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# Teacher-Led Read Alouds and Electronic Books to Engage Students and Enhance Achievement in the Area of Comprehension

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**Teacher-Led Read Alouds and Electronic Books to Engage Students and Enhance  
Achievement in the Area of Comprehension**

by

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## Chapter I: Introduction

### Purpose of the Study

Laughter, shouting, curiosity, pointing, excitement, and engagement; these are all common characteristics of student behavior during teacher led read alouds and e-books in an elementary school setting. There are many similarities between teacher led read alouds and e-books, but can their differences have a negative effect on literacy achievement or no effect at all? This study will present the effects of teacher led read alouds and e-books in regards to student achievement with comprehension and will also touch on the importance of student engagement in this area.

“Thirty nine percent (39%) of 5- to 8-year-olds have read, or been read to from an e-book presented on a tablet, reader, or other mobile device” (Richter & Courage, 2017, p.1). “Ninety-eight percent (98%) of schools have one or more computers in the classroom with internet access” (Statistic Brain Research Institute, 2017, p.1). Electronic books and many other devices are being used at elementary schools in communities throughout the world. Electronic books or e-books, in this case, are an electronic version of a printed children's book that can be read on a computer or handheld device. These elementary age students are typically listening to the device which reads the words that are flashing across the screen. Think about the capabilities and capacity of student learning with these technologies. Using technology in the classroom can be beneficial for students when it comes to literacy instruction. There is more to teaching nowadays than just lectures and chalkboards at any level of education. Teachers now have more resources than one could have ever imagined to help instruct students. Electronic books are a way to teach these literacy skills and when modeled appropriately students can use this technology to build

these skills; comprehension, language, and decoding. E-books allow students to see a story come to life. This promotes engagement in areas of imagination and gaining knowledge about the world. Children who are interested and attentive throughout reading instruction explore the book more thoroughly, generate discussion, show an interest in the illustrations, and sustain their attention throughout the reading. This type of engagement has many positive short and long term emergent reader outcomes (Frijters, Barron & Brunello, 2000). Students now have the capability to not only see from their teacher that reading can be enjoyable, but also from an e-book within the same classroom. Electronic books can all be done independently and at the student's own reading level which, for a teacher, can be an added bonus to differentiate instruction for students.

As a teacher, modeling reading along with other literacy components is necessary for desired student achievement when it comes to independent learning. Certain behaviors must be introduced before the e-book; how to build comprehension skills, language skills, and decoding skills. Teacher led read alouds can be useful in this way. Students are able to listen to a story out loud and the teacher is able to ask questions about details in the story. All in which will support student's retention and recall of information. At pre reading stages of development internal dialogue, read alouds with an expert adult or teacher that involves explicit instruction, think alouds, and interactive discussions can help move the comprehension learning process more quickly (Santoro, Baker, Fien, Smith, Chard, 2016).

To establish some of these key concepts a teacher led read aloud may be more useful than an e-book. Looking at and discussing text throughout a teacher led read alouds provides students with thinking language. The foundational vocabulary that can be connected with other words and content comprehension frames how the reader see themselves and the world around them

(Pinker, 2007). For students to accurately use e-books within a classroom, they must first gather these skills from a skilled teacher who is modeling these read alouds appropriately and repeatedly. A successful read aloud will be taught through teacher guidance and also through facilitation of a group discussion. Teachers will discuss vocabulary which is used throughout the text. Lastly, the teacher led read alouds will link listening and reading comprehension with purpose. Santoro et al. (2016) discusses using read-alouds to explicitly teach comprehension skills and strategies (e.g., identifying the key idea, making inferences, summarizing), can foster interactive academic discussions about text. Electronic books do not always promote these skills adequately, which is where teacher led read alouds become pertinent.

### **Research Questions**

Which method of read aloud (teacher led or e-book) is better suited for teaching elementary age students comprehension? Does the data prove either approach to be more effective?

In my kindergarten classroom the use of technology and e-books is a daily occurrence. After having taught how to use the technology the students are able to use e-books independently and answer questions about a story. Having found that some students don't always critically analyze the questions asked, it occurred to me that maybe they didn't get as much out of the e-book than a traditional teacher led read aloud. Or perhaps, they just developmentally don't have the skills to answer the questions correctly. I want to clarify these things in my research on this topic. After I collect my findings, I will be reevaluating how I implement e-books or if I implement them to the extent that I currently have.

Watching the students in my class for the past four years, I have noticed that students

with any form of technology always seem to be more engaged and seem to enjoy whatever it is they are doing. E-books that have many distractions, sounds, or other special effects seem to be the most engaging, but also are the least effective with literacy skills. While, on the other hand, I have also noticed time and time again that students seem to be intrigued by teacher read stories. Teachers are able to disguise their voices to match the characters in the story, they are able to use other expression when necessary, and they are also able to ask appropriate questions to hold students attention throughout the story which allows students to connect to the story and share their own knowledge on the subject.

## **Methods**

In all aspects of technology based read alouds or traditional teacher led read alouds, there are many pros and cons when it comes to teaching and student understanding of literacy skills. I hope to determine which form of read alouds is the most effective with comprehension success.

To do this, I plan on presenting two different stories about the same complexity and length to my kindergarten students. One story will be read by the teacher (myself) and the other will be found online through YouTube. I will present conceptual questions to six of my students in an interview setting; who is the main character(s), where does the story take place, what is the main idea, what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story, etc. The students that I interview will be of various academic levels. I will have two students who are academically lower, two students who are in target range, and two students who are on academically higher in reading. The other story will be online with the same prompts and pauses throughout the story. The only difference will be with the story itself; however each story will be of a similar genre,

length, and complexity.

### **Limitations**

This research mainly looked at e-books which had limited inter-activeness with the students. When looking at teacher led read alouds I limited my observations to my own school and to teachers who teach kindergarten. This would be a convenience sample.

### **Definitions**

- E-books - Electronic version of a printed children's book that can be read on a computer or handheld device designed specifically for this purpose. With this type of e-book the child is typically listening to the device reading the words which are on the screen.
- Read aloud - The act of reading a story out loud to help build many important foundational skills, introduces vocabulary, provides a model of fluent, expressive reading, and helps children recognize what reading for pleasure is all about.
- Think alouds - The act of verbalizing aloud while reading a selection orally. These verbalizations include describing things in which the reader is doing as they read to monitor their comprehension. This is a strategy to model for students how skilled readers construct meaning from a text.
- Comprehension - The act of understanding what you are reading; intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing.
- Engagement - The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn new content.

## **Chapter II: Review of the Literature**

In the review of literature my research will explore teacher led read alouds and e-books. It will discuss the meaning of a read aloud (teacher led and technology based), show how educators have implemented both reading techniques, and understanding the importance of engagement. The research will be focusing on these things listed, but also showing its effects on comprehension.

The research will continue to explore the how teacher led read alouds and e-books are both useful and effective. It will also discuss how a teacher implements these strategies and what exactly may increase or decrease effects of student comprehension. With both methods there are different ways to check for student understanding which will also be discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, research on engagement with both teacher led read alouds and e-books will be shown to be positive and also negative with reading comprehension. The purpose of this chapter, will be for the reader to decide which option is best for his or her classroom when deciding how to teach and practice comprehension skills.

### **Teacher-Led Read Aloud vs. Technology-Based Read Aloud**

“A read aloud is very typical in primary levels and is how teachers embed language, vocabulary, and concepts of print while reading a story out loud to students” (Teacher Vision, 2015, p.1). These are generally stories that students are unable to read by themselves, but have the cognitive ability to understand through their listening level ability. Sometimes, in an educational setting, read-alouds are used for the purpose of enjoying and listening to a story, but most times educators use this time to teach comprehension skills. This is also how a vast number of students become more engaged in literacy, expand their imaginations, and also gain new

knowledge about the world around them. Along the way teachers are also promoting reading as a worthwhile, enjoyable activity. Traditional teacher led read-alouds tend to have a much greater outcome for growth in comprehension and language skills (Stahl, 2003). Read alouds are one of the most important and intentional activities in an elementary education setting.

If you were to walk into a primary classroom you may observe much more technology than ever before. As previously mentioned, “Ninety-eight percent (98%) of schools have one or more computers in the classroom with internet access” (Statistic Brain Research Institute, 2017, p.1). Researchers have found that with the use of technology in the classroom there is also a new found approach to reading instruction. Students are able to reap similar benefits from e-books, online read alouds, and CD ROM books compared to traditional print versions of read alouds. It is, however, necessary that teachers properly assist their students in the use of these technologies otherwise the outcome will not be as beneficial. Read alouds have been shown to support young students in the area of literacy development and now with technology integration it can be done within a small group of students or independently, all in the realm of a general education classroom. The Electronic books style is one example of how teachers and beginning readers can use technology for various reading skills and programs (Ciampa, 2012).

### **Implementation**

Implementation of technology-based read alouds for literacy development requires much modeling, demonstrating, and discussion from the teacher (McKenna, Labbo, Reinking, & Zucker, 2003). Students need the proper guidance to become independent with the content and materials. Too often it is thought that students already know how to use devices, applications, or the internet. Educators cannot make a generalized assumption of what students know or don't

know. It is essential to explain exactly how and when you would like students to use the devices and programs, demonstrate the proper etiquette of being on the Internet, and also be sure to communicate the consequences for misusing a device or program. Mckenna et al., (2003) suggests to first, introduce the device or application being used, then navigate the program while having the students attention. Actually navigating the program allows students to see how to function both the device and the application being used (i.e. tapping a button to hear the story, or swiping to turn pages). As students become more familiar it is crucial to continue to guide them throughout the routine and the use of the technology and applications.

“Invite students to take turns operating the application to check for understanding” (Mckenna et al., 2003, p.281). Students will inevitably build strategies for making decisions when using the application independently. Be sure to show students how to properly use a device or application with a partner. When this is complete be sure to have students think critically about what they learned and have them discuss with the class, this encourages students to think of technology as an educational tool rather than a toy. Finally, when you feel as though students can use the devices and applications appropriately integrate within your classroom reading routine. Using print (teacher led read alouds) and technology based read alouds simultaneously allows students to see the interconnectedness of print and digital literacies (McKenna et al., 2003). This is necessary piece to using technology in the classroom. Basically, an educator cannot *only* use technology to introduce literacy skills and expect students to transfer this knowledge independently with their own reading, guidance is needed. There must also be scaffolding at different levels for students to better understand and interpret literacy skills in print. Not every student comes into a classroom with the same technology knowledge and/or experience.

McKenna describes a model classroom as having electronic storybooks with decoding scaffolds, computer-guided word study, and software designed to reinforce concepts about print, along with others. However, this researcher is only looking at a classroom in respect to technologies.

“Students who observe an adult read a print version of a story have better recall than that of interacting with an e-book (Zucker, Moody, & McKenna, 2009). To support literacy skills in young students with the use of technology-based read alouds educators need to find a balanced approach which has been researched and found to be effective.

Mckenna et al., also recommends integration of technology must be embedded in the daily routines of the classroom through planned activities. In supporting literacy skills many teachers use e-books, online read alouds, CD ROM stories, and many more programs and applications within the classroom. In a small group setting each of these has great instructional purposes. They assist in the differentiation of students needs in the areas of phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, writing, and comprehension. For example, “to extend comprehension development further, one might use electronic texts at the computer learning center then couple it with response activities or retellings at the sociodramatic play center” (Labbo, 2000, p. 206). Customize your technology to your own classroom needs to reinforce the different aspects of literacy development in an elementary setting.

McKenna, et al. (2003) suggests, there is a rise in technology in schools, however, by using technology in the classroom it does not ensure effective implementation or understanding of the technology. The access to these technologies hardly guarantees meaningful integration. Be diligent in your instruction and what information students need to understand before allowing the use of technology within the classroom walls. Technology is an effective tool, which needs to be

explicitly taught to students so they can use it appropriately for growth and development in education, especially if there is an expectation for student growth in the area of comprehension.

Implementation for traditional teacher led read alouds is very different. Since students don't physically need to touch or use anything, it is just the planning on the teachers part. First, it is important to understand the needs of your students. Based on some form of data, informal or formal, how will you service student's comprehension skills? To respond and consider students' needs, a skilled educator will strategically choose books, Pinnell and Fountas (2011) suggest, choosing a text that with both support and extend the audiences current literacy abilities. It is pivotal for facilitating effective and engaging interactive read-alouds. These well written, best choice books or stories, allow many opportunities to model fluent and expressive reading along with engaging character and plots. (Lane & Wright). It is important to be aware and understand the demands of the text and the opportunities it provides for learning. Be proactive, it is of utmost importance that teachers look for well-organized texts with high-quality writing" (Schugar et al., 2013). Too often, the applications that we use do not go through a rigorous review process, unlike other printed children's literature. Pre-reading and planning the approach for different literacy skills based on the needs of the students can be difficult, but it is essential for teacher led read alouds. The teacher needs to plan at what time to pause and ask questions, think aloud, or possibly just to clarify difficult text.

### **Importance of Engagement**

**e-books.** The use of e-books has been used as a strategy to engage students who normally do not enjoy reading (McKenna et al., 2003). Choosing a quality e-book can eliminate this problem all together. Elementary age children are more interested and exposed to different types

of storytelling, including e-books. This has been found to promote language and literacy skills (Ciampa, 2012). Students become highly motivated by the visual and aural elements of the e-book. Their interest becomes peaked and they are more willing to become involved with the story and its text. In an experiment done in the Netherlands, the experimenter who monitored children engaged in reading the electronic version of the stories, rarely had to intervene to help children or keep them on task (De Jong & Bus, 2004). This in return may increase the probability that reluctant readers will persevere in their interactions with text. It is important to choose an e-book which supports students attempt to make connections that contributes to comprehension skills and guides students understanding and application of reading skills and strategies (van de Broek, Kendeou, and White, 2009). A study which was done with students to determine their comprehension level and was based off of a print version of the text versus electronic versions showed the mean scores on a comprehension test to be significantly higher for the group reading the story from the electronic version than for the group reading the story from the book (Ciampa, 2012). The more the students showed engagement the higher the comprehension level of the text.

Zucker et al (2009) mentions there is a negative effect; some e-books appear to exhaust features, perhaps in an effort to make the reading experience more entertaining, impactful, or simply to make the product more relatable and sellable. Researchers (e.g. DeJong and Bus, 2003) have found that when games or extra entertainment are available at students fingertips they are 43% more engaged with the multimedia than they are with the text itself. This may be the reason why students working with e-books do not comprehend what they read the first time. Electronic books which have the least amount of multimedia (music, on screen movement, or other special effects) may increase students' literacy skills. Some examples which Schugar et al. (2013,

p.620) found are:

***Distracts from the text:***

- In *Sir Charlie Stinky Socks and the Really Big Adventure*, readers can touch “wiggly woos” to make noise and move them around the screen.
- Throughout *Rocket Learns to Read*, the bird flutters and sounds play in the background.

***Supports the text:***

- In *Miss Spider’s Tea Party*, Miss Spider “sips” her tea (with sound effects) while the text reads “Miss Spider sipped her tea.”
- At one point in *Will & Kate: A Love Story*, the text is “William knew that one day he would grow up to be king.” When readers click the little boy, he grows into a teenager then a king.

***Extends beyond the text:***

- On page where “Hyenas shared jokes with the red-bellied snakes” in *Wild About Books*, laughter sounds and speech bubbles allow readers to see that “howled and they hissed till their funny bones ached” means that the characters found the jokes funny.

Students seem to be very engaged with e-books, but as a teacher how do you know if they are really benefiting from reading these e-books independently? Some e-books even have an opportunity to teachers to check on students’ progress. A website and app called RAZ-Kids is an online guided reading program with interactive e-books, downloadable books, and reading quizzes. Students listen to the story; read the story independently, then there is a short quiz at the

end to checking for understanding. Many questions offer the reader the opportunity to retell the story, recall specific details or characters in the story, and much more. There are many e-books, websites and apps, but not all allow for specific questioning or quizzes at the end of the stories. If you choose to use a source that does not have those features for students then you may end up checking for understanding more similarly to that of a traditional teacher-led read aloud. The only difference is that a teacher does not reading the story, but would need to still use informal teacher assessment.

Ultimately, in recent studies it was found that kindergarten children who have reached a stage in which they can understand stories are also able to retell a story when they experience it independently in electronic form (De Jong & Bus, 2004). By using e-books teachers don't necessarily have to monitor this independent time because it has shown from these studies that students are working to improve their comprehension skills. In this same study by De Jong and Bus (2004), the way in which the children interacted with electronic versions of books may have been influenced by their previous exposure to printed books with adults. Without a model to establish reading routines with a variety of stories, children's interaction with electronic versions of books might proceed differently.

The important thing to remember about e-books is, as a teacher, always research what you plan to implement in the classroom. If a story has too much "seductive detail" (Garner, Gillingham & White, 1989) - then students will become distracted and less engaged in the text. Students are found trying to collect the meaning of a particular story, but they end up using their cognitive abilities trying to work around the excess multimedia. A researcher found (Pearman, 2008) that when less multimedia was apparent to distract students he reported stronger retellings

among readers of ebooks. For adequate growth in comprehension development, students require less multimedia distraction so as not to draw their attention from the text itself.

**Teacher-led read aloud.** With e-book multimedia features, researchers have begun to recognize that e-books can be both beneficial or problematic (Schugar, Smith, & Schugar, 2013). Some things that help support story retell and ideas about the characters would be video, sound, and music, it allows the reader to connect to the actions and feelings of the story details, but others argue that e-books have too many features which could result in actually hindering students' recollections. Because e-books are already so highly engaging with the use of special effects, teachers have to work extra hard to engage students in a teacher led read aloud. In a randomized-control trial, children who were read aloud a traditional, print book achieved higher average scores for beginning reading and recall for the original text than students who used a similar e-book with games (Zucker, et al., 2009). Even though teachers have to compete with e-books and their engagement properties, teachers can also use themselves for productive student engagement. Many educators will read in a lively, engaging way, using voices, gestures, and expressions can enhance understanding (Lane & Wright). There are many techniques for teacher led read alouds and each one is uniquely different, but still each are key to shape comprehension skills.

In many different articles and research findings there is a similar pattern when it comes to teacher led read alouds. To an outsider in the classroom it is almost like a script that teachers have practiced and rehearsed many times. The teacher presents the book and the title to students. The teacher then discusses what genre the book is and how to decipher between different genres. He/she asks students to make predictions about the story based on the picture on the front cover.

For more engagement, students can turn and talk to get an opportunity to share their predictions or opinions about the story. Once they are done sharing, this now presents the perfect opportunity for the teacher to use the think aloud approach to show students how to make a predictions and be able to show the reasoning behind those predictions. Think-alouds are an ongoing opportunities for oral interactions which then supports students as they think about how the authors crafted their message about this topic (McClure & Fullerton, 2017). Even at the end of the read aloud a teacher can then discuss the order of events and allow the students the opportunity to share, once again, their opinion of the book read. Depending on the genre chosen by the teacher the discussions are endless and different opinions are respected. All through this process the students are listening and sharing their own understanding through conversation between the teacher or their peers. “A defining feature of teacher led interactive read-alouds is that the teacher and students have conversations about the text throughout the reading rather than saving conversations until after the entire text is read. Through interactive (teacher led) read-alouds, the teacher provides and facilitates opportunities for students to experience how others make meaning from a text” (McClure & Fullerton, 2017, p. 56). By taking the time to walk through this process the students are able to see the comprehension strategies and utilize them. “Even though interactive (teacher led) read alouds take up a short amount of the school day, with a few considerations and precise planning, this brief time can provide multiple opportunities for students to collaboratively engage in productive literacy practices” (McClure & Fullerton, 2017, p.52). Not only are the students understanding the text better and putting information into their working memories, but they are also become better readers; which is the ultimate goal in literacy instruction.

By teachers asking students to participate in this form of literacy conversation they are also asking students to not fear failure, which can be a struggle for many students. McClure and Fullerton (2017), discuss that it is important to invite and foster interactions by creating a low-risk environment where students are willing to contribute to class discussions. If students don't feel that they are able to speak freely without judgement or embarrassment then they will be less likely to contribute in these productive discussions and therefore, may lack the comprehension skills than that of their peers. Giving students the time to converse with one another throughout read alouds, where it is neither student-directed nor engineered entirely by the teacher opens up authenticity to the text while also establishing literary success with discussion and responses (Maloch & Beutel, 2010; Sipe, 2008). This technique for building comprehension does not just work on its own, a teacher has to precisely and purposefully let these things unfold while guiding it in the correct direction. Evoking ideas and views, encouraging problem solving, modeling and discovering reasonable responses, and interpret text in many ways; all while promoting text responsibility, moves these read alouds beyond that of any other version. (Pappas, Varelas, Patton, Ye, & Ortiz, 2012; Varelas & Pappas, 2006)

When teachers read aloud to students they question and add conversation along with the story. The reasoning behind this is that teachers are checking for student understanding. With comprehension, teachers are typically looking for students to answer questions about the setting, characters, order of events, and other story details in which a teacher finds important for students to understand. Students can recall from their own experiences more readily and therefore derive a comparison to the text (Beck & McKeown, 2001). If children's conversations go too far off track, however, this can have the opposite for effect on story understanding. Teachers have to be

prepared to reel students back in if they have become derailed. Even with awareness of what makes reading aloud most effective, it is difficult to keep discussions consistently focused on the topic or what the teacher finds most important (Beck & McKeown, 2001). There is substantial planning that goes into the process of creating an effective and engaging teacher led read aloud.

### **Chapter III: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this research paper is to look at both e-books and teacher-led read alouds to find its effectiveness on student comprehension. In Chapter I, background information was provided and the research question was posed. Chapter II, presented a review of the research literature and Chapter III reveals my findings, recommendations, and implications from the research findings.

#### **Conclusions**

Looking at many different research articles on e-books versus teacher-led read alouds I came to the conclusion that teacher guidance is necessary with both. Teachers should show students what a read aloud is and how it is displayed. Know your students and their needs. Based on this information, be prepared with what questions, pauses and sharing opportunities throughout the read aloud. These things make a quality read aloud so pertinent for student comprehension. Teachers should also correctly implementing the use of devices for e-books or simply how teachers themselves would use them with their students. There is a rise in technology in schools, however, by using technology in the classroom it does not ensure effective implementation or understanding of the technology. The access to these technologies hardly guarantees meaningful integration (McKenna et al. (2003), if done correctly and with fidelity students will effectively develop literacy skills; including comprehension skills.

There are many similarities between teacher led read alouds and e-books, but can their differences have a negative effect on literacy achievement or no effect at all? To answer this question in regards to comprehension achievement; in my findings, both e-books and teachers-led read alouds have a positive outcome. Students need to be shown how to correctly and

effectively read a book. When teachers use the think aloud strategy throughout a story it allows students to also develop a way to think critically about new information when working independently with e-books. With the think aloud approach students hear what it sounds like to make predictions, process information, ask questions, retell and read pictures with the text itself.

Many studies suggest that e-books or other electronic version of stories cause distraction from the text, especially when there are opportunities for the student to touch things on the screen and/or play games within the story. If a teacher is implementing e-books or other apps effectively then they should know to find e-books with limited features such as these to limit negative, unwanted behavior from students. However, researchers Ricci and Beal (2002), did not find that visual and sound effects disrupted comprehension among a group of first grade students. The children were able to recall many details from a story presented electronically by a CD-ROM even though they explored numerous animations inconsistent with the story while reading the electronic books. Much of the behaviors are a result of teacher expectations.

### **Recommendations**

In the literature that was reviewed it appeared that one would recommend teachers don't use technology to replace read alouds entirely. However, it is important to respect the difference between the two types of read alouds and remember that technology can never take the place of a teacher and his/her skill set. Educators who are looking for ways to provide students an alternative to original text books are choosing electronically presented books for read aloud options (De Jong & Bus, 2004). It is just that, an option, or a way to provide a time for students to be independent with books. In my recommendations, I believe that e-books are very useful in

supporting the delivery of a teacher-led read aloud. Students are able to see the correct behaviors and format of a teacher-led read aloud and apply it in their own independent learning.

Unfortunately, the individual studies presented many limitations and mixed results. Based on my findings, the research show that what is essential is how an educator administers the read aloud or what quality the electronic version of a read aloud is. Those are the basic factors in each. If there is poor planning on the teacher's part then the teacher led read aloud will not be as effective to a student's comprehension. If the e-book or other electronic version of books is poor quality then the students will be distracted from the text.

Both also require some form of classroom management on the teacher's part as well. Students need to be in an environment where they are held to high expectations and that utilizing devices correctly will only be helpful in their development of comprehension skills. The electronic technologies for literacy are a low cost option for any educator. It is also an effective tool, which can easily be integrated into a typical elementary classroom. Centers or other daily reading programs would be practical ways to incorporate and reinforce emergent literacy skills (Moody, 2010). Educators with high expectations, make sure that students have a voice in the classroom. During a read aloud students need to know that there are rules to the procedure and that if they show respect they also get the respect back (i.e. not talking when another student is trying to share, raising your hand, showing appropriate conversation during a think, pair, share time, etc.). Remember as stated in the research from the literature, even with awareness of what makes reading aloud most effective, it is difficult to keep discussions consistently focused on the most productive features (Beck & McKeown, 2001). There are many steps that teachers need to be thoughtful of with the implementation of e-books and teacher led read alouds. Based on the

research reviewed, these are a few things that I recommend when looking at the similarities and differences of teacher led read alouds and e-books.

### **Findings**

In my kindergarten classroom, I have taken the time to approach each method with careful thought and consideration. I have implemented both of these strategies in my classroom, but I start with teacher led read alouds to establish an understanding of my students comprehension levels. Once this routine has been in effect and students know how to answer specific questions related to the text I will then implement e-books on iPads or Kindles. I use the app RAZ Kids. The app allows students to listen to a story, try to read it on their own, and then there are questions which will show if students understood what they were reading. This is data that the teacher is able to see and check in on. I found that it is convenient to have students work independently, but also the app holds them accountable. It is also convenient because the app is collecting the data for you instead of the teacher assessing one on one. The app is not perfect, but it can help to decipher which students require more help than others. I also use many other apps. These apps do not collect the comprehension data, but once I have implemented RAZ Kids students' understanding of literature seems to improve and I can trust that my students understand what is being read.

In my classroom students get a rich understanding of literature via myself or other staff and different technology outlets. I have explored many other avenues of read alouds. I have found many great read alouds online, [storylineonline.com](http://storylineonline.com) or [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) has many channels which you can subscribe to and watch e-books play. Depending on the channel and the creator of the channel the e-books vary in quality. Some creators have embedded questioning in the story

for the student to think about as they continue to read. If video did not have questioning within the story then a teacher could stop the video and ask his or her students appropriate questioning, which also allows for more critical thinking time.

With the use of both strategies and correct implementation time and practice my students have a much more broad understanding of comprehension with technology based read alouds and also teacher led read alouds. I have been able to witness growth in the area of comprehension in each group of students that has come through my classroom in the past four years. Do some students still struggle with comprehension? Of course, but with further practice with these procedures they will increase their comprehension skills. Both read aloud formats different in the way a book is presented, but both are equally as effective, in my opinion, if implemented together.

### **Summary**

As an elementary school educator, I feel there is a critical need for exposure to literature, especially at a young age. This exposure helps to build student creativity, language development, phonemic awareness, problem solving or critical thinking, and of course comprehension.

Read alouds are extremely influential for students learning to read and write. Students are able to see written words that tell a compelling story and they are also able to make meaning from it. Either way you look at the findings, some form of a read aloud can significantly help students in the classroom. Most importantly, read alouds in any form, considerably increase student comprehension skills. When discussing read alouds, researchers stated that, reading aloud is the single most effective activity for beginning knowledge required for success in reading (Lane & Wright).

In an educational setting, read alouds are used for the purpose of enjoying and listening to a story, however, many teachers use read alouds intentionally to teach comprehension, among other literacy skills. By employing research-based methods, teachers and parents can expand reading aloud effectiveness, thereby enhancing the reading experiences and literacy skills of students (Lane & Wright). There is much research done on whether e-books or teacher led read alouds are most effective, in the review of literature educators can decide which is best for them to implement or to purposely plan for within their own classroom.

### **Further Research**

As stated at the beginning of my research, I wanted to find out whether implementing e-books will have positive potential and show students making noticeable gains because of it. I would need to do further research in this area. When I gathered my data, I found that all students were able to give correct answers to most of my questioning at any academic level. Between the two different ways of reading aloud, the principal observation I made, was that engagement is extremely important. When employing the e-book method, it is easier for the teacher to see if the student is focused as opposed to a teacher led read aloud.

To further my research I would like to understand student engagement and focus as I offer both versions of read aloud. If a student is showing non engagement or distraction from the text is the student still getting the necessary information? How long or detailed should a read aloud be to reach the highest comprehension effectiveness?

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