

Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2022

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: The Tale of the Whale

Author: Karen Swann

Illustrator: Padmacandra

Publisher: Scallywag Press

These notes have been written by the teachers at the [CLPE](#) to provide schools and settings with ideas to develop comprehension and extended provision around [Klaus Flugge Prize-shortlisted texts for children of all ages](#). They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. We hope you find them useful.

This book is particularly suitable for children aged 5-11.

Reading the book and close reading of illustration:

- Before you begin to read, look at the front cover illustration. *What can you see? Who do we learn about the characters in this story? What are they doing? How are they feeling? How do you know?*
- Now read the title, **The Tale of the Whale**. *What do you think the tale might be? What clues are there in the accompanying illustration? What more does the title, and this cover illustration make you think about the book you are about to read?* Now, turn to look at the inside title page. *What do you see here? What other ideas does it give you about the book? What do we think about Padmacandra's clever illustration of the 'whale like mound'. What is the significance of the lighthouse on top? Why do we see a busy city in the background? Is this significant to the journey that the girl is about to embark on?* Encourage the children to explore where the story might take us. *What do you think might happen in this story? What makes you think this?*
- Read the first two spreads, up to **'I've so much to show you if you'll come along'**. *What do you notice about the words? Elicit from the children the lyrical, rhyming nature of the text. What does this add to our understanding of the story? Look at the accompanying illustrations. What sort of relationship does the girl appear to have with the whale? Does this support our initial impressions?*
- Now read the next four spreads, up to **'Whale shrugged at me'**. Explore the developing relationship between the girl and the whale and the author's use of descriptive language to express the beauty of the environment being explored. *What image does this create in your mind? Is this a place you would like to visit? What do you like or perhaps dislike about this place? How might the girl be feeling at this moment? Have you ever felt like this about a place?*
- Read the next four spreads, up to **'I understood now what he'd brought me to see'**. Look carefully at the illustration on the spread where the whale's tummy rumbled. *What is it the whale is swallowing? How is the girl feeling at this point? What tells us this?* On the following spread, we can see the emotion of the whale. *What emotional connection do these two characters have? Do you feel connected to the girl and the whale? What makes you feel this way?*

- Read the next three spreads, up to ‘...and the whale cried with me.’ *What message do these spreads convey? Why are they upset? How do the illustrations highlight this message? If you were the girl travelling back with the whale, what might you be thinking? What advice could we give her?*
- Look at the verb choices ‘smiled’, ‘laughed’, ‘danced’ in the earlier spreads. These give a sense of positivity about the situation being experienced by the characters. Compare this to the opposition in later spreads with verb choices like ‘cried’ and ‘stared’. *How might this change our perception of the situation?*
- Now, read on to the end of the book. *What does the end of the book leave you thinking about? Explore the last spread and how the girl is talking directly to us. How does it invite us to respond? What emotions does it evoke in us? What might we want to do as a result of reading this book?*

Engaging in illustration:

- Consider how the text and illustrations work together to tell a story about the world and our place in it. Look at the different emotions of the characters depicted through the illustrations as the story unfolds, from playful to exploratory to sorrowful to energised and determined. *How can we track the emotional journey of the girl and whale throughout the story?*
- The girl becomes empowered by her experiences with the whale to make a change and she explicitly invites the reader to join her. *Thinking about the children’s own experiences, has there been a time when they have felt empowered?* Invite the children to connect with a memory or experience in their own lives that has evoked a particular feeling within them. It might be happy, sad, anxious, surprised, exhilarated or any other emotion beyond those seen in the text. Demonstrate this by talking about a memory or event from your own life and the emotion connected with it. Encourage the children to hold a really clear picture of this moment in their mind, where they were, how they looked, what was around them.
- Now, model for the children how to use soft drawing pencils (2B-4B are ideal) to capture this moment in a drawing. Talk about how to break down the drawing into simple shapes and stages, capturing the person and their feelings then building up the scenery and props to share the detail of the situation. Come back to the original illustrations to look at how Padmacandra did this.
- Allow the children to capture their own moments and feelings in a drawing. Draw alongside the children as they work. When their drawings are complete, allow the children to use poster or acrylic paints to add colour and bring their drawings to life, concentrating on the colours shades and tones used to add emotion.
- Allow the children to pin up and share their drawings, encouraging them to look at the similarities and differences in their work and talk about what emotions they think are being portrayed and how they know this from the detail used in the illustrations, as well as what is effective in their own work and that of others.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: www.clpe.org.uk