



The importance of fairy tales in teaching english to young children.

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Abstract

This article explores the significance of fairy tales in teaching English to young children. It discusses how these stories can enhance language acquisition, foster creativity, and support cultural understanding. Various educational strategies utilizing fairy tales are presented, demonstrating their effectiveness in promoting vocabulary development and listening skills among young learners.

Keywords: fairy tales, language acquisition, vocabulary development, early childhood education, cultural understanding.

Introduction

Fairy tales have been an integral part of childhood for generations, captivating the imagination of young minds with their enchanting narratives and vibrant characters. In the context of language education, particularly in teaching English to young children, fairy tales serve as powerful tools. They not only engage students but also facilitate language acquisition by providing rich linguistic input and opportunities for interaction. This article aims to highlight the importance of fairy tales in teaching English to young learners, discussing their benefits and the methods through which educators can effectively incorporate them into the curriculum.



Main Body

1. Language Acquisition Through Fairy Tales Fairy tales expose young children to new vocabulary and grammatical structures within a meaningful context. For instance, in “The Three Little Pigs,” children encounter terms such as "brick," "straw," and "wolf." According to research by Anderson and Freebody (1981), exposure to rich language environments contributes significantly to vocabulary development. The narrative context helps children understand these words, making connections between vocabulary and their meanings. When the pigs build their houses, children learn about materials and construction while engaging in the story^[1].

2. Enhancing Listening Skills Listening is a crucial skill in language learning. Fairy tales, when narrated, can improve children's listening skills as they focus on understanding the plot, characters, and moral lessons. As noted by Harmer (2007), storytelling captivates listeners, encouraging them to engage actively with the text. Teachers can enhance this experience by using dramatic readings or audio recordings of fairy tales. For example, listening to the story of “The Three Little Pigs” allows children to follow the narrative while developing comprehension skills and responding to questions about the plot^[2].

3. Fostering Creativity and Imagination Engaging with fairy tales stimulates children's creativity and imagination. They often contain fantastical elements that encourage children to think beyond the ordinary. As stated by Vygotsky (1978), imaginative play is vital for cognitive development, and fairy tales provide a foundation for creative thinking. After reading “The Three Little Pigs,” educators can prompt children to create their own versions of the story, fostering narrative skills and

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self-expression. This activity not only enhances writing skills but also encourages children to explore alternative endings, thereby nurturing their creative thinking^[3].

4. Fostering Creativity and Imagination

Engaging with fairy tales like “Little Red Riding Hood” stimulates children's creativity and imagination. The story features fantastical elements, such as a talking wolf and a journey through the woods, prompting children to explore their interpretations. As Vygotsky (1978) notes, imaginative play is essential for cognitive development, and fairy tales serve as a foundation for creative thinking^[3]. After reading “Little Red Riding Hood,” educators can encourage children to create their own versions of the tale. They might imagine scenarios where Little Red Riding Hood encounters a friendly dragon or where the wolf becomes her ally. This activity fosters narrative skills and self-expression while enhancing writing abilities. By sharing their stories with peers, children refine their ideas and engage in collaborative storytelling, enriching their language experience

5. Practical Strategies for Teaching To effectively integrate fairy tales into English language teaching, educators can employ various strategies:

Story Retelling: After listening to a fairy tale, children can retell the story in their own words, promoting comprehension and vocabulary use. For example: After listening to “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” children can retell the story in their own words. They can be encouraged to focus on the sequence of events, using phrases like “First,” “Next,” and “Finally,” which helps reinforce comprehension and vocabulary.

Visual Aids: Using illustrations or puppets can help children visualize the story, enhancing understanding and engagement. Example: For “The Ugly Duckling,” educators can use illustrations or puppets representing the characters. As the story is



read aloud, children can hold up the puppets or images, helping them visualize the narrative and enhancing their engagement with the story.

Role-Playing: Encouraging children to act out scenes from the story fosters language use in a playful context and develops speaking skills. Example: In a classroom activity based on “The Gingerbread Man,” students can be assigned different roles, such as the Gingerbread Man, the fox, and the other characters pursuing him. Acting out the story encourages children to use language in context, fostering their speaking skills and creativity.

Creative Projects: Activities such as drawing favorite scenes or creating storyboards can reinforce vocabulary and narrative structure. Example: In a classroom activity based on “The Gingerbread Man,” students can be assigned different roles, such as the Gingerbread Man, the fox, and the other characters pursuing him. Acting out the story encourages children to use language in context, fostering their speaking skills and creativity.

Conclusion

Fairy tales play a crucial role in teaching English to young children, providing a rich resource for language acquisition, creativity, and cultural understanding. By incorporating these enchanting stories into the curriculum, educators can create a dynamic learning environment that captivates young learners and supports their linguistic development. The use of fairy tales not only enhances language skills but also fosters a love for storytelling, laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

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