

AI statement

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Video 1 link - [IMG_7132.mov](#)

Video 2 link - [IMG_7141.mov](#)

Introduction

There are many holistic benefits of storytelling in the early years. Bruner (1990) suggests that story telling supports the theory of cognitive development as the act of storytelling as a real-life experience can support how children understand and interpret the world around them. It also supports cognitive development by encouraging critical thinking, memory and creativity. In addition to this, storytelling also supports children's emotional and social development as Bruce *et al* (2020) emphasises that storytelling can improve children's language skills as it allows children to understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, share how they are feeling and show empathy. This allows children to develop positive connections and attachments whilst also building their emotional intelligence. Furthermore, storytelling can also build and develop children's literacy skills as storytelling promotes children's oracy skills by allowing them to access a wide range of rich language and vocabulary that they may not hear day to day (Tamer and Walsh, 2016). To support this, Cohrssen *et al* (2016) emphasises that when children role play or recount a story that has been read to them, they then incorporate the new vocabulary they have learnt which further develops their speaking and listening skills.

Storytelling behaviours

Use of props/visual aids

The practitioner is seen in the video of Goldilocks and the three bears using props and visual aids to support their storytelling. Props can be beneficial when storytelling as Cohrssen *et al* (2016) suggests that it allows children to feel included in the storytelling and encourages active listening. Active listening is an important part of children's language and reading skills as it develops children's phonological awareness. Visual aids such as books with pictures support children to spot letters and numbers that they have been learning during lessons within their story books. In addition to this, Nicolopoulou (2010) suggests that props allow children to visualise and gain a deeper understanding of the story and supports emotional and social development by allowing children to try to understand the characters and their feelings and develop empathy. Bruce *et al* (2020) states that props are also beneficial support children's reading, memory and comprehension skills as the children will be able to link props back to the story, notice

sentence patterns and support them to further understand and recount the story. In addition to this, props and visual aids can support children's language development and use of vocabulary as they are able to link words to real life experiences which supports their understanding (Yonzon et al,2022). However, Bruce *et al* (2020) suggests there may be disadvantages to using props to support children's language development as practitioners may rely too heavily on the use of props and this may distract children from the context of the story and hinder their ability to retell the story. In addition to this, Grove (2022) also emphasises that props may hinder children's language and literacy skills as the children, especially those with additional learning needs, may find the use of props over stimulating and distracting.

Many theorists in the early years support the use of props and visual aids to support children's learning and language development. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that children need tools to support their learning and that the physical, real-life tools can support children's understanding and oracy. Similarly, Piaget (1962) suggests that children learn and develop from practical experiences and exploring real life objects. However, theorists such as Skinner (1954) focus more on the benefit of repetition when learning and does not support the use of props.

Questioning/Interactive storytelling

In both of the videos the practitioner is seen using interactive storytelling skills by asking the children open ended questions such as 'What do you think the story is about? What do you think will happen next?' and encourages the children to interact. Practitioners asking children open ended questions like this supports their oracy skills and develops their vocabulary as they will be providing more in-depth answers to questions, which also supports their critical thinking and cognitive skills. Children are also learning how to properly construct their speech and how to verbalise what they are thinking. (Oracy Cambridge,2020). Additionally, National Literacy Trust (2018) suggest that open ended questions during storytelling supports active listening and encourages dialogue between the children and practitioners which further develops children's oracy skills. Furthermore, open ended questions and interactive story telling promotes children's oracy skills as they can express their opinions with no limitations of right or wrong (University of Nottingham, 2022). Theory also supports the use of open-ended questions to develop children's language and literacy skills as Wood *et al* (1976) suggests that the role of the practitioner is to support and model children's learning. Open ended questions give practitioners the opportunity to improve children's literacy skills and model new vocabulary, supporting children to reach their potential.

Children's oracy skills are the foundation to their writing skills. Asking open ended questions can support children's writing as they are able to think and verbalise their

ideas before beginning to write about them. This allows children to structure and make sense of what they are writing about (National Literacy Trust,2018). Additionally, Myhill *et al* (2010) suggests open ended questions can support children's writing skills as it allows children to reflect on their opinions and ideas, encouraging them to think critically about what they will include, which prepares them for writing. Furthermore, using open ended questions in practice can support children's confidence and enthusiasm for writing as the children will have the opportunity to discuss and celebrate their ideas and feel heard and respected by practitioners (Gordon,2024).

However, there can be limitations to open ended questions when supporting children's literacy skills. Gordon (2024) suggests that many children will not participate when answering open ended question or may not fully develop their answers as they may be scared to give the wrong answer. In addition to this, another limitation to asking children open ended questions is that there may be a lack of understanding for children in the early years and they may not be able to answers the questions that the practitioner is asking (Housen *et al*,2014).

Theory that links to the practice of questioning include the Reggio Emilia Approach. When practitioners ask open ended questions it encourages children to be inquisitive and explore their ideas. This will support children's literacy and language development and supports children's communication as they will discover new vocabulary. Open ended questions can also develop children's creativity social skills which is central to the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards,2012).

Voice modulation

Voice modulation such as pace, pitch, tone and volume is a key element of storytelling in the early years and supports practitioners to develop children's literacy skills. During both videos the practitioner uses voice modulation to increase and decrease the pitch and tone of their voice, and the practitioner also uses their voice to transition between different characters. Cremin *et al* (2017) suggests that voice modulation can keep children engaged with a story and encourages active listening. This engagement and active listening will support children to develop their oracy skills, and their oracy will then support them to develop their reading, writing and digital literacy skills. In addition to this, Cremin *et al* (2017) also states voice modulation can create excitement and anticipation and make learning fun and engaging. Voice modulation and dramatization during story telling can foster children's love for literacy. This will encourage children to explore a range of books, apply digital skills, act out and retell stories and explore writing. Furthermore, voice modulation can also support children to develop their comprehension skills as it creates an engaging, sensory experience where children are able to gain a deeper understanding of characters emotions and can follow along with a

greater understanding (RS Network,2024). Storytelling and voice modulation can support children's literacy skills as it provides an inclusive, immersive learning experience where all learners, no matter their ability can engage with and understand a story (National Literacy Trust,2021). However, there are some limitations of voice modulation. Loewenstein (2018) suggests when a practitioner is reading a story with multiple characters, they must keep the tone and pitch the same for each character as the children may become confused, struggle to identify characters and not fully understand the story. This will have a negative impact on the children's literacy skills as they will not be able to talk about what they have learned or recall the story accurately.

Theorists that support the use of voice modulation for storytelling and language development include Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory emphasises that children thrive when they interact with others and share language rich experiences. In addition to this, Montessori (1967) links to voice modulation and children's literacy development as it emphasises the importance of learning through sensory experiences and real-life, hands-on learning.

There are significant differences between traditional storytelling and digital story telling. Traditional storytelling promotes children's language and literacy skills as children are listening to the practitioner's voice, tone, and facial expressions to comprehend the story. It also promotes creativity and imagination whilst digital story telling has more visual cues and promotes digital literacy and digital competence as it includes more animation, technology and leaves less to children's imagination. Furthermore, Indriani and Suteja (2023) suggest that children in the early years find digital story telling more interesting and engaging.

Conclusion

This assignment looks at story telling behaviours such as the use of props, questioning and voice modulation, the benefits and how these story telling behaviours can improve children's literacy skills. This assignment includes a variety of sources such as books, journals, blogs and websites to display and support how storytelling supports children's language and literacy. The assignment includes books which are good academic sources as written by reputable authors and books written by authors with extensive knowledge of early years practice. This is to ensure the information and research for the assignment is reliable and accurate. The assignment also includes research from well-known theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Skinner and Montessori. These sources are a good academic source as their opinions and ideas are supported by extensive research and do not contain bias; they are also experts within their field. The assignment is also supported with sources from universities such as the University of Nottingham and Harvard. These sources are reliable as they are written by experienced and highly

skilled professionals and the research is current and usually made for educational purposes.

The more recently published books and journals may be considered a better academic source as limitations of using sources by theorists are that they may be outdated. Early years practice is constantly changing and evolving and books by theorists are often outdated.

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