

Cover Page.

For this assignment I have used the following: -

Part 1: Video 1 & 2

Part 2: Evaluation

Statement for the use of AI.

I acknowledge the use of Co-pilot between 28.09.26-21.10.26 to research and to proofread.

I used the prompt(s):

1. Twinkl- Digital book
2. Current Sorces
3. Proof Reading

Part 1.

Videos sent to lecturers.

The Tiger who came to tea- [Traditional Story.mp4](#)

Twinkl- Beauty and The Beast- [Digital storytelling.mp4](#)

1. Introduction.

Early literacy supports children's communication, imagination and future learning. From birth to seven years, children develop language and literacy through interactions, play, storytelling and experiences with books and technology. Practitioners have an important role in providing inclusive opportunities to develop oracy, reading, writing and digital literacy.

This assignment critically evaluates two recorded reading activities: reading a physical book using a tiger, sandwiches and a mug as props, and reading a Twinkl digital PowerPoint using a doll and a figure while swiping through slides and pointing to images. It examines language and literacy development, compares traditional and digital approaches, and reflects on the practitioner's role in supporting children's learning. Relevant theories and the Northern Ireland curriculum are used to link practice with research.

2. Language and Early Literacy Development from Pre-birth to Seven Years.

Language development begins before birth, when babies can hear sounds and become familiar with aspects of voices and speech patterns. Following birth, infants communicate through crying, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and vocalisations. **Trevarthen (1979)** highlights the importance of early communication between infants and caregivers. Responsive adults support development by recognising babies' cues and responding warmly, establishing foundations for later communication.

During the first two years, children increasingly babble, imitate sounds, understand familiar words and begin speaking. Their language develops through repeated interactions, play and exposure to meaningful speech. **Bruner (1983)** emphasises the importance of supportive adult-child interaction. Shared reading provides opportunities for children to hear vocabulary, associate words with pictures and participate through gestures, sounds and emerging speech.

Between approximately two and four years, children develop vocabulary and sentence structures, ask questions and engage in pretend play. Familiar objects can make language meaningful and support understanding. For example, a tiger prop could encourage children to name an animal or describe its actions. A sandwich and mug could introduce everyday vocabulary and connect the story with familiar experiences. However, resources alone do not guarantee learning. Practitioners must model language, allow thinking time and encourage children to contribute.

From around four to seven years, children increasingly develop narrative skills, phonological awareness, print awareness and early writing. They may recognise familiar words, identify letter-sound relationships, retell stories and begin writing letters and words. Development varies according to individual needs, experiences and opportunities. **Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998)** explain that emergent literacy includes code-related skills, such as recognising letters and sounds, alongside meaning-related skills, including vocabulary and story comprehension. Effective practice should support both.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning is supported through interaction with more knowledgeable others. Adults can scaffold learning by modelling vocabulary, asking questions and demonstrating literacy skills, gradually reducing support as children become more independent.

In Northern Ireland, **the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007** provides a statutory curriculum framework for early years and primary education **(Northern Ireland, 2007)**. Reading activities should therefore be purposeful, inclusive and appropriate to children's developmental stages, supporting communication alongside early reading and writing.

3. Evaluation of the Physical Book Reading Activity.

The first recording involved reading ***The Tiger Who Came to Tea* (Kerr, 1968)**, using a tiger, sandwiches and a mug as props. The use of *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* provided opportunities to connect the story with props and familiar experiences. Combining a printed story with tangible objects can help children connect language with everyday experiences. Physical books also provide opportunities to explore illustrations follow a narrative sequence and observe how printed text is handled during reading.

The props can make storytelling interactive. The tiger may encourage discussion about characters, actions and emotions, while the food and mug can introduce familiar vocabulary and imaginative scenarios. Children could use these objects to recreate events, predict what a character might do or describe what they can see. Such experiences support expressive language and connect storytelling with play.

This approach reflects **Bruner's (1983)** emphasis on supportive interaction. It also creates opportunities for dialogic reading, where children contribute ideas rather than simply listen. **Mol et al. (2008)** found that dialogic parent-child book reading can provide additional benefits compared with less interactive approaches. Practitioners can apply this by asking open-ended questions, such as, "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why might the character need a mug?" These questions encourage prediction, explanation and vocabulary development.

However, props can also distract from the story if they are used without a clear purpose. Children may focus on manipulating the tiger or food rather than understanding the narrative. The practitioner should therefore connect each object to the text and balance play with discussion of illustrations, events and printed words. Pointing to the text and explaining how it relates to the story can strengthen print awareness.

The activity can support inclusion because children can participate by pointing, selecting objects, gesturing or speaking. Practitioners should acknowledge different forms of communication and extend children's contributions without pressuring them to speak. Children with more advanced language skills may benefit from questions requiring detailed explanations or retelling.

Overall, physical books and props provide valuable opportunities for shared attention, imaginative play and language development. Their effectiveness depends on purposeful use, sensitive interaction and maintaining a clear connection between the resources and the story.

4. Evaluation of the Digital Twinkl PowerPoint Reading Activity.

The second recording involved reading the Twinkl *Beauty and the Beast* PowerPoint (Twinkl, n.d.), using a doll and a figure, swiping between slides and pointing to images. The resource supported visual storytelling and introduced opportunities to explore digital literacy. Digital storytelling can combine written or spoken language with visual information, potentially helping children understand the narrative. **Burnett (2010)** argues that digital technologies should be understood as part of children's wider literacy experiences rather than as separate from traditional literacy.

Swiping between slides allows the practitioner to manage the sequence and pace of the presentation. Pointing to images can direct attention towards important details, introduce vocabulary and connect spoken language with visual information. The doll and figure can extend the story into practical play, helping children recreate an event shown on screen or explore what might happen next.

The activity also introduces early digital literacy. This involves more than operating a device; it includes understanding that technology can communicate information and be used purposefully. By modelling how to swipe, select and revisit slides, practitioners can demonstrate basic digital interactions. Explaining these actions also helps children understand that technology is a tool for learning and communication.

Nevertheless, digital resources do not automatically improve learning. Attractive images and frequent transitions may distract children or interrupt the narrative. If the practitioner concentrates on operating the presentation, opportunities for conversation may be reduced. The pace should therefore remain responsive to children's needs, with pauses for discussion and opportunities to revisit slides.

Pointing to images is not sufficient evidence of understanding. Practitioners should invite children to describe what they see, explain events and predict what might happen next. Questions such as "What can you see?" and "Why do you think that happened?" can encourage vocabulary, reasoning and comprehension. Where appropriate, children should also have opportunities to participate in using the technology rather than remaining passive observers.

Digital activities should be age-appropriate, supervised and balanced with physical books, movement and practical play. Some children may benefit from enlarged images or repeated visual cues, while others may require reduced visual stimulation or additional support. Practitioners must consider accessibility and ensure that digital features enhance rather than replace meaningful interaction.

The PowerPoint therefore provides opportunities to combine visual storytelling, physical props and early technological skills. Its value depends on purposeful use, appropriate pacing and active participation.

5. Comparison of Traditional and Digital Approaches.

Both activities use storytelling and props to connect language with meaningful experiences. The physical book offers direct contact with printed text and opportunities to model book-handling skills. The PowerPoint introduces touchscreen interaction and presents information digitally. Both can support vocabulary, prediction, comprehension and imaginative play when accompanied by responsive adult interaction.

The physical format may make it easier to revisit pages and draw attention to print. The digital format can introduce children to touchscreen controls and demonstrate how images and words communicate information. However, neither approach is inherently superior. Learning depends on the quality of the story, the suitability of the resources and how the practitioner encourages participation.

Mol et al. (2008) highlight the value of interactive shared reading, while **Burnett (2010)** emphasises the importance of considering digital technology within broader literacy practices. Together, these perspectives suggest that practitioners should select resources according to learning intentions rather than novelty. Combining printed books, digital stories, conversation and imaginative play can provide varied opportunities for literacy development.

6. The Practitioner's Role in Supporting Oracy, Reading, Writing and Digital Literacy.

Practitioners create an environment where children feel confident communicating and exploring literacy. Supporting oracy involves modelling clear language, introducing vocabulary, listening attentively and allowing children time to respond. Open-ended questions, repetition and expanding children's phrases can encourage richer communication. For example, if a child names the tiger, the practitioner could respond, "Yes, the tiger is walking towards the food," modelling a longer sentence.

Reading support includes modelling book handling, discussing illustrations, drawing attention to print and encouraging prediction and retelling. Writing can be developed through related activities such as drawing a character, making marks on a pretend shopping list, labelling objects or attempting to write a name. These experiences connect spoken language, reading and writing within meaningful play.

Digital literacy should be supported through purposeful, supervised use of age-appropriate technology. Practitioners can demonstrate basic controls and encourage children to discuss digital content instead of simply watching it. They should also consider online safety, privacy, accessibility and the balance between screen-based experiences and other learning opportunities.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory supports adapting assistance to each child's needs. Practitioners should observe children's responses, provide prompts where necessary and gradually encourage independence. Working with families can further support development by recognising children's home languages, reading experiences and familiarity with technology.

7. Reflection and Professional Development.

The recordings provide an opportunity to reflect on my developing practice. The physical-book activity required me to coordinate storytelling with the tiger, sandwiches and mug. The digital activity required me to manage the PowerPoint, swipe between slides, point to images and use the doll and figure. Both approaches required preparation and an understanding of how resources supported the narrative.

A key area for improvement is ensuring that resources do not interrupt opportunities for dialogue. In future activities, I should plan pauses, use open-ended questions and allow children sufficient thinking time. Reviewing recordings can help me evaluate my pace, voice, gestures, positioning and use of resources. Where children's responses are available, I should use them to assess participation and adapt future practice rather than assuming that attention demonstrates understanding.

I can also improve my confidence with presentation software and develop follow-up activities involving drawing, mark-making and retelling. These experiences would connect reading with wider literacy skills. Reflecting on both activities helps me identify strengths, recognise areas for development and apply theory more effectively in practice.

8. Conclusion.

Both reading activities offer opportunities to support children's language, literacy and imaginative play. The physical book and props connect printed stories with tangible experiences, while the digital PowerPoint introduces touchscreen interaction and visual storytelling. Neither approach guarantees learning; effectiveness depends on purposeful planning, inclusive participation and responsive adult interaction. By combining traditional and digital resources and reflecting critically on my practice, I can support children's developing oracy, reading, writing and digital literacy from birth to seven years.

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