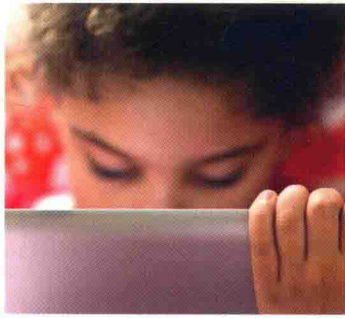
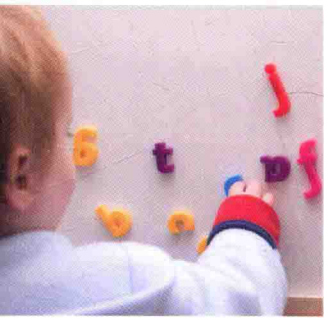
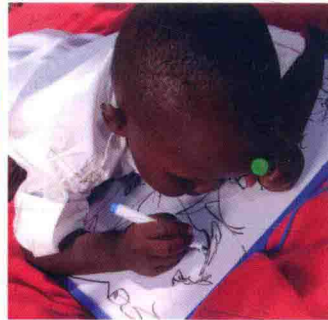
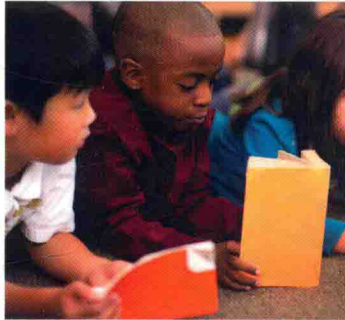
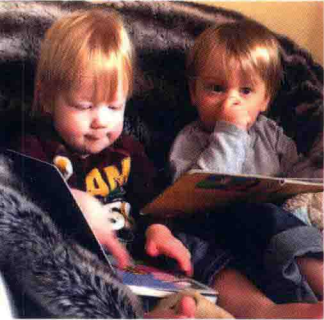


Developing Early Literacy 0 to 8

from theory to practice



edited by
Virginia Bower



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SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/1 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Amy Jarrold
Editorial associate: Miriam Davey
Production editor: Thea Watson
Copyeditor: Michelle Clark
Proofreader: Katie Forsythe
Indexer: Bill Farrington
Marketing manager: Catherine Slinn
Cover design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by: C&M Digital (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Ashford
Colour Press Ltd



Editorial arrangement, Chapter 5 and Chapter 8 © Virginia Bower, 2014

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First published 2014

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2013957880

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4462-5532-2

ISBN 978-1-4462-5533-9 (pbk)

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This book is for my very favourite young learners – Sienna, Darcey, George and Alfie

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the schools, colleagues, parents and children who helped with the material for this book.

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Introduction

Excellent literacy practices should begin at birth and can set young learners on an exploratory journey from the very beginning of their lives; a journey that allows them to discover the power of language – both oral and written – and develop effective communication skills, enabling them to succeed in a range of settings. Working with babies and young children carries a huge responsibility, as we strive to promote curious, motivated learners who are able to collaborate and cooperate with others, working towards a common goal and, at the same time, having the confidence and ability to work independently where necessary. Support from more able others, high-quality resources and well-planned environments all play a part in the development of these young learners. Practitioners need to combine their knowledge of relevant research and their own experience with working with children in order to ensure that settings provide these elements. We owe it to every child we meet to be well informed, up-to-date with our knowledge of child development and prepared to continually improve our practice by talking with colleagues, doing extensive reading and being prepared to take well-judged risks to promote exciting and innovative learning environments and opportunities for all children.

Every contributor to this book has worked or is still working in primary schools. In our roles as class teachers, literacy leaders, senior management and university lecturers, we have engaged in hundreds of conversations with colleagues and trainee teachers. This book has emerged from those conversations, wherein practitioners have identified particular aspects of early literacy learning that interest them or raise issues. As we explored the nature of those interests and issues, it became apparent that particular themes were recurring and these themes have become the basis for the structure of this book. The themes of the four parts of the book are 'Environment', 'Provision for all', 'Promoting language' and 'Inspiring readers and writers'. Within each part there are three chapters and the contents of these are summarised below.

In writing the book, we were aware there are already many excellent texts available that discuss the nature and importance of early literacy, but felt none of these were based specifically on the direct everyday concerns of practitioners. We hope, with this book, to address some of these concerns and raise an awareness that all of us who wish to see our children learning and having fun in inspiring environments with

knowledgeable and caring practitioners are in this together and, by sharing our knowledge, experience and understanding, can successfully achieve these goals.

To this end, this text is a combination of evidence-based discussion and practice-based case studies. Each chapter begins with a list of objectives and topics covered, which provide an overview of the intentions of the author and an outline of the chapter's structure. The chapters then go on to examine the research-informed literature relating to the subject matter and present a range of viewpoints and opinions. Ideas and issues are raised and case studies are presented that illustrate some of these, followed by discussion to attempt to examine the concepts and implications relating to the practice described. A summary is included at the end of each chapter to draw the ideas together and hopefully provoke your own thoughts and lead to conversations with colleagues. Each chapter includes ideas for further reading, providing a brief explanation of why these particular texts might prove useful, and all finish with a reference list, which might be useful as a starting point for your own follow-up reading.

Although the book is divided into four parts, the chapters are designed so that they can be read in any order, depending on your current need or interest. However, links are sometimes made between chapters, particularly if a certain idea is discussed in more depth in another chapter. Below is a summary of the contents of all the chapters.

Part 1: Environment

Chapter 1: *Baby rooms* Kathy Goouch

This chapter centres on a research-informed discussion supporting the idea that babies arrive in the world curious, predisposed to learn and already experienced in tuning in to the sounds and patterns of their mother tongue. Kathy discusses how these early dispositions can be acknowledged, celebrated, supported and embedded and how rich literacy practices with babies can be promoted to support their natural development. There is a strong emphasis within the chapter on the importance of environment on babies' very early literacy development. The author uses examples from *The Baby Room* project (Goouch and Powell, 2012) to provide the contexts for discussion.

Chapter 2: *Role-play areas for EYFS (ages zero to five), Key Stage 1 (ages five to seven) and beyond* Joanne Palmer

This chapter begins with an examination of different types of play. The discussion then moves on to consider role-play areas and how these might be used to enhance and develop children's language and literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stages 1 and 2. Joanne includes case studies that are examples from her own practice, where she has used role-play areas with different year groups to

enhance the children's language and literacy skills. The role of the teacher is identified and suggestions are made relating to how this role is vital when setting up and monitoring role-play areas to ensure that the children can have fun and develop into independent learners, but receive effective intervention from the practitioner when needed.

Chapter 3: *Getting outside* Michael Green

This chapter presents an argument for embedding children's development as literate language users within meaningful contexts outside the classroom, placing demands on children to express themselves in a variety of ways and in a variety of modes – spoken, written and visual. Michael explores both the particular benefits of outdoor environments as learning contexts and considers the possibilities afforded by visits to local and cultural settings, such as museums, art galleries and historic buildings. There is a particular focus on non-fiction and how children's interest and learning in this area might be promoted by provision of learning opportunities outside the classroom. The case studies are drawn from the author's own experiences, utilising a range of environments outside the classroom in order to maximise the potential for enhancing the learning and teaching of early literacy.

Part 2: Provision for all

Chapter 4: *Seamless transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 (ages three to six)* Karen Vincent

This chapter explores what good practice in literacy transition between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 might look like. It examines the sources of transition tension generally and in terms of literacy and discusses how these may be overcome. Karen provides a range of case studies to offer an insight into literacy and transition for four- and five-year-olds and raise awareness of some of the potential issues that might occur for young children as they encounter the different aspects of early literacy.

Chapter 5: *Supporting learners with English as an additional language* Virginia Bower

In this chapter, the author aims to raise awareness of the fundamental role of language in relation to early literacy learning and highlight strategies that can support children with English as an additional language (EAL) in relation to literacy. Discussion is included relating to the importance of routines, classroom layout,

grouping and promoting dialogic talk and case studies are used to demonstrate how this might look in practice. The importance of strong home-school links is emphasised in relation to providing the best possible early literacy support for EAL pupils.

Chapter 6: *Literacy and diversity*

Virginia Bower and Verity Hill

It is not the intention of the authors in this chapter to explore specific literacy-related special educational needs, such as dyslexia. Instead, while recognising and acknowledging that specific and individualised support may well be needed for pupils with particular educational needs, the aim is to provide examples of classroom literacy practices that can motivate, inspire and empower *all* pupils. To this end, the authors discuss a range of strategies that might support children's diverse learning needs in early literacy, with a particular emphasis on making literacy real and enabling children to make links with their own lives. The case studies include examples using literature and film and there is an examination of a range of pedagogical strategies, including the use of paired and group talk, shared reading and writing frames.

Part 3: Promoting language

Chapter 7: *Diverse approaches to language development*

Tracy Parvin

This chapter examines different theories and pedagogy associated with language development and their importance in ensuring children's ability to communicate their ideas in a range of forms. Two case studies of schools are utilised to show how two EYFS settings approach language development, using very different strategies to encourage speaking and listening skills. Discussions follow the case studies, exploring the implications of these two different approaches. Within these discussions, the themes of home and school literacy and language, the importance of resources, parental involvement, embedded practices and knowledge of child development emerge.

Chapter 8: *Rhythm, rhyme and repetition*

Virginia Bower and Susan Barrett

This chapter aims to highlight particular aspects of rhythm, rhyme and repetition and how they can be effectively used to support both teachers and learners with early literacy. The first section focuses on rhythm, in relation to both poetry and

prose, and then the authors move on to explore the idea of rhyme and how rhyming texts can support early literacy learners in a multitude of ways. Particular issues and challenges that might occur when exploring rhyme are identified and these are illustrated by a case study. The final section explores repetition and this is examined through three separate lenses: reading and rereading stories; storytelling and the retelling of stories; and learning and playing with songs and rhymes. Throughout the chapter, texts and/or poets and authors the authors have found to be useful resources in relation to early literacy in general, and rhythm, rhyme and repetition specifically, are recommended.

Chapter 9: *Tales and the oral tradition* Caroline Tancock

In this chapter, Caroline focuses on the power of traditional tales and the impact they can have on young children's development of language and attitudes to reading. The author explores the idea that tales can teach children about the diversity of language by means of their repetition, rhythms and rhymes and that, by supporting children in making connections between their oral use of language and the written word, we can promote an excitement about using language as a powerful tool. The oral tradition of tales is explored to show how the spoken patterns, narrative structures and memorable story language can inspire and excite young learners and promote an enjoyment of reading. Case studies are utilised to illustrate how tales have been used to motivate and involve children in their use of language and the effects on their social and emotional development and early reading skills.

Part 4: Inspiring readers and writers

Chapter 10: *Picture books* Roger McDonald

This chapter investigates the complex world of picture fiction, focusing on the inter-relationship between the words and the pictures, as well as addressing the question of how children reflect and respond to these texts in a range of situations. The vital place picture books have in early literacy is explored, examining the rich literature available and relevant to children, whether they are babies, pupils in the EYFS or those moving on to Key Stages 1 and 2. The power of the pictures is analysed and questions are raised regarding the differences between a child's imaginative world and that of an adult's. Using a range of case study material, the author describes how well-chosen books can open up a range of reading and writing experiences for children and teachers alike, inspiring a deeper conversation and an engaged response, culminating in a shared emotional connection with texts.

Chapter 11: *'This is how we teach reading in our school'*

Tracy Parvin

This chapter provides a detailed overview of government initiatives that have led to the introduction of systematic synthetic phonics as the prime approach to developing early reading. The author then goes on to examine different perspectives on the teaching of early reading, the difference between decoding and reading and how reading for meaning needs to be embedded in our teaching of early reading. Two case studies are offered that describe the approaches to early reading taken by two different schools and readers are offered the opportunity to consider the implications of the diverse approaches schools might take to this aspect of early literacy.

Chapter 12: *Empowering young writers*

Susan Barrett

Sue begins by discussing the theories relating to the writing process in order to provide a background against which the question as to how children's writing can be affected by particular pedagogies and assessment strategies can be examined. The idea of 'school' writing is introduced, with reference to a specific approach used in many schools, and the implications of such an approach are discussed in some detail. Using two very powerful case studies, Sue illustrates particular issues relating to writing, leading to suggestions as to how we might empower young writers.

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