Chapter 12
Enhanced Picture Books: Enhancing the Literacy Development of Young Children

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ABSTRACT
This chapter provides a rationale for using digitally Enhanced Picture Books (EPBs), electronic texts which pair text narration with animated pictures, with young children in the classroom and as a home-school connection tool. First, we synthesize the research on shared reading with young children. Next, we detail the research literature in the area of digital text use with young children. We suggest substantive variables to consider when selecting EPBs. Finally, we recommend practices for integrating EPBs into the primary and early childhood classroom in a manner that will advance young children’s literacy development.

INTRODUCTION
Literacy learning has been the focus of educational conversations over the past decade with several large scale government initiatives to address literacy education (i.e. Reading First and Early Reading First). Research indicates that an individual’s literacy experiences in the early years can tremendously affect the total academic trajectory (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Juel, 1988; Scarborough, 2001), and children with rich literacy exposure and participation have greater school success than peers lacking such experience (Adams, 1990).

Research has long supported the benefits of traditional storybook reading for children and the contributions that storybook sharing make to literacy development, content knowledge, and
Early childhood classrooms have begun providing children access to e-books during the school day (Ricci & Beale, 2002). In this setting the teacher typically allows students to use these interactive enhanced e-books during independent free-choice time or center time. In much the same way that many early childhood and primary grade classrooms have traditionally used audio books in independent listening centers, teachers are now beginning to use EPBs as independent learning tools. Indeed, “whether the words are handwritten, composed on a typewriter, or keyed into an iPad, it is the written word and its ability to reach and touch the minds and experiences of others that is truly miraculous. Our essential work of turning kids on to reading has not changed” (Kimmel, 2012, p. 12).

Enhanced Picture Book Formats and Tools

EPBs come in many different styles; however, Anderson-Inman, and Horney (1997) set four minimum criteria for classifying an e-book: text presented visually on a screen; book-like configuration (table of contents, pages, etc.); an organizing subject matter or topic; and multimedia enhancements. “Visual features [in EPBs] include cuts, pans, dissolves, and special effects; auditory features include music and sound effects; and more holistic characteristics include pacing (rates of scene and character change), physical movement (action), and variation” (Bus, Verhallen, & de Jong, 2009).

EPBs tend to take one of two forms. Traditionally, the more common form of EPB was that of a fairly static picture with narration and a few animations of images. More recently, however, EPBs are “film-like” productions with user-activated “hotspots” that provide additional levels of information or interaction, and this film-like style of EPB has been found to be more beneficial for the most at-risk beginning readers and second language learners (Bus, Verhallen, & de Jong, 2009;
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