

Spring 5-15-2017

Using Read Alouds to Support a Pre-Kindergarten Student's Emergent Literacy Skills

Kaitlin Dennis
kdenn1@brockport.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

To learn more about our programs visit: <http://www.brockport.edu/ehd/>

Recommended Citation

Dennis, Kaitlin, "Using Read Alouds to Support a Pre-Kindergarten Student's Emergent Literacy Skills" (2017). *Education and Human Development Master's Theses*. 758.
http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/758

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Education and Human Development at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education and Human Development Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Using Read Alouds to Support a Pre-Kindergarten Student's Emergent Literacy

By

Kaitlin T.A. Dennis

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education of The College at Brockport, State
University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Literacy Education

May 15, 2017

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Abstract

This research explores how read alouds may support a Pre-Kindergarten student's emergent literacy skills. The purpose of this research is to see whether or not read alouds and teacher/student interactions can improve the emergent literacy skills of the child. Data were collected for this study over a period of 6 weeks using informal field notes, observations, video and audio recordings and student data from PALS assessment. Data were analyzed for how the student's emergent literacy skills changed and how the student interacted with the read alouds.

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 4

 Problem Statement..... 5

 Significance of Problem 5

 Rationale 6

 Purpose 7

 Research Question..... 8

Literature Review 8

 Social Constructivism..... 9

 Emergent Literacy..... 12

 Read Alouds 13

Application and Evaluation 15

 Methodology..... 15

 Participants 15

 Setting 16

 Positionality 17

 Methods of Data Collection..... 17

 Procedures of Study..... 19

Analysis..... 21

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Analysis 21

Finding One 22

Finding Two..... 24

Finding Three 27

Finding Four 30

Conclusions and Limitations 32

 Summary of Findings 32

 Conclusion One 33

 Implication One..... 33

 Conclusion Two 34

 Implication Two 35

 Conclusion Three 36

 Implication Three 37

 Limitations 37

 Research Suggestions 38

 Overall Significance 38

References..... 39

Appendix..... 41

Introduction

“Miss Kate! Miss Kate! Look what I brought!” This was our first visit together and the excitement that Sarah had was remarkable. She had no interest for the cartoons that were on the TV, or her favorite cat, Anna, who was running around wanting to play. Instead, she was impatient with excitement to show me the brand new book that she had in her book-bag. For the next ten minutes, Sarah sat next to me and showed me the entire book. “Isn’t it big? Look this is the Mickey story”, she pointed to the pictures and continued to tell me about the story. Sarah then proceeded to flip through the rest of the book, showing me how many stories were in it. “This one is about Jake! He has to beat the bad guys and Captain Hook. There’s Peter Pan! He’s going to help Jake.”

Right from the beginning, I could see that Sarah had a love for books and reading, especially for only being 4 years old. As I continued to observe Sarah interacting with her book, I began to notice that she was showing strong knowledge of print concepts. She knew the proper way to turn the pages, she knew how to look at the pictures for information, and she knew which way to read the words. I started to wonder, what else she could learn from me reading books aloud to her?

As I researched this idea, I noticed that reading aloud to Pre-Kindergarten students has a variety of benefits. McVicker suggests that students’ emergent literacy skills are highly influenced when we begin reading to them at an early age (2007). This stuck out to me because I know what Sarah has experienced before entering Pre-K. The teacher who had Sarah before rarely read aloud to her class. If she did read to them, it was not captivating for their interests and they were not gaining anything from it. It was easy to see this because students were not able to stay focused and could not follow along with what was being read to them. Therefore, I wanted to see how read aloud practices with my Pre-Kindergarten student would benefit her emergent literacy, but I also wanted to track her progress. With all of the research that I read to back up my idea, I wanted to see if reading aloud to Sarah could truly

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

support her emergent literacy skills. If reading to my student was successful, I could expect much higher scores on her literacy assessments – showing that she is prepared for Kindergarten.

I also wanted to see how Sarah interacted with books as well as myself during our read alouds. Would she ask questions to make meaning? Would she be engaged or make personal connections to the text? Would she interact correctly with books on her own time after our read alouds? All of these questions would give me the answer as to how or if Sarah interacts during read alouds.

Topic and Research Problem

Pre-Kindergarten is a great time to start supporting the development of emergent literacy skills in students. However, there may be a misconception, on the part of parents, teachers, and/or outsiders, that Pre-K is more about play than learning. Therefore, many students may be lacking in certain skills because they have had no past exposure. Using read alouds has shown to be extremely beneficial to the development of emergent literacy skills. Zucker, Justice, and Piasta state, “reading aloud to children is an important means for supporting early literacy and language development” (2009, p. 376).

Educators may find it hard to set aside the time to read aloud to their students every day, but given the positive research behind it, children should be read to daily. Students need the exposure to literacy skills that books can provide because it is a positive and fun way for them to grow as emergent learners. Therefore, my study focused on how reading aloud to children could affect their emergent literacy growth throughout their Pre-K journey.

In this case study, I researched and observed how much a single, Pre-Kindergarten student could benefit from read alouds. I presented my participant with plenty of teachable moments that presented themselves during these read alouds, such as letter recognition, letter sounds, and print concepts for

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

further development. I then observed and analyzed how much progress my student made throughout this journey and what it may be indicating for her future as a literacy learner. I also observed any outside interactions she had with emergent literacy during our sessions.

Rationale

According to Sanacore (2012), reading is one of the most important and powerful literacy activities that children participate in. He states that reading aloud to children is extremely vital for their growth and skills development in reading. I wanted to make sure that my student was provided with exposure to read alouds for this very reason. The read alouds also benefit emergent literacy skills of Pre-Kindergarten students. Elster states that children “imitate adult reading” after read alouds (1994, p. 27). He also suggests, “They (students) pick up reading-like behaviors and story language after adults read aloud to them. We can see the beginnings of emergent reading when children participate in adult read alouds” (1994, p. 27). Therefore, I wanted to observe how my student interacted with literacy and books on her own, after I read aloud to her. Did she pretend read to herself? Did she perform a read aloud to someone or something? Did she point to letters or pictures like those that I did when modeling? All of these questions were vital when thinking about how the child was developing her emergent literacy skills through these read aloud sessions.

With the research showing that read alouds do in fact support emergent literacy in young children, I wanted my study to explore this idea by using my former Pre-Kindergarten student. When it comes to reading aloud to children, McVicker explains the importance of listening to the responses that children give you (2007). She goes on to say that a child’s response to read alouds progresses and becomes more complex as he/she gets older and as he/she begins to take part in a higher-level, critical thinking (McVicker, 2007). Therefore, a big part of my study focused on how Sarah responded when I

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

read to her. Was she thinking about the text? Was she making inferences? Was she making connections? Alternatively, was she completely off topic? I wanted to look at these responses as a way to see how a Pre-K student might interact with the text, others, and myself in order to support her emergent literacy learning.

Throughout this study, my student had the opportunity to practice literacy hands-on. She was able to observe my model reading, as well as practice reading on her own. She was able to dive deeper into her reading and grow as an emergent literacy learner. Sarah had opportunities to explore texts on her own, which helped her to discover her interests when reading. She was also able to explore and interact with a variety of other emergent literacy activities, if she wished to. Books, paper, pencils, ABC blocks and cards; all of this was made available to her once our read alouds are complete. She had the complete power to do what she wished with those items as I observed how she interacted with the materials in regard to her emergent literacy skills. All of these actions were vital when trying to learn more about how read alouds could support this child's emergent literacy skills.

Purpose

The purpose of my study was to support my Pre-Kindergarten student by exposing her to read alouds filled with opportunities to develop her emergent literacy skills. According to Sanacore, reading books aloud to children is "one of the most powerful literacy events" where students can interact with and learn from the text (2006, p. 34). Therefore, implementing read alouds into the learning process could be extremely beneficial for the emergent literacy development in my student. Therefore, during my study, I wanted to expose my student to a variety of books that satisfied both educational purposes as well as her interests as a reader. I needed to make sure that these sessions were interactive and engaging for my student so that she could benefit tremendously from the sessions.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

When interacting with read alouds, Elster states that children learn how to make meaning from print, learn about story structure, understand book language, make personal connections, grow as readers, and become more confident in their reading knowledge (1994). These benefits alone are part of the reason that I wanted to expose my student to literacy rich read alouds where she could interact with the text and others to build her skills. The purpose of this study was to provide Sarah with a variety of texts and literacy rich learning experiences so that she could build her emergent literacy skills. I wanted to model great reading for her but I also wanted to point out teachable moments that could help her develop those skills. Such as pointing out letters or making the letter sounds as I read. All of these tiny actions were going to work together during our read alouds to help her develop her emergent literacy beyond what it currently was.

I wanted to take the research that I had found surrounding read alouds and emergent literacy skills with pre-k students, and find out if they did in fact help promote literacy learning. If my study proved positive, maybe future students will have the exposure to read alouds that they need, prior to entering my classroom. I also wanted this study to answer my research questions:

1. How might read alouds help develop emergent literacy skills in a Pre-Kindergarten student?
2. How might a Pre-Kindergarten student interact during these read alouds?

Review of Literature

The literature review below highlights key points surrounding read alouds and how they can support emergent literacy skills in a Pre-K student. It also summarizes how interactions with the text and others can further support literacy growth through the lens of social constructivism. The review also dives into why emergent literacy is so crucial for student development and how read alouds can support those necessary skills.

Social Constructivism

When you think about read alouds, you think about the social interactions that take place. The teacher reads and models for the students, the students interact, make connections with the text, and may even interact with each other or their teacher to deepen their understandings of the text.

According to Elster, “when sharing books, adults and children often go beyond the text as printed” (1994, p 28). This means that there are vital conversations that take place before, during, and even after read alouds that can help children develop their understandings and literacy skills. These teachable moments took place during the read aloud sessions in this study.

Social nature of learning

When it comes to the idea of social interactions, Vygotsky was a vital contributor. He stated the idea that social interactions were the key item to creating knowledge of a topic or subject (1978).

According to Vygotsky, the learning process and the development of a child are interrelated and they begin from the day the child is born; not when they enter school (1978). Therefore, providing my student with read aloud experiences and interactions was extremely beneficial due to her young age and the fact that she had not yet entered a school system. Just because she was not in school, did not mean that she could not learn, develop, or benefit from the read alouds sessions, according to the ideas of Vygotsky.

Vygotsky also created the idea of “actual development level” and the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD). He stated that the actual development level of a child was what the child could do or perform on his/her own without the additional help or support of another person (Vygotsky, 1978). For my participant, her actual development level contained simple knowledge of letters and letter sounds, basic understandings of print concepts, and the ability to write her own name (without correct formation or sizing). Sarah was also able to make connections to text on her own – whether it was to

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

another text or a personal connection. Sarah knew how to communicate her confusions and understandings with others and was not afraid to share her own opinions on texts. Sarah was well informed on how a book works. She was aware that there is a story to be told and she paid attention to what that story may be. Her book handling was a skill she could perform with no support from an adult or additional peer. She had a lot of confidence and was more than happy to show it off. The Zone of Proximal Development is then what a child can do or perform with the support or guidance of a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). For my participant, her ZPD included writing letters with support, reading words with guidance and help, using correct letter format and sizing when writing her name, and receiving answers from questions that she may have had. Sarah needed assistance when thinking about story structure. She knew that a story was being told in texts but she was unaware that there is a beginning, middle, and end that work together to create that story. With teacher support she was able to look back in the text and put the pieces together in order to understand the story on a deeper level. Sarah also, sometimes, needed assistance with focus. When reading, Sarah would become inattentive and needed a reminder to stay on task to listen to the story but it only took a small amount of support. Once she was reminded, Sarah was able to re-focus fairly quickly.

Vygotsky's theory was that, through collaboration with an experienced adult as well as independent problem-solving, a child would be able to internalize new concepts and skills in order to perform them on his/her own in their actual development levels (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). This idea is known as scaffolding which means that an adult helps a child to internalize new skills and concepts by working with them until they are able to perform them independently (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). This is what I hoped to do with Sarah as we worked through our read alouds. I wanted her to be able to perform unknown concepts and skills, from her ZPD, on her own by the end of our study in order to add said skills and concepts to her actual development range.

Role of language in learning

When it comes to learning, the role of language and communication are very crucial. According to Allwright, the interactions that present themselves through language are vital to a child learning (1984). The social aspect of language in learning is engaging, which helps students retain and recall new knowledge (Scarino, 2009). Language is a meaning-making practice that helps students interpret what they are learning (Scarino, 2009). Therefore, when I interacted with Sarah, I wanted to make sure that the conversations between us were meaningful, as well as engaging. I wanted her to take-away valuable communication skills that she could use as she developed as a reader; this will help her when she begins asking more higher level thinking questions or when she has to communicate her ideas to a peer or adult. However, even though I wanted to have communication between both of us, I did want to encourage Sarah to do more of the talking. Allwright mentions how we, as a society, have decreased the amount of teacher talk in classrooms and how we have encouraged an increase in student talk instead (1984). This has shown to have its benefits when it comes to students communicating their understandings and confusions (Allwright, 1984).

When looking at the read aloud aspect, Elster suggests that children imitate what the adult does while reading (1994). Children can imitate reading behaviors that the adult portrays or models during the read aloud, and Elster states that you can begin to see children becoming independent emergent readers (1994). This means that my participant may or may not have tried to imitate my reading on her own when interacting with other books outside of our sessions. She may have also imitated the way I read to her by reading to her family members, friends, or even stuffed animals. According to Vygotsky, children acquire “an entire repository of skills” when they imitate what adults do (1978, p 37). This tells me that Sarah’s emergent literacy skills could improve through her imitations of our sessions and that our social interactions were going to play a crucial part to her development.

Emergent Literacy

What is it?

“Emergent literacy refers to the developmental precursors of formal reading that have their origins early in the life of a child” (Neuman & Dickinson, 2003, p 11). In shorter terms, emergent literacy is the beginning of literacy learning for a child; this can involve anything from pretend reading to knowing the ABCs. It is the time where a child’s print knowledge begins to develop before they can begin conventional reading on their own (Lysaker, Shaw, & Alicia, 2016). In this study, I wanted to research whether or not my participant’s emergent literacy skills would improve throughout our read aloud sessions. According to Neuman and Dickinson, children who have more exposure to reading, reading on their own or being read to, obtain more knowledge than those who have limited exposure (2003). Therefore, if the research is correct my student’s literacy skills should have become more developed over time as I read to her and as she explored texts on her own.

The Emergent Literacy perspective

What is included?

When looking at emergent literacy, there is evidence that shows a link between conventional literacy skills and the learnings of oral language, phonological awareness and print awareness (Neuman & Dickinson, 2003). This means that these three emergent literacy stepping-stones are crucial in the development of everyday literacy components. Therefore, during our read aloud sessions, I focused my teachable moments on aspects concerning print, phonological awareness, and oral language (hers and mine). Oral language is a key factor in emergent literacy. McVicker suggests that the reader encourages his or her audience (the students) to speak up and talk during read alouds (2007). This is where my audio and video recordings came into play in order to encourage the role of language and communication during our sessions. I was able to record all authentic responses, questions, and

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

dialogue that occurred between Sarah and me in order to understand what she was taking away from the readings. Was she hearing the letter sounds? Was she noticing how to operate a book or how to change her voice when reading? These were all very important things to consider when I began to analyze my data.

When it comes to the literacy tasks outside of our read alouds, Neuman and Dickinson talk about the importance of print awareness and emergent writing (2003). They advocate for print exploration and suggest that “invented spelling, pretend writing, and writing their name” are connected to emergent reading (2003, p. 16). According to Neuman and Dickinson, these three emergent writing tasks are linked to how well a child can recognize letters, and in turn, recognize letter sounds (2003). Therefore, during our read alouds, I provided Sarah with additional time to explore other emergent literacy tasks such as writing, pretend reading, and practice with writing her name, and so on. These tasks helped further develop her knowledge of emergent literacy, which may have helped her perform higher on her assessments. According to McVicker, “Reading aloud to children and extending books through interactions and activities hold huge educational benefits for young children” (2007, p. 22). Hence why provided Sarah with extra time to explore with these expansions.

Read Alouds

Read alouds are exactly what they sound like. Someone who is a knowledgeable reader selects a text (with or without the audience) and reads it aloud to an individual or group of participants. In this study, I looked at Sarah’s emergent literacy skills. These skills included, but were are not limited to, letter recognition, concepts about print, and letter/sound relationships. Research (e.g., Sanacore, 2012) has shown that the use of read alouds can greatly support a student’s emergent literacy skills, which is why I wanted to utilize read alouds in this study.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

According to Sanacore (2012), reading is one of the most important and powerful literacy activities that children participate in. He states that reading aloud to children is extremely vital for their growth and skills development in reading (Sanacore, 2012). I wanted to make sure that my student was provided with exposure to read alouds for this very reason. The read alouds also benefit their emergent literacy skills. Elster states that children “imitate adult reading” after read alouds (1994, p. 27). He also suggests, “They (students) pick up reading-like behaviors and story language after adults read aloud to them. We can see the beginnings of emergent reading when children participate in adult read alouds” (1994, p. 27). In short, read alouds tie together both the emergent literacy and the social constructivist aspects of this study. Sarah took part in read alouds where she and I communicated with one another and where she was able to explore and practice her literacy skills.

With the research showing that read alouds do in fact support emergent literacy in young children, I wanted to explore this idea by working with a Pre-Kindergarten student. When it comes to reading aloud to children, McVicker explains the importance of listening to the responses that children give you (2007). She goes on to say that a child’s response to read alouds progresses and becomes more complex as they get older and as they begin to take part in a higher-level, critical thinking (McVicker, 2007). Therefore, a big part of my study also focused on how my student responded when I read to her. Was she thinking about the text? Was she making inferences? Was she making connections? Alternatively, was she completely off topic? I wanted to look at these responses as a way to see how the Pre-K student was interacting with the text and myself in order to support their emergent literacy learning. All of these questions could be answered through the social interactions that took place during our sessions.

Conclusion

Supported by the social ideas of Vygotsky, read alouds are a great starting point when trying to develop a child's emergent literacy skills. Through rich conversations and critical thinking questions, a student can improve his or her literacy skills through read alouds. Imitation and practice with literacy are key factors that children take part in when trying to further their learning in literacy. When social aspects, internalization, and read alouds are all working together, there tends to be room for improvement with emergent literacy skills. I was fascinated to see how Sarah did throughout this study and what my results could tell me in regards to read alouds supporting emergent literacy.

Methodology

My study focused on using read alouds in order to support my Pre-K student's emergent literacy skills. I collected data for six weeks, 1-2 times a week, using a variety of different assessments, discussions, and observations. I also used audio and video recordings in order to capture authentic interactions between the student and myself, and the student and the text. I wanted to understand how read alouds might support Sarah's emergent literacy and how she could develop those skills as she continued her journey as a learner.

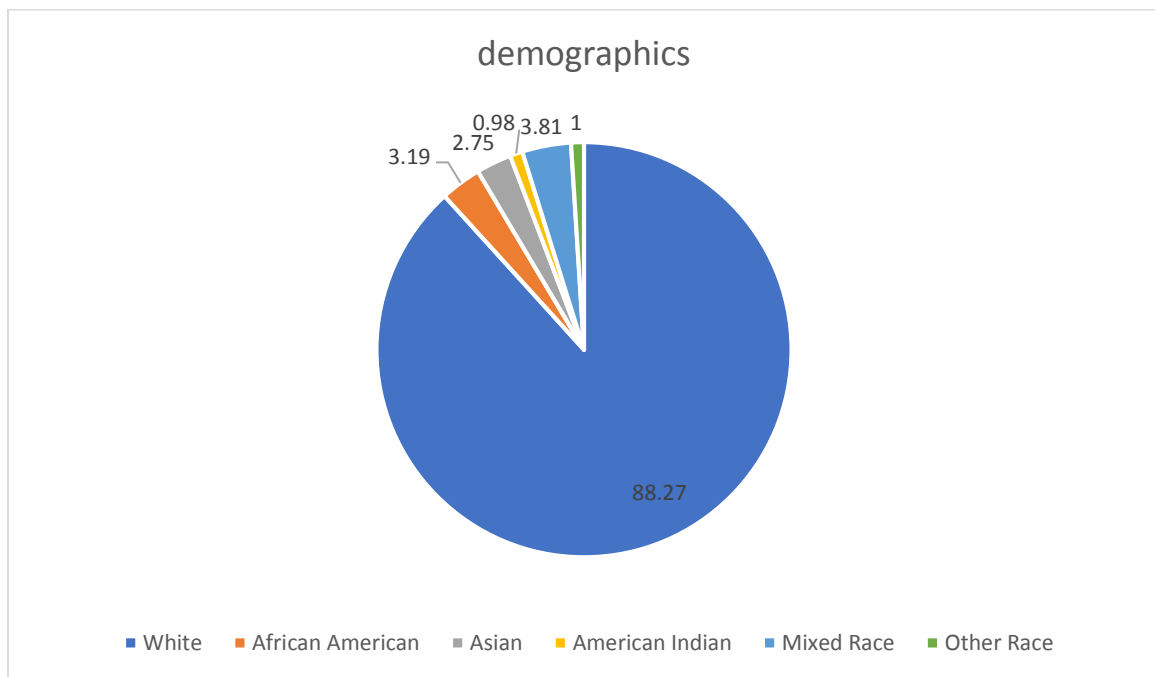
Participants and Setting

The child I worked with for this study was selected due to convenience because I saw her on a weekly basis. Sarah is a 4-year-old, Caucasian female who speaks English as her first language. Prior to this study, Sarah took part in the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment and

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

scored just below benchmark. Sarah is a fun loving little girl with a bubbly personality and a love for learning.

Throughout this study, Sarah and I gathered at my house for our sessions to take place. Sarah had visited multiple times so she was very comfortable in my home. This location had a few distractions; those being two cats and a playground right outside. During this study, Sarah and I performed all of our sessions in my living room, either while sitting on the floor or while sitting on the couch. From time to time, Sarah would become distracted with the TV in the room or the cats (if they walked into the room while we were reading). However, Sarah did pay more attention to our sessions than she did the outside distractions. Her living community, outside of our session location, is represented in the chart below with a population of 8,377 people. Sarah had just moved into a new home before this study, therefore the community area and surroundings were all new to her.



In Sarah's community, the median age is 22 years old, the male to female ratio is .9:1, 29 percent of the population is married, 92 percent speak English and 3 percent speak Spanish.

Positionality

For the past two years, I have held two positions as a Pre-Kindergarten teacher; one in a daycare setting and one in a school district. Thus, I have had experience with the age group presented in my study. Additionally, I am a Caucasian female, English is my first language, I am in my early twenties, and I am completing my Master's in B-12 Literacy education at SUNY Brockport. I am the first to attend and graduate from college on both sides of my family. My mother is a nurse's aide at a Veterans hospital and my father works in construction. My brother is attending college for diesel mechanics and my sister is a pastry chef in New Orleans.

I graduated from The College at Brockport with a Bachelor's Degree in Health Science and received certification in Childhood Education ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade. I also received my Special Education Certification for grades 1-6. I am currently a second year teacher working in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom in Rochester, NY.

I believe that all students should be provided with a variety of opportunities to grow in their learning because not all students can benefit from one way of teaching. I believe it is my job to make sure each student receives some sort of benefit from the instructional practices that he or she takes part in in my classroom.

Methods of Data Collection

As the participant observer in this study, I wanted to look at how read alouds could support emergent literacy development in my Pre-K student. Sarah had already been assessed for her literacy

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

performance (data will be used for comparing), and the next formal assessments (Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening - PALS) will take place in February and June. The Pre-K PALS assessment was written manually, using pencil and the assessment forms. PALS was proctored during free-play time so that Sarah did not miss any educational tasks (read alouds) and activities or family obligations. PALS was done one-on-one with Sarah and myself to decrease outside distractions. Sarah was assessed as I recorded her responses. Once the assessments were complete, I kept original documents and photocopies in a binder, stored away in my locked office at home so that I had access to them outside of sessions. A pseudonym was assigned to the child and was written in the assessment copies in order to protect her identity.

Field observations also took place weekly to record student interactions with books and emergent literacy (letters, letter sounds, concepts of print, etc.). All field notes were done informally. I recorded what I saw as Sarah interacted during read alouds, as well as how she interacted with literacy outside of the read aloud sessions (ex: looking at books, using ABC blocks during play time, etc.). These notes were kept with the assessment form copies, locked up in my home office where only I had access to them.

Audio recordings were also used in this study in order to capture dialogue during informal conversations as well as the read aloud sessions. Recordings were taken on my password-protected phone so that only I had access to them. Audio recordings were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document on my laptop, which was protected by a password. Every week after listening to the recordings, I transcribed them into the Word document and deleted all audio files from the recording device. The transcribed audio files will be deleted three years after the completion of the study, as is protocol.

Video recordings were also used in order to capture authentic interactions that Sarah had with emergent literacy and to obtain authentic dialogue. Videos were recorded during read aloud sessions,

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

and free play. Videos were taken on my password-protected phone, that only I had access to, and was used for analysis. Videos were deleted within 3 days of recording. Any dialogue or notable actions were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document on my laptop, which was password protected. Transcribed video files will be deleted three years after completion of the study, as is protocol.

I also made copies of all formal assessment results so that I had them as reference when searching for learning patterns and progress. I also used a coding system to highlight any emergent literacy skills that Sarah may have be showing (ex: letter recognition, letter/sound relationships, and concepts about print).

Sarah was already taking part in daily read alouds during her morning meetings at school so I did not have to explain what they were. She was extremely familiar with them. I did however, explain to Sarah that our weekly read alouds were helping us to learn and that she was now going to be a part of my research that she agreed to take part in.

Procedures

My student was already taking part in morning read alouds at her school and had already been assessed for the beginning of the school year. I began my study in February 2017 and collected data for 6 weeks, 2-3 times a week. Sessions took place in my home after 6pm when the participant was out of school.

Informed consent forms were sent home to the parents of the student participant. The form required a signature if the parent wished for their child to participate. Any questions that parents may have had were answered prior to the consent form being signed. Once informed consent was received from the parent(s), I met with the student participant individually (with a witness present) and read her

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

the letter of assent. I then answered any questions that she had and asked her if she would like to participate. Since she was only 4 years old, I did not need to obtain her signature.

Audio Recordings

I used audio recordings when conversing with the child informally in order to capture her responses to our read alouds. These recordings were done on my password-protected phone so that only I had access to them. Audio recordings were manually transcribed within three days of being recorded and then removed from my phone. Any dialogue or notable actions were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document on my laptop, which was password protected.

Video Recordings

Video recordings were used when observing the student and how she interacted when I read to her as well as how she interacted with other literacy rich activities. Videos were used to capture her authentic interactions with myself and the texts. Video recordings were used for analysis and removed within 3 days. Transcribed video files will be deleted three years after completion of the study, as is protocol.

Field Notes

I also took field notes informally using my double entry form. I recorded what I saw as the child interacted during read alouds, as well as how she interacted with literacy outside of the read aloud sessions (ex: looking at books, using ABC blocks during play time, etc.). These notes were kept with the assessment forms, locked up in my home office where only I could access them.

Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening

The PALs assessment was written manually, using pencil and the assessment form and was done in February to assess literacy growth. Once the assessments were complete, I kept original documents

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

and photocopies in a binder so that I could keep them stored away in my locked office at home. This gave me access to them outside of our sessions. I also used a coding system to highlight any emergent literacy skills that Sarah was showing (ex: letter recognition, letter/sound relationships, and concepts about print).

Due to the participant being a minor, I took extra steps to ensure that she was protected from excessive risk, coercion, or undue influence while taking part in this study. I began this by seeking informed consent from the participant's parents. The participant was also asked for the assent to take part in this study. I answered any questions that either the parents or the participant had about the study before consent or assent were given.

Over the course of this study I also used triangulation in order to constantly compare my data to multiple research sources in order to validate my findings and results. This allowed me to see whether or not read alouds did in fact help improve my participant's emergent literacy skills.

Analysis

Prior to this study in, mid-September 2016, I proctored the Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment with Sarah to get her baseline score for the beginning of the school year. During this assessment, I noted that Sarah knew 13 capital letters, 9 lower case letters, 4 letter sounds, 2 rhymes, 3 beginning sounds and 7 print concepts. After collecting data from my sessions with Sarah, I began looking for patterns and themes that I could code and/or compare to her original assessment scores.

While I coded my data, I kept comparing patterns that I saw with the research questions that I was trying to answer. I analyzed my data using a constant comparative method. This means that I

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

constantly looked for patterns that were supported by my research and coded them into findings. This allowed for me to look at all of my information from Sarah and see just how she was learning and what process she was going through (Shagoury, & Hubbard, 2012).

During this process, I categorized my data into four separate findings. Those findings included (1) Read alouds can improve alphabet knowledge; (2) Read alouds can promote a positive attitude on reading; (3) Read alouds can improve print concepts; and (4) Read alouds can promote an interest in writing.

Finding 1: Read alouds can improve alphabet knowledge

At the very beginning of this study, I performed the Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment with Sarah again. Within this assessment there is a piece on alphabetic knowledge, both upper case and lower case letters. In February, Sarah knew 13 upper case letters, and 9 lower case letters. On March 11th, during our 4th session, I proctored the assessment with Sarah again and saw improvement. This time Sarah knew 23 upper case letters and 17 lower case letters.

Teachable moments. Every time Sarah and I sat down to start our read alouds, I would prepare myself to keep my eyes open for any teachable moments that may arise. For example, during our first session on February 23rd, I read a book about cars to Sarah called “Beep Beep, Vroom Vroom” by Stuart J. Murphy (Murphy & Demaret, 2000). While I was reading, Sarah shouted “Vroom!” and said “that makes my lips tickle”. I took advantage of this situation and asked her if she knew what letter on the page made her lips feel that way. She looked at all of the letters but shook her head no. Therefore, I pointed to the ‘v’ and said /v/. I told her “This is V, can you say V?”. Sarah repeated me and then we moved on. Later in the book, ‘vroom’ showed up again and Sarah shouted “That’s V! Vvv”. I decided to research into this idea of teachable moments and learned that read alouds have become more of a tool

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

for educational purposes compared to simply reading to encourage an interest in books (Barrentine, 1996). This is when I knew that these teachable moments during our sessions were going to help improve her emergent literacy skills.

During our first session on February 23rd, again, Sarah made a self-correction based on a teachable moment a few pages before. While reading the book about cars, Sarah started naming off the colors of the cars. When she saw a yellow car, she pronounced yellow with the /L/ sound instead of /Y/. I asked her what letter “yellow” started with, while pointing at the word and she said ‘L’. I corrected her and said, “That’s a ‘Y’. Let’s try again. Say /Y/ /Y/ Yellow.” Sarah mimicked me and said it correctly before we continued reading. A few pages later Sarah read the page all on her own. When she reached the yellow car, she began to pronounce it with /L/ again but then immediately self-corrected herself and used the /Y/ sound and said “Y! Y-Y-Yellow, the yellow car”. This, again, showed that teachable moments in read alouds can prove to be beneficial for alphabetic knowledge.

When Sarah and I met for our third session on March 4th, she decided to work with letter Legos that were made available to her after our read aloud. While working with the Legos, Sarah looked at all the letters and words and then looked to me for some collaboration. The following transcript shows our interactions:

Sarah: *points to a word on the Lego that she doesn’t know and looks at me for help*

Me: Said

Sarah: Said. *Points at a letter and looks at me for help*

Me: What letter is that?

Sarah: E. (Sarah goes through the rest of the letters) i, nothing, o, uhhhh (shows me the Lego).

Me: U.

Sarah: U (keeps going) uhhh, r?

Me: Y

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Sarah: Y. Like yellow (keeps going) uh a? (self-corrects) E! P, a, o, o, i.

stops after reading all the letters and starts building a tower

From this short interaction, I could see, yet again, that our sessions were promoting an increase in Sarah's alphabetic knowledge. She was able to use her background knowledge of our previous car book session and put it to use when finding the "Y" Lego. This evidence showed itself again when comparing Sarah's letter knowledge on her PALS assessment. In February, Sarah was unable to identify the letter 'Y', however, in March (after we had a couple of sessions) Sarah was able to identify 'Y' without any hesitation.

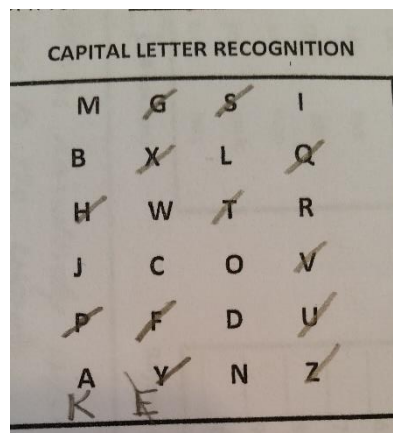


Figure 1a: Feb. Letter Assessment

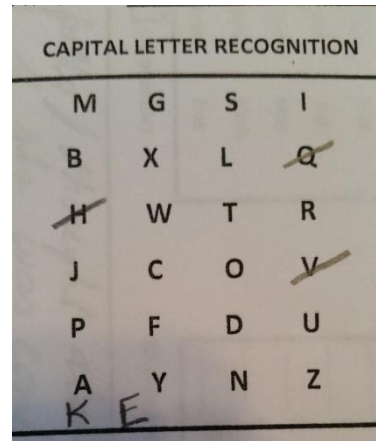


Figure 1b: March Letter Assessment

The benefits of these teachable moments showed when Sarah was assessed for her alphabetic knowledge. She showed an increase each time she was assessed as seen in figures 1a and 1b.

Finding #2: Read alouds can promote a positive attitude toward reading

Throughout this study, I paid close attention to how Sarah reacted and interacted with our read aloud sessions from day one until the very end. Over the course of six weeks, I noticed that Sarah had a

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

very positive attitude toward reading. During our first session, I knew that Sarah enjoyed books and reading, however, over the six weeks, her enjoyment grew even more.

Placement During our first few read aloud sessions, I noticed that Sarah would place herself in front of me instead of sitting next to me. When I asked her why she sat there she told me that that was the way she had to sit at school when her teacher read to her. At first, I thought this was normal because that was how I read to my students as well, but the more I thought about our circumstances, the more I realized it was odd. I wanted our read alouds to be enjoyable and having her sit in front of me felt like I was forcing her to participate. I believe that Sarah felt this way as well, because whenever she sat in front of me, she would become more distracted by her surroundings. She would pay attention more to the cats, or look at the TV more, or simply just space out. I found this very interesting.

As our sessions progressed and Sarah became more familiar and comfortable with them, she started sitting next to me when I read to her. For example, during our third session on March 4th, our interaction went as followed:

Me: Ok Sarah, did you decide what books you want me to read?

Sarah: Yeah! All of these

Sarah put four books in front of me, laughed and then sat down right next to me, leaning a little but on my shoulder

Me: *confused by her change of placement I asked her* Why did you change where you sit?

Sarah: Mommy reads my books at night like this. Now I can see the pictures!

After that, Sarah sat next to me during every single session and I could see that she was more engaged and even happier to be reading with me. She laughed more at the stories, she made more connections and she asked more questions. Unfortunately, there is no research behind this idea. Regardless, these interactions showed me that read aloud sessions can promote a more positive attitude towards reading, especially when children are in a place where they can engage in the story to their highest potential.

Expression of enjoyment Another aspect that showed me how attitude can increase with read alouds was the excitement that Sarah would verbally share over the course of our six weeks together. During our first session on February 23rd, Sarah was excited to read with me and said “Can you read me this one and this one?”. From her words, I could tell that she willingly wanted to participate in read alouds with me and she did not see it as something she was expected or forced to do.

During our second session on February 25th, Sarah brought her very own book to share with me. Her excitement was not only evident in her words but also on her face. She ran into my house with a huge smile on her face and she threw her bookbag on my couch. After opening her bag, she pulled out a large book full of Disney stories and said “Miss Kate, Miss Kate! Look what I brought. Isn’t it big? Look this is the Mickey story!”. She then proceeded to go through the entire book, describing each story to me as she flipped the pages. Her joy and excitement prompted me to use her book for our session that day because I could tell how interested she was in the stories.

Later in the study, during our fifth session on March 18th, Sarah took ten minutes before our session began to look through a book she was interested in. The book was called “The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?” by Mo Willems (Willems, 2012). During her interaction with the book, she began pretend reading and creating a story of her own out loud. While she was reading, she put all of her emotion into the characters and made her own personal comments on the story she was creating. Below is a snapshot of how her interaction went:

Sarah: (looking at the cover page) Oh! He’s got a cookie! (starts flipping pages) I’m looking for my cookie. I losted it. Where did it go?! (said loudly and with a sad expression). Oh! There it is! (excitement in her voice). I’m gonna eat it all by myself. You can’t take my cookie! (said when another character entered the illustrations on the page). Stop stealing my yummy cookie (said when the other character got close to the duck in the picture). Haha he’s funny (said when the other character was illustrated making several silly faces) I don’t think he will get the cookie. It’s not his. (Continued to flip through the pages without reading out loud). Aww! Miss Kate look it. He shared the cookie with the blue duck! (showed me the picture then closed the book and went to look at others).

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Watching Sarah interact with this book made me realize just how interested she is in reading and making up, as well as listening, to stories. Her enthusiasm to look at other books after pretend reading was another example of how her attitude has become more positive towards the idea of reading. After Sarah finished reading her duck book and looking at all of the other books, she and I shared some dialogue that showed me just how much her attitude was growing towards reading (in a positive direction). Our conversation went as followed:

Sarah: I want you to read ALL these stories!

Me: Why's that?

Sarah: Cause I like all of them. I just read the duck one and it was cool. Now you read these ones to me.

Our conversation lasted all of a minute before we began to read but the information that it gave me proved that these read alouds were helping to improve her attitude of reading. She may have always enjoyed it but her love for books was grew stronger over the weeks.

Finding #3: Read alouds can enhance print concepts

Prior to this study, Sarah was assessed on her knowledge of print concepts using the Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. This was the same assessment that was used to determine her alphabetic knowledge. In February, Sarah knew 7 out of 10 print concepts that were tested in the assessment. During our 4th session in March, Sarah increased her print concept knowledge from 8 to 10 items.

Modeling Every time Sarah and I sat down for our read aloud sessions, I would prepare myself on how I was going to model what good reading and book handling looked like. During every session, I would point to the cover of the book and say "The front of the book says...". I would then flip to the back of the

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

book to read the summary and say “The back says that this book is about...”. Sarah would follow my motions and then mimic them when she interacted with books on her own.

While reading to Sarah, because of her placement beside me, I was able to lay the books on the floor and use my finger to point to the words as I read them. I also made sure that I turned the pages carefully so not to skip any. Sarah’s learning of this print concept (page turning) was evident when she looked at books on her own (as seen in figure 2). While reading “Ten Cheepy, Chirpy Chicks” (Tarbett, 2014) after one of our sessions, Sarah accidentally skipped over a page. Her reaction to this was “Oh. I missed one” as she flipped back to the page she had skipped and then continued reading as if nothing had happened. She then proceeded to finish the book and was able to flip the rest of the pages efficiently and correctly, without skipping over anymore.



Figure 2: Page turning

In session six on March 25th, Sarah approached me before our session began and said “I’m the teacher!” She then proceeded to grab her absolute favorite book called “Brown Bear, Brown Bear” by Eric Carle (Martin & Carle, 1996) and sat down beside me on the living room floor. Sarah then turned to the first page and started to read (she recited the text from memory and picture clues) but before she got too far into the text she said “wait!” and turned back to the cover to read the title to me. This

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

showed me that she understood the importance of book covers and titles – two print concepts from her assessment. Sarah then continued to read “Brown Bear, Brown Bear” to me. While she read, she was able to pull the interactive flaps back – showing that she was able to use pictures into order to help her read (the picture under the flap involved the last sentence of each page). As Sarah continued to read, she looked at the pictures in order to tell what animal was being seen next. For example, on page 2 there is a picture of a red bird which caused Sarah to say “Red Bird, Red Bird what do you see?”. She then pulled the flap back and revealed a yellow duck and said “I see a yellow duck looking at me”. This interaction showed me that Sarah knew what pictures to look at and knew how to use them in order to continue her story – identifying pictures is also a print concept from her assessment.

Sarah’s improvement in her knowledge of print concepts was also very evident when comparing her February and March assessments. In February, Sarah knew 7 out of 10 of the concepts tested. The concepts she missed were 1) Points to the start of a sentence; 2) Points to a word; and 3) Points to the space between the words. When Sarah was assessed in March, she was able point to a word after watching my finger pointing during my modeling. Below are her assessment results:

Print and Word Awareness
Fall

+	1. Shows front cover
+	2. Shows back cover
+	3. Points to title
+	4. Points to picture
-	5. Points to start of the sentence
+	6. Demonstrates left to right directionality
+	7. Identifies letter O
-	8. Points to a word
-	9. Points to the space between the words
+	10. Turns the page correctly

Print and Word Awareness Score: **7** (10 possible)

Figure 3a: February 2017 Print awareness assessment from PALS

Print and Word Awareness
Fall

+	1. Shows front cover
+	2. Shows back cover
+	3. Points to title
+	4. Points to picture
-	5. Points to start of the sentence
+	6. Demonstrates left to right directionality
+	7. Identifies letter O
+	8. Points to a word
-	9. Points to the space between the words
+	10. Turns the page correctly

Print and Word Awareness Score: **8** (10 possible)

Figure 3b: March 2017 Print awareness assessment from PALS

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

These results showed me just how valuable read alouds can be when trying to improve a Pre-Kindergarten student's print concepts.

Finding #4: Read alouds can promote an interest in writing

While analyzing my data, I came across a finding that was very unexpected. In our last few sessions, Sarah began to show a great interest in writing after our read alouds. During session 5 on March 18th, Sarah and I chose to read a book called "A Giant Crush" by Gennifer Choldenko (Choldenko & Sweet, 2011). This book was all about a young, male rabbit who was making a special valentine for his crush. Sarah was very engaged throughout the entire read aloud as shown below:

Sarah: (sitting next to me on the floor in the living room) This is for Valentine's! He's making a heart (pointed at the picture). How is it for?

Me: I'm not sure. Maybe his teacher or someone he likes? Let's keep reading to find out! (continued reading with Sarah leaning in)

Sarah: Why is he sad? (looking at picture)

Me: Because those kids made fun of him. That's not very nice, is it?

Sarah: No. Sometimes Stephanie is mean to me at school. It's not nice. Where did his heart go? (noticing the character did not have his Valentine anymore)

Me: Maybe in his bookbag. Let's keep going, maybe we will find out where it went.

Sarah: Everyone has a heart! (looking at a picture of the classroom students at their desks with valentines) He's sad again. Where they mean to him again?

Me: I think he might be nervous about giving his valentine to his crush.

Sarah: Ohhh. (keeps looking at book, eager to find out more) Oh! She's happy! She likes it! They are friends. I like it when my friends share too.

Me: It is nice to share. It makes everyone happy. Now what would you like to do?

Sarah: I want to use the markers...

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Sarah then grabbed markers, a pencil, and paper and began to make her very own valentine, which is seen in figure 4. Here I noticed that she not only made a heart like the main character's valentine, but she also wrote the title on the book on her paper. This told me that read alouds can promote a strong interest in writing that is related to the text.



Figure 4: Writing Sample "A Giant Crush"

Even though some of Sarah's letters could use improvement on formation, and size, she is still performing at an appropriate level for her age. It is also evident that she could make connections to the text and use them toward her new interest in writing.

After noticing this, I decided to take another look at my data and discovered that Sarah also used her new interest in writing for personal joy. In session six on March 25th, Sarah said "I'm the teacher" and started to look at books and then write words on paper – with my assistance. Sarah began asking me to write down words on her paper so that she could then write them on her own. She did this for a solid twenty minutes before asking to read some books together. In figure 5a and 5b you can see some of Sarah's writing samples that she did during session 6.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

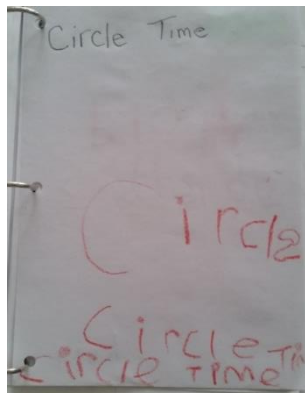


Figure 5a: "Circle Time"

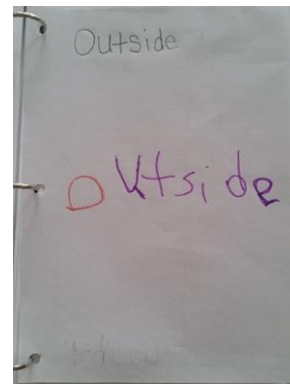


Figure 5b: "Outside"

These were just two examples of many that Sarah created during her twenty-minute writing session.

When I asked why she liked writing so much she told me "I want to write like these books". I

immediately realized that read alouds are not only beneficial for emergent literacy skills like knowing letters or letter sounds or even print concepts. Read alouds can also help improve emergent writing and a positive attitude towards writing. This evidence alone makes me want to produce future research on this idea that read alouds and writing are connected.

Conclusions and Implications

Summary of Findings

During my study, I focused on whether or not read alouds could support the emergent literacy skills of a Pre-Kindergarten student. I also focused on how a Pre-K child may interact during the read alouds as well. In order to create my conclusions and implications, I looked back at my research questions and findings from my study. The research questions that my study focused on were:

- How might read alouds help develop emergent literacy skills in a Pre-Kindergarten student?
- How might a Pre-Kindergarten student interact during these read alouds?

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Over the course of my six-week study with Sarah our read alouds were able to support her knowledge of print concepts and alphabet knowledge. My analysis also showed that read alouds can support and encourage a positive attitude towards reading in a 4-year old. This was seen during our interactions and according to Bus (2002), reading with children is a social and interactive task. Therefore, I focused on my interactions with Sarah in order to find this connection in my data. As the weeks ended, I finally found that read alouds can support and encourage an interest in emergent writing for a pre-k student. As stated by Gay (1976), reading books out loud and writing are linked to each other and if teachers do not read to their students, then they are failing them for when they learn to write. Therefore, I am grateful that Sarah was able to benefit from our sessions in regard to her writing.

Conclusion 1: Reads alouds can improve print concepts in Pre-K students

Prior to this study, I found that teachers should print reference during their read alouds. This meant I would highlight certain print concepts to support my audience such as 1) looking at words, 2) directionality when reading, 3) finger pointing while reading, and so on (Zucker, Ward, & Justice, 2009). Therefore, I focused on these scaffolding techniques when I read with Sarah. This resulted in Sarah showing improvement in her print concept knowledge over the course of our six-week time span together. She was able to follow along with our read alouds and my modeling in order to enhance her print knowledge. During our sessions, I modeled finger pointing as I read and this allowed for Sarah to learn how to identify a word in a text. According to Elster, read alouds are a great way to improve a reader's "knowledge of book language, story structure, and ways of taking meaning from print" (1994, p. 27). This tells me that read alouds can indeed improve a Pre-Kindergarten student's emergent literacy skills in the aspect of print concept knowledge. Saracho and Spodek also claim that read alouds can help to improve a child's understanding of story structure as well as his or her language of stories and reading behavior (2010). This is more evidence to show why Sarah's print knowledge may have increased during our time together.

Implication 1: Teachers should implement teachable moments into read alouds to improve print knowledge

After looking over the research behind read alouds and my analysis, it is evident that teachers need to be implementing teachable moments into their read alouds. When teachers model how to handle a book and their knowledge of print concepts, students may be able to catch on to the behaviors and mimic them in their own independent readings. Zucker, Ward, and Justice stated that, “adults play an essential role in actively mediating children’s attention to print during book reading” (2009, p. 63). Therefore, during our sessions, I modeled how to turn pages, how to point at words as you read, how to point out letters, how to look at the pictures and how to question the text. I also encouraged conversation about print while we read. I would ask Sarah, “where should I start?” or, “which way do I read?”. According to Zucker, Ward, and Justice, this kind of engagement is vital when print referencing because it helps the child internalize awareness (2009). These concepts were then mimicked by Sarah by the end of our six weeks which helped her improve in her print knowledge. Therefore, teachable moments during read alouds could be very beneficial to a child’s print concept knowledge.

Conclusion 2: Read alouds can promote a positive attitude towards reading

In the beginning of my study, Sarah was very formal and engaged during our read alouds meaning that she interacted with our sessions like she would at school. Sarah would sit in front of me and just listen to the texts. However, as our sessions went on, she became more comfortable with our read alouds and her enjoyment and engagement increased greatly. She began to sit next to me and point to the pictures as I read. She asked questions to enhance her understanding of the text, and she began interacting with texts on her own outside of our formal sessions. All of this data told me that read alouds, if done correctly and interactively, can encourage a positive attitude towards reading in a pre-k student. According to Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011), what I found has been seen before; read

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

alouds motivate children to interact with texts independently without being told to do so. Sarah showed this as well when she interacted with books on her own after our read alouds sessions. It showed me that she enjoyed books enough to explore them without it being a requirement.

Elster also weighed in on this idea and claimed that teachers should ask questions during read alouds and encourage their students to ask questions as well (1994). He also stated that children should be given the opportunity to choose their own texts to have read to them during the read alouds to enhance participation and enjoyment (Elster, 1994). All of this considered, I would allow Sarah to choose all but one text that she was interested in to read during our read alouds. The more I did this, the more texts she picked for me to read to her from week to week; showing that her enjoyment was increasing. Therefore, read alouds can support an increase in enjoyment and positive behavior if done supportively and correctly to encourage student interest and enjoyment.

Implication 2: Teachers should encourage interest/choice and engagement into their read alouds

When students are given the opportunity to actively participate in these read alouds, their enjoyment, engagement, and behaviors may increase positively. Teachers need to make their read aloud sessions interactive by allowing students to ask questions, point to pictures, or even to turn the pages themselves. Any positive interaction between the student and the text can encourage a positive attitude toward reading. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to actively participate in the read alouds either by allowing them to select the text or for them to be able to ask questions and make personal connections of their own; all meaning making strategies.

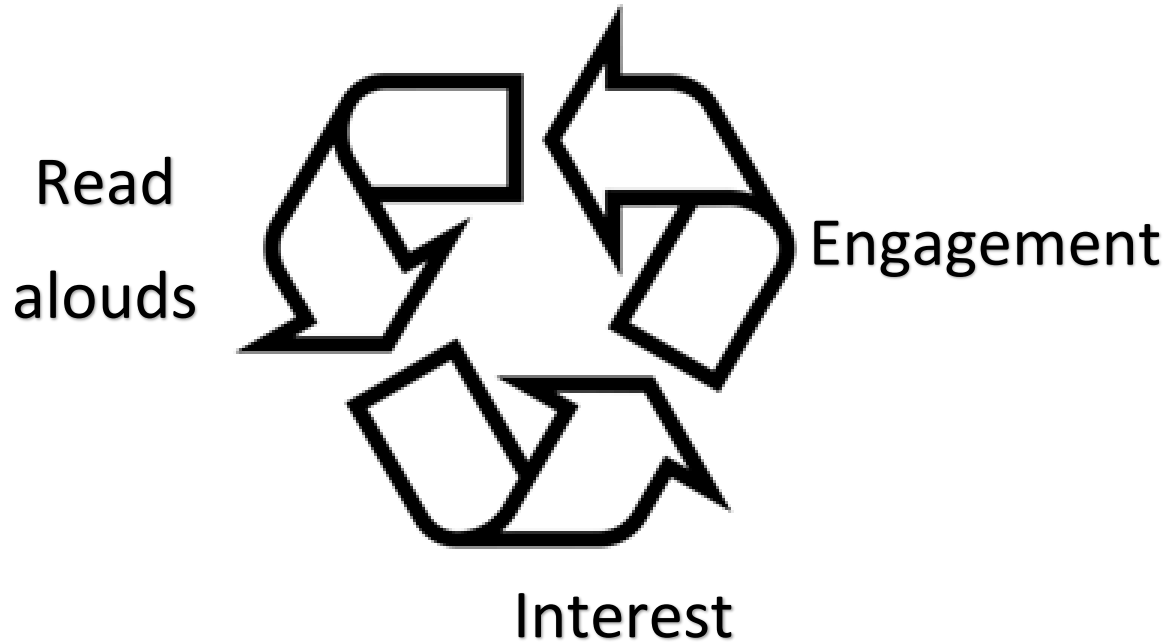


Figure 6: How to promote a positive attitude toward reading

This visual is a way to see how student interest, and engagement should be tied into read alouds in order to produce a positive behavior towards reading.

During our sessions, Sarah was always allowed to choose the books we read. According to Skeeters, Campbell, Dubitsky, Faron, Gieselman, George, Goldschmidt, and Wagner (2016), giving students an opportunity to choose the texts shows that you value their interests, which then promotes children to enjoy reading independently. Therefore, I allowed Sarah to pick all of the texts we read during our sessions, aside from one each session, which proved to encourage a positive attitude toward reading for Sarah.

Conclusion 3: Read alouds can promote an interest in emergent writing for a pre-k student

During the last few sessions of my study, my analysis showed that Sarah showed a strong interest in writing after our session ended. In session five and six, Sarah took 30-45 minutes after our read alouds to just write; items related to our texts and items related to her personal life. This was a conclusion that came as a shock to me because I never thought about any writing aspects of read

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

alouds, rather I focused my entire study on reading aspects. However, Sarah showed a great interest in writing and reading! After I researched this finding, I discovered that, according to Gay, reading and writing are inevitably connected (1976). So, I continued to keep an eye out for this and found that during our fifth session, Sarah wrote the title of the book that we read during our session along with a picture that fit the theme of the text. Then, during our sixth session, Sarah wrote out her school schedule – with my assistance – showing that she could write with connections to her personal life. All of this data makes me curious to do further research on this idea of whether read alouds can in fact promote an interest in writing.

Implication 3: Teachers should create opportunities for students to participate in writing after read alouds

According to Gay (1976), we need to be reading aloud to our students if we want them to succeed in learning how to write. Gay suggests that if teachers do not, or cannot, read aloud to their students, then their students will be at a huge disadvantage when they start learning how to write (1976). Thus, after every session of ours, I gave Sarah the opportunity to explore a variety of literacy related tasks following our read alouds. These tasks included letter/word LEGOS, markers, paper, pencils, and a variety of other books – different from those we read in our sessions. My data revealed that Sarah would interact with the LEGOS at the beginning but then leaned more toward writing. She favored drawing pictures with the markers and then writing words with pens and pencils after I wrote them first. This told me that she may have seen the fun texts in our books and wanted to create fun texts of her own due to the use of multiple colors and sizes of her words. Therefore, teachers should allow time and opportunities for students to engage in and explore other literacy related tasks such as writing to promote an interest in tying read alouds to writing.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Allowing time for Sarah to explore other literacy tasks, like writing, also helped to prepare her for higher education read alouds. In higher grades, writing after read alouds is used to build student comprehension (Cummins & Stallmeyer-Gerard, 2011). Therefore, I believe it is crucial to encourage an interest in writing regarding text that are read; dependently and independently.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were size, gender, location, and time. In regard to size, I was only able to work with one Pre-Kindergarten student. I was also only able to work with a female and not a male. The location of this study was also a limitation because it took place in my home where there were distractions that could have taken educational time away from the study itself. Finally, time was a huge limitation to the study. First, this study only lasted six weeks but more so, I was only able to work with my participant once a week which may have limited the amount of data or different data that I could have received if I worked with her more frequently.

Future Research

Due to the limitations of my study, I believe there is a need for research on how read alouds can support the emergent literacy skills of a larger group of students; young or older. Then, on my writing related finding, I believe there is a need for research in regard to whether or not read alouds can indeed promote an interest in writing. This would be an interesting study to compare to my own because it would look at the writing aspect of emergent literacy skills.

Overall Significance

This study is important to think about because it shows how vital read alouds can be to a Pre-Kindergarten student. It shows teachers how making read alouds interactive and engaging is important to knowledge growth and how interest/choice should be encouraged from students when selecting read

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

aloud texts. I believe the idea of using read alouds to support literacy growth can be used on a variety of different learning levels and I hope that future research does just that.

References

- Allwright, R.L. (1984). The importance of interaction in classroom language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 156-171.
- Al-Mansour, N.S., & Al-Shorman, R.A. (2011). The effect of teachers' storytelling aloud on the reading comprehension of Saudi Elementary stage students. *Journal of King Saudi University-Languages and Translation*, 23(2), 69-76.
- Bus, A. (2002). *Home and community influences*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Choldenko, G., & Sweet, M. (2011). *A giant crush*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons
- Cummins, S., & Stallmeyer-Gerard, C. (2011). Teaching for synthesis of informational texts with read alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(6), 394-405.
- Elster, C. A. (1994). "I guess they do listen": Young children's emergent readings after adult read-alouds. *Young Children*, 49, 27-31.
- Gay, C. (1976). Reading aloud and learning to write. *The Elementary School Journal*, 77(2), 87-93.
- Lysaker, J., Shaw, K., & Alicia, Z. A. (2016). Emergent reading comprehension: Social imagination and kindergarteners' readings of a wordless picture book. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 39(3), 245-255.
- Martin, B., & Carle, E. (1996). *Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?* New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co.
- McVicker, C. J. (2007). Young readers respond: The importance of child participation in emerging literacy. *YC: Young Children*, 62(3), 18-22.
- Murphy, S.J., & Demares, C.L. (2000). *Beep Beep, Vroom Vroom!*. New York, NY: Haper Collins
- Neuman, S. B., & Dickinson, D.K. (2003). *Handbook of early literacy research*.
New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Pentimonti, J. M., & Justice, L. M. (2010). Teachers' use of scaffolding strategies during read alouds in the preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(4), 241-248.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-009-0348-6>
- Pre-K Assessment Forms. (2010, January 1). Retrieved November 20, 2016, from
<http://www.prekinders.com/assessment-forms/>
- Sanacore, J. (2006). Nurturing lifetime readers. *Childhood Education*, 83(1), 33-37.
- Saracho, O. N., & Spodek, B. (2010). Parents and children engaging in storybook reading. *Early Child Development & Care*, 180(10), 1379-1389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430903135605>
- Shabani, K., Khatib, M., & Ebadi, S. (2010). Vygotsky's zone of proximal development: Instructional implications and teachers' professional development. *English Language Teaching*, 3(4), 237-248.
- Skeeters, K., Campbell, B., Dubitsky, A., Faron, E., Gieselmann, K., George, D., Goldschmidt, B., & Wagner, E. (2016). The top five reasons we love giving students choice in reading. *National Council of Teachers of English*, 6-7.

READ ALOUDS AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Tarbett, D. (2014). *Ten cheepy, chirpy chicks*. UK: Little Tiger Press Group

Willems, M. (2012). *The duckling gets a cookie?!* New York, NY: Hyperton Books for Children

Zucker, T., Justice, L, & Piasta, S. (2009). Pre-Kindergarten teachers' verbal references to print during classroom-based, large-group shared reading. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 40*, 376-392.

Zucker, T.A., Ward, A.E., & Justice, L.M. (2009). Print referencing during read-alouds: A technique for increasing emergent readers' print knowledge. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(1), 62-72.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Appendix A

Informal Observation/Field Note Template

Observations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What is being seen?</i>	Interpretations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What does this suggest?</i>

Appendix B

PALS Assessment

Print and Word Awareness

Fall

+/-

1. Shows front cover
2. Shows back cover
3. Points to title
4. Points to picture
5. Points to start of the sentence
6. Demonstrates left to right directionality
7. Identifies letter O
8. Points to a word
9. Points to the space between the words
10. Turns the page correctly

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Spring

+/-

1. Shows front cover
2. Shows back cover
3. Points to title
4. Points to picture
5. Points to start of the sentence
6. Demonstrates left to right directionality
7. Identifies letter O
8. Points to a word
9. Points to the space between the words
10. Turns the page correctly

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments:

Rhyme Awareness

Fall

+/-

1. mop	top	bike	can
2. sled	kite	bed	fruit
3. bee	flag	tree	cup
4. cake	bell	fruit	snake
5. moon	spoon	cat	sock
6. fox	wall	rain	box
7. man	book	can	pig
8. ring	swing	bed	mop
9. clock	road	pen	sock
10. rain	bell	train	box

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Spring

+/-

1. mop	top	bike	can
2. sled	kite	bed	fruit
3. bee	flag	tree	cup
4. cake	bell	fruit	snake
5. moon	spoon	cat	sock
6. fox	wall	rain	box
7. man	book	can	pig
8. ring	swing	bed	mop
9. clock	road	pen	sock
10. rain	bell	train	box

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments:

Pre-K Assessment Forms. (2010, January 1). Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <http://www.prekinders.com/assessment-forms/>

LPIK
ELA STUDENT RECORD SHEET

Student Name _____

LPIK Teacher _____

_____ - December
 _____ - February
 _____ - June

CAPITAL LETTER RECOGNITION

M	G	S	I
B	X	L	Q
H	W	T	R
J	C	O	V
P	F	D	U
A	Y	N	Z

February Benchmark - 12
 June Benchmark - 20

LOWER CASE LETTER RECOGNITION

s	g	m	i
b	r	l	f
h	w	t	q
j	c	o	v
p	f	d	u
a	y	n	z

February Benchmark - 4
 June Benchmark - 13

LETTER SOUNDS

B	S	R	F
W	T	O	J
K	H	K	V
I	P	Z	L
C	U	E	O
Y	G	N	M

February Benchmark - 2
 June Benchmark - 8

WITTIME AWARENESS

February Benchmark - 5
 June Benchmark - 7

BEGINNING SOUND AWARENESS

February Benchmark - 10A
 June Benchmark - 3

PHONIC CONCEPTS

February Benchmark - 3
 June Benchmark - 8

Pre-K Assessment Forms. (2010, January 1). Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <http://www.prekinders.com/assessment-forms/>