



Emergent Literacy and the Wordless Picturebook: Explorations Into a Visual Genre



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Rationale

Research has demonstrated that wordless books enhance the narrative comprehension of the emergent reader. Children's engagement with this unique genre of literature has also proven effective in promoting the use of metacognitive talk, theory of mind vocabulary, and in enhancing overall quality of verbal storytelling skills. Although several studies exist that explore these areas of development through the use of textless literature, their findings remain relatively unknown to teachers and therefore the instructional potentials of wordless books continue to be overlooked and undervalued in the classroom.

The profound lack of instructional resources for educators that contain explicit strategies and tools for the integration of wordless activities into daily instruction served as a catalyst in the design and construction of the *Wordless Books and Emergent Narrative Development: A Handbook for Educators*.

Background of the Handbook

Acknowledgment of the gap in current research in association with the author's personal experiences and professional knowledge as an educator, combined to result in the development of the *Wordless Books and Emergent Narrative Development: A Handbook for Educators* as a masters research project at Brock University (Quintiliani, 2011).

The comprehensive handbook was based on:

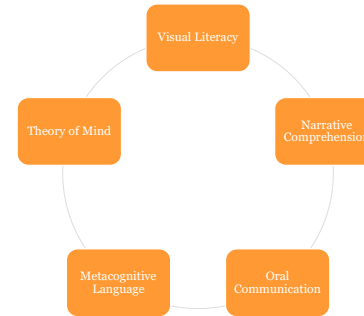
- ❖ a review and synthesis of current research in the field
 - ❖ feedback acquired through the administration of needs assessment questionnaires to practicing Grade One teachers
- Designed to complement and address specific expectations of the Ontario Curriculum for students at the Grade One level, the primary goals of the resource are to promote narrative comprehension which incorporates a wide variety of related skills including: mental state awareness, oral communication, visual attention, and use of metacognitive language.

The handbook is:

- ❖ discourse- and reflection-based
 - ❖ includes lessons, activities, and worksheets designed for learning at the independent, small group, and whole class level
- Administration of an evaluation questionnaire at the completion of the handbook provided the researcher with feedback on its overall practicality and identified areas in need of additional revision.



The *Wordless Books and Emergent Narrative Development: A Handbook for Educators* promotes development of theory of mind through opportunities for reflection on the mental states, thoughts, and emotions of characters presented in the literature.



Reference for the above wordless book illustration:
Becker, A. (2013). *Journey*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Benefits of Wordless

Contrary to popular views which tend to label wordless books as less academically challenging due to their absence of text (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad, & Zhang, 2002), research has demonstrated time and time again that they are an equally motivating and cognitively stimulating medium through which children develop vital literacy skills (Lysaker & Miller, 2012; Ramos & Ramos, 2011). For those struggling with text decoding, they are viewed as a refreshing and less intimidating resource where concerns about deciphering print are forgotten amidst an experience where visual interpretations and verbal communication become the central foci and comprehension is brought to the forefront.

Research has also firmly established the numerous benefits associated with textless literature including narrative production and comprehension (Curenton, 2011), development of theory of mind (Pelletier & Astington, 2004), visual awareness (Serafini, 2009), and verbal communication (Paris & Paris, 2001).

Next Proposed Stages

Purpose & Sample:

To explore the role of a visual literacy curricular program in the narrative development of emergent readers. At this stage in the research, the visual literacy curricular program will be defined as an integration of specific activities from the *Wordless Books and Emergent Narrative Development: A Handbook for Educators* into the weekly literacy instructional practices of a first grade classroom from a separate school board in Southeastern Ontario, Canada.

Methodology:

❖ Initial Wordless Reading Session:

Grade One participants will engage in initial independent readings of a wordless book and verbal narratives will be audiotaped and transcribed

❖ Introduction of Handbook Content into Weekly Classroom Learning:

Over the course of one month, the classroom teacher will guide students through selected activities from the handbook

❖ Observations & Exploration of Student Work:

Researcher will observe and record notes on students' interactions with handbook activities and wordless books, and will collect and analyze student work, including student-created illustrations

❖ Follow-up Wordless Reading Session:

Participants will engage in a second reading of a wordless book and verbal narratives will once again be audiotaped and transcribed

Qualitative Data Analysis:

Transcripts of both wordless reading sessions will be transcribed, coded, and themes extracted. Any differences in narrative between the two sessions will be noted. Analysis will also explore observational notes and student work.

References

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- Images from top banner:**
Child reading wordless book: <http://averyndaugustine.squarespace.com/blog/2013/11/18/wave.html>
Brock University Logo: <https://www.brocku.ca>



TRACE OF NATURE

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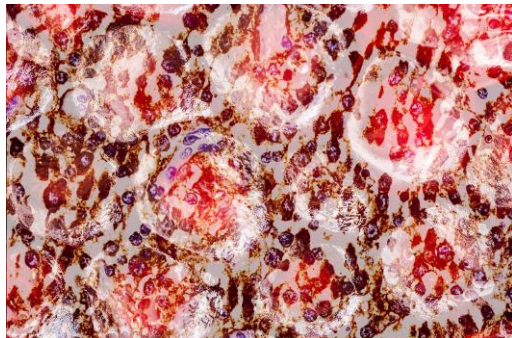
"Come to the forth into the light of things; let the nature be your teacher"

William Wordsworths



Heart - Tomato, C- Print Photography- 70X100cm, 2015

This study seeks to explore, through the visual images, the relationship between art and biology. It will examine the physical similarities between the organs of the creatures and some fruits-vegetables on macro and micro levels., as well as the benefits of the selected fruits- vegetables for the organs.



Eritrosit – Pomegranate, C- Print Photography- 70X100cm, 2015



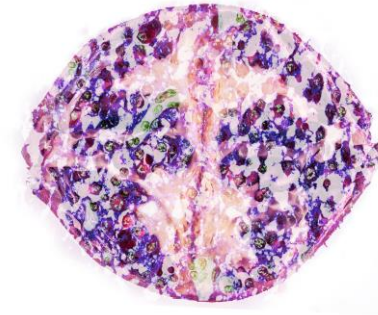
Ovary- Avocado, C- Print Photography- 70X100cm, 2015

This will be transformed to an art project with a visual language. This study will also question the fact that benefits of vegetables become a part of the popular culture and are reflected in the field art. By determining the basic characteristics of these reflections and their similarities, and offering a critical approach to the work of art, it aims to contribute to the literature.



Ovary- Avocado, C- Print Photography- 70X100cm, 2015

Macro and micro images of the organs and fruits will be used in order to determine the relationships between them. It will explore the relationship between art and biology in terms of similarities and benefits, and the process in which nature is transformed into an object of consumption will be examined in a critical point of view. Art aims to carry us to different universes, and provides us with different point of views whether it is based on paint brushes, ceramics, marble, plants or many other living forms.



C- Print Photography- 70X100cm, 2015

Therefore, the present research aims to demonstrate us these differences with the help of the discipline of biology by amazing human beings, by raising their curiosities, and by reminding them the basic phenomenon that art offers. Thus, it is expected that human beings will have a better understanding of the similarities, and will acknowledge and protect nature more.

References :

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