

Storytelling with Very Young Learners

Analía Ferraro - Anglo Congress - September 2019



Aims

- analyse the role of storytelling with very young learners
- share with you some tips and ideas on how to go about storytelling



characteristics of very young learners

very young learners

(between 3/4 and 6/7)



- emotions
- attention span
- experiential learning
- self-centered
- suspension of disbelief

anything else?

pre literate phase



very young learners do not **think about** the language,
they just **hear** it naturally



perception
of language



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“ ... Fully literate persons can only with great difficulty imagine what a primary oral culture *would be* like, that is, a culture with no knowledge whatsoever of writing or even of the possibility of writing. Try to imagine a culture where no one has ever ‘looked up’ anything. In a primary oral culture, the expression ‘to look up something’ is an empty phrase: it would have no conceivable meaning.

Without writing, words as such have no visual presence,
even when the objects they represent are visual.

Words are sounds.

You might ‘call’ them back—‘recall’ them. But there is nowhere to ‘look’ for them. They have no focus and no trace (a visual metaphor, showing dependency on writing), not even a trajectory. They are occurrences, events”

Ong, Walter J. 1982: 31. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*.
London: Methuen.

storytelling in language learning



to promote **cognitive, emotional**
and behavioural involvement

process of language **acquisition**

- **hearing** before **saying**
- **saying** before **reading**
- **reading** before **writing**

“Young learners need firm **auditory** and **oracy skills** before they can become proficient readers or writers of the language”.

Linse, C. (2005). Young Learners. McGraw-Hill

phonemic awareness

- develop learners' receptive skills to train their ears so that they **listen** (and not just hear)
- make children **identify sounds** (that may not necessarily be connected with letters; such as onomatopoeic sounds or musical instruments)

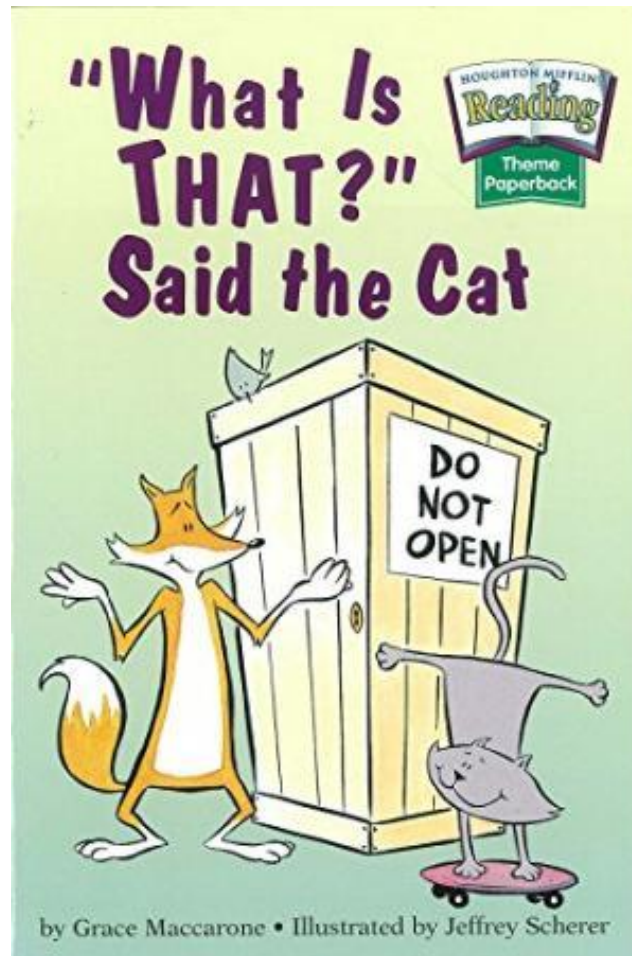
**phonemic
awareness**

vs






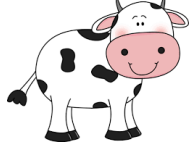





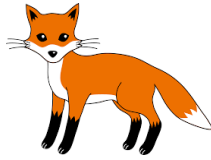


phonics

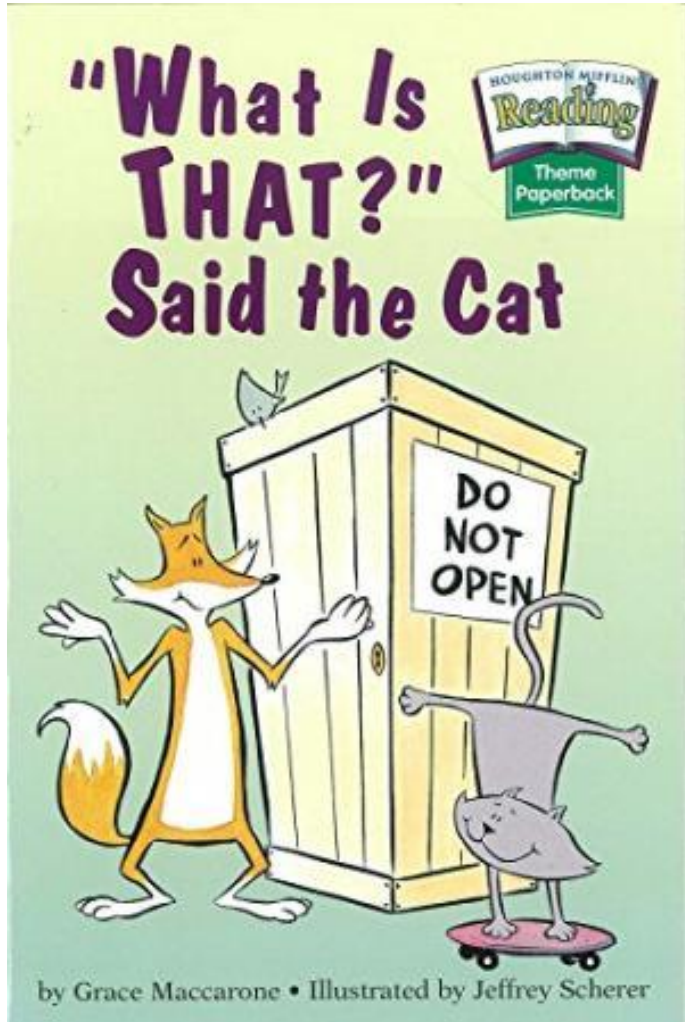


playing with **sounds**

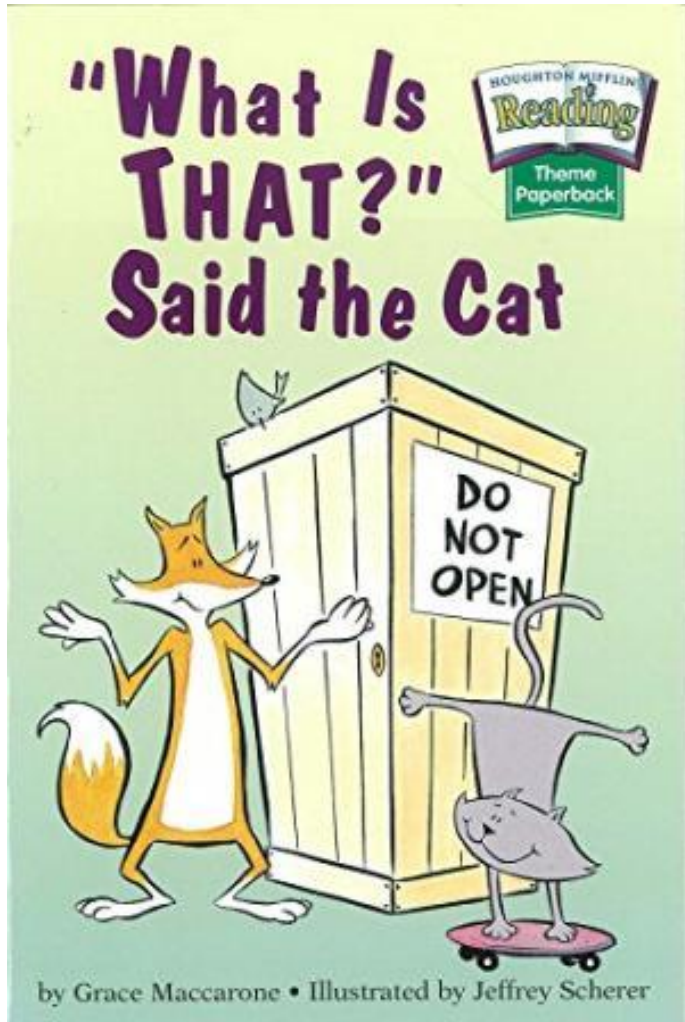


characters in the story

						
alligator	bee	pig	pup	fly	cow	bird
						
crow	duck	hare	cat	fox	rat	horse



“ I’ve found a box ”	
“ I heard ”	
“ What is that? ”	
“ We don’t know ”	
“ It is big ”	
“ Let me see ”	
“ Open it up ”	
“ How? ”	
“ I’ll use the force ”	
“ Use a bat ”	
“ I will try ”	
“ Good luck ”	
“ Beware! ”	
...	



“ I’ve found a box ”	, shouted the fox
“ I heard ”	, said the bird
“ What is that? ”	, said the cat
“ We don’t know ”	, said the crow
“ It is big ”	, said the pig
“ Let me see ”	, said the bee
“ Open it up ”	, said the pup
“ How? ”	, said the cow
“ I’ll use the force ”	, said the horse
“ Use a bat ”	, said the rat
“ I will try ”	, said the fly
“ Good luck ”	, said the duck
“ Beware! ”	, said the hare
...	

They finally
open the box

SO ...



the **fox**, the **bird**, the **cat**, the **crow**, the **pig**, the **bee**, the **pup**,
the **cow**, the **horse**, the **rat**, the **fly**, the **duck**, the **hare** shout:

...



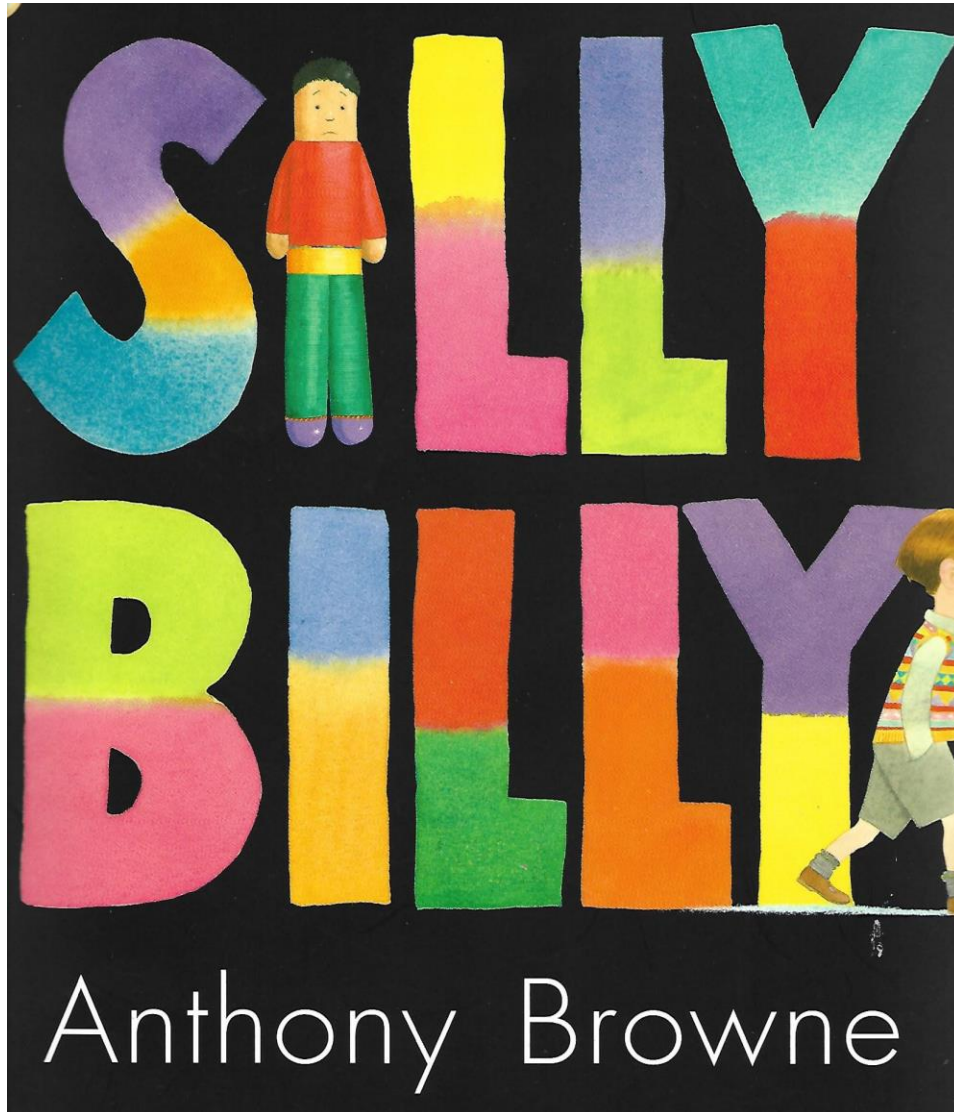
“ See you **later**, **alligator!** ”

choose a **story** ... not a **stage**



acomodate **input**





resorting to
language one?

worries
worry dolls



homemade **worry dolls**





retelling
and/or
reading

anchoring memory recall

- objects
- funny faces
- movements
- noises and sounds



“Mr Wiggle & Mr Waggle”





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A photograph of a group of children sitting on the floor in a classroom, with their hands raised in the air. The children are of various ethnicities and are wearing casual clothing. The background shows bookshelves filled with books. The image is slightly faded and has a warm, yellowish tint.

memorable
experience

stories and language acquisition



Stories provide input that facilitate **unconscious acquisition**, learning does not then rely solely on conscious systematic study

With stories, we are involved in **learning without being asked to learn.**

“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”



Goldilocks and the three bears

“Goldilocks and the Three Bears” using songs & chants





pushed output

input & output

- comprehensible input is necessary **but insufficient**, we have to “push” output if we want **to nurture the acquisition process** (Swain 1985)
- being pushed to produce language “upgrades” the existing **interlanguage** system (Swain 1985)
- stories should act as **springboards** for re-telling in different ways and students should be able to **harvest the language** in the stories for their future use (Harmer & Puchta, 2018)

“the magic moment” reconstruction & appropriation



“The Three Little Pigs”







*“If you want your children to be smart,
tell them **stories**.*

*If you want them to be really smart,
tell them **more stories**.*

*If you want your children to be brilliant,
tell them **even more stories!** ”*

Albert Einstein

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