

AI acknowledgement

I am acknowledging that I have used MY BIB to support me with my reference list. I have also used the word hippo to source alternative words with the same meaning.

Introduction

Hegar (2022), Hook-Sopko (2022) and Lunn (2015) agree that storytelling in utero and the early years does not only support connections and bonding between the baby and parents but furthermore suggests that reading to the foetus and during the early years can build the foundation for early literacy and language development. Chomsky (Cited by Main,2023) and Pinker (2010) believed that language acquisition is already set in the human brain. However, Skinner (1953) and Bandura (1977, as cited in Jakobsen and Fischer, 2023) proposed that language acquisition occurs through interactions or language they hear or observe.

Nedovik (2023) states that storytelling in the early years can have many benefits such as promoting brain development, language and imagination. Moreover, it can promote oral language development, listening and interactions. Vygotsky (Loughborough University, 2016) and Oldham Council (2023) suggest that storytelling can spark children's imagination and fuel their creativity. This could encourage children to retell or tell their own stories (Howley-Rouse,2022). According to Kelley (2020), a child's retelling of a story could be carried out using pictures and sequencing with a verbal re-tell, a written re-tell or through drawing. This demonstrates the understanding the child has of the text.

In recent years there has been a development in digital literacy. The National Literacy Trust (2019) states that technology can play a role in supporting language and literacy and can offer learning opportunities through a variety of digital tools and applications. In an article, Lopez-Escribano, Valverde-Montesino and García-Ortega (2021) discuss how the use of digital devices can enhance children's literacy with the correct tools. For example, the use of e-books has become a popular tool to practise reading, this may be done individually or as a shared read. Epistemo (2020) states that the use of digital

devices and tools can reduce teacher and pupil interaction. Additionally, Lopez-Escribano, Valverde-Montesino and García-Ortega (2021) add that the teacher would need to interact with the children and scaffold the learning to maximise the benefits of digital learning.

Video 1- Traditional Storytelling.

In the first recording, the reader captures the children's imagination by setting a scene. The reader invites the children into the outdoors to recreate the story's setting.

According to Sefton (2023) bringing storytelling outdoors can add a whole new layer to the experience, especially when the setting mirrors that of the story itself. This approach can help convey the characters and set the mood and atmosphere.

Additionally, Rennie (2023), states that by storytelling in a natural environment, this immerses children in sensory experiences that reinforce narrative elements, enhancing their imagination, creativity and wonder. This can deepen the connection to the story.

This connects with the 'Waldorf' tradition. Bettelheim, (1976, cited by Cekaite and Björk-Willén, 2018) suggests that stories should entertain and spark curiosity, inspire imagination and emotional engagement. These are important for building literacy skills.

Analysing the reader, there is clear evidence of intonation, a variety of tone, pitch, and pace. These changes make the story more interesting and can capture the children's attention. Cunich (2024) suggests that pace is a great way to build suspense or excitement in storytelling. The Orkney News (2020) states that by using your voice to change pitch it can support children in understanding emotion. For example, using a higher pitch for a scared little mouse or a deeper voice for a Gruffalo, this will support in getting an understanding of the characters. Alternatively, pitch could be higher in happy moods whereas lower pitches could represent sadness. Additionally, Hill (2024) states that storytelling with intonation exposes children to varied sentence structures, helping them grasp how sentences convey meaning and emotion. This can build pattern recognition that enhances oracy and writing.

The reader demonstrates good use of non-verbal communication. This is shown through facial expression, posture and hand gestures where able. Care Learning (2024) suggests that verbal and non-verbal communication combined can create a deeper

learning experience and allow the children to fully understand what is being expressed. Non verbal communication is important, it can support 55% of a message that is communicated (Seeds Of Tellers, no date). Darwin (1872, cited by Fiveable,2024) believed that facial expression is a way of communication which not just learnt but is born already instilled in us. BBC Bitesize (2019) suggests that facial expression can communicate emotions and mood of characters. This can support children socially and prepare them for the world around them. Similarly, Raenkwocha (2023), adds that body posture can also communicate emotion, confidence and enhance story telling experiences for the children. According to Barnes *et al.* (2023) this supports literacy as children learn words by using verbal and nonverbal cues with gestures helping young children by capturing attention and enhancing meaning.

The reader has used a 10x8 sized book to tell/ read the story in an outdoor area with some props which enhances the story telling experience. However, it could be beneficial to not use a book at all. This way the reader does not have to juggle turning the pages whilst being engaged in the storytelling itself. The pictures and book is small in such a big space which already sets the scene of the story. The Curiosity Approach (2024) argues that storytelling is more than reading from a book, it is about making stories come to life. Bromley (2019) adds that oral story telling can support children with their emerging literacy development. The children would be more engaged with the storyteller rather than trying to see the pictures in the book. This could encourage more interaction and questioning. Essential Resources (2023) states that story telling can be an immersive experience bringing language to life. Moreover, encouraging children to want to create their own stories further supporting literacy.

Video 2 Digital Storytelling

During the digital storytelling the reader used the animated pictures and text to follow the story and tell the story to the children. Using the animations prompts questions that the children or storyteller can ask as it gives clues about the characters feelings. The story has some animation which can draw the attention of the children. This is something that would not be seen in a traditional storybook. According to Rahiem (2021) digital storytelling can support traditional storytelling with digital tools such as

images and animation. Additionally, supporting children's learning by providing a variety of teaching pedagogy. Moreover, Eurokids (2023) support this by stating that digital storytelling enhances traditional storytelling by using interactive technology to engage children. These tools make learning fun by communicating information, emotions, and perspectives in an effective way. Robin (2016), believes that digital storytelling can foster creativity in children encouraging them to want to tell their own stories through a digital media, this can also support communication by questioning, expressing ideas and building up a story.

The reader appears to lack some confidence with the wording of the story and is relying on the subtitles to read the story to the children. This shows as the reader keeps reverting to the screen. This leads to a limited interaction between the reader and the children. According to Lenhart et al. (2020), interaction such as gestures and eye contact play an important role in helping children stay engaged with the story and concentrate on its key elements. Similarly, Kucirkova and Falloon (2017) suggest that maintaining eye contact while using digital storytelling tools bridges the gap between the screen and the physical environment. This connection enhances children's focus on both the storyteller and the story, improving comprehension and retention. Essential resources (2023) agree that the storyteller can model skills like eye contact and body language, to maintain the children's attention.

In addition to the reduced interaction between the reader and the children, it seems as though pace of the story was impacted by time and therefore also reduced the amount of interaction that could possibly have taken place between the reader and the children. The reader had to keep up or slow down in places with the turning of the pages and keep in time with the subtitles on the page as it was underlined once the words were spoken. There was not much time in between to discuss the images or the story itself. This possibly could have been supported by being able to stop, pause and continue the story without affecting the time or causing a delay between pages. Williams (2023) states that reading too quickly can have an impact on understanding, retaining information, and being able to recall specific details. Wong-Nizic (2019) agrees that children can learn

and enjoy the language when reading is slowed down, with children having a little more time to take it all in.

One of the most important considerations of this study is that both traditional storytelling and digital storytelling are influential tools for enhancing oracy (speaking and listening skills), reading, and writing (Lisenbee and Ford, 2017). According to Athena Career Academy (2023) traditional storytelling can support verbal communication skills by involving listeners in vocabulary, intonation, and story structure. This can promote understanding and critical thinking, whilst providing a foundation for the development of literacy in reading and writing. Moreover, storytelling can fuel imagination, paving the way for creative story writing (Bahrey,2022).

On the other hand, digital storytelling combines stories with multimedia tools such as video and audio, which can support digital literacy. Çetin (2021) states that learning with technology allows for new literacy skills to be obtained. It can encourage individuals to create and share their own content using technology, this can further support oracy and writing through the use of digital tools (Robin,2016). Vygotsky (1978, cited by Brodie,2024) in his sociocultural theory highlights the use of technology in shaping development. Additionally, his ideas have been integrated into what we now know as digital literacy, adding how these applications can scaffold learning in the classroom.

In conclusion, both traditional and digital storytelling are important for developing language and literacy skills in children. According to Sylvester and Greenidge (no date) states that some children may find traditional literacy challenging, but engaging with new forms like digital storytelling can enhance motivation and help build a foundation for traditional literacy skills. Traditional storytelling uses voice, facial expressions, and gestures to engage children, helping them understand stories and develop literacy skills. This approach encourages creativity and imagination, forming the base for oracy, reading and writing skills. In addition to this, digital storytelling which includes a variety of media elements like animation and interactivity can capture children's interest in our modern, digital world. Furthermore, encouraging children to develop their literacy and

digital literacy skills through digital storytelling learning how it can be a fun activity and building a positive relationship with language (Giannikas,2024).

Welsh Government (2024) states that using technology when learning in literacy can help learners deepen their understanding beyond the text that is in front of them.

Strivastava (2024) suggests that finding a balance between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling can offer a broad and comprehensive approach to education in the early years.

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