Improving Boys' Writing: Visual Texts

Department for Education

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Visual Texts

Links to PNS resources and others

Learning and teaching using ICT (DfES 2004, Ref. DfES 0473-2004 CD)

Speaking, Listening and Learning (DfES 2003, Ref. DfES 0623-2003 G) (Drama strand)

UKLA/PNS – *Raising Achievements in Boys' Writing* – (UKLA September 2004)

Resources

Look Again!: A teaching guide to using film and television with three to eleven year olds (BFI Education/DfES)

Starting Stories: A film and literacy resource for three to seven year olds (BFI Education)

Film and Literacy: Part One study pack (Film Education)

Film and Literacy: Part Two study pack (Film Education)

Digital Blue Video Camera (TAG Learning)

Websites

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/teachingresources

www.filmeducation.org

www.bfi.org.uk/education

www.itnarchive.co.uk

www.imdb.com

Ideas for CPD

- Hold a staff meeting to generate writing ideas from a film sequence
- Adapt medium term planning to include visual texts and investigative approaches
- Create a list of films/DVDs linked to written texts and share with staff to support shared and guided/group activities
- Work with a peer to create a hyperlinked PowerPoint presentation to use as shared reading

> "I love using visual texts. It helps me with ideas when I am writing."
> Jada, Yr 9

> "I can see the pictures in my head now."
> Mica, Year 5

Film

The Internet

Interactive Texts – CD Roms; Graphic Novels

I find using different types of visual or interactive texts such as film/DVD can engage even the most un-motivated young writers. Writing can become a much more enjoyable experience when text and image work together. The children love it – as home literacy such as DVDs and videos come into school and are used as shared texts. They become absorbed in it and don't want to stop!

Rebecca, Foundation Stage Practitioner

Key principles

- Build on boys' enjoyment and motivation through ICT, film and visual texts
- Make explicit links between visual texts and a written outcome
- Teach understanding/vocabulary of media structures to support the writing sequence
- Discuss images and picture to generate wider vocabulary
- Develop children's visual skills through games and role-play

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SureStart

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Foundation Stage

- **Watch familiar videos/DVDs and discuss characters to develop vocabulary.**
- **Use favourite films/DVDs as theme for creative role play area, support with toys from the film.**
- **'Select and move' storyboard boxes to sequence known and unknown stories.**
- **Model 'select and move' punctuation to make sentences grammatically correct. Vary punctuation choices for different effects.**

A Foundation Stage setting in small groups went on a walk to the local high street over a series of days. Each group took a slightly different route to the local supermarket. The children took digital photographs of the route and key local features. The photographs were placed on an interactive whiteboard and the children were asked to sort out the images of the different routes. Key landmarks were labelled and 'select and moved' onto appropriate photographs and printed for a class display.

A key photograph was displayed with a practitioner created a list of sound words that may have been heard during the visits (e.g. 'beep', 'bump' or 'cheep'). Children were asked to discriminate words by their initial or medial sound and the words were 'select and moved' into appropriate groups.

Emile sequenced a set of photographs taken on a trip to a fire station. He discussed them with the practitioner and she helped him write on a post it note a short phrase or word for each photograph. They then worked together to add his phases to the images on the computer. These screens were then added to others made by the children as a scrolling powerpoint for parents/carers to view in the setting.

Year 1 and Year 2

Sahar and his class watched the film *Mulan* in small chunks. He then discussed and wrote the story as a simple sequence. He included description, vocabulary and emotions that had previously not been evident in his writing. 'I see the pictures in my head and it helps me write'
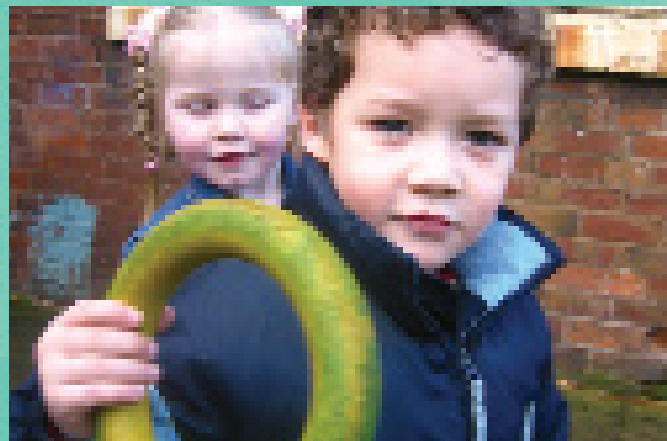
- **Video activities in PE and through discussion reinforce appropriate vocabulary.**
- **Use digital stills from drama activities for: story sequencing activities, storyboarding, writing frames and captions for question cards.**
- **Create illustrations for narrative stories using a digital camera.**
- **Plan, write, storyboard and record short films for a given text type (e.g. documentary, traditional tale as script).**

Year 2 have been developing their use of settings. Using a video camera they filmed a local river near the school. In shared writing they studied the video sequence and gathered vocabulary on the movement of the river and features in the locality to make a whole-class word list that could be displayed in the classroom. Stills from the footage were used to make a simple writing frame to help the pupils draft a short piece of writing.

The class teacher used the footage on a laptop with a small group during a guided writing session and the children collaboratively wrote a descriptive paragraph. This work was then edited into a film sequence for the class to view. The children discussed how the descriptive paragraph described the scene and how effective the vocabulary was.

Year 3 and Year 4

Year 4 were studying QCA History Unit 9: 'What was it like for children in WW2?' As part of their research they made simple hyperlinked PowerPoints on different topics such as evacuees or rationing. These main pages were then linked to sub-sections leading from key words.

Additional research was undertaken using the Internet to collate images and information. This material went through an editing stage to shape the final text. The class teacher then linked the different groups' sections together to make a whole-class interactive text that could be used as a study source.

Copies of the interactive book were copied on CDs and placed in the class and school library for other pupils to use. Having learned this process some boys made their own interactive texts at home for their friends to share.

- **Analyse a film sequence to extend writing about setting, pace or dialogue.**
- **Use the Internet to hyperlink together pages to make topic-based 'Web quests'.**
- **Listen to a soundtrack without the image to generate ideas about text type, narrative or characterisation.**
- **Create an interactive recount of a visit with hyperlinks to other information (e.g. official website, maps, photographs and comments).**

Josh worked with a partner on investigating evacuees in WW2. They searched the Internet and book-based resources and produced a sequence of 4 PowerPoint screens detailing their findings about evacuees. This was then presented to the class in shared reading. Josh said 'We found out loads and wrote all about it, with sound and everything!'

Year 5 and Year 6

Year 6 were studying *Romeo and Juliet* for the 'Media and Plays' Unit in literacy. Through analysis of particular scenes from a film version they were able to develop a much deeper understanding of the themes and images within the play.

They analysed scenes, focusing on, for example, lighting and sound, and how this helped to convey the drama of the scene. They categorised appropriate vocabulary and made wordlists and notes on the narrative action within the scene. This helped to generate additional vocabulary to scaffold their narrative versions.

This work led to a high level of discussion, and the boys in particular were keen and able participants.

Samir finds writing difficult and writes very little. Having watched extracts from the DVD of *Toy Story 2*, he surprised his teacher by contributing to shared writing about the character of Woody, with many important observations. He went on to write collaboratively about Woody and his relationships in great detail. His writing was imaginative and insightful.

- **Make a web-page of personal interests with additional background information.**
- **Use a video sequence to support non-fiction writing, e.g. a newspaper report on a dramatic event.**
- **Write a whole-class story trail book in which the reader is offered alternative choices on which direction to travel within the narrative. This could be paper- or ICT-based.**
- **Use video sequences as starting points for writing alternative openings or endings.**