

Parent-child Aesthetic Shared Reading with Young Children

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Abstract The participation of parents shared reading with children is a topic that has generated a lot of attention among many researchers in the world. For the use of picture story books which have caused positive impact on the child's learning process has also been recommended as the best strategies to develop children's aesthetic ability. The purpose of the study aims to investigate the effectiveness of parent-child shared reading in developing children's learning; and to investigate the key virtues of parent-child shared learning that are critical in development of child's aesthetic abilities. Ten pairs of mother-child shared reading aesthetic wordless storybook in preschool and at home were observed and interviewed. The results show the positive effects of quality accompany time, environment setting up, and skills to scaffold children within parent-child shared reading. Finally, according to conclusion of this research, suggestions for relative practical application were proposed.

Keywords Shared Reading, Parent-child Interaction, Aesthetic, Children

1. Introduction

Researches (Beauchat, Blamey, & Walpole, 2009; Bracken, & Fischel, 2008; Evans, & Shaw, 2008; Evans, Williamson, & Pursoo, 2008; Ginsberg, 2007; Landry, Smith, Swank, Zucker, Crawford, & Solari, 2012; Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009; Sénéchal, & Young, 2008) [1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8] proposed that parent-child shared reading has generated a lot of attention for children's reading in the world. Studies revealed the importance of parent-child shared reading on children's language development (Teale, 2010; Wasik, 2010)[9][10] and word recognition(Roy-Charland, Saint-Aubin & Evans, 2007)[11]. In Taiwan, the participation of a parent in child learning has become an agenda, but still not yet been fully completed in preschools for the lacking of the combination of theory and practical experience. For effective children

learning, there is much emphasis on curriculum modeling and the use effective learning tools that motivates creativity and develops children's reading habit and performance. Research (Beauchat, Blamey & Walpole, 2009; Essa, 2013; Li-fang, 2007)[1][12][13] proposed the positive results of story books on children's learning process, especially from the cultivation of children's aesthetic ability, in exploration and awareness, expressing and creation, and response and appreciation (Ji-yao, 2007)[14]. Scholars have attached more value to quality reading rather than quantity of reading at the elementary level of learning (Morgan, Fuchs, Compton, Cordray, & Fuchs, 2008) [15], and parent-engaging strategies to cultivate a child's aesthetic abilities (Tompkins, 2007). [16]

The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which parent-child shared reading influences children's aesthetic cultivation and ability. In this case, the research will focus on the application of parent-child shared reading of some scholar recommended selected aesthetic picture books, including wordless, image, picture, interactive story books. By measuring the participation of a parent in this a child's learning experience and observing the child's engagement in play, role play, drama, relationship with peers, it is possible to assess the influence of a child-parent shared reading in a child's learning abilities. Consequently, this paper will present research based conclusions and recommendations that can be applied in improving instructional methods that facilitate better learning abilities in young children.

Problem Statement

In preschool education teaching and learning, there is great pressure to reform the instructional methods and engage new teaching strategies to enhance a child's awareness, creativity, reading and writing techniques. Children find it an interesting matter to decode the message in a wordless book and while the book not only amuse parents and child, but also elevate parent-child shared reading warmth interactions. In addition, parents love to read the picture story books and pay more attention to the

worded books for their children; a matter that often elevates the child's learning abilities as they get to the following learning stage-elementary schools (Wolfe and Flewitt, 2010)[17]. Consequently, the child's performance is consequently advanced and their optimal productivity is tapped, an issue that concerns every society that has value for civilization in the society (Schickedanz, & McGee, 2010; Teale, Hoffman & Paciga, 2010)[18][9]. Therefore, the study aims to answer the questions including "Does Parent-child shared learning influence a child's aesthetic abilities? And are there any other factors influencing parent-child shared reading picture story books?"

Purpose of the Research

To investigate the effectiveness and to collect recommendable shared-reading strategies or factors that can cultivate children's aesthetic abilities.

To realize the progress of the parent-child shared reading within one year of shared reading.

2. Literature Review

Recently, significant research (Chow, 2010; Evans, 2008; Stephenson, 2008; McElvany, 2009)[19][3][20][21] emphasized the interrelationship between children's aesthetic ability and reading ability development within the pre-school age bracket and the effect of this kind of approach on the children's ongoing learning process. The National Council of Curriculum assessment (2012)[22] recognizes the need to define the children's literacy ability and its effect on long-life learning. The implication of their idea is that the development of a child's learning process starts right from the preschool age and is nurtured all the way up the academic height (Biemiller, & Boote, 2006; Morrow, Freitag & Gambrell, 2009; Sansanelli & Hustedt, 2009)[23][24][25]. In essence, the literacy is cumulated and the literacy of a child will be determined by the quality reading activities and play they were exposed during pre-school period (Bloom, 2010)[26]. Silverman and Crandell (2010)[27] have pointed out that the abilities of a child to learn, read and write in a vocabulary class are determined by both the pre-school preparation and what children receives at home from their parents (Beck, 2012; Belland, 2008; Bravo, 2007)[28][29][30]. For Taiwan Education Bureau promoted Aesthetic cultivation as the long-life standard for being quality citizens, aesthetics ability have been emphasized for a child from their family and early childhood education. Essa (2013)[12] defines aesthetic abilities as the ability to make meaning interpretation of graphical illustrations, a skill that requires awareness (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012)[31], creativity (McKool, 2007)[32], and effective learning techniques (McKool, 2007). For pre-schoolers, the learning process begins with visualization of images and the ability to create mental images that make some meaning to them. At the early childhood education stage, children can also learn aesthetic experience from their daily life curriculum and

play, especially from parent-child shared reading picture story books. Kindle (2011)[33] points out that learning does not commence until a child is able to attach some meaning to the kind of images and objects they see. The concession of most researchers is that aesthetics are powerful learning materials at preschool age (Kim, 2008)[34].

Three aesthetic abilities that include exploration and awareness (Lambrou, Veale, & Wilson, 2011)[35], expression and creativity, and appreciation and response have been considered important in a child learning process. First, children have the potential to feel, to smell, to touch, to hear, and to see the objects or images that are presented to them, and then become aware of the objects meaning and attach this meaning to their daily life experience (McGee & Richels, 2008; Wasik, 2010)[36][10]. Secondly, they should be able to express their understanding of these images and develop a creative mind that is capable of imagining and deriving the relationship that exists between the images. Finally, the response of the child to this kind of learning and the kind of appreciation they acquire from it defines their ability to overcome the barriers that stand in the path of aesthetic abilities. Lillemyr (2009) [37]points out that the aesthetic abilities in young learners must be nurtured to enhance their comprehension of the wordless story books that form a critical part of pre-school learning. The aesthetic abilities are the core aspects of pre-school knowledge development in young children in modern education.

Research by the Justice (2009)[38] revealed the importance of classroom reading activities and that through classroom reading activities would cultivate children's aesthetic experience. Further, Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, (2012)[31] reported that parent-child engagement plays a key role in developing the aesthetic abilities of their children in the early age education. Parent-child shared story book reading is an instructional approach that has garnered a lot of attention from researchers seeking to explain the unique characteristics in contributing in parent-child quality interrelationship and children's aesthetic experience. Kindle (2011) [33] launched a research to compare the characteristics of different shared reading approaches that different parents adopt in developing reading skills in children. In his conclusion, he pointed out that different parents use different approaches to achieve shared reading and all of them achieve positive effect in children's reading performance, exploration, expressing, creating, and appreciation. However, he discovered that parents who laid emphasis on promoting children's reading habit were successful in developing both effective comprehension and aesthetic ability. Mol, Bur, de Jong, (2009)[7] revealed that through parents dedicating to the shared reading stories, children love to read, to explore, to interpret, to appreciate, and to create novelty communication/dialogue with peers, teachers, and parents. At the end of this research, he found out that most parents were enthusiastic to provide multiple information technology reading materials for their children (Parish, 2013; Wolfe, 2010; Mol, 2009) for the advancing for correlating the pictures and comprehending the stories

provided in these stories (Heisey & Kucan, 2010)[39]. For the reason that parent-child shared reading in foreign research (Wohlsend, 2011)[40] indicate the positive effect on children's learning, there seems to be a shortage of research on the factors that determine effective parent-child shared reading in Taiwan. Hence, the purpose of this research is to identify the characteristics of parent-child shared reading in preschool and at home and hopefully, to provide recommendations for Taiwan preschool institutes to advance parent-child interactive reading.

3. Research Design

For the purpose of this study, during 2012 June to 2013 June, ten pairs of mother-child groups were selected from the preschool the researcher's daughter study in for 2 years. The ten mothers have the same characteristics, including their love to read stories for their children at home, they are willing to contribute their time and efforts in reading stories for children and have role play activities in preschool, 6 of them have full or part time work, and 4 of them don't have to work. With parents' agreement, parent-child shared reading aesthetic wordless storybook in preschool and at home was adopted for this study. For some parents need to work, they take turns to read story books for children in preschool during the morning and the evening picking up children period. While at home, parents arrange at least 4-times parent-child shared reading time during a week, and each time for at least one story book, in accordance with children needs and interests. Interviews with parents, observations and video-taping for parent-child shared reading in preschool and at school were always used to collect qualitative data to determine the qualities and the characteristics of their interactive sessions.

4. Data Analysis

In process of qualitative research, observation records, interview records, children's book borrowing record, children's reading related files, and role play data on video and audio images were analyzed. These aesthetic abilities (exploration and awareness, express and creativity, and critical criticize and response and appreciation) of the child will be analyzed with the standard offered from Xi-jian (2005)[41]. The observation data would also be discussed with parents to see the progress of children's aesthetic abilities, to be regarded as either poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent. Further, we consulted data analysis steps from Mol, Bus, & de Jong (2009)[7] include "Data Reading", "Data Selection", "Data Presentation", and "Data Analysis Procedures", and completed data analysis and integration. Therefore, the researcher timely re-read the collected data based on the suggestions above, and organized, generalized, and classified it to form temporary claims. Then, research data were further reviewed, modified, and tested to establish

research system and framework, presenting research implication and results.

5. Results

In accordance with the data analysis, the following items are elaborated for the results.

- A. The re-arranging warm reading environment and atmosphere can strengthen children's reading motivation. Children's active exploration and reading behaviors and motivation are enhanced as well, if we provide a place for children to contact with books anytime, their love for reading will be fostered. The establishment and change of reading environment can rouse children's attention and mobile power for the reading materials, for example, the shelves' height so that children can not only contact with books more easily, the mental distance between children and books can be shorter. By this approach, not only their personal feelings can be expressed, their confidence and sense of achievement can also be enhanced. Therefore, the physical environment within class reading environment can be positive on children reading.
- B. Role Play Raise Children's Reading Intention. With parents' assistance in organizing children role play some read story books, children are getting familiar with peers; their social interpersonal relationship, their aesthetic ability, creating and expressing ability are getting better. Most important of all, they fall in love with actively sharing and reading books. In accordance with preschool educators, it is also found that the browse frequency of classroom books is becoming very high, and children would read to and fro and talk about the story. As a result, it is verified that role play, aesthetic cultivation, and reading habit are positively influenced.
- C. Diversified Interactive Materials Make Children Enjoy in Reading. In respect with the diverse materials adopted in parent-child shared reading, including toys, dolls, animal puppets, drawing tools, blocks, music, computer-media, and information technology integrated into reading program, all contribute in making reading more joyful, interesting, and love to read. Not only parents have more ideas in sharing stories, but also children can creatively and actively respond parents back for what they see, read, learn from the interaction with multiple materials through parent-child interactive stories. By means of providing media tools in the reading area for children to express or present what they think, we can understand the type of books children like, raise their motivation and interest to explore and enlighten the world of books, and display the creative works made by children after reading a book.

- D. Aspects of parents adopting parent-child shared reading strategies were elaborated as follows. A. Parents' active responsiveness for children's behavior and expression is highly recommended. B. Body language, facial expression, and oral praise are necessary strategies during reading process to arouse children's interests and needs. C. Open-ended questions and situational hypotheses are great for keeping children's focus on books. D. Parents need to design developmentally appropriate strategy for their children, for the experienced children, parents need to use more extra-textual dialogue, examples and verbal communication to combine storybooks with children's daily life experience; while for those less-experienced children, parents need to use more scaffolding and praise to assist children recognize the knowledge, the image of the objects and items from story books.

To conclude, setting up class reading environment, role play, parents' quality accompany, diverse interactive material, and developmentally appropriate strategies all lead to successful parent-child interactions. In addition, the child was exposed to a variety of text materials and that seems to be the main reason why the child has developed the ability to be creative and the courage to interact actively with its peers. In brief, the results indicate that through effective instructional methods the child has learnt to creativity, awareness and responsiveness in aesthetic studies.

6. Conclusions

In this study, the provision of parent intervention in the reading process has assisted the child to develop better understanding of aesthetic cultivation and reading ability. In this regard, it is possible to regard the parent-child shared reading a superior instruction method for pre-school teaching environment (Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009)[7]. Moreover, the mother's investment in the child learning and ensuring that the child had understood various concepts in the picture story books helped the child to develop awareness and generate an imaginative mind, abilities that are core to aesthetic learning in children during their early age. At this point, it is possible to draw a direct relationship between the effectiveness of learning and the time dedicated to coaching and provision of motivation during the session shared between a parent and a child. In essence, the amount of the time dedicated to scaffolding is directly proportional to the knowledge acquired by the child with any interactive session.

With the suggestion that the need for setting up aesthetic reading environment, appropriate material, active responsiveness is necessary, parents need to be in the same pace with the children's learning development pace. While the child is excited about learning new concepts, the parents need to provide motivation and appreciation. For example,

when the child demonstrates her creativity or even ability to remember various stories that they have encountered before, parents need to give appropriate responsiveness (Willett, Robinson & Marsh, 2009; Wilson, 2010)[42][43]. Further, to achieve effective communication, it is recommendable to provide a healthy environment to allow the child to interact freely and openly with their parents (Biemiller & Boote, 2006)[23]. Boosting the communication through enhancement of social interaction will help the child to develop an open relationship with their parent, a critical aspect of aesthetic learning in preschool education.

Finally, this research points out that there is more value in quality rather than the quantity of parent-child shared reading arrangement. To achieve this effect, there is need to create a conducive learning environment, to allow the child to relate their studies with their own life experiences and keep the interactive sessions between parents and children going on and on. The success of the aesthetic leaning does not count on the number of books that a child has come across but the amount weight put on the interpretation of each message conveyed in the parent-child shared reading stories. This will boost children's awareness, understanding and development of aesthetic skills that are important in early childhood learning and play.

7. Recommendations

One finding of this study is that parental guidance in early childhood development is a critical aspect in the child's learning. According to the theories of scaffolding, there is a need for intensive parental coaching within parent-child reading sessions to enhance a child's learning abilities in the preschool stages, especially from the perspective of scaffolding strategies in developing the child's learning skills (Belland, Brian, Glazewski, Krista, and Richardson, 2008; Wohlwend, 2011)[29][40]. Lastly, there is a need to lay more emphasis on the quality of learning rather than the quantity of learning in parent-child shared wordless book reading (Parish-Morris, Mahajan, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Collins, 2013; Kickinson, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010)[44][45]. While it is necessary for a parent to provide a wide range of texts to their children, it is their obligation to ensure that each of these materials are understood and that they contributed to the child's aesthetic experiences. One way to enhance understanding is providing creative materials to make the learning experience more exciting. Psychologists suggest that a child will develop keen interests in things that interest them and that these things occupy the greater part of their mind (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2012; Lonigan, & Shanahan, 2010; Machado, 2015)[28][46][47]. Also, the parents should invest more time on parent-child shared book reading to ensure that the children become more aware and responsive of the material they read. Consequently, they will develop a better visualization of the images they see and their ability to read, write and draw these images will be enhanced.

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