Bonding over Books: Lessons from Parent-Shared Reading Experiences

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Abstract

The importance of developing children as lifelong readers has shed light on the kinds of reading experiences that children receive and engage in. Children with a broad range of reading experiences have been found to appreciate reading for leisure and for learning. The research encourages us to be sensitive to exposing children to a wide range of reading experiences whether at home or at school. Furthermore, the research argues that when children have positive reading experiences, they are inclined to read for leisure which is foundational keystone to the development of children as lifelong readers. In this presentation, I begin with a discussion of the principles of reading experiences that include talk and play that children naturally include when reading (Rowe, 1998, 2000; Sipe, 2002). From there, I present findings from a qualitative study involving parent-child interactions in home-based parent-shared reading experiences. The findings show that parents employ a range of strategies that teachers often deprioritise. Yet, these strategies foster confidence in children as readers and are aimed at building better relationships with children which are often part of the suite of benefits of shared reading with children. In this presentation, I argue that attention to these strategies will benefit teachers especially in the shared responsibility of developing children as lifelong readers. To add, the findings reveal that if teachers attend to strategies that build better relationships with the children they teach, teachers are likely to make better gains in the hard work of developing children as skilled readers.

Keywords: parent-shared reading; children as lifelong readers; recreational reading; reading for better relationships; teaching reading