Can children learn from screens?

Learning from Screen Media

- High quality educational media (Fisch & Truglio, 2001)
- Characters are important (Lauricella et al., 2013)
- Narrative is critical (Fisch, 2006)
- Repetition & predictability help (Barr et al., 2007)
- Co-viewing with an adult is great (Strouse et al., 2013)
- Opportunities for extra, repeated practice (Pitchford, 2014)

How to Help Children Learn: Takeaways

- Look for trusted sources (PBS Kids Games, PBS Kids Video, SesameStreet.org)
- Look for content that has a simple narrative that supports the learning lesson
- Find opportunities for adult (or older sibling) engagement
- Use the technology to support a specific outcome or provide extra practice/new exposure to content

What makes learning from screens hard for children?

Learning from media is HARD (Smith, Anderson, & Fisher, 1985)

- We have to learn how to process and understand information from a screen
- Scene changes, cuts, and zooms only exist in digital media content- not in our real world
- Sound and visual effects have meanings that we learn about through experience
- Processing media content requires keeping a lot of information in mind

Evidence that children have to learn to learn from a screen

- New research with infants, preschoolers, and adults used eye tracking to examine eye movements while watching clips from (Sesame Street Kirkorian, Anderson & Keen, 2012)

Do not assume comprehension

- Even though children look like they are understanding... they may not be comprehending.
Inquire and ask questions!

**Children & Tablet Technology**

We are still learning, but:

- Some evidence of reading and math learning from apps (Masataka, 2014)
- But, Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers seem to learn more from video than touchscreen (Aladé, et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2016, Kikokian et al., 2016)

**Gaming and Learning**

Opportunities

- Gaming is fun
- Increased engagement
- Continuous desire to play
- “Chocolate covered broccoli”

Concerns

- Educational games sometimes lose the fun
- Narrative may be minimal
- Educational content is too overt
- Feels too quiz-like/forced

**How to Help Children Learn from tablets: Takeaways**

- Minimize distractions within the app (hotspots)
- Engaging narrative and characters to increase engagement
- Encourage interaction and adult support during and after interactive app use
- Use the technology to support a specific outcome or provide extra practice

**Considerations for virtual learning during the COVID-19 Outbreak**

**Children and screens now**

- These times are new for every single one of us
- Children need their basic needs, like safety, met first
- Technology can be one tool, among many others

**5 Takeaways**

1. Use technology to support/maintain relationships
2. Choose tools intentionally
3. Keep use short and focused
4. Encourage repetition of content using different formats
5. Integrate consistent characters/puppets into lessons, activities, digital experiences