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Story Telling

In early childhood education, storytelling is essential because it fosters children's language development, creativity, and awareness of their surroundings. Children are introduced to a wide vocabulary through storytelling, which also provides them with opportunity to develop their speech, listening, and comprehension skills in an interesting and meaningful setting. Research shows that children with better literacy skills gain many positive benefits like better jobs and greater self-esteem. (Winters, 2025) The habits and abilities of the storyteller, such as the use of expressive voice, physical interaction, and relevant materials that help comprehension, have a significant impact on how good storytelling is. (Department for Education, 2021) With an emphasis on early childhood settings, this article will evaluate important storytelling practices and skills. It will compare and contrast how well these strategies work to encourage children's engagement and learning, as well as how they promote various facets of literacy and the development of digital literacy.

Key Behaviours and Skills

Language and communication are central to the curriculum and have been given the importance that they deserve in terms of promoting children's development. Since the actions and abilities of the storyteller influence the children's engagement, comprehension, and enjoyment of the narrative, the storyteller's role in early childhood education is crucial to the success of storytelling as a learning tool. Strong communication skills are crucial because storytellers give children a rich language example to follow and learn from by modelling clear speech, a diverse vocabulary, and proper sentence structures. (Dubiel, 2024) Children's

comprehension is strengthened by expressive reading, which emphasises meaning, emotion, and significant events in the story through adjustments to tone, pitch, tempo, and volume. (Mastermindbehavior.com, 2025) In addition, this emotion draws in children and keeps them focused, which is crucial for young learners since their listening skills are still developing. To make stories come to life and spark children's imaginations, skilled storytellers employ a variety of engagement strategies, including body language, gestures, and facial emotions, this can be done through digital and traditional storytelling. (Lonigan and Whitehurst, 1998) Story tellers can ask open ended questions, Present ethical dilemmas and encourage prediction to increase childrens critical thinking to the maximum, by engaging with children while storytelling promotes active engagement instead of passive listening, which further improves learning. Storytellers foster a shared, social experience that promotes language development and communication confidence in children by adopting techniques like pausing, asking for comments, and reacting to their reactions. Children's comprehension of the story is deepened and their cognitive skills are encouraged through the use of open-ended questions and prediction, such as asking them what they believe might happen next or how a character would feel. By encouraging children to draw connections between the story and their own experiences, these activities also help them understand it better. All things considered, good storytelling enables practitioners to encourage emotional engagement and creativity, model language use, and enhance listening and comprehension abilities. (Vygotsky, 1978) Storytelling is an effective approach for promoting early literacy development in a purposeful and entertaining learning environment when it is expressive and interactive.

How voice changes, props and rhyming are beneficial in story telling?

Voice changes, the use of props, and rhyming books are highly effective storytelling strategies in early childhood education, as each supports children's engagement, comprehension, and early literacy development in different but complementary ways. Variations in tone, pitch, tempo, and emotion greatly improve children's involvement and understanding of a narrative. (National Literacy Trust, 2023) By changing their voice to represent different characters or emotions, storytellers help children better understand feelings, motives, and actions within a story. This supports both emotional literacy and narrative comprehension, as children learn to

connect vocal cues with meaning. Changes in volume and tempo also help to maintain attention, preventing stories from becoming monotonous and enabling children to concentrate for longer periods. Expressive voice use supports listening skills by encouraging children to attend closely to spoken language and recognise important details, while emphasis on key words or phrases can enhance comprehension and memory retention. In addition, exposure to variations in sound, rhythm, and intonation supports the development of phonological awareness, which underpins later reading and spelling skills.

The use of props provides valuable visual and tactile support that enhances children's understanding and engagement with stories, particularly for those who are still developing abstract thinking skills. Physical representations of characters or events help children make sense of spoken language and support comprehension. Props encourage active participation, imaginative play, and interaction with the story, which supports expressive communication and language development. (Evelyn, 2014) From a literacy perspective, props support story comprehension by highlighting key characters and events and helping children follow the sequence of the narrative. Visual cues also strengthen memory and recall, enabling children to retell stories in the correct order. In addition, props support vocabulary development by providing clear, concrete references for new words, making them easier to understand and remember.

Rhyming books further support early literacy development by introducing children to the sound patterns and structures of spoken language in an engaging way. Regular exposure to rhyme supports phonological awareness, which is a strong predictor of later reading success, as children learn to recognise and manipulate sounds within words. Studies suggest that although phonological awareness is important for learning to read, children's understanding of word parts and meanings also plays a significant and lasting role in reading development, particularly for comprehension and decoding unfamiliar words. (Deacon and Kirby, 2004) Rhyming texts help children identify sound patterns and predict upcoming words, encouraging active participation and strengthening confidence and enjoyment of language. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of rhyming books supports memory, making it easier for children to recall vocabulary, phrases, and story events. Bryant et al. (1989) found that early exposure to nursery rhymes was linked to later reading and spelling success, rhyming books also support

early reading and spelling development by helping children understand that words are made up of smaller sound units, laying the foundations for decoding skills.

All things considered, rhyming books, voice changes, and props all help with various learning skills, such as vocabulary growth, phonological awareness, listening comprehension, and memory. Together, these techniques produce a rich, captivating, and inclusive narrative experience that accommodates a variety of learning preferences. In addition to captivating young listeners, this comprehensive approach actively fosters their verbal and cognitive development. Teachers and parents can create a more dynamic atmosphere that supports the development of early literacy by combining a variety of approaches. These kinds of experiences are crucial for developing children's communication abilities and fostering a lifetime love of reading.

How Storytelling Promotes Literacy and Digital Literacy?

Since storytelling fosters children's language development through a variety of learning techniques, it is an effective strategy for advancing both traditional and digital literacy in early childhood education. In terms of traditional literacy, storytelling helps children learn and utilise new words by exposing them to a variety of vocabulary in relevant circumstances. Children who regularly engage with stories also develop their listening and comprehension skills as they learn to follow stories, decipher events, and understand the feelings and actions of characters. (Maureen, van der Meij and de Jong, 2021) Children gain an awareness of tale structure, beginnings, middles, and ends, through repeated storytelling experiences, which helps them with later writing and narrative comprehension. (Rahiem, 2021)

Children's comprehension of print is also improved when practitioners highlight text while storytelling by pointing to words, talking about titles, or demonstrating how to handle books. Through the use of interactive whiteboards, storytelling applications, and e-books, storytelling is increasingly promoting digital literacy in addition to traditional literacy. By fusing text, voice, visuals, and animation, these digital resources provide multimodal learning experiences that can improve comprehension and engagement. (Rahiem, 2021) Clickable elements, highlighted text, and audio narration are examples of interactive features that promote active

engagement and help children navigate digital texts. When utilised properly, digital storytelling can inspire children who might not be as interested in traditional literature and aid in the development of critical abilities like making thoughtful use of technology and interpreting digital data. All things considered, storytelling fosters the development of literacy by combining established language abilities with newly developed digital competencies, underscoring its ongoing significance in early childhood education today

Compare and Contrast Storytelling Techniques

Children's engagement and learning are supported in different ways by various storytelling approaches, such as rhyming books, voice changes, and the use of props. In order to assist children follow the story and pay attention, voice alterations mainly improve auditory learning by employing changes in tone, pitch, and tempo to express meaning, emotion, and character. Since children rely on vocal clues to interpret the story, this strategy is very useful in boosting listening skills, comprehension, and emotional understanding. On the other hand, the use of props facilitates tactile and visual learning by offering tangible representations of events and people. (Ghannoum and Cooper, 2020) Props give children tangible references to help them understand stories, which is especially helpful for children who learn best by seeing or touching things. Rhyming books, on the other hand, provide a greater emphasis on phonological development since they reinforce early reading and spelling abilities and help young children become more aware of sound patterns through repeated exposure to rhyme and rhythm. Even if each method works well, when applied separately, they have drawbacks. Children who need visual aids may be at a disadvantage if voice changes are used excessively, and if props are used carelessly, they may divert attention from the story. Similarly, if children just concentrate on guessing rhymes rather than comprehending content, rhyming novels may emphasise sound patterns over deeper narrative comprehension. However, a more comprehensive and inclusive storytelling experience is produced when these strategies are integrated. The importance of a well-rounded and intentional storytelling practice in early childhood education is highlighted by the integration of expressive voice, visual aids, and rhyming texts, which promotes diverse learning styles and reinforces literacy development through complimentary techniques.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the behaviours and abilities of the storyteller are crucial to effective storytelling in early childhood education because they have a direct impact on the engagement, comprehension, and literacy development of the children. Effective storytellers model language and provide meaningful learning experiences through interaction, communication, and expressiveness. According to the investigation, rhyming texts, voice changes, and props all have unique and beneficial roles in promoting early reading. Props offer tactile and visual support that facilitates learning, recall, and narrative retelling, while voice alterations improve listening, comprehension, and phonological awareness through expressive and captivating delivery. By helping children identify and anticipate sound patterns, rhyme books support phonological development, memory, and early decoding abilities. Crucially, as these resources can be used through traditional story telling as well as digital storytelling, this essay has shown that no single storytelling method is adequate by itself. Rather, a more comprehensive and inclusive learning environment that accommodates a variety of learning preferences and literacy requirements is produced by fusing rhythmic language, illustrations, and vocal expressiveness. (Pesco and Gagné, 2017). The success of these strategies has been supported throughout the study by educational theory and research, which reaffirms the idea that intentional, research informed storytelling is crucial for fostering early literacy outcomes. All things considered, when supported by expert practice and theoretical knowledge, storytelling continues to be an effective teaching technique.

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