

Parent-Child Palm-size Red Linked Picture Books Reading: A Case Study of Chinese Children's Family Education

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ABSTRACT

A half-year parent-child reading experiment was carried out in a Chinese white-collar family. The mother used classic red palm-size linked picture books as reading materials, and read together with her 7-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter for an hour per day. This mode enabled the two children to systematically understand the history of the Chinese revolution, cultivate good reading habits, establish patriotic feelings of loyalty to the country, and improve their self-consciousness of learning and academic performance. Furthermore, the daughter greatly improved her level of school readiness. The key to the success of this experiment is that parents attach great importance to parent-child co-reading and insist on it every day, which can provide reference and discussion for family education.

Keywords: *red linked picture books, parent-child reading, family education experiment*

1. INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the key period for the formation of reading habits, and also the initial formation of ideal [1-2]. Through parent-child reading, children can be guided to read widely, to cultivate good reading habits, to understand the history of social development in reading, to initially form a correct outlook on life and values, to establish a lofty ambition to serve the country and the public, and become the pillars of society [3-5].

But at present, many young parents do not pay attention to family education and lack effective methods, and do not know how to cultivate their children to be excellent children who have ideals and love learning [6-8]. Therefore, based on years of research experience in children's education, the researchers propose to solve this social problem by reading red palm-size linked picture books together.

Chinese palm-size linked picture books is a kind of unique picture book, usually sized in sixty-fourmos, 100-200 pages in a volume, and more than 100 words per page. The proportion of painting and word text is 1:1 [9]. Compared with the western picture books, the character's account for a large proportion, the narration is clearer, and the educational function is stronger. In particular, the complete set of linked picture books adapted from many long classic masterpieces, which concisely describes the complex history and culture of China, which is very suitable for children to read [10].

In the 1950s-1980s, when there was a lack of electronic media, China published a large number of various kinds of comic books, which were the spiritual food for teenagers to read at that time. Many of them were red linked picture books, that is, excellent linked picture books about Chinese revolutionary history and heroes, promoting socialist core values and social positive energy [11-12].

The noble aspiration of China's president Xi Jinping to serve the people with loyalty and dedication is the formation of the mother's guidance in reading *The Story of Yue Fei* during the childhood period [13]. It is difficult for children to understand empty lectures, but they can learn to be heroes by reading hero stories.

At present, many Chinese children watch 2-3 hours of cartoons every day, but they read very little. Only less than 30% of families carry out parent-child reading. Most of the reading materials are western fairy tale picture books, such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White* and *The Seven Dwarfs*, *Three Little Pigs*, etc. The plots are simple and absurd, lack of educational significance, and the printing cost and price are high. These imported products are not ideal reading materials for Chinese children [14].

2. FAMILY CASE EXPERIMENT DESIGN

2.1 Research subjects

Mrs. L, a neighbor of the researcher, has a 7-year-old son, who was in the second grade of primary school, and a 4-year-old daughter, who was in the middle class of kindergarten. Mrs. L always paid attention to family education and often asked the researcher about children's education. The researcher suggested that she can read with her children and cultivate their good reading habits and correct life ideals through reading. At the same time, the researcher was willing to provide more than 200 volumes of Chinese classic red palm-size linked picture books and guide her to carry out family reading experiments. Mrs. L is an executive member of a university in China, and she often works online at home during the outbreak of COVID-19. Her husband is a corporate engineer and leaves early and returns late. Because he often works overtime and is busy at work, the two children are mainly taken care of by Mrs. L. Due to the epidemic, schools and kindergartens were closed. The two children had been at home since the winter vacation at the end of January 2020. The boy took online lessons at home from March to May, and returned to school from June to July, and then had summer vacation. The girl didn't go to kindergarten until early September. In the past six months, Mrs. L accompanied and guided her children to read a lot of red linked picture books.

2.2 Reading materials

The reading material is more than 200 volumes of Chinese red palm-size classic linked picture books, including the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, the history of the Chinese revolution, the history of China, and the introduction of leaders and heroes in various periods, such as *Xi Jinping and the People*, *Xi Jinping's Expectations for Children*, *Founding of the Republic*, *Socialist Core Values Idiom Story Reader*, *Long March*, *Eight-Year War of Resistance Against Japan*, *Reading for the Rise of China*, *Two Little Eighth Route Army Soldiers*, *Mao Zedong*, and so on, with more than 40,000 pages and around 400,000 Chinese characters.

2.3 Reading mode

Parent-child reading + children's independent reading: the mother read 1-2 picture books to two children every day for an hour on average, and introduced the historical background of picture book stories to the children; then her children often read 1-2 picture books on their own, and some of them even read 3-5 times on their own.

2.4 Records and test material

(1) The researcher designed a form to record reading, including daily reading time, reading quantity, reading effect and reading experience, which was recorded by the mother in detail.

(2) A questionnaire about common sense of Chinese and foreign history and Chinese revolutionary history was compiled. It has 50 questions, 2 points for each question, with a full score of 100.

(3) One hundred common words were selected from the Chinese words table of grade 1-5 in primary school. Besides, a literacy rate scale was compiled, in which 1 point for each word and 100 points in total.

(4) Five palm-size linked picture books will be randomly selected for children to explain the main contents and feelings, and the reading comprehension rate was tested, with a full score of 100.

(5) The interview outline was compiled to understand the content of reading satisfaction, children's vision and career aspirations.

3. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The pretest found that the mother used to read with her children only occasionally. On average, she read a western style picture book every week for about 30 minutes. Her two children seldom read picture books on their own. Instead, they watched TV cartoons and played video games for 2-3 hours every day, and read about 20-30 picture books in six months.

They were at home during most of the time in the epidemic period. The mother spent an average of 45 minutes a day reading a red palm-size linked picture book to her children and they also reduced the time to watch cartoons and play games. They read 2-3 comic books on their own, and they read more than 200 books in six months. Table 1-2 show details.

Table 1 The Four-year-old Child's Parent-Child Reading and Test Results Before and After Reading Experiment

Test items	Pretest	Posttest	Sig P-value
Total reading volume in 6 months (books)	20 picture books	> 200 Palm-size picture books	.000
Average daily time for parent-child reading (minutes)	5	60	.000

Average number of books read per day (books)	0.15	1	.000
Average daily independent reading time (minutes)	0	30	.000
Average number of self-reading books per day (books)	0	2	.000
Average daily time of watching TV and playing video games (minutes)	150	100	.000
Test results of Chinese and foreign history and Chinese revolutionary history (points)	0	33	.000
Literacy rate (points)	4	37	.000
Reading comprehension rate (points)	0	46	.000
Palm-size liked picture book reading satisfaction	Not read	Like it very much	
Dream and ideal career	No	Become a doctor	

The literacy rate of 4-year-old girl is only 4% in the pre-test and 37% in the post test, which is the result of her natural acquisition of commonly used words in parent-child reading. Her mother asked her to reduce the average time she spent watching TV and playing games from 150 minutes to 100 minutes a day to save time for

parent-child reading and independent reading. Therefore, in the post test, her reading quantity and literacy rate have been greatly improved, her understanding of Chinese and foreign history and Chinese revolutionary history has been increased from 0 to 33%, and her reading comprehension rate of comic books has also reached 46%.

Table 2 Seven-year-old Child's Parent-child Reading and Test Results Before and After Reading Experiment

Test items	Pretest	Posttest	Sig P value
Total reading volume in 6 months (books)	30 picture books	> 200 Palm-size picture books	.000
Average daily time for parent-child reading (minutes)	5	60	.000
Average number of books read per day (books)	0.15	1	.000
Average daily independent reading time (minutes)	5	60	.000
Average number of self-reading books per day (books)	0.2	3	.000
Average daily time of watching TV and playing video games (minutes)	120	90	.000
Test results of Chinese and foreign history and Chinese revolutionary history (points)	8	85	.000
Literacy rate (points)	39	92	.000
Reading comprehension rate (points)	0	87	.000
Palm-size linked picture book reading satisfaction	Not read	Like it very much	
Dream and ideal career	No	Become a scientist	

The posttest results of 7-year-old boys show that the reading amount, literacy rate, knowledge and reading comprehension rate are improved more greatly, as shown in Table 2.

After reading the book *Fighting the COVID-19 Epidemic*, the son seriously said that when they grow up, he wants to be scientists and develop medicine to fight the virus; the daughter said that she wants to be doctors and save patients. The mother said to them: "To be a scientist and a doctor, one has to learn a lot of professional knowledge, work hard for a long time, and not be afraid of viruses and sacrifices. Can you do it?"

The two children said in unity: "We can do it. We should learn from the heroes in the book, not afraid of hardship and sacrifice, be heroes and serve our country

faithfully." More importantly, the mother thinks that through parent-child reading, children's self-reading is promoted, good reading habits are formed, and the time of watching TV and playing games is reduced. Compared with children of the same age, the level of girls' school readiness and the boys' learning enthusiasm have been greatly improved; they are very serious in doing homework in online classes. They also tell some stories in palm-size linked picture books to their classmates through videos, which are admired by their classmates. Their final exam scores have also entered the top 10 from the middle of the class, which has been praised by the school teachers.

The mother thought that the first mock exam of the red classics was very helpful to the two children, and decided to buy new classic comic books and continue the parent-child reading.

The key to the success of this experiment is that parents can attach great importance to and insist on parent-child reading every day, and guide children to discuss and reflect on the reading content in order to promote their own cognitive development.

4. CONCLUSION

This family experiment shows that Chinese red classic palm-size linked picture books are excellent for children's reading. Parent-child reading mode guided can make children understand Chinese and foreign history and Chinese revolutionary history, cultivate good reading habits and patriotic feelings, establish lofty ambition of serving the country, improve their learning consciousness and academic performance, and preschool children can also greatly improve their school readiness. The key to the success of this experiment is that parents attach great importance to parent-child co-reading and insist on it every day, which can provide reference and discussion for family education.

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