

Abstract

The influence of reading electronic and printed books with and without adult mediation on kindergarteners' emergent reading was assessed in the present study. The specific question which was investigated was whether adult mediation during the reading of an electronic book with a child makes a unique contribution to promoting children's emergent reading compared to adult mediation when reading a printed book and compared to children's independent activity with an electronic book.

One hundred and twenty eight kindergarten children from a low socio-economic status participated in the study. The subjects were randomly divided into four groups. The first group worked independently with an educational electronic book without adult mediation. The second group read an educational electronic book with adult mediation during and after the reading. The third group read a printed book with adult mediation during and after the reading. The printed book was a printed version of the electronic book. Adult mediation in both groups focused on the children's emergent reading development and was based on the use of the program or the printed book reading. The mediation utilized processes such as focusing, giving meaning and expending terms related to emergent reading. The three intervention groups read the book four times. The fourth group was a control group that received the regular kindergarten program.

The emergent reading level of the children in the four groups was assessed before and after the intervention according to: recognition of letter names, letter-sound connection, phonological awareness - opening and closing sounds and division into syllables and sub-syllables, emergent word reading and concept about print (CAP).

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The results indicate that the achievements of children who read the electronic book with adult mediation were significantly higher than the achievements of children who read the printed book with adult mediation, the achievements of children who worked independently with the electronic book and the achievements of children in the control group. These results were obtained with reference to recognition of letter names, emergent word reading, concept about print and the general emergent reading level. Furthermore, the achievements of children who read the electronic book with adult mediation were significantly higher than the achievements of children who read the printed book with adult mediation in the measure of phonological awareness – closing sound. The achievements of children who read the electronic book with adult mediation were significantly higher than those of children who worked independently with the electronic book and children in the control group in the measure of phonological awareness - division into sub-syllables.

Regression analyses indicate that children who read the electronic book with adult mediation achieved higher progress in recognition of letter names, emergent word reading, concept about print and the general emergent reading level than the control group.

These results demonstrate a unique contribution of adult mediation when reading an electronic book compared to adult mediation when reading a printed book and compared to children's independent activity with an electronic book in promoting kindergarteners' emergent reading. It is apparent that the combined support of the educational electronic book and adult mediation led to the most effective promotion of the children's emergent reading. Based on the results of the current study, it can be concluded that the use of new programs, such as electronic books, in combination with supportive and suitable adult mediation, may promote children's emergent

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reading and their achievements in the field of understanding the written language.

This promotion may be beneficial among young children in general and among children from a low socio-economic status in particular.