



MODULE: EYEC5004

Story telling



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Traditional and Digital Storytelling “We’re going on a Bear Hunt”

Storytelling has long been regarded in early childhood education as a teaching tool that establishes the foundation for young learners' language and literacy development (Asta Cekaite, Polly Björk-Willén, 2018). Children benefit from storytelling in many ways, including language development, imagination, creativity, and cognitive abilities. (Williams, 2024). By being exposed to a diverse range of stories, children can improve their expressive language, vocabulary, and comprehension. In turn, this fosters the growth of excellent literacy abilities, setting the stage for future academic achievement (Thompson, 2023).

Peck (2016), stated, the oral interpretation of a traditional, literary, or first-hand narrative is known as storytelling. Children can naturally develop their language skills through storytelling. It is commonly known that the development of later reading skills is correlated with early language. Oral language is the foundation of emergent literacy. This is developed through the "back and forth" of conversational turn-taking, exposure to a variety of words to expand vocabulary, and exposure to books, stories, rhymes, songs, and regular reading habits. (Rowland, Noble, Lingwood, and Coates. 2016).

Storytelling is an important component of language and literacy learning, especially for children between 4-5 years of age. At this developmental stage, children are learning new words, improving their listening skills, and distinguishing between sounds, words, and writing. The best approach for fostering these skills is through the use of stories. In particular, "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen is suitable for both traditional and digital storytelling, as it elicits participation and contains repetitive language and a chorus, making it rhythmic and full of imagery. Stories are around 22 times more memorable than facts alone, according to child psychologist Jerome Bruner (Williams, 2024).

In this paper, both methods of storytelling will be applied to the same book: traditional storytelling, which involves physical items, body gestures, and objects, pictures, word spelling, and digital storytelling, which uses multimedia equipment, visual sensory aids and props. The focus will be on how both methods can foster language and literacy, such as

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phonological awareness and vocabulary, as well as the use of technology, while stimulating children's imagination and encouraging active participation.

Traditional Storytelling- It should be noted that storytelling for children aged 4-5 years is characterized by the use of vocal sounds and gestures to maintain their attention and support learning. During the reading of the book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt", I will employ vocal variation to convey the feelings of surprise, danger, and other emotions of the characters. For instance, the excitement at the beginning of the hunt is expressed in a joyful and cheerful manner, while the moment of grasping the bear in the cave is spoken in a tense tone. Inflectional changes in pitch and loudness, for example, capture children's attention and enhance their listening, immersing them in the story. Research found that speaking expressively when reading to children leads to better attention and improved narrative understanding (Suggate et al., 2021).

Lucarevschi (2016) asserted, the success of storytelling, according to most research, depends on how enjoyable, captivating, and memorable it is; this increases children's interest in listening to stories as well as in discussing, writing, and reading about them. To ensure that children participate practically in the story, the repetitive language, such as "We're going on a bear hunt, we're going to catch a big one!" allows them to easily join in. These well-known phrases help build ideas and foster language development by reinforcing expectations of what will happen next in the narrative. By pausing before repeating such lines, children can complete the sentence, which helps in developing their speaking skills and building confidence. This approach, encouraging children to follow the story or answer questions, helps them feel involved and improves their language skill.

Use of Props and Visual Aids To make it more engaging, I intend to use props during the storytelling that correspond to the scenes depicted in the book. For instance, having children imitate the "long, wavy grass" using green paper or the "swirling, whirling snowstorm" using cotton wool assists children in visualizing the words. Thus, when physically observing these representations, they realize the connection between the stimuli before their eyes and the words being uttered, which enhances their comprehension of vocabulary and concepts. A study on children's learning suggests that when children are able to point at things while hearing the names of those things, they improve their ability to learn the names of those things by a very large factor (Rahiem, 2021).

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Furthermore, to support letter-sound knowledge, I will place spelling cards of words used in the story, such as 'grass,' 'mud,' and 'cave.' I show children how words on paper are related to the sounds they make, thus enabling them to see how written words are equal to the objects they signify. Using meaningful print in context sets the stage for emergent literacy because children develop an understanding that print conveys meaning (Taylor & Leung, 2020).

Additionally, this supports Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development, which holds that facilitated interaction is the only way for language acquisition to take place (Alharbi, 2023). Bruner agrees with Vygotsky that language mediates the interaction between an individual's response and outside stimuli (Macleod, 2024). However, according to Noam Chomsky, who created the nativist theory of language acquisition, people are naturally inclined to learn languages because to a biological capacity called the LAD (Levityinen, 2023).

Props also help enhance children's understanding of the information being imparted during storytelling. Educators should ensure that they use narration and story props to teach children since these increases their ability to remember what they are being taught. For instance, when they use cotton wool to mimic snow, they will be in a better position to remember the word 'snow' and the experience of how it feels. This kind of learning, by using multiple senses, is consistent with Piaget's cognitive stage theory as it advocates for sensory concrete actions by children (Qorbanpoor Lafmejani, 2022).

Promoting Literacy and Language Skills Storytelling fosters a number of language and literacy competencies relevant to children's learning. Incorporating children into the repetitive features of We're Going on a Bear Hunt introduces them to wordplay, which enhances phonological awareness. Phrases such as "swishy swashy" and "splash splosh" help children identify word parts like sounds, contributing to a child's early reading ability. Phonological awareness is highly correlated with the decoding process important for reading (Goswami, 2001).

Besides teaching sound recognition skills, the story helps children learn certain words better by repeating them several times. Nedovic (2023) believes one of the best ways children learn is through repetition and rhyme and this story provides all which is excellent for developing early language and reading abilities. If a child hears a word like 'cave' or 'river,' I will ask the child to tell me what they understand the word to mean, supporting their

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comprehension. Questions such as, “What do you think the grass looks like?” or “How would you cross a river?” are good for encouraging critical evaluation of newly learned materials and the use of new vocabulary.

The interaction described above aligns with Bruner’s theory of scaffolding, in which adults assist children as they learn language. Another advantage of storytelling is that it can improve a child’s narrative abilities. While telling the story, I will emphasize the identification of sequences, and at certain points, I will ask the children to reflect on the story. For instance, posing questions like “What happened before they got to the cave?” will help children appreciate storytelling patterns — the beginning, middle, and end — as they prepare for more complex stories in the future. Developing such sequencing skills supports their reading and writing later on (Ingov, 2022).

The main contribution of an adult during storytelling is vital in language development, as discussed below. By serving as a facilitator, I can demonstrate both language and socio-communication development. Instead of providing the children with answers, I ask them to guess what will happen next or to state what they think the characters feel, which makes children feel listened to, thus encouraging them to speak confidently and express their ideas. This approach aligns with Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, where a child’s learning is more effective with the support of an adult or another child (Sage, 2022). For children who have not yet fully developed speech, I will ensure that I support them through scaffolding techniques. For example, if a child fails to respond to a question about what the characters might do next, I can encourage them by saying, “You think they will continue searching for the bear because they are strong. What do you think?” This gives them the confidence to respond, encouraging them to be more active in group discussions and to gradually develop their language skills.

Digital Storytelling

Utilizing Digital Tools for Storytelling In the context of digital storytelling, the use of multimedia elements deepens the impact of the narrative by engaging more senses than simple storytelling does. Children will be engaged through multiple senses when real scenes from “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” are animated and accompanied by sound effects. In this way, the narrator enhances the storytelling by having the children watch visuals, listen to sounds, and enjoy music (Maureen, Meij and Jong, 2021).

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Furthermore, digital media allows the inclusion of components that cannot be implemented in traditional narration. For example, in some variations of the application, children can touch items on the screen to hear additional sounds or see extra movements in the picture, which stimulates their attention during the reading of the story. These forms of interaction enrich learning experiences and help children link the content and features of the pictures and words with other aspects of storytelling. Digital storytelling also relates to the creation and interpretation of multimodal literacy, the process of constructing meaning using text, images, and sound (Djonov, Tseng, and Lim, 2021).

In terms of repetition and interaction, digital storytelling has the following advantages. Children can pause, rewind, and review parts of the desired digital story, allowing them to concentrate on problematic segments or listen to unfamiliar terms multiple times. This is important for learning, especially vocabulary and meaning, as it can be done repeatedly, reinforcing comprehension through repeated exposure. By reviewing sections of the shared story, children can rehear new words and phrases, aiding their language acquisition and helping them make connections between words and context. Additionally, digital storytelling familiarizes children with digital literacy skills, which is especially important in today's society. Children learn how to manipulate objects on the screen and navigate through a story with or without parental help—skills that are increasingly valuable in the growing world of technology in both school and life. Evidence suggests that awareness of technology at a young age benefits children's ability to use and interact with technology (Livingstone, Mascheroni, and Stoilova, 2023).

Interactive features in digital storytelling can be beneficial is by promoting physical participation. For example, in a digital book, children could be encouraged to “swipe to help the family go through the grass” or “pretend to walk on tiptoe with the characters in the cave.” These physical interaction phases, when included in digital storytelling, relate directly to the kinaesthetic learning aspects of traditional storytelling, keeping children attentive while reinforcing motor memory and enhancing recall of information (da Silva, 2022.)

Technological proficiency is fostered through digital storytelling by learning how to use a tablet (tapping on icons, changing volume levels), as well as navigating through interactive features like pausing or replaying parts of the story. Furthermore, digital pieces that involve text, images, and sound help children develop multimodal literacy, which becomes increasingly important as they grow older and are exposed to more complex forms of communication. Thus, the practice of digital storytelling involves not only language and

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literacy skills but also critical digital literacy. Children acquire useful skills such as understanding the flow of a story, exploring various forms of media, and interacting with technological devices, all of which are valuable in future education, social interactions, and everyday life (Djonov, Tseng, and Lim, 2021). These foundational skills prepare them to effectively engage in the digital world.

Conclusion- Regardless of whether it is in the traditional or digital format, storytelling is one of the best methods for enhancing language and literacy skills among young children. In teaching activities that involve “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt,” both methods allow children’s participation and contribute to their learning of essential skills in phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. Storytelling with objects allows for personal teaching and promotes imagination and manipulative, while also appealing to children’s senses. Digital storytelling enhances children’s learning by appealing to multiple senses through sounds, images, and touch, integrating technology. These two approaches are rich and highly effective because they complement each other in teaching children how to use language. As educators, it is better to incorporate both conventional and modern ways of storytelling to present learning in various styles, thus covering all aspects of children’s development and interests. In terms of learning competencies, storytelling fosters a love for reading, enhances communication skills, and helps children learn about the print-rich environment in both the physical and digital worlds, supporting lifelong literacy and language.

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