

iPad Reading and Students with Disruptive Behaviors: A Case Study

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Abstract:

The purpose of this case study was to explore the influence of iPads on reading homework completion of students with disruptive behaviors. Three elementary students with disruptive behaviors (incompliant in doing school homework), ages 8-10 participated in this study. With the use of tablet-based readings, results demonstrated the acceleration of those participants' reading homework completion levels. Recommendations for future research and practice were provided.

Keywords: compliance, reading, homework, iPad

ملخص:

ان الغرض من دراسة الحالة هذه هو الكشف عن تأثير الأجهزة اللوحية (الآيباد) على الأداء القرائي للطلاب ذوي السلوك المعضل/الفوضوي. ثلاثة طلاب بالمرحلة الابتدائية من ذوي السلوكيات الفوضوية، تتراوح أعمارهم ما بين ٨-١٠ سنوات شاركوا بهذه الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج ارتفاع مستويات اكمال الواجب القرائي باستخدام الأجهزة اللوحية. خلصت الدراسة الى عدد من التوصيات ومقترحات لأبحاث ودراسات مستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإذعان، القراءة، الواجب المنزلي، الآيباد.

Introduction

Homework completion is one of the essential aspects in reinforcing students' learning, especially, if the homework is a reading assignment. When children engage in reading, they are more likely to experience academic success. Evidence of their learning acquisition can be demonstrated through their reading (Justice & Sofka, 2010). Wanzek, Al Otaiba and Petscher (2014) claimed one of the basic reasons for being at risk of failure and dropping out of high school is students' shortage of successful reading skills. Accordingly, reading plays a major role in the success or failure in children's academic performance which will affect later on their career lives.

In addition to good reading instruction during the school day, reinforcement of reading skills must occur outside of the school environment. Amelioration of students' reading deficiencies includes compliance of reading homework assigned by teachers. Reading homework completion is essential, specifically for those who are struggling in reading. The acceleration of students' reading completion can be achieved by scaffolding. Justice and Sofka (2010) defined scaffolding as an instructional method used by a parent, a teacher or even a peer who is more knowledgeable than the student to pave the way for more efficient reading. Scaffolding can be represented in various ways such as parents' assistance in a reading activity or a peer's explanation for a specific reading task.

Parents' role in homework completion is demonstrated in their encouragement and help to their child in reading activities. According to Buyuktaskapu (2012), family support plays a pivotal role in developing a child's reading skills. By their help, parents convey a message that reading is a fundamental skill not only related to school activity, but also to our daily life experiences (Buyuktaskapu). Therefore, knowing such importance promotes students' compliance with reading homework. Significance of reading is demonstrated in realizing its purpose. Kucer (2014) indicated any type of reading has a purpose derived from the environmental context around learners. In this context both reader and the text are interacting and operating with each other. The association of reading to our lives is reading's basic purpose which must be recognized by children. Providing young learners with the purpose of reading will increase their compliance with doing the reading homework (Kucer, 2014).

Kotaman (2013) pointed out that reading is related to the learners' success in the early years of school since it is a key for all other learning fields such as writing, math, science, or social studies. Furthermore, he stated it is the parents' duty to integrate reading into their children's daily life habits (e.g., associating the details of a story to their social contexts). By this integration, children will attain cues for academic excellences and acquire prolific experiences such as being initiative and motivated to gain more knowledge. Parents can facilitate the development of their children's language skills such speaking and writing through the improvement of reading. To improve reading skills, parents can reinforce their children's positive attitudes towards reading (Kotaman). These attitudes can be used as future indicators for the children's successful accomplishments in school (Kotaman).

Literature Review

Compliance in Doing Homework

Compliance is rated as one of most the problematic issues in children's behaviors. Jenson, Rhode, and Neville (2010) described non-compliance as a behavior in which the child exhibits refusal for complying with the adults' requests. Ignorance, pretending not to hear or direct arguing are the prominent features of incompliance (Jenson, et al.). Research and literature demonstrated the importance of homework in students' academic success and progression. In addition, these educational domains highlight the significant role of homework in promoting higher levels of learning. Compliance with doing the school homework, especially reading improves students' learning and ameliorates their knowledge in the

educational area they have studied and tackled. Axelrod and Zank (2012) highlighted the positive influence of compliance with school work on students' academic performance. Accordingly, educators have to choose the most effective methods to increase their students' compliance with doing the required tasks such as home assignment. Adopting verbal disapproval or punishment may solve problem of homework incompleteness, but these methods will not be exemplary ways to improve students' compliance (Axelrod & Zank). There are several factors that impact students' desires for completing their homework. According to Tompkins (2002), students' compliance in doing homework is basically determined by several aspects such as explicit meaning and reason for doing homework and clear procedures and descriptions of the homework. Giving descriptive directions for doing the homework explains to the child the requirements of that work (Jenson, et al., 2010).

Other aspects that impact students' compliance with doing homework involve: students' abilities for doing homework, and the teachers' ways for reviewing and giving feedback (Tompkins, 2002; Margolis & McCabe, 1997). According to Tompkins (2002), the teachers' attitudes in reviewing child's homework impact child's product of homework. These attitudes could be whether the teacher was enthusiastic, supportive or curious in student's performance. Children know their teachers' attitudes in reviewing their homework; therefore, such attitudes will influence their products (Tompkins). Positive attitudes in reviewing homework accelerate student's compliance with doing homework which leads in improving his learning levels.

Benefits of homework are demonstrated when it is assigned to meet students' needs and to improve their levels in an educational field. Margolis and McCabe (1997) claim that reading homework is a tool for helping students to increase their learning levels, and develop their reading skills. Feedback that includes the purposes of a reading homework and how to improve the current levels is essential in developing the student's reading skill. When students realize the purposes of their homework, how it is related to their academic levels and the benefits of reading in their lives, their compliances' levels for doing the reading homework will significantly increase (Margolis & McCabe).

Tablets and Homework

The emergence of technology has ameliorated various fields in education. Technological applications are being adopted by several schools to facilitate students' learning. Teachers are using such products to pave the

way for more effective teaching practices. Parents may also utilize these technological applications to increase their children's learning levels. Compliance with homework completion increase students' success in their academic work. Accordingly, homework could be presented in new methods for accelerating students' compliance with this school task (Bryan & Burstein, 2004). One potential tool is the use of tablets such as iPads. According to McClanahan, Williams, Kennedy and Tate (2012), iPads are the most prevalent devices of information and communication in education due to their efficacy in the teaching and learning processes. These authors claimed various school districts used the iPads to fulfill the students' learning needs. In addition, iPads were used by these schools to achieve several educational targets such as effective instruction that mimics the technological atmosphere where students live today (McClanahan et al., 2012). The interactive applications of iPads create innovative learning contexts for students to learn reading or writing. McClanahan et al. (2012) indicated learning how to use the iPad is easy and students can master this usage for independent use. Neely, Rispoli, Camargo, Davis and Boles (2013) discussed the unequivocal, prominent effect of the iPads on the student's behavior. Students are more involved in the instruction when iPads are used (Neely et al., 2013).

Compliance to Homework Completion and Tablets

Students' developments in all aspects of learning are being sought by educators and parents. Therefore, iPads are used for developing students' learning in all fields. Murray and Olcese (2011) stated that iPads are multi-function tools. Due to iPads' various options, they are used by many teachers to increase students' involvement in the learning process. Research indicates the efficiency of iPads as reinforcement tools which impacts several learning skills such as young learners' reading. Kay (2012) stated that touch screen devices such as iPads can be effective reinforcers to reduce challenging behaviors such as school work avoidance or increase positive desired behaviors such as compliance with homework. She indicated one advantage of iPads' apps is that these applications are available for children anytime and anywhere. Children can choose their preferred apps on their own because of the ease of iPad's usage.

Hutchison, Beschoner and Schmidt -Crawford (2012) stated the iPads' applications and how they present effective reading texts which can be used in literacy instruction and to improving reading problems of students. iPads options such as reading apps or e-books provide interactive environment for ameliorating reading. E-Books or electronic pictured

stories in iPads enhance students' reading because they are supported with interactive audiovisual texts.

Digital reading devices such as iPads encourage students to read since these devices have various options. These options include: creating story books with multiple multimedia applications such as visual texts or pictures with audio or video illustrations. Such options enhance the books and encourage students to perform reading practices in an attractive method (Larson, 2010). In this way we can increase students' compliance in doing the homework and at the same time encourage them to create their own stories, in their preferable format. Providing opportunities for children to create their own story books increase their compliance with the reading homework. In addition, by digital reading devices, we establish effective connection between children and reading texts (Larson, 2010).

Providing students with opportunities to experience reading with creative ways increases their interests to read, and therefore, they will be compliant with reading homework. According to Saine (2012), iPads reading or creating book apps stimulates students' creative thinking and encourages them to discover more about reading texts through these apps. This could be an efficient tool for increasing students' compliance with homework completion. In these creative apps, children can create their own books and train on the internet usage and gathering information skills. These effective skills could be all learned with teachers or parents' scaffolding (Saine). Reading or creating story books would be effective tools for increasing students' compliance with doing homework, especially if that homework was reading. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper was to demonstrate the importance of compliance with reading homework for students whose English is their second language. In addition, this paper showcased how interactive reading books promote compliance with homework completion.

Methodology

Participants and Setting

Three elementary, Caucasian boys, ages 8-10, whose English was not their first language participated in the study. These subjects exhibited incompliance behaviors in doing the daily reading homework, as perceived by their parents at home, and stated by their classroom teachers, when it comes to classroom discussions about the readings assigned the day before. According to Jenson, et al. (2010), wait time for the child to comply with a request elapses between three to five seconds. According to their parents,

participants exceeded this period of time by more than 15 minutes before doing the reading homework, and most of the times they did not do it.

As typical in the Kuwaiti society, each of the participants had his own iPad. The participants used to spend their leisure times playing video games online or on different applications (apps) via their iPads. Therefore, the researcher investigated the influence of this preferable device for the participants in increasing their compliances with doing the reading homework. Unfortunately, the reading texts assigned by English Language Arts teachers at their school were not available online/electronically. Therefore, the researcher used *Little Stories. Bedtime books* App as the intervention for increasing the participants' compliance with doing the reading homework. The study took place at the researcher's office. The participants were asked to read all their reading books assigned by the researcher using the iPad.

Research Questions

To fulfill the research purpose, the study investigated the following questions:

1. What was the effect of using the iPad app (*Little Stories. Bedtime books*) on the participants' compliance in doing their reading homework?
2. How did *Little Stories. Bedtime books* app increase the participant's interest in doing the reading homework?

Procedures

Measure. The goal of the study was to decrease the time the participants took before beginning their reading homework. The measure was the time the participants took to be compliant and finish their reading homework. According to parents' observations, and data recordings, the participants' mean time they consumed to complete their reading homework elapsed between 12-15 minutes. The reduction of that time was representative of those children's compliances. In other words, the less time each child took before doing his reading homework, the more compliant he would be. It is hypothesized completing the reading homework daily will improve the participants' reading. From this it is noted that completing reading homework is academically and socially important.

Intervention. The iPads app (*Little Stories. Bedtime books*) was the intervention in this study. This intervention was selected by the researcher for several reasons. The main reason was the participants' interest in iPad. In addition, since the participants had iPads and they knew very well how

to use it, *Little Stories. Bedtime books* was an effective tool to increase the students' compliance with doing homework. In this app, the students had the option to read the stories, or fairytales, with their names. When commencing reading in this iPad, the user can enter his/her name, so the entire story/fairytale's main character would be that child. In addition, beautiful and engaging pictures were added to help in raising the child's positive behaviors by providing examples on them. These options created an interactive reading environment for the participants, accelerating their interests for more reading attempts and more compliance with reading homework completion.

Observations, and time counting were used to record/collect data on the participants' time consumed to complete the reading homework. The researcher referred to the participants' classroom teachers to see if the app's stories and fairytales would fit as reading homework for the participants. With classroom teachers, the researcher assigned a couple of stories on that app to be the reading homework for the participants. After doing all the needed preparations, arrangement and collecting stable (baseline observational data) on the participants' performances, the intervention (the use of *Little Stories. Bedtime books* app) commenced. By this phase, the app's influence was observed and whether it caused that change in the student's performance rather than any other factors. All observations were recorded in an observational log (data source) and used to derive results.

Results

Results demonstrated that participants decreased the amount of time they used to complete their reading homework. This was indicative that the intervention had a key role in encouraging participants to read the assigned readings daily and comply to their teachers. The implementation of the intervention in this study impacted the dependent variable or reading homework completion. Electronic books in *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* app were appropriate tool for accelerating the children's compliance with reading homework. According to Horner et al. (2005), implementing a practical intervention would enrich the study's social validity. In this study, *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* app was a practical intervention since the participants had iPads and adopted them as tools for leisure. Using the observational data, the researcher also calculated the mean (average) time the participants took to start the homework. It was noted that the participants took less time to finish the reading homework than before. They took (2-5 seconds) to start doing the readings with the iPad, in comparison to paper, traditional reading (they took 12-15 minutes to

comply). The researcher asked the participants about their perspectives regarding using the electronic books instead of reading them in papers. The participants explained that these versions of books are more attractive and interesting since they enabled them to navigate and explore many resources about any topics provided in the books. The participants also expressed their enthusiasm to learn how to be the main characters in such stories, and learn new words accompanied with engaging melodies. The participants demonstrated that these books encouraged them to learn more about the stories by their interactive pictures and demonstrations.

Discussion

Results implied the positive impact of *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* app on the compliance of homework completion. It is evident that this app changed the non-compliant behavior into more compliant performance with doing the homework. In addition, it encouraged the participants' creative thinking and reflection of reading stories, which they were the main characters in. This result corresponds with what Saine (2012) inferred - that iPads encourage the children's creativity in learning. It is noted that *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* accelerated the students' compliance, and it would be an appropriate tool for educators to increase such behavior even in classroom settings. With this app, the children became more engaged in reading homework, continued smoothly to answer the discussion questions after each reading sessions and talked about their experience with these electronic and interesting books to his family and even teachers at school. Saine highlighted the significant effect of these interactive apps in involving students in core instruction. *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* is an appropriate tool for encouraging young learners for obtaining positive behaviors which affect their academic performances at school by making them more engaged in this environment. When children exhibited compliant behaviors, they would learn more effectively. Their learning levels will be promoted, and they will demonstrate more successful efforts in school life. Homework completion is one of the key elements that lead to success in learning.

Results demonstrated the high compliance levels of the participants in doing the reading homework when *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* was used. Through intervention, the children sometimes wanted to start reading before even the assigned time of the daily homework time. From that it is deduced that the children's interest levels in complying with reading homework increased because of the iPad's usage. This could be due to the app's options in providing very interactive books with audio and visual

demonstrations. The time spent after the reading homework was completed included discussion. This result demonstrated the children's positive change regarding homework. The study's results indicated the efficiency of the iPad's applications in increasing other domains beyond compliance levels. *Little Stories. Bedtime Books* application was an effective tool in improving the participants' compliance with reading homework, their interests in homework and related materials to this school assignment. The results revealed the impact of this app in increasing the participants' compliance and interests of reading homework.

Recommendations

This study came up with multiple recommendations that could be considered for future research and practice:

1. More research in the area of compliance to fulfill academic assignments and homework and students with problematic behaviors should be conducted. Such issues emerge in the field of education, and many in-service teachers do not obtain the appropriate tools to deal with problems such as incompliance.
2. Pre-service teachers in college of education should be well-prepared and educated on how to deal and encounter such problems by their future students and adopt the research-based strategies to encourage their students for more learning engagement that could not be fulfilled without compliance.
3. Learning environments/contexts including assignments and homework should be engaging. That could be through the use of modern, technological tools to motivate students for more successful contributions in their school life.
4. It would be beneficial for educators and educational researchers to explore other iPads applications that can be effective not only in literal instruction, but also in social engagement in learning.

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