This curriculum guide highlights activities for Molly Idle’s 2014 Caldecott Honor Book, *Flora and the Flamingo*, and the followup picture books, *Flora and the Penguin* and *Flora and the Peacocks*. These innovative wordless books encourage readers to engage in the storytelling process while interacting with the book as they generate their own responses verbally, artistically, and kinesthetically.

**WORDLESS PICTURE BOOKS**

Wordless picture books are often viewed as stories for very young children. However, wordless books are for all readers because they invite the child to create a verbal story from the visual one expressed on the pages of the book. For example:

**Emergent reader:** Wordless books provide an opportunity for emergent readers to read and understand a book independently. Children generate a story based on the visual images they see while gaining an understanding how stories are structured.

**Early reader:** Wordless books encourage children to “read” the story fluently as they generate their own verbal text. Early readers also pay attention to visual clues such as foreshadowing that support making story predictions that they might not notice if they are struggling to read text.

**Independent reader:** Wordless books allow independent readers of all ages to tell or write the story that is unfolding through the illustrations. Children can add more detail about the plot, characters, and setting which assists in developing their own storytelling skills.

Wordless picture books are also excellent to share with English Language Learners in creating opportunities to enhance language learning and vocabulary building. Because the story is told entirely through illustrations, the reading experience builds confidence, alleviates anxiety, broadens the definition of reading, and makes the book accessible to all readers. Some of the key reading skills that are promoted and reinforced as children read wordless books include:

- **Comprehension:** Wordless books often promote more discussion than books with words because children are generating meaning from the illustrations thus leading to improved comprehension.

- **Sequencing:** All stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Wordless picture books enable children to provide a narrative of the story while using phrases such as “and then . . .”, when suddenly . . .” or “and finally . . .” to describe the order in which the events occur.

- **Inferring:** Readers are able to capture visual clues from a wordless picture book and infer what is happening even though it was not explicitly shown in the picture.

- **Predicting:** In wordless stories such as *Flora and the Flamingo*, it is natural to ask, “What do you think will happen next?” This is doubly true given that Molly Idle’s books contain flaps where children can predict what might be revealed once the flap is lifted.

- **Building vocabulary:** Wordless picture books prompt children to create their own verbal text. *Flora and the Flamingo* might generate vocabulary focused on ballet terms while *Flora and the Penguin* will encourage children to use more descriptive language in discussing the story. *Flora and the Peacocks* will support sequencing as children tell the story behind the visuals.

- **Determining cause and effect:** All actions create consequences. As children read a wordless picture book they can identify the character’s action(s) and the effect(s) of those actions.
TACTILE-KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Molly Idle's Flora books are excellent for engaging tactile-kinesthetic learners in the reading process. Tactile and kinesthetic learners grasp information by doing, experiencing, touching, moving or being active in some manner. Some characteristics of tactile-kinesthetic learners include:

- Learns through emotions, touch, movement, and space
- Enjoys feeling, discovery and action
- Engages in acting out a situation relevant to the topic
- Participates in hands-on activities
- Remembers what they DO by being physically involved in the learning activities

Strategies for sharing Molly Idle's books with tactile-kinesthetic learners:

- Try a whole-to-part approach when sharing the books. Children first scan the illustrations without lifting the flaps. This will engage children when the process is slowed and they move slowly through the book as they tell the story, adding in the illustrations below the flaps.
- Use Chronicle Books website at www.chroniclebooks.com to share the book trailer of *Flora and the Flamingo* and *Flora and the Penguin* which are accompanied by music.
- Encourage children to move and be an active participant in the actions of the story as it is being shared. Kinesthetic learning involves use of the whole body rather than just hands-on experiences.
- Allow tactile-kinesthetic learners to close their eyes and visualize the illustrations after reading the story. Ask what words they hear in their heads that correspond to the story.
- Provide tactile-kinesthetic learners with materials to write or draw notes and connections as the story is shared.

Wordless picture books support children who are English language learners, tactile-kinesthetic learners, and those who are honing their reading and writing skills. As you share the three books with children in large groups, small groups, or as they explore each book independently, here are some overall strategies that will engage and support readers:

- **Encouraging discussion:** When sharing a wordless book with children, stop to discuss the story at various points. This enables the teacher to check understanding and develop comprehension skills and children can ask clarifying questions. Reading a wordless book begs the reader to slow down and observe what is happening in the illustrations which also presents opportunities for building vocabulary, making connections, and asking questions.
- **Learning visual clues:** A story without words compels a reader to linger over the illustrations rather than focus on the text. Teachers can point out how a character expresses emotion, how the picture shows motion, or how the passage of time is conveyed. A wordless book can also encourage readers to think about color choices that assist in creating a mood or tone or to examine where illustrations are placed on a page.
- **Introducing vocabulary:** Wordless picture books entice children to create their own story which in turn promotes richer language, more complex sentences, and longer phrases. As children explain the story’s action or the emotions of a character, teachers should prompt or supply vocabulary that is descriptive.
- **Inspiring storytelling:** As a child tells the story that is presented through illustrations, it assists in developing storytelling skills such as details about the setting, descriptions of the characters, and specifics about the story’s action. A wordless picture book also prompts children to create their own dialogue for characters.
- **Understanding story structure and sequencing:** Wordless picture books provide excellent examples of basic story structure and the sequence of story events. Children can relate what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story. They can also talk about different plot elements and sequence of events. This ability to summarize a story helps develop comprehension skills.
- **Inspiring writing:** What better way to inspire writing than in telling a story from a wordless picture book. Children can write a narrative, add dialogue, or generate their own story or sequel to the book. Young children not proficient in writing can tell their story to an adult who can turn it into text that the child can read.

*This guide was prepared by Cyndi Giorgis, educator and researcher. She is the dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso.*
In this creative picture book with interactive flaps, recipient of a 2014 Caldecott Honor Book award, Flora and her graceful flamingo friend explore the trials and joys of friendship through an elaborate synchronized dance. With a twist, a turn, and even a flop, these unlikely friends learn at last how to dance together in perfect harmony. Full of humor and heart, this stunning performance (and splashy ending!) will have readers clapping for more.

**BEFORE READING**

- Show children the book jacket of *Flora and the Flamingo*. Ask, “What do you think this story is about? What do you know about flamingoes? Have you ever seen a flamingo?”
- Point out the silver medal and talk about what award the book received. Explain that the Caldecott Honor award is given to a “distinguished” picture book for children. Ask what they think “distinguished” means.
- Read the first sentence on the book jacket flap, “Friendship is a beautiful dance.” Ask children, “What does this sentence mean to you?”
- View the endpapers. What color are the endpapers? Ask, “Do you think that color is significant in the story? Why or why not?”

**DURING READING**

- As you share *Flora and the Flamingo* with children, ask at appropriate points in the story, “What is happening? What do you think will happen next? What do you think should happen?”
- Discuss with children what the word “mimic” means and if that is what Flora is doing in the story. Divide the children into two groups and have them mimic Flora or the flamingo for a few pages to understand the idea of mimicking.
- Also have students think about the characters as they reveal more about themselves throughout the story. Have children discuss the following: Who are the characters? What is the character going to do next? What choices is the character making at different points in the story?

CONTINUED ——>
AFTER READING

• Following the first reading of the story, pair students so that one is the flamingo and the other is Flora. Share the book again and have children act out the story side-by-side. As an extension, one child can generate his/her own movement and actions for the other child to mimic.

• Compare and contrast the two book trailers found at www.chroniclebooks.com/titles/flora-and-the-flamingo. Discuss the music for each one. Which one do they feel expresses the story? Also discuss how the book is presented in each book trailer. Which one do they prefer and why?

Revisit the book and discuss or express the following:

- What colors did Molly Idle use to create the illustrations?
- What did you notice about the lines and how they created movement? How can you create lines like that with your arms or legs?
- Did you observe any changes in the sizes of the characters? Why do you think they became larger or smaller?
- Look at where the characters were placed on the pages. Why are they sometimes on the same page and at other times they are on different pages? Why did Molly Idle leave so much space on some of the pages?

EXTENSION STRATEGIES

• Exploring Emotions
Flora expresses a range of emotions throughout the story. Have children brainstorm a list of emotions that Flora expressed. Then have them write an emotion on a sticky note to post on the page where Flora exhibits that emotion. Kinesthetic learners will enjoy physically showing that emotion through facial expression or body movement. A variation of this strategy would be to take then print a digital photo of the child showing a series of emotion, and then create their own book of emotions and feelings.

• Volume Vocabulary
Flora and the Flamingo encourages children to learn a variety of terms and movements such as:

- passé
- jeté
- barre
- arabesque
- pirouette
- crescendo

Have children explore the internet to find more ballet terms and utilize www.youtube.com to discover how these movements are performed. To extend this strategy, select another type of dance and have students practice and perform those moves. Children can write their variation of a Flora story in which she dances a different type of dance with another animal.
Flora is back and this time she partners with a penguin. Twirling, leaping and gliding on skates and flippers, the duo mirror each other in an exuberant ice dance. But when Flora gives the penguin the cold shoulder, the pair must figure out a way to work together for uplifting results. In this frosty follow-up to 2014 Caldecott Honor Book, Flora and the Flamingo, artist Molly Idle creates an innovative wordless picture book with clever flaps that reveal Flora and the penguin coming together, drifting apart, and coming back together again as only true friends do.

BEFORE READING

• Ask children what they notice on the cover of Flora and the Penguin. What is unique about how “Flora” is designed? What colors are used? What is framing Flora and the penguin?
• Read the phrase, “Some friendships take a little time to warm up?” What do they think this means? Who do you think might be friends in the story?
• Open the book to the title page. Ask, “What is Flora carrying? Where does this story take place? What is the weather, season, and time of day? Is there anything unusual or familiar about the setting?”

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-1.3.

DURING READING

• As children progress through the reading of Flora and the Penguin, ask the following questions:
  o What are Flora and the penguin doing? Have you skated or seen someone skate in the way the two of them are skating?
  o What do you notice about the fish below the ice as we read the story?
  o What happened between Flora and the penguin? How did Flora behave? How did the penguin feel? What emotions do they both express?
  o What is Flora thinking at different points in the story?

Correlates with CCSS RL.1.1, 2.3.
AFTER READING

• Pair students and have each retell the story. Prior to starting have them think about the beginning, middle, and end of the story and how they might tell it so that it flows smoothly. Remind them that they are telling a story, not just describing what is on each page.

• Encourage children to scaffold their response to *Flora and the Penguin* by completing the following as they revisit the story:
  - _______ wrote this book to __________________________.
  - It is a ________________ written for ________________.
  - This illustration shows us and tells us about ________________.
  - The main idea in this illustration is ______ and is shown by ____.
  - We learn about ____________ and ______________ on this page.
  - This page makes me think of _____________________________.

EXTENSION STRATEGIES

• Dandy Dialogue
  Students can create dialogue for each character in *Flora and the Penguin* and perform it as a reader's theater. Have students work in pairs or small groups and discuss what each character might be saying on the page. As they write down the dialogue remind them to pay attention to punctuation so that the reader knows exactly how that sentence should be read. Students should also discuss the type of voice for each character. Then they can recruit two other students to perform as the reader's theater script is read.

• Exciting Events
  Have children consider the 5 “wh” and a “how.” First, pose questions that will get them thinking about the story such as:
  - What was the most important part of the story?
  - How long do you think it took for the story to happen?
  - Who is telling the story?
  - Where did the story take place? Why did you think it was set on the ice?
  - What character was the most interesting and why?
  - What do you think the characters were thinking or feeling?

Using an event map, have the complete the graphic organizer by answering the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happened?</th>
<th>Where did it happen?</th>
<th>When did it happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did it happen?</td>
<td>Why did it happen?</td>
<td>Who was involved?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The darling, dancing Flora is back, and this time she's found two new friends: a pair of peacocks! But amidst the fanning feathers and mirrored movements, Flora realizes that the push-and-pull between three friends can be a delicate dance. Will this trio find a way to get back in step? In the third book featuring Flora and her feathered friends, Molly Idle's gorgeous art combines with clever flaps to reveal that no matter the challenges, true friends will always find a way to dance, leap, and soar—together.

BEFORE READING

• Show the class the book jacket of Flora and the Peacocks. Ask the students if they have ever seen a peacock or a peacock feather, and invite them to share their thoughts about what makes a peacock unique. Explain to the children that the male peacock has a gorgeous long tail full of feathers that trails down behind him when he walks, but that when the peacock gets excited and puts his tail up, the feathers spread out like a fan displaying myriad shades of iridescent blue and green. Write down the word “iridescent” and talk about what it means.

• Open the book to the double-spread title page. Discuss the various shapes that are shown on these two pages.

• Conduct a brief picture walk of the first few pages of Flora and the Peacocks. Point to the expression on Flora's face. Ask children what they imagine Flora is thinking. What do they think she wants to do?

• If Flora and the Flamingo and Flora and the Penguin have been shared with students, have them compare the three book jackets. Discuss the colors used and the differences they see on each book jacket, including the way that Flora interacts with the flamingo, penguin, and peacocks. Ask the children to consider their knowledge of the previous books and predict what Flora and the Peacocks might be about.

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-1.9.

DURING READING

• As you share Flora and the Peacocks with students, stop periodically and ask the following questions:
  ○ What's going on in this picture?
  ○ What do you see that makes you say that?
  ○ How do you think Flora is feeling? How do you think the peacocks are feeling? Have their emotions changed from the previous pages? If so, how and why?
  ○ What more can you find in the illustrations?
  ○ What do you think will happen next?

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-2.7.

For more strategies on reading wordless picture books, see the Chronicle Books blog post “How to Read a Book With No Words” by literacy expert Julie Barton (chroniclebooks.com/blog).

CONTINUED
AFTER READING

• At the conclusion of the book, have children identify the top three most important events in the story (with number one being the most important). Write these down on a chart and then discuss the emotions felt by the characters during each event. Draw the prevailing emotion next to each of the three statements.

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-2.3.

• Conduct a full “walk” through the book and discuss how Molly Idle uses shapes and color to assist in telling the story.

• Discuss the conflict between Flora and the peacocks. Ask the students if their friends have ever left them out. How did they feel? How was this conflict resolved in the story? How did the children resolve the conflict with their friends?

• After Flora and the Peacocks is read aloud, instruct the class to retell the story by sharing what happened in the beginning, the middle, and at the end.

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-2.2.

EXTENSION STRATEGIES

• Problem-Solving ABCs
  Use the following ABC strategy with the class to discuss and record the problems encountered between Flora and the peacocks:
  
  A sk, “What is the problem?
  B rainstorm ways to solve the problem.
  C hoose the best solution(s).

  Next, ask students to role-play the conflict between Flora and the peacocks using the solution they determined was the best one. Select two different children to role-play how the peacocks could have acted differently. Encourage the children to use movement initially and then role-play using words.

Correlates with CCSS.RL.K-1.1.

• Friend or Foe?
  When Flora meets the two peacocks, they become angry when one feels left out and destroy her fan as a result. Use the following chart to discuss and record what a good friend is, does, says, and is not.

  A Good Friend...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IS</th>
<th>DOES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAYS</td>
<td>IS NOT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-1.10.

• Story Frame
  Story frames can be used to encourage children to make predictions as well as to retell the story. The frame can be completed as the story is read or at the conclusion. This strategy is particularly useful for Flora and the Peacocks or any of the Flora series of books by Molly Idle because the story is told visually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>In this story the problem starts when...</th>
<th>After that...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next...</td>
<td>Then...</td>
<td>The problem is finally solved when...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-1.2, K-2.7.

Correlates with CCSS RL.K-2.3, K-2.2.