

BUD-E: A KEY RESOURCE FOR EARLY LITERACY LEARNING FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

An authoritative report by
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Bud•e Reading in relation to research on effective literacy
instruction

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For many years research has demonstrated that if children are to become lifelong learners, they must develop core skills and knowledge in the early years of schooling. Early reading and writing experiences should ensure children develop confidence and independence as readers, positive attitudes to reading, and view reading and writing as rewarding and enjoyable.

In this paper I report on a review of Bud-e, which identifies it as a key resource for early literacy development. It is evident that the Bud-e digital programme is informed by a robust theory of literacy development; the content and structure provide sound, research-based experiences to support the development skills and knowledge which are validated by a wide body of research as essential for early literacy development; and is consistent with the Core Standards expected to be achieved by the end of the kindergarten year at school. Furthermore, it is a motivating programme with a digital game at its heart with which children can engage at home, as well as in other early literacy learning contexts. For many years research studies have emphatically argued, with strong evidence, that reading begins at home, and more recently that for children in the twenty-first century, literacy learning activities with a digital platform are pivotal to children's engagement.

Before presenting the evidence from an analysis of the Bud-e programme to support my claim Bud-e is a key resource for children's early literacy learning, I will summarise the

key skills, knowledge and experiences for successful early literacy learning. These, I have learnt through many years of teaching, reading research studies and undertaking my own research, are fundamental. A key resource should enable children to master this body of knowledge.

Research on early literacy learning tells us that children must:

- know written words and pictures tell stories and give messages;
- expect what they read to make sense;
- develop a rich base of vocabulary;
- recognise rapidly the high-frequency words in written language;
- discriminate between the sounds in language, referred to as phonological awareness;
- know the names and sounds of letters;
- know written words are made up of sequences of letters, separated by spaces, and convey meaning;
- know (in English) we read words from left to right and top to bottom;
- use experiences of their own world to make sense of (comprehend) what they are reading;

- know they can learn about other worlds, real and imaginary, by listening to stories and by reading print and digital stories.

A key early literacy resource will also incorporate experiences and activities that enable the above skills and knowledge to be mastered and will include:

- opportunities for lots of talking with the special people in children’s lives about things that are important to them to expand their oral language;
- being read to regularly and engaging with a wide range of picture books;
- digital games which are imaginative, interactive, motivating and fun that encourage engagement with letters

and sounds in the context of stories and games (learning letters and sounds in isolation may lead to effective decoding but not reading for meaning)

- listening to poetry, playing language and word games, hearing and recording the sounds of letters in children’s names; exploring everyday words with a focus on making meaning; problem-solving experiences with words and stories to build children’s skills and self-confidence and to assist children become independent readers and writers.

A key early literacy resource will also help prepare children to achieve the Core Standards assessed at the end of the first years at school. These are summarised in the table below.

Foundation skills	Literature skills
a) Demonstrate understanding of the organisation and basic features of print.	a) Ask and answer questions from a text; retell familiar stories; identify characters, settings and major events in a story.
b) Demonstrate understanding of spoken words.	b) Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
c) Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	c) Describe the relationship between illustrations and the story.
	d) Recognise common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

An analysis of the Bud-e digital programme with its supporting resources of *Out of Bubblo* (a picture storybook), *Bud-e* (digital game), *Bud-e Reading Books 1–5* (reading books), *A*

Whale of a Tale (poem book) and word cards is presented in the following tables showing how each part of the Bud-e programme has the potential to develop the key skills,

knowledge and understandings essential for effective literacy learning, and provides research-validated experiences to enhance

learning. The Kindergarten Core Standards related to the essential skills and knowledge are also identified.

	Comprehension of and response to text	High-frequency word recognition	Vocabulary development	Phonological awareness	Motivation and engagement	Core Standards Kindergarten
Out of Bubblo: The picture book provides an imaginative and engaging story in which children learn words and pictures tell stories and give messages. Children learn to expect what they read should make sense. The text of the story introduces a wide range of vocabulary.	●		●		●	Literature a, b, c, d
Bud-e digital game. Highly engaging digital game builds on picture book. The game provides listening, word recognition, reading and problem-solving experiences in a highly imaginative and interactive programme. Introduces high-frequency words with repetition and high exposure within a game context.	●	●	●	●	●	Foundation Ka, Kb, Kc Literature Ka, Kb, Kc, Kd
Books 1–5 are books children can read with a parent/teacher, by themselves, or with Bud-e in the digital programme. They provide learning-to-read experiences which reinforce the structure and sequence of written language, teach high-frequency words and foster comprehension through retelling of simple stories. Prompt questions for parents/teachers help children use experiences of their own world to make sense of (comprehend), and respond to, what they are reading. Each book is read by Bud-e, who also models prompt questions, on the digital programme. Letter knowledge and early writing are modelled and encouraged in each book.	●	●	●	●	●	Foundation Ka, Kb, Kc Literature Ka, Kb, Kc, Kd

	Comprehension of and response to text	High-frequency word recognition	Vocabulary development	Phonological awareness	Motivation and engagement	Core Standards Kindergarten
A Whale of a Tale: Engagement with poems, rhymes and repetition enhances phonological awareness, vocabulary development and high-frequency word knowledge. Poems encourage exploring words and word meanings as well as enjoyment of word patterns in language.	●	●	●	●	●	Foundation Ka, Kb, Kc Literature Ka, Kb, Kc, Kd
Word Cards: Provide practice at rapid recognition of high-frequency words in written language. Can be used for word recognition/memory games as well as using words to make sentences.		●	●	●	●	Foundation Ka, Kb, Kc

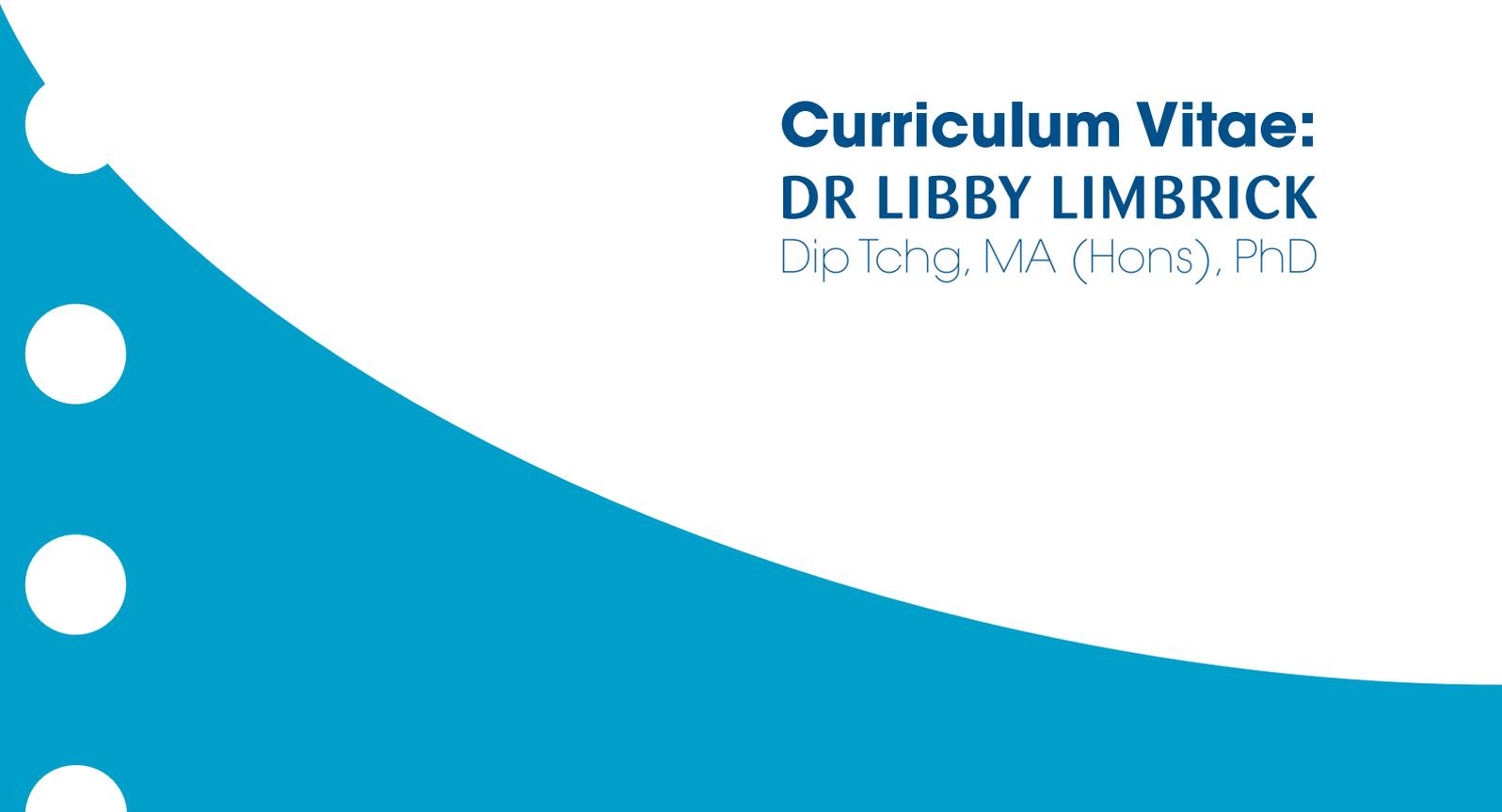
	Talking about texts	Engagement with print and digital stories	Learning letters/sounds/high-frequency words in context	Developing confidence/independence as a reader
Out of Bubblo. Picture book encourages talk about the story, characters and events of the story (comprehension)	●	●		●
Digital programme. Interaction by Bud-e with children through stories and games encourages interaction and engagement by children	●	●	●	●
Books 1–5. Prompts in books provide models for questions about the text, vocabulary and language structures	●	●	●	●
A Whale of a Tale. Enjoyment of and response to poems enables exploration of stories, language structures, vocabulary and sound patterns (phonological awareness)	●	●	●	●
Word cards. Can be used for games and language activities such as creating real and nonsense sentence development. Leads to rapid word recognition and understanding of language structures			●	●

SUMMARY

Bud-e is a highly engaging, motivating digital and print-based programme. It is theoretically sound and provides experiences validated by research studies as optimal for literacy learning. An ideal home-based programme, it is designed to be used and enjoyed not only by children and adults working together, but

also by young and not-so-young children, learning — and playing — independently. While no programme can claim to teach all children to read, I am convinced that Bud-e is a most valuable resource to support the complex processes of literacy learning for most children.

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initially trained as a primary teacher, and has spent
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