately, many teachers are not carrying this model of looking at and responding to art back into their classrooms after leaving the museum. I hope that this unit will encourage teachers to use what the art galleries have modeled so wonderfully for us and apply it to the classroom. Artwork (in the form of prints and books) can be integrated into the study of science, social studies, math and especially literature, if the right selection is made. For this, classroom teachers are encouraged to collaborate with the art teachers in their building. This can occur during the teaching of this unit, after their gallery trip or at any point in the school year.

The education departments of both the Yale Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art have both been very supportive and helpful in fostering an understanding of the need for visual literacy in the classroom. They offer a teacher symposium on the topic once a month, of which I am a participant, and have workshops throughout the year for teachers to learn how to integrate visual literacy in their classrooms. These seminars use the collections of both museums, which are available online and during the meetings; the group often travels to the galleries to discuss work and write about it. I will be gathering most of the images I will be using during this unit from these collections.

My school has also recently (in the last two years or so) become an active participant in several new educational learning theories and strategies. We are following the Comer model of educational planning and management and also the model of the responsive classroom. James Comer is a professor of child psychology at the Yale Child Study Center and the Associate Dean of the Yale Medical School. ¹ He founded the School Development Program in 1968, and it is still in use today, almost fifty years later. Comer speaks of multiple pathways to holistic learning, the education of the whole child through six developmental pathways: physical, psychological, ethical, social, cognitive and language pathways. ² The responsive classroom principles include guided discovery, collaborative problem-solving, and logical consequences. ³ Most recently, teachers and administrators are working on improving student engagement by using methods and strategies and

implementing design qualities from the Schlechty Center for Educational Leadership and School Reform, whose goal is "to ensure that every student, every day, is provided challenging, interesting, and satisfying work." ⁴ Schlechty's design qualities include choice, authenticity and affiliation (collaboration). I strive to include most or all of these attributes every day during my art classes.

Rationale

Much of what I have learned about the relationship of image and text from attending the seminar entitled "Picture Writing" has informed my own curriculum unit. I have showing my own art since 2001 as well as teaching art in the district for seven years. The link between art and literacy has been an interest of mine for as long as I have been teaching. Interpreting art orally and in writing are ways to engage higher-order thinking from students of any age and ability. These two strategies, talking and writing about art during class, are something I plan to use daily in all of my art classes and will use to further strengthen the students' knowledge of visual art in all stages of its creation.

Research has shown that students who do not have a strong foundation at home of a rich use of language and conversation lag behind their peers when it comes to future literacy skills and vocabulary acquisition. In a 2012 journal article from *Child Development Research* concerning language acquisition, it was noted that:

...children must hear much language from adults willing to explain and expand, including a broad range of vocabulary and sentence structures, to show this growth [an expanded vocabulary and the use of more complex sentences]. In other words, children need to engage in many language-based interactions with supportive adults. ⁵

Many of my students are not hearing a lot of this explanatory language from the adults in their homes. It takes considerable time and effort for children to learn how to interact with other students and teachers; and as an enrichment teacher, I can support the classroom teacher by modeling these conversations in my classroom.

What I have learned through our seminar discussions informs my teaching of this area of visual art. This activity will incorporate Common Core standards for speaking and listening as well as for oral language and writing, listed in the appendix. I will also be able to enhance the curriculum I am currently teaching by enriching it with discussion about artist's intent and teaching students to read a painting just as they read books in their classroom. The skill of visual literacy is still a recently identified one, one that classroom teachers are still learning to use effectively. As an art teacher, I strive to teach my students the importance of images to tell a story even if the words are created by themselves, the viewers of the work. In the book *Raising Confident Readers*, Richard J. Gentry states that readers start out by drawing, and "their drawings can have elaborate details even though the first written stories may be a one-word label" ⁶ It's appropriate if one student has a different interpretation about what's happening in the story or of the picture their classmates are looking at because art is subjective. Any answer, oral or written, is acceptable as long as there is a reason or justification for that interpretation. To be able to defend their points of view successfully, students must have and use the proper vocabulary. It is the use of higher-order thinking skills, inference and deductive

reasoning, that makes students more intellectually stimulated. Students who demonstrate those skills often have a more expansive vocabulary than others in their class.

One of the weaker vocabulary and grammatical areas that I have seen is the ability to properly use prepositions. Many of the ELL students whose first language is Spanish struggled with this during my time teaching English. Many of my other students have not had the proper use of prepositions modeled for them at home, or they are used to just pointing and being understood when asked about the location of something.

Early Elementary Vocabulary Acquisition

In order to improve students' vocabulary regarding proper use of prepositions and conversational words, I first discovered that I needed to learn more about how children learn new words and acquire language skills. I went to my local library and checked out a stack of books about literacy and reading. I read the books *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* by Judith Birsh, *Raising Confident Readers* by Dr. Richard J. Gentry, and *Change in Time in Children's Literacy Development* by Marie Clay, as well as several articles about early elementary language and vocabulary learning.

One of the important ways to get a child to learn new words is something my parents did when I was a toddler and young child: they read to me daily. For the majority of my students, this did not happen at all when they were young children and toddlers, and I believe it has impacted their ability to learn a love of reading from an early age. The language and literacy development scholar Susan Canizares' article states that:

When you read aloud to your child, you are not only helping to prepare her to learn to read, you are also exposing her to rich language she otherwise might not hear. Reading will help her become familiar with new words and a different language structure, as the form and feel of written language is quite different from spoken language. ⁷

The latter part of this quote resonated with me as an urban educator since my students often speak with different intonations and patterns than those in what they are learning to read, and most of this is a result of the spoken language they are surrounded by when outside of an academic setting. The vast majority of students do not have books read out loud to them at home, only at school by their teachers. By reading to my students on a regular basis and having them read to their class with a rotating selection of wordless books, I believe that I can foster a newfound enjoyment and maybe even love for reading by the completion of this curriculum unit.

One webpage, from the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, contains an article by Carrie Gotzke and Heather Sample Gosse about literacy development from ages 0 to 60 months (5 years old). I focused my attention on a passage regarding prepositions. At age three, children learn how to use *in* , *on* , and *under* . The article continues by stating:

By 40 months of age, children understand *next to* and by four years of age, *behind*, *in back of* and

in front of . Prepositions that describe basic relationships between objects in space (e.g., on, in, under) appear to be easier for children to understand than those that describe more complicated relationships (e.g., behind, beside, between, in front of). ⁸

If this is a typical developmental scenario, by kindergarten children should already be familiar with all of these prepositions. I am finding out that this is not the case with the students at my school. I also accessed a website specifically for teachers of ELL students which offers a strategy for teaching prepositions. ⁹

Visual Literacy in the Art Room

Wordless books will encourage conversation and dialogue between students, as well as between student and teacher. Students who can verbalize what is happening in a story by using the illustrations alone, as well as the context clue of what happened on the page before, have a better chance at inferring behaviors and emotions when they use them in real-life situations. Jalongo, Renck, Dragich, Conrad and Zhang's oft-cited article "Using Wordless Picture Books to Support Emergent Literacy" states that "wordless picture books connect visual literacy (learning to interpret images), cultural literacy (learning the characteristics and expectations of social groups) and literacy with print (learning to read and write language). ¹⁰ I strongly agree with this statement, and I try to incorporate all of these multiple literacies in my lower elementary classes at all times. The students' understanding of behavioral expectations and social skills are still malleable at this developmental stage, and the more that I can impress upon them about the expectations and principles of social and creative behavior in the art room, the better.

The practice of cultural literacy is one that I do not feel is addressed enough in the elementary classroom. Students have very little time during their school day (at six and a half hours long, school is where they spend their waking hours) to focus on how to properly converse and interact with fellow children outside of a classroom environment. If I can create a classroom environment in which practicing these skills is praised and thought of as a positive addition to our conversations, then my students will be more receptive to talking about art and relating it to their lives. The more comfortable the students are with the culture of the school and the classroom, the more these behaviors will become second-nature to them.

Why Wordless Books?

Wordless picture books are the bridge between the literacy skills the students are learning in their classroom and the visual images they are creating and responding to in the art room. Students are already familiar and comfortable with the concept of sitting down with their teacher to read and discuss a book in their classroom, so it would be a smooth transition to doing this in the art room. Students have been somewhat receptive to this, although some of the third graders asked me, "When are we going to do art?" I had to explain that talking about illustrations in a story was talking about art, and talking about art is an important part of learning about art. As an art teacher, literature and books have a strong link to visual art, especially in the young elementary

grades. At the grade levels of kindergarten through third grade, students are rarely looking at text without accompanying illustrations. Reading to my students offers an immediate connection to one of the activities they already do in their classrooms, and a similar routine of reading to them aloud as a whole class in the art room can usually get them more invested and interested in my lesson. As author Caroline Brodie noted,

Wordless picture books can serve as a great tool for building vocabulary and comprehension by providing an opportunity to verbally "read" the picture...wordless picture books encourage creative thinking because students can see how verbal (and written) language works with the illustrations. ¹¹

Without text to explain objectively what the students are looking at, it is up to the students to put together the story being shown solely in pictures. They can use the same skills they have learned in their literacy lessons in the classroom to interpret the story. Many students will find out themselves that text is not necessary in a lot of cases, as the sequence of many stories is very clear from page to page.

Students are also used to participating in what is called a "Picture Walk," although the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is restructuring this process somewhat by eliminating the term. I spoke with several of the K-3 teachers in my building to get an idea of what this was because I was unfamiliar with the term. A picture walk is used when a new book is introduced to the class. The teacher sits the class in a group (this can be done one-on-one as well) and shows the class every other page or so of illustrations. The class discusses, with prompting, what they see and what their predictions for the story are. When the story is read to them, they are comfortable discussing the events therein, and they have a familiarity with the sequence/structure of the story. I have not done this in the past but plan to incorporate it into my future lessons, starting during the instruction of this unit.

Wordless books are a great resource for art teachers and classroom teachers because they are "accessible to everyone regardless of language or reading ability, making the books ideal for use in international settings, classes with non native speakers, or families with adults or children who are struggling or emergent readers." ¹² This is a sentiment that I read echoed over and over again in journal articles and books about the benefits of using wordless picture books in the classroom. Students who participate in art may sometimes be shy but articulate about their abilities as artists and especially as readers, so using wordless books serves as a non-threatening way to introduce literacy into the practice of learning about art. There is no pressure to sound out words or struggle over pronunciation.

Many of my students enter school for the first time without a strong foundation of conversational skills and as a result have heard "32 million fewer words than some of their classmates," ¹³ according to Gentry. I hope that through this unit, classroom teachers will consider using wordless picture books as well as artist prints as a valuable tool for developing literacy, vocabulary and conversational skills amongst their students.

The Ebb and Flow of Wordless Picture Books' Popularity

According to Barbara Bader in her book *American Picture Books from Noah's Ark to The Beast Within*, the addition of sound to movies halted the development of wordless picture books. After 1931's *A Head for Happy* by Helen Sewell, the next wordless book didn't get published until more than thirty years later. ¹⁴ This website offers a list of wordless picture books from the 1960's to the present that are categorized by author's country

of origin as well as by theme: <http://gatheringbooks.wordpress.com/2011/12/27/list-of-wordless-picture-books/>

Picture books without words have been becoming increasingly numerous and easy to find. When researching this unit, my local library had labels on all the text-less books to identify them and set them apart from the other books in the children's section. Many wordless picture books have been published in the last five years, including this year's *Mr. Wuffles* by David Weisner; and last year alone, *Bluebird* by Bob Staake, *Journey* by Aaron Becker, and *Inside Outside* by Lizi Boyd hit the shelves of bookstores and local libraries. This resurgence serves to raise the picture book to a fine art standard that it well deserves, beyond the yearly Caldecott Medal, which is awarded for illustrations. The more popular this style of book is becoming, the more picture book illustration as a fine art is recognized.

How to "Read" a Wordless Picture Book

Wordless picture books are able to teach children many of the same valuable literacy skills and concepts that books with text do. Therefore, using them in the art room is of great value in supporting what the classroom teachers are modeling, except in a different modality. These books, as noted in numerous articles (Read and Smith's being just one), teach children about "sequencing, determining main idea, making inferences, drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect and making judgments." ¹⁵ I feel that wordless books demonstrate these concepts just as well as books with words, and that teachers would benefit greatly from using these books, if those concepts were easily accessible through an index of themes such as the ones as referred to by Read and Smith. There are already in existence lists of books with themes such as Journeys, Chases, and Dreams, but none from a literary conceptual standpoint such as those topics mentioned above (main idea, sequencing, drawing conclusions, etc.).

Using Artist Prints to Enhance Vocabulary

In my art classes, I make it a point to bring artist prints to each grade level throughout the year, so my students get used to talking about art as well as creating it. I travel to the K-2 classrooms at my school as my schedule allows, so when I am going into a classroom, I bring a print or poster with me. I put it up at the front of the room and students sit on the floor in front of it. In my art room, I have a projector and a screen that are connected to my computer, so I have a broader range of images to choose from and show. Often I choose a piece that is colorful and contemporary, or one that incorporates many different elements and/or principles of art. The work of Stuart Davis is an excellent example of this, as are Romare Bearden's collages and Franz Marc's animal paintings.

One of New Haven Public School's Visual Arts Power Standards focuses solely on students' ability to respond to art. The standards outline four steps when responding to a piece of art: Describe, Analyze, Interpret, and Decide. Whenever I show a piece of art to my students, I ask them to tell me what they see. They can list objects, people and anything else in front of them. The question deals with just the surface of the artwork in that I am not yet asking them to think more deeply about the work. After they have told me what they see literally, I will ask them to talk about the elements of art they recognize in the work. The seven elements of art are line, color, shape, value, space, form, and texture. A combination of any or all of these is present in any work of art. Students begin learning about these in kindergarten, and these vocabulary terms are taught

through twelfth grade. The students will then create their own interpretation of the artist's intent, which will differ widely depending on the student (this is the subjective nature of art that I mentioned previously). Lastly, they will decide their opinion about the piece. Do they like or dislike it and why? (See the appendix for these visual arts power standards.)

Strategies

The lessons for kindergarten through third grade incorporate many of the Common Core State Standards as well as the New Haven Public Schools Visual Arts Power Standards (mentioned previously). Although separate Common Core standards do not yet exist for visual arts exclusively, I have learned to use the literacy standards in my art room quite easily. I have supplemented the word "text/story" with the word "artwork," as they will be used interchangeably in this unit.

Kindergarten students will start their classes with either a book being read or an artist print being shown. They are learning the basic building blocks of looking at and responding to art, using proper vocabulary and practicing speaking clearly and articulately in the art room and to each other. I will prompt them by asking questions such as "What do you see?" or "What do you notice?" We will then delve into the other three steps of responding to art. I will validate answers by writing them down, either on paper or on a dry erase board, so that all the students in the class will be able to see that their contributions "count." One way I like to do this is list the phrases "I notice" and "I wonder" in an alternating pattern around the print on my board, so that I can fill in these as the students volunteer. The sentence starters seem to make the students feel more at ease than if they had to complete an entire sentence on their own.

Spot the Sight Word

I will provide vocabulary specific to the work of art or book that I show to the class, either by writing it on the board or creating a handout for the students to look at and check off. Students in all grades will have the chance to get up, walk to the image up close, and see if they can find all the objects listed in the piece of art.

Using Manipulatives to Teach Prepositions.

To teach prepositions to kindergarten and first-grade students, I will give them a manipulative object to hold and place on their desk/table. I will lead the class in a guided lesson of moving the objects around in different locations and either checking the students' accuracy by circulating around the room or having students hold up the two objects in relation to each other in the air over their heads. These can be shapes cut out of felt, math counting cubes or even two toys or stuffed animals.

Working in Small Groups

Students in second and third grade also will be able to work in small groups when given a wordless picture book and collaborate to create text for the story based on consensus of what is occurring in each illustration. Each group will then have a chance to present their story to the class.

Peer-to-Peer Teaching

Students in third grade especially will be able to use the strategy of peer teaching (having students teach each other about new words they see when looking at an image or illustration) to further their understanding of what they are looking at in an illustration or artist print. They will then be able to question each other and check for understanding by asking to describe, using different, more colloquial vocabulary, the object at which they are looking.

Act it out/Strike a pose

One activity that I have found success with in the past is to have students reenact the poses of figures in drawings, paintings or sculptures that I display for them to observe. The students enjoy the kinetic way they are learning, and it feeds into the idea of multiple intelligences and reaching all learners. Because students are familiar with this activity, I can now add to it by having them describe their positions and locations in relation to each other, therefore building their knowledge of prepositional phrases.

During the process of teaching this unit, I will be using many of these strategies to teach my students the vocabulary they need to be successful as artists and as citizens of New Haven and the world at large. As a result, they will also have gained significant knowledge about visual art and its connection to literacy through their understanding of wordless picture books and their observation of artist prints.

Activity One

Students in kindergarten and first grade will be able to identify prepositions by using manipulatives to show location. Kindergarten students will be able to describe visual characteristics of work using visual arts terminology as well as speak in complete sentences when describing locations of objects in space.

This lesson will take two forty-minute class periods to complete.

Each student will be given two shapes that are two colors (i.e. red circle and green triangle). These can be made out of paper, felt, cardboard, construction paper or math blocks. They should be about four inches tall/wide. The teacher will be holding up larger versions of these at the front of the class. The teacher will call out for students to hold up each one so they are identified positively. Prepositions will be called out to the class (ex: the red circle is on top of the green triangle) and the teacher will place his/her examples up in the air for the class to see. The students must then duplicate what is being shown and hold their shapes up for the teacher to see and correct if necessary. This will continue with the terms *below* , *next to* , *left* , *right* , *under* and *over* . During the next class, students will have the opportunity to draw shapes on paper which demonstrate understanding of their prior knowledge. When called upon, they will each say a sentence that describes their drawing, as in "I drew a red circle under a blue square." Additionally, the teacher can call out shapes and locations, and students must draw them in the correct locations on their paper.

Activity Two

Students in Kindergarten through third grade will be able to use sight words to determine location and identify objects in an artist print and/or picturebook illustration. Students in K-3 will be able to describe visual characteristics of work using visual arts terminology.

This activity will take one forty-minute class period and is adaptable to all grades in this unit.

The teacher will put an artwork reproduction in a central location in the class (on the board, an easel, smartboard or projector screen). There will also be three vocabulary lists displayed: one of sight words, nouns, and adjectives, one of prepositions, and the final list will contain visual art specific vocabulary (colors, shapes, line types, etc.). Students will then take turns to locate the objects in the artwork. Students will circle the preposition, underline the noun or adjective, and put a star next to the art word. This will continue until all the objects on the list have been located.

Activity Three

Students discuss illustrator's intent using wordless picture books in small groups. By the end of this lesson, students in second and third grade will identify the different ways visual characteristics are used to convey ideas.

This lesson will take approximately 2-3 forty-minute classes to complete.

Students in second and third grade will be divided into small groups (3-5 students each) and each given copies of a wordless picture book (multiple copies of the same book for each table) and a piece of paper each. They will have half the class period to read the book. They will then individually choose an illustration that they like in the book and write down the things they notice in it. The teacher will collect and review these. During the next class, the groups will be shown the illustrations chosen and have to put them in the proper sequence following the order in which they occurred in the story. They will then discuss with each other why the illustrator chose to use the elements in the composition in a certain way. Throughout the class, the teacher will be circulating to each group, asking higher-order questions such as "What do you see that makes you say that?" in order to assess the students' understanding.

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"Comer School Development Program: About Us." *Yale School of Medicine Child Study Center*, July 2014. www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org/about/development.aspx A detailed description of the six developmental pathways essential to the Comer Method.

"Comer School Development Program: James P. Comer, MD, MPH." *Yale School of Medicine Child Study Center*, July 2014. <http://www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org/about/people/faculty/comer.aspx> A biography of the founder of the School Development Program, used across the country.

Gentry, Richard J. *Raising Confident Readers*. Cambridge MA: DaCapo Press, 2010.

Excellent resource on early childhood reading habits and patterns and how they develop over time.

Gotzke, Carrie and Heather Sample Gosse, "Handbook of Language and Literacy Development: A Roadmap from 0-60 Months," *The Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network*. July 2014. <http://www.theroadmap.ualberta.ca/understandings/parents/37-60> An excellent breakdown of how babies, toddlers and young children acquire specific language and vocabulary skills.

Jalongo, Mary Renck, Denise Dragich, Natalie K. Conrad, and Ann Zhang. "Using Wordless Picture Books to Support Emergent Literacy." *Early Childhood Education Journal* 29, 3 (2002): 167-177. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=11305212&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Comprehensive, oft-cited article with suggestions of how to use wordless books to enhance literacy skills.

Lindauer, Shelley L Knudsen. "Wordless Books: An Approach to Visual Literacy." *Children's Literature in Education* 19 (1988) (3) (09/01): 136-42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF01127091>. This articles gives real world examples of students interacting with wordless books, specifically Briggs's *The Snowman*.

Lukehart, Wendy. "Picture Perfect." *School Library Journal* 57 (2011) (4) (04): 50-4, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=59966462&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Overview of the genre, plus a thematic list of books to use in the classroom.

Lysaker, Judith T., and Angela Miller. "Engaging Social Imagination: The Developmental Work of Wordless Book Reading." *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 13, 2. (2013): 147-74. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=87730632&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Read, Donna, and Henrietta M. Smith. "Teaching Visual Literacy Through Wordless Picture Books." *The Reading Teacher* 35 (8) (May): 928-33, 1982. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20198128>. Various ways to use wordless picture books as a part of the language arts curriculum.

"Responsive Classroom," *Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.* July 2014. <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>. Website detailing the principles and positive outcomes of the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning.

Sanderson, Rob. "Every Picture Tells a Story." *English 4—11* 41 (2011): 16-7. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=59513760&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Article focusing exclusively on Beatrice Rodriguez's *The Chicken Thief*.

"The Schlechty Center." *About the Center*, July 2014 <http://www.schlechtycenter.org/about-the-center>. Details the principles, benefits and outcomes of using the center's resources in schools.

Skolnick, Donna *More Than Meets the Eye: How Relationships Enhance Literacy Learning*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2000. Focuses on intrapersonal relationships that benefit from learning to read.

Storey, Dee C. "Reading Comprehension, Visual Literacy and Picture Book Illustrations." *Reading Horizons* 25, 1. (1984): 54-59. List of picture books grouped by themes such as "predicting outcomes" and detecting and selecting details."

Teacher Resources

Yale Art Gallery. <http://artgallery.yale.edu/overview-and-highlights> A comprehensive look at the gallery's permanent collection, with options to search each department's collection and view highlights of each.

Yale Center for British Art. <http://britishart.yale.edu/collections/search>. An easy to navigate way to look for any piece of artwork available in the Yale Center for British Art's permanent collection, also linked to their reference library.

Student Resources

Becker, Aaron. *Journey*. Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2013. A bored city girl finds magical chalk with witch she draws a magical portal to another world.

Boyd, Lizi. *Inside Outside*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2013. Contrasting exterior and interiors of a house and yard with a boy

and his dog acting as guides through the changing seasons.

Christelow, Eileen. *What Do Illustrators Do?* New York: Clarion Books, 1999. Great for K-3, this book tells how pictures are thought of and selected to illustrate stories, using the fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk as an example.

Rodriguez, Beatrice. *The Chicken Thief* . New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2010.

A sly fox absconds with a chicken while her friends Bear, Rabbit and Rooster try to get her back.

Staake, Bob. *Bluebird* . New York: Schwartz and Wade Books, 2013. A boy takes a walk through the city with a bluebird as his guide.

Varon, Sara. *Chicken and Cat Clean Up* . New York: Scholastic Press, 2009. Chicken brings his friend Cat to help out with his housecleaning business, with comical results. Nearly wordless.

Wiesner, David. *Flotsam*. New York: Clarion Books, 2006. A boy finds a magical underwater camera.

Wiesner, David. *Tuesday* . New York: Clarion Books, 1991. Winner of the 1992 Caldecott, a magical realist tale of strange goings on in a town pond.

Notes

1. "Comer School Development Program: James P. Comer, MD, MPH"
2. "Comer School Development Program: About Us"
3. "Responsive Classroom"
4. "Schlechty Center"
5. David K. Dickinson, Julie A. Griffith, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, and Kathy Hirsh- Pasek, "How Reading Books Fosters Language Development around the World"
6. Richard Gentry. *Raising Confident Readers* , 41
7. "For the Love of Words"
8. "Introduction to Language 3-5 years-More Mature Understanding and Use"
9. "How to Teach Prepositions of Position to Young Learners"
10. Jalongo, et al. "Using Wordless Picture Books to Support Emergent Literacy".168
11. Carolyn Brodie. "Wordless Picture Books: Creative Learning Ideas" 46.
12. Wendy Lukehart. "Picture Perfect" 50.
13. Gentry, 4.

14. Barbara Bader . *American Picture Books from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within* , 83.

15. D. Read and H.M. Smith, "Teaching Visual Literacy through Wordless Picture Books," 928.

Appendix

By the completion of this unit of lessons, the following Language Arts Common Core State Standards will be addressed:

While describing an illustration in a wordless picture book or an artist print,

- K-1 students will be able to ask and answer questions about key details in a text (artwork). (CCSS RI 1.)

- Grade 2 students can describe the overall structure of a story/artwork, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action. (CCSS RL 5)

While talking in small groups about a picture book and answering questions about what they notice,

- Grade two students will participate in collaborative conversations. (CCSS SL 1)

- Students in grades 1-3 will be able to speak in complete sentences. (CCSS SL 6)

In using the Act it Out strategy for teaching using artist prints,

- Kindergarten students will be able to distinguish shades of meaning by acting out the meaning (i.e. walk, march, strut, prance, etc) (CCSS L 5d.)

CT Visual Arts Standards addressed:

Students in K-3 will identify the different ways visual characteristics are used to convey ideas. (Standard 2)

Students in K-3 will discuss a variety of sources for art content. (Standard 3)

Students will reflect upon, describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate their own and others' work (see Activity One). (Power Standard)

Students in K-3 will be able to describe visual characteristics of work using visual arts terminology (see Activities Two and Three). (Standard 5)

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