

AI Statement

I acknowledge the use of Google Scholar (Available at: <https://scholar.google.co.uk/>) for the purpose of research for Module 11 – Language and Literacy in the Digital Age (ECEY5004).

I acknowledge the use of COPILOT to find current sources (e-books, journal articles, webpages), dated between 2015 and 2025 for the purpose of research for Module 11 – Language and Literacy in the Digital Age (ECEY5004).

I confirm that I have also kept my research notes should they be required

Prompts:

1. Importance of storytelling in the early years
2. Benefits of storytelling in the early years
3. What does storytelling develop in young children
4. Welsh Curriculum – Oracy Skills
5. Can puppets promote Oracy
6. Can Oracy be supported using digital means
7. Role of Digital methods in oracy
8. What is better live storytelling or digitally enhanced

Module: ECEY5004

- **Section 1** – Traditional storytelling activity – Three Little Pigs, Page 3
- **Section 2** – Digital storytelling activity – Three Little Pigs, Page 3
- **Section 3** – Written analyse of traditional and digital storytelling behaviours with a focus on oracy. Pages 4-10
- **References** – Pages 11-15

Section 1

Traditional storytelling activity – The Three Little Pigs

(7minutes 6seconds)

[Language and Literacy in the Digital Age ECEY5004 - Three Little Pigs \(Traditional Final\).mp4](#)

<https://uwtsd->

[my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/2413982_student_uwtsd_ac_uk/EXIKH8ovoSJNtGXf9zjlhKEB0QHyAC2gO4XGY6nONSacVQ?e=LYqcFN](https://uwtsd-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/2413982_student_uwtsd_ac_uk/EXIKH8ovoSJNtGXf9zjlhKEB0QHyAC2gO4XGY6nONSacVQ?e=LYqcFN)

Section 2

Digital storytelling activity – Three Little Pigs

(7minutes 2seconds)

[Language and Literacy in the Digital Age ECEY5004 - Three Little Pigs.mp4](#)

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Section 3 - Analysis

Storytelling is a versatile and engaging approach for developing language, early literacy and digital literacy in babies and young children. Storytelling supports holistic development of children's literacy across oracy, reading and writing. This analysis focuses specifically on how the storyteller develops children's oracy in two formats: traditional storytelling using puppets and props and digital storytelling using recorded narration, character voice and media effects. The assignment will analyse how the storyteller uses three key storytelling behaviours pitch and tone, props and puppets, narration and media effects to promote children's spoken language, listening and communication skills. This will be supported by relevant research and theory throughout.

Benefits of storytelling (Pre Birth – 7years).

Storytelling is a multifaceted teaching tool that supports children's language, literacy, emotional, cognitive and social development. The Department for Education (2022) highlights that reading and telling stories to children strengthens language acquisition, widens vocabulary and fosters understanding. Liu *et al* (2022) argue that children are born with natural recognition of pitch and tone and can tune into the musical nature of speech before they understand words as they are immersed in the rhythm and patterns of language. Similarly, research by Moon *et al* (2015) showed an unborn baby can recognise intonation and rhythm of speech before they understand words, highlighting the importance of engaging in oral storytelling from pre-birth. Chomsky's theory of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) also suggests children are born equipped to acquire language (Chomsky, 1985). White (2022) highlights repetitive storytelling promotes children's oral language and has benefits for children's vocabulary, phonological awareness, narrative skills. Carr *et al* (2022) found that children's early language skills were enhanced when children engaged in complex and meaningful language during early storytelling experiences. These experiences led to higher literacy and comprehension outcomes when in education. This highlights the importance of storytelling for language and literacy development in the early years.

Intonation- Pitch and Tone

This section explores pitch and tone within intonation for promoting children's oracy. Intonation refers to sound change created by the rise and fall of your voice in speech, an important communication between speaker and listener (Bradford and Brazil, 2025). Within early years storytelling, pitch and tone supports children's oracy by modelling expressive speech, supports understanding and encourages active listening (Voice 21, 2025). Additionally, Sorianello (2024) identifies pitch and tone as a key element of spoken language supporting sentence expression, highlights important information and conveys feelings, attitudes and social cues.

In both the traditional and digital formats of "The Three Little Pigs" the storyteller uses character intonation in the form of high-pitched voices for the pigs to convey innocence, while a deep voice was given to the wolf to signal, he is a threat. This contrast demonstrates Sorianello's view that using varied pitch and tone helps children to interpret emotion, character intent, and narrative structure making language more meaningful and engaging. The storyteller also uses repetitive language with raised intonation for "I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down" and "Not by the hairs on my chinny chin chin". These repetitive patterns with raised intonation in storytelling according to Cioffi (2025) reinforce vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure by presenting them multiple times. Cioffi (2025) also highlights repetition within storytelling creates opportunities for children to join in practicing spoken language and develops confidence. The storyteller facilitates these opportunities in the traditional story by pausing and inviting the children to join in with repetitive phrases. This aligns with the Curriculum for Wales, that states within oracy children should develop the ability to listen, respond and use expressive communication (Welsh Government, 2021) therefore through modelling expressive language and giving opportunities for participation the storyteller is supporting children in meeting curricular expectations.

These opportunities could be built into the digital storytelling experience through pausing and replaying of the story supporting children's oracy development through repeated exposure to varied intonation and oral expression. Billington (2016) states that digital tools can enhance communication, language, and literacy when used purposefully, through interactive storytelling and multisensory engagement alongside adult interactions. Upon reflection of both methods of storytelling the storyteller is

observed to use pitch and tone more confidently within the digital format compared to the traditional story telling. This suggests practitioner confidence and training is important to ensuring effective storytelling within early years. Melicoot (2019) also stipulates practitioners often find oral storytelling challenging and become self-conscious. This suggests practitioner's confidence can influence delivery and create missed opportunities to develop oracy through pitch and tone within traditional storytelling.

Wells (1986) emphasises pitch, and tone supports children's understanding of intent and emotion. Within the digital story, the storyteller enhanced varied intonation for the three little pigs and the wolf, with layered sound effects to further emphasise character intent and convey emotions. A cheerful narrative tone that rose and fell guides the children through the structure of the story. By delivering the story in this way the storyteller effectively uses pitch and tone within character voices to bring the story to life developing children's understanding of character roles and emotions while introducing key vocabulary. This aligns with Tales Toolkit (2024) that reports storytelling involving character voices and expressive narration enhances children's vocabulary, communication and engagement in collaborative dialogue.

It could also be argued that the layering of intonation, sound effects, and digital enhancements may at times distract or overwhelm young children, particularly those still developing attentional control. Mercer and Mannion (2018) state that while oracy is enriched through multimodal input, excessive auditory stimulation can reduce opportunities for children to focus on the language itself and practise expressive speech independently.

Props and Puppets

This section explores the use of props and puppets for developing children's oracy. A puppet is an inanimate object that can be brought to life and given a voice by humans enabling them to represent a character in storytelling (Kroger and Nupponen, 2019). The storyteller has utilized props and puppets to present the story of "The Three Little Pigs" reflecting Bettelheim belief, as cited by Sherman (1979) that fairy tales need to be told to children rather than read. This method of storytelling enables the consolidation of developmentally appropriate narrative

through the storyteller's voice, expression, gestures and imagination (Sherman, 1979). By choosing this method of storytelling the storyteller has promoted oracy by modelling expressive language through giving the puppets character voices, encouraging attentive listening and provides children with opportunities to join in with familiar repeated phrases such as "I'll huff and I'll puff, and blow your house down" and "Not by the hairs on my chinny chin chin".

Mujahidah *et al* (2021) highlights that using hand puppets in storytelling has many benefits, including encouraging children to speak, improving listening skills, supporting word recognition, adds vocabulary and creates opportunities to promote holistic oracy skills. Similarly, Remer and Tzuriel's (2015) found puppets acted as a mediation tool, enabling practitioners to adapt their language that children found more accessible. The storyteller demonstrates this by modelling Welsh phrases "tri mochyn bach" and using simple expressive language that is appropriate for early years children. The puppets also offer opportunities to bilingual integration supporting the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings that promotes communication in play-based storytelling through voice, gesture and imagination (Welsh Government, 2022)

The storyteller's choice to use puppets to retell "The Three Little Pigs" reflects Paley's storytelling and story acting curriculum (1990), that emphasises children's spoken language and listening as the foundation to language development. Paley believed children should engage with stories through voice, movement and imagination. This is reflected in the traditional version by using puppets to visually support the narrative and by creating opportunities for children to listen, anticipate, repeat and engage with the story. Additionally, the storyteller further enhanced the puppets by adopting pitch and tone for characterization encouraging children from being passive listeners to active participants, a strategy that Tales Toolkit (2024) highlights fostering vocabulary development through participation. Furthermore, this aligns with Vygotsky's theory that views language is a fundamental tool in children's language and communication and is developed through social interactions and guided participation. (Vygotsky, 1978). This is also demonstrated in the traditional version where the puppets serve as a tool to scaffold children's expressive language through modelling, participation and shared experiences.

However, while the use of props and puppets offers rich experiences for oracy development, research suggests there is limited use of puppet within early years due to practitioners' lack of confidence and knowledge of the benefits they have (Giannikas, 2023). Arnerich (2018) also emphasises the puppetry is not being utilized within early years settings as practitioners do not recognise its values for supporting communication and language skills. Therefore, children are missing out on opportunities to engage in meaningful, interactive, varied storytelling. It could also be argued that unlike digital formats live storytelling allows practitioners to adapt pace, language and delivery in response to children's engagement and needs. According to Dubiel (n.d.) live storytelling offers children connection and makes language more meaningful and therefore offering practitioners opportunities to notice, analyse and respond. This practice supports curriculum guidance on scaffolding children learning through responsive interactions and play-based communication to support oracy development (Welsh Government, 2022). (587)

Animation, Narration and Sound Effects.

This section explores the use of layered narration and sound effects and digital delivery to promote children's oracy. The digital story of "The Three Little Pigs", the storyteller uses recorded narration, visual animation and sound effects to enhance the storytelling experience. These work together to stimulate concentration, communication and engagement in early literature (Flewitt et al, 2015). The recorded narration provides children with the story structure and the sound effects paired with expressive language supports children understanding of emotion and character intent. This aligns with the Curriculum for Wales Cross-curricular Skills Frameworks and multimodal communication strand of the Digital Competence Framework both that emphasise integrating digital tools to support literacy and oracy development for children (Welsh Government, 2022). Furthermore, Newall *et al* (2024) highlight supporting evolving literacy through digital tools and the need to develop digital literacy alongside traditional literacy skills, embedding speaking and listening through digital means.

The digital story offers children consistent narrative, enhanced with sound effects and animation to support listening and comprehension. Upon reflection of both versions of the story, the storyteller is more confident and expressive in the digital version

than the traditional version suggesting digital tools can enhance practitioner delivery and provide children with more meaningful storytelling opportunities.

This method of storytelling develops children's oracy by providing opportunities to practise listening, anticipate predictive phrases, and rehearse oral speech. Flewitt *et al* (2015) also emphasises that digital storytelling supports expressive communication by offering repeated exposure to multimodal language, especially when supported with adult interaction. The added ability to pause and replay the digital story further supports children's comprehension and allows repeated exposure to expressive intonation and fosters conversations and questions. The repetitive phrases such as "I'll huff and I'll puff and blow your house down" encourages spoken repetition, supporting language acquisition.

In today's digital landscape children find digital storytelling more engaging than traditional storytelling because they are surrounded by its visual, auditory, and interactive opportunities. Giannikas (2023) emphasises digital storytelling energises language learning and makes content more exciting and accessible for young children. Similarly, the Society for Storytelling (2024) recognise that children are growing up in digital environments and are therefore more responsive to digital learning experiences, that still offer oracy development opportunities.

However, it could be argued that digital storytelling may lack meaningful engagement between practitioners and children that live storytelling offers. Without adult facilitation, digital stories become passive entertainment rather than interactive learning experiences. Barton (2024) highlights oracy as encompassing a range of communicative methods and not just spoken language alone, suggesting digital tools can support inclusive practice by enabling children other ways to communication in multimodal interactions. Practitioners should be encouraged and supported to deliver digital storytelling in ways that enhance speaking, listening, and understanding inclusivity and value oracy in a diverse way. This aligns with curriculum guidance that promotes responsive interaction, scaffolding of learning, and the development of digital competence through purposeful use of technology (Welsh Government, 2022).

Conclusion

In conclusion, embedding storytelling within practice provides valuable and meaningful engagement that supports holistic development of language and literacy within the early years. Through the delivery of storytelling over a range of formats, and by incorporating multimodal opportunities, children have opportunities to experience stories in diverse ways that promotes visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning (Scotland's National Centre for Languages, 2022). Storytelling develops oracy by encouraging spoken language, listening and communication skills. The practitioner's role is to enrich storytelling experiences by modelling expressive intonation, incorporating props and puppets to build confidence and by using media to enhance stories to come alive. Practitioners should develop digital tools strategically, ensuring they complement existing early years practice and are appropriate (Billington, 2016). This creates engaging and meaningful opportunities for children in different ways. By offering varied storytelling experiences that model rich language and immerse children within the experience practitioners can strengthen language acquisition, widen vocabulary and foster understanding. This supports laying the foundations for confident speakers, and lifelong enjoyment for stories.

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