

## **Language and Literacy in the Digital age**

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Video link: <https://uowtsd-my.sharepoint.com/my?id=%2Fpersonal%2F2418872%5Fstudent%5Fuwt%5Fdocuments%2Fstory%20videos>

## 2000-word analysis

Storytelling is the act of telling stories, such as by speaking, writing, or using a digital device. It is a technique to teach children who are still young. Furthermore, it gives children educational experiences that help them learn crucial reading and language skills. This is true for children from before birth to age seven. From the time they hear voices in the womb until they read picture books or digital stories, children learn how to put words together, how to use words, and how to tell stories (Partanen *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, these experiences improve not only language skills but also readiness for reading and writing (Cremin *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, children can also engage their imaginations, interact with others on an emotional level, and learn about various cultures by telling stories. In the age of technology, digital storytelling takes storytelling to a whole new level. Furthermore, it helps children become used to reading and writing in different ways and teaches them how to utilise technology (Maureen, van der Meij & de Jong, 2020). Therefore, storytelling is important in the early years because it helps children learn how to read and write in both digital and traditional ways. Moreover, this assignment will now analyse two videos of a practitioner undertaking two different stories, one traditional using props and one using a digital book with sounds. The stories used are The Three Little Pigs and Old MacDonald had a farm.

**Intonation**, which includes pitch, rhythm, and stress in speech, can help young children learn reading, writing and oracy. In the recorded videos the practitioner uses three main aspects of intonation that are shown in the video which are expressive intonation, phrase-boundary cues, and focused stress. The goals of the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Gov, 2025) and Vygotsky's social theory (Arshad and Chen, 2009) are used to connect these traits to children's speaking, reading, writing, and digital literacy skills.

In the video, the practitioner naturally speaks slower and lowers their voice at key points to show where words and lines end. This helps children understand the story and how words are put together in groups that make sense. Kuhn and Stahl (2003) discovered that this type of phrasing helps children read and understand better because it works like punctuation does in writing. Therefore, Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development posits that children learn most effectively when assisted with tasks slightly beyond their current capabilities. Furthermore, distinct speech patterns facilitate this form of scaffolded learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Listening to the story helps children's understanding of spoken language, thereby improving

their writing and listening skills, the Curriculum for Wales endorses this approach (Welsh Government, 2022). The practitioner might also use the video with written text and have the children mark the spots where they hear natural breaks. Moreover, this would support reading, writing, and oracy. The practitioner telling the story in the video also uses focused stress, which means focussing on certain words more, to make important parts of the story stand out. For example, putting an accent on the word "not" changes the meaning of the whole line. Therefore, this helps children pick up on small differences and figure out what characters want or how they feel. To improve their speaking skills and become better speakers and writers, Berman *et al.*, (2010) says that children need to learn how to spot and use focal stress. Vygotsky said that children learn these skills by connecting with other people. Furthermore, talking back and listening to adults or peers helps them understand how focus changes what something means (Vygotsky, 1978). The Curriculum for Wales says that children should work on being clear in their speech and writing (Welsh Government, 2022). Therefore, this supports that. After listening to the story, the children could practice reading words and lines from other stories themselves using different stress patterns to see if and how the meanings could change. Moreover, this would support their writing and oral skills.

The practitioner telling the story changes the pitch, volume, and speed of their voice to show how different characters may feel and to bring the story to life. This keeps children interested and makes them feel connected to the story, which is great for helping them understand and empathise with others (Liu *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the Curriculum for Wales focusses on these traits to help children feel more confident and aware of how they feel. Also, as the story was recorded online, the video can also help children learn how to use technology better. They can watch and listen to the voice of the speaker, and then they can write their own digital stories to try out different ways of talking themselves. Vygotsky's theory of guided learning says that technology can help people learn languages (Kim, 2013), and this fits right in with that idea. Therefore, this way of using the video combines reading, writing, and internet skills, which helps children learn all these skills at the same time.

Patel (2011) states that figurative stress, expressive stress, and phrase-boundary intonation can all help children learn to read and write. This video with a story shows how these things work. Moreover, these traits, which come from Vygotsky's theory (1978) and are in line with the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Gov, 2025) show how practitioners can use intonation to help children become better speakers. Therefore, recorded stories could be used in the school to make learning more fun for the children. The skills they learn here will help them with reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computers all at the same time.

**Puppets and props** in storytelling can help children get better at talking by encouraging them use expressive language, use different voices, take turns, and have conversations that use their imagination. Furthermore, the practitioner in the

video uses finger puppets to act out the different animals in the story and make the animal voices to teach the children what each animal looks and sounds like. This strategy gets children interested in the story and shows them different voices for different characters. Vygotsky (1978) says that children learn language through social interaction, and the use of props and puppets can provide a fun way for children to join in stories and conversations through different voices and songs. Moreover Cremin et al. (2016) emphasise the importance of drama and storytelling in enabling children to understand different characters through voices and from different points of view, which improves their imagination and oracy. Alexander (2008) also backs dialogic teaching, which is when children learn through planned conversation like storytelling. Therefore, children can also practise their expressive speaking skills in a fun and exciting way by using props and puppets. These skills are vital for building confidence in both formal and informal speech.

Props and puppets also help children improve their writing skills by helping them generate ideas and structure stories. Furthermore, in the video displayed, the practitioner tells a story using a puppet and then asks the children what they believe will happen next. This encourages children to express their thoughts before writing. Moreover, this strategy helps children develop their language skills, create characters, and brainstorm plot ideas. Cooper (2005) states that creative play is a crucial foundation for children's narrative cognition, which directly helps writing. According to Fisher (2010), storytelling connects spoken and written language, allowing children to recall story patterns and phrases better. Therefore, puppets and props can help children use their imagination about what they want to write by providing a real-life connection to people and circumstances. This aligns with the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022), which states that storytelling, acting, and using materials in multiple ways can help children learn to read and write. Furthermore, puppets can help increase children's confidence as writers and get them enthused about writing when used before or during writing time.

Children can learn to read and use computers by using puppets in interactive storytelling. Moreover, by recording a puppet story, children can re-watch it, which promotes expressive language use, word learning, and understanding of story structure. The visual and aural components combine make things more understandable, and repetition aids with memory retention. Furthermore, multimedia storytelling teaches children to read and comprehend information from a variety of sources (Marsh *et al.*, 2005). Seeing a puppet perform a story can help teach children about the emotions and needs of characters. Therefore, it gives abstract things a real and understandable form. Children can use digital tools to create their own stories in addition to watching others. Moreover, children can create their own stories by fusing voice recordings, drawings, photos, and accessories using simple apps. This innovative approach aids with narrative and digital abilities (Fellowes and Oakley, 2011). Orey (2010) links this to Vygotsky's theory of guided learning, which suggests that tools like technology could improve children's understanding. Furthermore, this approach aligns with the Curriculum for Wales, which promotes learning in a variety of topics, particularly in digital skills, creativity, and communication. Therefore, storytelling is more than just reading, it's an enjoyable way to engage children in a variety of other developmental activities.

**Gestures.** Storytelling with gestures can be helpful for young children, especially when it comes to improving their speech and listening skills. Furthermore, the practitioner brings the story to life in the video by moving their hands a lot, making expressive faces, and even moving their whole bodies to show how the characters are feeling and what's going on. These body language cues help children stay focused and understand difficult or vague ideas better. McNeill (2005) says that speech and body language go hand in hand. They work together not only to show meaning, but also to help shape the thoughts that go along with the words. Moreover, this fits with Alexander's (2020) ideas about dialogic teaching, in which letting children talk freely helps them understand more. Children often start to copy the motions when they see them being used in this way. Therefore, this helps them feel more comfortable speaking, try out different tones and expressions, and understand that communication is more than just words. For children who are quiet or don't talk much, movements let them join in the story without having to speak. Furthermore, this can help them become more involved and improve their speaking skills over time.

Simple gestures like pointing, miming, or acting out a word can make a big difference when it comes to helping young children learn new words during storytelling because it gives children extra ways to understand what's being said and especially helpful when the words are new or tricky. Moreover, Capone and McGregor (2004) found that these kinds of visual cues help make word meanings clearer, which is important for younger children or those learning English. In Storytime settings, gestures help connect the words in the book to the pictures on the page, making the story easier to follow (Speakman, 2017). Furthermore, Barnes et al. (2023) showed that children whose teachers used more gestures during shared reading did better on vocabulary tests. Therefore, altogether, using gestures alongside speech turns storytelling into a richer, more engaging experience that supports children's early language, oracy, and reading development.

Gestures are also a way of children learning how to use technology as practitioners can record a story for them to view it again. Furthermore, the practitioner's expressive motions are plain to see on screen in the video, which makes it easy for children to understand the story and watch it as many times as they want. Watching the same thing more than once helps children understand the story better. Moreover Marsh et al. (2005) states that multimodal storytelling, which combines gesture, visuals, and music, can help children understand the multiple layers of meaning in digital texts. Rahman (2024) says that children can grow in their zone of proximal development by using digital tools. Therefore, children learn to present their own thoughts in imaginative, multimodal ways by seeing and replicating expressive storytelling, including the motions and gestures. Furthermore, doing this helps with their imagination, reading and writing, as well as the digital abilities that modern programs like the Curriculum for Wales encourage (Gov, 2018).

When reflecting on the sources I used, I saw that books and peer-reviewed journal articles were the best because they are more trustworthy, well-researched, and gave a strong base to construct my research. Moreover, websites were useful for quick checks or more information, but I was careful with them because their quality and trustworthiness were very different. Therefore, I learned that some sources were better than others. The books and journals were the most useful because they were deep and authoritative. Furthermore, websites were only used as supporting parts, not the main part of my work. I also cited findings from theorists that are still relevant to early years settings today.

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## **AI statement**

I have not used AI