

Cover Sheet

For this Assignment I have submitted the following:

Part 1: Two videos telling a story – A Traditional Story.

A Digital Story.

Part 2: A reflective piece analysing the recordings.

AI Statement

I acknowledge the use of co-pilot on 8 October 2026 to find books or articles that discussed the use of rhyme in the Early Years.

I used the prompt(s):

‘Can you find me peer reviewed books that look at rhyme in books in the early years.’

Part 1

Links to videos recordings:

Traditional story:

https://uowtsd-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/2513719_student_uwtsd_ac_uk/IQCim9OgJplFQ4VEAGe5x19qAf9WTkbB4tve081FDcQJaTM?e=MRuzxU

Digital Story:

https://uowtsd-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/2513719_student_uwtsd_ac_uk/IQAAC1O9HPLZTYRQeQmQxEg5ASSAYVopHhMK-Gg0ojZpnqU?e=Nfqt5z

Part 2 – Reflective Piece

Stories introduce the emergent reader or listener to a range of new and exciting vocabulary. With a linguistic bonus, children can experience language in different patterns and rhymes (Whitehead, 2009). Bower (2014) suggests that narrative is important to thinking and learning in the early years, playing a key role in supporting children to make meaning from experience. When engaged in storytelling, children's creativity and imaginations are released, allowing them to play with words and developing an understanding of language pattern and structure. Communication and literacy practices have been changed by the digital world people now live in. From birth, children are immersed within digital society, experiencing digital communication and entertainment. There is an anxiety surrounding the digital world which has been around since the 1950's with fears of the impact media was having on children, though it is argued that being digitally literate can have a positive impact on children's futures (Erstad *et al.*, 2019). This piece will look at and compare the use of traditional and digital books within the early years and the potential impacts this may have on children's language and literacy development.

Rhyming

Rhyming books have a rhythm and flow that can engage children and encourage their interest in reading. These books may sometimes offer vocabulary which children have never heard, therefore it introduces children to a new range of words, supporting them to develop their ongoing reading and writing skills (Good2know Network, 2025).

Schwartz and Sparks (2019) discuss the complexity of the English language and its irregularities. Some words have similar pronunciation, such as 'dime' and 'lime', whereas others have similar pronunciations but different spelling, such as, 'pint and mint'. Because of this, it considers brain studies and how a readers brain needs to access a range of information to make understanding of these differences. In these moments, phonics rules alone may not help a child recognise rhyme. However, it can be considered if the words show at the end of the lines, children may recognise the words are intended to rhyme, enabling them to make their own predictions. This is supported by Good2know Network (2025) who say the repetitive language structure and pattern within rhyming stories help children to recognise patterns within each

story. They explain that this pattern recognition can support children's cognitive skills as they eventually go on to experience maths and science concepts. With this idea in mind, it can be seen why rhyme may be used in children's books, such as the ones used within the recordings of 'The Dinosaur that Pooped Halloween' and 'The Dinosaur that Pooped a Monster'. Within the story, as suggested above, they use rhyme at the end of sentences, for example 'late' and 'wait', 'tail' and 'pale'. A word such as 'pale' could also be considered a word a child may not have come across before, therefore supporting the learning of new vocabulary.

Macmillian (2002) argues the benefits of rhyming. Sharing the findings from studies which look at the links between rhyming, reading achievements and phoneme awareness. It is suggested that teaching rhyme alone has little impact on a child's reading development. They believe it takes a range of learning opportunities, such as, letter recognition, phonics and blending sounds, to support children in their reading development. Though Macmillian (2002) argues the little learning opportunity rhyme alone has to offer, Crystal (2010) shares his theory that people love to play with language, such as jokes as rhyming. Reflecting back to the earliest years, he suggests adults engage in 'baby-talk' as they introduce a baby to language. He believes it is a natural instinct for children and adults to want to continue on the fun of playing with language. From this it can be considered how rhyme and play with words can make a story more engaging for children, particularly with the addition of jokes. As well as using rhyme, the stories within the recordings include silliness within their narrative, telling the story of a dinosaur that poops, a story that could be funny and entertaining to young children.

Interactive Books

The recording of the traditional story shows a book that is interactive as it has the addition of flaps to reveal words and images. It can be seen that the reader allows the children to join in and open the flaps. Interactive books, such as this, allow children to explore literature with a hands on approach. Engaging with books that have textures to feel or cardboard flaps to lift and discover, enable the child to play and participate within the story. This can stimulate the brain of babies and young children, helping to develop their focus and concentration (BookTrust, 2026).

This idea can be supported Halpenny and Pettersen (2013) who share the ideas of Piaget who believed children learn from their direct interaction within the environment. They share the example of baby 'Clara' exploring through sensory experiences, including the opportunity to access books with sounds when buttons are pressed. This principle of direct interaction within the environment, can be applied to interactive books as children develop their knowledge of language and literacy from the sensory experience they gain from exploring interactive books. From this, It can be questioned if the digital story in the recording, can have the same sensory and interactive benefits for children and babies compared to the traditional story, which can be physically touched and manipulated.

Mustafa, Ahmed, and Haider (2024) share research into the comparison between digital and traditional literature. They found that children were more engaged with digital stories compared to traditional stories, and state that one of the most significant benefits was the immersive experience, such as sound and visual elements, that supported a range of different learning styles. It was felt that, for children who find traditional print more challenging, this approach was more beneficial. It could be argued, that this research was based on only a small group, however, this evidence can be supported by Xu, Yau, Reich (2020) who consider research into the use of interactive features and engagement with digital technology. Findings showed that 'hotspots' such as pressing and swiping, seemed to give children enjoyment, as they responded with reactions such as clapping, and smiling, and provided opportunity for engagement and learning. While it has been shown that digital stories may increase children's engagement with stories, Wolf (2020) is more critical of digital literature, believing that digital stories only offer surface-level processing rather than deep reading. They suggest that the rapid information processing and sensory stimulation that comes from digital stories may reduce the attention and memory needed to reflect for deeper reading and understanding. It appears these ideas are not fully against the use of digital reading, as Wolf (2020) goes on to compare Lev Vygotsky's theory of the integrated development of thought, language and inner language to that of a 'biliterate brain'. She believes that children should first establish deep reading skills through traditional methods which can then be weaved into digital media. The findings by Xu, Yau, Reich (2020) also support the idea of surface level processing as a 'considerable' number of children in their

research were found to engage by repeatedly tapping the hotspots without waiting to hear the full narration.

Voice and expression

Wilkinson (2026) believe the secret of good storytelling, is to have fun and be confident when reading aloud. They suggest, babies learn from the rhythm of speech and sounds even if they may not understand the words being used, and if babies and children can feel the fun and excitement from the reader, this will encourage them to explore books and reading as they grow older. Cekaite and Björk-Willén (2018) agree that the use of 'enchantment' and bringing a sense of wonder within storytelling can spark interest and curiosity from the child. When sharing their research, they discuss the teachers interaction, using pauses, eye contact and changes in voice, which in turn invited the children to become active participants within the story. The authors also found that changes in volume and pitch, directed the children's attention during important parts of the story. By doing this, it enhanced engagement at moments where the storyteller wanted to support the children's engagement and understanding. These ideas are taken on by the reader in the recordings. Within the recording of the traditional story it can be seen that the storyteller is attempting to use pitch and changes in voice and volume. This can also be seen for the digital story, where the reader attempts to change their voice for the speech of different characters.

Linguist Eve Clark saw the value of the adult interacting with babies and children to support language development. Kane (2025) said, Clark believes, that children need to hear how language is used and be given feedback when they make mistakes, with opportunity to practice in order to acquire these language skills. As children develop their knowledge, Clark suggests they make changes and 'repair' their language, this includes the sound, structure and grammar. She stated that it is the role of the adult to support children with these 'repairs' through conversation. The example is used of a child requesting a drink. The child says "Milk", the father replies "you want milk?", adding the pronoun and the verb (Kane, 2025). It can be seen how this theory could be used within storytelling. Conversing and pausing in storytelling could enable the child to express their own ideas and questions, whilst the storyteller could support the development of language by using the 'repair' method if required, and answering

questions. In regards to digital storytelling, this theory may be more challenging to implement. As mentioned above by Mustafa, Ahmed, and Haider (2024) children were eager to press hotspots within the digital story with little interest of the narration. It could be considered how it may be difficult to pause and 'repair' language if a child is more focused on tapping or swiping the screen. Takacs, Swart and Bus (2015) share the view of the impact of hotspots, also recognising them as a distraction within their studies. They did however, find that narration and sound effects linked to the story, supported children's literacy development. It could be considered, for adults who are less confident in reading and expression, digital storytelling could be beneficial for both the adult and child. When looking at the recording of the digital story, the benefits can be noted. The reader is using a digital story which requires some engagement as the children support to 'swipe' the pages. It avoids the risk of distraction from hotspots, but it could be argued that sound effects and some movement on the screen could be beneficial for engagement as mentioned above by Takacs, Swart and Bus (2015). A confident, expressive reader could offer an exciting and engaging experience for children when reading a traditional story. However, lack of confidence and enthusiasm could impact the delivery of the story, which is where digital stories can be more beneficial. An experienced reader combined with sounds could make a story more engaging for children.

The research has shown how the traditional and digital story have similar benefits, such as the use of rhyming language and interactive elements. Both can be seen as engaging for children. Although, as argued, hotspots within digital stories can be a distraction for children, therefore it could be considered that the story in the recording with only swiping pages may be a better option to offer deeper understanding of literature. It shows there are benefits of the delivery of both traditional and digital stories within the early years. The idea of 'Biliterate' brain suggested by Wolf (2020) could be an idea that would benefit children's development of language and literature and could enable them to engage in a world of both traditional and digital stories, potentially gaining a deeper understanding of literature through traditional books and preparing for the digital world through digital literature.

Within this piece AI has been beneficial for research, helping to find useful books and articles that link to language and literature. When asked 'Can you find me peer reviewed books that look at rhyme in books in the early years.' Co-pilot was able to find a range of books and articles that discussed rhyme in the early years. The writer was able to confirm the validity of AI by searching it's suggestions through the University Library, which provides reliable, peer reviewed sources for research and reading. Though the suggestions from AI were not used directly within this piece, they enabled the writer to extend their research into different authors. For example AI suggested 'Young Children's Learning of Language and Literacy by Marian R. Whitehead' which then enabled the writer to research and find more of the authors work, which include Whitehead (2009) 'Supporting Language and Literacy Development in the Early Years'. The use of AI did have its drawbacks as it made many suggestions, some of which were unable to be accessed or seemed to not be available online. This at times could be seen as time wasting, however, the sources that were available in the library were useful for furthering knowledge of the subject and as mentioned, extending research into different authors.

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