

Where the Wild Words Are

Language and Images Tickling Little Minds

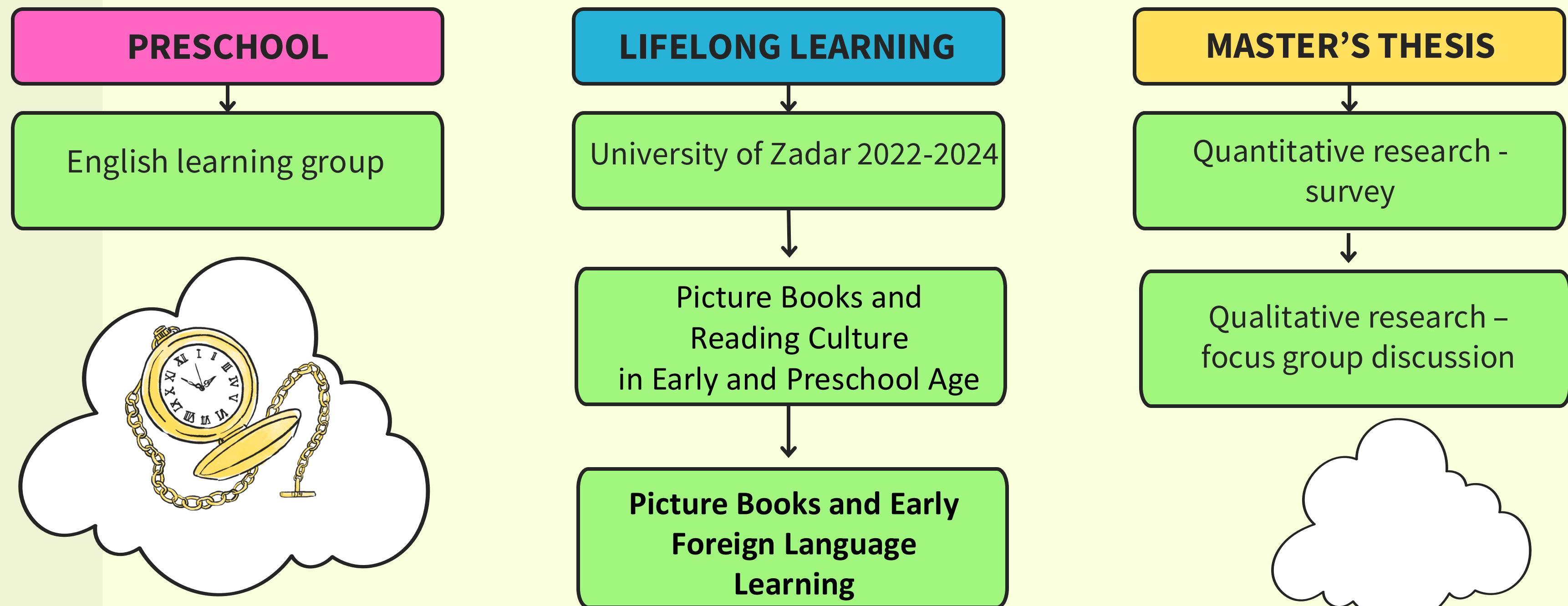
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33rd Annual International HUPE Conference
Poreč, 24 October 2025

Why Picture Books?



Research questions

Do teachers use
picture books &
how often

Frequency of picture book use:
preschool vs. elementary

Educational
benefits:
grammar,
linguistic, and
phonetic forms

use, and
implementation

Children's
access to
books

comprehension
and vocabulary

Accessibility and
availability of
picture books



Frequency of Picture Book Use

- Most preschool teachers answers 3-5
- **ALL** primary school teachers 1-3

Ako je odgovor na prethodno pitanje potvrđan, koliko često koristite slikovnice?/ If the answer to the previous question is yes, how often do you use picture books?

145 odgovora

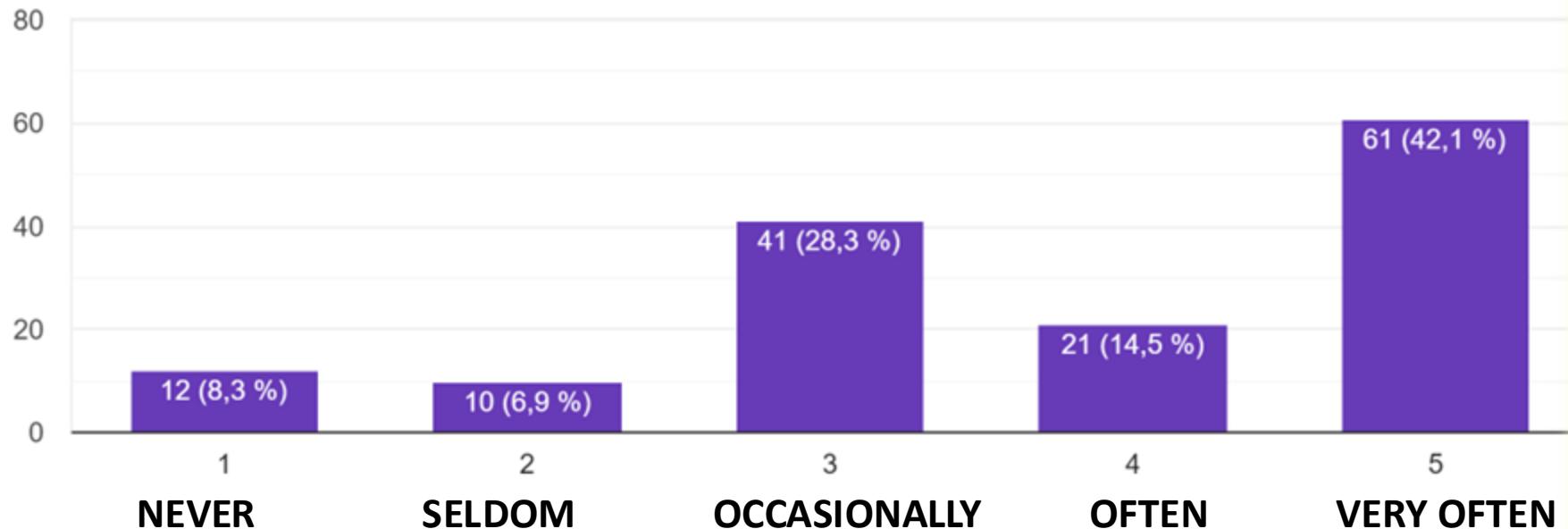


TABLE 1. Frequency of using stories (narratives) in ELT lessons.

	N	%
Once per week	14	13%
Once or twice per month	49	45%
Less than once per month	44	40%
Rarely/sometimes	3	2%

TABLE 2. Types of stories used by primary EFL teachers.

	N	%
Stories from textbooks	64	58.2%
Authentic short stories	14	12.7%
Authentic chapter books	3	2.7%
Authentic picture books	13	11.8%
Adapted stories and picture books	12	11%
Other:	4	3.6%

From Preschool to Primary: A Shift in Priorities

Key Benefits of Early Foreign Language Learning:

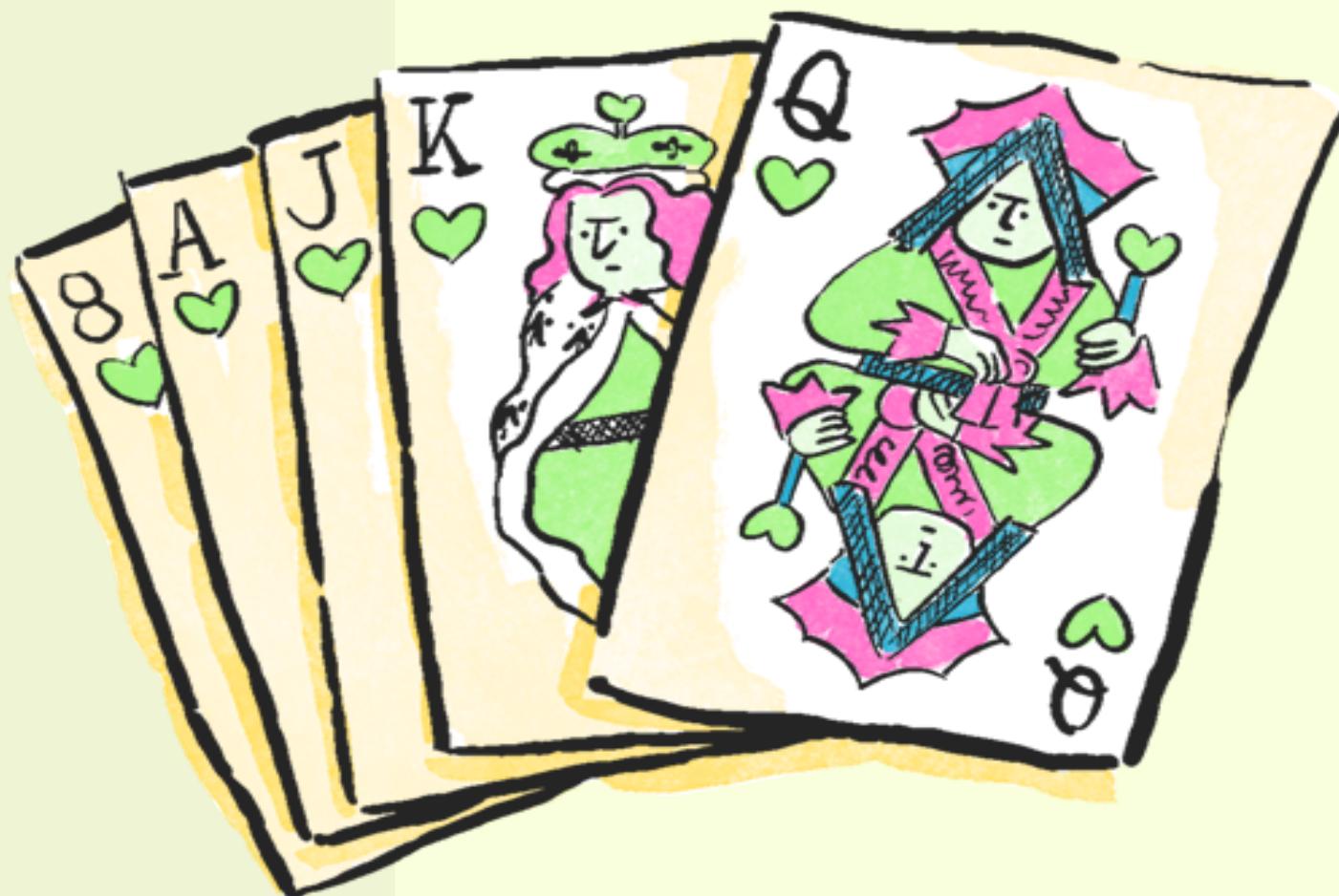
- Cognitive development: improved memory, attention and problem-solving skills
- Linguistic skills: early vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation and grammar awareness
- Cultural awareness: exposure to different cultures and perspectives
- Socio-emotional development: empathy, cooperation, self-reflection, emotional awareness

Effective Methods and Tools in Early Foreign Language Learning:

- Songs, rhymes and chants
- Games and movement activities
- Visual aids and flashcards
- Puppets and role-play
- Digital media and interactive tools
- Arts and crafts
- Storytelling and picture books

Time to Put Our Cards on the Table

- Divide into groups of 3 – 4
- Each group chooses one Dixit card
- Individually: write 1–2 sentences of a story inspired by the image
- Do not share with the group until everyone finishes writing
- Then read aloud and compare interpretations



Goal: to show how the same image can evoke different meanings and associations

The Power of Picture Books

Linguistic & Cognitive Benefits

- Support vocabulary acquisition and understanding of linguistic structures
- Reinforce comprehension through visual cues and narrative context
- Develop attention, prediction and storytelling skills

Transmediation & Multimodal Learning

- Enable transfer of meaning across modes (text, image, sound, gesture)
- Foster creativity and deeper understanding through multiple representations
- Connect language learning with art, drama and digital media experiences

Emotional & Social Dimensions

- Establish an emotional connection between the reader and the story
- Encourage empathy, imagination and emotional expression
- Create a safe and engaging context for language learning



Taming the Wild Feelings

Based on Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are



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- Divide into groups of 3 – 4
- Discuss: *What emotion does Max feel here?*
- Choose one or two words (angry, free, scared, calm, loved)
- Express it through a gesture, colour, short phrase
 - e.g. Stamp feet angrily – "I'm angry!"

Yellow → happy

Back home – safe and loved

When we give feelings words, we help children understand both the story and themselves.

Taming the Wild Feelings

Based on Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are



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- Help children recognize, name and express emotions in English
- Link language learning with emotional literacy

Transmediation – moving from image → emotion → language

Extensions for Classroom Use

- Create a **Feelings Chart** (colours or emojis linked to scenes)
- Draw "**My Wild Feeling**" and label in English
- Make "**Max's Feelings Diary**" – one sentence per page

Where the Meaning Happens

Revealing the power of emotion and imagination in picture book learning

Lawrence Sipe

- Children are co-creators of meaning, not passive listeners.
- They build understanding through aesthetic engagement — feeling, imagining and interacting.
- Meaning happens between words, pictures and the child's own experience.

Maria Nikolajeva

- Explores how words and images work together to tell stories.
- Emotions often live in the space between text and illustration.
- Picture books invite readers — even the youngest — to interpret, not just receive.

When we connect story, emotion, and language, we nurture both understanding and empathy.

 Discover more: Lawrence Sipe — "Storytime"; Maria Nikolajeva — "Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature"

We Are Going on a Feelings Hunt

Based on Michael Rosen's We Are Going on a Bear Hunt;
Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

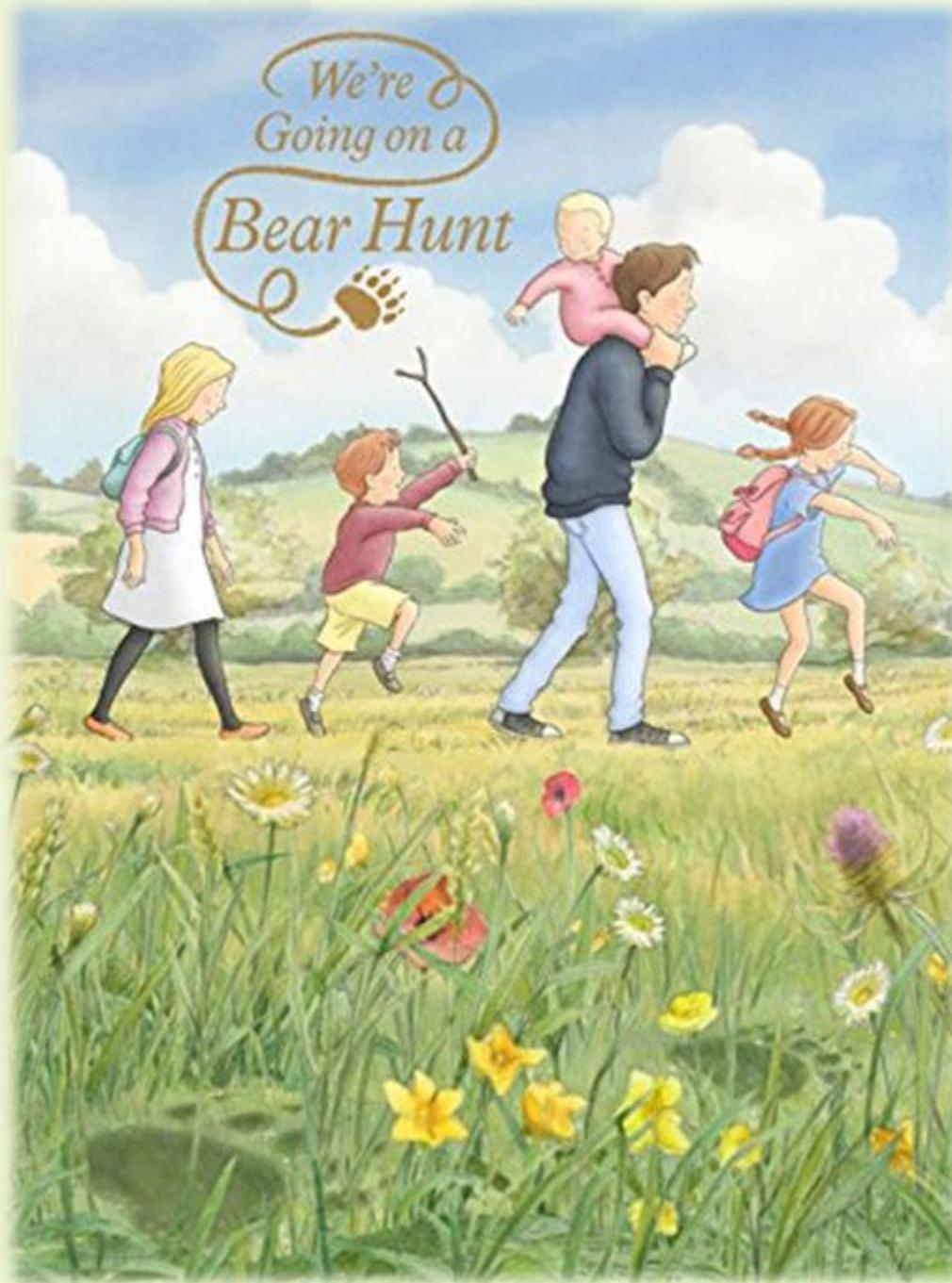


- Divide into groups of 3 – 4
- Study one of the story sections
- How do the characters feel here?
- Feel free to use words for feelings, sensory details and movement
 - e.g. Grass – Excited – Tickly grass, tiptoe
 - Forest – Curious – Rustling leaves, peeking around trees

Let's share and create a story!

We Are Going on a Feelings Hunt

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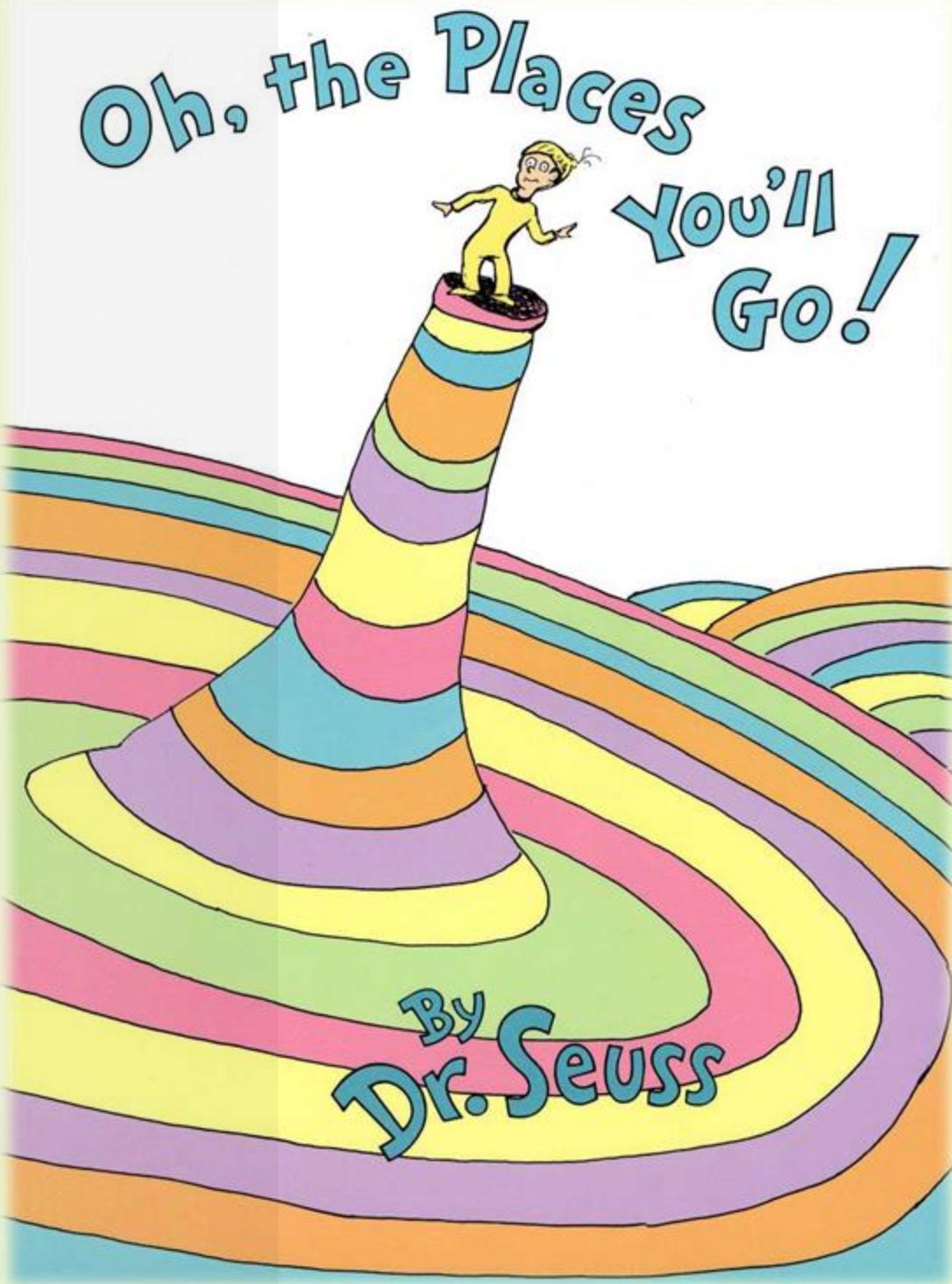


- How does movement help children connect words & emotions?
- How could this be adapted for different ages or language levels?
- Transmediation = text → movement → emotion → language

Classroom Extensions

- Draw a Feelings Map: each scene + emoji or colour
- Create a Feelings Word Wall: excited, scared, brave, tired, safe
- Chant or repeat story phrases to reinforce rhythm & vocabulary
- Link to SEL: discuss when children feel similar emotion

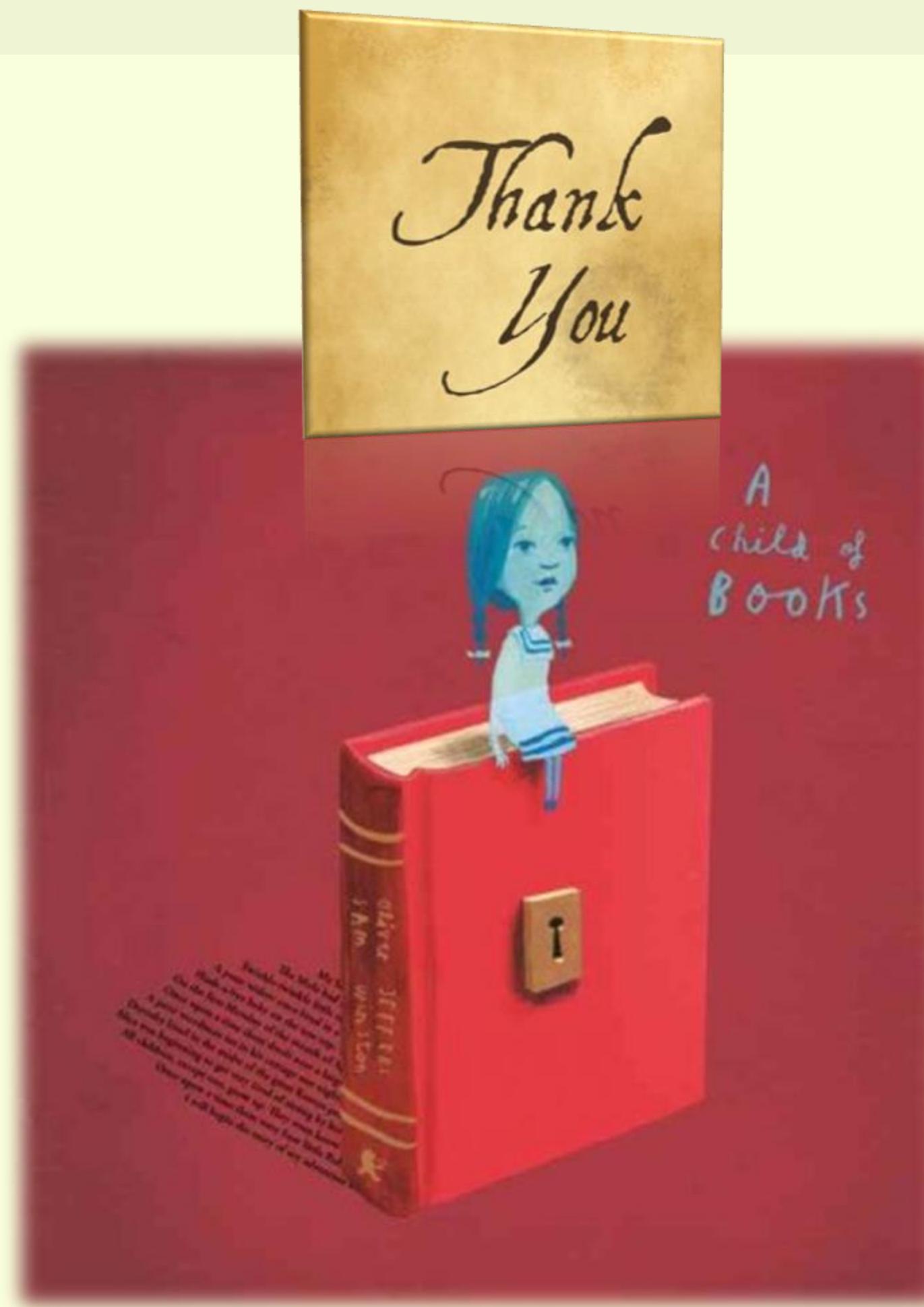
Picture Books Are More than Stories



- Picture books spark language, emotions and imagination
- Children (and adults!) learn by living the story
- Dive in, play and watch the magic happen – the benefits are endless!

Warning: may cause smiles, laughter and spontaneous creativity – suitable for all ages!

Tell me how you feel! ☺



A Child of Books, written and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers

Guidelines for Using Picture Books in
Early Foreign Language Learning &
Recommended Excellent Picture Books



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