



Presenting: Static Images

LEVEL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Possum

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This class focused on emotions and feelings as part of an integrated unit incorporating English, the visual arts, and health. The class explored picture books, discussing how the illustrators communicated the characters' emotions. The teacher asked:

- What colours has the illustrator used? Why?
- How are the characters moving? How do you know? How did the illustrator show this?

The students learned that colours can represent different emotions or states (for example, they can be "happy" or "mad").

The teacher shared several books from the series *Your Emotions and Your Feelings* (Hodder and Stoughton). These explore metaphors and similes based on different emotions. The students discussed the emotions and suggested others. They mimed them to each other, with the audience describing how the performers looked, and guessing which emotion they were representing.

The class discussed how images and texts can be combined to communicate emotions. The teacher asked, "How does the illustration match the words?" "If you were the illustrator, what would you choose to do and why?"

She questioned them about the features of book covers. "What colours stand out?" "What catches our eye?" "Why do you think the bear is the biggest?" She showed them covers with borders and discussed their significance. During shared reading of *Ready to Read* poem cards, the class discussed the borders and the size and type of the fonts on different cards.

When the teacher felt the students were ready, she asked them to respond to the story *Animals Scare Me Stiff*. They discussed the main themes of the book and then drew pictures of the main character. The criteria were that the colours reflect the character's feelings and the picture should be eye-catching. From this, the teacher found that they needed more guidance about size and dominant image.

The class repeated the exercise, with *When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry...* by Molly Bang. This time, the class developed their own criteria:

- Sophie will be the biggest [dominant image].
- My colours will show how Sophie is feeling.
- My words will describe how Sophie is feeling.
- My border will relate to the story.

Teacher-student conversations

After publishing:

- Teacher: Tell me about your picture. Why did you choose to draw Sophie as a possum?
- Mandela: The possums crash into walls at my house and they go "hhhhhhhaaaaagggghhh"! They sound really angry.
- Teacher: How can I tell Sophie is angry? Why did you choose these colours?
- Mandela: I used red and black because she is like fire inside. She's got pigtails like fire.
- Teacher: I like your border. How does it help tell the story?
- Mandela: The black around the side is like smoke and the red is like blood. It's about Sophie, and she sure is angry.

INTEGRATING VIEWING AND PRESENTING

Students need many opportunities to view and discuss a variety of static images. Illustrations, book covers, posters, advertisements, wordless texts, and greeting cards can all serve as good models and be incorporated into a reading programme. This teacher shared a variety of picture books with the class and the students viewed role-plays based on emotions. The class also viewed and discussed the features of a number of book advertisements in the school library.

Teachers can encourage their students to determine what creates impact. "Why do we like it?" "What features does it have?" Students can explore features of static images, such as the size, frame, colour, font, and dominant image.

Presentation activities help students to appreciate ways in which they can combine verbal and visual features to convey their own ideas about literature.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Mandela towards the next learning step, the teacher could help him to focus on:

Concept

- Increase the use of terminology when explaining his image.
- Discuss background and border and their relevance to the idea.

Impact

- Manipulate the text (for example, experimenting with its position and the tools to produce it).



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Mandela has produced a dominant image of the character Sophie, in bold colours, which powerfully portrays her fury.



Impact

Uses visual and verbal features to convey Sophie's anger.

- Bright red colour.
- "Pigtails like fire".
- Movement.
- Facial expression.

Student's explanation

I drew Sophie like a possum because the possums crash into the walls at my house and they go hhhhhhaaaaaagghhhh! I used red and black because she's like fire inside. She's got pigtails like fire, too. The black around the side is like smoke, and the red is like blood. She sure is angry!

Concept

- Understands that a simple idea can be conveyed visually.
- Describes an idea to be conveyed: Sophie's anger.



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Student's original work

