

Read it again and again and again!

DEMISSIE, Fufy <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2325-4313>>

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Read it again, and again, and again....

As anyone with young children in their lives knows, those young children love to hear the same stories again and again and again. It may be tiresome for adults, but children love listening to the same story. Why is that? And could repeated reading benefit children's learning and development?

Repetition is a fundamental learning process, but it's often associated with boring and old-fashioned rote learning. Yet we know from experience and [the science](#) that repetition is how young children learn about the world around them. In a similar way, repeated story book experiences provide many beneficial learning opportunities. Repeated reading enables young children to develop detailed knowledge of the characters, the setting, and the key events of a story. Repetition also creates opportunities to speculate about characters' feelings and perspectives. Repetition enables them to think beyond their everyday experience, for example, by relating the story to something that happened in their own lives, and how they responded to similar dilemmas in their own lived experiences. Familiarity with the story also facilitates abstract thinking to explore ideas beyond the immediate narrative. Take Goldilocks and the three bears. Goldilocks makes decisions (eating the bears' porridge, sleeping in their bed) that are open to debate. Did she make good choices or bad choices? More generally, repetition strengthens children's focus and attention skills, language skills and capacity for abstract thinking.

The familiarity that comes from repeated experiences of stories also has social and emotional benefits. We all know the difference between a familiar and unfamiliar environment. The former is less threatening and more likely to lead to positive experiences. Similarly, for young children who are exposed to new experience all the time, any source of familiarity is reassuring. So, regular exposure to the same story could help the child process any concerns and uncertainties within the safe context of a familiar story.

Adopting repeated reading as a pedagogical strategy can therefore be highly valuable, particularly for children who have less access to stories in the home. As [my research](#) into early years practitioners' story reading experiences showed, the practice is highly valuable for both educators and children. Repeated reading helps the educator to read with better fluency and expression, notice interesting words and illustrations, and think of better questions to engage learners. The impact is more pronounced when accompanied by skilful questioning based on dialogic reading principles where children are encouraged to respond to different types of questions such as recall, prediction, sequencing or asking them for their opinions about a character's actions.

Repeated story reading can be a powerful pedagogical practice in early childhood settings. There are social and emotional benefits, and it strengthens language

development and engagement in stories. So, educators shouldn't be concerned about reading the same story again, and again and again...

Dr Fufy Demissie is senior lecturer in teacher education at the Sheffield Institute of Education and project director for the TWITCH (Talk with Tales for Children) programme. She leads the early years CPD network that supports early years practitioners in South Yorkshire to develop pedagogic knowledge, understanding and practice. To join the network, contact Fufy at f.a.demissie@shu.ac.uk.

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