Parenting pedagogies in the marketing of children's apps

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical analysis of the download pages for children's apps aimed at pre-school aged children, most of which are provided free or inexpensively in an effort to compete in this fiercely competitive market. We focus on the use of marketing discourses which the state and free market economy not only use to shape individual citizens' education or learning but also shape the environment in which future work-force citizens are raised through the responsibilisation and mobilisation of their parents (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014). In particular, we emphasis on the way in which parental responsibilisation discourses encourage early literacy and numeracy interventions on the part of parents. Implicit within these marketing discourses is that it is good parenting practice to provide even very young children with computer-mediated educational opportunities that will assist children's learning and, over time, lead to future success in the work force (O'Connor & Fotakopoulou, 2016). Parents are constructed as pedagogues responsible for "ensuring that their children acquire skills they will need for educational success" (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2001, p. 282). At the same time, nonetheless, the specialist vocabulary and didactic educational focus of the download pages position parents as being in need of the expert help provided through these educational apps.

Buckingham, D., & Scanlon, M. (2001). Parental pedagogies: An analysis of British 'edutainment'magazines for young children. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 1*(3), 281-299.

Holloway, S. L., & Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2014). "Any Advice is Welcome Isn't it?": Neoliberal Parenting Education, Local Mothering Cultures, and Social Class. *Environment and Planning A, 46*(1), 94-111.

O'Connor, J., & Fotakopoulou, O. (2016). A threat to childhood innocence or the future of learning? Parents' perspectives on the use of touch-screen technology by 0–3 year-olds in the UK. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 17(2), 235-247.