

Language and Literacy in the Digital Age.

This analysis will discuss how storytelling can promote babies' and young children's language development and early literacy development, also discussing digital literacy skills and the affects of it.

Storytelling has the ability to capture and develop the imagination, by encouraging the thought process of themes, characters, and plots.(Maureen, I.Y., van der Meij, H. and de Jong, T., 2021) Sintonen, S., Kumpulainen, K., and Vartiainen, J. (2018) explains that this encourages the literacy development of children. Marsh, J., Kontovourki, S., Tafa, E. and Salomaa, S., (2017) explains that whilst the use of technology is becoming increasingly common, in everyday life and learning areas, children's skills need to be developed so that they can productively utilise within a digital environment, being able to create and express themselves.

Schwartz, S., and Sparks, S, D. (2019) explain that there are many different beliefs on the learning of reading. However, they argue the proven research that reading does not come naturally to children, it is however, seen as a code that children need teaching through systematic phonics. The process of learning to communicate comes from listening and repeating sounds. Children can also begin associating objects with its name when the name is repeated and the object is in sight.

Children's nervous and motor systems are at their best during the early childhood, being an import time for children's learning and future developments. It is explained that during this age, children are able to learn early literacy through observations and absorbing information naturally through their environment and experiences. Literacy skills begin developing from the time of pregnancy, through listening to the world and environment from inside the womb and making sense of familiar voices. Storytelling is just one example of media used to develop the literacy of babies ad children, the interactive news between the child and the storyteller, develop their imaginative skills (Dewi, N.A.R., 2020).

Metland, D. (No date) explains that after four to six months in the womb, babies begin to develop hearing. They are able to hear the heartbeat, breathing, and voice of the mother but can also hear faint and unclear voices outside of the mothers body, this means they may recognise music which they may recognise after birth. Noises heard

In the womb which the baby may recognise after birth may sooth and relax them in times of distress. Babies are able to begin learning in the womb, the use of repetition can help this as they begin recognising the sounds and rhythms of what is being repeated. Laing, C. And Bergelson, E. (2020) discuss how babies develop from babbling to recognising words that Match their sounds. It is found that the babies babble matches familiar words used in their caregivers speech. It is stated that by ten months old, babies babbling often matches what they see or hear. I CAN (no date) says that between three to six months, babies begin babbling to themselves, then progress to babbling to others as a way of communication at six to twelve months. Babies typically start saying around ten single words at twelve to fifteen months. Geller, A. (2022) explains that around 10 months of age, babies begin pausing, taking turns, using rhythm and tone in their way of communication, this is known as conversational babbling. It is stated that through use of eye contact, imitating babble, talking, singing and reading books with infants can encourage their communication. Babies are more likely to pay attention and pick up on words when adults use higher toned voices and exaggerated speech. Words pronounced this way stand out more to babies, encouraging the development of their speech and language (Laing, C. 2016), for this reason, during both stories, lots of different tones and emotions were used to keep the children engaged and interested, and to also explain the different emotions in the stories.

Babies engage with stories as they enjoy listening to the tones and rhythms of the storytellers voice. As children babble, storytelling encourages children's language development as they begin learning words that they often hear. Children are able to learn the word "page" through language used while storytelling such as "turning the page" or "click the page" which will also help them differentiate between traditional books and digital books.

As children's language develops, the storyteller can ask them questions about the books and pictures inside, this enables the child to make connections with the word and the image. Through the story of 'The monkey Puzzle' questions such as "do you this is her mum?", this encourages the children to engage with the story and try to problem solve throughout. There is also opportunities for the child to ask questions to make their own connections. By making storytelling enjoyable for babies and children, they will be eager to learn to read as their language and skills develop further

(Wilkinson, K. 2019). In both videos, props were used of different characters which can also encourage children to make connections between words and images. In the video of 'The Monkey Puzzle', green fabric was used on the floor to portray a jungle, with lots of green leaves and plants in the background. This makes the story more enjoyable and engaging for the children, as it brings the book to life and helps them identify different environments and surroundings. Story time can be made enjoyable and engaging through the use of props. As seen in both videos, props of each character were used, to encourage the children to make connections and understand the story in more depth. The environment and backgrounds were also considered, making them fit the theme of each story, to create a wider impact for the children. Greimann, N. (2017) explains how to use different props to bring a story to life. She raises the idea of using a green sheet with objects underneath to create a scene of mountains. This idea was used in the story of 'The Monkey Puzzle' to add to the 'jungle' affect. The use of props during storytelling is considered important by many theorists. Vygotsky, L. S. (1966) explains a theory that play has purpose discusses the impact of children making connections between actions, reality and objects which have significant meaning. Piaget, J. (1962) also states that children make connections between play materials and literacy. Both literacy and play are significant influences to the social and cognitive development of children. (Barton, K. L. 2013). Traditional storytelling encourages the expansion of vocabulary and introduces symbolic use. Storytelling can help teach appropriate behaviour through different topics and characters used in the book. Through tradition storytelling, it is important to shape the stories to suit the audience of children, share attention with the children, use eye contact to engage the children and encourage them to get involved. The storyteller has an opportunity to discuss the use and learning opportunities of books and to create a sense of joy and excitement when it comes to the children themselves learning to read and write. To create this effect for the children, storytellers can take the children's areas of developments into consideration, consider cultures, families within the audience and community and accept and respect individuals differences when choosing a story. If the audience have different individual needs, the storyteller should adapt and adjust their aim of storytelling to suit each child. This could include breaking the story down, explaining it as it goes on, using different paces and tones of voices. The storyteller can use different voices and actions to bring characters to life and

captivate the children they are reading to. A book that includes repetitive words, phrases or incidents can be easier for a younger audience to follow along and captivate their attention (Zeece, P.D., 1997).

As seen in the video of 'The Monkey Puzzle' attention was paid to the environment and background to make it fit the story, this will encourage children to interact and engage with the story and understand the themes and characters better, encouraging them to also use their imagination in picturing a real jungle and animals.

Digital storytelling can be used by including photographs, artwork, music, voice-overs, video clips and text (Cunsoo W. A., Harper, S.L., Edge, V.L. 2012). Page, R. And Thomas, B. (2011) explains that the rising increase of accessibility to digital media is provoking a newly found way of storytelling using digital media. This has been done through using photos as visual storytelling, documentation's of life through photos, YouTube, sharing videos and movies. Although there being many visible benefits of storytelling in the digital age, some also explain the negative impacts it has on storytelling. Wilson, M. (2014) States that the growing rate and accessibility to technology has impacted the way storytelling is carried out and there is a major change to traditional storytelling approaches. It was thought that the increase of technology would be threatening to traditional storytelling and people would, in the future become 'story-less creatures' (Gold, J. 2002).

As seen in the video of 'The Colour Monster', a PowerPoint of the original story was created, with a use of animations when the screen was clicked, this can be an approach of keeping the children engaged with the story and a fun way of reading with children.

Storytelling has the ability to develop children's oracy, reading and writing.

The teaching of oracy can benefit children enormously. Children's cognitive gains, social and development gains and civic engagement and empowerment is developed through oracy (Millard, W. And Gaunt, A. 2018). Bruner believed that humans have a readiness to organise experiences into a narrative form. He also states that through storytelling, the strange is made familiar, and storytellers are able to create scenarios and circumstances. In the book, where children can apply their knowledge and imagination to think of an outcome (Crace, J. 2007).

Digital storytelling can improve oracy skills as children will remain engaged throughout the story, this will in turn promote the children's independence of speaking and relaying stories back (Nair, V., and Yunis, M.M. 2021)

In both videos, the children are being asked lots of questions throughout and are being encouraged to join in. Hibbin, R. (2016) (Explains that this is known as 'oral storytelling' which has been found to be a more personal and engaging way of storytelling, allowing the development of their communication and oracy skills throughout the activity. Children learn their oracy skills through the communications they hear around them. Picture books are popular in early childhood development and children are able to make connections between the pictures and words (Montag, J.L., Jones, M.N. And Smith, L.B., 2015). In both videos, lots of pictures were included in the books as well as props of the different characters, this will support their oracy development as they can recognise the different animals or surroundings in the pictures and make recognise the words they are hearing, inspiring them to respect the language they are hearing.

Considering the growing rate of technology in everybody's day-to-day lives, children are often exposed to technology, through phones, iPads, televisions and many other appliances. Children mostly use these devices to watch videos, films or play games. Uncommonly thought, this develops a range of skills and capabilities through the use of technology. It is believed that reading and writing skills can be developed through the use of digital skills (Marsh, J., 2016).

By promoting digital literacy from a young age, it encourages the learning of digital skills which can be used throughout their lives. The video of 'The Colour Monster' promotes digital literacy skills through the exposure of technology in the setting, and identifying different language used when referring to the digital story. Children could have their own opportunities of clicking the next page, to develop these skills further.

There are many theories supporting the benefits of storytelling, including Vygotsky, who believes that children learn through a more knowledgeable other and in the presence of other people (Abtahi, Y., Graven, M. And Lerman, S., 2017). Froebel who believed rhyming and rhythms were beneficial for the development of language acquisition, and that it aims to support the education and nurturing element whilst also enhancing understanding of their world (Hoban, M. 2022) Bronfenbrenner and Piaget,

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who suggests using senses to interact with young children and that children learn through experiences and developing their senses (Rayleigh, C. 2019). Sensory items were included in both videos of stories through the use of props, where children would have the opportunity to hold and feel them.

This analysis has discussed the importance of storytelling, both traditionally and digitally, as the development of babies' and children's literacy can develop through a range of storytelling approaches.

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