**Responding to Illustrations and Visual Approaches**

**All kinds of graphic representations help to make stories more accessible to children, especially to less experienced readers or bilingual learners.**

**Drawing and annotating**

Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children's motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.

**Drawing and annotating characters**

Drawing characters focuses attention on them: how they look; what they say; how they behave. To build their ideas of what a character is like, children have to refer to the text. They can also be encouraged to draw on the language of the text in making annotations around the drawings.

**Drawing and annotating settings**

Drawing story settings prompts children to imagine what a scene looks like, or visualise it from a particular viewpoint. Like drama, it enables children to enter the world of the story and provides support for writing.

**Responding to illustration**

The children's books featured on Power of Reading have been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures, and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text. Children can develop their responses to the book by drawing or painting in a similar style to the illustrations.

**Illustrating the text**

Opportunities to illustrate a story during an activity such as bookmaking give children the chance to build on ideas that they have gained from talk, story making, role-play and drawing. They enable them to engage in creative re-interpretations of the texts.

**Drawing comparison charts**

A comparison grid is a visual way of recording similarities or differences in style, language or content, for example when considering the question:

How is this version of the story like that one?

Talking together as a whole class about how you might collect 'evidence' in this kind of way helps children to see patterns in text. A chart could help with comparing story beginnings or looking at different characters.

**Visualising**

Asking children to picture or visualise a character or a place from a story is a powerful way of encouraging them to move into a fictional world. Children can be asked to picture the scene in their mind's eye or walk round it in their imaginations. Finally, they can bring it to life by describing it in words or recreating it in drawing or painting.

**Using visual images**

In the best picture books illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a book and are frequently far more observant than an adult reader. Children’s interest in images and their ability to read them can be developed through carefully planned interventions with an emphasis on talk. Discussions of this kind can include all children and help to make a written text more accessible. Time spent focusing on illustration can contribute to children’s ability to read for meaning, express their ideas and respond to the texts they encounter.

Introducing a new book with a key illustration is a way to intrigue and motivate the children to want to find out more.

**Ways of using illustrations to introduce a text include:**

- Using the cover illustration encourage the children to predict what the text will be about, the genre, who the main character is.

- Conceal part of an illustration from a text to provoke discussion then provide the complete image to demonstrate how your interpretation changes according to the amount of information you are given.

- Children could be asked to list what they can tell about a character from an illustration, his/her appearance, lifestyle, and personality

- Ask children to think what characters in an illustration might be thinking, this alongside drama work using strategies such as freeze frame, could lead to writing in role.

- Ask children to raise their own questions about the puzzles in a given image, using the Aidan Chambers Tell me approach.

Images can be presented using an Interactive White Board or as an enlarged colour photocopy. For group work it is helpful to have laminated colour copies of the illustration.