

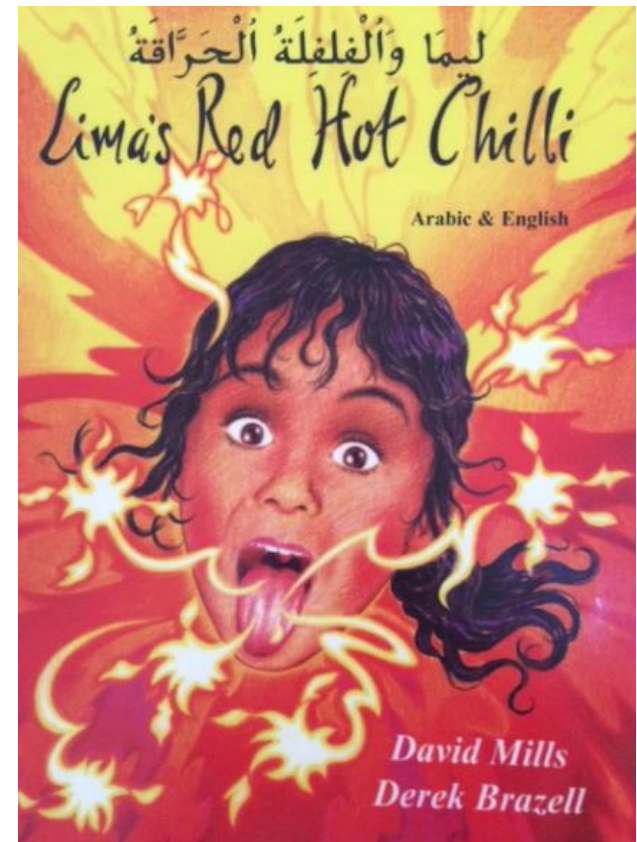
# Multilingual Storyboxes in the Early Childhood classroom

Dr Gill Pennington

Kim Cootes

Pembroke Junior School

Thursday 12 March, 2020





# The power of stories: reflect and discuss

- What is your favourite story? When did you first hear/read/watch it?
- What makes a good story?
- Where do our stories come from?

# Workshop

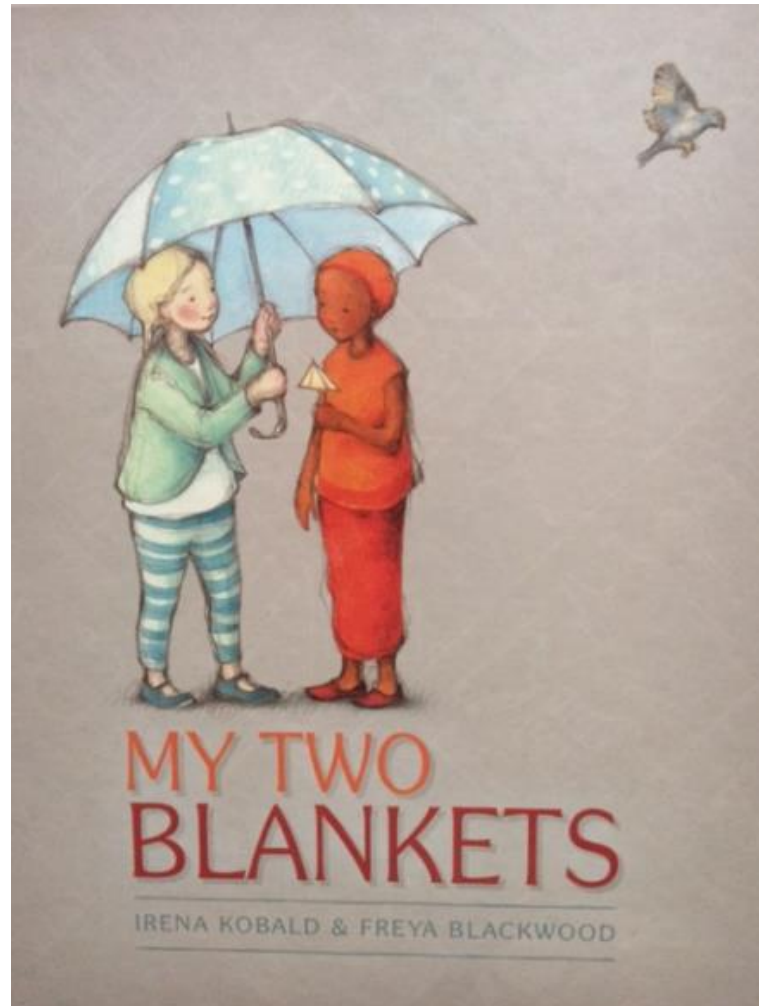
## Theoretical foundations

- Stories in the classroom: *Whose stories are shared?*
- Narrative and play: *How can we find time to play?*
- EAL/D pedagogy: *How do stories support our multilingual students (and the others too)?*

## The Storyboxes

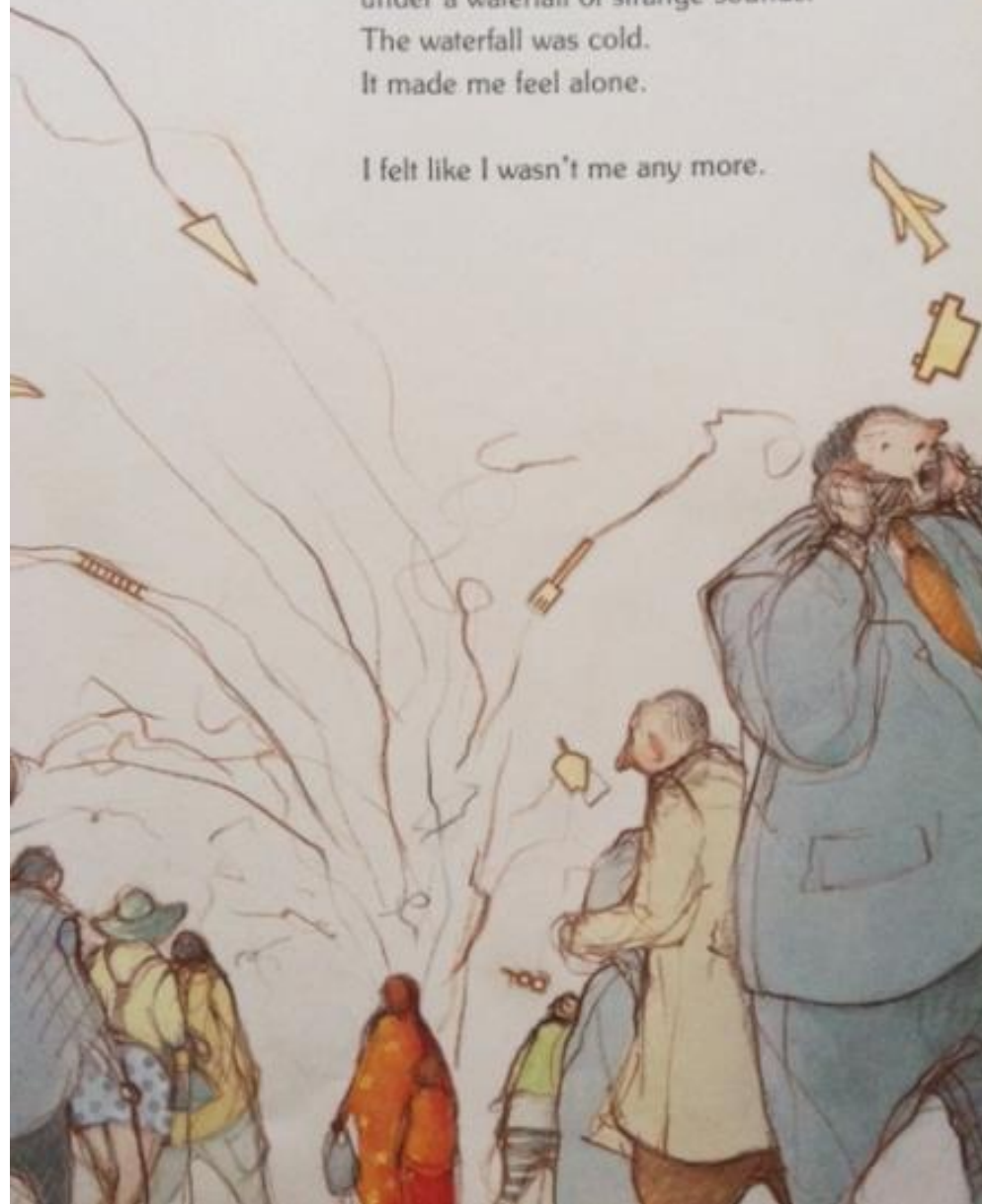
- Exploring the contents
- Planning new boxes

Let's start with a story...

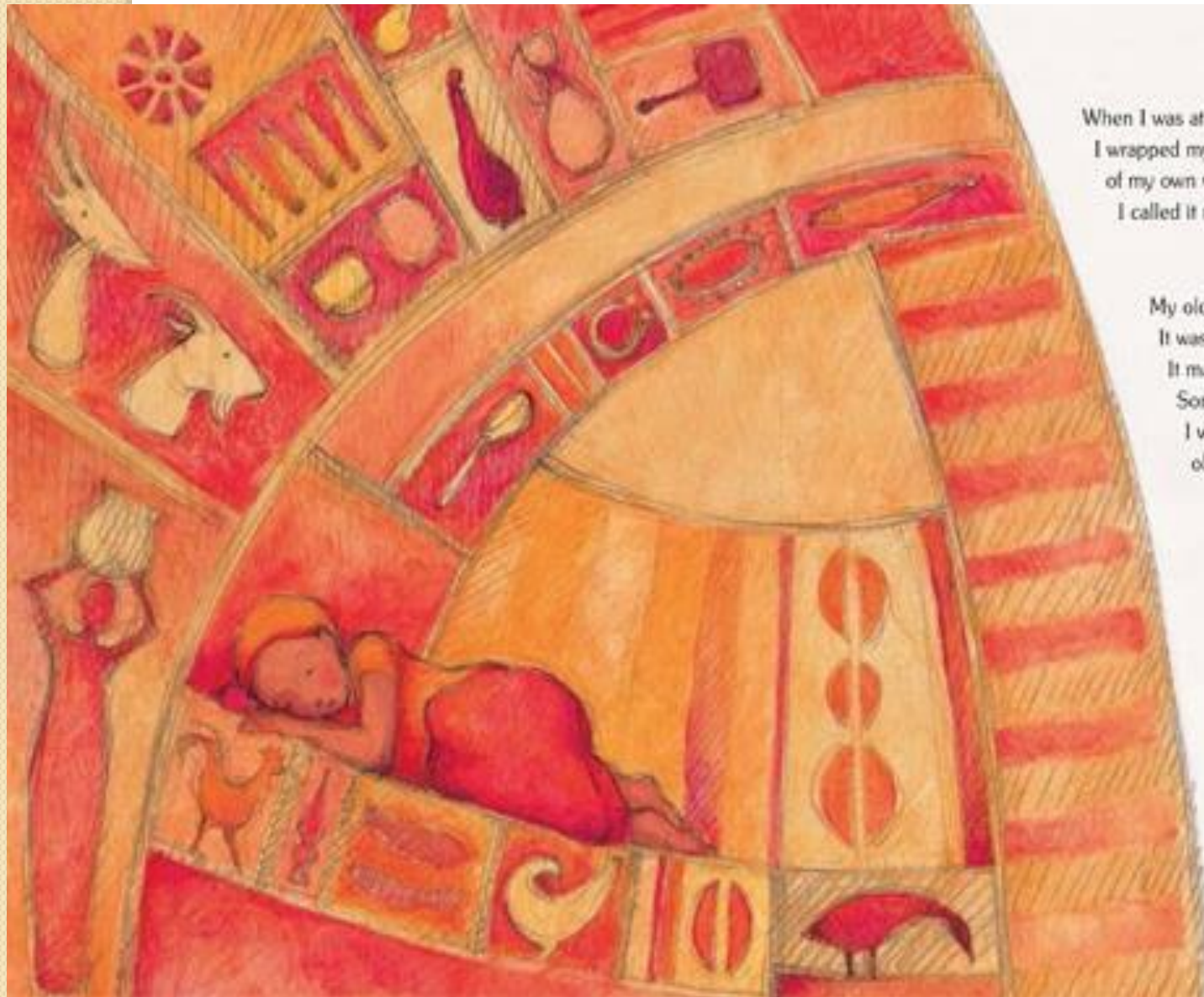


When I went out, it was like standing  
under a waterfall of strange sounds.  
The waterfall was cold.  
It made me feel alone.

I felt like I wasn't me any more.







When I was at home  
I wrapped myself in a blanket  
of my own words and sounds.  
I called it my old blanket.

My old blanket was warm.  
It was soft. It covered me all over.  
It made me feel safe.  
Sometimes I didn't want to go out.  
I wanted to stay under my  
old blanket for ever.

## *Storytelling Resources (Pennington, 2017)*

- personal to the teller in the form of memories or events, leading to the development of family stories
- artefacts to which stories become attached over time
- printed and online texts, TV programs and movies
- national and cultural myths and histories passed down over generations
- stories which accompany religious practices and beliefs

# The power of stories

- Making sense, constructing stories and sharing them with others is ‘an essential part of being human’ (Wells, 1986: 222)
- We create possible and imaginary worlds through words...emotions, memory and imagination combine within narrative thinking (Bruner, 1986)
- Our stories are part of who we are – our identities



# Stories in the family

- Children listen and contribute to the stories their families tell and retell about activities in their shared past, internalizing them as autobiographical memories (Cremin & Flewitt, 2017)
- There is no one correct way of making stories: we learn the story grammars, discourses and patterns from our society and from our cultures (Heath, 1983; Smidt, 2006)
- Children access these stories through the languages of the home

# Stories in the classroom

- Early narrative competence offers a firm foundation for emergent literacy and long-term success in schooling (Cremin & Flewitt, 2017)
- Narrative as a way of organizing experience promotes academic learning and enhances literacy skills: stories are an important part of the literate discourse of the school (Lowe, 2002)
- Which stories are valued? Which ones are overlooked or invisible?

# Paired reading: *Story as an adventure playground*

- Paired reading involves reading an extract of text individually and then briefly summarizing it for your partner
- Partners identify as A or B
- A reads from the start of the paper to near the end of the first page, finishing with the words “*to question other certainties in our thinking.*”
- B reads from “*We encounter a far greater range and use of language*” (bottom of page 1) up to the end of the first section: “*let you see the difference.*”
- Read your extract silently; when both of you have finished, take it in turns to share understandings of your text.

# Mirror Books: Vesak



# Translanguaging in the classroom...

*‘Teaching practices that tap into multilingual ways of reading, writing and speaking allow students to access the cultural resources that enhance the personal significance of their classroom work’*

**(Garcia, 2009)**



# Pretend play

Play is “story in action, just as storytelling is play put into narrative form” (Paley, 1990: 4)

Young children move between ‘what is’ narratives (a simulation of everyday life) and ‘what if’ narratives (entry into an imaginative world of fictive possibilities)...exploring notions of self within a particular family and culture

(Cremin & Flewitt, 2017)



# Vivian Gussin Paley's 'storytelling curriculum'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkJl8dyzRQQ>

## Responsive Play (Flint, 2018)

Through responsive play children actively participate in personally significant classroom language and literacy learning experiences

Responsive play allows all children to utilize important sources of information called '*funds of knowledge*' (Moll, 2005). These include:

- **personal experiential knowledge**
- **home languages and stories**
- **religion**
- **cultural skills and knowledge**

## Book-related pretend play (Welsch, 2008)

The practice of *book-related pretend play* is student-directed and initiated, when they:

- **interact with others** (using English/home languages)
- **make object substitutions** (for example, a pencil becomes a magic wand)
- **integrate imaginary elements** (bringing new settings or characters into the story)
- **assume roles** directly related to the characters, objects, actions, setting, language, and themes found in children's literature

# Why use stories with English language learners?

- Connection with students' home languages and identities (Cummins, 2015); translanguaging (Garcia, 2009)
- Engaging vehicles for English language and literacy learning (Gibbons, 2014)
- Increased levels of oral interaction in the classroom (Dufficy, 2005)
- Increased familiarity with narratives of home and target cultures
- Opportunities for creativity and fun: play!

# Why use stories with English language learners?

## **Affective Filter** (Krashen, 1972):

All students learn best when they are engaged and feeling positive. Teachers can build a learning environment which reduces anxiety and encourages risk-taking, especially for EAL/D learners.

Listening to and learning through stories inevitably lowers the affective filter.

# Why use stories with English language learners? Links with ESL Scales

**Oral Interaction Level 1: 1.1** Communicates verbally and nonverbally in simple social and classroom situations, taking cues from immediate context and using gesture, isolated words or well-known formulae, for example:

*Participates in group learning activities such as making things, shared stories, games and songs/rhymes, by joining in appropriately, laughing, clapping or cutting*

**Reading Level 1: 1.5** Gains and shares meaning from hearing and reading short simple texts in structured reading activities, for example:

*Sequence a story, a series of events or a process using pictures or illustrations.*

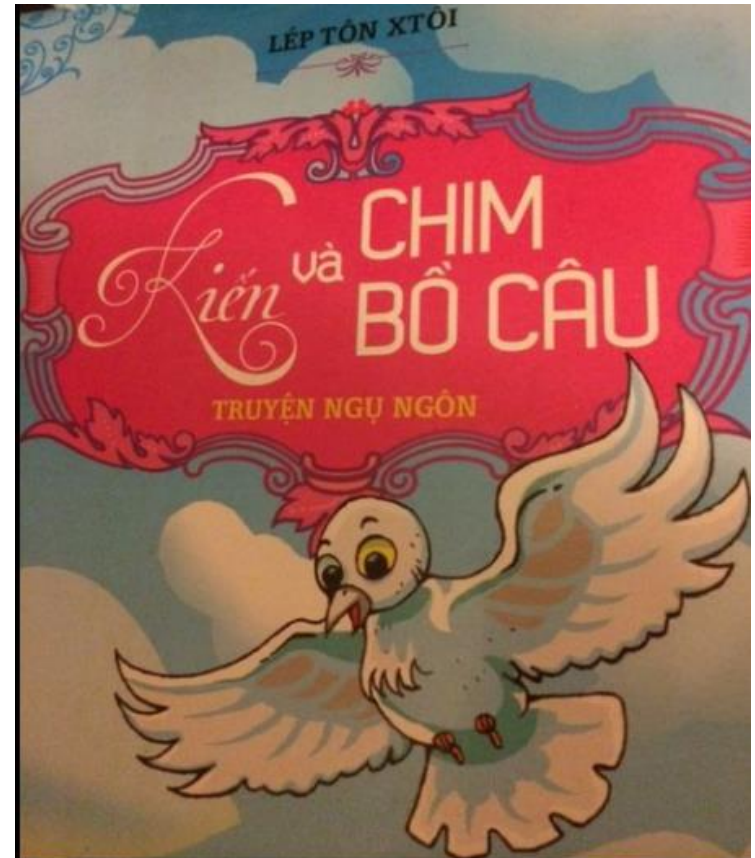
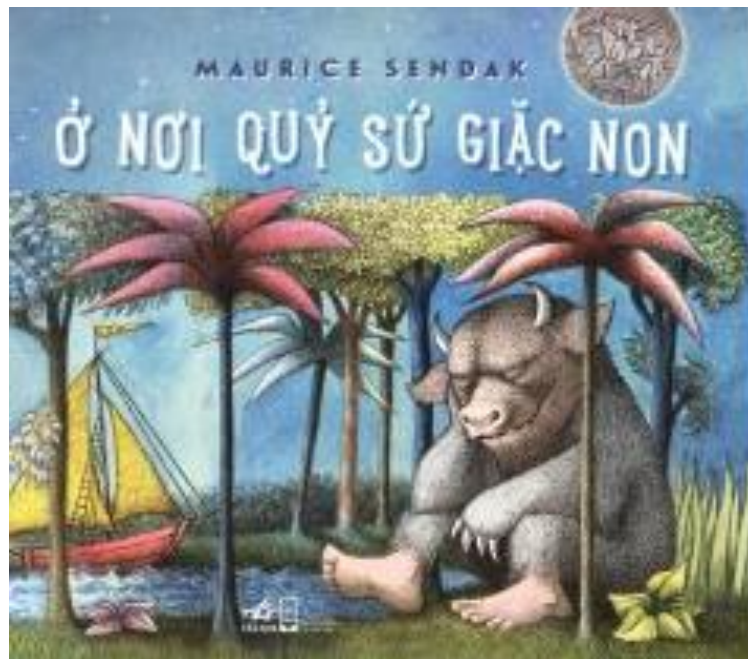
**Writing Level 2: 2.9** Communicates ideas, events and experiences using limited repertoire of spoken and written English, for example:

*Create simple fictional or poetic texts modelled on familiar forms and repetitive patterns (from fairy tales, story books).*



# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## I. Links to prior skills and understandings: home languages and stories



# The Very Hungry Caterpillar's Food Diary



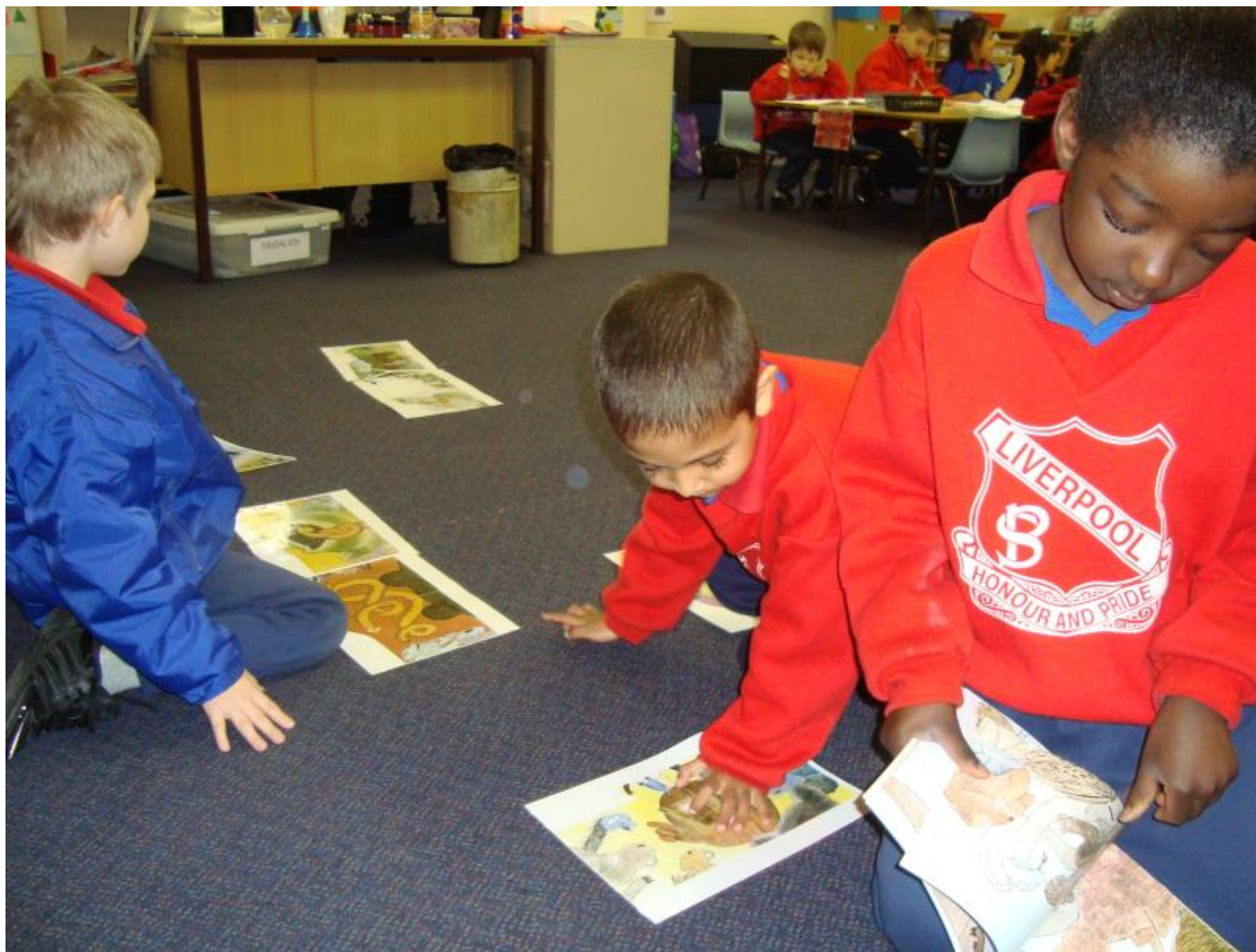
# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## **2.A focus on oral interaction:**

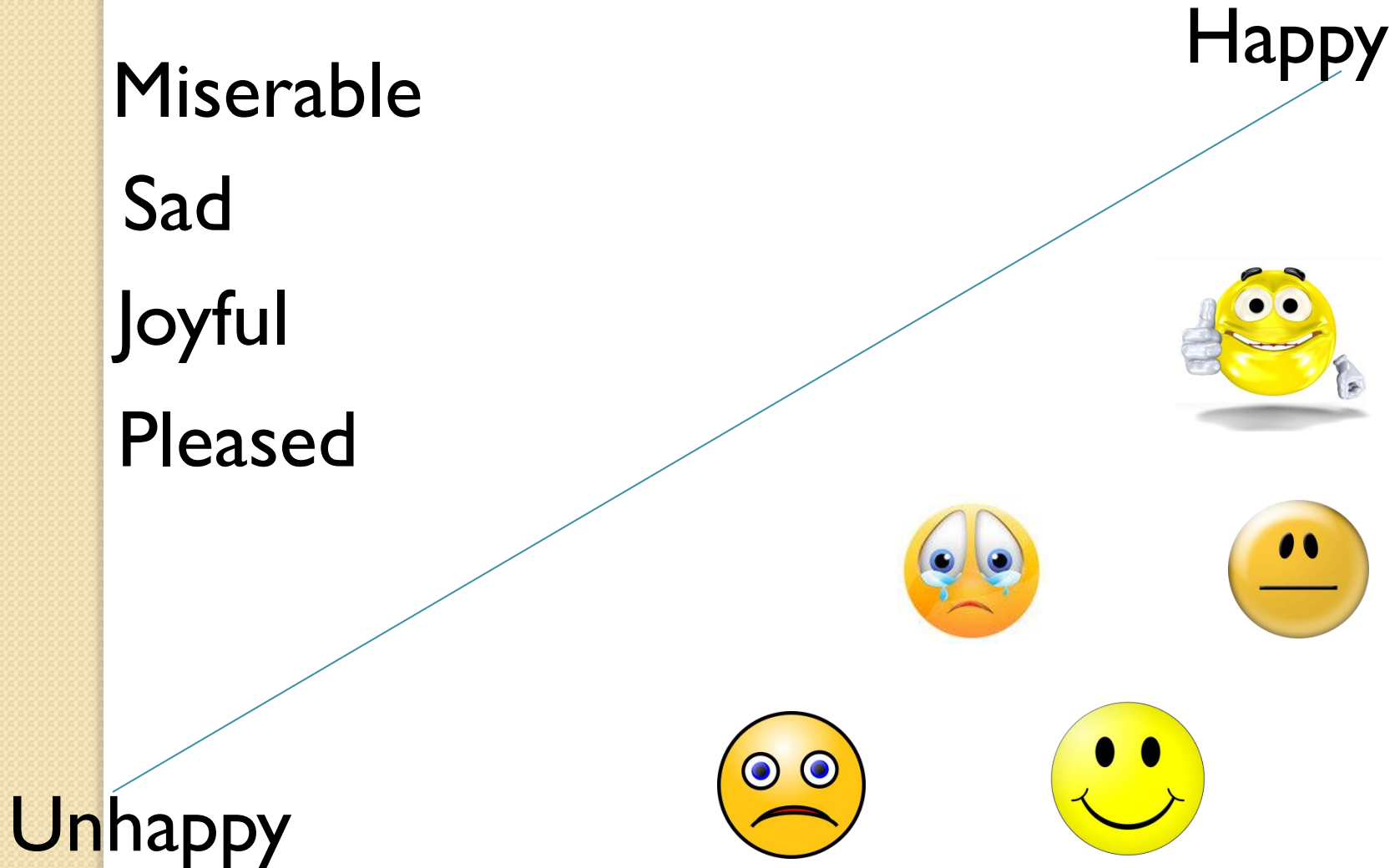
Students need to listen to language and they need to interact with other speakers to try out new words and clarify meaning. They learn best when language is heard and used in an appropriate and meaningful context.

**Activity:** group storytelling





## Vocabulary Development: clines





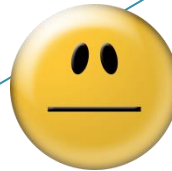
Ecstatic

Happy



Joyful

Pleased



Sad



Miserable



Unhappy



# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## 3. **Designed and contingent scaffolding:**

Scaffolding is assistance which will enable a learner to accomplish a task which they would not be able to complete alone.

**Controlled support** helps students to *notice* new language

**Guided support** allows students to *appropriate and practise* using the language with others

**Independent support** encourages students to *reformulate and take up* the language

# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## **3. Designed scaffolding:**

Designed, or planned scaffolding includes the organization of the program, consideration of students' previous experiences, the choice and sequencing of activities and opportunities for whole class, group or individual responses.

## **Contingent scaffolding:**

Contingent, or 'point of need' support involves talk, usually questions and answers. It relies on the teacher identifying a 'teachable moment' and then clarifying and extending a student's understanding.

# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## **4. Explicit language teaching:**

Students need to understand the vocabulary, structure and grammatical features of English, and they need many opportunities to practise.

**Grammar Activity:** *Lima's Red Hot Chilli*

# *Lima's Red Hot Chilli:*

## Building the noun group

- Listen to the story, remembering as many noun groups as you can
- Examples?
- Using the visuals
- Creating a word picture



# Building the noun group with adjectives

coconut...samosas...sweets

- a hairy brown coconut
- some spicy vegetable samosas
- some delicious chewy sweets

# Building the noun group with adjectives and adjectival phrases

- a hairy brown coconut *with a very hard shell*
- some spicy vegetable samosas *inside the fridge*
- some delicious chewy sweets *high up on the shelf*



# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## **5. Message abundance:**

As many channels of communication as possible are used to help students understand the message...

...so they can listen to the story, look at the pictures, hear it again (and again), tell it in their home language, act some of it out, paint pictures of it, change the storyline, retell it orally and in writing, play with the words, play with the ideas....and have fun!

# How do stories connect with EAL/D pedagogy?

## **6. Rich Tasks – bringing it all together:**

Rich Tasks are designed for a real-life purpose and audience. Lasting over a period of weeks, students build their language and curriculum skills so that they can be demonstrated in, for example, a performance or a printed book.

**Example of a Rich Task:** a class performance of *Handa's Surprise*

# Performance: Handa's Surprise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN9bWB3vsCk>

As you watch the performance, think of the learning activities which might have prepared students to produce this Rich Task.

How might you support your EAL/D students?

# Building a Storybox

- Who are my learners?
- Which languages/cultural communities are significant to them?
- What are their needs?
- What are my curriculum priorities?
- Which stories/themes are suitable?
- Which activities will suit my classroom?
- Which resources do I need to collect?

# Learning through stories includes:

- See, Think, Wonder
- Story reading in home languages (with family members)
- Book-related pretend play
- Making meaning through visual literacy
- Using puppets and masks
- Sequencing illustrations
- Matching vocabulary and pictures
- Building the noun group
- Reading related texts (similar structure, content)
- Responding through art
- Creating story maps
- Story writing – retells and innovations on text
- Sharing Readers Theatre

# Sourcing the materials

- Lost In Books - a multilingual and online bookshop, café, creative learning & language exchange hub. 2/40 Harris St, Fairfield NSW 2165  
<https://www.lostinbooks.com.au/>
- The Book Garden – online books and teaching resources: <https://thebookgarden.com.au/>
- Global Language Pty Ltd – multilingual bookseller  
<https://www.globallanguage.com.au/>
- Dollar Shops/Aldi/IKEA/garage sales
- Your school community
- Libraries



# References

- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*
- Cremin, T. & Flewitt, R. (2017) *Storytelling in Early Childhood*
- Cummins, J. (2015) *Identities in Motion*
- Kobald, I. (2014) *My Two Blankets*
- Dufficy, P. (2005) *Designing learning for diverse classrooms*
- Flint, T. (2018) *Responsive Play*
- Gibbons, P. (2014) *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*
- Heath, S.B. (1983) *Ways with Words*
- Krashen, S. (1985) *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*
- Lowe, K. (2002) *What's the Story?*
- Paley, V. (1990) *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*
- Pennington, G. (2017) *Once upon a time: A temporal study of storytelling in a multilingual community*
- Smidt, S. (2006) *The Developing Child in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
- Wells, G. (1986) *The Meaning Makers*
- Welsch, J. (2008) *Playing within and beyond the story*