



# Every Child a Talker

## Building a path to a story 3: 'Duck in the Truck'

Sally Roberts and her colleagues in the Foundation Unit of St. Mary's Primary School in Tilbury, Essex, explored some of Michael's ideas during a 'Hippos' Bath' day. They decided to adapt the technique for themselves, and here is Sally's account of what happened.

"The staff and children all enjoyed the exciting resources that Michael brought, and being involved in the activities that captured their imagination, (as well as his shirt!) Staff learned a lot from the day, and from the informal discussion after school. This is essentially the process of introducing children to the language of the story they will be sharing at the end of the session. Finding ways to introduce the vocabulary of the story through practical activities helped the children engage with the story at the end. The majority of the children were three years old at the time, with quite a few only having been in the nursery for a few days. They were able to stay on the carpet for Michael's 'show' for over half an hour, which is much longer than we would expect from such young children.

Following our session with Michael we used the same technique to explore '*Duck in the Truck*' by Jez Alborough. Instead of initially sharing the story with the children, we planned a range of activities that would give them experiences that they could relate to the vocabulary, so that they could make more sense of the story when we shared it together at the end of the session.

This story revolves round a very impulsive and excitable duck, whose truck gets stuck in the muck (it's a rhyming story!). He ropes in (literally!) various farm animals and a frog to try and help him get his truck unstuck. A rope and lots of pushing and pulling are important features of the story.

### Our main ideas and vocabulary

- *Farm animals*
- *Rhyming words* such as *duck, stuck, truck, muck*
- *Rope, knots*
- *Push, pull*
- *Help!*

### Our activities

- We filled a builders' tray full of mud and small trucks. Once the children were fully involved, we added string and little bits of rope. We encouraged the children to explore tying knots, driving trucks and exploring the language of the story (stuck, muck, truck etc)

- Outdoors, we tied rope to our tyres, so children could experience pushing and pulling on a larger scale.
- We tied rope to a small trailer and pulled the children: to recreate the section of the story where the goat attaches the rope to the back of his boat and tries to pull the boat out.
- With the help of our school caretaker, we moved our massive tractor tyre. It was a very physical activity with lots of fabulous language coming from everyone, including, "Its too big! Push! Pull! It's stuck! Help!"
- Once the tyre was in place we used washing up bowls and cloths to clean up the tyre before the children could play in it. This kept some of our particularly boisterous boys involved for practically the whole session!

When we shared the story at the end of the session we found that some of the children learning English as an additional language were more vocal than usual. They were able to understand what was going on in the story more fully, because they had actually experienced getting stuck, pulling, pushing etc

We have tried this approach with 'The Gingerbread Man' (playing 'Chase' in small groups and chanting, "Run, run as fast as you can" etc; making play dough from scratch with the children, etc). Although we won't be able to use this approach with every story all of the time, we shall certainly be using it with our core stories that form the basis of our themes. Thank you Michael!"

Why not try this approach for yourselves, with your favourite story? Please let me know what happens, and we can share your ideas.



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