Building kindergarten children’s literacy through storybook reading in Greece

Eufimia Tafa
Professor
Department of Preschool Education
University of Crete, Greece
etafa@edc.uoc.gr
Storybook reading to young children has long been acknowledged as a critical aspect of early literacy development.

Reading to children is a vital way to encourage the development of concepts about print, the story structure, and the other elements of text.
Story-book reading

- Although story reading is a pleasurable activity in itself, the selection of materials and **the way** the books are read will determine the effectiveness of the read-aloud program in nurturing children’s literacy development.

- Careful selection of books that extend children’s vocabulary and background experiences is a first step.

**BUT**

- It is through **purposeful teaching** that we extend children’s thinking and their knowledge of the reading process.
Understanding text and developing concepts about print is a process that occurs:

- Before,
- During, and,
- After story-book reading.
The purpose of this study was the implementation of a story-book reading program in kindergarten classrooms for developing children’s

- Comprehension
- Concepts about Print.
Program Implementation

- The program was implemented in seven (7) kindergarten classrooms.
- The majority of the children (aged 4-6 years old) were from low-income families.
- The program was implemented by postgraduate students in collaboration with the classroom teacher.
- Each student-teacher read aloud two stories and based on the story plot organized activities before, during and after reading.
- The program took place during October 2008 and lasted for two weeks.
Instructional Strategies

Before reading

Teachers:

- Previewed the book.
- Planned an introduction that provided a context for the reading.
- Prompted children to make personal connections to the text.
- Introduced the title, author and illustrator.
- Prompted children to recognize letters on the title.
- Organized phonological awareness activities.
Instructional Strategies

During reading

Teachers:

- Asked predictions, comments and questions about the plot.
- Drew attention to illustrations and features of text.
Instructional Strategies

After reading

Teachers:

- Allowed time for discussions.
- Encouraged children’s responses.
- Encouraged retellings.
- Organized extension activities.
  - Rereading the same text.
  - Dramatizing the story.
  - Adapting the story into a class-made book or informational report.
  - Responding through art and crafts.
  - Responding through writing.
  - Extending through related events such as cooking, field trips, guest speakers.
Before reading

Teachers:

For comprehension

- Previewed the book.
- Planned an introduction that provide a context for the reading.
- Prompted children to make personal connections to the text.

For concepts about print

- Introduced the title, author, and illustrator.
- Prompted children to recognize letters.
- Organized phonological awareness activities.
During reading

Teachers:

For comprehension
- Asked predictions, comments and questions about the plot.

For concepts about print
- Drew attention to illustrations and features of text.
After reading

Teachers: 
*For comprehension*

- Allowed time for discussions.
- Encouraged children’s responses.
After reading

Teachers:

For comprehension

- Encouraged retellings.
After reading

Teachers:

*For comprehension*

- Encouraged retellings.
- Responding through art and crafts.
After reading

Teachers:

*For comprehension*

- Encouraged retellings.
After reading

Teachers:
*For comprehension and concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
  - Adapting the story into a class-made Big Book.
  - Responding through writing.
After reading

Teachers:
For comprehension and concepts about print
- Organized extension activities
  - Children dramatized the story.
After reading

Teachers:

*For comprehension and concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
  - *Children dramatized the story.*
  - *Responding through writing.*
After reading

Teachers:

For concepts about print

- Organized extension activities
  - Preparing a Veterinary Clinic corner.
  - Responding through writing.
After reading

Teachers:

*For concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
  - Preparing a Tavern.
  - Responding through writing.
After reading

Teachers:

*For concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
  - *Preparing an Apple-pie.*
  - *Responding through writing.*
After reading

Teachers:

For concepts about print
- Organized extension activities
  - Advertizing the food products.
  - Responding through writing.
After reading

Teachers:

For concepts about print
- Organized extension activities
  - Visiting a Dental Clinic.
  - Responding through writing.
After reading

Teachers:

*For concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
  - Phonological awareness activities.
After reading

Teachers:

*For concepts about print*

- Organized extension activities
- Phonological awareness activities.
Conclusions

Children learned

- That a book is for reading.
- The front, back, top and bottom of a book.
- The difference between print and pictures.
- That the pictures on a page are related to what the print says.
- Where to begin reading on a page.
- What a title, an author, an illustrator is.
- To “read” story books.
- To participate in story readings.
- The story structure.
  - The setting (time, place), the characters, the theme (problem, goal), the plot episodes, the resolution, the sequence.
Children learned

- To retell a story with a lot of story details.
- To retell a story in sequential order.
- To respond to text after listening.
- To generate questions that are literal, inferential, and critical.
- The print directional rules.
- The concept of sentence, word, and letter.
- The alphabet letters.
- To write their names.
- To use writing for communication.
- To identify phonemes, syllables, and rhymes.
- To match phonemes to graphemes.
Thank you.

etafa@edc.uoc.gr