



Making literacy and the curriculum accessible to all children and young people with dyslexia”

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Positive about Dyslexia

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style”

Maya Angelou



The unintended, unnoticed consequences of school systems

- Children accumulate multipliers of advantage/disadvantage through everyday experiences. Some enter an ‘upward spiral’ - success breeds success. Others enter a ‘downward spiral’ where lack of early success is allowed to breed exclusion and fewer formal and informal opportunities for positive experiences, low esteem, and eventually intellectual, social and emotional disengagement.
- Downward spirals are not inevitable.

The logic of middle class families: ***concerted cultivation*** (A. Lareau)

Organized activities:

- requires adults - time/attention
- structured environment - same age group
- Busy and tired children
- pestering and whining
- Talk: opinionated: argue, abstract topics, question, entertain – ‘take the floor’
- Adults: know how schools work; supportive but questioning



In poor families: *natural growth*

No organised activities

- greater autonomy in leisure time
- closer extended family ties (nicer)
- more independent – entertain themselves
- play with wider age-range
- Fewer & shorter, discussions with adults, no complaining or opinions, narrow range of topics
- Adults less knowledgeable: on how institutions work; homework; trusted teachers

The difference: **Entitlement**

Poverty children:

- No pestering/ whining
- Didn't ask for stuff, interrupt
- Didn't offer opinions
- Less practice at telling stories, holding the floor
- Didn't even think of getting changes to suit them, and no practice in how to do it.

And in School...

- Young M/C children badger teachers for help. W/C in the same classroom raise hands.
- M/C children speak, interrupt, ask for help, and argue. They take the 'talk time' in schools
- W/C and poor are silenced, given, and take, fewer opportunities to develop their language skills



Cultural differences: stories

- Why & what families read; how *much*; how they think/respond/ talk about stories
- Views: Is reading for: relaxing; pleasure; work; anti-social; lazy or nerdy? Is text: truth; to be challenged; debated; expanded?
- Vocabulary
- What children know about the world
- The ability to ‘create a world’, not ‘fit the world’
- Syntax of stories

School ways with stories are not the ‘obvious’ way
for many children.

Language changes: the left-ward shift



Then away down the
hill trotted Lucie and
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle
with the bundles of
clothes

So... What do 'school literacy practices' teach? Assume? Who does this benefit?

Pat Thomson – Every child brings to school a virtual schoolbag of knowledge and experiences and assumptions.

- Some find what they bring is celebrated.
- Others don't even get to open their bag



Strathclyde's model: Literacy in school

Different KINDS of data, questions & interventions

Cognitive knowledge, skills, engagement
for school subjects etc.



Cultural capital &
funds of knowledge – beliefs,
ideas, experiences, people,
activities, home literacies...

Personal/social identity,
aspirations, entitlement,
& agency... as reader
& learner- how presenting
& how positioned
by self & others

Reading Aloud To The Class Matters

- You expose them to complex ideas, complex syntax, complex vocabulary, complex structures
- You teach them that reading is relaxing, emotionally engaging, enjoyable, worthwhile
- They learn about their world and other worlds & how others think and live
- They learn about themselves – bring their life to the book, and about how others are same/different
- They learn how to write

Playful Comprehension

The Visitor by Ian Serraillier

Art – illustrate the scene

Drama – in groups of 4 extended scenes

Recitation – in groups of 4

Musical accompaniment

Collaborative writing

Choral speech

First sentence oral drafts

Teaching metaphor/ simile

Comprehension: teach for different responses

Discussion around stories

- What did you Like? Dislike?
- What puzzled you?
- What patterns or connections did you make with your life? With other stories you know?

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou