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Learning on the box: reflections on the mediating role of the television in reinvigorating a culture of reading in Kyrgyzstan

Uncertainties about the nature and effects of Fast Capitalism, new technologies, and the new work order have redefined the nature and meaning of teaching and learning; where we learn, how we learn, and what we learn.

This paper examines the impact of the 'Reading Together' National Television Game Show on the development of reading in Kyrgyzstan. It asks whether the Reading Together Talk Show, watched by millions of viewers in Kyrgyzstan and by Kyrgyz migrant workers abroad, stimulates reading as a social activity and in so doing enriches the culture of reading in homes.

There is anecdotal evidence that schools throughout Kyrgyzstan are using the Talk Show as a model for the teaching of reading and that it benefits the professional development of teachers. The paper examines whether the Show transforms the culture of teaching and learning literacy in schools.

Four propositions are examined:

1. The reading together game show enriches the culture of reading in homes throughout Kyrgyzstan
2. The reading together game show stimulates dialogical interaction between children and other family members in the home and in so doing impacts positively on reading comprehension and the enjoyment of reading
3. The reading together game show serves to develop teachers' knowledge of and professional capabilities to the teaching of literacy
4. The reading together game show bridges the geographical sites of the home and the school and accounts for the production of overlapping 'texts' (writing, talk, drawings, illustrations, models, etc.,) that allows for knowledge exchange and transformation.