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An Evaluation of Language and Literacy in the Digital Age

Storytelling is a powerful tool in which anyone can captivate the attention of another person (NPR, 2020). The practioner chose to read “We’re going on a Bear Hunt” because it reminds them of when they were younger and more imaginative. The story is all about being brave when facing obstacles and having a cheerful outlook no matter the situation.

There are numerous benefits of storytelling such as improved retention, recall and imagination (Boris, 2017). Peg Neuhauser discovered that learning that is based on a compelling narrative is retained for a longer period and with more accuracy than learning that is based on data and facts cited in The University of Zimbabwe (no date). Additionally, according to studies by Bruner, facts that are woven into a story or tale have a 20-fold higher chance of being recalled as they require attention and imagination (Popova, no date). Additionally, storytelling strengthens the bonds between educators and learners. Telling tales opens doors to deep conversations and friendships. Everyone benefits from a more encouraging learning atmosphere due to enhanced storytelling (McGraw, 2024).

The University of Kansas (2017) states children hear sounds before they are born. During pregnancy, the foetus will hear sounds around them and begin to recognise sound rhythms which they will use as a building block in later language development. Additionally, Healthline Media UK (2019) stipulates that between weeks 22 and 24, the developing baby starts to react to sound, although it can only detect low frequencies. This range grows as the brain and auditory system continue to develop. The foetus can hear and discriminate between sounds towards the end of pregnancy.

McGraw (2024) states that children must follow the storyline, comprehend the characters, and follow crucial elements to really enjoy the story, storytelling motivates students to actively listen. This demonstrates a strong link between story telling and listening and comprehension. Children also analyse a story's themes, consider different points of view and try to understand the characters emotions.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. Showing a link between emotional literacy and storytelling. Children also gain better knowledge because of story analysis, which also inspires them to use these abilities and critical thinking skills in other areas (McGraw, 2024).

The University of Cambridge (2022) defines the development of digital literacy as the new and adaptable methods of working, learning, and interacting with the environment due to the constantly evolving developments in technological advances. Gaining digital literacy is crucial for children to take advantage of the possibilities and overcome the obstacles presented by digital technology and online settings, both presently and in the future. Computer use is only one aspect of digital literacy, students must develop a variety of abilities to become digitally literate.

As seen by the practitioner in the storytelling videos there are various visual aids used to captivate the attention of the children. Wong (2024) states that effective storytelling helps to immerse the children into a completely different world fuelled by imagination. The practitioner uses props, open ended questions and actions to captivate the audience through storytelling.

Props

The National Storytelling Network (no date) illustrates that the use of props encourages all types of learning and creates a more inclusive environment for children who might have hidden needs. Furthermore, the use of props develops concepts and provides stimulation for the mind and body through the five senses (Semantic Scholar,2019). The practioner used a collection of different sized teddy bears as props within their storytelling video to present the children with a physical representation of an object in relation to the story. According to Anderson (2019) this helps to develop language and literacy skills by encouraging the children to discuss the characteristics of the object in front of them. Additionally, we are Cognitive (2024) similarly states that visual representations are imperative in storytelling as they add more depth that cannot be captured without the use of objects.

Additionally, Palmer (2021) explains that props can make children laugh and encourage interaction whilst also breaking down difficult ideas. The practioner

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. encourages interaction by making the children laugh while drawing attention to the props and being a little bit silly with characterization. The practioner also uses different tones of voice to establish feelings such as a higher pitch for anxiety and fear, this is supported by an article on BlueRose One (no date) which states that the tone of literature has a sufficient impact on achieving the desired concepts and perceptions.

Spurcreative (2015) states that the use of props is useful when trying to create a different atmosphere. The practioner uses a tent in relation to the cave to create an atmosphere that will spark imagination. Additionally, the practioner also uses the teddy bears to describe the features of a bear which some children might have difficulty visualising.

During the digital storytelling video, the big screen was the focus of the session and so the practioner moved away from using numerous props to allow the children to focus and not become overwhelmed and distracted. This is because too many props can become overwhelming for children and misdirect their attention causing them to lose interest in the story states the National Storytelling Network (no date). The practioner did not use many props in the digital storytelling video as it is not possible to use props and use the computer at the same time.

The Empowered Educator (no date) demonstrates the importance of a story bag or prop box when telling stories to children. This is because it creates a sensory experience that allows for interaction and collaboration. However, The Learning Blog (2022) states that you cannot simply offer a prop to a child within a story such as pigs for the three little pig story without giving them characteristics like a voice and emotion.

Questioning

Questioning plays a significant role in the advancement of children's critical thinking and resolution skills states Jenkins (2023). However, questions asked without a sufficient wait time are useless because children will not have enough time to think about the question and understand what is being asked of them (NSW Government, 2024). Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) ,(cited in Liu and Yoon,2024), proposed that

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. learning will only occur when children are cooperating, engaging and interacting with peers and adults not by listening to a set activity. Therefore, adults must ask meaningful questions to get the children involved. The practioner uses questioning in both

In addition to this, NSW Government (2024) states that effective questioning leads to a deeper level of thinking and provides the adult with a heightened level of what the children understand. However, often teachers neglect to ask effective questions to children while storytelling as they do not wish to fall off topic (Du, 2017). The practioner consistently uses the power of enquiry in both videos by pausing and asking "I wonder" questions. Eduphoria (2015) states that asking questions and seeking involvement will encourage independent thinking and build children's confidence to ask questions back or try to find resolutions for the questions posed to them.

Passer (2023) believes that storytelling has the ability to allow children to emotionally connect with characters in the story, this allows for a more compelling and pertinent experience. The practioner poses questions for the children to debate and answer but also relate to. In line with the Digital Competence Framework by the Welsh Government (2024) the practioner tries to incorporate progression step one of data and computational skills by asking the children to come up and click the screen which helps them understand digital cause and effect. For example, when a child touches the screen, it moves or plays whereas with a physical book nothing happens.

Actions/ Gestures

Ramamurthy *et al.*,(2023) implies that stories are a powerful communication tool that can be readily adapted to many cultures and languages since they are universally understandable. Additionally, children respond well to storytelling, which has been shown to help them retain information and foster prosocial behaviour, imagination, and creativity. Physical actions through storytelling refers to the movement and behaviour of characters in the story by conveying their emotions, intentions, and responses to situations (Fiveable, 2024). Furthermore, Bowen (2022) states that given the depth of human potential for gesture language and the evidence of how far

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. such a language can be developed, it becomes easy to understand how a simple gesture language, used regularly, can help a storyteller convey the story's content to the audience more effectively. It integrates the experience on several levels and presents the audience with the story content on a deep level. The practioner uses small actions and big actions in both videos. The small actions in the first video consist of movements in coordination with the story such as “swishy swashy” and encouraging the children to brush the grass away with their arms. Whereas in the digital storytelling video the practioner encouraged the children to get up and perform bigger movements like running through the river with big feet to get the “splish spolsh” sound.

A study by Dargue and Sweller in 2019 found that gestures are beneficial for telling a narrative when the age, skill and speech of a child has been established. It will not be useful to overwhelm a child with speech, gestures and a video if they are not able to fully comprehend their environment. Selma (2024) stipulates that Multimedia experiences provided by digital storytelling technologies can improve conventional storytelling. Particularly for visual or auditory learners, apps and websites may enhance tales with visual components, making them more interesting and approachable. Although the main purpose of storytelling is to foster intellectual and emotional growth, it may also promote physical development, particularly when interactive components are included. Motor skills can be improved by doing actions like turning pages as seen in video one, enacting scenes from stories, or utilising props. Movement-based storytelling sessions, including dancing or imitating movements, can improve coordination and physical exercise. The practioner encourages movements by insisting on the involvement from the children to get up and do the actions or click the board.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the practioner found that storytelling was better with a physical copy of the book for a few reasons. Reading a book allowed the practioner to keep a steady pace and build suspense with a slow page turn. The physical book also had detailed pictures that the children would engage with by asking questions and commenting on things that they could see. The book also allowed for the use of more props and

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. required the children to sit close and observe carefully. But, with regards to the digital storytelling the practioner found it hard to engage with the children while being digital competent. The practioner had to speak quite quickly to remain in time with the video and pause the video quite a few times to question the children. However, the story being on the screen allowed the practitioners hands to be free to do more actions and get the children involved with bigger movements. The children were required to engage and not expected to sit still. On the other hand, the video was playing quite quickly, and the children did not have enough time to see the pictures and respond to them. Both the physical and digital book pose great benefits and limitations

I have used a range of reliable sources to create a detailed evaluation of language and literacy in the Digital Age. The sources I have used are reliable and recent as they consist of government legislation and theory such as the Digital Competence Framework by the Welsh Government (2024). Most of the sources I have used are within the last ten years to ensure that the material and research is relevant to the topic. I have tried to use journals that have been peer reviewed such as Ramamurthy *et al.*, (2023) as they appear to have higher levels of credibility. I have used theorists work such as Vygotsky which might seem outdated but is supported by recent research as seen in the text "Vygotsky (1978) ,(cited in Liu and Yoon,2024" . Overall, I try to use recent, credible and relevant sources to ensure the highest standard of work is achieved.

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