

STILL MORE IDEAS

Heather Thelwell, Bishop Macdonell High School (Guelph) reports: 'I am definitely interested in further supporting the role of wordless books in a high school setting. In particular with high functioning autistic kids that enjoy the more complex stories, but are not literate.'

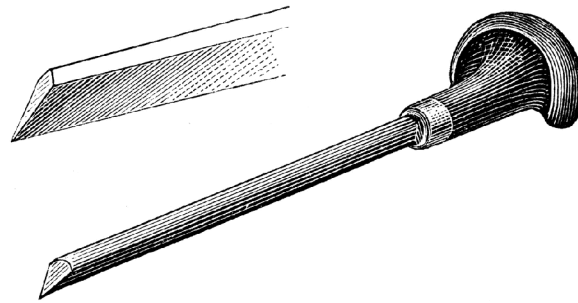
Sharon Turnbull-Schmitt, a former superintendent of the Toronto District School Board, draws attention to what she identifies as opportunities for the development of oral language skills in *Tom Thomson*. Students could, as Sharon suggests, write a script for a play about Tom Thomson, or perhaps an interview with the artist that could probe the complexities of his romantic relationships with Winnifred Trainor and Annie Fraser. Tom Thomson's rustic life in Algonquin Park could also evoke lyrics for a ballad, perhaps done in the style of Gordon Lightfoot, though students will also want to reference Gord Downie's song, recorded by the Tragically Hip, called 'Three Pistols', in which Winnifred Trainor lurks in the shadows at Mowat Cemetery and tends to Tom's grave.

Philip Fernandez (Etobicoke) suggests that small 'teams' of two or four go through the book a page at a time and write out a line or two of text for each image. According to Philip 'This can be fun because there are pages in the book where you truly have to guess what is going on.'

Margaret Lindsay Holton (Waterdown) suggests that she 'felt

and inferred an absence of sound, particularly music' while leafing through the pages of *Tom Thomson*. Margaret suggests that students could be asked to create a 'music list' to reflect the sounds that would have been associated with the early part of the twentieth century, perhaps the sounds of the British Music Hall (esp George Formby Sr), and with Tom Thomson's life, both in Toronto and in the wilds of Algonquin Park.

Beau Williamson (Montreal) admits that wood engraving tools are too small, too sharp, too difficult to manipulate and generally too dangerous for classroom use but suggests that similar effects could be explored with scratchboard or even (in a pinch) 'black poster paint on paper prepared with a solid base of wax crayon'. One drawback to scratchboard is that it does not convey any of the 'mirror' imaging required by relief print-making (wood engraving, linocut or woodcut).



Margaret Lindsay Holton suggests that students be encouraged to 'create an app. Each image would have documentary digital photography and wiki-like links that explore the nature and origin of the artefacts inherent in the engravings ... Study: Use the app as a starting point to encourage students to discuss their own lives and their own artefacts.'

Sharon Turnbull-Schmitt suggests one lesson could feature a screening of ‘His Favourite Pastime’, a sixteen-minute burlesque starring Charlie Chaplin that was produced in 1914 and is readily available on YouTube. In the silent film, Charlie gets drunk in the bar then steps outside, meets a pretty woman and tries to flirt with her, only to retreat after the woman’s father returns. Which calls very much into question the issue of what Winnifred Trainor’s father, Hugh, must have thought of a ne’er-do-well painter of pictures who drank too much and may have gotten his daughter ‘in a family way.’

Jose Ortega (Mexico City) suggests a reading list as follows:

- Arizpe, Evelyn and Morag Styles. *Children Reading Picturebooks, Interpreting Visual Texts*. 2016.
- Elkins, James. *Visual Literacy*. 2009.
- Heffernan, James A. W. *Cultivating Picturacy, Visual Art and Verbal Interventions*. 2006.
- Karasik, Paul and Mark Newgarden. *How to Read Nancy. The Elements of Comics in Three Easy Panels*. Fantagraphics, 2017.
- Mitchell, W.J. T., *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. 1994.
- Mitchell, W.J. T. (ed.), *The Language of Images*. 1980.
- Mitchell, W.J. T., *Iconology: image, text, ideology*. 1986.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Reading Pictures. A Few Thousand Words on Six Books Without Any, Lynd Ward: Six Novels in Woodcuts*. Library of America, 2010.