

# QSA

## ‘Shared Vision Conference’

New Australian Curriculum: English literature Years 4-7.

## Narelle Oliver presentation April 28, 2010

### **‘Picture books’ are listed as one of the multimodal genres of literature suitable for study in the new English curriculum for Years 4 -7.**

So... why study picture books?

Aren't they too simple for these year levels?

In terms of studying literature in all its forms, what can be gained from studying picture books?

Narelle Oliver has been planning and creating the visual and written narratives of her highly successful picture books for over twenty years. In this session, she reveals how the authors and illustrators of picture books make a myriad of choices in terms of visual cues and the words they use in order to convey a story in all its richness and complexity – motives and power relationships between characters, emotions, sense of place, broader social and historical issues, points of view.

Picture books rely on a special interaction between visual and written texts and this is valuable to study in its own right.

But there are more reasons to choose picture books for close scrutiny with your year 4-7 students...

The visual devices used in picture book illustrations share many common attributes with film.

Likewise, because every word in a picture book counts, the written text of a picture book often offers a concentrated clear and very accessible sample of linguistic devices which also exist, but are often more difficult to locate, in longer written works.

Thus, the study of visual and linguistic devices used in picture books offers a perfect pathway to the study of other literature such as film and chapter books/novels.

**Queensland Studies Authority**  
**SHARED VISION CONFERENCE (28 April 2010)**  
**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, LITERATURE STRAND (YEARS 4-7)**

**Summary of Presentation by Narelle Oliver ([www.narelleoliver.com](http://www.narelleoliver.com))**  
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Focus points	How picture books can be used as the subject of each focus point
<b>Common to all Year levels 4 to 7</b>	
Three key focus points (as identified by Narelle Oliver) which are <b>common to all year levels</b> , with complexity level increasing with year level	
<p><b>Focus Point No 1.</b>            Identify main ideas and characters and make inferences about motives and action and relate them to underlying message of text. (includes: relationships, emotions, points of view, power.) In picture books, this includes examination of both visual and linguistic cues to communicate above. Visual cues include: angle, setting, light, position, direction, colour, shape, objects, size.</p>	<p><b>“Dancing the Boom-cha-cha Boogie”</b>            Examine all visual cues used by illustrator (listed left) in illustration of Grand Snigdom when Murmels first arrive and then in final scene to determine how illustrator has communicated changes in character, relationships, power differences, emotions in Boss Snig, Snigs, and Murmels. How then does this convey the underlying message of the text? (ie. Acceptance of newcomers who may appear different and may be a perceived threat).</p> <p>In scene where three murmels are sobbing in prison, examine visual cues used to communicate sadness and despair. (eg. colour, position of creatures, expression, objects placed with them)</p> <p><b>“Sand Swimmers”</b>            Examine visual cues in illustrations (in sequence at start of book) which reveal four different points of view of the deserts of Central Australia: objective view of geographical features of landscape, ancient historical view of landscape, indigenous dwellers’ view of landscape, first white explorers’ view of landscape.</p> <p>Examine how author-illustrator has continued two points of view visually through the book, linking them with written text.</p> <p><b>“Home”, “The Hunt”</b>            Examine how illustration expresses different point of view to written text. (decalage) eg. text written from point of view of falcon from bush, but illustrations show cityscapes (mountain peaks, shiny beasts, blue animal)</p>
<p><b>Focus Point No 2.</b>            Discuss how writers use literary language and features to engage readers. eg. Simile, metaphor, alliteration, sound effects, onomatopoeia, short punchy sentences, etc.</p>	<p><b>“Fox and Fine Feathers”</b>            Examine use of simile, alliteration, short punchy sentences, sound effects, onomatopoeia for particular effect and to keep attention of reader.</p>
<p><b>Focus Point No 3.</b>            Use metalanguage to share and discuss their own and others’ understanding and appreciation of ideas, structures and features of a broad range of literary texts in a variety of situations. eg. fable.</p>	<p><b>“Fox and Fine Feathers”, “The Best Beak in Boonaroo Bay”</b>            Examine the structure and features of these picture books which allow them to be classified as “fables”. eg. Underlying moral, animals used rather than people, but thought and/or speech is like humans, use of fox as villain or trickster.</p>
<b>Year 5 Extension</b>	
<p><b>Focus Point No 1</b>            Recognise that the language choices and techniques of authors can reflect bias and influence readers.</p>	<p><b>“Dancing the Boom-cha-cha Boogie”</b>            Infer what the author-illustrator’s underlying message is regarding newcomers and what her viewpoint might be on refugee issues.</p>

**Focus points****How picture books can be used as the subject of each focus point****Year 6 Extension****Focus Point No 1.**

Begin to appreciate what it is that defines an author's individual literary style.

**All of Narelle Oliver's picture books (see website for full range: [www.narelleoliver.com](http://www.narelleoliver.com))**

Find common linguistic and visual features (eg. alliteration, similes, strong sense of place, interesting movement words, sound effects, plot relies on what animals do in real life, scene is set first then characters introduced with problem, repeated central section, use of decalage in some, use of print-making medium, variation in close-up and distance, emphasis on patterns and textures of animals and plants).

Some titles deviate from others in subject matter. Students might group titles with similarities. eg. *"The Very Blue Thingamajig"* and *"Dancing the Boom-cha-cha Boogie"* are imaginary creatures in fictitious settings as opposed to narrative drawn from non-fiction base as in *"Fox and Fine Feathers"*.

**Focus Point No 2.**

Create or rewrite narratives with literary similarities, such as main idea, issues or characters, for different audiences, identifying characters for different audiences, identifying language choices appropriate to audience.

**"Sand Swimmers", "Baby Bilby, where do you sleep?"**

Examine how the same content has been adapted for a much younger audience.(eg. rhyme, peepholes, removing double point of view through narrative).

**Year 7 Extension****Focus Point No 1.**

Appreciate how authors use a range of devices including puns, idiomatic expressions, innuendo and parody to express ideas and develop humour in literary texts.

**"Dancing the Boom-cha-cha Boogie"**

Examine the dialogue of Boss Snig and the word play in names of murmel games and dances. (eg hopsplotch, leap-murmel, dance the jitter-murmel).

**Focus Point No 2.**

Discuss aspects of texts such as their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage.

**All of Narelle Oliver's picture books**

Examine use of linocut print medium and what it supplies aesthetically eg. strong patterns, textures, bold line, sense of "olde worlde" What kinds of stories would it not be suitable for?

Discuss what might be the long-term social value of presenting picture books to children which feature Australian landscapes in detail, and lesser-known wildlife?

Discuss what might be the social value of presenting the messages in *"Dancing the Boom-cha-cha Boogie"*, *"The Very Blue Thingamajig"* and the two fables.

**Focus Point No 3.**

Recognise the richness of other cultures, making connections and looking for commonality between cultural contexts in their world and the cultural contexts represented in literary texts.

**"Mermaids Most Amazing"**

Compare and contrast the myriad ways mermaids have been presented visually throughout history, in different cultures.

Compare and contrast the mermaid-centred folk tales and myths from different cultures presented towards the end of the book.