

DIGITAL MEDIA TEACHING FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Abstract

Digital media is becoming increasingly prevalent in early childhood education, but there is still much to learn about its use and effectiveness. Research has shown that children use and learn from digital media, but there are also potential risks associated with excessive screen time. The use of technology and media in preschool classrooms varies based on the characteristics of the teacher, classroom, and program. This research has investigated the purposes for which parents and preschool teachers use technology and media in the home and classroom and the contexts in which such use occurs. However, some studies have shown that technology can be used to support learning and development in several ways, including language development and social skills. It is important for early childhood educators to be prepared for the digital age and to use technology and media in developmentally appropriate ways

Keywords: digital media, teaching, early childhood, education.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is known as the Digital Era, or the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which means that ‘our devices will become an increasing part of our personal ecosystem, listening to us, anticipating our needs, and helping us when required’ (Schwab 2017:11). Children are constantly connected to various digital devices and these often regulate their lives. Thus, teachers need to embrace and incorporate digital technology into their

teaching approaches so that young learners acquire language proficiency early (Dietze & Kashin 2013:5).

However, this is a challenge for teachers, as they have to understand how to incorporate digital technology into their usual teaching practices. Examples include various digital devices, tools, applications and processes, which facilitate knowledge learning and teach learners to be more creative (Berson & Berson 2010:192). Therefore, teachers need to be skilled in the use of digital technology and need to create digital solutions to problems (Murcia, Campbell & Aranda 2018:251). Various authors, such as Edwards, Straker and Oakey (2018) and Murcia et al. (2018), state that in both the formal and informal environments, social inclusivity and learning are improved with the use of digital technology.

Digital media can be used to support language development in early childhood education. Here are some key points from the search results:

1. The digital technologies that now feature prominently in young children's daily lives are quite different from prior decades.
2. Teachers can use games or interesting media to develop children's language development.
3. Digital media, such as cellphones and tablets, are a common part of our daily lives and their usage has changed the communication structure within families. Thus, there is a risk that the use of DM might result in fewer opportunities for interactions between children and their parents leading to fewer language learning moments for young children.
4. Digital media are a particularly good resource for remote learning, as screen sharing during video conferencing and two-player apps provide fun opportunities for learning.
5. Parents and educators are often concerned about young children's consumption of digital media. As with any diet, though, moderation and choosing the right ingredients make all the difference.

Based on these findings, it seems that digital media can be a useful tool for supporting language development in early childhood education, but it is important to use it in moderation and in culturally appropriate ways. Teachers and parents can use games,

apps, videos, and songs to engage children and encourage learning, but they should also be mindful of the potential risks associated with excessive screen time and limited opportunities for face-to-face interactions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is using qualitative research that is the essential guide to understanding, designing, conducting, and presenting a qualitative research study. This fourth edition features new material covering mixed methods, action research, arts-based research, online data sources, and the latest in data analysis, including data analysis software packages as well as narrative and poetic analysis strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital media is a broad term describing content that is delivered through technology; it can include text, images, audio, animations, video, and interactives. On the one hand, digital media with abundant sights and sounds may reduce children's learning by overtaxing their ability to selectively attend to and process important information. On the other hand, digital media with more focused and coherent verbal and nonverbal representations of the content may support children's acquisition and retention of that information.

While digital media could never replace interaction with a teacher, it can enhance instruction. One way to do this is to identify digital media that can help to reinforce or provide practice with skills or concepts teachers are targeting. For example, in one study with kindergartners from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, instruction focused their attention on the sounds of words in the text. Children used e-books that included text to speech, highlighted words, and interactive "hot spots" that could be activated by clicking characters, objects, or words appearing in the text. To ensure distractions were kept to a minimum, hot spots could not be clicked until the narration ended.

Early childhood is the nation's next generation so that aspects of child development need to stimulate properly and correctly. Early childhood development includes aspects

of cognitive development, language, physical-motoric, social emotional and moral religious values. One of aspects of early childhood development is language development. There are three aspects of language that could be learn directly or indirectly such as sound, structure, and vocabulary.

Early childhood understand sounds since fetus, said Lecanuet and Granier Deferre in Gleason in the 4 days after birth, the baby could distinguish his mother voice than other person. This proves fetus also experience learning process (in utero learning). It means before and after the baby was born, he/she has learned the sound first. The longer, the child gets older, and the mastery of sound increases. In the early stages, children recognize vocal sounds such as /a/, /o/, /u/ and /i/ and some dead letters or consonant sounds such as /p/, /b/, /m/. Children then have rapid sound mastery. This development begins with a babble i.e. the unmeaningful sounds of language. Finally, children can recognize complex sentence structures.

Language development is closely related to other developments, such as cognitive and social. McCabe and Meller revealed that language not only affects cognitive growth but also social competence. Children who learn to speak and succeed interact with others to develop more effective learning strategies and reading skills that are inversely proportional to children who fail to develop language appropriate to their age will get risk of experiencing social isolation, reading problems, and other academic difficulties in school. For this reason, schools and families must provide stimulation and media that support their early language development.

In order to develop language in early childhood, teachers must pay attention to the characteristics of early childhood who loves to play. By playing, children learn and play is life and vice versa. All children love to play, every child likes games because through playing children learn to understand the environment. Children who were born as Alpha generation, they use more technology including the use of tabs, computers, cellphones and other electronic devices. Thus, as a teacher, you should make a game in accordance with their generation and characteristics of early childhood.

Preschool children experience learning across a variety of physical contexts at home and in school, but also at the grocery store and the neighborhood park. And digital media

apps, videos, games, and songs are engaging and entertaining, providing another context that can be leveraged for learning.

The research literature clearly indicates the widespread nature of digital technology use by preschool children with touch screen devices being by far the most popular with this trend growing rapidly (Kyriakides, Meletiou-Mavrotheris, & Prodromou, 2016). This is perhaps due to intuitive interface of a touch-screen tablet, the ease of installing new apps, and the increased portability and autonomy of the devices.

The implementation of learning in early childhood needs to pay attention to the systematic and regular way of working to facilitate the learning process. The method is an effort to systemize learning as proposed by Mursid i.e. it is a tool used to achieve the goal with steps that have been systemized and organized. One method for early childhood education is the method of playing while learning. Playing is an activity that is most liked by all people even more so by children as their world is playing. Piaget in Mayesty stated that playing is an activity carried out repeatedly for pleasure. Playing for early childhood is an indirect learning platform, play activities can also develop mental, spiritual, language, social and motoric skills of children which are very important in supporting their developmental stages.

The approach to learning by playing can be done using digital media such as by utilizing gadget or mobile devices developed this time. The use of digital media must be under parents or adults supervision. This approach can be found by using an internet connection. For example, their desire for something can be directed by searching in cyberspace, for example a child wants to know penguin birds, without having to visit the area of penguin birds, the child still can see it through pictures or videos without visiting its area or zoo. Not only by using internet connection, but also it can be done by television. Because children prefer watching TV, this proved by research that 90% of children aged 2 years have spent 1-2 hours watching TV and start spending more time on mobile devices.

Preschool children learn a lot from watching a video or playing a game, guiding their attention increases the impact of these interactions. Parents can home in on new vocabulary or concepts, restate phrases, or use open-ended questions to extend children's learning or make connections to things they already know. For example, using the *Droplets* app, and look up new vocabulary words in different languages. This helps expand the child's growing pool of active vocabulary, as well as the background knowledge they have to draw on for future activities. Words and letters are everywhere, literacy isn't confined to books. And then point out letters on the way to the park or use new vocabulary when encounter familiar objects in digital media. For example, if kids are animal lovers, try *Molly of Denali's Alaskan Adventure* and help them make their own animal notebooks, documenting what Molly sees as she travels around Alaska or what they see outside the window.

Preschool children learn turn-taking and conversational skills through modeling, and teachers and parents can use shared video viewing or game play as a time to practice conversational turn-taking. After seeing something interesting, ask about it and then wait for a response. At the next interesting moment in the video or game, encourage children to ask you a question and then wait for your response. Be sure to pause after asking a question to provide enough time for kids to think about their answer. And then turn it into a game by timing the pauses to see who "wins" by being a good conversational partner.

They learn better when media connect to their interests and experiences. Build their informational text skills by having them participate in an online search for digital media that focuses on something they're interested in. If the kids say they want to read about baby lizards, you can find photos, drawings, videos, and stories about this subject from Google, YouTube, or your local library's online listings.

Parents and educators are often concerned about young children's consumption of digital media. As with any diet, though, moderation and choosing the right ingredients make all the difference. The tips we present here can help educators and parents make sure that the time children spend with digital media is productive and maximizes their learning.

The benefits of using digital media for language development in early childhood education:

1. Enhanced engagement and motivation: Digital media, such as interactive apps, games, and educational software, can captivate children's attention and promote active participation. This engagement can lead to increased motivation and interest in language learning activities.
2. Exposure to diverse linguistic input: Digital media platforms provide access to a wide range of language-rich content, including stories, songs, and videos. This exposure exposes children to different vocabulary, sentence structures, and pronunciation, thereby expanding their language repertoire.
3. Facilitation of multimodal learning experiences: Digital media often incorporate visual, auditory, and interactive elements, allowing children to learn through multiple sensory channels. This multimodal approach can reinforce language concepts and support comprehension by presenting information in various formats.
4. Promotion of vocabulary expansion and comprehension skills: Many digital media resources focus on vocabulary development through interactive features, such as word games and virtual flashcards. These activities can help children acquire new words, understand their meanings, and reinforce their comprehension skills.
5. Support for phonological awareness and literacy development: Digital media can offer opportunities for practicing phonological skills, such as recognizing and manipulating sounds, through interactive phonics games and rhyming activities. Additionally, digital books and storytelling apps can foster early literacy skills, including print awareness and story comprehension.

Challenges and considerations of using digital media for language development in early childhood education:

1. Overreliance on screen-based activities: Excessive screen time and overreliance on digital media may hinder children's engagement in real-life, hands-on language experiences. Balancing digital media usage with other forms of language learning, such as face-to-face interactions and play-based activities, is crucial.

2. Potential negative effects on social interaction and communication skills: Extended exposure to digital media may limit opportunities for face-to-face communication and social interactions, potentially impacting children's development of vital interpersonal and communication skills.
3. Lack of standardization and quality control in digital media resources: Not all digital media resources are created equal in terms of educational value and appropriateness. Ensuring access to high-quality, age-appropriate, and evidence-based digital media is essential to maximize the benefits for language development.
4. Need for balanced integration with offline language learning activities: While digital media can complement language learning, it should be integrated with offline activities that promote active engagement, social interactions, and hands-on experiences. Combining both digital and non-digital approaches can provide a more holistic language learning environment.
5. Importance of parental and teacher guidance in media usage: Children require guidance and supervision when using digital media to ensure their safety, appropriate content selection, and meaningful learning experiences. Parents and teachers play a crucial role in setting limits, selecting appropriate resources, and fostering responsible media use.

By addressing these challenges and leveraging the benefits, educators and caregivers can harness the potential of digital media to effectively support language development in early childhood education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of digital media in early childhood education has the potential to enhance language development in preschool children. The benefits of incorporating digital media include increased engagement and motivation, exposure to diverse linguistic input, multimodal learning experiences, vocabulary expansion, and support for phonological awareness and literacy development.

However, it is important to recognize and address the challenges associated with using digital media for language development. These challenges include the risk of overreliance on screen-based activities, potential negative effects on social interaction and communication skills, the lack of standardization and quality control in digital

media resources, the need for balanced integration with offline language learning activities, and the importance of parental and teacher guidance in media usage.

To optimize the use of digital media for language development, educators and caregivers should strive for a balanced approach that combines digital resources with real-life experiences and social interactions. This includes selecting high-quality and age-appropriate digital media, setting limits on screen time, providing guidance and supervision, and integrating digital activities with hands-on, play-based learning.

Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects, optimal dosage, and best practices for integrating digital media into early childhood language development programs. By continuing to study and refine the use of digital media in language education, educators, policymakers, and researchers can unlock the full potential of technology as a valuable tool in supporting language acquisition and development during the early years of a child's education.

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