

READING ALOUD TO KINDERGARTENERS: THEIR RESPONSES AND PERCEPTIONS



Reading aloud to children is an activity parents and teachers have been pursuing. Research has shown that the activity contributes significantly to the language and literacy skills of children who are learning to read (Cambourne, 1988; Coiro, 2000), and to the pleasures of reading and books (Elley, 1998; Teal, 1984, 2003). In this study, the outcomes of the interactive read-aloud approach were examined. The kindergarteners were encouraged to verbally interact with the stories read to them, among themselves and the teacher, who was the reader. A group of 30 four- to six-year-old Malaysian kindergarteners participated in read-aloud sessions where stories in English were read out loud to them. The kindergarteners responded to questions posed by the reader, and engaged in discussions which provided for the use of language, predictions, and analytical and literate thinking. The sessions were videotaped and the interviews were recorded and the data were analysed qualitatively. The main findings showed that the kindergarteners comprehended the stories read aloud to them in English but used a great deal of their first language in their verbal responses. The kindergarteners derived pleasure from connecting the stories to their personal experiences by articulating what they had seen happening in their lives and hence building story relevance. Furthermore, the kindergarteners were able to use their background knowledge to aid their comprehension of the stories. The findings serves to inform researchers and practitioners of the significance of the interactive read-aloud approach to reading success.

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