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THE USE OF ADVENTURE BOOKS IN FOSTERING CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILL

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to investigate the role of an adapted and modified version of Busy Book known as "Adventure Book" in fostering children's language skills. With the rise of technology, books seem to become less significant as mobile devices become increasingly more integral to our everyday life and education. Thus, this study aimed to highlight the role and importance of books as an essential material in learning especially for children aged 3 to

4-year-old. The Adventure Book is a type of book that provides tactile experience to children as it was adapted from 'Busy Book', a popular type of children's books. The book contained simple and basic English language as well as easy-to-read stories with moral values and familiar characters. The book contained simple activities that could help children develop their cognitive skills. The study was conducted on 30 children of 3 to 4-year-old at local nurseries and it involved their parents and teachers. The instrument used in this study was questionnaire. The findings indicated positive responses from the children and the guardians on the application of the books.

Keyword

Adventure Book, Busy Book, Children's Book, Kindergarten

1. Introduction

Adventure Book is a modified version of a particular type of book, Busy Book, often used as a learning material to nurture children's language skill. Children today are becoming less interested in reading and get bored easily when they are expected to read books including the common books available in nurseries. The children are more interested in gadgets and mobile devices. This can be proved through past studies. An early childhood education expert, Keating (2011), argued that the use of gadgets such as smart phones and computers has more negative effects than positive effects on children if these gadgets are used without proper parental monitoring. Besides, children often use them for a longer period of time which can affect their health in a negative way. Moreover, excessive use of technology can also affect children's focus in education and learning whether in formal or informal contexts. The reason why this study attempted to redesign books to create Adventure Book was to excite children and retain their attention. Dopyera and Dopyera (1993) claimed that children tend to become attracted to something colorful that they can touch and play with like books with lots of tangible features.

Adventure Book used in this research was made from polyester fabric and acrylic that was embedded with colorful embellishments of various shapes. The book was soft, light and convenient for children to read and use. This Adventure Book contained challenging activities that were meant for children aged 3 to 4-year-old with the objective of assisting them in developing their cognitive skills and logical thinking skills. In addition, children could touch and play with the book as it was designed to be tactile. Children learn better through their senses like tasting and touching that can enhance their ability to remember and recall what they have experienced (Duncan & Lockwood, 2008). The aim of this project was to modify "Busy Book" (a type of activity books) in order to create "Adventure Book" that could capture children's

attention better. This study also attempted to examine whether Adventure Book could help children learn simple vocabulary effectively.

2. Problem Statement

With the rising use of technology in education, there are many new teaching tools and technologies that have been invented to create a fun learning environment for children. This is essential as Malaysia's policy asserts that Malaysian children need to be educated and they deserve the best and most advanced form of education that prepares them for the real world (Rohani Abdullah et al, 2013).

However, the increasing usage of technology might have affected children's interest in books and the role of books in educating children seemed to decline as people opt for gadgets instead of books. Furthermore, parents found it difficult to properly monitor their children's use of gadgets. Most parents considered gadgets as tools that could help children develop their thinking skills faster and learn more. This explained why many adults did not bother to interfere with their children's habitual use of gadgets. Extensive use of gadgets can cause children to become so attached to mobile gadgets due to their appealing features. As a result of this, their fascination with mobile devices may gradually influence their ability to focus on other activities like reading books and doing hands-on activities (Naeyc.org, 2012). Consequently, they become less interested in reading books and perform poorly in reading-related tasks.

Therefore, the existing busy book was adapted to contain certain features that could appeal to the children more. This was how Adventure Book came to be after several changes were made on the original concept of busy book. The book had a diverse range of patterns, colours and decorations that were durable and visually appealing. In addition, the material used to create the book was soft and light that made it easy and convenient for students to carry and flip. The price of the book was lower than most books so that every family could afford it. To sum it up, this book could be the learning material that parents and teachers needed in order to provide children a meaningful and engaging learning experience.

3. Research Questions

There were two main objectives of the study. The first one was to introduce the Adventure Book to the children. The second objective was to encourage children to complete the activities in the book.

1. To what extent that Adventure Book could draw children's attention to read it and carry out the activities that were presented in it?

2. To what extent that the book influenced children’s acquisition of basic English language vocabulary?

4. Methodology

The instrument for the study was questionnaire. The population comprised of teachers and parents of children in three nurseries in the inner area of Sabah. One nursery was in Ranau and two were in Keningau. The respondents consisted of 20 parents or guardians and 20 educators. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained that the respondents needed to clearly understand the purpose of the research. Hence, they were briefed on the details of the study before they were expected to complete the questionnaire.

5. Findings & Discussions

Table 1 revealed the responses of the parents/guardians as well as the teachers on the application of Adventure Book as a reading material for children.

Table 1: *Responses of the Subjects on the Use of Adventure Book*

No	Item	Yes	No
1.	Did the children find the Adventure Book appealing?	92.5%	7.5%
2.	Did the children enjoy doing the activities offered by Adventure Book?	90%	10%
3.	Did you provide guidance to the children on how to use Adventure Book?	87.5%	2.5%
4.	Could the children use Adventure Book on their own after the assistance you initially provided to them?	70%	30%
5.	Would you agree if Adventure Book is made available as a reading material in nurseries?	100%	-
6.	Do you think Adventure Book helped children learn English language	92.5%	7.5%

Based on the responses of the parents/guardians and the educators, most of them believed that the children enjoyed the Adventure Book as they felt the children found the book appealing and they enjoyed reading it and completing its activities. The responses also showed that the Adventure Book might assist children in learning English language. All of the respondents agreed that the book should be made available in nurseries for children to read or for teachers to

use as their teaching materials. The findings were consistent with what Best and Khan (1998) who conducted a research on the comparison between technology and traditional way of teaching reading and discovered that reading printed books remained relevant no matter how much technology had evolved.

6. Conclusion

The research implied that Adventure Book might be able to aid teachers in nurseries deliver a fun, engaging and meaningful learning experience for the children in a way that they can focus in reading activities and carry out follow-up hands-on activities that they might not be able to experience from mobile gadgets. Thus, teachers in nurseries should be trained on how to use Adventure Book in their teaching practice.

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Appendix

A Sample of the Adventure Book



The Process of Creating Adventure Book



The Application of Adventure Book at a Nursery

