

# Kindergarten children's story structure understanding through story retelling

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# Introduction

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Retelling stories is a widely used technique that helps young children to develop a sense of story structure (story grammar), story comprehension and oral language complexity

With practice in story retelling, young children:

- Develop narrative skills.
- Develop comprehension.
- Understand the story structure and use story grammar elements such as:
  - setting
  - theme
  - characters plans
  - plot episodes
  - resolution
  - ending.

# Purpose, Sample, Material

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- The purpose of this study was the implementation of an intervention program:
  - to train kindergartner children in story retelling, and
  - to examine whether this training helped them to understand the story structure.
- The program was implemented in two (2) classrooms of a private kindergarten (total 32 children).
- Children were from middle class families.
- Twenty two (22) books were read to the whole class setting with specific criteria.
- In addition, 5 cards were used with the key-words:  
*'When', 'Where', 'Who', 'What' and 'End'*

# Intervention program

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Children were evaluated before and after the intervention program.

- A book was read to the children.
- Each child retold the story in a quiet place of the kindergarten.
- Children's retellings were audiotaped and transcribed.

## Implementation of the program

- The program was implemented by the classroom teachers after their training.
- The program lasted for 6 months (one day per week)
- Children's training program consisted of 7 phases.
- Each phase lasted for about one month (4 sessions)

# 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase

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- 1<sup>st</sup>: All structural elements were presented to the children. The teachers explained to the children that each story has a certain structure.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: The teachers asked the children to retell the story by using and putting in a series the photocopied illustrations of the book.

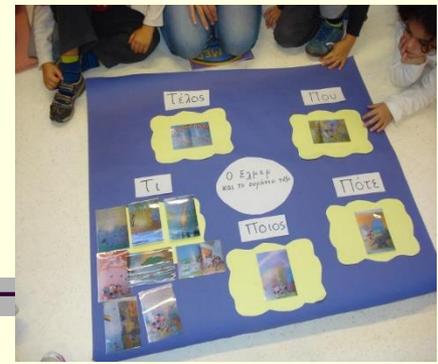
# 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase

- After story retelling, the children were asked to draw the story plot, discussed the story plot and decided who will draw what.
- Based on their drawings the children retold the story and put them in sequence.



# 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Phase

- In the 4<sup>th</sup> phase and after story retelling, the children were asked to make the story map with the story illustrations.
- For children's better story plot understanding the teachers organised the map in five parts according to the five cards:
  - When?
  - Where?
  - Who?
  - What?
  - End
- In the 5<sup>th</sup> phase and after story retelling and instead of putting the story illustrations on the story map the children were asked to draw the story plot on the story map and write down what they had drawn.



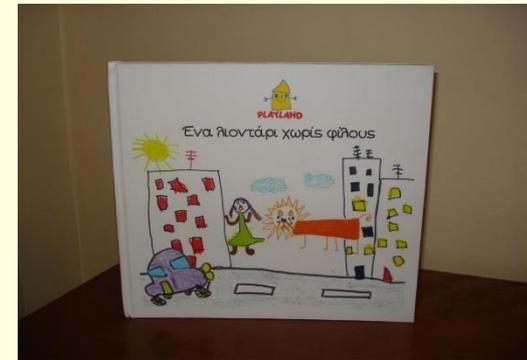
# 6<sup>th</sup> Phase

- After story retelling, the teachers organised a different story map in vertical shape and asked the children to draw and write the story plot in each column.



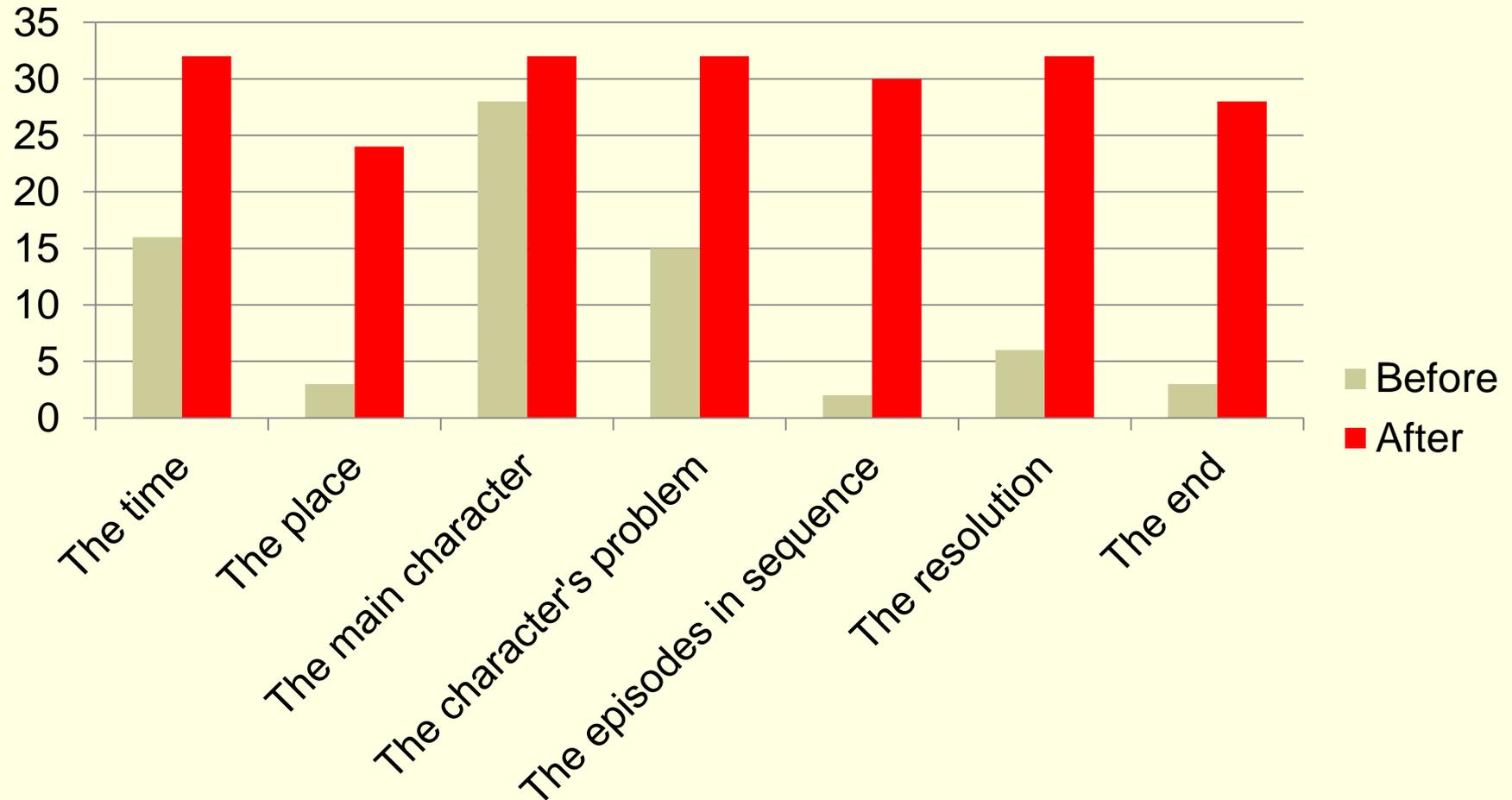
# 7<sup>th</sup> Phase

- By the end of the program the children were asked to make their own story.
- So they started to discuss with the teacher:
  - Where the story will take place?
  - Who will be the main character?
  - Which will be the character's initial problem?
- The children were puzzled how to make the decision. So, they voted.
- The discussion started and the children with the help of the teacher created the story by specifying:
  - The setting (time, place)
  - The characters
  - The theme (problem, goal)
  - The plot episodes
  - The resolution
  - The end
- Then the children in pairs began the story illustration and the two books were ready.



# Results

Children's retellings before and after the intervention program



# Conclusions

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- After training in story retelling children were able to:
  - Understood the story plot.
  - Retold the setting
  - Referred the main character
  - Referred the main character's problem (the theme)
  - Retold in sequence all the story episodes and character's actions.
  - Referred the end of story.
  - Justified and commented characters' actions and reactions.
  - Enriched their retellings with personal comments.

It seems that **the use of visual aids, the drawing and writing** of story plot episodes, the children's **active involvement** in story retelling and **the repeated training** in story retelling made children able to understand the story structure and retell the story structural elements in sequence.

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Thank you.

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