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Title	Multiliteracies in the Singapore English Language classroom: Lessons and resources - Viewing and representing with <i>Rats' Nests</i> lesson package for Primary Four
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# Multiliteracies in the Singapore English Language Classroom: Lessons and Resources

## Viewing & Representing with *Rats' Nests* Lesson Package for Primary Four



An Institute of



DEV01/18VL Integrating Multiliteracies into the English Language Classroom: Developing an Instructional Approach to Teach Multimodal Literacy (Critical Viewing and Effective Representing of Multimodal Texts Texts)

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# Multiliteracies in the Singapore English Language Classroom: Lessons and Resources

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# About the Lesson Package

*Year of Design: 2020*

*Year of Implementation: 2020 and 2021*

*Co-designed with: Teck Whye Primary School*

*Teacher co-designers: Ms. Lim Lay Cheng Lynn, Ms. Khairunnisa bte Khairudin (Nisa)*

*Intended Level: Primary 4*

*Size: 40 students per class*

## **Introduction**

- Lynn, who has been teaching English in Teck Whye Primary School for 10 years, and Nisa, a teacher of English for 5 years in the same school worked closely with the research team from NIE in the co-design of the multiliteracies (ML) lessons. The co-design sessions took into account the ML lessons from Phase 1, the teacher-set goals and instructional emphasis, the constraints of the curriculum, the allocated time for these lessons, and the student learning needs.
- In the discussion with the researchers, the teachers identified the multimodal resources to be used and was guided on the learning processes and the pedagogical features of a multiliteracies classroom in the design of the lessons. Pictures in books were identified as the texts for viewing and representing. The teaching of viewing and representing was incorporated in the lesson series based on the STELLAR Reader *Rats' Nests*.
- The research team observed three lessons from each teacher (Lessons 1, 2 and 5), interviewed the teachers post-lesson and conducted focus-group discussions with mixed groups of 6 students to collect their feedback. Building on the lessons implemented and based on the reflections from the teachers and students, the research team prepared this version of the lesson package.
- The lessons are shared to connect the principles, ideas, and strategies on how engagement with pictures can develop students' multimodal literacy. The lessons also connect with the teaching principles and teaching processes encapsulated in *EL Syllabus 2020*. Teachers may adapt these lessons based on the different profile and learning needs of their students.

## **Lesson Scenarios**

- Both Lynn and Nisa introduced their students to the words and pictures in *Rats' Nests*, drawing on the pedagogic metalanguage as a resource to describe and explain aspects of the (a) integral features of narrative with pictures, (b) ways of interaction in the text, (c) representation of ideas in the text and the (d) interplay of meanings across semiotic modes in the print text to convey meanings and the development of the narrative, over 6 lessons of 60 minutes each.
- The lessons are designed around the learning processes for multimodal literacy development (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023) and they complement and support both the six *Teaching Principles* and the six *Teaching Processes* encapsulated in *EL Syllabus 2020*. These syllabus features

are widely known among teachers as CLLIPS (contextualisation, learner-centredness, learning-focused interaction, integration, process orientation and spiral progression) and ACoLADE (raising awareness, structuring consolidation, facilitating assessment for learning, enabling application, guiding discovery and instructing explicitly) respectively.

The learning processes are:

- **Encountering:** In encountering, the teacher designs for affective learning experiences by valuing the students' lifeworlds (New London Group, 1996). The learning process of encountering raises students' awareness by guiding them to respond and reflect on their emotional engagement with the multimodal text. The teacher invites students to bring artefacts or tell stories from their daily contexts as rich resources for discussion.
  
- **Exploring:** In exploring, the teacher designs cognitive learning experiences by guiding students in identifying and offering textual evidence in their exploration of multimodal texts. The learning process of exploring supports instructing explicitly, where the teacher introduces the pedagogic metalanguage as a resource and models how she will use the concepts to interpret the text, and inductive learning, where students explore the meanings in the text amongst themselves before the teacher synthesises their understandings from their guided discovery activity.
  
- **Evaluating:** In evaluating, the teacher designs critical learning experiences through guiding students in their analysis of multimodal texts. Students recognise perspectives and evaluate the multimodal text in relation to how successfully it has been created and the values conveyed in the text. The learning process of evaluating is carried out through joint construction of meaning between the teacher and students, amongst students themselves, or as an independent construction of meaning. All these points of engagement are assessment for learning moments.
  
- **Expressing:** In expressing, the teacher designs embodied learning experiences through offering opportunities for students to apply themselves in the physical acts of meaning-making through their multimodal composing. Expressing can be supported with digital tools and done collaboratively amongst students as social knowledge building and learning-focused interactions. The learning process of expressing empowers students to be active and agentic designers of meaning while it integrates the learning meaningfully for them.

Structuring consolidation occurs each time the teacher wraps up the lesson or the unit of work.

- Lynn and Nisa guided the students in their encounter and exploration of the integral features of *Rat's Nest*, a story with pictures, in Lessons 1 and 2. The students explore its visual and language features, and its narrative structure (problematic situation, rising action, resolution and conclusion). Attention was then directed to the explicit study of the integral features of the words and pictures in relation to how they interact with each other to bring out prominence, address, mood, power, perspective, distance, relation and affect. In Lessons 3 and 4, the students focused on the language features of the print text, specifically the use of grammar and vocabulary. This was followed by Lessons 5 to 6 on multimodal composing where the students expressed their understanding of how the multimodal features of a text work

together when they composed a sequel to the story and represented it to the class for peer feedback. The sequel to the story included choice and flexibility that catered to the students' interest and imagination.

Lesson 1	Reading and Viewing - <i>Rats' Nests</i>
Lesson 2	Multimodal Features in <i>Rats' Nests</i> – Integral Features, Ways of Interaction, Interplay of Meanings
Lesson 3 - 4	Language Features in <i>Rats' Nests</i> – Grammar, Vocabulary
Lesson 5	Multimodal Composing - Pictures and Words
Lesson 6	Presentations – Story Endings

### **Note on Adaptation**

- The lessons are intended for adaptation in response to the readiness, interest, and learning profile of the students.
- Depending on the profile of learners, further and separate lessons may need to be devoted to introducing the pedagogic metalanguage with more examples and teachers' explanation to support students' learning of the concepts and vocabulary.
- The lessons could be integrated, organised, and chunked into segments, to guide students to develop the knowledge, skills and semiotic awareness in multimodal literacy learning (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023) or for the purposes of blended learning:
  - Learning the Multimodal (MM) Skills for Meaning-making (Lessons 1, 2)
  - Expressing the MM Skills for Language Learning (Lessons 3, 4)
  - Expressing the MM Skills for Composing and Presentations (Lessons 5, 6)
- For weaker students or classes, scaffolding can take the form of:
  - Lessons devoted to introduce the pedagogic metalanguage so that students can understand and appreciate the ways meanings are made in the multimodal text. The teacher may need to show and tell to demonstrate more concretely the text features in relation to the concepts drawn from the pedagogic metalanguage.
  - Teacher sharing her perspective and reading possible endings to the story.
  - Opportunities for teacher-guided discussion and learning experiences with the use of more than 1 text, including digital texts depicting a similar theme, in order to provide contrastive perspectives for events and characters, and to connect the text to a wider context.
- The lessons and resources could also be used flexibly to complement the teaching of all other areas of language learning, undergirded by the choice selection of multimodal texts, including the use of multimedia.

### **Lesson Design & Learning Processes**

- The lessons are designed around the learning processes for students' multimodal literacy development (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023). The learning processes build on the dimensions of the Learning by Design Framework (New London Group, 1996) which have since been developed as knowledge processes in Cope and Kalantzis (2015) and Lim, Cope and Kalantzis (2022).
- The pedagogical features of a multiliteracies classroom (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023) are infused into each lesson, where appropriate, and annotated with an icon.

Pedagogical Features of a Multiliteracies Classroom			
	Is Organised by Genre		Has Inductive Learning
	Uses Authentic Texts		Has Collaborative Learning
	Has Explicit Teaching		Has EdTech Enhanced Learning
			Has Artefact Making

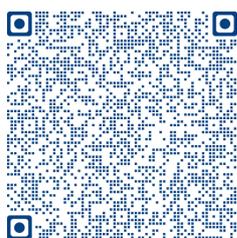
- Attention may not be distributed equally across the learning processes and pedagogical features in every lesson, but all learning processes and pedagogical features will typically be observed within a Unit of Work and across different lessons. Some learning process and pedagogical features figure more prominently in certain lessons than in others, depending on the lesson objectives. For example, at the start of the Unit, students would encounter and explore multimodal texts before evaluating perspectives and expressing their understanding in later lessons.

### Resources

- Lessons 1, 2 and 5 are appended here
- Teaching and Learning Resources for Lessons 1, 2 and 5 (Annex 1a-c, 2a)
- Student Artefacts (Annex 3)

Access resources [here](#)

<https://bit.ly/ReLPRatsNests>



### References

- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2015). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Learning by design*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lim, F. V. & Tan-Chia, L. (2023). *Designing Learning for Multimodal Literacy: Teaching Viewing and Representing*. London & New York. Routledge.
- Lim, F.V., Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2022). A metalanguage for learning: Rebalancing the cognitive with the socio-material. *Frontiers in Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2022.830613>
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92.

## UNIT OVERVIEW

<b>Term 4 Week 2,3</b>	<b>Theme/Topic: Narrative Texts</b>	<b>Class: P4-4/4-5</b>	
<b>Unit</b>	<b>Sub-theme: STELLAR Reader</b>	<b>Lesson: 1 to 6</b>	<b>Suggested Duration: 60 mins x 6 sessions</b>
<b>Learner Profile</b>	40 students Primary 4 mixed-ability students		
<b>Unit Goal</b>	<p><u>Content</u> To comprehend <i>Rats' Nests</i> and extend the story with words and pictures.</p> <p><u>Language</u> To identify and use the language features of a narrative story.  To write an extension to the story.</p> <p><u>Multimodal Knowledge, Skills and Awareness</u> To put on a multimodal lens and identify the multimodal features of pictures in <i>Rats' Nests</i> through the use of Distance (shot), Address (gaze), Power (angle) and Perspective.  To create meaningful pictures to accompany an extension to the story.</p>		
<b>Unit Summary</b>	<p>Examine and deconstruct the visual and language features of narrative texts (from picture books/readers).</p> <p>Plan, design and produce a sequel to the story, creating purposeful images, to extend the story.</p>		
<b>Adaptative Use</b>	<p>This unit of work is suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing the knowledge, skills and semiotic awareness in viewing pictures</li> <li>• introducing narrative text and its features</li> <li>• juxtaposing multiple perspectives on events and characters (e.g., finding a home for a pet) for heightened engagement with the students' lifeworld</li> </ul>		

## LESSON 1 (60 minutes) – Lesson on Reading and Viewing *Rats' Nests*

### Lesson Objectives

- Process and comprehend age-/year level appropriate texts by focusing on literal and inferential meaning
- Analyse, evaluate and appreciate age-/year level appropriate texts by focusing on implied meaning, higher order thinking and judgement
- Introduce the visual and language features of narrative texts in *Rats' Nests*

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
Encountering	10 mins  	<b>State Lesson Objectives</b>  <b>Introduce the Topic</b> Show the cover page of <i>Rats' Nests</i> and a selection of pictures (page 2) and ask Ss to predict the story. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the likely characters? (characters)</li> <li>• What is likely to happen in the story? (actions)</li> <li>• Where is the story likely to take place? (setting)</li> </ul>	STELLAR Reader <i>Rats' Nests</i>	Viewing task
Exploring	20 mins 	<b>Activate Learning (Reading the Story)</b> Read aloud the story once. Select some Ss to read aloud a few lines or paragraphs along with the teacher. Show the words and pictures on screen. Check for Ss' understanding of the plot from page to page in terms of the narrative and multimodal ways of interacting with text learnt from the previous unit of work (shot, angle, gaze, perspective).  For example:	PPT slides: Annex 1a	Supported reading and viewing task

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences		Resources	Learning Tasks
		Page 3	Could you identify the problem? What might account for Mum's opposition? How do the pictures show the intensity of the situation and from Millie's perspective?	STELLAR Reader <i>Rats' Nests</i>	Silent reading task
Page 4	Millie was now placed in a dilemma. What choices did she have with regard to Atom? Did the pictures bring out the tension? What feature would you have added to bring out the dilemma?				
Page 5 - 7	Look at the pictures and the text. What would you like to clarify? Do the pictures and text work well to bring out the meaning? What was the change that came over Millie's behaviour?				
Page 8 - 9	How was the secret unveiled? What activated Atom's scruffle? What was surprising about Mum's reactions? How did the pictures bring out this turn of events?				
Page 10 - 12	How did the story end? What do you notice about the prominent visual on page 10? How does it compare with the prominent visual on page 7? In what way is Mum's concession a smashing solution for the dilemma? The pictures on page 12 has 3 characters. In what way is this a fitting picture for the ending of the story? Why do you say so?				
Distribute copies of the STELLAR Reader to Ss and allocate time for Ss to read the story a second time on their own.					
<b>Exploring</b>	25 mins	<b>Critical Viewing of the Pictures</b> Tell Ss that they will recap the story with reference to the pictures. Guide Ss to think about the importance of pictures		PPT slides: Annex 1a	Guided discovery task

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
	    	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do books have pictures?</li> <li>• Are pictures important in picture books? Why?</li> <li>• What makes a good picture in a book?</li> </ul> <p>Show three illustrated book covers with the titles masked out, and ask S to decide, based solely on the pictures, which book they would want to read and explain why.</p> <p>Guide Ss to examine again the pictures of <i>Rats' Nests</i> critically using probing questions, based on the pedagogic metalanguage for pictures. Use probing questions to guide noticing of the different features of pictures (shot, angle, gaze, perspective).</p> <p>Have Ss retell the story to each other from the pictures and by relating the narrative to the visual features on the page.</p>	Teacher's Resources: Annex 00	Retelling task
<b>Consolidation</b>	5 mins    	<p><b>Conclude the Lesson</b></p> <p>Have Ss reflect on these two questions on Mentimeter or at home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we have a storybook without any pictures?</li> <li>• Can we have a storybook with only pictures but no text?</li> </ul> <p>Consider the purpose and audience of the storybook (different age groups).</p>	Mentimeter/ Journal	Review task

## LESSON 2 (60 minutes) – Lesson on Multimodal Features in *Rats' Nests*

### Lesson Objective

- Reinforce the concepts and pedagogic metalanguage for describing pictures in *Rats' Nests*

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
Encountering	10 mins 	<p><b>State Lesson Objectives</b></p> <p><b>Activate Prior Knowledge (T-whole class approach)</b> Recap the 4 multimodal features of text taught in the previous Unit of Work on instructional texts: Distance (Shot), Power (Angle), Address (Gaze) and Perspective.</p>	PowerPoint Slides: Annex 1b	Viewing task
Exploring	30 mins  	<p><b>Activate Learning (Guided Viewing)</b> Introduce more explicitly the features of the book. Unpack and explain the following visual features of the pictures, using the pictures from <i>Rats' Nests</i> and other books that Ss are familiar with, including screen shots, in terms of how they bring out the story and make meaning for students.</p> <p>Talk about the stories first, then connect the narrative to its multimodal features.</p> <p>For example: <u>Integral Features</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which are the setting, characters, actions in the story?</li> </ul> <p><u>Ways of Interaction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominence – What is the focus of attention here?</li> </ul>	PowerPoint slides: Annex 1b  <i>A combination of pictures from books and digital text.</i>	Guided discovery task

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance – How does a close or long <b>shot</b> complement a character’s or viewer’s <b>perspective</b>?</li> <li>Power – What does high or low <b>angles</b> show in pictures?</li> <li>Address – What does <b>gaze</b> tell you about the relationship between characters or with an audience?</li> </ul> <p>Other multimodal features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mood - How do the colours make you <b>feel</b>?</li> <li>Affect – What do the facial expressions <b>suggest</b>?</li> <li>Relation – What does being <b>close or far apart</b> tell you about the characters and their relationship to each other?</li> </ul> <p><u>Interplay of Meanings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do <b>words and images</b> work together to create similar or different meanings?</li> </ul>		
<b>Evaluating</b>	15 mins 	<b>Apply the Concepts</b> <i>Pair Work</i> S apply their understanding of the features to analyse a few pictures from books.	<i>Rats’ Nests</i>  STELLAR Readers	Critical viewing task
<b>Consolidation</b>	5 mins 	<b>Conclude the Lesson</b> Have Ss think about why understanding pictures is helpful in the reading of books.		Review task

## LESSON 5 - 6 (60 minutes x 2) – Lesson on Multimodal Composing & Presentations

### Lesson Objectives

- Generate, select and organise ideas for writing and representing creatively and critically for a variety of purposes, audiences, contexts and cultures
- Compose ideas and images to express understanding of a story and its sequel

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
<b>Exploring</b>	10 mins   	<p><b>State Lesson Objectives</b></p> <p>Recap the story of <i>Rats' Nests</i>. S take turns to retell the story from recall to each other.</p> <p><b>Introduce Representing Task</b> Guide Ss to design a 1-3 page extension to the <i>Rats' Nests</i> (write and illustrate a further 1-3 pages to the <i>Rats' Nests</i>).</p> <p>Discuss and brainstorm some possible plotlines for the story extension.</p> <p>For example: Atom escaped and found a new home Mum brought another pet rat home one day Millie discovered a new interest A new habitat for Atom</p>	PowerPoint slides: Annex 1c	Retelling task  Generating possibility
<b>Expressing</b>	15 mins  	<p><b>Write the Story Extension</b></p> <p>Distribute handouts for Ss to draft their story extension.</p> <p><i>Pair Work</i> Organise Ss in pairs to brainstorm, develop and write out their story.</p>	Student Handout: Annex 2a	Creative writing task

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
	30 mins   	<p><b>Illustrate the Story Extension</b>            Before Ss begin illustrating, recapitulate the various features of pictures. Ss discuss and answer the guiding questions on the Illustration Checklist to plan their pictures.</p> <p>Ss draw and colour their pictures according to plan to complement their story extension.</p> <p><u>Alternative Sequence:</u>            Ss sketch quickly (in pencil) to illustrate what they have written. Remind Ss of the importance of pictures            Recapitulate the various features of pictures.            Ss review their pictures using the Illustration Checklist.            Based on the completed Illustration Checklist, Ss improve their pictures to bring out the features so as to better support the story extension they have written. Ss may limit their refinements to 3 key features, e.g. angle, shot, perspective.            Ss add colours to their pictures.</p>	PPT slides: Annex 1c Student Handout: Annex 2a	Representing task
<b>Consolidation</b>	60 mins  	<p><b>Conclude the Lesson</b>            Have Ss refine their work at home and be prepared to share their composing with one another.</p> <p>Have Ss present their completed story extensions in small groups for peer feedback.</p> <p><i>Reflection</i>            Summarise the key learning points in the Unit.</p>		Edit and revise  Presentation  Self-evaluation

Learning Processes	Suggested Duration & Features of a ML Lesson	Facilitating Learning Experiences	Resources	Learning Tasks
		Direct S to write a short reflection on Mentimeter or their journal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 thing they enjoy learning from the lessons</li> <li>• 1 thing they are still unsure about/ want to find out more</li> <li>• 1 skill they can apply in daily life</li> </ul> Journal reflections may be completed as homework.		

Legend:		Pedagogical Features of a Multiliteracies Classroom	
	Is Organised by Genre		Has Inductive Learning
	Uses Authentic Texts		Has Collaborative Learning
	Has Explicit Teaching		Has EdTech Enhanced Learning
			 Has Artefact Making