

Active Learning Written & Spoken Word



Story Sharing with Reception.

Blackgates Primary School.

Char March.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Story Sharing with Reception

Blackgates is a one and a half form entry community Primary School, catering for children between the ages of three to eleven years, with our youngest pupils starting on a part time basis. At the beginning of the academic year in which they are five, children attend on a full time basis, moving through Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

Teacher: Amy Shaw

Year group involved: Reception

Numbers of pupils: 21

Artist: Char March – freelance writer and performer
www.charmarch.co.uk

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Story Sharing with Reception

The main initial aim was to help children build on and retain their memories of stories. We also encouraged all the children to tell stories. A very important part of the project was us listening to the children, not just them listening to us tell stories. We included drawing, puppets and use of musical instruments as an integral part of the storytelling.



Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
Outcomes

Curriculum
Links

Review and
Evaluation



Overview of the Project Model – three days:

Day One – oral story telling including using musical instruments; sharing story telling skills between the writer and the teacher.

Day Two – more story telling plus using shadow puppets, with children making up their own jungle story in a group.

Day Three – one more story, with puppets and the children drawing their favourite character and then telling us their story.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Overview of the Project Model – three days:

Day One – oral storytelling including using musical instruments

The writer told the children two stories which she had learned with Pat Ryan:

Katie and Her Boat which involved the children listening and being involved through questions and making the sounds of storms – first orally, then with musical instruments.

Javinder and the Button-Pushing Factory – this involved the children in lots of movement and trying to co-ordinate their arms and legs – quite tiring for them!

The writer shared her new story telling skills (learnt from the Pat Ryan course) with the teacher and encouraged her to have a go. There was concern from the teacher over whether keeping discipline would be a problem if she threw herself into doing different voices, etc.

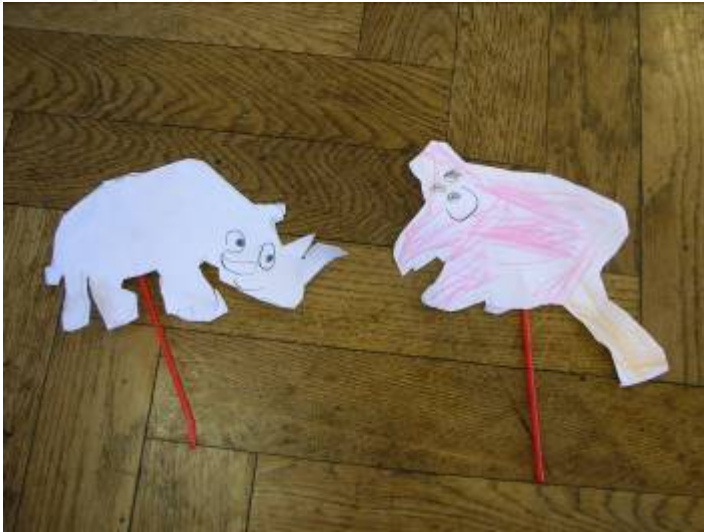
Then we did a session with more movement and sounds – linking into the class's current Medical Centre corner. We did Simon Says and pointed to different bits of the body – including heart, lungs, guts. We explained what each of these did and encouraged the children to think what noises they make.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Overview of the Project Model – three days:

Day Two – more storytelling plus using shadow puppets, with children making up their own jungle story in a group

The teacher told the children an improvised story, based on 'The Gruffalo' which the children were familiar with. The children gave ideas for different parts of the story and this was acted out as the story progressed.

The children were then split into groups and given a range of musical instruments. Each group of children was supported by an adult. During this time the children attempted to match the sound of the instruments to different animals.

The children were then given the equipment to make a jungle animal puppet. As the children were so keen to start we forgot to demonstrate making the puppets! Once the children had made their puppets they were given time to discuss the story told by the teacher, children then moved on to showing their puppets to the other children in front of a projector.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Overview of the Project Model – three days:

Day Three – one more story, with puppets and the children drawing their favourite character and then telling us their story

We took children to the school library for the first time. The writer had picked out a book from the library and made a series of puppets from it.

She asked the children what you needed to make up a story – i.e. a goodie, a baddie, a setting (the place where it is) and a problem. (Pat Ryan called this a 'story stew') She introduced the puppets she had made to illustrate these points.

She told the story (without using the book) getting the children to use the puppets at the right parts of the story. Those children who didn't have puppets joined in with ideas on what was eaten, the noises of the farmer snoring, etc.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Overview of the Project Model – three days:

Day Three – one more story, with puppets and the children drawing their favorite character and then telling us their story

We went outside and the children played in the role of the farmers, the cats and the mice from the story.

When we gathered back in the library, we encouraged the children to tell us their favourite stories and their favourite character from those stories. They then drew pictures of their favourite characters and this helped them tell us much more about their favourite stories.

The teacher wrote to all parents to say their children had been introduced to the school library and to give them information on the local library to encourage them to use this with their children.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Resources:

We used several of Pat Ryan's stories that he had told us – this gave us both confidence to adapt stories we already knew and also make up new ones.

'Fat Cat' – by James Sage and Russell Ayto – storybook.

An overhead projector to project a big bright square of light onto the wall for the children to hold their shadow puppets up to. Puppets can also be put onto the OHP's flat glass but then only one puppet can be seen at a time, and the image of them is huge on the wall – very effective for the elephant!

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Overview of the impact of the work and evidence of the pupils learning.

Quantative Evidence:

In Reception, we don't carry out such strict quantative assessment as with older age groups, but we observed big changes in the behaviour of the children, e.g. the quieter ones coming forward. We got masses of anecdotal evidence that they had learnt new skills and were able to remember much more as a result of the new methods we used.

Qualitative Evidence:

Children were engaged throughout all the sessions. The main difference during the sessions to the teacher's everyday style was that there were no books shown to the children and when stories from books were used they were adapted. The stories told during the session by both the teacher and writer allowed flexibility so the children could input ideas and be involved with the stories. We found it very interesting to see very shy children participating and adding ideas to the stories.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

*'I liked the puppets - building them
and showing them on the screen'*
- Kyle

'I liked roaring like a lion' - Caitlin

Overview of the impact of the work and evidence of the pupils learning (continued).

This was the first time the children had used puppets and they loved it, and created some amazing jungle animals – both drawing freehand and using templates. They carried on making puppets for a couple of weeks afterwards in their choosing time – i.e. on their own initiative. Their fine motor skills, for example using scissors to cut their puppets out, improved a lot as a result.

We didn't give enough time or clear instructions about how to create their own stories from their puppets, but this did start to happen very effectively in the last session.

It was a surprise to us that, when the children drew their favourite characters and talked us through their favourite stories, virtually none of them were ones they had learnt in school. They were from books they'd been read at home, or TV programmes – especially Dr Who!! This was natural story telling at its best. The children really enjoyed telling us their stories, not just listening to stories.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

'I liked the thunder and the storm' - Kieron

'The button-pushing game was hurting my arms!' - Lee

'I liked Char telling us the story because it made me laugh' - Caitlin

'I liked doing drawings of our favourite characters' - Ella

Overview of the impact of the work and evidence of the pupils learning (continued).

This was the first time, also, that the children had used musical instruments outside a specific music lesson. We were worried that they might go overboard and make huge amounts of noise with them, but they orchestrated themselves very effectively, making the storm noises for the Katie story and then going quiet. They were innovative, using the instruments in all sorts of different ways to denote different jungle animals.

Over the time the writer was in school, it became clear that children in the class who usually find concentrating very difficult were engaged throughout, e.g. children were listening and following the story with puppets. This is an exciting move forward for these children.

The children really listened, joined in and enjoyed all the stories. Best of all, they remembered the stories incredibly well, even six weeks later.



Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
Outcomes

Curriculum
Links

Review and
Evaluation



Areas of the curriculum the project supported:

The topics that were being covered in Reception during the sessions were 'The Jungle' and 'Medical Centre'. These topics were then linked into the sessions by the artist and teacher.

During the three sessions in school, all six areas of the Foundation stage curriculum were covered. Some examples include;

Personal and Social - is confident to try new activities, initiate ideas & speak in a familiar group.

Communication, language and literacy - use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences.

Problem solving, reasoning and number - use everyday words to describe position.

Knowledge and understanding - use simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately.

Physical development - demonstrates fine motor skills and co-ordination.

Creative development - introduce a storyline or narrative into their play.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

The areas of the curriculum the project supported:

The main areas which were covered were communication, language and literacy and also creative development. However all areas of development were addressed.

We have jotted down just a few examples of Early Learning goals which were covered, although many many more were touched upon, many of which, in our original lesson plans, we did not aim to cover!

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

What have we learned through Active Learning?

From the perspective of the teacher, it is easy to see the difference in the class during the sessions spent with artist. The children have accessed a range of learning experiences not only in literacy but in many areas of their learning, from fine motor to personal and social.

From a personal point of view I feel from accessing this course some of my teaching styles will develop and change for the better. Working alongside the artist has given me confidence to try out a range of story telling techniques which I am looking forward to building upon.

From my perspective as a writer, this project was a real challenge as I'd never worked just with 4 year olds before, and I'd never done any story telling before! Pat Ryan was fabulous at encouraging us to have a go, and at showing us how to tell stories in a really engaging way. It was great to do an entire project without doing any writing!

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

What have you learned through Active Learning?

Amy and I were both amazed at the attention levels of the children – they really listened, and joined in with great extra inputs to the stories. They threw themselves into puppet-making, and loved drawing their own characters and telling us about them.

The whole project was incredibly valuable to me – to be allowed to experiment with my very very new storytelling skills; to pass these on to Amy (and I was soooo proud of her that she conquered her nerves and delivered a crackingly good story to the children without needing a book – well done Amy!!); to try out working with puppets and musical instruments for the first time; and to understand how to put across story development techniques (that I usually teach at degree-level!) to 4 year olds via the story stew method. And it was soooo valuable to listen to the children, to hear about the characters they had drawn and to hear their stories.

Finally, the thing that will stay with me the longest is that all these skills and learning took place without the need to write anything. It has inspired me to run 'writing' sessions with all sorts of age-groups, without them actually writing anything – ah, the power of the spoken story!



Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Thoughts at the end of the project

Top Tips from Amy and Char:

Have a go! It turns out to be great fun, and nowhere near as frightening as you think it might be!

Don't be afraid to run a 'writing' project without doing any writing – whatever your age group. The memory, organisational, creative and presentational skills your pupils will learn are extremely valuable to them, and you will find that pupils who struggle with their writing can really excel at story telling.

Try mixing in other art forms – e.g. drawing, puppet-making and using musical instruments. Everyone learns in very different ways, so the more different ways you can try to trigger off your pupils, the more impact you will have.

Who

What and Why

How

Resources

Evidence and
OutcomesCurriculum
LinksReview and
Evaluation

Thoughts at the end of the project

Top Tips from Amy and Char:

Give your children, and yourself, TIME. If it's going well, stick with it – give it time to develop and progress.

The collaboration:

This is the first time, as a writer, I have ever been given any time to PLAN with the teacher – usually I am parachuted in to do a workshop or a performance and then I leave. It was brilliant to be able to have a sustained partnership with Amy and to learn from each other. By the third session, we were sharing tasks and responsibilities naturally between each other.

As a teacher, I came into this course after missing the first session, I feel the time given by Char to helping me catch up and develop my skills was extremely valuable. The collaboration between myself and Char worked very well, and I really feel we worked as team to build upon our skills together.