



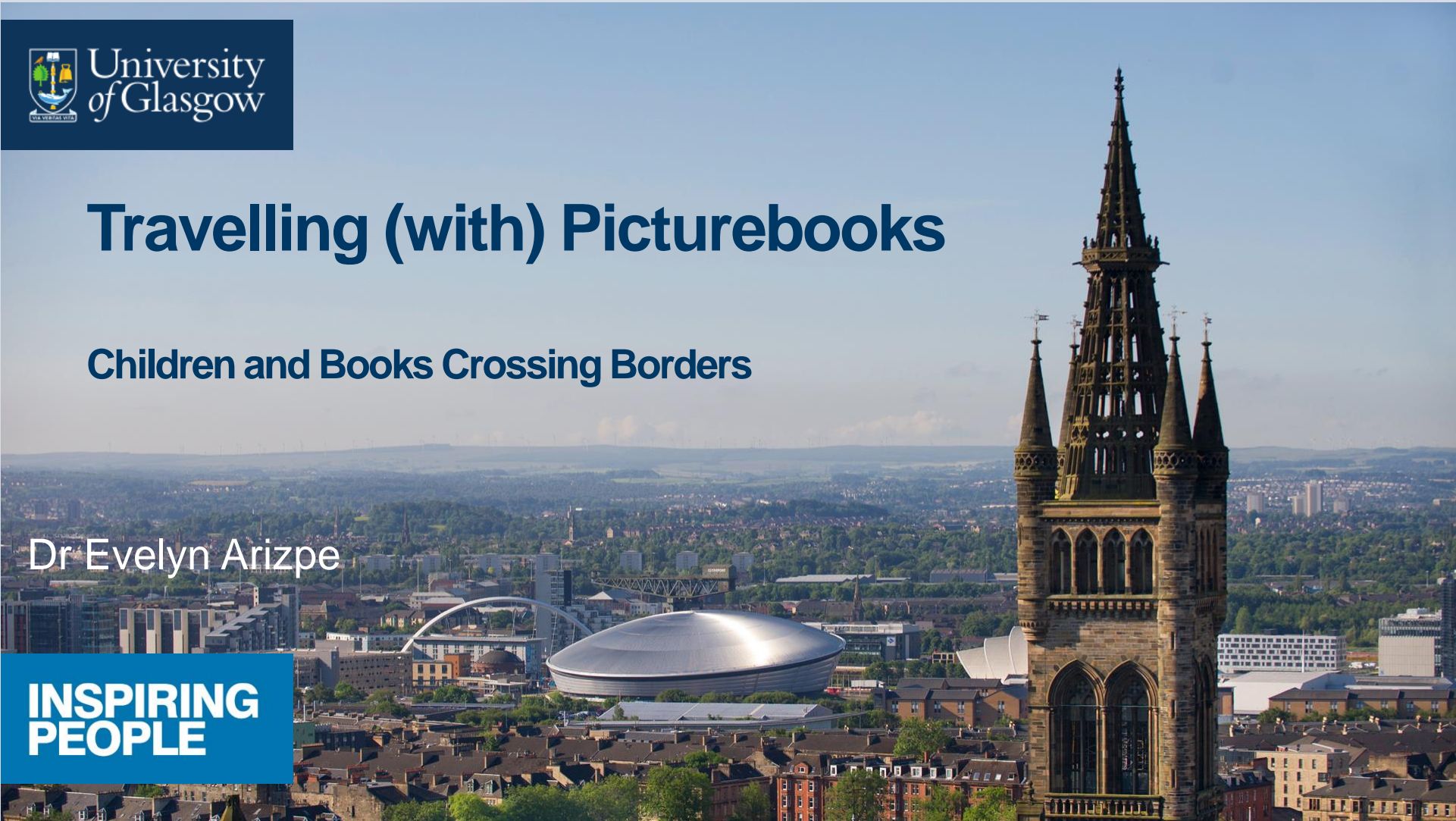
University
of Glasgow

Travelling (with) Picturebooks

Children and Books Crossing Borders

Dr Evelyn Arizpe

**INSPIRING
PEOPLE**



Borders and movement

Though [borders] can never *contain* all movement, they *constrain* it, often at great cost to human spirits, bodies, and minds, as well as to our world. They can close off our hearts, and keep us from connecting with others. Still, borders can be crossed, and do get crossed all the time. (p.3)

[...]

To find global solutions to global problems [...] we need people who are willing and able to cross lines that adults have drawn [...] We need to learn to see things from different perspectives, and forge dialogue across our differences. (p.134)

Marjorie Faustlich Orellana, *Immigrant Children in Transcultural Spaces*, Routledge. 2016.

Travelling

- Physical, emotional and psychological impact of the journey (Fazel and Stein 2002)
- Encounter welcome or suspicion and hostility (Tuase 2004)
- Support systems vary – school/ communities/government/NGOs (Menter et al. 2000, Rutter 2006)
- Importance of creating a safe space to (re)construct personal narratives along with identity, belonging, connections, community (Petit 2008)

Engagement through story

As well as being able to develop literacy, access learning and information and to enjoy stories, neuro-scientific research is providing evidence that stories offer a unique opportunity to engage the capacity to understand interactions with others which impacts on our real-life social skills and emotional relationships with others.

(Nikolajeva 2014)

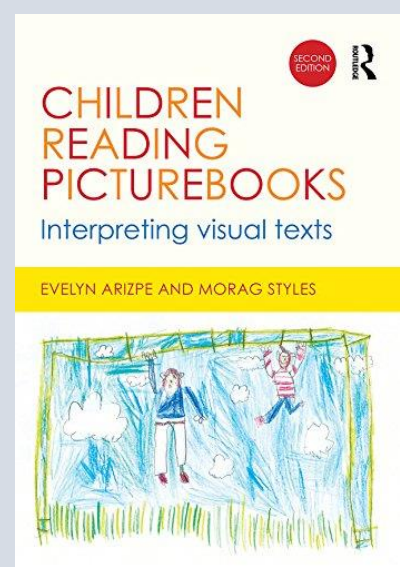
Picturebooks

- Visual images are powerful means to invite readers to engage (Nikolajeva 2013), they provide 'extra dimensions of interpretive possibilities' (Nodelman 2005 quoted in Hope 2017)
- Can provide a safe space to better understand complex emotional experiences (such as migration)
 - for those who need to reconstruct their story – sense of self and healing
 - for those who need to see there are hopeful alternatives – how others have found a way
 - for those who have not experienced uprooting – imagine and 'put themselves in their shoes'
- Wordless picturebooks in particular
 - create a level playing field for all readers
 - take away the fear factor associated with reading books which demand certain level of English/reading

Children's responses to picturebooks

Research with picturebooks has shown that they

- engage children of all ages and at all stages of reading
- stimulate talk
- can help to support and develop cognitive skills
- enhance emotional literacy as readers engage with the visual representation of emotions of fictional characters and see characters interpreting each others' emotions



Picturebooks and Diverse Readers

- Picturebooks have been used for many years to develop various forms of literacy recently, they have been seen as a way of supporting not only language but 'literary learning' in an EAL or ESL context and also in recognizing and valuing diverse linguistic and cultural resources (e.g. Arizpe and Ryan forthcoming)
- Studies with minority ethnic children or EAL learners have shown that engagement with visual narratives
 - increases linguistic repertoires
 - increases confidence in expressing themselves
 - allows children to demonstrate their knowledge and experiences
 - supports children to negotiate cultural understandings



University
of Glasgow

UAB

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

ACU

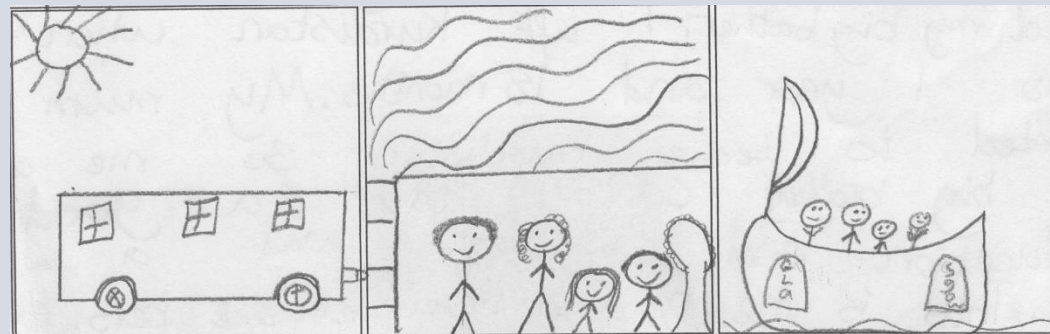
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Visual Journeys

An International Research Project



Visual Journeys Through Wordless Narratives

An International Inquiry with
Immigrant Children and *The Arrival*

Evelyn Arzoo, Teresa Golomer and
Carmen Martínez-Roldán

with Carolina Begelman, Dennis Bortun, Roshan Farid,
Marina Fitzpatrick, George Gek, Mirela Marinos, Amy Mc, Margaret,
Jane Mulcahy, Yaeli Nee and Marlene Torgue

EDUCATION

Art + Literature = Picturebooks

What makes art and literature so interesting is that it presents us with unusual things that encourage us to ask questions about what we already know. It's about returning us, especially we older readers, to a state of unfamiliarity, offering an opportunity to rediscover some new insight through things we don't quite recognise.

Shaun Tan (<http://www.shauntan.net/essay1.html>)

Findings

- The participants used more language and talk as the project progressed
- They used their past lives and experiences of migration to interpret the texts: text to life and life to text responses
- Showed an increased awareness of cross-cultural issues
- Openly shared their experiences and cultures through talk and the through the photographs
- The books and reading activities provided that 'safe space' because they use metaphors and readers can distance themselves from the characters and the situation
- New narratives were created

<http://www.journeys-from-image-to-words.com/>

The reading and response sessions

- Strategies provided a level playing field because there were no prior expectations about success or failure based on traditional reading and writing skills
- Created a sense of community among readers with diverse cultural backgrounds
- Responses revealed an increased understanding of the issues around forced migration in an affirmative and compassionate manner
- Broadened the intercultural knowledge base for the 'host' pupils with some moving beyond aspects of their own lives to empathise with the characters and contexts in the books, with a few taking the issues 'off the page' and moving towards social action

- Shahid (pupil): *See, I'm a refugee person, so I got lots of information about it and what did the other refugees do and that. I haven't had any story about it. And so it tells people that are not refugees how we have to survive to get to a new country and to be safer and happier.*
- Sylvia (EAL teacher): *I thought the texts and visuals were a fabulous resource to have to engage the children and to get them talking and using that as a vehicle for them to share some of their experiences or even if they are not comfortable sharing them, at least they can relate to the children in the story or relate in some small way to the experiences of moving and being displaced.*

Importance of the mediator

- While we may consider that books have the potential to break down borders, what remains clear is that books cannot do this by themselves
- Teachers and other mediators must be
 - informed enablers, that is critical readers who are open to flexible pedagogies and creative forms of response
 - able to contextualize the stories in a sensitive manner
 - aware that strong emotions can be released through reading
 - able to initiate dialogue AND listen to and value what children say
 - encourage appropriate social action and further reading

(see also Hope 2017)

“Narratives of Change”

Julie E. McAdam, University of Glasgow

<http://narrativesofchange.education/the-potential-of-childrens-literature/>

Arts and Humanities Research council/
Global Challenges Research Fund (AHRC-GCRF)
Research Network

*Children's Literature in Critical Contexts of Displacement:
Exploring how story- and arts-based practices can create
'safe spaces' for displaced children and young people*

- Egypt and Mexico
- NGOs, universities and third-sector partners: UNHCR; International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY) Mexico and Egypt;
- Ministry of Culture, Mexico

References

- Arizpe, E. and Ryan, S. (2017 forthcoming) The wordless picturebook: Challenging attitudes about literacy and language learning in multilingual contexts. In J. Bland (ed) *Teaching English with Challenging Texts: Literature in Language Education with 8-18 Year Olds*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Arizpe, E. (2009), 'Sharing visual experiences of a new culture: Immigrant children in Scotland respond to picturebooks and other visual texts'. In J. Evans (ed.), *Talking Beyond the Page: Reading and Responding to Picture Books*. Routledge, pp. 134-151.
- Arizpe, E. & McAdam, J. (2011) Crossing Visual Borders and Connecting Cultures: Children's responses to the photographic theme in David Wiesner's *Flotsam*, *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* 17 (2).
- Arizpe, E., Farrell, M., and McAdam, J. (2013) Opening the classroom door to children's literature: a review of research. In: Hall, K., Cremin, T., Comber, B. and Moll, L. (eds.) *International Handbook of Research on Children's Literacy, Learning, and Culture*. John Wiley & Sons, London, UK, pp. 241-257.
- Arizpe, E., Bagelman, C., Devlin, A. M., Farrell, M. and McAdam, J. (2014) Visualising Intercultural Literacy: Engaging critically with diversity and migration in the classroom through an image-based approach, *Language and Intercultural Communication*.
- REPORT: <http://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/news-and-learning/publications/journeys-from-images-to-words>
- WEBSITE: <http://www.journeys-fromimagestowords.com/>
- Arizpe, E., Colomer, T. and Martínez-Roldán, C. 2014. *Visual Journeys through Wordless Narratives: An international inquiry with immigrant children and The Arrival*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- FaustlichOrellana, M. (2016) *Immigrant Children in Transcultural Spaces*, Routledge.
- Fazel, M. y Stein, A. (2002) "The mental health of refugee children", *Arch Dis Child* 8, 366–370.
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11071330_The_Mental_Health_of_Refugee_Children
- Hope, J. (2017) *Children's Literature about Refugees*. Trentham Books.
- McGonigal, J. and Arizpe, E. (2007) *Learning to Read a New Culture: How immigrant and asylum-seeking children experience Scottish identity through classroom books*. Final Report. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. November 2007. Published online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/31125406/0>
- Menter, I., Cunningham, P. and Sheibani, A. (2002) 'Safe at last? Refugee children in primary school'. In Datta, M. (ed) *Bilinguality and Literacy: Principles and practice*. Continuum.
- Nikolajeva, M. (2013) 'Picturebooks and emotional literacy', *The Reading Teacher*, 67(4), 249-254.
- Nikolajeva, M. (2014) *Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Petit, M. (2008) La lectura en tiempos de crisis. Fondo de Cultura Economica.
- Ruase, T. (2004) "Inside the mind of a refugee child", *Sankofa* 3, 63-67.
- Rutter, J. (2006) *Refugee Children in the UK*. Open University Press.

Can I ask you a favour?

If you have enjoyed this presentation and if you go on to use any of the books or strategies presented here or from the texts mentioned in the references, I'd be very grateful to hear how you used them, where and how they worked.

Please feel free to ask me questions and to contact me at evelyn.arizpe@glasgow.ac.uk