



Early Literacy Learning

Professor Rosie Flewitt

*Education and Social Research
Institute, Manchester
Metropolitan University*



What does 'Early Literacy' mean to you?

Exchange views with your neighbour ...

Early literacy is rooted in children's everyday lives and meaning making

3 conditions for early literacy

1. Literate environments
2. Attentive and responsive adults who celebrate children's preferred ways to express meanings
3. Rich opportunities to practise literacy in playful and purposeful ways





Early literacy learning...

... is complex, rich and begins from birth.

... is rooted in young children's meaning making.

... involves making sense of people, objects, texts and social situations.

... involves making signs that other people understand (gesturing, moving, talking, singing and making marks etc).

... involves sensory experiences (seeing, hearing, touching, feeling).



Literacy is multimodal meaning making - using many different signs, symbols and media



Writing, drawing, cuttings-out, collage, and the making of three-dimensional objects are all ways of representing meaning. Children will use the most apt forms and materials which come to hand, basing their decisions on their experience of different sign systems in the world around them.

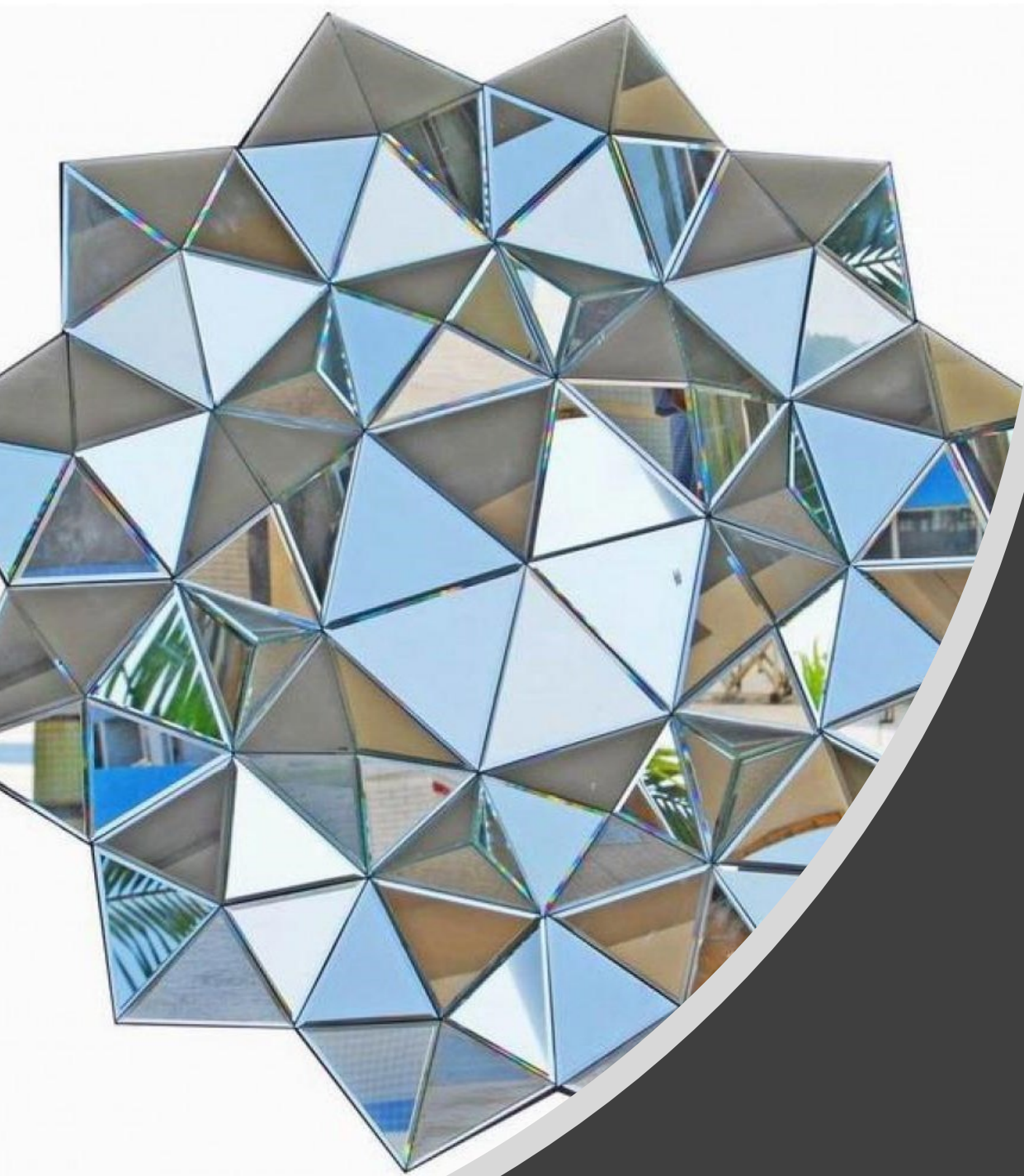
(Gunther Kress, 1996)



Literacy learning involves...

... interpreting, creating and communicating meaning through writing and reading in different media (picture books, environmental print, logos, different digital devices ...)

... observing and joining in the different ways that people and communities use literacy for different purposes.



Learning about literacy includes developing a literacy identity

Identity is multifaceted, so let children experiment with the different signs, symbols, languages and literacies that they encounter.

Children should not feel torn between communities, identities and languages, but respected and connected.

3 conditions for early literacy

1. Literate environments - indoors and outdoors in ECE; at home; in the wider community
2. Attentive and responsive adults who celebrate children's preferred modes of expression
3. Meaningful opportunities to practise literacy in playful and purposeful ways





Literacy Rich Environment

Building a rich literacy environment involves creating **space** and **time** for children to feel comfortable:

- playing on their own and with others
- communicating through speech and making marks
- telling, listening to and acting out stories
- moving around, running, jumping, dancing
- experimenting and having a go
- disrupting and doing surprising things



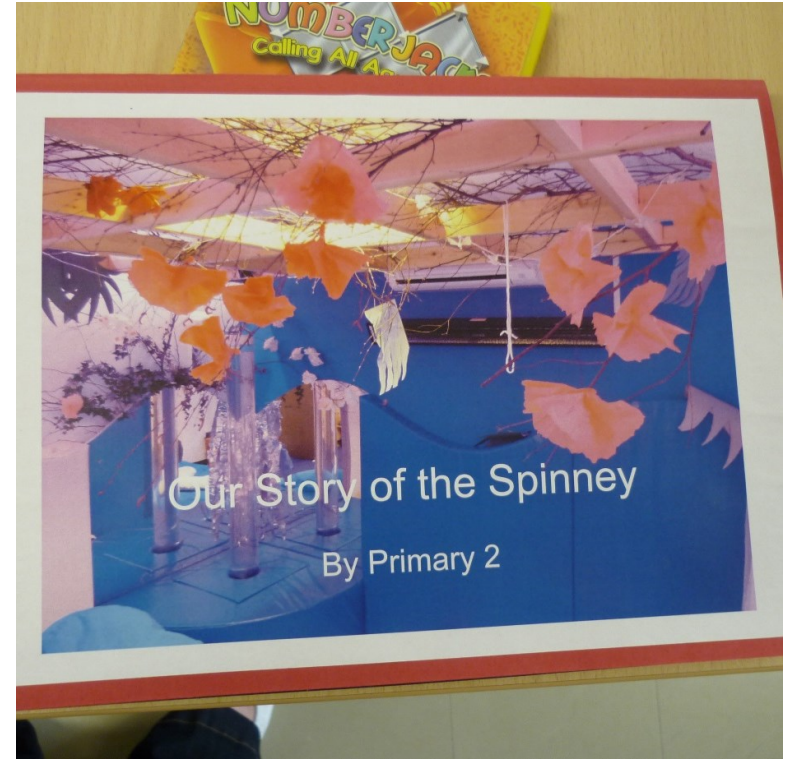
POINTS TO CONSIDER

What literacy activities do the spaces and things in your setting invite and make possible?

How do different spaces make children feel and how do children communicate in them?

What motivates children to talk in different spaces? What silences them?

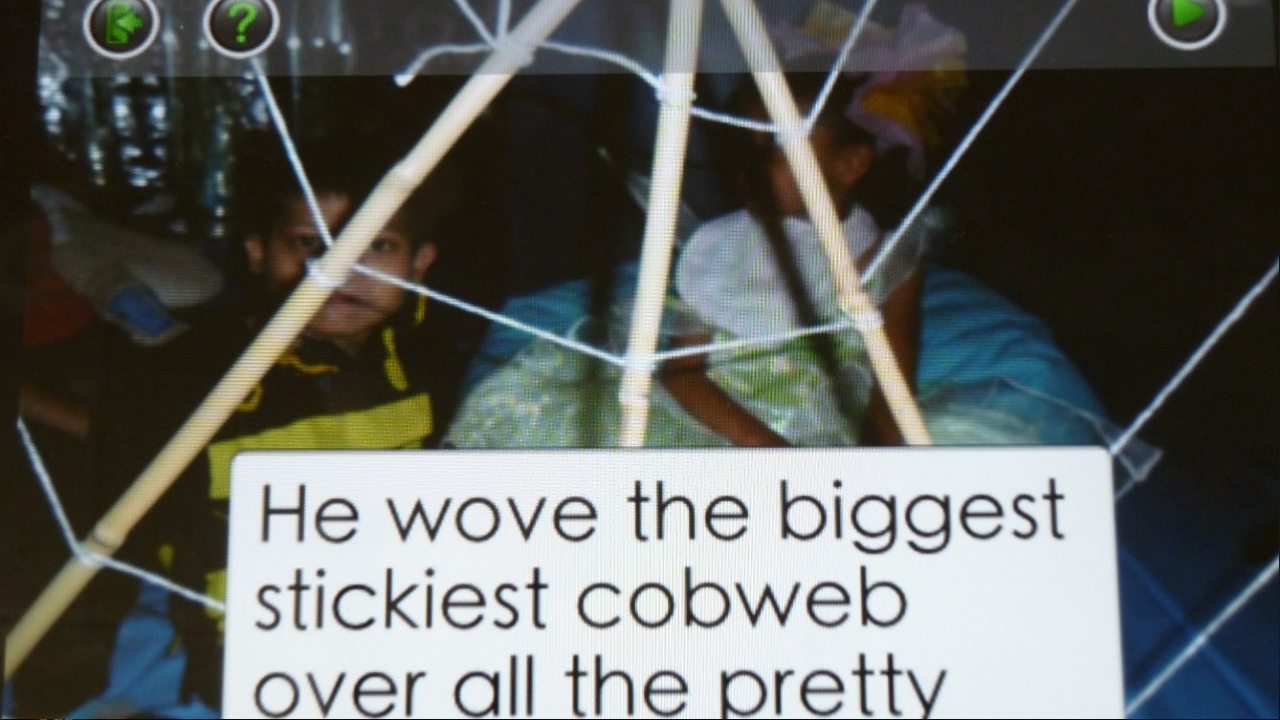
Could changes in the indoor and outdoor spaces and soundscapes in your setting make communicating, moving and 'having a go' at literacy feel meaningful and natural?



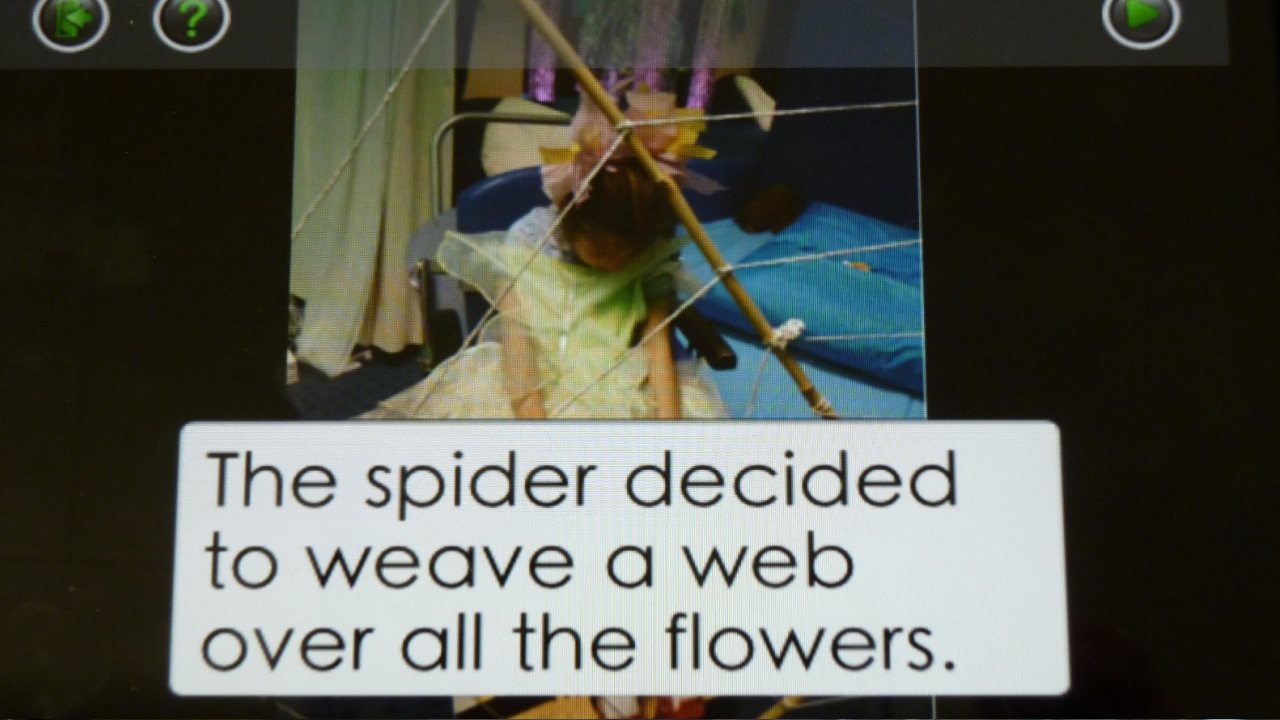
EXAMPLE FROM RESEARCH: OUR STORY

Our Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z76jcP-np60>

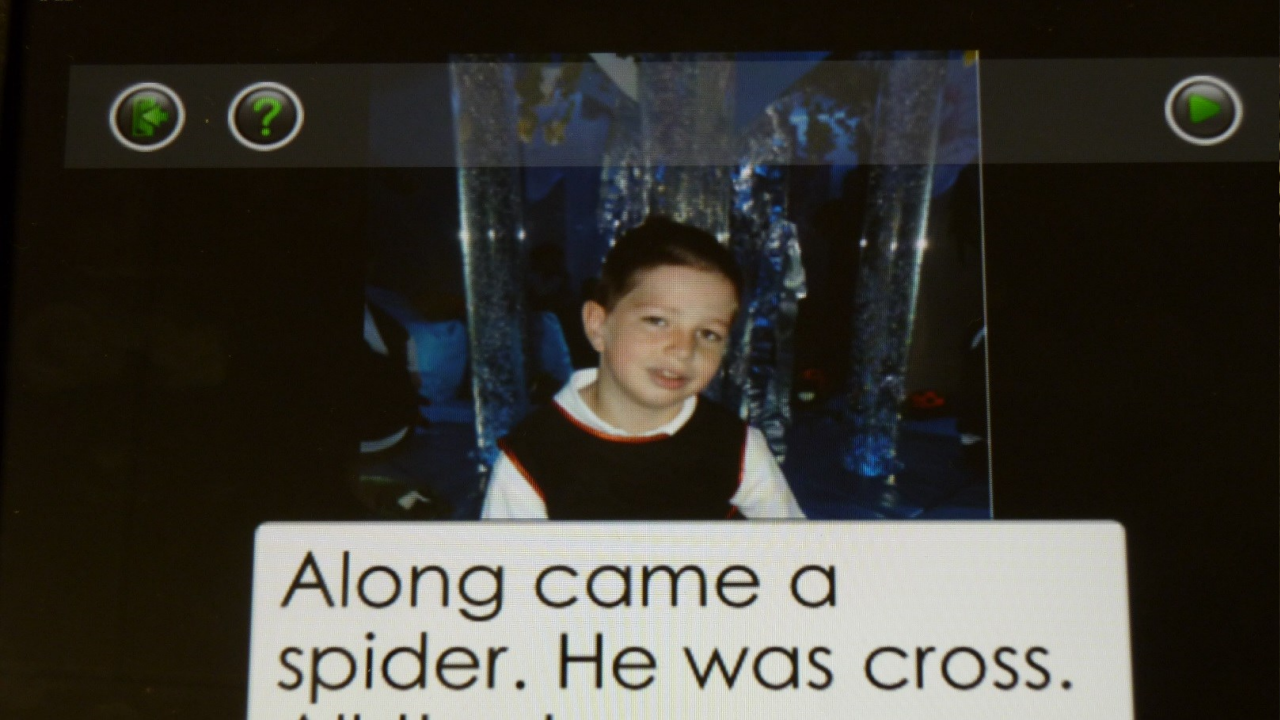




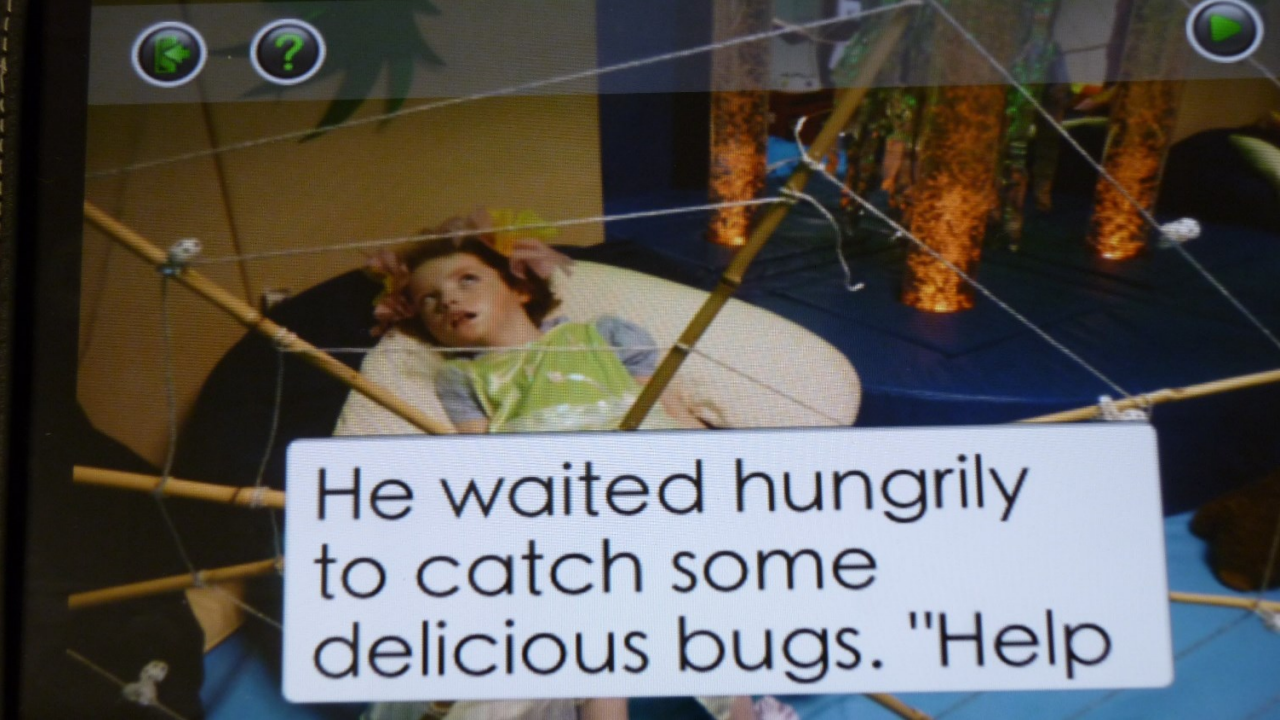
He wove the biggest stickiest cobweb over all the pretty



The spider decided to weave a web over all the flowers.



Along came a spider. He was cross.



He waited hungrily to catch some delicious bugs. "Help

EXAMPLE 2

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Learning+and+Creating+with+iPads+in+Kindergarten





Supporting early literacy involves ...

- ... observing and listening attentively to children
- ... valuing children's choices and expertise
- ... grounding literacy experiences in children's everyday lives
- ... recognizing that literacy practices depend on place, objects and materials and that many children engage in the literacy practices of more than one culture

Supporting early literacy

Language and literacy are more than communication. They involve...

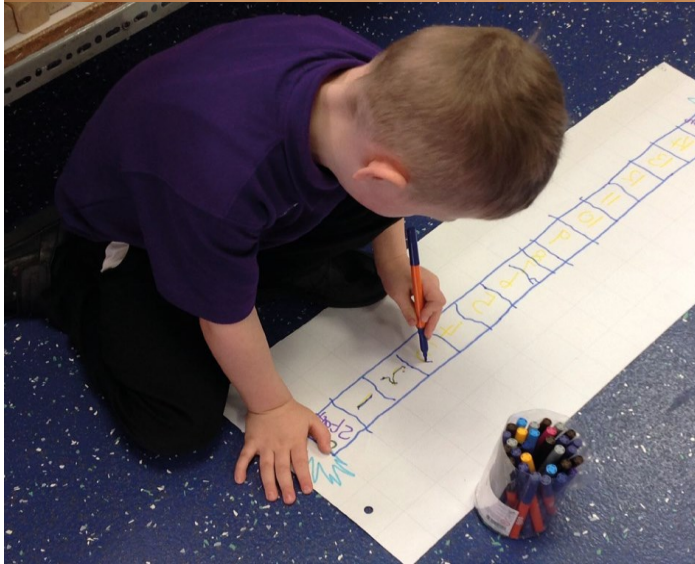
... fitting in with a community

... feeling a sense of belonging

... building an identity within a community

Children should not feel torn between the identities, languages and literacy practices they encounter in different communities and cultures.





Children engage best in early literacy when:

- an activity has a clear purpose that children understand
- they can choose to be involved (or not)
- it is creative and fun



POINTS TO CONSIDER

What literacy practices happen in your setting that are not planned or organized by adults?

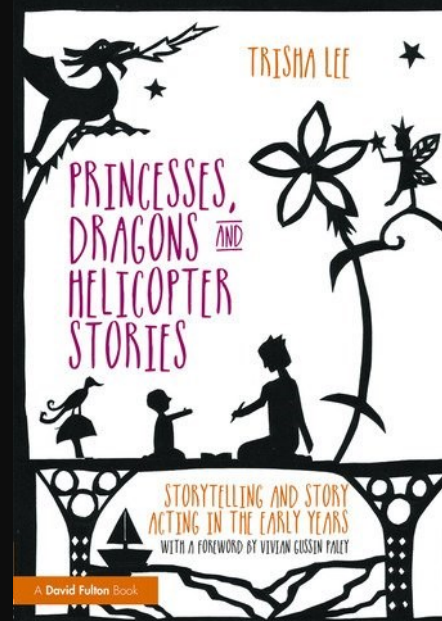
Where do different children invest their time and enthusiasm?

How are different spaces, texts and literacy artefacts are familiar or unfamiliar for different children?

What strengths do families bring to your setting?

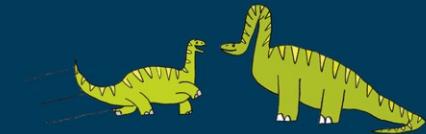
EXAMPLE FROM
RESEARCH:
Storytelling and story acting

<https://www.makebelievearts.co.uk>



STORYTELLING
IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD

ENRICHING LANGUAGE,
LITERACY AND
CLASSROOM CULTURE



EDITED BY TERESA CREMIN, ROSIE FLEWITT,
BEN MARDELL AND JOAN SWANN





Storytelling

- Children often observe their classmates telling a story to the teacher, who transcribes the story EXACTLY as it is told.
- What is the nature of children's participation?
 - Are they passive observers?
 - Do they actively participate in storytelling episodes offering ideas and suggestions?
- What are they learning?



Story acting

- Story acting is given a dedicated time that respects individual children's stories – however short they may be
- Children sit around the 'stage' to watch and act out their classmates' stories
- Acting out encourages children to explore their conceptual understandings, to explore words with their bodies

developing
narrative:
Yakubu's story

*There was a Power Ranger and **then there was** a knight and **then there was** a princess and **then there was** a castle a very big one. There was a dragon and **then there was** a penguin. He died and **then there was** an egg and **then there was** a ladybug and **then there was** another castle and it was in the forest.*

(Early May)

developing
narrative:
Yakubu's story

*Once upon a time there was a big castle and then there was a forest that **leadied to the dark castle** and then (pause) and then there was a caterpillar and then there was a (pause) er ladybird and then there was a dragonfly and **then kids stepped on them** and then there was another castle and then there was **a magic cave** and there was **a little egg** and **then it growed in a chick** and then there was a dad and a mum.*

(Early June)

developing
narrative:
Yakubu's story

Once upon a time there was a big castle and then somebody was walking through the forest and then there was a ladybird and there was a big ginormous giraffe and he floated in a magic book and then there was a magic carpet that took books and then there was a bad fairy that turned the wolf into a house.

(Late June)

For discussion

How can we as educators embrace the complexity and diversity of children's language and literacy practices?

How can educators use print and digital media to create purposeful literacy activities that motivate children's engagement and reflect different children's interests?

How can educators support literacy learning with diverse media in a broad and balanced kaleidoscope of activities that reach beyond school?

References

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