

# E-Literature and On-Line Literary Resources: Engaging 'Net-Age' Children with New Forms of Literary Texts

Len Unsworth

**Professor Unsworth discusses relationships among literature for children and adolescents in books, on the www and on CD-ROMs. It explores both familiar and new forms of literary narratives, also acknowledging electronic game narratives. Examples of learning experiences for students are discussed, as is the management of such learning experiences in classroom programs. This paper was first presented to the Annual National Conference of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association, Gold Coast, 1-3 July, 2005. It is reprinted with permission.**

Many 'net-age' children are already engaged with new and traditional forms of literary narratives in both digital and traditional formats (while others may be more engaged with the 'net' than with the literary narratives). Margaret Mackey's paper on "The New Basics . . ." in the mid-1990s was quite prescient in advising us that:

*To talk about children's literature, in the normal restricted sense of children's novels, poems and picture-books, is to ignore the multi-media expertise of our children* (1994, p. 17).

Mackey pointed out that children come to school already used to making cross-media comparisons, whether the stories were about Thomas the Tank Engine or Hamlet. In her words (1994, p. 15): "Cross-media hybrids are everywhere". What is emerging more extensively today are strongly synergistic complementarities, where the story worlds of books are enhanced by various forms of digital multimedia, and correspondingly, some types of digital narratives frequently have companion publications in book form. The enduring capacity of literary narratives to engage the enthusiasm of young people is increasingly articulated with the integral role of digital technology in their lives.

This is exemplified in the phenomenal success of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books and the plethora of *Harry Potter* websites, many developed and managed by juvenile 'webmasters'. Such websites demonstrate both profound and playful engagement with the books through online chat rooms, reviews and commentaries, as well as avid exploration of new forms of related game narratives, and the generation of 'fan fiction' and image-focused creations elaborating interpretations of the story worlds.

But, of course, the confluence of children's enthusiasm for fictional narrative and the possibilities afforded by computer-based multimedia are not confined to the *Harry Potter*

phenomenon. The online extension of young readers' involvement with a host of contemporary authors, as well as with classic stories such as *The Little Prince* (de Saint-Exupery, 2000a) is abundantly evidenced on the world wide web, as is the opportunity for creating online narratives and experiencing new forms of e-literature, including game-narratives both online and on CD-ROM (Unsworth, 2006; Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson, & Asha, 2005).

Children's literature can bridge the inter-generational digital divide in the English classroom. However, more than ten years after Mackey's (1994) "New Basics . . ." paper, although children's literature maintains its significant role in English curriculum documents, such documents appear to be silent about literary narratives in the digital sphere (Locke & Andrews, 2004). There is also relatively little use of ICTs in teaching literary texts in schools in Australia (Durrant & Hargreaves, 1995; Lankshear, Snyder, & Green, 2000).

On the other hand, relevant online and digital media resources are burgeoning, access to computing facilities in schools is becoming routine, and there is an emerging research literature dealing with the interface of ICT, literature and literacy education (Jewitt, 2002; Locke & Andrews, 2004; Morgan, 2002; Morgan & Andrews, 1999).

Many teachers are looking for frameworks that offer a starting point for thinking about how the impact of ICTs on literary narrative can be taken account of in planning learning experiences. This paper briefly addresses some aspects of that impact and introduces three related frameworks as a starting point. The first framework describes the articulation of book and computer-based literary narratives. The second classifies the range of online resources for developing understanding about different dimensions of literary experience. The third framework outlines approaches to managing units of work in class programs using digital resources.

## The articulation of book and computer-based literary narratives

The relationships among literary materials on the www, on CD-ROMs and in books can be described in terms of three main categories. The first refers to electronically *augmented* literary texts. This category is concerned with literature that has been published in book format only, but the books are augmented with online resources that enhance their story world. This kind of augmentation may involve information about the genesis of the story; further details of artefacts or additional information about characters; and sometimes presentation of selections from the story in print or by the author, or someone else, reading a sample segment.

The second category of relationship between literary texts and digital media is the electronically *re-contextualised* literary text. This involves the republication of books online or as CD-ROMs. Many works that are now out of copyright have been transcribed or scanned and located in online digital libraries. The most widely known of these is the Gutenberg Project <<http://gutenberg.net/>>, but there are many others such as the International Children's Digital Library <[http://www.icdlbooks.org](http://www.icdlbooks.org/)>. The scanned books contain the original images, but some other sites provide the texts of these stories with new images interpolated. These online versions of published books can be accessed free of charge.

A number of contemporary books are additionally published online and can be downloaded at a cost. It is also possible, at a modest cost, to download audiofiles for many current titles, including classics like Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant* (Wilde & Gallagher, 1995).

Although some books are published as audio-only CDs, most CD-ROM versions of literary texts include images, which vary to a greater or lesser extent from those in the book versions. In some cases the images are static, simply transposed from page to screen, as in *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1994) for example. In other cases, the original images from the book appear as animations on the CD as in *The Polar Express* (Van Allsburg, 1997). In this CD the animations activate automatically, but in others like *The Little Prince* (de Saint-Exupery, 2000b), the animations are controlled by the viewer. Some novels for mature readers such as *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, 1937; Steinbeck Series, 1996) have been re-presented as CD-ROMs including images.

The third category is the digitally *originated* literary text published in this format only. Relatively few such stories appear on CD-ROM. Some notable examples are *Lulu's Enchanted Book* (Victor-Pujebet, n.d.) and *Payuta and the Ice God* (Ubisoft, n.d.).

The great variety of literary narratives for children and adolescents on the www can be categorised as follows:

- e-stories for early readers – these utilise audio and hyperlinks to support young children learning to decode print by providing models of oral reading of stories and the pronunciation of individual words. Stories like these are included on sites such as 'Children's Storybooks Online' <<http://www.magickeys.com/books/>> and Tumblebooks <<http://www.tumblebooks.com/syndication/chickadee/indexwf.html>>.
- *linear e-narratives* – these are essentially the same kinds of story presentations found in books, frequently illustrated, but presented on a computer screen. For examples such as *Wollstencroft the Bear* see the 'Children's Storybooks Online' site.
- *e-narratives and interactive story contexts* – the presentation of these stories is very similar to that of linear e-narratives, but the story context is often elaborated by access to separate information about characters, story setting in the form of maps, and links to factual information and/or other stories. In some examples it is possible to access this kind of contextual information while reading the story. Examples of such stories are *Banpf* (Left Handed Creations, 1994-2004) and *The Relic Triangle* (Matus, 2002).
- *hypertext narratives* – although frequently making use of a range of different types of hyperlinks, these stories focus on text, to the almost entire exclusion of images. There appear to be very few such hypertext narratives specifically for children and early adolescents. Nevertheless, some stories on sites such as Word Circuits <<http://wordcircuits.com/gallery/>> are suitable for this age group.
- *hypermedia narratives* – use hyperlinks involving text and images, often in combination. The relationship between linear and hypermedia narratives is addressed by Joellyn Rock in *The Vasalisa Project* <<http://www.rockingchair.org/>> (Rock, nd). At the centre of the project is the story *Bare Bones*, which is a new version of the Russian fairy tale, *Vasalisa and the Baba Yaga*. By reshaping the original story's text, imagery and format, Rock indicates that she is attempting to build a bridge for the fairy tale audience between traditional media and new media. A very different kind of e-narrative is *Lasting Image* <<http://www.eastgate.com/LastingImage/Welcome.html>> (Guyer & Joyce, 2000), set in Japan just following the second world war. In this story the interactivity is primarily achieved through a range of different kinds of hyperlinks.

To this list must be added some types of video games, defined as electronic game narratives and discussed in detail in Unsworth (2006). Examples of such games include *Snow White and the Seven Hansels* (Tivola, 2001), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll, 2000) and

**On the other hand, relevant online and digital media resources are burgeoning, access to computing facilities in schools is becoming routine, and there is an emerging research literature dealing with the interface of ICT, literature and literacy education.**

Libby Hathorn's online game-narrative *The Wishing Cupboard* (Hathorn, 1999).

### Classifying online resources for developing students' literary understanding

Currently, online resources do not adequately address a number of significant aspects of the narrative art of children's literature. For example, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the importance of the integrative nature of image/text relations – especially in a digital multimedia world:

*... many contemporary texts make use of image and of writing at the same time, using both to carry meaning in specific ways. In that context, a theory of reading which relates to the graphic material of 'letters' alone is no longer able to explain how we derive meaning from texts* (Kress, 2003, p. 141)

*Serial cognitive processing of linear print text no longer adequately characterises contemporary reading and writing, which now involve parallel processing of multimodal text-image information sources* (Luke, 2003, p. 397)

Writing about *Books for Youth in a Digital Age*, Dresang noted that:

*In the graphically oriented, digital, multimedia world, the distinction between pictures and words has become less and less certain* (1999, p. 21).

and that:

*In order to understand the role of print in the digital age, it is essential to have a solid grasp of the growing integrative relationship of print and graphics* (1999, p. 22)

And recently Richard Andrews has noted the importance of the visual/verbal interface in both computer and hard copy texts:

*it is the visual/verbal interface that is at the heart of literacy learning and development for both computer-users and those without access to computers* (Andrews, 2004, p. 63)

Elsewhere, (Unsworth, 2001, 2003, 2006; Unsworth et al., 2005; Unsworth & Wheeler, 2002) I have shown how the interpretive tools provided by functional descriptions of verbal and visual grammar enable teachers and students to read literary texts grammatically, so that they are able to read the 'constructedness' of the texts, simultaneously focusing on the 'what' of the story and the 'how' of its verbal and visual construction. This perspective does not currently occur in online resources for using e-literature in the English curriculum. Nevertheless, there are richly inspiring online resources for extending children's literary experience, and a useful approach is to co-opt such resources for infusion with the above perspective. Here I will briefly indicate the range of such online contexts for developing understanding about different dimensions of literary experience:

- *Composition/story genesis*  
This includes information about actual events, places, artifacts, which the author drew on in composing the story. It could also include manuscript data about earlier drafts as well as additional information not in the story provided by the author to elaborate aspects of the story world. Examples include the the J.K. Rowling official website <<http://www.jkrowling.com/>> which contains a great deal of such information about early drafts of the Harry Potter novels, and the Philip Pullman site <<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/index.html>>, which includes additional information about aspects of the books in 'His Dark Materials' trilogy that extend beyond what is provided in the novels.
- *Invitation/Enticement to read*  
The www provides 'teaser' sample story segments, often with audio and sometimes with the author as reader, as well as online reviews and reactions from readers, and more recently online story-derived games designed to arouse reader interest in the narrative. Paul Jennings and Morris Gleitzman promote their *Wicked* stories (Jennings & Gleitzman, 1998) through animations preceded by online games <<http://www.pauljennings.com.au/>>, and Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith promote their book, *Henry P. Baloney* (Scieszka & Smith, 2001) with a related online game <<http://www.baloneyhenryp.com/>>.
- *Appreciation/Celebration*  
There are many examples of 'fan' sites on the www where individuals or groups of readers manage a site that celebrates a particular author. These often contain biographical information, testimonials to the impact of books, favourite quotations, images of covers of different editions and a range of other features. One such fan site for the Harry Potter books is *Mugglenet* <<http://www.mugglenet.com/>> managed by 17-year-old webmaster Emerson. Further examples include the obernewtyn.net club <<http://www.obernewtyn.net/>> for author Isobelle Carmody, and tribute pages to William Golding <<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6249/>>, Gillian Rubinstein <<http://www.carnelianvalley.com/hearn/>> and Patricia Wrightson <[http://www.bowjamesbow.net/2004/01/12-were\\_back.shtml](http://www.bowjamesbow.net/2004/01/12-were_back.shtml)>.
- *Interpretation/Response*  
Two main types of online resources offer opportunities for interpretive responses to the narrative. One type is the fairly traditional lesson plans for teachers to download, although some of these include online learning experiences that make more use of the affordances of the online digital environment. The second type is the opportunity for readers to participate in online book discussions via chat rooms and

**... there are richly inspiring online resources for extending children's literary experience ...**

forums. (For detailed accounts of work by children on various discussion forums see Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson and Asha [2005].) An impressive school site showcases the work of teacher Monica Edinger at Dalton Elementary School in New York <<http://intranet.dalton.org/ms/alice/alice.html>>. This site shows fourth grade children's work creating videos of toy theatre dramatisations of segments of *Alices Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll & Browne, 1988).

- *Adjunct composition/creation*

This frequently appears on 'fan' sites (such as those for Isobelle Carmody noted above) where contributors write stories in the style of particular narratives, sometimes additional episodes, sometimes parallel or related stories, often involving the same characters as the original. Some fan sites conduct competitions involving this kind of writing, with strict rules relating the new fiction to parameters of the source story. Other contributions include the creation of images, games and puzzles based on the stories. Another kind of creative composition activity adjunct to the source story is the co-creation of multimodal story episodes in virtual worlds known as palaces. Story palaces involve participants adopting character roles and representing these characters visually on screen using 'avatars' as well as verbally by the input of dialogue, so that they 'act out' stories in this multimodal virtual world. Of particular interest is the Middle Earth Palace <<http://www.middleearthpalace.com/palace.html>>, celebrating Tolkien's world and Harry Potter Palaces, such as *Hogwarts* (Maykitten, 2004), *Harry Potters* (Aurora, 2004), and *Bloody Brilliant* (Layke, 2004). (For further information on Story Palaces see Thomas (2000; 2001) and Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson and Asha (2005)).

### Designing coherent classroom programs of work using digital resources

The burgeoning of children's literature www sites reflects not only the popularity of children's books and other forms of literary narratives, including electronic game narratives, but also the integral part played by the www in children's experience of such story contexts. However, many teachers do not feel confident in the world of digital multimedia. But more and more children routinely use computers outside of school to access a variety of forms of digital narrative on CD-ROM and the www, and more and more they are communicating their experience around story via email, 'blogs' and various forms of electronic forums and chat rooms.

A growing number of educators are now advocating the need for curriculum design and classroom teaching to be responsive to these changes and, in so doing to acknowledge the relevant experience and expertise of children,

which many adult educators do not possess (Alvermann, 2004; Andrews, 2004; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Gee, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Lankshear et al., 2000; Sefton-Green, 2001; Sefton-Green & Buckingham, 1998). However, teachers are in a position to mediate new knowledge and understanding that is not so readily accessible to children.

A relevant example here is the theoretically articulated functional grammars of language and image that facilitate explicit discussion about relationships among narrative form and the interpretive possibilities constructed by the multimodal texts. There is an opportunity in working with e-literature and online literary resources to bring the complementary expertise and experience of children and teachers together in their shared enjoyment of children's literature. This entails a framework for pedagogic practice that simultaneously acknowledges children's expertise and their inexperience in a range of aspects of learning.

Such a pedagogic framework involves student-centred, discovery learning as well as teacher-directed, overt teaching and intermediate, guided investigations of various kinds (Unsworth, 2001). Managing classroom learning also includes designing experiences based on collaborative small group activities, individual independent work and common whole class tasks. The teacher at times will be a facilitator and guide or a co-researcher and co-learner, but at other times will be an authoritative leader and direct instructor. Initial work on a topic may involve sharing of informal knowledge, observations, and opportunities and suggestions for extending understanding. This may be highly student-centred and exploratory but as the teacher begins to bridge toward more systematic knowledge, the pedagogic orientation shifts to more guided investigation and direct instruction.

On the basis of students' greater familiarity with systematic knowledge of the topic, the teacher then moves to emphasise more critical framing to provoke critical questioning and a shift toward transformative knowledge. This may entail more collaborative group work and independent research and may be also a shift back to more student-centred, student-initiated learning.

As the classroom work progresses through these phases, teaching is differentiated to optimise the engagement of all students in essentially the same learning tasks. This means providing scaffolded learning guides, and opportunities for peer support. It could also involve grouping students with high support needs together to 'prime' their understanding of subsequent tasks through direct teaching while more proficient learners operate independently, then regrouping students heterogeneously so that highly proficient students and high support students are able

**The teacher at times will be a facilitator and guide or a co-researcher and co-learner, but at other times will be an authoritative leader and direct instructor.**

to work productively together. The following classroom program indicates how some of these principles can be addressed.

### The Little Prince

This program is not intended as a 'template'. What is intended is a sufficiently detailed plan that indicates to teachers new to planning programs using ICT how e-literature can be practically incorporated (for a more detailed account of this classroom work see Unsworth, 2006).

**Grade/Age Group:** from about 9 to 12 years.

**Duration:** Ten sessions of about 90 minutes over about two weeks

**Computer Resources:** Minimally four (preferably 12) classroom computers with online access.

#### Websites:

<<http://www.angelfire.com/hi/littleprince/frames.html>>.

<<http://www.geocities.com/athens/rhodes/1916/online.html>>.

<<http://www.lepetitprince.com/en/>>

<<http://www.geocities.com/razzberryrainstars/littleprince.html>>

<<http://members.lycos.nl/tlp/>>.

<<http://lepetitprince2.tripod.com/>>

**Books:** Four to six copies of the following:

Almond, D. (1998) *Skellig*. London: Hodder.

Baillie, A. (1988) *Megan's Star*. Melbourne: Nelson.

Browne, A. (1982) *Bear Hunt*. London: Scholastic.

Carmody, I., & Woolman, S. (2001)

*Dreamwalker*. Melbourne: Lothian.

de Saint-Exupery, A. (2000a) *The Little Prince*. London: Penguin.

de Saint-Exupery, A. (2000b) *The Little Prince* (CD ROM) Berlin: Tivola.

Victor-Pujebet, V. (n.d.) *Lulu's Enchanted Book*. (CD ROM) Hove: Wayland.

Wheatley, N., & Ottley, M. (1999) *Luke's Way of Looking*. Sydney: Hodder Headline.

Wrightson, P., & Ingpen, R. (1988) *The Nargun and the Stars*. Hawthorn: Hutchinson Australia.

#### Background/Synopsis of The Little Prince

*The Little Prince* was first published in 1943 and has been republished many times, most recently by Penguin Books (2000) and by Harcourt Inc (2000) in a larger format. Also in 2000 the CD-ROM with hyperlinked animations of the original images was published by Tivola/Gallimard (2000). In this story, the narrator is a lone aviator forced to land in the Sahara Desert after his plane has mechanical difficulties. A young boy comes up to him from nowhere and asks him to draw a sheep. Gradually the pilot learns that the Little Prince is a visitor from space who lived on a small asteroid named B-612. He left his home to explore, and describes his journey from planet to planet, each tiny world populated by a single adult. As the Little Prince recounts these visits, the author pokes fun at a king, a businessman, a geographer, and a lamp-

lighter, all of whom signify some futile aspect of adult existence. Eventually, the Little Prince is carried by a flock of birds to Earth. Here the parable or fable-like story of *The Little Prince* continues, addressing deep philosophical issues about love, relationships, the emptiness of a life without either, death, spirituality, capitalism, and, in general, the soulless existence of the adult world.

#### Learning Tasks:

1. use the www to appreciate the international and inter-generational 'life' of this kind of literary classic and to explore information about the author and the context of composition of the story.
2. develop an understanding of the 'visual grammar' of images and the role of different grammatical features of images as part of the narrative technique of the book.
3. expand literary appreciation of other stories that involve supernatural characters who provide opportunities for characters to gain new insights and understandings. Such stories include *Skellig* (Almond, 1998), *Megan's Star* (Baillie, 1988) and *The Nargun and the Stars* (Wrightson & Ingpen, 1988).

#### Week 1: Session 1

- **Introduction:** Show the children a collection of different versions of the story, including CD-ROM and the www. Give an outline the story. Indicate short quotations that appeal to children such as:
 

*Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.*
- Read the first two chapters aloud.
- Plan the following six group work activities to begin the next day:
  - *About the author:* Biography section on the CD ROM (de Saint-Exupery, 2000b) and websites <<http://members.lycos.nl/tlp/antoine.htm>> Students produce a chart or 'Powerpoint' slideshow 'about the author'.
  - *International and inter-generational literature:* (a) visit websites <<http://mitglied.lycos.de/kleineprinz/>> to note *The Little Prince* in different languages; the virtual communities that exchange ideas about the story; children's work portrayed on the websites. (b) design and conduct a telephone survey of students' extended family members to find out who has read *The Little Prince*, in what language and under what circumstances in their lives. (c) check the school and local libraries, bookshops (including online booksellers) for version(s) of the story and then prepare a chart or electronic report on their surveys.
  - *Reading Online:* survey www sites providing the illustrated story, noting different formats and select one to read. Compare reading a story online with reading in book format.

As . . . classroom  
work progresses  
. . . teaching is  
differentiated to  
optimise the  
engagement of  
all students . . .

– *Characters drawing their story*: Read *Bear Hunt* (Browne, 1982) to observe the drawing done by a story character as drawings in the book and an integral part of the story. Explore other books where the images in the book have a similar narrative role such as *Luke's Way of Looking* (Wheatley & Ottley, 1999) and *Dreamwalker* (Carmody & Woolman, 2001).

– *Otherworldly characters in other stories*: Read *Skellig* or listen to an excerpt online <<http://www.davidalmond.com/>>. It is also possible to purchase an audio cassette of the story read by the author. Select a paragraph or two for reading aloud to the class.

– *Image Exploration*: Teacher introduces key elements of the grammar of visual design, focussing on the visual grammar of interactive meanings. Concepts introduced are those of contact - the differences between offers and demands, social distance – long medium and close-up views, power – high, eye-level and low angle views, and involvement – parallel or oblique horizontal angle. Concepts are introduced using the online story *The Littlest Knight* (Moore, 1994), and then explored in the images in the early chapters of *The Little Prince*.

Each of the six groups of children will complete two tasks each day over the next three days.

#### **Week 1: Session 2**

- Read aloud next two chapters of *The Little Prince*.
- Children divide into six groups and work on the first two the groupwork tasks.
- Review of what we can now say about the story chapters read as a whole class to date ('quotable' quotes, which can be added to the class notice board; images encountered and their role in the story; and the questions/issues/lessons raised so far.)

#### **Week 1: Session 3**

- Introduce children to *Megan's Star* (Baillie, 1988) involving an 'otherworldly' character who enables the main human character to develop deeper insights or understandings.
- Group work tasks during which all children complete the second set of two tasks for their group.
- Discussion with whole class about ways in which *Megan's Star* and *The Little Prince* are the same and different.

#### **Week 1: Session 4**

- Read aloud the next two chapters of *Megan's Star*.
- Group work tasks during which all children complete the final set of two tasks for their group.
- Discussion with whole class about similarities and differences among *Skellig* (which they

have all now encountered in group work), *Megan's Star* and *The Little Prince*.

#### **Week 1: Session 5**

- Read the next two chapters of *Megan's Star*.
- Provide time for student groups to finalise displays/presentations of the results of their group work.
- Children share displays and presentations of their group work.
- Discussion with the whole class about what has been learned about *The Little Prince*, the narrative techniques of other stories involving 'otherworldly characters', and the role of images in constructing stories.
- Complete reading aloud of *Megan's Star*.

#### **Week 2: Session 1**

- Review the results of children's group work as displayed and consolidate the grammar of visual design in understanding the role of different types of images in developing the story.
- Using a data projector (or in a computer lab) introduce the class to the CD-ROM story, *Lulu's Enchanted Book* (Victor-Pujebet, n.d.).
- For the remainder of this session and the first part of the next session the class will work in four groups. (a) explore all of *Lulu's Enchanted Book* on CD; (b) explore all of the CD-ROM version of *The Little Prince*; (c) complete reading *Skellig* (using the audio cassettes and/or teacher and/or peer assistance in the case of any students who find reading the book difficult); (d) complete reading *Dreamwalker*, paying particular attention to the images, and when finished explore the images on *Dreamwalker* websites, such as Cally Steussy's image <<http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/loth/s/t/steussy/nesaka1clrsz.jpg.html>>.

#### **Week 2: Session 2**

- Complete group work tasks from previous session. Early finishers engage in web searches for reviews of *Lulu's Enchanted Book*, more information about *Skellig* etc.
- The teacher demonstrates the role of image analyses in comparing the interpretive possibilities of the hypertext CD-ROM of *The Little Prince* and the other hard copy and linear online versions the children have read. The focus of the comparison is the Geographer chapter in *The Little Prince* (for details see (Unsworth, 2006).
- The teacher plans with the children the following four group work tasks to be completed over the next two sessions:
  - select another episode in *The Little Prince* to compare, applying the visual analyses used in the teacher demonstration.
  - select an episode from *Lulu's Enchanted Book* and undertake an image analysis to indicate the role of the hypertext-activated

**Teacher introduces key elements of the grammar of visual design, focussing on the visual grammar of interactive meanings.**

images in confirming/changing the way the written story is interpreted.

- select an episode from one of the illustrated books read in the previous week such as *Dreamwalker* or *Luke's Way of Looking*. Analyse the images and comment on the role of the different types of images and how other image selections might have been used to impact upon the story interpretation.
- select one episode from *Skellig* and design and insert images at points in the text as appropriate.

#### **Week 2: Sessions 3 and 4**

- Each of the four groups in the class completes two of the tasks as outlined above, so that by the end of session four, all children have completed all tasks.

#### **Week 2: Session 5**

- Reporting by student groups of their four completed tasks.
- Whole class discussion of the different sections of the CDs that the four groups investigated, the different episodes of the books in which they explored the images, and the different representations for the various episodes of *Skellig* they chose.
- In this session the children next set up a 'poster' presentation of their work and invite (at this point or on a subsequent occasion) other teachers, classes and parents to attend. As visitors circulate around the presentations, students are on duty to explain their work.

#### **Conclusion**

The potential of the expanded digital context of story worlds to encourage young people's sustained reading of literary narratives (Mackey, 2001) needs to take account of the impact of ICTs on the textual practices surrounding literary texts and, indeed, on the character of literary narratives themselves (Locke & Andrews, 2004), changing the very nature of what we understand to be narratives (Hunt, 2000).

Locke and Andrews cite Donald Leu (2000) in suggesting that in responding to the imperative for research into the impact of ICTs on how students are working with traditional and new literary forms, it may well be that "teachers themselves, exploring in their own classrooms hunches and intuitions about the implications for their teaching" can "provide the strongest lead as to how the future research agenda should be formulated" (2004, p.48). It is hoped that this paper will assist teachers in considering this kind of role orientation, stimulating critically constructive responses to, and envisioning beyond, what is presented here to maintain and enhance a vibrant engagement of 'net-age' students with past, contemporary and emerging forms of literary narrative.

#### **References**

- Almond, D. (1998) *Skellig*, London: Hodder.
- Alvermann, D. (Editor) (2004). *Adolescents and literacies in a digital world*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Andrews, R. (2004) 'Where Next in Research on ICT and Literacies' in *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 12 (1), pp. 58-67.
- Baillie, A. (1988) *Megan's Star*, Melbourne: Nelson.
- Browne, A. (1982) *Bear Hunt*, London: Scholastic.
- Carmody, I., & Woolman, S. (2001) *Dreamwalker*, Melbourne: Lothian.
- Carroll, L. (2000) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (CD-ROM). Brighton, United Kingdom: Joriko Interactive.
- Carroll, L., & Browne, A. I. (1988) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, London: Julia MacRae.
- Chandler-Olcott, K., & Mahar, D. (2003) "'Tech-Saviness' Meets Multiliteracies: Exploring Adolescent Girls Technology-Related Literacy Practices' in *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38 (10), pp. 356-385.
- de Saint-Exupery, A. (2000a) *The Little Prince*, London: Penguin.
- de Saint-Exupery, A. (2000b) *The Little Prince*, (CD-ROM): Tivola.
- Dresang, E. (1999). *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*, New York: Wilson.
- Durrant, C., & Hargreaves, S. (1995) 'Literacy Online: The Use of Computers in the Secondary Classroom' in *English in Australia*, 111, p. 37-48.
- Gallimard. (2000) *The Little Prince*. Milton Keynes: Tivola/Editions Gallimard.
- Gee, J. P. (2003). *What Computer Games have to Teach us About Learning and Literacy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guyer, C., & Joyce, M. (2000) *Lasting Image*. Retrieved 11th August, 2004, from <<http://www.eastgate.com/LastingImage/Welcome.html>>.
- Hathorn, L. (1999) *The Wishing Cupboard*, from <<http://www.libbyhathorn.com/lh/Wishing/Default.htm>>.
- Hunt, P. (2000) 'Futures for Children's Literature: Evolution or Radical Break' in *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30 (1), pp. 111-119.
- Jennings, P., & Gleitzman, M. (1998). *Wicked! All Six Books in One*, Ringwood, Victoria: Puffin.
- Jewitt, C. (2002) 'The Move from Page to Screen: The Multimodal Reshaping of School English' in *Visual Communication*, 1 (2), pp. 171-196.
- Kress, G. (2003) *Literacy in the New Media Age*, London: Routledge.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2003) *New Literacies: Changing Knowledge and Classroom Learning*, Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Lankshear, C., Snyder, I., & Green, B. (2000) *Teachers and Technoliteracy*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Left Handed Creations. (1994-2004) *Banpf*.

**. . . the expanded digital context of story worlds to encourage young people's sustained reading of literary narratives needs to take account of the impact of ICTs . . .**

- Retrieved 24th August, 2004, from <<http://www.banph.com/>>.
- Leu, D. (2000) 'Literacy and Technology: Deictic Consequences for Literacy Education in an Information Age' in M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson & R. Barr (Editors), *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 3). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Locke, T., & Andrews, R. (2004) 'ICT and Literature: A Faustian Compact?' in R. Andrews (Editor), *The Impact of ICT on Literacy Education* (pp. 124-152). London and New York: Routledge/Falmer.
- Luke, C. (2003) 'Pedagogy, Connectivity, Multimodality and Interdisciplinarity' in *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38 (10), pp. 356-385.
- Mackey, M. (1994) 'The New Basics: Learning to Read in a Multimedia World' in *English in Education*, 28 (1), pp. 9-19.
- Mackey, M. (2001) 'The Survival of Engaged Reading in the Internet Age: New Media, Old Media, and the Book' in *Children's Literature in Education*, 32 (3), pp. 167-189.
- Matus, M. (2002) *The Inner Circle - 1st Book of the Relic Triangle*. Retrieved 3rd August, 2004, from <<http://www.relictriangle.com/>>.
- Moore, C. (1994) *The Littlest Knight*. Retrieved 3rd August, 2004, from <<http://www.magickeys.com/books/lk/index.htm#start>>.
- Morgan, W. (2002) 'Heterotopes: Learning the Rhetoric of Hyperlinks' in *Education, Communication and Information*, 2 (2/3), pp. 215-233.
- Morgan, W., & Andrews, R. (1999) 'City of Text? Metaphors for Hypertext in Literary Education' in *Changing English*, 6 (1).
- Munsch, R. (1994) *The Paper Bag Princess* (CD-ROM). Buffalo, N.Y.: Discis.
- Rock, J. (nd) *The Vasalisa Project*. Retrieved 5th August, 2004, from <<http://www.rockingchair.org/>>.
- Scieszka, J., & Smith, L. (2001) *Baloney, Henry P.* New York: Viking.
- Sefton-Green, J. (2001) 'ICT, The Home and Digital Cultures' in C. Durrant & C. Beavis (Editors) *P(ICT)URES of English: Teachers, Learners and Technology* (pp. 162-174). Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press/Australian Association for the Teaching of English.
- Sefton-Green, J., & Buckingham, D. (1998) 'Digital Visions: Children's "Creative" Uses of Multimedia Technologies' in J. Sefton-Green (Editor) *Digital Diversions: Youth Culture in an Age of Multimedia*, London: University College London Press.
- Steinbeck, J. (1937) *Of Mice and Men*, London: Penguin.
- SteinbeckSeries. (1996) *Of Mice and Men*, New York: Penguin Electronics.
- Thomas, A. (2000) 'Textual Constructions of Children's Online Identity'. *CyberPsychology and Behaviour*, 3 (4), pp. 665-672.
- Thomas, A. (2001) 'The Cyber Child' in *disClosure*, 10, pp. 143-175.
- Tivola Publishing. (2001) *Snow White and the Seven Hansels*.
- Ubisoft. (n.d.). *Payuta and the Ice God*, London: Ubisoft Multimedia.
- Unsworth, L. (2001) *Teaching Multiliteracies Across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*, Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- Unsworth, L. (2003) 'Re-Framing Research and Practice Relating to CD-ROM Narratives in Classroom Literacy Learning: Addressing 'Radical Change'' in *Digital Age Literature for Children' in Issues in Educational Research*, 13 (2), pp. 55-70.
- Unsworth, L. (2006) 'Multiliteracies and Multimodal Text Analysis in Classroom Work with Children's Literature' in T. Royce & W. Bowcher (Editors) *Perspectives on the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*, New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Unsworth, L. (2006) *E-Literature for Children: Enhancing Digital Literacy Learning*, London and New York: Routledge/Falmer.
- Unsworth, L., Thomas, A., Simpson, A., & Asha, J. (2005) *Children's Literature and Computer-Based Teaching*, London: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.
- Unsworth, L., & Wheeler, J. (2002) 'Re-Valuing the Role of Images in Reviewing Picture Books' in *Reading: Language and Literacy*, 36 (2), pp. 68-74.
- Van Allsburg, C. (1997) *The Polar Express* CD-ROM, Somerville, MA: Houghton Mifflin Interactive.
- Victor-Pujebet, V. (n.d.) *Lulu's Enchanted Book*, Hove: Wayland.
- Wheatley, N., & Ottley, M. (1999) *Luke's Way of Looking*, Sydney: Hodder Headline.
- Wilde, O., & Gallagher, S. (1995) *The Selfish Giant*, New York: Putnam.
- Wrightson, P., & Ingpen, R. (1988) *The Nargun and the Stars*, Hawthorn: Hutchinson Australia.

---

**Professor Len Unsworth** is a Professor of English and Literacies Education in the School of Education at the University of New England. He is also Director of the Centre for Research in English and Multiliteracies Education (CREME) at the University of New England. Email: <[len.unsworth@une.edu.au](mailto:len.unsworth@une.edu.au)>. Professor Unsworth will be the keynote speaker at SLAV's 'Reading, Thinking, Learning' conference on November 16.