The ABC’s on Learning to Read

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Review of the Literature

A qualitative case-study examined the reading beliefs of a fifth-grader, her mother, and two teachers. Interviews were collected at a Catholic school in an urban area.

Methods

Participants

Abby: fifth-grade female
Cheyenne: Abby’s mother, 47-year-old female, who worked as server
Mrs. Tyler: Abby’s teacher, who had twenty-five years of experience
Ms. Hay: Abby’s teacher, who had two years of experience

Results

Aspects on Learning to Read

How do a child, her parent, and two teachers report learning to read?

Responses were categorized as:

Influence, Environment, Practice, Emotion, and History

Influence was the most commonly occurring category, with all four of participants including this response.

What similarities and differences are reported between actual experiences of learning to read and the adults “ideal” perspective on learning to read?

Adult participants’ responses on how children actually learned to read included the following categories:

Influence, Emotion, History, and Practice

Influence and Practice were the most commonly occurring categories

Adult participants’ responses on the “ideal” way for children to learn to read included the following categories: Influence, Emotion, Practice, and Environment

Are beliefs and processes of reading influenced by experience, historical context, or a combination of factors?

Each participant described a component which was a belief or process that was influenced by experience.

Experiences played a key role in the participants responses in learning to read.

Although no specific teaching methods were mentioned, whole language teaching, sight words, and phonics were described.

Discussion

The present case study focused on participants’ views about:

Learning to read

Influence was the most occurring theme

All of the participants stated that family members influenced their learning to read.

Parents and teachers do share a very important responsibility in the process of learning to read.

Actual and “ideal” perspectives on learning to read

Perspectives from the participants are similar in the fact that many believed that Practice is an actual and “ideal” way for children to learn to read.

There was agreement between participants’ beliefs of instruction across the actual and “ideal” perspectives.

Historical influences

Adult participants were in agreement about how reading has changed over time.

They also believed that reading at home has an increased importance and is a tool for children learning to read.

Technology currently is playing an important role for reading in all aspects of life.

“I do more internet and computer-based integration than most teachers do,” commented Mrs. Tyler.

As technology continues to evolve, reading will yet again see more changes.

Future Directions

Limitations of this study yield opportunities for future research:

An increased sample size is needed to make conclusions about the general population.

Students and teachers should be selected from a variety of different schools so a wide range of teaching philosophies are obtained.

Choosing students from other schools will also allow for a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Further research should focus on working parents and their influence on their children’s ability to learn to read.

It would be valuable for speech-language pathologists and teachers to know how children with speech, language, and learning disabilities report learning to read.

Research Questions

How do a child, her parent, and two teachers report learning to read?

What similarities and differences are reported between actual experiences of learning to read and the adults “ideal” perspective on learning to read?

Are beliefs and processes of reading influenced by experience, historical context, or a combination of factors?

References


3Smith, N. B. (2002). In Influence, Emotion, Practice, and Environment


