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ABSTRACT

This study examined how parents' beliefs about skilled reading and shared book reading related to the ways they coached their children in learning to read in kindergarten through grade 2 and whether these beliefs and behaviors contributed to their children's reading skill. The focus of the study was on the ways parents responded to children's miscues. Data collected drew on two cohorts of children and their parents who entered the longitudinal study when children were in kindergarten. Of the 70 participating parents, 65 were mothers. The findings converged on three main points. First, parents explicitly attempted to develop reading skills in their children while primarily reading books to their kindergartners by teaching and practicing letter names and sounds and cueing children to take on small pieces of the reading role. In Grade 1, parents focused their children's attention on various clues and modeled various strategies in response to miscues the child made in reading to the parent. Second, parents insisted on accurate reading, ignoring only 2 to 4 percent of miscues in comparison to findings that teachers ignore 40 to 60 percent of miscues. Third, parents' goals and values predict the kinds of coaching they use during shared book reading. Parents whose primary goal was enjoyment added to the reading interaction with comments to enhance interest in and comprehension of the story. Parent behavior during shared book reading in kindergarten predicted 8 to 9 percent of the variance on first-graders' word recognition and passage comprehension, respectively. (Contains 25 references.) (KB)

Parental Coaching in Child-to-Parent Book Reading: Associations with Parent Values and Child Reading Skill

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Ideas about how families and schools should best support children's literacy development are rarely constant within a society. For example, educators are challenged to alter their instructional methods in light of new theories of learning and new curricula; parents may be uncertain as to what role they should play in the acquisition of their children's literacy skills as the curriculum and their child's skill level changes. It seems likely, however, that the behaviours of both parents and teachers are guided by their beliefs and values. In fact Panel 6 of the National Conference of Studies in Teaching (1975) began its report by stating that " It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think...If teaching is done and, in all likelihood will continue to be done by human teachers, the question of the relationships between thought and action become crucial" (p. 1).

However, subsequent research examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and behaviours show mixed results. Some have found strong correlations between beliefs and behaviours (eg., Charlesworth, Hart,& Burts, 1991; Deford, 1985; Hook & Rosenshine,1979; Muchmore, 1994), while others have found little relationship between the two (Duffy & Metheny, 1979; Hoffman, & Kugle, 1982). Similarly within the parenting literature it is assumed that beliefs guide parental actions with children (Ashmore & Brodzinsky, 1986) but the relations between what parents believe about children and how they behave toward them have been found to be quite modest (Holden & Edwards, 1989; Miller, 1988) . Part of the problem may be that the beliefs assessed were too global , or that the behaviours observed were not appropriate to examining belief-behaviour connections, or that situational cues and constraints outweigh general beliefs in moment to moment decisions and moment to moment behaviour.

This presentation stems from a research program examining 1) parents' beliefs about the

nature of skilled reading, their goals for shared book reading, and their values about what is important in developing reading skills, 2) how these relate to the ways parents coach their children in learning to read in kindergarten through grade two, and 3) whether these beliefs and behaviours contribute to their children's reading skill level. Three analyses will be presented which show that parents' views do guide their behaviours when reading books with their children. A focus will be on children's oral reading errors or what Goodman (1969) referred to as "miscues", reflecting the notion that both expected and unexpected oral reading responses are produced by the same interactions of thought and language. However unlike previous studies, which have examined the nature of children's miscues, this study examined the way that parents respond to the miscues that children make.

Methodology

Data collection. This research draws on two cohorts of children and their parent, who entered a three year longitudinal study when children were in the middle of kindergarten. Once parental consent was given and parents identified which parent most often read with the child–mostly mothers-- we telephoned that parent to collect demographic information and a narrative of how the parent had learned to read. Immediately thereafter we mailed a questionnaire called Approaches to Beginning Reading and Reading Instruction, refined for this study from a preliminary instrument developed in previous research (Evans, Barraball & Eberlee, 1998). This questionnaire included 14 items by which parents rated the importance of various activities, materials and goals in learning to read, and 8 items by which they rated the importance of different strategies for recognizing words in text.

At the end of kindergarten and then 10 and 20 months later, children were individually

assessed at school with a cognitive and achievement battery which included the Test of Early Reading Achievement (Reid, Hresko, & Hamill, 1989) in kindergarten and Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (Woodcock, 1987) in grades one and two. Within three months of each of those assessments, a home visit was conducted to observe and audiotape the parent and child reading books together which we brought, and to interview the parent. The books ranged from highly predictable pattern books, which could be "read" by "reading" the picture or drawing on known rote songs and rhymes, to books with more difficult texts. The audiotapes were subsequently transcribed using the transcription format of the Child Language Data Exchange System (MacWhinney, 2000) and coded for the types of verbalizations parents made. More detail on the questionnaire, interviews and coding will be given as these topics arise in this presentation.

In longitudinal research when examining a developing skill, the methodologies have to be adjusted to address the same questions across different developmental time frames. Thus, in kindergarten, when children are in the early stages of reading acquisition we examined parents goals for reading with their children and how these related to the kinds of extra-text comments they made when reading to their child. We also examined how they encouraged and supported their children's attempts to read the simple and predictable texts we provided. This included giving hints on a word before the child attempted it as well as responding to miscues. Towards the end of grade one, when the children we studied were able to read and parents expected them to read, the methodology was adjusted to match the child-to-parent nature of the book reading. Thus in grade one we examined how parents responded to their children's miscues and whether this was related to their opinions on word recognition expressed earlier in the kindergarten year. The year-and-a- half lag between assessing parents' views how this plays out in behaviour is

important in controlling for the possibility that behaviours spawn the beliefs than parents express, rather than our hypothesis that beliefs guide their behaviours.

Sample characteristics. Of the 70 participating parents 93 per cent were mothers. 97 per cent of participating parents were educated in Canada. All but 2 per cent had graduated from highschool and 48 per cent had completed undergraduate studies.. Family income for 69 per cent of the families was between $26,000 and $70,000 a year; 10 per cent had incomes under$26,000; and 19 per cent had incomes above $70,00. Participating children were evenly divided between boys and girls.

Findings

Kindergarten analyses: During the kindergarten year parents on average reported that they read with their child 3.5 hours per week and cited a variety of goals for this activity. The first goal they cited-- what we regard as their most salient goal--most frequently entailed enjoying reading together (47%); 21 per cent cited developing reading skills. When given an opportunity to cite additional goals, about 60 per cent of parents cited developing reading skill and about 60 per cent cited enjoyment. Parents were divided according to whether they first cited skill development or enjoyment, making for a sample of 48 dyads for examining the relationship between parents goals and behaviour.

Table 1. Percentage of Parents Citing Goals for Shared Book Reading

	First Cited	Cited at Any Point
Enjoy reading/time together	**47**	60
Develop reading skill	**21**	58
Develop love/interest in reading	21	41
Learn information	9	26
Build child's confidence	1	7

During the book reading session, parents made an average of 67 general comments which were coded into four main categories, the first three of which are of interest..

Table2. Coding Categories for General Comments

Story Comprehension	Word definitions, plot/character elaboration, questions to child
Interest	Dramatizing voices, suspense questions, attentional vocatives
Teaching letters/sounds	Finding words starting with letter/sound; modelling sound and blend after word read.
(Other	Praise, acknowledgements, managing behaviour, etc.)

Square root transformations were done to correct for positive skewness and a MANCOVA by parent goals completed. Number of books read was entered as a covariate to reduce the variability number of comments in the three categories. This analysis showed no difference in the extent to which parents taught about letters and letter sounds but there were significant differences in their remarks about the story . Parents citing entertainment offered more remarks to enhance interest and tended to make more remarks to enhance story comprehension, as though augmenting the shared book reading experience beyond that of parents who cited developing reading skill first.

Table 3. Mean Number of Parent Comments During Book Reading by First Cited Reading Goal

General Comments	Reading Skill Mean	(Median)	Enjoyment Mean	(Median)	p <	eta sq.
Comprehension	8.00	(4)	13.18	(10)	.07	.07
Interest	10.87	(8)	19.45	(16)	.01	.16
Teaching Letter/Sounds	10.67	(7)	10.00	(4)	.ns	.0

Wilks' Lambda for MANCOVA Group effect : F (3,43) 3.84, p < . 01, eta squared = .21

As expected parents did most of the reading to their kindergarten children but they also

encouraged them to read, such that the children attempted on averge 21% or roughly 200 of the words within the texts. Not surprisingly, this was positively correlated (r = .60) to the child's reading level as measured by the Test of Early Reading Achievement. Children misread 20% of the words–on average about 40 words, and parents almost invariably gave feedback to ensure accurate reading. In fact only 4% of kindergarten children's miscues were ignored , a figure identical to that which I previously found in studying a sample of parent child dyads in grade one (Evans, Barraball & Eberlee, 1998). Parents frequently anticipated that their child would need assistance with reading some words and offered hints in advance. Advance hints and feedback clues to miscues were collapsed and coded into four broad categories . Again totals were corrected for positive skewness through a square root transformation.

Table 4. Coding Categories for Advance Hints and Miscues Feedback.

Word Supply	Provide the word
Try Again/Attentional Clue	Encourage another attempt without word recognition hint
Graphophonemic Clue	Give letter sound/rhyming word/word part/phonics rule; point out misread letter; cover word part; etc.
Context Clue	Point out picture clue/context of word; read ahead; elicit general knowledge
(Ignore /No Feedback)	

A MANCOVA examined these four type of assistance by parent goal for shared reading with number of comments coded in all categories as the covariate. Again parent group exerted a significant effect. Parents in both group equally offered graphophonemic clues, but parents who cited developing reading skill more often pointed to context clues–particularly picture clues and less often supplied the word or encouraged the child to simply try to read the word again without offering a hint on how to go about it.

Table 5. Mean Miscue Feedback During Book Reading by First Cited Reading Goal

	Reading Skill Mean (Median)	Enjoyment Mean (Median)	p <	eta squared
Word Supply	18.79 (14)	23.91 (18)	.01	.14
Try Again/Attentional Clue	2.67 (1)	6.73 (4)	.05	.11
Graphophonemic Clue	14.47 (6)	17.88 (10)	ns	.03
Context Clue	24.60 (16)	12.27 (7)	.01	.13

Wilks' Lambda for MANCOVA Group effect : F (4,42) 3.67, p < . 05, eta squared = .26

Grade One Analyses. The goal here was to examine the relationship between parents views in kindergarten of how to tackle unknown words when reading and what they actually did to help their children over miscues during shared reading in grade one. We transcribed and coded the interactions of a selected subsample of dyads having children within one standard deviation of the mean on either the Reading Comprehension or Word Identification subtest of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test. This was for two reasons. The first was so that the children were skilled enough to take on the primary reading role in these interactions. The second was to control for the effects of child reading ability on parent behaviour. Previous research on teacher miscue feedback and my own research with parents has shown that the type of feedback varies with the reading level of the child. In particular children who are more advanced in reading development in kindergarten are more often given context clues (Bell et al, 1997). In grade one, parents give the poorer readers (comparable to better readers in kindergarten) context clues, and encourage better readers to look more closely at the letters and to try the word again (Evans, Barraball & Eberlee, 1998).

A second control was that we examined how parents responded to miscues only for words that were illustrated on the page and were orthographically regular. Thus both context and

graphophonemic clues could equally apply. There were on average 12 of these criterion words in each of the seven books we brought to the home. Thirdly we selected dyads in which the children made miscues on at least 6 criterion words to ensure a sampling of parent feedback. Finally dyads selected were ones for which parents had returned the survey on reading the previous kindergarten year.

Thirty-nine dyads met all of these criteria. In this sample children misread an average of 13 criterion words (range 6-24). As replication of a previously mentioned finding, parents ignored just 2% of them.. On average they offered 19 feedback comments to these miscues (range 6-78).

A previous factor analysis of 133 kindergarten surveys showed that seven of the eight items concerning strategies for word recognition loaded clearly on two uncorrelated factors.

Table 6. Factor Structure of Parent Ratings of Strategies for Word Recognition

Item	Factor Loading	
	Context	Graphophonemic
Use general knowledge of world/topic	.82	.21
Use meaning of what has been read so far	.78	.16
Use picture cues that appear near word	.75	-.05
Skip over word to rest of sentence	.73	.23
Sound out each letter or group of letters	-.33	.71
Divide word into smaller parts of syllables	-.30	.71
Use pronunciation rules (eg final "e" rule)	-.03	.73

Parents were divided into those with positive versus negative factor scores–i.e., higher versus lower endorsement–on the context factor and then on the graphophonemic factor. Preliminary analyses confirmed that these groups did not differ in the child's reading level,

number of criterion words miscued, or number of feedback remarks made to the child's miscues (see Appendix A). Parallel MANOVA's were conducted to compare parents's response to miscues first according to one factor, and then according to the other, and for only first response to the miscues and all responses to the miscues. There was no significant difference in the extent to which parents gave terminal feedback , that is simply supplied the miscued word. Regardless of whether parents endorsed context or graphophonemic strategies, and regardless of whether we looked at the strategy first provided or provided at any point in the feedback after a miscue, parents supplied the word roughly a third of the time.

The results for sustaining feedback were quite different. MANCOVA's were conducted entering square root transformations of the three types of sustaining help as the dependent variables with number of responses to miscues as the covariate. (For interest, partial intercorrelations are in Appendix B.) How strongly parents endorsed graphophonemic strategies had no effect on the kinds of sustaining feedback they provided, but how strongly they endorsed context approaches did. Parents who endorsed skipping the word, relying on picture clues, etc. more often pointed out context clues and less often helped the child to sound out the word.

Table 7. Feedback Strategies by Endorsement of Context Approach.

	Low Context Mean	(Median)	High Context Mean	(Median)	p	eta squared
Try Again/Attentional Clue	3.15	(2.00)	2.00	(1.00)	n.s.	.04
Graphophonemic Clue	7.35	(7.50)	5.11	(3.00)	.01	.19
Context Clue	2.70	(1.00)	5.16	(4.00)	.05	.12

Wilks' Lambda for MANCOVA Group Effect $F(3, 34) = 4.39$ $p < .01$, eta squared = .28

Table 8. Feedback Strategies by Endorsement of Graphophonemic Approach.

	Low Graphoph. Mean	(Median)	High Graphoph. Mean	(Median)	p
Try Again/Attentional Clue	2.12	(1.00)	2.95	(2.50)	ns
Graphophonemic Clue	7.17	(8.00)	5.55	(4.00)	ns
Context Clue	4.94	(2.00)	3.09	(2.00)	ns

Wilks' Lambda for MANCOVA Group Effect F (3, 34) = .956 p > .05, eta squared = .08

The lack of significant results when parents are divided according to the extent to which they endorse graphophonemic approaches at first seem puzzling. It likely reflects the fact that the majority of these parents recalled learning to read via phonics, they more highly endorsed the items on the graphophonemic than context factor, (M = 4.35 vs 3.20 on a 5-point scale), they showed less variability in their ratings on the graphophonemic factor (SD = .54 vs .88) and they likely viewed as commonplace or mainstream. Parents highly endorsing a context approach diverged from the norm and their behaviour was more highly predicted from these divergent values.

Summary

These results converge on three main points. First parents explicitly attempted to develop reading skills in their children while primarily reading books to their kindergarten children by teaching and practising letter names and sounds, and cueing children to take on little pieces of the reading role. Similarly in grade one, they focussed their children's attention on various clues and modelled various strategies in response to miscues the child made in reading to the parent. Secondly, parents insisted on accurate reading, ignoring just 2 to 4% of miscues. This stands in stark contrast to studies of classroom teachers wherein miscues have been reported to be ignored

an average of 40 to 60 % of the time (Allington, 1980; Chinn et al. 1993; Hoffman et al, 1984.). Together these findings highlight a unique contribution that parents may be making to their children' reading development through shared book reading during the early school years. They do not have the same need to move along as do teachers working with a whole classroom, and they can afford to spend considerable effort in coaching accurate reading in these one-to-one settings.

Third, the goals and values parents express around reading predict the kinds of coaching comments that parents make during shared book reading. Parents whose primary goal is enjoyment add to the interaction with comments to enhance interest in and comprehension of the story. In addition when helping their child over miscues, parents who more highly endorse context approaches to word recognition use this strategy more frequently and use a graphophonemic strategy less frequently than parents who less highly endorse this approach . Thus when the beliefs measures are specific enough and the situational factors controlled, clear belief-behaviour connection are found.

The big question, of course, is whether what parents do makes any difference. Previous research has shown that classroom instructional approach appears to determine miscues patterns. Children taught by methods which emphasize meaning make more real-word miscues with little graphic similarity to the printed word and make more no response miscues than those taught by methods emphasizing phonics, who make miscues which are graphophonically similar but nonwords (Dank, 1976; DeLawter 1975, Norton, 1976 as cited by Wixson, 1975) However there is little evidence that the type of feedback has a significant affect on reading achievement. A singular exception is the work of Hoffman et al (1984) who found among second graders, a small negative relationship between teachers supplying the word and subsequent reading achievement.

I did complete two regressions to predict standard scores on the Word Identification and Passage Comprehension subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test in grade one (see Appendix C). TERA scores were entered as the first step in recognition of the fact that early literacy skill is the best predictor of later reading skill. The frequency of the various categories of extra-text and word recognition supports in kindergarten book reading were entered as the second step. What parents said during book reading predicted an additional 9 per cent of the variance on the Passage Comprehension subtest ($p < .06$) and an additional 8 percent of the variance on the Word Recognition subtest ($p < .06$). These numbers have a familiar ring to them. For example Bus, Van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini (1995) and Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) concluded that time spent in shared book reading with preschoolers contributes eight per cent of the variance to reading achievement; Evans, Shaw & Bell (2000) found that parental teaching of letter names and sounds contributed nine percent of the variance in kindergarten children's knowledge of letters and 10% of the variance in knowledge of the sounds letters make, and LeFevre et. al in this symposium report that the extent to which parent report teaching their child to read and print contributes 8 per cent of the variance in alphabet knowledge in English and 7% in French.. So it is clear that parents play a supporting role, but we should also bear in mind that what may be more critical is the classroom curriculum.

Finally, as just a glimpse into our next moves in this research program, we are coding more transcripts and coding feedback to all the miscues to see if belief behaviour connections still hold when the methodology is loosened up a bit. We also want to look longitudinally at parent responses to miscues, to see how parent behaviour changes in response to perceived reading progress or lack thereof in their child. And with still more energy or one-track mindedness, we will be transcribing and coding the explanations and reflections parents made on what they were doing during these sessions when they listened to the audiotapes we made.

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Appendix A

Basic Descriptive Statistics of Sample for Analysis of Feedback to Criterion Miscues (n = 39)

	Mean	SD
Word ID SS	100.28	7.29
Pass Comp SS	101.11	5.51
First parent feedback to criterion miscue		
supply word (35%)	4.84	4.35
give sustaining feedback (65%)	8.17	4.34
Total parent feedback to miscues	19.62	7.69
Total sustaining feedback (63%)	12.75	7.49

Note. There are no significant difference by parent endorsement of context or graphophonemic approach to word recognition s in any of the above variables.

Appendix B

Partial Inter-Correlations Controlling for Amount of Sustaining Feedback

	Try Again F.	Grapho. F	Context F	Context A	Grapho A.
Try Again Feedback	1.00	-.21	-.62***	-.39**	.02
Graphophonemic Feedback	-.07	1.00	-.64***	-.281	-.06
Context Feedback	-.67***	-.69***	1.00	.54***	.03
Context Approach	-.38*	-.35*	.53***	1.00	.05
Graphophonemic Approach	.17	-.17	.01	.04	1.00

Note: Correlations above the diagonal are for first sustaining feedback moves; those below the diagonal are for all sustaining feedback moves

Appendix C

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Passage Comprehension

Model	R	R Square	Adj R Square	F Change	df	p
TERA	.74	.55	.54	78.46	(1,64)	.001
TERA+ Behaviour In Book Reading	.80	.64	.59	2.07	(7, 57)	.06

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Word Recognition

Model	R	R Square	Adj R Square	F Change	df	p
TERA	.78	.61	.60	98.13	(1,64)	.001
TERA+ Behaviour In Book Reading	.83	.69	.64	2.14	(7, 57)	.06

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