

The Importance of Storytelling and Children's Early Literacy and Language Acquisition

Communication and literacy are paramount in human development, classed as the oldest form of communication, storytelling is an effective tool to develop children's language skills. Lucarevski (2016) tells us that storytelling effectiveness relies upon a story being engaging, fun and to provides a memorable experience. Numerous theorists discuss the importance of reading during pregnancy, stating that a foetus has the ability to differentiate sounds and the rhythmic properties associated to language (Minai *et al.*, 2017, p. 561., University of Kansas, 2017, p. 2., and Auger *et al.*, 2014, p. 337). Furthermore, it is believed that due to this prenatal sensitivity, a baby has the ability to recognise familiar voices such as their parents, this can be identified by the drop in the rate of the baby's heartbeat (Franti *et al.*, 2018).

Neaum (2012, p. 110) considers this further by examining the fact that, when parents read to babies and young children, they have the ability to provide a rich and enjoyable bonding experience, whilst providing an opportunity for acquiring language development. This bonding experience provides the child with security, warmth and the comfort needed to achieve their basic needs, enabling the child to gain self-actualization as stated by Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs theory (McDonough, 2022., and Yardi, 2021). By ensuring the child has access to this rich form of literacy involvement, children are provided with an opportunity to be engulfed in their traditional culture and language (Larson, 2015, p. 93) . Vygotsky Enculturation theory explain is vital for the child to learn and develop through observing and experience their groups culture, which is needed to become a functioning member of their community (Gavelek & Kong, 2012, p. 2029). This 'Emergent literacy skills' as discussed by Clay (1990), enables young children and babies to employ early behaviours and concepts in which they interact with books, prior to gaining the capability of reading (Lysaker, 2019, p. 1., Whitehead, 2010, p. 133., and Cremin, 2017, p. 34).

Speech and Language UK, (2022a) states that children who possess poor language skills find many areas of their life compromised. It can have a detrimental effect on their educational outcome, whereby they are six times less likely to reach their expected standards in English and ten times less likely to reach their Mathematical

outcomes. These outcomes place young individuals at risk of unemployment, poor mental health, and difficulties with social relationships (Speech and Language UK, 2022a). Alexander (2012, p. 5) discusses unemployment further, by stating that when individuals possess poor oracy skills, they are unable to provide future employers with the key skills that they require. These can include the inability to clearly present themselves to others, have difficulties in both teamwork and displaying good collaborative skills as they lack attentive listening skills.

McCormack and Kloppe (2016 p. 417) states that when a child's oracy pedagogy is supported by an adult, the learner is provided with an abundance of opportunities to "communicate creatively, purposefully and productively in a variety of contexts that are exciting, engaging and meaningful." (Caselli, 2019). Storytelling can promote an active method to a child's imagination, creativity, and participation with others, whilst increasing a child's listening skills and promoting a sense of well-being and fun (Shannon, 2023., and, Ece Demir-Lira *et al.*, 2019). Bietti *et al* (2018) states that the role of the adult during storytelling is to capture the child's imagination and interest; to motivate and encourage children to make links between the story and everyday life and past experiences to promote sense-making. Ece Demir-Lira *et al* (2019) discussed further that when adults read to children, it enables a child to be introduced to new words, sounds and language needed to develop their early literacy skills. Wessel- Powel (2016) discusses that storytelling enables children to develop comprehension, acquisition of story structure including content and grammatical structure. Kim *et al* (2015) argues that when a toddler is provided with an enriched Home Literacy Environment, that the child's phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge is increased, and as a consequence the child gains proficient decoding skill's (Perez-Marin *et al.*, 2022).

Establishing regular storytelling, can stimulate a child's brain development in addition to developing a child's concentration and focus (Agosto, 2016). Storytelling provides the means to open discussions between the children and the storyteller, conversations in which the children's vocabulary and oracy skills can develop further (Mordsley, 2017). Satriani (2019) and Zucker *et al* (2013) consider storytelling as a tool that enables children to hear language patterns, such as repetition and rhyme, whilst developing their phonemic awareness, print awareness and oral comprehension (Rohde, 2015). Written text in both digital and traditional formats,

require comprehension and decoding skills, to recognise sounds, and breaking down words into syllables (Almon, 2020., Whitehead, 2009, p. 23., and Bower, 2014, p. 173).

Storytelling is an ideal method to introduce these literacy skills to young children, as it enables adults to discuss the key components of reading, to improve their understanding and oracy skills (Felt, 2019). Within this activity, adults are equipped to scaffold children's oracy by speech modelling, enabling context of language and enabling a child's imagination to be expanded, all of which contributes to a child's literacy development (Sintonen *et al.*, 2018., and Speech and Language UK, 2022b). This supports Chomsky's belief that stories provide ample opportunities for children to hear and learn the universal rules of grammar (Chomsky, 2023, p. 99). However, Pinker takes this one step further, explaining that, when provided with a positive role model a child has the ability to hear oral language (Pinker, 2014, p. 399). This is supported by Bruner's, Language Acquisition Support System, stating that although children possess an innate ability to acquire and learn language, children require interaction with others of the same language to become proficient in their learning (Bruner, 1985). However, when provided with poor role models or reduced interaction with others, children's outcomes in oracy and language development are also reduced (Caselli, 2019).

Estyn states that when children are provided access to literacy-type activities such as story time, it can promote a child's reading, writing and oracy skills (Welsh Gov, 2021a & b). ChildCare Education Institute (2022) discusses this further, stating that activities such as storytelling, provides the opportunities for adults to demonstrate through pointing, the direction in which text should be read and also enables the adult to demonstrate the difference between capital and lower-case letters (Welsh Gov, 2021a & b). Expanding on this by saying, when provided with storytelling opportunities, it enables adults to discuss correct book handling skills, by attracting the child's attention to the back cover, spine, and front cover. Time should be taken to discuss the contribution of the author and illustrator of the book, furnishing the children with a chance to discuss their ideas in regard to the story topic (ChildCare Education Institute, 2022). Welsh Government states that storytelling can provide children with the phonological and phonemic awareness to develop their literacy

skills and is reinforced within their listening and reading sections of the Literacy Framework (Welsh Gov, 2022).

Boerma, Mol, & Jolles (2016), Roig *et al.*, (2018) and Sintonen *et al.*, (2018) explains that during today's digital era, technology can contribute in providing young children with an exciting experience. This form of digital literacy extends a child's literacy experience beyond the areas of traditional reading (Maureen *et al.*, 2018; 2020). When technology is introduced into storytelling, it enables children to develop their digital skills. The Digital Confident Framework (Welsh Gov, 2018) discusses that to gain digital competency, children must be able to access digital technologies, demonstrate effective use and understand their functions. Digital storytelling provides children with an engaging experience, combining a mixture of digital media, images, and narration (Robin, 2016). By simply equipping a child with an iPad, can permit them to interact with the story (O'Byrne *et al.*, 2018). Touch screen laptops, interactive white-boards and iPads, allow children the freedom to interact with the story and device by encouraging children to drag their fingers across the screen, click buttons and explore the story (Giannikas, 2023). Interactive or digital stories can provide a stimulating experience for a child, it enables them to gain an understanding of vocabulary and intonation within a story, which can be reinforced by introducing the story in a traditional format (Ozturk and Ohi, 2018., Maureen *et al.*, 2021., and Parish-Morris *et al.*, 2013).

This next section will discuss the skills and behaviours demonstrated in the recordings by the storyteller, focusing upon the prosodic features of intonation and repetition, and the use of props. Throughout both recordings of 'Don't hog the hedge' (Twinkl, 2018), and 'The Gruffalo' (Donaldson and Scheffler, 2023), the storyteller demonstrated the skill of intonation. Crystal (1976) describes English intonation as including the pace, pitches as well as highlighted words within a sentence. Wessel-Powell *et al.*, (2016) and Murray (2021) discusses the importance of using varying tones of voice when reading a text aloud, in order to make the text interesting for the listener. Cinelli, (2021) states that intonation and prosody provides children with contexts and meaning to words, it also keeps listeners engaged with the storyteller (Lenhart *et al.*, 2020). Although expressive speech is a difficult concept for young children to grasp, Cinelli (2021) explains that it is central to a child's language and social development. When used properly during storytelling, prosody and intonation

enables children to gain acquisition of new words; introduces punctuation, and enhances a child's active listening skills, creativity, and imagination in an engaging way. Storytime provides opportunities for children to gain an introduction to reading accuracy and comprehension (Crystal, 1986).

Both 'The Gruffalo' (Donaldson and Scheffler, 2023) and 'Don't hog the hedge' (Twinkl, 2018), provide opportunities to promote language development through repetition and rhyming. This was demonstrated within the recordings by the storyteller drawing the attention of the listeners to the rhyming words or repeated phrases. Mosdsley (2017), Crystal (1986) and Tomasello *et al.*, (2012) all agree that when children are read rhyming stories on a regular basis, it enables children to remember and recite the story easier, making it an enjoyable experience. Arnerich (2023) discusses this further by stating that when children become familiar with rhyme, positive outcomes can be achieved in their reading, writing and oracy development. Increased frequency of repetitive texts, and child active participation, reinforces a child's vocabulary, especially if English is an additional language (Arnerich, 2023). However, Chomsky (2023) believed that children's language learning was innate, whereby the child memorises grammatical rules, without understanding or knowing how to use it correctly when speaking. Corneal (2019), Horst, Parsons and Bryon (2011), and Wojcik (2013) reinforce the theory of repetition, stating that when children are provided with opportunities to hear the same story repeatedly, it provides the time needed for the child to encode, memorise new words and acquire new vocabulary, which can be used in their writing.

'Don't hog the hedge' (Twinkl, 2018), and 'The Gruffalo' (Donaldson and Scheffler, 2023), provided opportunities for the storyteller to use props to increase the interaction and engagement of the children. Yonzon *et al* (2022), (Greimann, 2017) and Brun (2018) expand this further by discussing that when provided with opportunities to interact with a story, children are able to understand and comprehend the concepts and vocabulary within the story. Providing physical items such as puppets and sensory toys, when adjusted can support different children and age groups (Greimann, 2017). Atlanta Speech Therapy (2016) notes, that when non-verbal cues such as props and story sacks are used, they can provide a valuable resource to scaffold a child's understanding of the spoken language. When a child has gained understanding of oral language, it enables them to repeat or imitate

phrases of a story, by experimenting through role play Atlanta Speech Therapy (2016). This is reinforced by Vygotsky's belief, that when provided with resources to encourage play, children's imagination is aroused, creating a new reality in which they can explore and experiment with their language acquisition and development (Vygotsky, 1967; 1998; 2004).

Providing a child with a rich form of literacy involvement such as story time, enables children to explore their traditional culture and language. When provided with adult support, an exciting and engaging environment, a child is provided with an abundance of opportunities to develop their oracy and language skills. However, when poor provision is provided to a children's language and literacy development, children are at a higher risk of possessing poor language skills and find many areas of their future life compromised.

During both recordings, the storyteller provided an exciting and engaging experience for the children. However, the storyteller could in future provide more opportunities for the children to participate in the story, by introducing open ended questions. The storyteller showed more confidence in the traditional storytelling recording, opposed to the digital version, and although props were present for use with the eBook, the storyteller had difficulty utilising these items due to the awkwardness of holding the iPad. This issue may be alleviated if the storyteller cast the eBook onto a larger screen from either a laptop or an iPad, this would enable children to view the book also.

Reference List

Agosto, D.E. (2016) 'Why storytelling matters: Unveiling the literacy benefits of storytelling', *Children and Libraries*, 14(2), pp. 21–26. doi:10.5860/cal.14n2.21.

Alexander, R. (2012) *Improving oracy and classroom talk in English schools: Achievements and Challenges*. Available at:

Achievements and Challenges. Available at:

<http://robinaalexander.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2020/10/DfE-oracy-120220-Alexander-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 16th October 2023).

Almon, J. (2020) *Oral language*. Available at:

<https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/oral-language>

(Accessed: 07th October 2023).

Arnerich, M. (2023) *The Power of Repetition in the Early Years*. Available at:

<https://sfroundup.com/article/the-power-of-repetition-in-the-early-years-family>

(Accessed: 14th October 2023).

Atlanta Speech Therapy (2022) *10 repetitive storybooks you should own*. Available

at: <https://atlspeechtherapy.com/10-repetitive-childrens-storybooks/>

(Accessed: 15th October 2023).

Auger, A., Reich, S.M. and Penner, E.K. (2014) 'The effect of baby books on

Mothers' reading beliefs and reading practices', *Journal of Applied Developmental*

Psychology, 35(4), pp. 337–346. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2014.05.007.

Bietti, L.M., Tilston, O. and Bangerter, A. (2018) *Storytelling as adaptive collective*

sensemaking [Preprint]. doi:10.31219/osf.io/4an6t.

Boerma, I.E., Mol, S.E. and Jolles, J. (2016) 'Reading pictures for story comprehension requires mental imagery skills', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01630.

Bower, V. (2014) *Developing early literacy 0 to 8: From theory to practice*. London: Sage.

Brun, H. (2018) *toddler-ales - use of props in story starter sessions*, *Coram Beanstalk*. Available at:

<https://www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk/blog/toddlertales-use-of-props-in-story-starter-sessions> (Accessed: 14th October 2023).

Bruner, J. (1985) 'The role of interaction formats in language acquisition', *Language and Social Situations*, pp. 31–46. doi:10.1007/978-1-4612-5074-6_2.

Bruner, J.S. (1999) *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Caselli, P. (2019) *The role of caregivers in children's linguistic-conversational development: A review of Italian Pedagogical Studies*. Available at:

<https://www.rivistadistoriadelleducazione.it/index.php/formare/article/view/3842>

(Accessed: 05th October 2023).

ChildCare Educational Institute (2022) *Teaching children book handling skills*.

Available at: <https://www.cceionline.com/teaching-children-book-handling-skills/>

(Accessed: 11th October 2023).

Chomsky, N. (2023) 'Language and interpretation':, *Inference, Explanation, and*

Other Frustrations, pp. 99–128. doi:10.2307/jj.5232952.9.

Cinelli, E. (2021) *Prosody plays an important role in language development*, Verywell Family. Available at:

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/prosody-and-languageacquisition-5191264>

(Accessed: 14th October 2023).

Clay, M.M. (1990) *Reading: The patterning of complex behaviour*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Corneal, D.A. (2019) *Why reading the same book repeatedly is good for kids (even if it drives you nuts)*. Available at:

<https://www.readbrightly.com/why-reading-the-samebook-repeatedly-is-good-for-kids/> (Accessed: 15th October 2023).

Cremin, T. (2017) *Storytelling in early childhood: Enriching language, literacy and classroom culture*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Crystal, D. (1976) *Prosodic systems and intonation in English*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (1986) 'Prosodic development', *Language Acquisition*, pp. 174–197.

doi:10.1017/cbo9780511620683.011.

Donaldson, J. and Scheffler, A. (2023) *The Gruffalo*. London: Macmillan Children's Books.

Ece Demir-Lira, Ö. Applebaum, L.R., Goldin-Meadow, S., and Levine, S.G. (2019) 'Parents' early book reading to children: Relation to children's later language and

literacy outcomes controlling for other parent language input', *Developmental Science*, 22(3). doi:10.1111/desc.12764.

Felt, A.L. (2019) *Read across America and the benefits of rhyming for young readers*. Available at:

<https://readingpartners.org/blog/benefits-rhyming-hiddengenius-dr-seuss/>

(Accessed: 07th October 2023).

Franti, E., Ispas, I. and Dascalu, M. (2018) 'Testing the universal baby language hypothesis - automatic infant speech recognition with CNNs', *2018 41st International Conference on Telecommunications and Signal Processing (TSP)*[Preprint].

doi:10.1109/tsp.2018.8441412.

Gavelek, J.R. and Kong, A. (2012) 'Learning: A process of Enculturation', *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences of Learning*, pp. 2029–2032.

doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-1428-6_868.

Giannikas, C. (2023) *Storytelling and digital literacy: Research and practical tips*.

Available at:

<https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2023/04/02/storytelling-and-digital-literacyresearch-and-practical-tips/>

(Accessed: 11th October 2023).

Greimann, N. (2017) *Storytelling for children: How to use props to bring stories to life*, YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY_kqlsenU

(Accessed: 14th October 2023).

Horst, J.S., Parsons, K.L. and Bryan, N.M. (2011) *Get the story straight: Contextual repetition promotes word learning from storybooks*. Available at:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00017/full>

(Accessed: 15th October 2023).

Kim, S., Im, H. and Kwon, K.-A. (2015) 'The role of Home Literacy Environment in toddlerhood in development of vocabulary and decoding skills', *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 44(6), pp. 835–852. doi:10.1007/s10566-015-9309-y.

Larson, J. (2015) *Making literacy real: Theories and practices for learning and teaching*. London: Sage Publications.

Lenhart, J., Lenhart, W., Vaahotoranta, E., and Suggate, S. (2020) 'More than words: Narrator engagement during storytelling increases children's word learning, story comprehension, and on-task behavior', *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 51, pp. 338–351. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.12.009.

Lucarevschi, C.R. (2016) *The role of storytelling on Language learning: A literature review*, *Working Papers of the Linguistics Circle*. Available at:

<https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/WPLC/article/view/15309>

(Accessed: 05th October 2023).

Lysaker, J.T. (2019) *Before words: Wordless picture books and the development of reading in young children*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Maureen, I.Y., van der Meij, H. and de Jong, T. (2018) 'Supporting literacy and

Digital Literacy Development in early childhood education using storytelling activities', *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 50(3), pp. 371–389.

doi:10.1007/s13158-018-0230-z.

Maureen, I.Y., van der Meij, H. and de Jong, T. (2020) 'Enhancing storytelling activities to support early (digital) literacy development in early childhood education', *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 52(1), pp. 55–76.

doi:10.1007/s13158-020-00263-7.

Maureen, I.Y., van der Meij, H. and de Jong, T. (2021) 'Evaluating storytelling activities for Early Literacy Development', *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 30(4), pp. 679–696. doi:10.1080/09669760.2021.1933917.

McCormack, B.A. and Klopper, C. (2016) 'The potential of music in promoting Oracy in students with English as an additional language', *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(4), pp. 416–432. doi:10.1177/0255761415619066.

McDonough, M. (2022) 'selfless actualization': *Revisiting Abraham Maslow and the hierarchy of needs*, *Free Range*. Available at:

<https://freerange.com/blog/selflessactualization-revisiting-abraham-maslow-and-the-hierarchy-of-needs>

(Accessed: 18th October 2023).

Minai, U., Gustafson, K., Fiorentino, R., Jongman, A., and Sereno, J. (2017) 'Fetal rhythm-based language discrimination', *NeuroReport*, 28(10), pp. 561–564.

doi:10.1097/wnr.0000000000000794.

Mosdsley, J. (2017) *Why use rhythm, rhyme and repetition in language*

class?, British Council. Available at:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voicesmagazine/why-use-rhythm-rhyme-and-repetition-language-class>

(Accessed: 07th October 2023).

Murray, V. (2021) *Storytelling in early years – how to add Magic*, Kinderly. Available at:

<https://kinderly.co.uk/2021/08/20/casting-the-storytelling-spell-how-to-add-magic-to-your-storytelling/>

(Accessed: 13th October 2023).

Neaum, S. (2012) *Language and literacy for the early years*. London: Learning Matters, an imprint of Sage Publications Ltd.

Ozturk, G. and Ohi, S. (2018) 'Understanding young children's attitudes towards reading in relation to their digital literacy activities at home', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 16(4), pp. 393–406. doi:10.1177/1476718x18792684.

O'Byrne, W.I., Houser, K., Stone, R., and White, M. (2018) 'Digital Storytelling in early childhood: Student illustrations shaping social interactions', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01800.

Parish-Morris, J., Mahayana, N., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R.M., and Collins, M.F. (2013) 'Once upon a time: Parent–child dialogue and storybook reading in the electronic era', *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(3), pp. 200-211.

doi:10.1111/mbe.12028.

Phillips, L. (2013) *Storytelling as pedagogy*. Available at:

<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.199640>

(Accessed: 13th October 2023).

Pinker, S. (2014) 'Language learnability and children's language: A multifaceted approach', *Children's Language*. Edited by K.E. Nelson, 5, pp. 399–443.

doi:10.4324/9781315802572-19.

Pérez-Marín, D., Hijón-Neira, R. and Pizarro, C. (2022) 'Coding in early years education: Which factors influence the skills of sequencing and plotting a route, and to what extent?', *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 30(4), pp. 969–985.

doi:10.1080/09669760.2022.2037076.

Robin, B.R. (2016) *The power of digital storytelling to support teaching and learning*, *Digital Education Review*. Available at:

<https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/der/article/view/16104>

(Accessed: 16th October 2023).

Rohde, L. (2015) 'The Comprehensive Emergent Literacy Model', *SAGE Open*, 5(1).

doi:10.1177/2158244015577664.

Roig, A., Pires de Sá, F. and Cornelio, G.S. (2018) 'Future story chasers: An experience with co-creation of fiction in the classroom through a collaborative storytelling game', *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, 10(2),

pp. 279–289. doi:10.1386/cjcs.10.2.279_1.

Satriani, I. (2019) 'Storytelling in teaching literacy: Benefits and challenges', *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 8(1), pp. 113–120.

doi:10.25134/erjee.v8i1.1924.

Shannon, C. (2023) *Why storytelling is important*. Available at:

<https://ihworld.com/ihjournal/issues/issue-43/why-storytelling-is-important/>

(Accessed: 04th October 2023).

Sintonen, S., Kumpulainen, K. and Vartiainen., J. (2018) *Young Children's Imaginative Play and Dynamic Literacy Practices in the Digital Age.* "In *Mobile Technologies in Children's Language and Literacy*. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328252286_Young_Children's_Imaginative_Play_and_Dynamic_Literacy_Practices_in_the_Digital_Age_Innovative_Pedagogy_in_Preschool_and_Primary_Education

(Accessed: 16th October 2023).

Speech and Language UK (2022a) *The importance of spoken language and the impact of poor language skills*. Available at:

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/for-professionals/information-for-inspectors/the-importance-of-spoken-language-and-the-impact-of-poor-language-skills/>

(Accessed: 18th October 2023).

Speech and Language UK (2022b) *Using scaffolding to help children's language* .

Available at: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/media/1787/scaffolding.pdf>

(Accessed: 16th October 2023).

Tomasello, M., Gampe, A. and Liebel, K. (2012) 'Eighteen-month-olds learn novel words through overhearing', *First Language*, 32(3), pp. 385–397.

doi:10.1177/0142723711433584.

Twinkl (2018). Available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-l-54232-dont-hog>

the-hedge-powerpoint (Accessed: 06th October 2023).

University of Kansas (2017) *Language development starts in the womb*. Available at:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/07/170718084600.htm>

(Accessed: 05th October 2023).

Vygotsky, L.S. (1967) 'Play and its role in the mental development of the child', *Soviet Psychology*, 5(3), pp. 6–18. doi:10.2753/rpo1061-040505036.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1998) 'The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky', *Child Psychology*.

Edited by R.W. Rieber, 5, pp. 261–281. doi:10.1007/978-1-4615-5401-1.

Vygotsky, L.S. (2004) 'Imagination and creativity in childhood', *Journal of Russian*

& East European Psychology, 42(1), pp. 7–97.

doi:10.1080/10610405.2004.11059210.

Welsh Gov (2018) *Digital Competence Framework Guidance* . Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/337437b8-cfe3-4305-ae32-f47ad82f3e76/digital-competence-framework-guidance-2018.pdf>

(Accessed: 03rd October 2023).

Welsh Gov (2021a) *Languages, literacy and communication: Introduction*, Hwb.

Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/languages-literacy-and-communication/>

(Accessed: 07th October 2023).

Welsh Gov (2021b) *English language and literacy in settings and primary schools*.

Available at:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/english-language-and-literacy-settings-and-primary-schools>

(Accessed: 07th October 2023).

Welsh Gov (2022) *Literacy and numeracy framework*, Hwb. Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/cross-curricular-skills-frameworks/literacy-and-numeracy-framework>

(Accessed: 11th October 2023).

Wessel-Powell, C., Kargin, T. and Wohlgend, K.E. (2016) 'Enriching and assessing young children's multimodal storytelling', *The Reading Teacher*, 70(2), pp. 167–178.

doi:10.1002/trtr.1491.

Whitehead, M.R. (2009) *Supporting language and literacy development in the early years*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Whitehead, M.R. (2010) *Language and literacy in the early years 0-7*. London: Sage.

Wojcik, E.H. (2013) 'Remembering new words: Integrating early memory development into word learning', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4.

doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00151.

Yardi, T. (2021) *Emotional design and storytelling*. Available at:

<https://tanviyardi.medium.com/emotional-design-and-storytelling-89147eab2757>

(Accessed: 16th October 2023).

Yonzon, K.C., Flee, M., Fragkiadaki, G., and Rai, P. (2022) 'The role of props in promoting imagination during toddlerhood', *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 55(2), pp. 223–240. doi:10.1007/s13158-022-00336-9.

Zucker, T.A., Cabell, S.Q., Justice, L.M., Pentimonti, J.M., and Kaderavek, J.N. (2013) 'The role of frequent, interactive prekindergarten shared reading in the longitudinal development of language and literacy skills.', *Developmental Psychology*, 49(8), pp. 1425–1439. doi:10.1037/a0030347.