

Dr. Linda Wason-Ellam, Canada
Professor, University of Saskatchewan, College of Education
linda.wason-ellam@usask.ca

Storytelling: Enhancing interactive and collaborative learning

Storytelling appeals to children's imaginations and this makes learning more meaningful. When children engage in storytelling, they create mental images that connect the content to something personally significant. Young children often struggle with abstract concepts in mathematics, thus primary teachers continue to search for ways to help to teach basic concepts. Using powerful literacy tools such as drawing, writing, and storying, children can apply these multiple methods to understanding abstract mathematical concepts and patterns. Storytelling appeals to children's imagination and helps to make learning more meaningful. When children create mental images that are personal, they are connecting the content to something previously known. In this research study in 12 classrooms, storytelling helped children to deepen their concept of addition and subtraction by connecting it to their lived experiences. Although the experiences were often fantasy stories, the story character had a maths problem in need of a solution that required counting, estimating, and/or measuring. The literacy strategies unravelled the problem. In these primary classrooms, storytelling, writing and drawing all work well as pedagogical strategies.