



Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2018

Set up to honour Klaus Flugge, founder of Andersen Press, this award is for the most promising & exciting newcomer to children's picture book illustration.

Title: Big Box Little Box

Author: Caryl Hart

Illustrator: Edward Underwood

Publisher: Bloomsbury

These notes have been written by the teachers at CLPE to provide schools with sessions which focus on the importance of illustration in building a narrative and supporting children's response. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing.

The teaching notes show you how to use picture books with your class to enhance children's reading comprehension and understanding of how to convey messages through illustration. We hope you find them useful.

Before beginning this sequence:

Collect together a range of art materials that will allow the children to engage in the activities exploring illustration, for example: cartridge paper, paint, brush pens, coloured pencils, tissue paper, coloured paper, sugar paper, sponges, a variety of brushes

Suggested Activities:

Session 1:

Read the book up to 'Fat box' without revealing the front cover or inside title page. Ask the children what they like or dislike about the book and its illustrations so far, if they have any questions about the book or illustrations or if the book so far reminds them of anything they have read or seen before. Many children may know and have read *My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes* by Eve Sutton, illustrated by Linley Dodd (Puffin), with which there are many parallels, Viviane Schwarz's *There are cats in this book, There are no cats in this book* and *Is there a dog in this book?* (Walker). It would be useful to gather these books together to compare and contrast illustration styles and techniques if you have them available. Some children may themselves own a cat who might like to play in and around boxes and use their personal experience to relate to the intrigue and excitement of the cat.

Look at the way the illustrations are composed. The cat is one, flat grey colour with striking green eyes and in comparison the boxes are richly coloured, textured and patterned which makes them a key focus. Explore the technique used for creating shadows on and around the boxes that bring them to life and give them shape. Give children access to dark grey poster paint – you can explore with mixing black and white to create different shades of grey to get a pleasing one for shadow – and toothbrushes. Experiment with dipping the toothbrush into the paint without adding water then running a thumb along the bristles onto white paper to create the stippled effect. Now look at the Little box on the first double page spread. Trace



the base shape and cut this out to use as a template to create another box to explore the techniques used to make the box look 3-dimensional. Support the children in drawing round the template onto a piece of flat coloured paper. Use masking tape to mask round the left hand edge of the box and once again use the toothbrush and paint stippling technique to create a shadow on this edge. Now use a fine felt tip and ruler to create the flap divide and front edge, now cut out a shadow from the first experiments and sit the box on top. Ask the children which of the boxes captures their interest the most and why. Use their responses to explore other techniques the illustrator has used to create interest, the stripes on the big box, the woodgrain effect on the huge box, using string lines around the fat box to create the effect of it bulging, opening the lid of the tiny box to make us wonder what's inside, the diagonal positioning of the thin box. Look at the words that the illustrator has been given to shape his thoughts, Big box, Little box, Huge box, Tiny box, Thin box, Fat box. Give the children time and space to take one of these phrases and create your own interpretation of one of these boxes using the techniques explored so far. When the children have completed their artworks, pin them up around the room. Allow them to walk round, exploring each other's work and deciding which phrase the artist has represented, evaluating the effect of the techniques used in achieving their goal.

Session 2:

Re-read the text from yesterday's session and on until '*Snore box*'. What do the children know about the character of the cat from these spreads? How do they know this? Although no clues are given about the character of the cat from the words on the page, Edward Underwood, the illustrator has brought the cat to life and given it a distinct personality in the illustrations. Explore how facial expressions and body position tells us so much about the cat's character. Have a large copy of the first double page spread available for the children to explore and work on. In this spread, we barely see the cat – its eyes, nose, mouth, all parts of the face we use to read emotion are out of sight as is its body. What does the one ear and whiskers we can see tell us though? Allow children to write suggestions on post it notes and stick these around the spread. What do we know from relatively little and how has the illustrator made us think this? Now look at the next spreads, up to '*Snore box*' allowing children to respond to the character of the cat – how do we think it is behaving and feeling each time we see it? Why do we think this? Look at the importance of reading eyes, ears, legs, whiskers, tail and body and how we use this to interpret mood and action. Explore and expand on vocabulary that is specifically related to emotions, e.g. intrigued, content, shocked, curious, eager, confused, interested, anxious, exhausted.

Give time and space for the children to try out different sketches of the cat, exploring different emotions. You may want to start with just the face, looking at the placement of ears, eyes, pupils, whiskers, nose and mouth and what different emotions different positions show. When children are confident with the facial expressions, try out different body positions that exemplify the emotion. What can the legs, paws, tail, body position show?

Encourage the children to come back to the boxes they created in the previous session. How do they think the cat would feel if it saw this box? How would it interact with their box? Allow time and space for the children to try out ideas for adding the cat character to their own illustration using techniques they have explored. Display these prominently in the classroom for others to see and respond to.



Session 3:

In preparation for this session, print out the phrases on the next spread of the book for each child: Plain box, Jazzy box, Spotty box, Snazzy box. Think more about boxes in the everyday environment. What do we use boxes for? What can they look like? Are they always cuboids? Share various images of boxes, including gift boxes and look at all the different patterns, textures, shapes and sizes available. Have photographs of some available boxes for the children to explore, what words would they use to describe the box? Create noun phrases for these using an adjective plus the noun 'box'.

Now show the children the next four phrases from the text but without revealing the illustrations, instead giving these to the children on strips of paper. As they read each phrase allow them time to visualise the image they see accompanying that phrase in the text. What shape or size will the box be? Will it be plain, textures or patterned? Will the cat be interacting with the box? What will its reaction be to the box? Now, allow the children to pick the phrase they feel they can visualise most strongly and allow them time and space to work on an illustration that could accompany these words in the text. Remind them of all the skills and techniques they have looked at so far that they could draw on when creating their interpretation. Pin these up around the classroom and give time and space for the children to conduct a gallery walk, responding to their own work and that of others, comparing and contrasting ideas and techniques.

Finally reveal the single page spread in the text showing Edward Underwood's interpretation, stressing that their interpretation is as valid as his; both are responses to the words provided by the author. What does your picture have in common with the illustrator's? What differences are there? The idea of this is for the children to see that their personal experiences and experiences of illustration will have fed into their own interpretations and that there are no right answers, just lots of different possibilities for the images that could have been created.

Session 4:

Re-read the story as a whole and on to, *'Scurry, Pounce, Chase, Bounce'*. Look at the story that has unfolded in the new illustrations, explore how the character of the cat moves from being confident in wearing the boxes to shying away and hiding in the Lemons box. Look at the choice of box for this event – what associations could they make with its colour or former contents? Although it is a bright colour, often associated with happiness, yellow also means not brave or cowardly and the phrase 'feeling like a lemon' is used to describe someone who feels self-conscious or outside of their comfort zone. Look at the scale chosen in the following spread beginning *'Box round'*. The scale of the boxes towering almost tree-like over the cat makes it look smaller, following on from its vulnerability on the previous page but also emphasising the small size of the hole in the bottom box. Look at how the scale changes in the next spread as we focus in on the cat's curiosity and again even further as we turn to the next double page spread and see the scale of the cat's eye compared to the mouse. Explore the effect of the ripped out hole and viewing this scene from this perspective – what feelings does this create for you as the reader? What does it make you think about the cat? The mouse? Look at how, on the side of the spread with the eye looking so big, the text also changes to large capital letters. Explore the facial expression and body positioning of the mouse, and how



shadow is used to emphasise its leap, the similarities in the use of the whiskers and tail to add emotion, as well as facial expression.

Turn to the next double page spread and focus on the movements of the characters on the page. Look at how these are directed by the verbs in the text. How are the characters' different movements conveyed by the illustrator? Look at how the use of line matches the quick patten of the word scurry, the change of direction of movement in the word pounce, which has the cat in the higher position of power, bearing down on the mouse, the pointed, focussed stance of the chase before the characters come together at the same height in the illustration for 'Bounce'. Looking at the movement, body language and facial expression, how do you predict the story might end? Allow time for the children to scribe their ideas on post it notes around the illustration. Compare and contrast ideas and reasons for the children's thinking.

Allow time and space for the children to try out different movement sequences for the cat and mouse. Give each child a piece of A3 cartridge paper, and fold this in half to create a double page spread. Try out illustrating an action sequence of four movements, either using words from the text or thinking of and writing their own new words describing how the cat and/or mouse are acting. Display these prominently in the classroom for others to see and respond to.

Session 5:

Read to the end of the book. Is the ending as they predicted? Why/why not? Why do you think the author chose to end the book in this way? Now reveal the cover image and title of the text. Do you think this is a good choice of image? What does it tell you about the story? How does it work with the title? Do you think your opinion of the book would have changed if you saw this image first? Now look at the endpapers; what do the front endpapers show? Is it a good image to lead you into the story? Why/why not? Compare these with the final endpapers – what could the choices of colour and the pathways between the boxes tell you about the characters? Turn to the final image in the text – why do you think this might have been added after these final endpapers?

If you could design an alternative front cover for the text, what would you do and why? Allow children time and space to try out different ideas, ensuring they build in the key details of the title, names of the author, illustrator and publisher. Allow time for children to pitch their alternative designs to the class and for the class to vote on their favourite alternative.

Finish by discussing the book as a whole. Allow lots of time for the children to explore the book independently following these sessions. They may want to re-read, or they may continue to be inspired to create their own illustrations; allow time and space and access to art materials and reference photographs or videos to allow children to do this. You may want to get extra copies of the book to explore in group reading sessions or for interested children to borrow from the reading area or school library and read together.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Klaus Flugge shortlist. To access more resources to support your literacy teaching, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources



Further teaching sequences and resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at:

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>

If you have enjoyed this teaching sequence you might want to look at our Power of Reading resource. This contains in depth teaching sequences for more than 200 other high quality texts helping you to plan and deliver a rich literacy curriculum with quality children's literature at its heart.

www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading