

# Story webs

## Anecdotal narrative and the fabric of being

LaTrobe

Wednesday March 6th 2029

Nicola Grove, Tizard Centre, University of Kent at Canterbury

## My background

- English teacher turned speech pathologist
- 40 years working with adults and children with severe and profound disabilities
- Doctoral research on sign creativity in hearing children with disabilities
- Left academic work to found a storytelling charity - Openstorytellers [www.openstorytellers.org.uk](http://www.openstorytellers.org.uk)
- Just completed the first textbook on signing by children with developmental disabilities, integrating findings on Deaf and hearing youngsters.

The unique context of children with developmental disabilities who are acquiring language using manual signs has received little recognition. This textbook breaks the mold. Bringing together expert researchers and clinicians from a diverse range of backgrounds, it highlights not only the challenges faced by children with developmental disabilities, but also their communication achievements. It richly illustrates the theoretical insights and practice implications that can be gained when close attention is paid to the developmental process of language and communication development in this very special context.

*Martine Smith, Associate Professor, Clinical Speech & Language Studies, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland*

It is indeed time to bring signing out of the margins and to shed light on this rich medium of communication and learning. Nicola Grove and Kaisa Launonen have accomplished this through a comprehensive text with wide appeal - from scholars of language and languages to interventionists working with people who stand to benefit from a comprehensive appreciation of the role and benefits of signing.

*Teresa Iacono, PhD, Professor of Rural and Regional Allied Health, La Trobe Rural Health School, College of Science, Health and Engineering, Melbourne, Australia*

This book is an indispensable addition to the growing body of work on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). It provides an in depth overview of research and practice in the use of manual signs with individuals who present with a wide range of language learning disabilities. The book also courageously and innovatively presents a description of the synergies between two fields that have been traditionally antagonistic and seen as separate: Deaf studies and Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

*Professor Gloria Soto, Department of Special Education and Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, San Francisco State University, USA*

The editors, Grove and Launonen, and their contributors offer an important, alternative perspective to language and communication development in deaf and hearing children with additional disabilities. In particular, they emphasise the need for disabled children who use sign-based interventions to be placed in language-rich environments, using holistic and multimodal approaches to enable them achieve their full communication potential. This book is a valuable tool for both parents and practitioners making decisions on how to maximise their children's opportunities to become effective communicators.

*Dr. Katherine Rowley, Deafness, Cognition and Language (DCAL) Research Centre at University, College London and City, University of London, England*

I am delighted to see the publication of this book on such an important topic. Those who work with deaf children are noting that signers with additional needs present demands for a different range of skills in their teachers. This volume will be of great assistance to them.

*Rachel Sutton Spence PhD, Sign Language Studies Department, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil*

Artwork created by Lily Gayner

# Manual Sign Acquisition in Children with Developmental Disabilities

Nicola Grove, Ph.D.  
Kaisa Launonen, Ph.D.  
Editors



# Fabric of Integrality

1. Embodied identity
2. Resistance and emancipation
3. Celebrates stories
4. Reclaims friendship

My narrative embraces Bruner's notion that "a life as led is inseparable from a life as told" or life is not only how it was, but how "it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold." The narrative is the very essence of the quilt.

# Storysharing®

- Uses frameworks and strategies from oral conversational narrative to:-
  - Engage attention
  - Stimulate recall of reportable events
    - Episodic memory
- Create a shared social focus in which each person's contribution is equally valued
- Concerned with small everyday events that form the fabric of friendship and community
- Dialogue as an instrument of change (*Meininger, 2010*)

# Storytelling as a social construct

- Emphasis on process not outcome
- Beginnings in infancy
- Collaborative
- Focus on **meaning**: co-constructed, emergent, dynamic
- Narrative memory develops through talk about experience
- *Tomasello, Fivush, Trevarthen, Reese, McCabe, Bamberg, Norris*

# Pragmatic perspective: Language for meaning (Halliday)

<i>Level of language development</i>	<i>Pragmatic functions</i>
<b>Sentences</b>	Evaluate, Imagine, Create, Reflect, Hypothesise Predict, Discuss, Explore
	Apply, Relate, Compare, Explain causes, Classify, Question (“why”, “when”, “how”) Predict (simple immediate events)
<b>Multiwords</b>	Request, Confirm/deny, Pretend, Argue, Assert, Joke, State, Describe, Comment, Narrate information “what”, “who”, then “where” begin to link with “and”, “then”
<b>Single words</b>	Request object/action, Protest, Reject, Social exchanges (greeting, play) Name, Tell (inform, share) Symbolic play behaviours
<b>Preverbal</b>	Request object/action Answer, Show and tell
	Call attention, Protest, Reject, Greeting, Exchanges, Tease, Show off, Joint attention
	Express feelings Sadness, Fear, Anxiety, Anger, Happiness, Humour And Teasing Surprise Love Pleasure, Play Social smiling, Babble and sound practice
	Express states Alarm, Hunger, Pain, Tired, Contentment

Grove, N. (2019) Pragmatic skills of key word signers In Grove, N. &

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# Stories

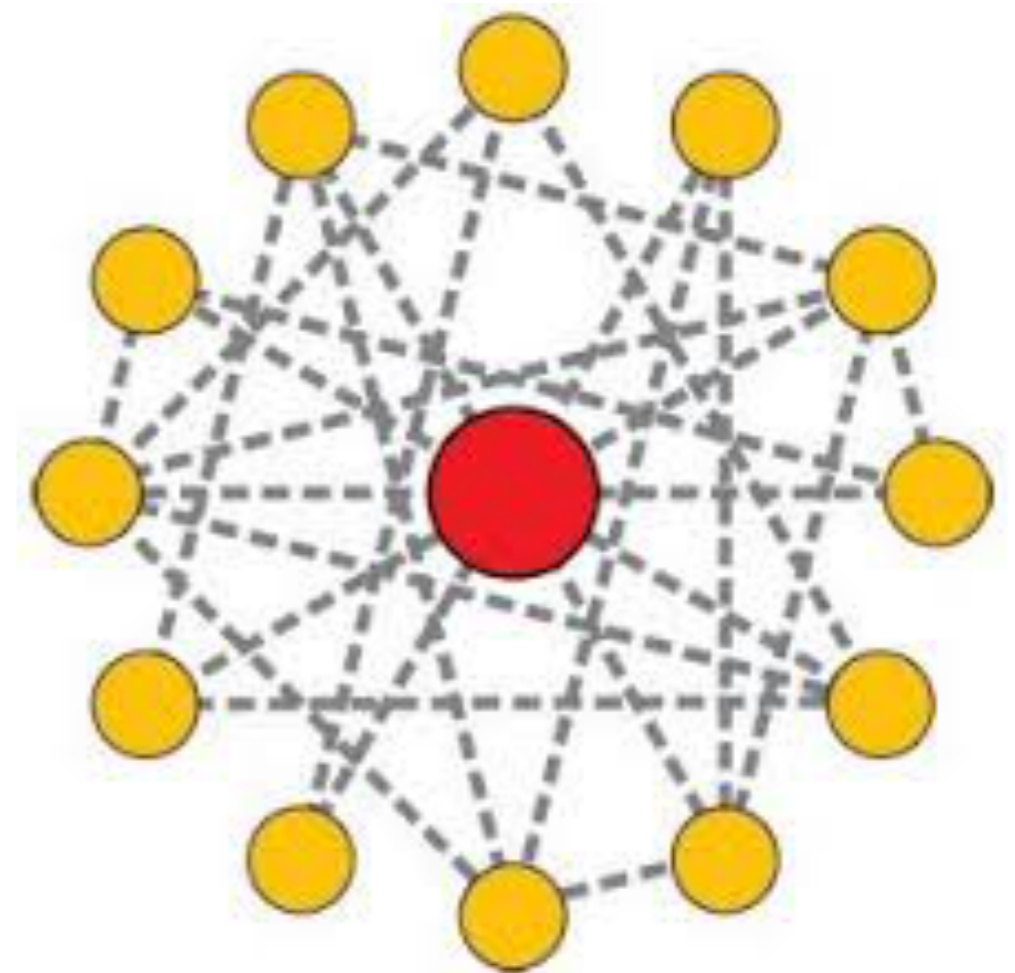
WHY

WHAT

HOW

## Why story?

In summary: stories connect people in several ways with themselves, with one another and with human life and society in culture and society. In this connecting telling of stories, the strange is not denied or shoved aside but met in the conversation of people with themselves and with others  
Meininger, 2010



“To be a person is to have a story” (Clapton)

- 65% of everyday conversation is made up of stories and gossip (*Hsu, 2008*); in children, personal narratives predominate
- Life stories told together help people to develop resilience and a sense of identity post-stroke (*Bronken et. al., 2012; Hydén, 2011; Shadden & Hagstrom, 2007*)
- For these adults, “flow” of interaction is more important than structural elements in keeping a narrative coherent (*Olness & Ulatowska, 2011*)

## What story? Big Stories

Social integration as an interpersonal process, as I have described it, arises and flourishes where stories about people are told and heard. In this context the term 'stories' refers primarily to people's life stories..... it is primarily this identity constituting and socially connecting function of storytelling that is at issue.

**The image is of "Peter's book"  
Life stories tend to be reified,  
become objects, and are told as  
monologues. As such they are of  
course important, but they are not  
the only stories we tell**

*Meininger, 2010*

## Big Stories....

The focus on temporal sequencing and narrative clauses in much narrative research have tended to narrow the data base by excluding collaborative stories as well as unsuccessful or incomplete stories, and marginal, narrative like exchanges..

*Norrick, 2000; Bamberg & Georgapoulou..*

## What story? Small Stories

Small stories can be about very recent ... or still unfolding events thus immediately reworking slices of experience and arising out of a need to share what has just happened..

...fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world... *Bamberg & Georgapoulou*

Stories and narrative like sequences emerge from and recede back into turn by turn talk, making it hard to determine the boundaries. Participants may collaborate in producing a story, making it hard to identify the teller or even the primary teller *Norrick, 2000: 200*

**When you tell a story to a friend, you can transfer experiences directly to their brain. They feel what you feel. They empathize.**

**What's more, when communicating most effectively, you can get a group of people's brains to synchronize their activity. As you relate someone's desires through a story, they become the desires of the audience. When trouble develops, they gasp in unison, and when desires are fulfilled they smile together.**

**Stephens GJ, Silbert LJ, Hason U. Speaker-listener neural coupling underlies successful communication. P  
*Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci U S A.* 2010 Aug 10;107(32):14425-30.**

# How?

## The process of story creation

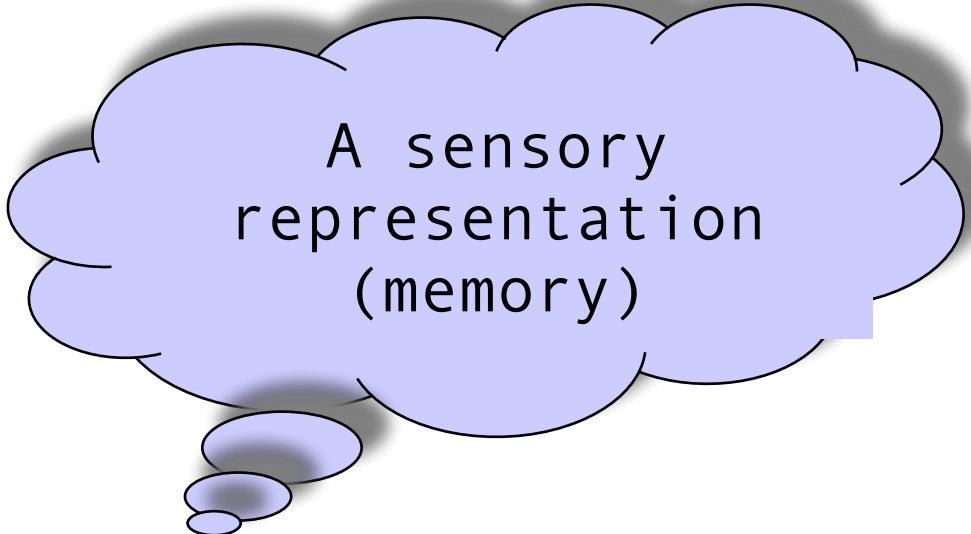
You and Me - someone to  
share with

***Expression of states and feelings :  
Attuned interactions***

Image of infant (2 months) interacting with grandfather,  
mutual smiling, attention

Image of infant (11 m) wiping grandfather's nose

**INTENSIVE INTERACTION  
ATTUNEMENT**



A sensory  
representation  
(memory)

Endel Tulving (2002) proposes that an 'episodic memory', recalling **key moments of experience** for future reference, is a special human talent. It seems to be what makes 'processual', problem thinking, inventive intelligence possible. It builds each individual's **personal history**, an 'autonoesis' that links **emotion-charged moments of action and awareness** in 'phenomenological present' recalled as specially significant in a fictional plan of life's ambitions and achievements *Trevarthen, 2007*

**Beginnings of story – look at this!**

**Images of child with profound disabilities, examining an object, with mainstream**

**peer hand on her shoulder, distal point, attracting her attention to an event**

**Image of Ida (12 m) pointing to her birthday cake**

**Proto-declaratives (often subsumed under the heading of *joint attention*) show**

**the roots of narrative: calling the attention of another person to a reportable event**

Episodic memory + you and me  
makes  
Story

Warp threads  
Interactive dynamics  
Attunement



Weft threads..  
The experience, the memory, the  
story

Texture  
Patterning

## Warp threads Backstrap weaving Guatemala

When preparing the warp, the weaver creates the cross, or “heart”, of threads which allows for the lift and fall of threads during the weaving process. The weavers I have met, say you must take great care in the setup of the heart before you can even begin the weaving process...Once the loom is set up, the threads extend from the belly, which symbolizes creation or giving birth to the textile. When they start to weave, they tell their story through their textile which is created using the tension of their own body. They are weaving a piece of themselves into the work.

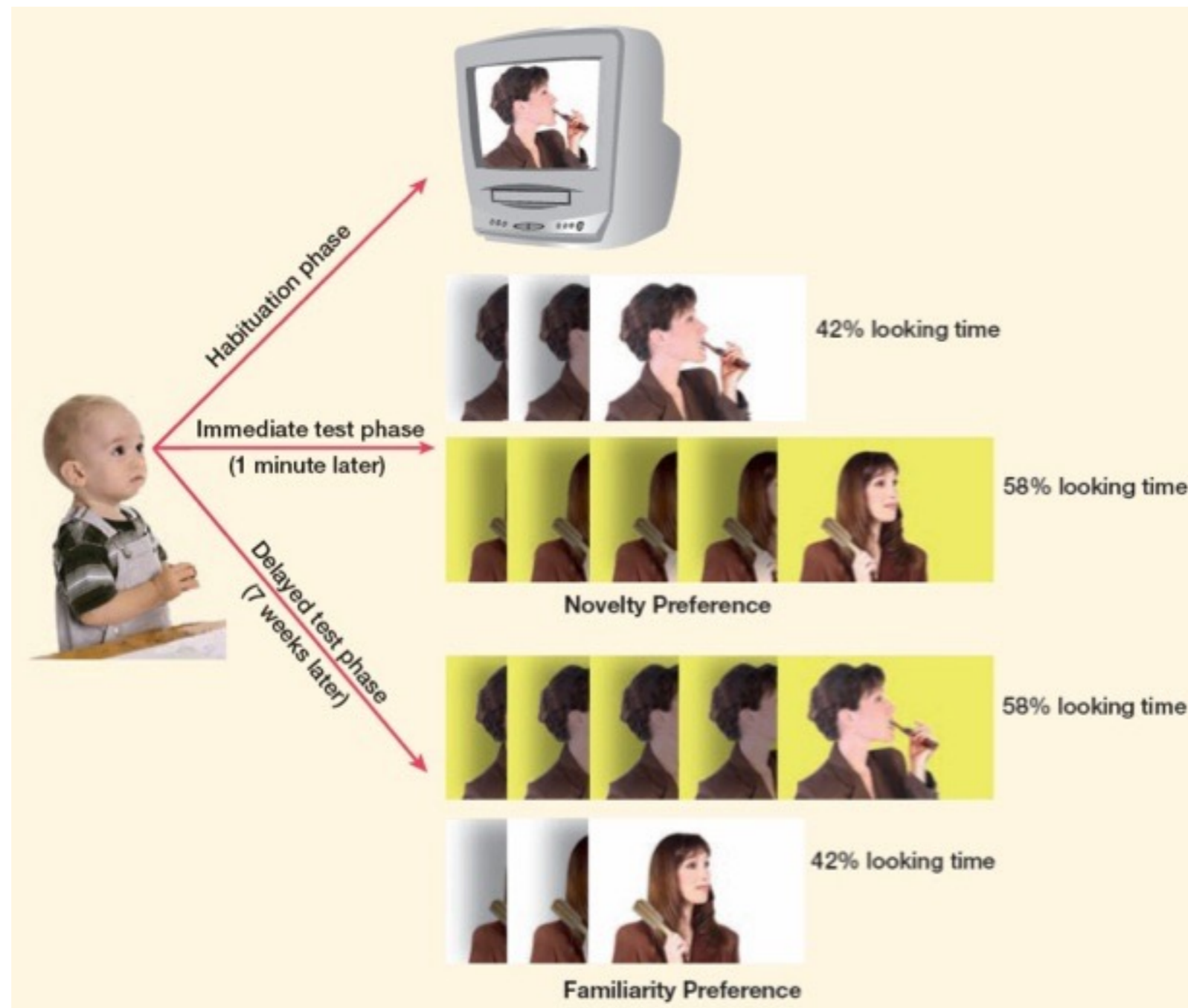
<https://casaflordesigns.com>

## Weft threads - Saiori

In Zen vocabulary, SAORI is the combination of the words 'SAI', meaning everything has its own individual dignity, and 'ORI', meaning weaving.

SAORI is a contemporary hand weaving method founded by Misao Jo (1913-2018, Japan) in 1969. She started weaving when she was 57 years old and created her own loom and style, free from the traditional concept and rules of weaving. She named her weaving style 'SAORI' in which anyone can express oneself freely regardless of age, gender, disability or intellectual aptitude.

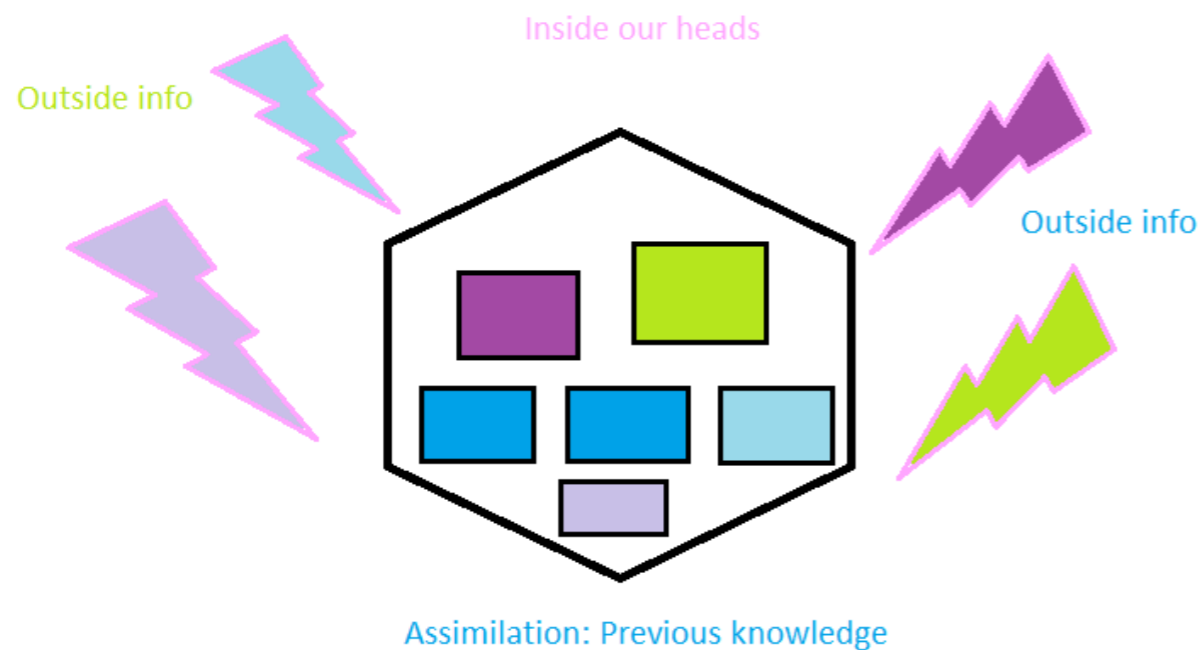
# How babies learn



Response to SAME and DIFFERENT <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlilZh60qdA>

# What's going on?

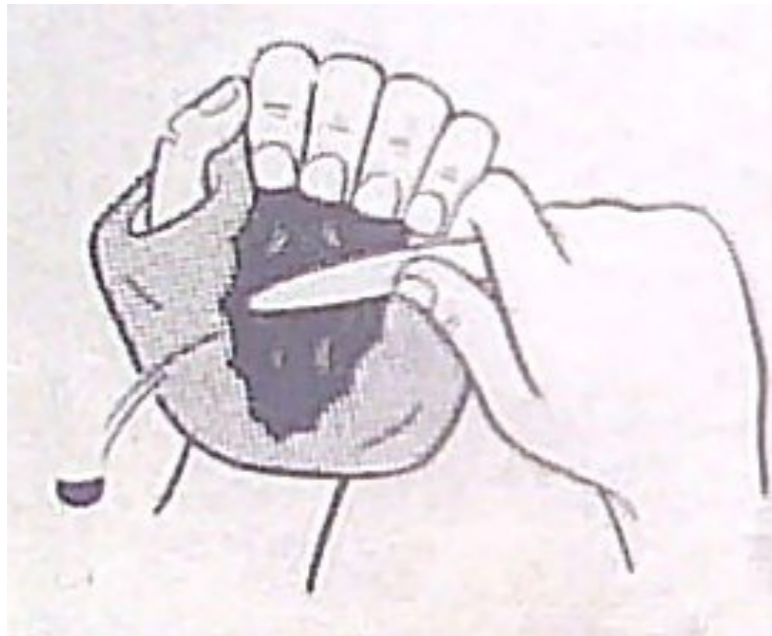
## Assimilation and accommodation



Response to SAME and DIFFERENT

# Responding to learning challenge

## Honing and potential



The brain works to understand a new (“dissonant” experience, by either changing the way the task is seen to make it fit with past experience, or changing our existing view of the world

## Wow effects



As the brain works through this process, there's a sudden increase in processing speed which is stimulating and exciting

## Attunement : flow

**Ida, 3 days old, watches her aunt intently and appears to imitate play tongue protrusion. It's reciprocal, affect is muted and gentle**

## Attunement 2: Discrepancy

**Ida, 4 months, responds to her father's play noise and approach by stilling, eye widening, mouth open in anticipation, and giggling. Affect is marked and contrastive**

**This is the arc of the story process:  
problem state->anticipation ->climax -> resolution**

## Attunement 3: Imitation

**Ida, 9 months, claps in imitation, first as a response, then she initiates. Imitation is vitally important in allowing new responses, or new variations of responses, to be incorporated in the process**

# Patterning

**Ida, 22 months, is putting two words together. But she can also sing an entire song or rhyme, approximating The sounds, intonation and rhythm. Here her version of “Twinkle Twinkle Little star” scaffolded by her father (she contributes the final word in the first 2 lines before taking over), becomes a crazy fun experimental sound play, elongating the vowels, changing pitch and volume. This shows how young children pick up on vocal patterning, so that they can infuse a narrative with texture and emotional colour. People with severe IDs can often vocalise and may be encouraged to use their voices musically within a story**

## Weft thread: Experience

**Ida verbalises her strong sensory experience of swinging.  
Whee... became her word for swing (as in  
whee + point to garden)  
Ooh remains exclamatory  
Woof means effectively “animal not  
person”. Here she is in fact reacting to a  
loud raven caw. The film illustrates how a  
memory becomes codified in language, in  
the instant of its emergence**



Whee!



ooh!



Woof!

## Story 3 Dropped the keys!

This film shows Gunnar walking to the car with a deaf blind lady. He supports her (hand under hand guidance) to find the door of the car and fail to open it. He signs with her (hard to make out but probably something like WHERE KEYS), then helps her to search first the pockets of his jacket, then his jeans. Together they sign/gesture - NO... OH DEAR. Then he cues her that they are going to look on the ground, by moving her hands DOWN. Together they scrabble around, till they find the keys. Then together they sign YAY GREAT!  
The video then shows them reminiscng by going through all the movements again, and it is quite clear that she remembers the event.

Bodily Emotional Traces and the processes involved are explained here

<https://library.tsbvi.edu/Player/13204>

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/videos-webinars/deafblindness>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfSpYljl7AA>

- Individuals construct and reconstruct their apperceptions and understandings of the world. At the same time, the **external world offers affordances for categorisation** in the form of salience patterns..These affordances and patterns are there, in the world, but **they must be dialogically recognised and appropriated**
- Linell, 2005:5

## Bad leg cat

**This film shows Victoria co-telling the story of the cat going to the vet. But it is far more than this, it's clearly a meditation on illness and a caring community, as is evident in the responses of all involved. Towards the end there is an intimate exchange between 3 residents with IDs - vanishingly rare to see in this presenter's experience!**

## Making meaning together

- Affirmation of community
- Affirmation of value of members
- Meditation on illness
- « She's transferring to herself » *Connor, staff member.*
- Parties make different kinds of contributions to the joint activities-  
*they make meaning together Linell, 2005*

If listeners can... project upcoming parts of others' utterances, they can also complete others' utterances, and they can respond relevantly and promptly..., **latching** their responses to these preceding utterances without any interjacent pauses...this virtual **co-authoring** is supported by the capacity for other-centred **mirroring and resonance** that we see at play in proto-conversation and response to motherese.

Linell, 2005:10 **Dialogic stance...**

# Storysharing®

## Dialogue for change

- People to share with...process
- Something to remember - key small episode of significance
- Deploying highly patterned units that secure and maintain attention
- Permitting the emergence of co-constructed and therefore co-owned meanings

# The fabric of being

Warp threads  
Interactive dynamics  
Attunement



Weft threads..  
The experience, the memory, the  
story

Texture  
Patterning

## Thanks so much to...

- Victoria Library Service and Susie Prestney, who brought me to Melbourne
- Hilary Johnson and Scope
- LaTrobe for this wonderful opportunity
- Aud Bergerud, Signo School and Resource Centre for permission to show the film (with help from Sheri Forster)
- And all of you, for listening!

# Story webs: Anecdotal Narratives and the Fabric of Being

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6th March 2019

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<http://www.openstorytellers.org.uk>  
<https://www.storysharing.org.uk>

A film showing Storysharing in action in a UK school “Guess what happened to me” can be viewed here:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8V5iBeGGJs>

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