

CCTELA CONFERENCE
Winnipeg, Manitoba
November 27, 2008

Dr. Robin M. Bright, a professor in the Education Faculty at the University of Lethbridge, presented an innovative workshop at the 2008 Manitoba English Conference. The session entitled *Media Madness: Talking About and Working With Advertising and Interactive Websites to Develop Critical Thinking* raised the essential question, "Who will teach our children to communicate"? Participants were engaged in a visual literacy activity that required them to explore the six elements of a visual text (color, line, perspective, technique, texture and composition & design). Picture books were introduced for each of these six elements and a discussion on the equal importance of written and visual text in portraying messages occurred. Teachers must understand that visual literacy instruction will better prepare students for the dynamic and constantly changing world that they will inevitably be communicating through.

- Color – *The Spider and the Fly* by Tony Diterlizzi
- Line – *Free Fall* by David Wiesner
- Perspective – *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears* by Emily Gravett
- Technique – *Black Cat* by Christopher Myers
- Texture – *If you're not from the Prairie* by David Bouchard
- Composition and Design – *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon

Dr. Bright concluded by reminding us that media is everywhere and consumes the daily lives of our students therefore we need to teach kids to make their own good decisions; they need to ask the "Big Questions" such as...

1. Who created the message and why are they sending it?
2. Who is the target audience and how is the message tailored to them?
3. How does the message get your attention?
4. What values and lifestyles are shown?
5. How might other people read this message differently?
6. What's missing from this message that might be important to know?

Our students need to examine media and technology with a more critical eye; we can no longer allow complacency when it comes to advertising and interactive websites. Teachers need to engage students and help them become confident and successful learners in a variety of literacy contexts.

Respectfully submitted by
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