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Comparing the Relationship of Storytelling and Storybook Reading to Kindergartners' Ability to Sequentially Retell a Story Using Pictures

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COMPARING THE RELATIONSHIP OF STORYTELLING
AND STORYBOOK READING TO KINDERGARTNERS'
ABILITY TO SEQUENTIALLY
RETELL A STORY USING PICTURES

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York

at Brockport

in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling). The subjects of this study were forty-eight kindergarten children attending an suburban school district in Western New York State. After listening to a story read aloud and another story told orally half the students retold the stories using pictures provided by the researcher. The other half of the students listened to the same stories only presented in the opposite manner from the first group.

The story retellings were compared through the use of a t test. The results showed no statistically significant difference in the childrens story retellings.

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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling).

Need for the Study

Reading aloud to children is a worthwhile activity that children, at a very early age, learn to enjoy. Parents and teachers who spend time reading aloud to their children are helping them gain an interest in learning to read. A teacher who shares an enjoyment for reading with students is creating a setting that shows books are a desirable part of life (Hickman, 1979).

Storytelling is another way for children to experience stories. Some research indicates that storytelling improves the language growth of children. Still most of the research has been in the area of storytelling as an assessment tool not as a instructional technique (Blank & Sheldon, 1971).

The importance of retelling stories as an instructional

technique has been emphasized by researchers. Retelling a story helps children learn because they are given opportunities to actively reconstruct a detailed sequence of events (Pickert & Chase, 1985). Also when retelling a story children use an organizational structure to retrieve and recall information (Blank & Frank 1972). Gambrell, Pfeiffer, and Wilson (1985), stress that by retelling a story children are prompted to assimilate and reconstruct text information. Morrow (1985) found that frequent practice and guidance in story retelling with an emphasis on story structure improved children's comprehension, increased the number of structural elements included in the retelling and enriched their oral language.

In a study by Brown (1975) children were involved in a retelling activity in which they arranged pictures of the story in sequential order. This kind of activity was found to aid the children's comprehension of the story.

When teachers give their students opportunities to hear stories read aloud from a book as well as listen to stories without a book, the listening skills of the students are enhanced. Listening to stories also helps the children to get ready to read the stories on their own.

Question

1. Are there any statistically significant differences in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read aloud to them from a book compared to a story told orally without a book?

Limitations of the Study

The children did their retelling of the story individually by arranging pictures of story events in the correct order but they were not completely separated from one another. Students were asked to do their own work but the possibility existed that they looked at another student's work.

Summary

The study determined if there were any statistically significant differences in kindergartners' sequential retellings of stories that were read to them from a book as compared to stories told orally.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story when read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to when a story is told orally without a book (storytelling).

Reading Aloud

Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way (Prescott, 1965).

Reading aloud to children who are not yet able to read on their own is important. Research indicates that children who have been exposed to literature at an early age through having stories read to them often show an interest in learning to read, develop language patterns, attain a wealth of background information and develop an awareness for story structure (Chomsky, 1972; Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1966).

Routman (1991) claims that reading aloud plays a significant role in young children becoming successful readers.

Books were meant to be enjoyed. When books are read aloud to children for enjoyment, the children are also being

provided with the opportunity to gain much information from the books. Reading aloud appears to help children develop and acquire language skills. In a study on reading stories to infants over an eighteen-month period Irwin (1960) found increased spontaneous vocalization of the experimental group by the time they were two and a half. In another study Elley (1989) found reading aloud to have a positive effect on vocabulary development. Ninio and Bruner (1978) also found that reading aloud to children resulted in vocabulary development and that the more books children are exposed to helps them to acquire and learn many words. Butler (1980) reported that a regular reading aloud program resulted in the improvement of reading scores.

Wells (1985, 1986) found measurable growth in reading performance and language development in children who were read aloud to. Chomsky (1972) discovered a positive correlation between being read to at home and the level of young children's language development. Durkin (1966) and Manning and Manning (1984) found that children who begin to read at an early age are most often read to by someone in the home. In a study by Brisse (1982), in which children's responses to books read aloud were observed, she found that reading skills were motivated and developed through hearing stories read aloud. Clark (1976) confirmed, through her

research, the value of reading aloud to children at an early age. In a study of reading in fifteen countries, Thorndike (1973) reported that reading aloud to children is an important factor in learning how to read. Sostarich (1974) discovered that when she looked into the backgrounds of twelve year old active and non-active readers, the active readers had been read to from the time they were three years old and some were still being read aloud to at home. Barton (1990) stated that much research has been done that proves children who are read aloud to at home on a daily basis and have books available to them are interested and excited about learning to read. Durkin (1966) found that being read to from age of three was a positive factor in children who learned to read before going to school.

Cullinan (1987) believes that teachers are very effective models and play an important role in encouraging children's enthusiasm for reading. Reading aloud gives children the opportunity to hear stories and motivates them to want to learn to read the stories on their own (Cullinan, 1992). Cohen (1968) discovered that significant gains in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension in children seven years old was achieved as a result of being exposed to literature on a daily basis for one year. Teachers share their excitement for reading when they read aloud to

their students and children are motivated to want to learn to read. Holdaway (1979) found motivation to be a very important factor in establishing children's interest in books. Reading aloud to children is one way of enabling children to realize that print is meaningful. Durkin (1987) stated that "the most successful (and enjoyable) way to interest children in acquiring the ability to read is by reading to them frequently from carefully chosen books" (p.115). Hiebert (1981) found that reading aloud to children positively effects their attitude toward reading. He also suggests that role models are important in the process of children becoming readers.

Fun and success in learning to read can go hand in hand. Excitement in the classroom is contagious and when the teacher shows enthusiasm for reading through reading aloud to the children they too become drawn into the excitement of reading. When children are read aloud to their interest is sparked along with their emotional development and their imaginations. The opportunity to develop a response to literature is present when children are read aloud to. Children begin to desire the value of learning to read when books become exciting.

Trelease (1982) refers to reading aloud to children, to awaken their sleeping imaginations and improve their language skills where this is done in school, it improves the atmosphere of the classroom. When it is done at home it improves the quality of family life. But where ever it is done, the overwhelming result is that it improves children's attitudes towards books and reading. These are results that have been proven in hundreds of studies... by educators and psychologists in thousands of classrooms and homes. The results are so decisive, they are beyond debate. (p.11)

Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), in Becoming a Nation of Readers, state "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 23).

Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of learning and a wonderful form of literary communication in the education of children. According to Shedlock (1951), it is a natural and worth-while way of introducing children to literature. She believes that storytelling not only brings dramatic joy to the listener but also develops the imagination. In the classroom setting storytelling is relaxing yet valuable because it gives the listener the chance to use his or her imagination to recreate the story. It is a simple effective way of forming the habit of concentration.

Storytelling is another exciting and effective way of

motivating children to read. Donze (1985) believes that a child who has been given the opportunity to listen to a story told will naturally be more interested in books and reading.

Scott (1979) found that when young children listen to stories they develop a sense of story that will become the center of their thinking and language processes. Children who are provided with a rich story environment, both in hearing stories and talking about them, will grow as thinkers as well as story-tellers.

As the children listen to stories they create the scenes, the action, as well as the characters in the story. When a story is told the listeners are given the opportunity to develop their imaginations and create their own mental images out of the words they hear (Baker & Greene, 1977).

During storytelling children's listening skills are encouraged which in turn prepares them for eventually reading on their own. Storytelling gives the listeners more opportunities to use their imagination. The listener is able to concentrate more on the story being told. Also in storytelling the storyteller is able to establish eye contact with the listeners which enables a rapport to develop between the storyteller and the listeners (Morrow, 1979).

Reading Aloud and Storytelling

Both reading aloud and storytelling have proven to be of great value to children. Morrow states:

...one of the most valuable activities you can expose children to is a regular storytime at home or in school (p.236)

Children learn to appreciate literature and develop a desire to learn more from books when they hear stories read and told to them. Exposure to stories through reading aloud and storytelling helps children develop the structure of language as well as motivate them to learn to read. (Morrow, 1984; Sadow, 1982).

Listening to stories read aloud and told introduces children to patterns of language and extends vocabulary. Children learn to associate the symbols on the printed page with the words they hear. Many times, if children hear stories that are worth listening to they will be eager to learn how to read the stories on their own.

Summary

Hearing stories read aloud and told and then giving children the opportunity to retell what they have heard has been proven to be a powerful motivation for children who are learning to read. They learn that reading and listening to

stories is enjoyable and they want to learn themselves. When someone important in the lives of children values books and does so by their actions, reading books, then children will also come to value the wonderful world of reading and books. Children who have been exposed to books and stories at an early age have been provided with a rich background of literary language.

Chapter III

The Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling).

Question

1. Are there any statistically significant differences in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling)?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects of this study were forty-eight kindergarten children from two classrooms in a suburban school district in Western New York.

Materials

The materials used in this study were trade books, The Mitten by Jan Brett, which was read aloud to twenty-four of the children and told orally without a book to the other twenty-four children and The Napping House by Audrey Wood, which was also read aloud, to twenty-four of the children and told orally the other twenty-four children.

A pilot for this study was done one week prior to the actual study. The trade book, I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly, by Glen Round was used. It gave the children an opportunity to experience the sequential retelling of a story using pictures.

Eight pictures for each story and a long rectangular piece of construction paper were given to each of the children after the story .

Procedure

The story, The Napping House was read aloud by the researcher. The children were in a group of twenty-four chosen by counting off in twos. The children were asked to retell the events of the story by arranging pictures in the order in which they happened in the story.

The story, The Napping House, was told orally, with a book, by the librarian to another group of twenty-four children. After the story was told the children were then

asked to retell the events of the story by arranging the same pictures that was given the previous group, in the order in which they happened in the story.

The story, The Mitten, was also read aloud by the researcher and told orally without a book by the librarian. The same procedure was used as before only with The Mitten the opposite groups of children heard the story read aloud with a book and told orally without a book.

Analysis of Data

The results of the sequential picture retellings of the stories were statistically analyzed through the use of a t test.

Summary

Twenty-four kindergarten children listened to two different stories. One story was read aloud and a the other was told orally.

Another group of twenty-four kindergarten children listened to the same stories only the stories were presented in the opposite method from the first group. After each story session the children sequentially retold the story by arranging a group of pictures. The retellings were analyzed.

Chapter IV
Analysis of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling).

Findings and Interpretations

Question: Is there a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling)?

The difference between the read aloud and storytelling means was compared with a t test. The results are shown in the Table.

Table

Mean Retelling Scores for

Read Aloud and Storytelling Groups

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Calculated t</u>
Story One Read Aloud	21	7.00	44	2.28	1.18
Story- telling	25	7.68	44	1.60	1.18
Story Two Read Aloud	25	5.52	43	2.00	0.28
Story- telling	20	5.35	43	2.01	0.28

A calculated t_score of 1.18 for Story I and 0.28 for Story II were the results of the analysis.

Since the critical value of t_with 44 degrees of freedom for Story I and 43 degrees of freedom for Story II at 95% confidence level is 2.018 for Story I and 2.017 for Story II, the null hypothesis must not be rejected, concluding that there was not a statistically significant difference between the sequential retelling of a story read aloud (from a book) compared to a story told orally with a book (storytelling).

The mean score for Story I read aloud was 7.00 and told

orally was 7.68 and for Story II read aloud was 5.52 and told orally was 5.35.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in kindergartners' sequential retelling of a story read to them from a book (read aloud) as compared to a story told orally, without a book (storytelling).

Conclusions

A storyteller shares a story and puts words together in such a way that the listeners are captivated and can become completely involved in the story. The researcher observed that the children listened to the storyteller very attentively and were relaxed and enjoying the story. When the story was read aloud the book seemed to be distracting to the children. They were not as attentive. The researcher observed several children looking around the room rather than at the book. A few children were talking out loud and fooling with each other. A couple of children were making comments about the story while the story was being read.

When listening to the storyteller's words the children only had to comprehend what they heard where as with the book, the children had to listen to the words, view the

pictures, the print and comprehend.

Even though the researcher did observe different behaviors during the storytelling and book reading sessions that did not seem to effect the results of the sequential picture retellings that the children did of the story. Most of the children in both groups did sequentially retell the stories with accuracy.

The conclusion reached from doing this study was that even though the children were more attentive during the storytelling sessions than during the reading aloud sessions, their sequentially retellings of the stories were not effected. Both groups were able to correctly retell the stories.

Implications for Research

1. Studies comparing pictures created by the children to retell stories read aloud from a book and told orally without a book.

2. Measure the interest in books read aloud and compared to stories told orally. How often do children re-read these stories?

3. Studies that focus on children's ability to orally sequentially retell stories read aloud from a book compared to stories told orally.

4. Studies that involve older children to determine if there may be a statistically significant differences in their sequential retellings of stories read aloud and told orally.

5. Studies that measure children's comprehension. Is their comprehension better when stories are read aloud from a book or when stories are told orally without a book.

6. Studies comparing boys and girls sequential retelling of stories read aloud and told orally.

Classroom Implications

Storytelling sessions would be an added benefit to any classroom. When a story is told and the children only have to listen they can become focused on what is being said. There is also a relaxed atmosphere and feeling between the storyteller and the listener.

Storytelling can encourage listening. Listening to stories can help prepare children to learn to read on their own. When children are stimulated by stories heard they eventually become more interested in hearing the stories again and even in learning how to read the stories on their own.

Reading aloud from books is another very beneficial teaching tool. Most children love storytime and enjoy hearing stories read aloud. A teacher who reads aloud to the

students on a daily basis is not only able to introduce them to many books but is showing them that reading can be a very worthwhile and fun experience.

Children are indeed like sponges and the many and varied opportunities they are given to hear stories read aloud and told orally can only enhance and brighten their future as readers.

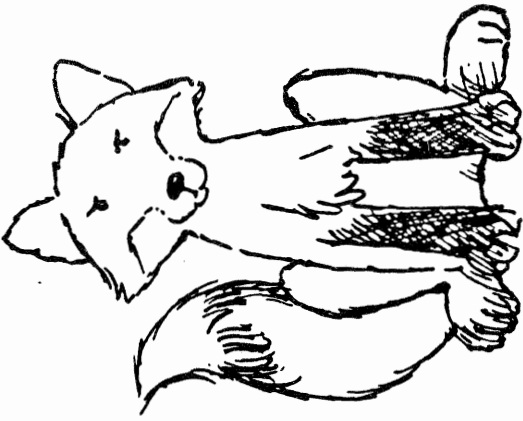
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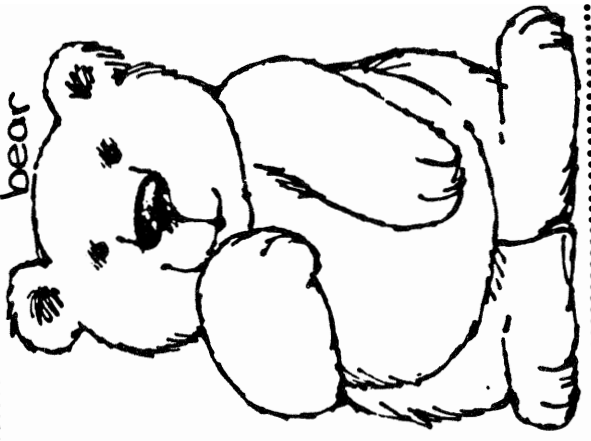
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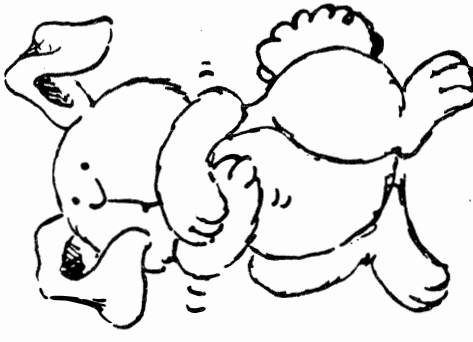
fox



bear



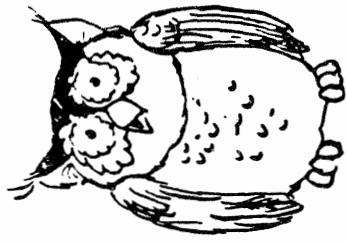
rabbit



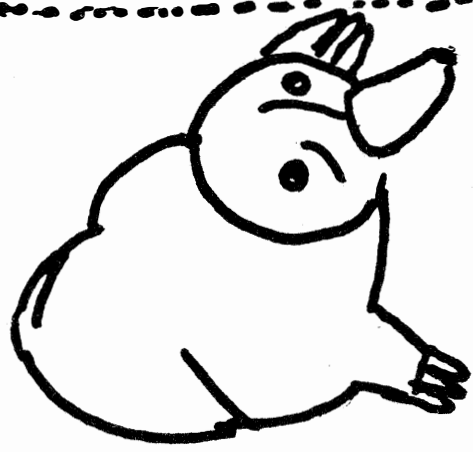
hedge hog



owl



mole



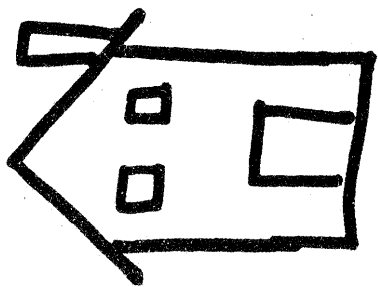
mouse



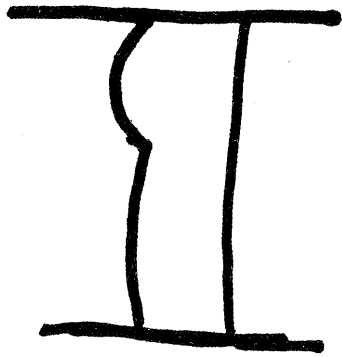
badger



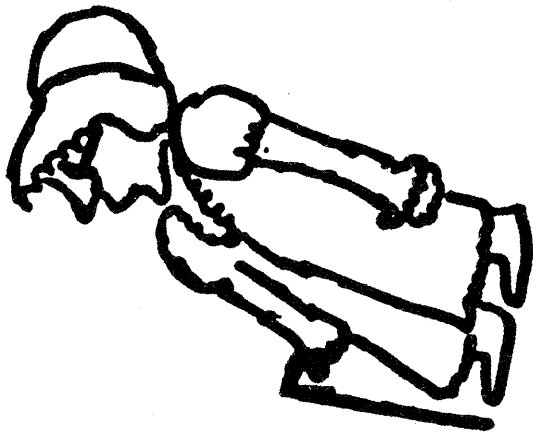
House



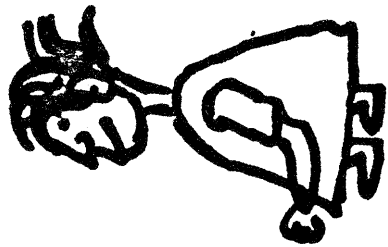
Bed



Granny



Child



Dog



Kitty



Mouse



Flea



