

Reflective analysis of traditional and digital storytelling activity

Contents:

- Page 2 – 5: Reflective analysis essay on activity
- Page 6: Reference list

Links to Videos:

- Traditional Storytelling activity: [IMG_0627.mov](#)
- Digital storytelling activity: [IMG_0610.mov](#)

AI:

- I used ChatGPT to help me find relevant websites and articles
- I used Copilot to help me find relevant sources

Reflective analysis of activity

Storytelling and the role of the storyteller are one of many key elements for supporting children in early childhood development encouraging an emotional and social connections, and cognitive development from as early as birth. The sociocultural theory created by Vygotsky (1987) highlights how children construct knowledge through social interaction and language, the central elements of storytelling. Through storytelling, adults scaffold children's learning and promotes their language and communication development while also fostering their social and emotional skills that are essential for their growth and learning later on.

My approach to story telling differed in several ways from when I completed a digital story telling activity compared to reading the physical copy of the story book to the children in order to ensure I maintained the groups attention and their interest and understanding. To encourage greater participation, I ensured I asked the children questions throughout the story. While I felt that I asked more questions and encouraged more involvement during the second activity with the physical copy of the book rather than during the digital activity, I ensured that both times I made the children feel apart of the story telling as interactive story telling provides children with social interaction and shared language experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Encouraging the children's participation in the story telling activities and ensuring they were interested being two of the main focuses for both of the activities, meant focusing more on facial expressions, gestures and enthusiasm. The role of the storyteller involves creating a connection through emotional depth and ensure that the audience is captivated, while also being a good role model as it is show in Vygotsky's theory that children learn from their caregivers (Vygotsky, 1978). This is also supported in Micheal Tomasello's theory on language development which is rooted in the idea that children learn language through their cognitive abilities, particularly their ability to understand the intentions of others (Tomasello, 2003). Therefore, I reinforced this and was enthusiastic and ensured my facial expressions and tone were engaging for the children as I was introducing them to new words and vocabulary supporting their cognitive development.

I found that overall, both activities encouraged engagement and interaction especially through the use of props and other resources which were used in the second storytelling activity to aid in keeping the children interested and involved in the activity. By using props, the second time around it helped to stimulate the children's imagination as they had the opportunity to create their own interpretations of the story therefore fostering their creativity. The props were also more beneficial as they helped to enhance the children's memory. The props help to trigger the children's memory of the story sequence and pattern, aiding in recall and a deeper understanding (Hallma, 2025).

Chomsky's theory of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a concept that suggests that babies are born with an innate ability to acquire language and that

children have the mental capacity to learn languages and their rules and structures very quickly and with limited exposure (Pinker, 1994). "Children acquire language rapidly, effortlessly and without instruction, because they are born with a blueprint for language" (Pinker, 1994, p. 25). Therefore, during both digital storytelling and reading with a real book children are exposed to different vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures which support this process and with the children's language and cognitive development. The natural exposure to language that story telling offers, helps to scaffold the children's learning and development.

Both traditional and digital versions of storytelling activities provide a linguistic environment in which the children can learn new sentence structures and vocabulary, both of these help to promote the development of children's oracy. David Crystal's theory of language play posits that since playing with language with so natural, it is a fundamental and effective way to learn and understand languages. He argues that language play should be a part of central language learning and teaching, providing a more engaging and effective approach to language acquisition (Ellman, 2019). Crystal emphasizes that every child who is given enough exposure to language, automatically learns to speak, therefore emphasizing how important it is to have children engaged in storytelling activities to expose them to new language. Even for children as young as a few months to a year old who are beginning to experiment with sounds and beginning to connect these sounds with meanings, storytelling can help to promote this oracy development. Crystal also begins to stress the importance of real interaction and the role of the storyteller, conversation, eye contact and feedback from the caregiver are just as important for developing children language skills (Crystal, 2010). This is also supported by Micheal Tomasello's social learning theory which proposes that children learn languages through social interaction and cultural contexts (Toppelberg and Collins, 2004). Crystal emphasizes the role of interaction and the importance of responsive conversation. Babies and young children need eye contact, facial expressions and emotional connection to link words with meaning. This makes language a social skill as well as a cognitive skill.

One of the storytelling activities being a digital version, meant the approach to reading the story differed in many ways however, the benefits of storytelling and how it promotes children's oracy and language development are not impacted. Crystal reassures that new forms of communication and modern technology does not damage children's language development. "Children today are learning to use language in more contexts than ever before. Far from ruining language, it shows their adaptability" (Crystal, 2010, p. 202). He argues that digital language use strengthens children's awareness of audience and style, a skill central to language cognitive development. The exposure to new vocabulary and sentence structures through interactive digital stories helps to foster these new language skills and effective communication skills.

Following on from Crystal's theory of digital language and modern technology, the digital aspect of the storytelling activity promotes children's digital literacy skills by

encouraging them to use technology purposefully and creativity. As a group the digital story helps to promote the children's social and language development. Through discussion, children can make choices together, talk about the themes of the story and listen to each other's ideas. These key skills are essential for digital and real-world communication. This also helps the children to develop early communication skills and creative thinking skills. The rich language exposure through multimedia elements helps children engage with vocabulary in contextually rich settings (Giannikas, 2023).

According to Vygotsky's theory, repetition is a crucial element in the development of language skills in children. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is where a more knowledgeable person provides scaffolding to support a child's learning. By repeating words, phrases or instructions, children are given multiple opportunities to engage with new concepts. This supports digital storytelling as adults and caregivers can scaffold the children's learning and provide them with gentle guidance that helps children to accomplish tasks and activities. The repetition of new words and sentences as well as the social interaction that digital storytelling provides can help children to extend each other's understanding and language skills and promotes digital literacy (Kurt, 2020).

Literacy and oracy skills and language development supported through scaffolding and meaningful interactions is also supported by Jerome Bruner's theory which emphasised the role of narrative in language development. He argued that storytelling activities not only enhance language skills but also support cognitive development. Bruner also introduced the idea of the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS). LASS emphasises the importance of social context and cultural influences in language acquisition, suggesting that children construct knowledge through active experiences within their environment (Mcleod, 2024). Highlighting the idea that both digital and traditional storytelling promotes these skills.

In contrast, Bruner's theory differs from Noam Chomsky's of language development which posits that babies are born with an innate ability to acquire language through a universal grammar structure. While Chomsky emphasises the biological basis of language acquisition, Bruner's theory focuses more on the social and cultural contexts that shape language learning. However, both theories contribute valuable insights into the complex process of language development, highlighting different aspects of how children learn to communicate effectively (First Discoverers, no date). Language development is natural, however having children engage in stories that contain grammatical patterns and repetition of sentence structures helps promote this process and scaffold the children's learning.

Digital storytelling activities offer children an interactive experience which children are more likely to engage with as it offers interactive visuals such as sound, music and visuals. In contrast, while both versions of storytelling require oral narration, the traditional version requires the children to be creative and use their imaginations.

While other resources can be introduced during story time, such as the props which I used during my traditional version of the activity, it still requires children to be more imaginative and promotes their thinking skills. During both digital and traditional versions, open ended questions can be asked as well as the reader using their enthusiasm and facial expressions to keep children engaged in the story, however during the traditional version it requires the storyteller to be more enthusiastic and allows for more open ended questions to be asked as without the visuals a digital story provides, it allows the children to answer these questions however they feel and use their imagination and creativity to think of their own outcomes of the story. However, because the traditional story lacks the multimedia resources that the digital version can provide, it may not provide the scaffolding that children benefit from as stated in Vygotsky's theory of language development as his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Both versions of storytelling offer some form of interaction, the digital version can help to promote digital literacy as it often includes sound, interactive prompts or tasks such as clicking a mouse or swiping the screen. Whereas the traditional version also encourages physical interaction such as turning pages in a book and pointing to pictures and words, it also relies on more of an emotional connection with the storyteller and the use of the children imagination. While both versions differ in many ways, they each have their benefits when it comes to supporting children's language development as they expose children to new vocabulary, supports literacy and creativity and encourages interaction and attention (Giannikas, 2023).

in order for me to conduct research for this essay I used a combination of digital sources including relevant websites and AI and academic sources such as relevant books and articles. While I did use types of AI such as Copilot and ChatGPT to help me find relevant sources such as articles and websites and also used AI to summaries the sources and check whether they were suitable to be used in my work, I did not use AI to generate text and include it in my work. Instead, I used the websites and articles it recommended to me to support my essay and what I was writing about. The majority of the sources I used to gather information and create notes to include in my work were from academic resources such as articles and books as this ensured that what I was referencing to support my work was all relevant and up to date information. In summary, both AI and academic resources were used in order for me to complete this essay, however only up to date and relevant information was used in the essay from sources which included the correct information.

Reference list

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