

Re-reading the same book

Repetition literally changes the brain. Learning is practicing and repeating. Listening to the same story again and again can imprint vocabulary words in the brain. Children learn vocabulary through experience (communication or exchange situations) and through situations that make sense for them. Children's literature is well suited for this particular type of learning; not only do authors of children's books play with the sounds and words, but they offer situations that are at times mirrors or windows for the children, which makes them laugh and stimulates the senses for them. These books are often read in a positive affective context (with parents, during a calm moment that is suitable for connection) and the child's mind-set is in a good condition to absorb knowledge.

A study in 2011 demonstrated that children who read the same book many times retain vocabulary words and their meanings better than when they encounter the same words in different books. The authors of this study claim that rereading the same book many times facilitates learning in a holistic manner. In the experiment, the adults read the same book 2 times and 4 times to children aged 18 to 24 months old. The children exposed to 4 readings were capable of imitating the word production process in a more precise manner.

Furthermore, children look for models and regularity to better understand the mechanisms that govern the world. Children feel secure in rituals they can predict. Young children are like scientists who make hypotheses and verify models that were established by repetition. It is for this reason that children will firmly correct an adult who modifies the text or makes a mistake reading a book they know.

Rereading the same book to a child is ideal for bringing out positive emotions: joy of learning, joy of being in a warm relationship, joy of anticipation and participation (like when adults sing a song that they love and know by heart). So do not worry if a child asks you to read the same book again and again. It is good for their cognitive and affective development. It does not matter so much the number of books available to a young child but it is the act of following and respecting the child's wishes to read the same story one more time (and one more time, and again for the last time, and then after the last time once again tomorrow, and after tomorrow again with their father, mother, grandmother, and even their grandfather)!