

This essay highlights the significance of storytelling in a rural Primary School in Wales. Educators play a vital role in modelling and exposing children, including ALN, EAL, and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds to new vocabulary through a person-centred approach. The essay also discusses the evolution of literacy policies over the past decade. Additionally, Part 2 it reflects on the module using Gibbs Reflective model (1988) to discuss what went well and what could have been improved if completed the module again.

Parents can optimise their child's future success. A child cannot simply develop their vocabulary on their own, they need to hear these words and encounter real-life experiences (Dewey, 1938, *cited in*, Latasha, 2020) to be able to comprehend the new vocabulary. Reading books to children and talking to them consistently can inevitably enhance their language development (Chomsky, 1970, *cited in* Dickinson and Smith, 1994), (Jones, 2000). As Larrick (no date) suggests "he needs someone who knows the language better than he does and who is willing to play a pleasant game of conversation with him" (Larrick, no date, *cited in* Jones, 2000). This is an example of Vygotsky's (1980) social constructivist theory by using a more knowledgeable other (MKO) this could be a teacher or a peer. For example, paired reading with a stronger reader.

Evidence illustrates to increase in children's vocabulary and oral language skills further by discussing the vocabulary and story and asking questions relating to the story (Arnold & Whitehurst in press; Elley, 1989; Feitelson, Kita & Golstein, 1986; Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi & Share, 1993; Pemberton & Watkins, 1987, Whitehurst et al., 1988; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992, *cited in* Dickinson and Smith, 1994) to allow the process of the word meanings (Dickinson, 1984,; Elley, 1989; Flood, 1977; Stahl & Fairbanks 1986, *cited in* Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Early language development in children is also enhanced by nonverbal cues (Rowe and Goldin-Meadow, 2009) 93% of information transmitted in conversation is done so non-verbally (Mehrabian, 1972). Children from low socioeconomic

status backgrounds such as poverty and deprivation can have an adverse effect on children's language development and may be classified as "poor readers" (Noble *et al*, cited in Perkins *et al*, 2013).

According to the National Literacy Trust (no date) only 45% of 0 – 2-year-olds are read to daily or nearly every day. This increases to 58% of 3 – 4-year-olds to get them 'school ready'. However, this could be due to a lack of resources at home, such as book availability (Lin, *et al*, 2015) or parents not being able to read themselves (France and Meeks, 1987). School A offers a wide variety of genres of books for all different ages at their library which parents and children have access to via a library card to overcome this barrier. There are also parent-child interventions such as 'Springboard' to aid parents to up-skill their own cognitive, language, and reading abilities to enable them to support their child's cognitive development (Pembrokeshire.Gov.UK, 2024) (Piaget,1964). Conversely, some parents are not willing to help at home with their children's schoolwork as they feel it is the role of teacher's job and not of parent's (Mudzielwana, 2014). Moreover, by contrast, Bandura (1961) proposes children's early year's play is a vital component for promoting children's learning and development (Marthers *et al*, 2014, cited in Weinbergr, 1996) children learn through observation and communication whilst playing with their peers and discovering the world around them (Bandura 1961, cited in Nabavi (2012). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) also suggested to ignite and develop cognitive learning children need social interaction (Blakemore & Frith,2005). Compared to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954) before children can engage in learning they need to have their psychological, safety and social needs met (Maslow and Lewis, 1987). Setting A fulfils these essential needs by offering breakfast clubs, free school meals, respect, safe and secure environment this can enable children to develop and achieve their personal goals (Noltemeyer, A. *et al*, 2012).

The National Curriculum has been mandatory in Welsh schools since the late 1980s. After the concerning results of The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 the education minister called for an independent review by Graham Donaldson to "take a fundamental look at how today's schools can prepare young people for an exciting but uncertain future" (Donaldson, 2015, *cited in* Donaldson, 2016) and later the reform of the National Curriculum in 2015 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015). The all-new Welsh curriculum consists of 4 strands with the children's voice at the heart of it (Article 12, UNCRC, 2024) this is monitored through stages and not ages as Donaldson (2015) introduces 'progression steps'. The New Curricula and the Literacy Framework (GOV.WALES, no date) form the basis of teaching and learning in all schools in Wales.

Barriers to effective communication and poor oracy skills may arise due to, many barriers including Additional learning needs (ALN), adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and English as an Additional Language (EAL). School A provides numerous interventions and support (Endowment Education Foundation, 2024) to ensure these learners progress and are included in a mainstream classroom (Strategic Equality Plan, 2023) (UNESCO, 1994), (GOV.WALES, 2016) (GOV.WALES, 2022).

For example, Children who speak English as an extra language (EAL) may have limited English therefore, School A utilises their 'one page profile' to tailor their pedagogy to a more personalised approach. Google Translate also helps support to complete differentiated, person-centred tasks this is an example of Rogers's (1979), Humanist Approach (Rogers, 1979). Sentence starters are used to 'scaffold' (Vygotsky, 1978) and support EAL and ALN learners asking open-ended questions (Wood, Bruner, Ross, *cited in* Nordlof, 2014) whilst the professional's role always modelling the correct, clear and concise English language and behaviours (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1989, *cited in* Govindaraju, 2021). The new Welsh curricula allow teachers more scope to deliver their lessons via a person-centred approach

(Rogers, 1979) using their expertise to suit the age and abilities of each child for children to feel included (GOV.WALES, 2016). Additionally, Vygotsky (1980) suggested that children can reach their full potential and enhance their learning by implementing the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). As a result, more children move out of the Zone of Proximal Development and can complete given task independently.

To conclude Literacy has advanced significantly over the past decade with the new Wales curricula, teachers can teach using a more person-centred perspective while assessing and testing to close learning gaps. This is attainable for all children including EAL and ALN children by implementing the correct resources and strategies to develop into ethically informed citizens, be prepared for the wider world and have successful futures (GOV.WALES, 2018).

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Professionals that place a high priority on lifelong learning regularly employ reflection as a technique to learn from experience (Jasper, 2003). Donald Schon defines reflection as “Reflection is a dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skilful” (Schon, 1987, p. 31, *cited in* Peterbuwert, 2013). Osterman and Kottkamp (1993, pg 19), suggests “reflective practice is viewed as a means by which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development” *cited in*, Roffey- Barentsen & Malthouse, 2013). Nonetheless, I fully comprehend and appreciate that reflection is a crucial component of any learning (Schon, 1987). The aim of reflection is to simplify a situation or solve a problem; it entails working towards a deeper comprehension of the issue and potential solutions (Loughran, 1996. p.14).

I feel I participated well in lectures through both asynchronous and Synchronous interactions (Scheiderer, 2021). However, with the amount of fresh knowledge presented to me I felt overwhelmed. However, I came to see that the lectures had sparked my cognitive (Bandura, 1986) and competence capacities (Barker, 1994). According to research, when all kinds of communication are encouraged in lectures, students are more apparent to be involved in the learning procedure and achieve higher academic performance (Lanier, et al, 2022). Thurmond (2003) describes interaction as “the learner’s engagement with the course content, other learners, the instructor, and the technological medium used in the course”. Exchange of knowledge during interaction can inevitably aid students to comprehend the material being delivered and expected learning outcomes on a deeper level (Thurmond, 2003).

When given my assignment I felt quite eager to get started and found the workload and timescale reasonable. I convinced myself that good time management will reduce tension when completing my assigned tasks (Aeon, et al, 2021). I thought I would start with the video element of the assignment as I knew this is what I do daily in my setting. However, being recorded made me feel a little nervous as I do lack confidence. I have completed reflections before so felt I had a head start on that element of the assignment. According to Gibbs’ reflective cycle (1988) this is recognised as the ‘feelings stage’ (*cited in* Brown, 2022). I felt my recording of my story telling of ‘The Last Chip’ to a group of diverse, year 5 children had overall gone well, all children were engaged and listened carefully throughout. Storytelling can empower children to experience the content of the story being told and enable “cognitive demands which push children towards new relationships and decentred viewpoints” (Fox, 1989, *cited in* Collins, 1999). By utilising Vygotsky, (1978) ‘scaffolding’ theory within storytelling helps children to go ‘above their daily behaviours’ and boost their cognitive and language skills (Fox, 1989, *cited in* Collins 1999).

All children participated in the follow up activity which they thoroughly enjoyed. The learning outcome was to understand empathy and how you would feel in someone else's situation. I am pleased to say that every child fully understands the meaning of empathy. I felt both happy and satisfied the lesson and recording was over. This is known as the 'evaluation' stage of Gibbs (1988) Reflective cycle (*cited in Brown, 2022*).

Storytelling in school settings is "a positive way of expanding children's experiences of different cultures and a means by which they become aware of the parallels with their own" (Ellis, 1988, pg 102, *cited in Collins, 1999*). Young children who are read to can benefit from the social skills and adult interaction that reading fosters and ignite cognitive learning (Kupetz and Green 1997, *cited in Murray & Egan, 2013*). Storytelling is also an effective pedagogical approach that significantly enhances young children's linguistic development (Lucarevski, 2016; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008; Speaker et al, 2004 *cited in Rahiem, 2021*). "Language is the essence of thinking and is integral, not just to effective communication, but to learning, reflection and creativity" (Donaldson, 2015).

I submitted my work by the deadline set, I felt accomplished and satisfied it was over. This is referred to as the 'conclusion stage' in Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle. I realise communication is key to everything and understand literacy is an important curriculum component for all children. I think I have shown accountability, initiative and motivation throughout this module and found all the information beneficial and pertinent to my daily tasks within my setting.

In conclusion I feel all year 5 children within my group including children with difficulties in language and communication increased as they all interacted with follow up activity and completed with excellence. However, if I were to repeat this activity, I would try to look at

the children more whilst reading the story. Although this is hard to do when reading from the book at the front of the class to children. I would use the main electronic board to view story so children could see the pictures on a bigger scale, more clearly and read along with the story in their heads if they wished to. I would also slow my pace down as looking back at my video I feel I read some content too fast. If I read slower this would give children, the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the page read or about any words they did not fully understand. In reference to Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle this is known as the 'action plan'. In addition, I would provide an extension activity for children who had finished their initial task, which could be children creating their own empathy scenarios up for their partner to decide if empathy was displayed or not.

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