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Using Fast Phonic Program To Learn Reading Skills

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Abstract: *This research reviews the use of fast phonics to learn reading skills with phonics for emergent and early readers. This research is a descriptive qualitative. Observation is used as the main instrument to collect data. The data uses the app of Reading Eggs that contains Fast Phonics program as the object of research. The analysis of the data uses three ways of qualitative analysis, namely reducing data, displaying data, and conclusions. Fast Phonics is part of ABC Reading Eggs application— online reading program for ages two to 13—was developed by its team of highly experienced educators, animators and web developers. This phonics program helps students become a more fluent reader, as they'll be able to quickly and accurately recognize and pronounce words. The Fast Phonics program includes 20 fun-filled levels (peaks) where students learn key phonics skills. This research will take Peak 1 as the sample of activities. The analysis shows that Fast Phonics program explicitly and systematically teaches, supports reinforces and assesses the core phonics skills, namely: letter sound-correspondence, blending, segmenting and syllable. Fast Phonics program also covers pseudo-words and decodable books and an accompanying end-of-book quiz in each peak. This complete synthetic phonics program is a dynamic mix of maps, upgrades and exciting learning activities. Since this program is an online learning, students in around the world may considered this program as a useful and practical learning tool to master key phonics skills and improve reading skills.*

Keywords: *Phonics, Reading Skill, Fast Phonics*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengulas penggunaan program Fast Phonics untuk belajar keterampilan membaca dengan fonik untuk pembaca awal dan pemula. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Observasi digunakan sebagai instrumen utama untuk mengumpulkan data. Data tersebut menggunakan aplikasi ABC Reading Eggs yang berisi program Fast Phonics sebagai obyek penelitian. Analisis data menggunakan tiga cara analisis kualitatif yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Fast Phonics adalah bagian dari aplikasi ABC Reading Eggs— program membaca online untuk usia dua hingga 13 tahun— dikembangkan oleh tim pendidik, animator, dan pengembang web yang sangat berpengalaman. Program fonik ini membantu siswa menjadi pembaca yang lebih fasih, karena mereka dapat mengenali dan mengucapkan kata-kata dengan cepat dan akurat. Program Fast Phonics mencakup 20 level (peak) yang menyenangkan di mana siswa belajar keterampilan phonics utama. Penelitian ini akan mengambil Peak 1 sebagai sampel kegiatan. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa program Fast Phonics secara eksplisit dan sistematis mengajarkan, mendukung memperkuat dan menilai keterampilan inti fonik, yaitu: korespondensi bunyi huruf, pencampuran, segmentasi dan suku kata. Program Fast Phonics juga mencakup kata-kata semu dan buku-buku yang dapat didekode serta kuis akhir buku yang menyertai setiap peak. Program fonik sintetik lengkap ini merupakan perpaduan dinamis antara peta, peningkatan, dan aktivitas belajar yang menarik. Karena program ini adalah pembelajaran online, siswa di seluruh dunia dapat mempertimbangkan program ini sebagai alat pembelajaran yang berguna dan praktis untuk menguasai keterampilan fonik dan meningkatkan keterampilan membaca.

Kata kunci: Fonik, Keterampilan Membaca, Fast Phonics

Introduction

The acquisition of skill in reading is a highly complex matter (Roberts,1999). It depends on a substantial amount of preparatory work in which early learner begin to become aware of the nature of print, to realize that it conveys a message and that it is possible to interpret that

message. This means that a very early age, when, as Piaget has shown, children's mental activities are severely constrained in terms of dealing with abstract matters, they have to begin to understand something of the nature of texts, firstly that they can make responses to texts in terms of sounds which are attached to symbols and, secondly, that text have a form and structure which affects their meaning.

Talking about sounds is something that most native English-speaking children do from a very young age. One reason for this is the writing system, which is based, however loosely, on a system where a set-of-twenty-six symbols is used to represent the forty-five or so sounds of English (Odgen, 2009). The complex orthography of the English language makes understanding the connection between sounds and written letters (the alphabetic principle) particularly difficult. The letter <m>, and the letter <c> can usually stand for either a [k] or a [s] sound. Learning this way gives priority to letters over sounds. Learning this way gives priority to letters over sounds. For example, to describe how to say a word like 'knight', we have to say something like 'the "k" is silent. The problems do end there: <igh> stands for what is often called 'a long "i"-sound, which in phonetics transcription is often represented as [aɪ]. These ways of talking also cause problems. What does it mean to say that the word 'knight' has a "k", when everyone never pronounce it? It is tempting easy to talk about words in terms of the letters we write them with rather than their linguistic structure.

The period of preparation for learning to read cannot be regarded solely in terms of looking at books, words and letters and experiencing someone else reading books and labels. Early learners must be actively engaged in tasks from which they learn facts and how to deal with them and use them. Thus it is so important that exploratory or invented spelling and writing as well as oral story making should be an important aspect of preparation for learning to read.
The online environment can be a lonely place. Students and faculty alike report feelings of isolation when working online. The benefits of taking or teaching an online class-being able to connect any time and any place, from one's bedroom in pajamas and bunny slippers or from a library or computer lab—also can be a detriment of sorts given that, for the most part, the people with whom one is interacting are represented by words on a screen (Palloff and Pratt, 2005). Thus, people all over the world can access virtual classrooms without leaving their job or their community and without the significant transportation costs and dislocation cost involved in traditional education.

Aldrich (2009) states that distance learning has tangential benefits beyond student attendance and some green benefits: classes can access talent or even just plain folk that they could not access otherwise. For example, because it will take only an hour rather than a day, a guest speaker might agree to present to a class a virtual world but not be willing to come in person. In addition, students spend their class time in front of a computer using a common

environment such as virtual classroom tools. This is in contrast to the often computationally heterogeneous environments of-face-to-face classrooms. Highly interactive virtual environments are logical extension to distributed learning, rather than something completely different.

Recent studies of the online learning environment have noted that involvement or "social presence", better known as a feeling of community and connection among learners, has contributed positively to learning outcomes and learner satisfaction with online courses. Tu and Corry (2022) identified three dimensions of social presence: social context, online communication, and interaction.

Fast Phonics is an online systematic, synthetic phonics program designed for emergent and early readers, as well as older students with gaps in their core reading knowledge. Fast Phonics is included free as part of your Reading Eggs subscription. The Fast Phonics program claims that it highlights the proven power of systematic phonics instruction to boost reading skills fast. The program is based on best-practice educational research and is closely aligned to the Letters and Sounds sequence. This research focuses on using an online reading tool for the emergent and early readers as an effort to learn reading skill by using Fast Phonics online program. Therefore the objective of this research is to stimulate the use of Fast Phonics online program as an option to learn reading skill.

Method

As this study deals with data that are in the form of words or pictures or other visuals rather than numbers, calculation and statistics, it takes on a qualitative nature (Ary et al., 2018), although it is primarily descriptive and focused on reviewing the application's usage. Process and subject perspective are utilized to make a description of the use an online reading tool, Fast Phonics. The aim is to explain the use of Fast Phonics program to learn reading skill fast.

This research uses observation as the collection method. Observation is an activity of observing an object directly and in detail to obtain correct information regarding the object. The data uses the Fast Phonics program in ABC Reading Eggs application as the object of the research. The researcher observes the process how Fast Phonics program assists students to learn reading skill.

The analysis of the data in this research uses three ways of qualitative analysis, there are reducing data, displaying data and conclusions (Miles et al., 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In data reduction, data obtained is reduced by summarizing, selecting, and focusing the data on appropriate matters. The data were analyzed then presented in the form of images and explanations. Last, conclusions are made by strong evidence at the data display stage.

Result and Discussion

The objective of this research is to explain the use of Fast Phonic program to learn reading skill for emergent and early readers, as well as older students with gaps in their core reading knowledge. Fast Phonics program is one of the online program parts in ABC Reading Eggs. The ABC Reading Eggs is an online reading program for children aged 2 -13. To access the ABC Reading Eggs we can open the browser then in the search field type https://readingeggs.com.au/ then log in to student's dashboard.

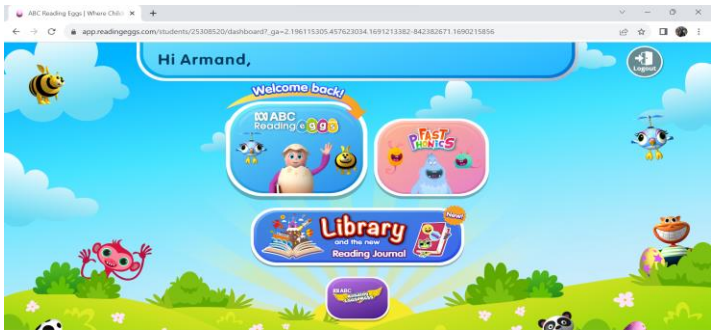

Figure 1. View of ABC Reading Eggs after logged in.

After logged in, the application presents several reading learning programs to choose such as ABC Reading Eggs, Fast Phonics, Library and the New Reading Journal, and ABC Reading Eggspress. Since this research aims to explain Fast Phonics program, choose the Fast Phonics program. To continue, student can tap the Fast Phonics icon presented on the dashboard.

Figure 2. View of Fast Phonics Program

The Fast Phonics program includes 20 fun-filled levels (peaks) where students learn key phonics skills explicitly and systematically including letter-sound correspondence, blending, segmenting and spelling, syllable manipulation and pseudo-words with a range of videos, interactives, activities and decodable books. Each level is a Mountain Peak covering one set of letters with more than 20 exciting activities (stones). This research will take peak 1 as the sample of activities.

Figure 3. View of Peak 1

Activity 1

In Activity 1 students are introduced to the letter /s/ and the sound /sss/ in a fun and mnemonic animation. Then, students are presented to the words which contain /s/ sounds as in 'Super Snake and silly snake'.

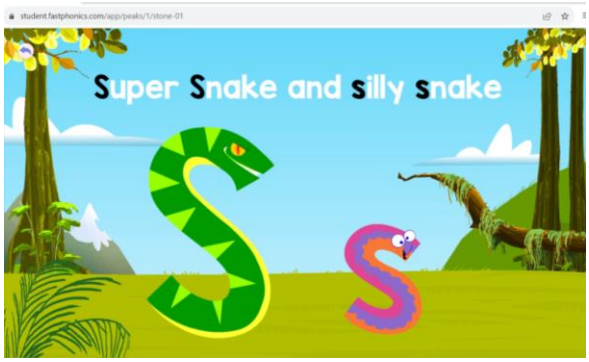

Figure 4. View of Activity 1

Activity 2

In activity 2 students identify letter-sound correspondence sees the cheeky furballs go flying in Flying Furball. Students are asked to look at the sign /s/ and choose the one that match then tap the snowballs that match.

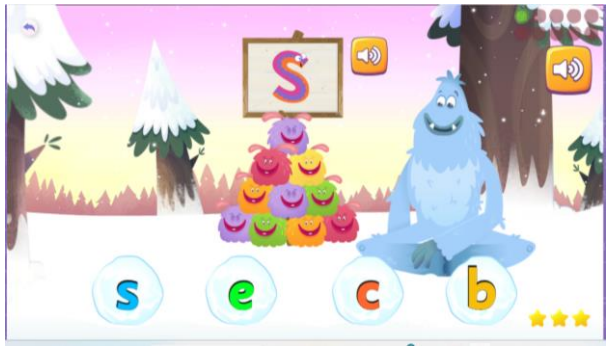

Figure 5. View of Activity 2

Activity 3

In activity 3 students are first introduced to the letter /a/ and the sound /a/ in a fun and mnemonic animation. Then, students are presented to the words which contain /a/

sounds as in '**A**lligator e**a**ts **a**n **a**pple'.

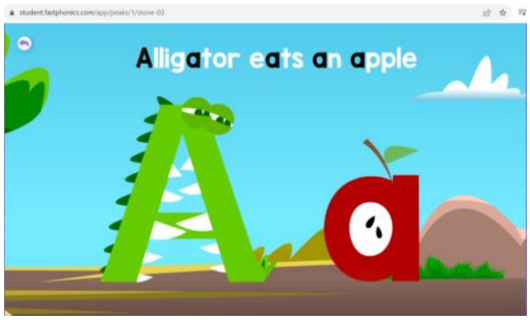

Figure 6. View of Activity 3

Activity 4

In activity 4, students are asked to find sound in Sound Square activity. The instruction is to find eight sounds /a/ as in 'apple' and eight sounds /s/ as in 'snake' presented in squares.

Figure 7. View of Activity 4

Activity 5

In activity 5 students are first introduced to the letter /t/ and the sound /t/ in a fun and mnemonic animation. Then, students are presented to the words which contain /t/ sounds as in '**T**iger in a **t**ree'.

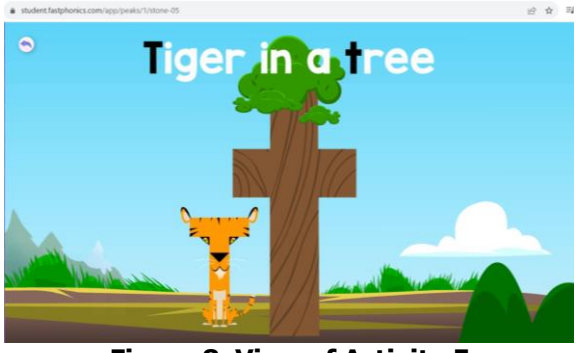

Figure 8. View of Activity 5

Activity 6

In activity 6 students fill a bucket and make furballs fly in 'Flying Furball' game activity. Here, students are asked to find furball that says /t/ sound to fill the bucket then fly all the furballs after the tasks are done.

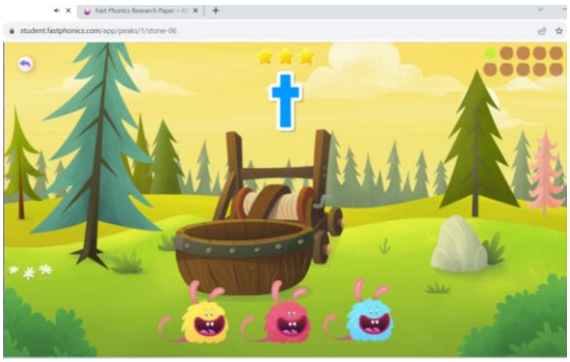

Figure 9. View of Activity 6

Activity 7

In activity 7 students are first explained that letter sounds make word then asked to sound out letters from beginning to end that sounds /c/, /a/, /t/ then blend them together to result 'cat' word.

Figure 10. View of Activity 7

Activity 8

In activity 8 students are taught to identify individual sound of /a/, /t/, and /s/, /a/, /t/ then blend all the way through the word to decode 'at' and 'sat' word.

Figure 11. View of Activity 8

Activity 9

In activity 9 students are introduced to 'Build a Fire' game activity. The game presents a Yeti that wants to make a fire then students are asked to find the logs that he needs. The Yeti only needs the logs contain 'at' word. Students tap the 'at' log from ten tasks given.

Figure 12. View of Activity 9

Activity 10

In activity 10 students are introduced to 'Who's in the Tree' game activity. Students are asked to find the furballs by listening to the sound /s/, /a/, /t/, and find the matching snowballs in ten tasks.

Figure 13. View of Activity 10

Activity 11

In activity 11 students are first introduced to the letter /p/ and the sound /p/ in a fun and mnemonic animation. Then, students are presented to the words which contain /a/ sounds as in 'Panda and Penguin pop pop popcorn'.

Figure 14. View of Activity 11

Activity 12

In activity 12 students are asked to find sound /p/ as in Pinguin, and /t/ as in Tree from

'Sound Square' game activity.

Figure 15. View of Activity 12

Activity 13

In activity 13 students are asked to match four sounds namely /a/, /s/, /p/, and /t/ in 'Four Square' game activity.

Figure 16. View of Activity 13

Activity 14

In activity 14 students are asked to say each letter sound then blend them together to say the word. First is sounds /m/, /a/, /t/, that blend to 'mat' word, the second sounds are /t/, /a/, /p/, then blend to 'tap' word, the third sounds are /p/, /a/, /t/ which blend to 'pat' word, dan fourth sounds are /s/,/a/,/t/ that blend to 'sat' word.

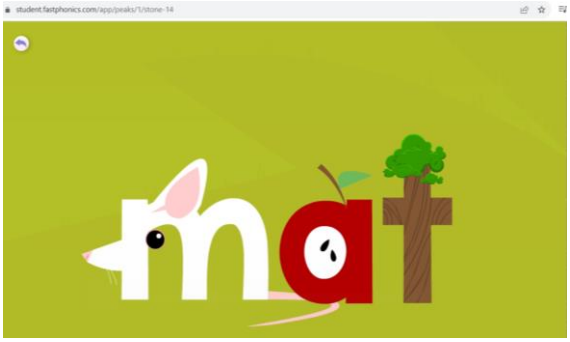

Figure 17. View of Activity 14

Activity 15

In activity 15 students are introduced to 'Fly the Flag' game activity. Students are asked to read the word before it breaks apart then use the letters to make the word. The words are

pat, *sap*, *Pat*, *sat* and *tap*.

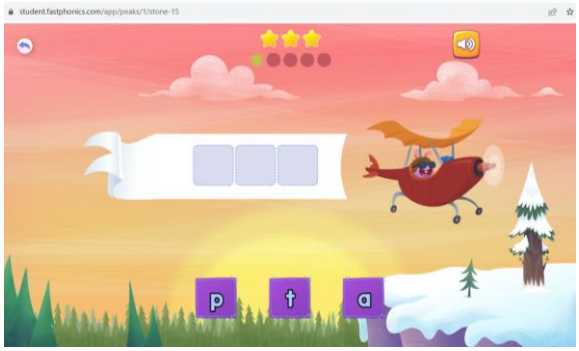

Figure 18. View of Activity 15

Activity 16

In activity 16 students are introduced to 'Furball Fun' game activity. Here, students are asked to choose whether a word is real or not in each task. The words are *at*, *pas*, *as*, *tas*, *tap*, *sat*, *pat*, *ast*, *sap*, and *pas*.

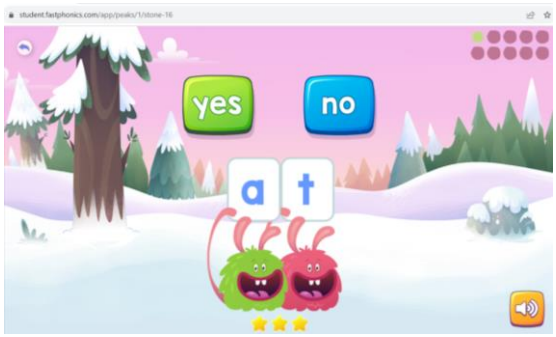

Figure 19. View of Activity 16

Activity 17

In activity 17 students are introduced to 'Yeti Stamp' game activity. Students are asked to help the Yeti home by choosing the correct word. The word is *as.*

Figure 20. View of Activity 17

Activity 18

In activity 18 students are introduced to 'Daily Dozen' game activity. Students are asked to read the word and choose the matching picture. The words are *Pat*, *sat*, *tap*, *taps*, *pat*, *sap*,

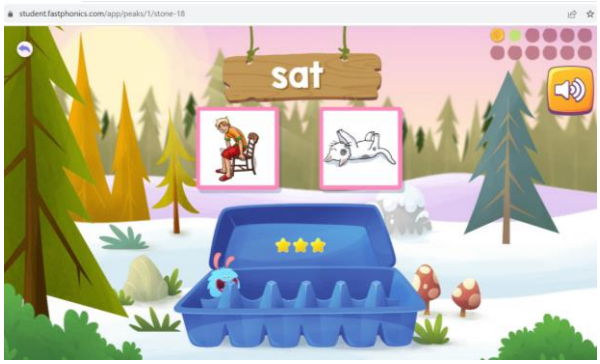

Figure 21. View of Activity 18

Activity 19

In activity 19 students are introduced to 'Full Circle' game activity. First, the words and the spelling are sounded then students use the letter tiles to make each word. The words are *tap*, *sap*, *sat*, and *pat*.

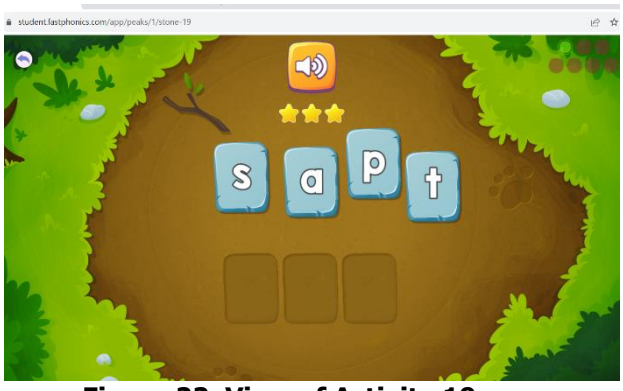

Figure 22. View of Activity 19

Activity 20

In activity 19 students do 'Peak Quiz' as the end of game activity in Peak 1. The students are asked to choose word starts the sound mentioned and finding words that have been studied in the previous activities.

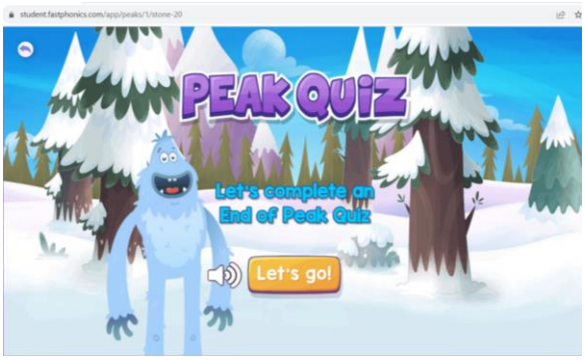

Figure 23. View of Activity 20

With a range of videos, interactives and activities in Peak 1, Fast phonics explicitly and systematically teaches, supports reinforces and assesses the core phonics skills, namely:

a. Letter-sound Correspondence

The program teaches student the letter-sound relationships needed for accurate word decoding. Students learn from animated videos using powerful learning mnemonics and practise each skill within focused, engaging activities in short and snappy sessions. The activities can be seen in activity 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

b. Blending

The fast phonics program teaches students to blend phonemes in order, from left to right, 'all through the word' for reading. Students are taught to identify and blend sounds to decode words with consonant-vowel-consonant patterns, before moving on to more difficult words. The activities presented in activity 7, 8, 14

c. Segmenting and Spelling

Fast Phonics teach students how to spell words by segmenting them into their constituent phonemes. The task can be seen in Fly the Flag in activity 15. Students learn spelling as presented in activity 9, 17, 18 and 19.

The Fast Phonics program also covers pseudo-words. As the initial focus of the program is to teach children to identify, blend and segment phonemes, consequently, it is considered appropriate to practice these skills on pseudo-words or nonsense words. Pseudo-words are strings of letters that resemble real words. These types of words are included in phonics checks as in activity 16.

The Fast Phonics also includes decodable books and an accompanying end-of-book quiz. Each peak presents four decodable books to practice new decoding skills and reinforce students' knowledge and provide insightful data to inform their classroom practice.

Conclusion

Fast Phonics is a rigorous phonics program built on practice research. The sequential program of 20 peaks introduces letter-sound correspondence systematically. Each peak thoroughly covers one set of letter-sound correspondence using motivating and engaging animations, activities, interactives, books and quizzes. The teaching and strategy animations teach and reinforce systematic synthetic phonics. The multisensory interactive activities allow students to practice key phonics skills, including letter-sound recognition, blending all through the word, segmenting and spelling, pseudo-words, syllables, reading captions and extended text. The decodable books and end-of book quizzes allow students to use and reinforce their reading skills. The end-of-peak quizzes are an opportunity to assess students' abilities and monitor their progress. Fast phonics is rigorous but fun. This complete synthetic phonics program is a dynamic mix of maps, upgrades and exciting learning activities. Students may considered this program as a useful and practical learning tool to learn reading skills and master key phonics skills.

Acknowledgement

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