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# raising readers using dialogic reading techniques

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The COVID-19 pandemic presents many challenges to families as they adjust to life in lockdown. Parents find themselves thrust into the role of teacher, without training or preparation and although most parents are enthusiastic, they are unsure how best to support their children's education, especially in relation to teaching young children to read.

For my PhD thesis, I examined the effectiveness of parent-implemented shared-reading strategies. One fun, easy to follow and effective method that I looked at closely is Dialogic Reading (DR).

In contrast to traditional styles of shared book reading where an adult reads and the child passively listens, DR encourages the child to become the storyteller and the adult an active listener, providing assistance as required, facilitating, expanding and responding to the child's verbalizations.

DR is based on three principles:

- (i) evocative techniques - encourage children's active participation and language practice
- (ii) informative feedback (on correct language use)
- (iii) progressive change - adults adapt their language to support children's developing linguistic abilities.

Adults are encouraged to use a set of prompts, represented by the acronyms PEER and CROWD, which encourage children's engagement in dialogue about the book, rather than just decoding and reading aloud.

The PEER sequence helps adults remember the order of DR techniques and includes PROMPT, EVALUATE, EXPAND and REPEAT which target vocabulary and comprehension skills. Whilst the CROWD prompts which include COMPLETION, RECALL, OPEN-ENDED questions, WH-questions and DISTANCING, encourage children to develop language abilities through practising linguistically enhanced dialogue.

DR positively impacts a wide range of important language and literacy skills, including phonological awareness, rhyme recognition, word reading, concepts about print, receptive vocabulary and expressive vocabulary (Elmonayer, 2013; Pillinger & Wood, 2013; Pillinger & Wood, 2014; Rahn et al., 2016; Sim et al., 2013; Simsek & Erdogan, 2015; Townsen & Gallagher, 2016).

Evidence also suggests DR enhances sustained attention, reading enjoyment and communication between parent and child, lowers parental stress, strengthens the bond between parent and child and increases satisfaction with parenting (Beschoner & Hutchison, 2016; Ganotice, 2017; Vally et al, 2015).

These benefits are demonstrated in numerous countries, across different settings (e.g, libraries, school and home) when administered one-to-one and to small groups of young children (aged 2-5 years). With this in mind, DR could be a useful tool for parents to help promote children's language learning, whilst also providing quality time away from the stresses and strains that life in lockdown may present.



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