
The impact of an intervention literacy programme with pre-school children from a very low social background

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Résumé

There is a lot of literature that proved that training phonological awareness is quite important to prevent learning difficulties (e.g., Adams, 1990; Stahl & Murray, 1994). Also there is a significant amount of research that supports the idea that it is important for children to engage in early writing experiences. Research shows that there is a strong relation between invented spelling and understanding the alphabetic principle; that increasing the quality of invented spelling promotes phonemic awareness and that there is an impact in experiences of invented spelling on early reading (Alves Martins et al., 2013, 2014; Ouellete et al. (2013). There are many reasons for engaging reading activities, Reading can be a source of pleasure, a source of information, a classroom task, or a context for social interaction. Children that have more early reading experiences are able to explicit more reasons for wanting to learn to read and have more success in learning (Mata 2006). In contrast to the experience of middle-class children, children in low income families have less early literacy experiences (Teale, 1986)

Our aim is to investigate the effect of an intervention programme for children on kindergarten's emergent literacy skills from low social backgrounds. The programme included invented spelling activities, phonological awareness training and reading stories and other functional activities of reading and writing. Most of the intervention programmes focus only one of these literacy dimensions, and we intent to explore the effect of a programme that includes phonological awareness, invented spelling activities and functional activities. This is an experimental study in which 34 pre-school children grade from a very low social background, who were not able to read and write, were given a pre-test and a post-test intended to evaluate phonological awareness, invented spelling and children's knowledge about literacy functions. Children were randomly divided in two groups, experimental and control, equivalent in terms of age, knowledge of letters, phonological abilities and intelligence. Between the two tests, the experimental group participated in 45 sessions of the intervention programme and the control group had the same number of sessions occupied with drawing and math activities. In the literacy intervention program children were trained in several phonological tasks; instruction followed the developmental hierarchy of linguistic units (i.e., from syllables to onset-rime units, to phonemes), with one task operation (e.g., blending or segmenting) emphasized at a time. Children also participated in group invented spelling activities and listen to read stories or other written materials that were used from functional purposes.

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Children who participated in the literacy intervention programme showed a significant improvement on number of correctly phonetized letters (there were a significant number of children that presented alphabetic spellings) and phonological awareness (children improved significantly in phonetic tasks) , and on the their knowledge about literacy functions when compared with children of control group.

Children from control group were submitted to similar sessions than the ones of intervention group, after the study was finished .

Mots-Clés: phonological awareness, invented spelling, intervention literacy programmes, pre, school children