



Leanne Williams

THE LITTLE BIG BOOK CLUB



Sarah Lawson

The Big Book Club Inc is a not for profit organisation that is dedicated to the promotion of reading. TBBC Inc. has two major projects: The Big Book Club for adults and The Little Big Club (LBBC) for the early childhood sector and parents and caregivers of children aged between birth and five years.

The Little Big Book Club's primary goal is to promote the love of reading and the importance of reading from a very early age. Through a variety of programs and resources LBBC supports both parents and professionals in providing children with a crucial base for lifelong literacy, success in formal schooling and improved life chances.

Literature in the Early Years

Leanne Williams and Sarah Lawson

"Good children's literature appeals not only to the child in the adult, but to the adult in the child" Anon

Literature in the *Australian Curriculum English* is defined as understanding, appreciating, analysing and creating literature.

In the early years young children become increasingly aware of written language and quickly learn that symbols and patterns have meaning. They begin to show an interest in recording their ideas, theories and understandings. Whether it is through painting, drawing, dance, writing or dramatic play young children's focus becomes making sense of their world.

Children's desire to engage with literature and create their own literature also increases. In *Belonging, Being and Becoming; The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* one of the desired outcomes is for children to become effective communicators. Some of the key components of this outcome include that:

- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

In Early Childhood and early primary settings picture books form the foundation of many literacy experiences. The importance of providing appropriate high quality literature in a classroom becomes paramount. An excellent children's book

can become the catalyst for a range of learning outcomes.

Each month The Little Big Book Club selects and recommends three books to read with children. This ongoing project helps to inform parents and early childhood professionals of appropriate and high quality books to read with children at different ages and stages. The selections are supported by lesson plans and downloadable activity sheets that can be accessed via our free website.

Responding To and Examining Literature

While the concept of responding to and examining literature is not uncommon in early childhood, it does not always have to follow the familiar format of question and answer. Young children in particular are eager to use a range of mediums to express their understandings. Puppetry, dramatic play and song allow children to fully engage with literature.

In February, The Little Big Book Club featured *Blossom Possum* by Gina Newton & Kilmeny Niland for children aged 4 & 5 years. This book provides an excellent springboard for encouraging young children to respond to literature in a variety of ways.

Once you have read the story of *Blossom Possum* to the children try the following:

- Talk about the subtitle *The sky is falling down*

under. Do any of the children know what it means? Where is down under?

- Blossom Possum is based on the traditional tale Henny Penny. You can read or retell this story to the children and then compare and contrast the two stories. For children in the early years of school they could draw and label pictures of the characters in each story.
- What do the children notice about all the animals' names? Rhyming and the recognition of rhyme are key aspects in developing phonemic awareness in young children. Can the children make up their own funny rhyming names like Messy Tessie or Crabby Abby?
- Play games that reinforce the concept of a cumulative tale. Try *I Went Shopping ...* In this game the first child starts by saying *I went to the shop and I bought a ...* for example, banana. The next child continues by saying, *I went to the shop and I bought a banana and a pineapple* and so on.
- Can the children retell the story – whom did Blossom Possum meet first? Who did she meet next? Use puppets for retelling the story. The children can choose which character they would like to be.
- Blossom Possum is very worried about the sky falling and decides to go and see the Prime Minister. If the children in your class have concerns you may like to encourage them to write a letter or prepare a speech to someone in authority.
- Reread the story to the children. Where did Blossom Possum go on her way to find the Prime Minister? Give the children a large piece of paper and ask them to draw a map of Blossom Possum's journey down the track, round the back of beyond, over the hill and past the black stump.

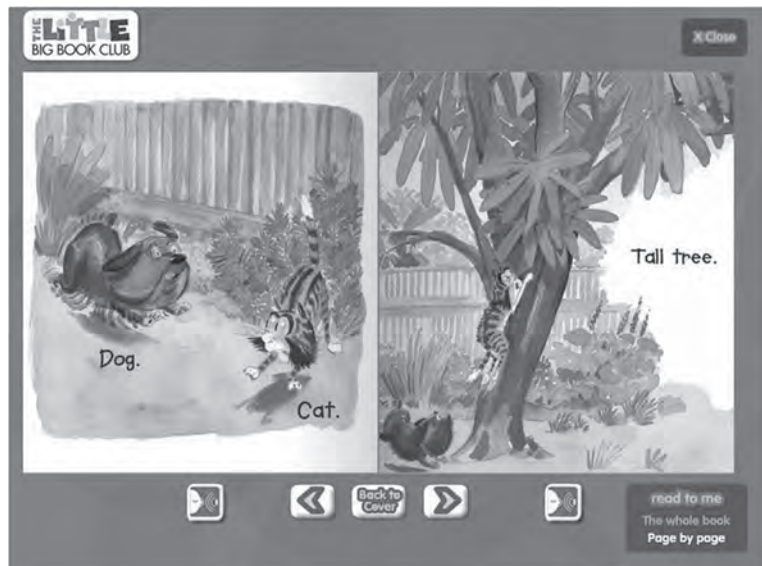
Digital Texts

When thinking about literature for young children books spring to mind but increasingly young children are exposed to a variety of literature in different medias.

Children benefit from opportunities to explore their world using technologies and to develop confidence in using digital media.

Belonging Being Becoming:
The Early Years Framework for Australia.

As part of The Little Big Book Club range of



resources our website features three e-books (available in 7 languages) that are suitable for both preschools and early primary classes. The titles include:

The Terrible Plop by Ursula Dubosarsky & Andrew Joyner

Boom Bah! By Phil Cummings & Nina Rycroft

Cat by Mike Dumbleton & Craig Smith

One of the crucial precursors for children to learn to read is exposure to literature. As a teacher you can make a book come alive and foster a child's imagination. Good literature comes in many forms, from print based to screen based texts. The key is to ensure whatever type of text you choose, that the children make a connection and are fully engaged with the literature.

Leanne Williams is the Early Childhood Advisor for The Little Big Book Club.

The Early Childhood Advisor is responsible for the implementation of the Monthly Selections program and the ongoing development and promotion of LBBC's range of resources.

Sarah Lawson is part of The Little Big Book Club's Early Childhood Team.

Sarah holds a Bachelor of Teaching – Early Childhood Education. She has fifteen years teaching experience in variety of Early childhood settings. Sarah has worked in child care centres, kindergartens, preschools and in junior primary classrooms.

For further information, ideas and activities please visit our website:
www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au