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'Visual learning is the best learning - it

lets you be creative while learning': Exploring ways to begin guided writing in second language learning through the use of comics

**Babel**

**Volume 45 Issue 2/3 (2010)**

**Abstract:** This study investigated the use of comics (Cary, 2004) in a guided writing experience in secondary school Italian language learning. The main focus of the peer group interaction task included the exploration of visual sequencing and visual integration (Bailey, O'Grady-Jones, and McGown, 1995) using image and text to create a comic strip narrative in Italian. A group of 26 year 9 students participated. The 26 students had very limited experience in writing in Italian. This investigation represents phase two of a larger study that explores the development of visual literacy in languages learning (Rossetto and Wyra, 2006). Two sources of data are discussed. Firstly, the students' ability to use key vocabulary productively is assessed, in consideration of the quality of the narratives produced. Secondly, both the students' and the Italian teacher's written reflections on the guided writing experience are analysed. The reflective analyses of the year 9 students were collated and compared to gauge whether the participants considered that working with image and text, in peer group interaction, enhanced or detracted from their ability to express themselves through writing in the target language. The study finds that, in the light of the increasingly visual nature of communication, visual modalities can be an important part of meaning making in second language learning.



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