

Digital Storytelling with English Learning Families

Overview of Research

- **Overall Goal:** The overall goal of this line of research is to find out how families can use digital devices to support the literacy development of multilingual children.
- **Short-term objectives:** The short-term objectives of the research are: (a) examining the impact of digital storytelling of family literacy practices and engagement and (b) the impact on multilingual children's emergent language and literacy.
 - We believe that technology, now ubiquitous, can alter the language and literacy outcomes for young students, who are academically at-risk, and their parents in significant ways.

Demographic Content

- English Learners are one of the fastest growing populations in the U.S.
 - In 2008, the number of school-age (5-17 years) children spoke a language other than English was 10.9 million or 21% of the school population.
 - Of the students who spoke a language other than English at home, 72% (7.8 million) spoke Spanish.
 - In Nebraska, one in every five Kindergarten students are native Spanish speakers (PEW, 2014)

Background Information

- Studies of family literacy have shown that joint storybook reading has an impact on children's literacy achievement (Bus et al., 1995).
- In many cultures, however, oral storytelling is a more common way to support children's cognitive and academic growth (Thomas & Collier, 2012).
- We suggest to bridge culturally accepted literacies practices (i.e. oral storytelling) with school expected literacy (normative reading and writing) through family digital storytelling.
- A broader field of research explores adults' learning experiences with computers within family literacy programs (Edwards, 2006; Hughes & Coyne, 1996) and families' technological literacies in the home (Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Lewis, 2009; 2013). However, currently, there is no published research examining the impact of using digital resources with multilingual families.

Morningside & Kats Elementary Schools

- Morningside Elementary
 - Midwest small city
 - School-wide Title 1 urban school with 71% of students on free and/or reduced lunch.
 - Minority enrollment is 45% of the student body (majority Latinx).
 - Participants: Four Latino families (4 mothers & 8 children)
- Kats Elementary
 - Midwest small city
 - School-wide Title 1 urban school with 91% of students on free and/or reduced lunch.
 - Minority enrollment is 68% of the student body (majority Latinx).
 - Participants: Seven Families (7 mothers, 1 father & 13 children)
 - Spanish, Chinese, Sudanese & Vietnamese

Family Literacy Program Details

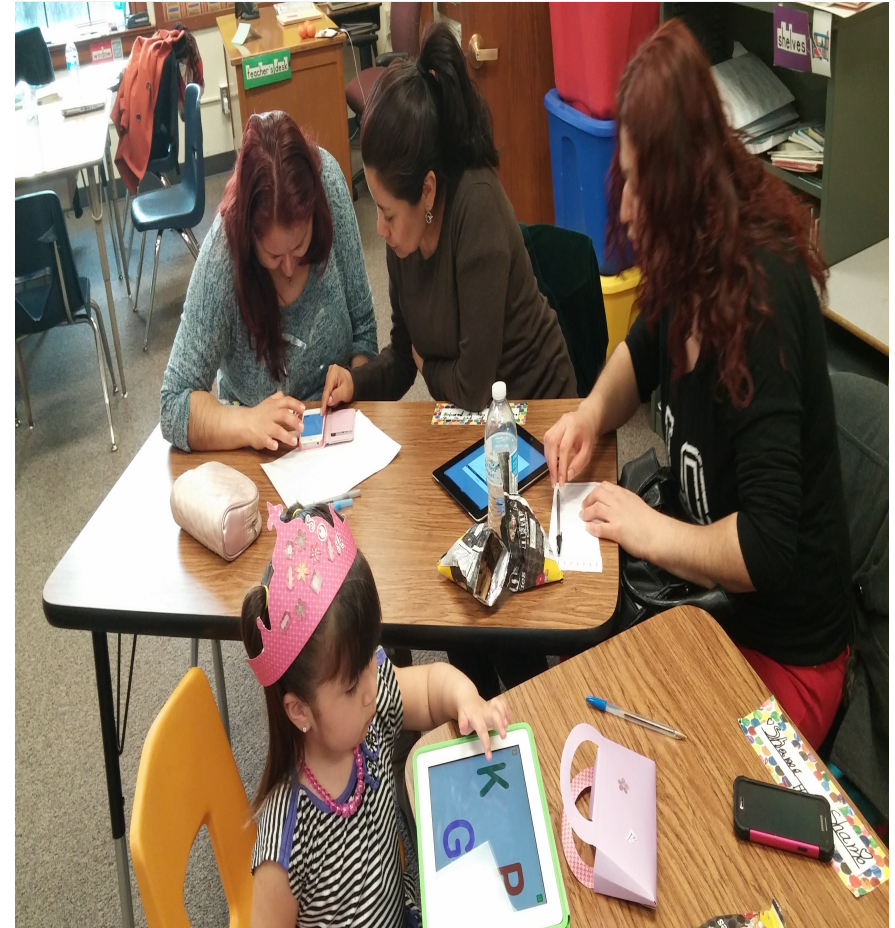
- Same space in the elementary
- Voluntary After-school program
- 8-10 sequential sessions (once a week)
- 80-90 minutes
- Program conducted in Spanish (Morningside) & English (Kats)
- Childcare provided for children while parents were in learning sessions
- Students were producing digital stories
- Refreshments and social time

Digital Storytelling Family Literacy Program Sessions

- Session 1:
 - Discuss of cultural values & the concepts of storytelling.
- Session 2:
 - Identification of parts of the story & developing a continuous storyline within the context of the digital artifacts.
- Session 3:
 - Creating a continuous storyline within the context of the digital artifacts.
- Session 4:
 - Listening to each other's contributions to the story & active listening
- Session 5-9:
 - Feedback on stories & completing own stories
- Session 10:
 - Celebration and share their digital stories

Everything is in English

- *Almost everything, everything is in English. We want to learn about technology but we have to learn English first.*
- *I can be looking for something and you put it in Spanish and you will various things in Spanish but it won't find what you are looking for, things like that.*
- *We speak Arabic at home, everyone has to speak it, I tell them Arabic is good; We are trying to teach them to read and write in Arabic. But I need to push them to learn English; then we can speak Arabic.*
- *The school has a lot of [of emails] and now that we have to read, [I say] "come here niece! Read it to me what does it say?"*



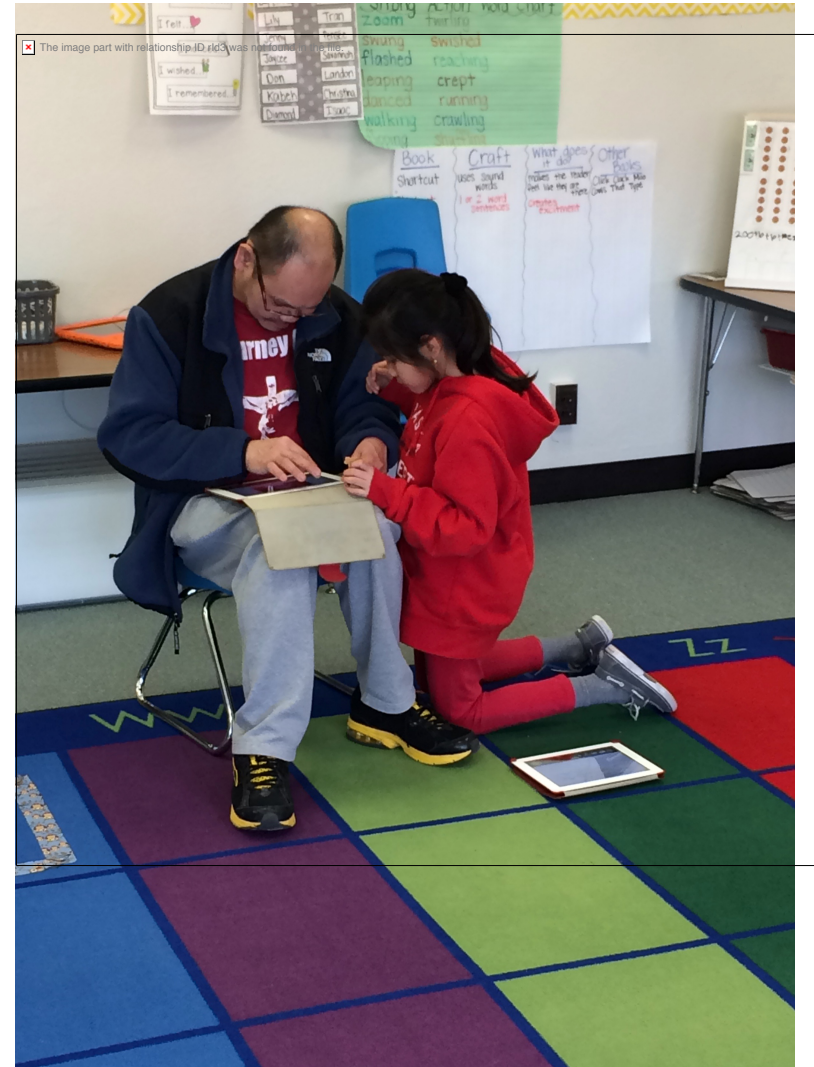
Confidence in learning about technology

- *Through this program, well I learned how to open my email. And I didn't have it [before].*
- *Because once you are learning technology at the same time as the story, well they are the, it puts pressure on us...I will be very sincere. I didn't know anything. I didn't even know what, what, what is this, what do you do with it. But now I say yes.*
- *Where to open the apps, where to close them...all of this. In order to make the story. How to begin it. And what you need to continue it as you go. (laughing) We learned about the story. The beginning, the problem, the...the...solution and the ending. And the surprise!*
- *How to put the photos [on the tablet]. ...id order to put the photos [on the tablet]. We can put one or three and you can put the text or whatever you want. The principal [thing] is how to experiment when using the tablet. That is what we did. Experimenting. We did experiments. But something good came out of it!*
- *What I learned is to be more interested. Because before I didn't like it [technology]. I wasn't interested. Now I am more interested.*



Coexistence [spending time together]

- *The coexistence, that you guys were patient with us [when using] the tablet.*
- *They read to me in English, I read to them in Arabic.*
- *Everything was good because we are very comfortable.*
- *Jessica shared her story and I shared my story with her.*
- *Now I see that it is okay to click/touch it. I learned how to click/touch the tablet and how to help the kids so that they learn how to make a story on the tablet. They do one part and we do another but together, yes.*



Lessons learned....

- Parents skills with technology
 - Creating accounts & receiving emails
 - Learning more about google+
 - Uploading information
 - Keeping things secure on tablets and online
 - Ipad/phone vs. other smart phone
 - Downloading apps
 - Taking pictures with smartphone
 - Willingness to post information
 - Excitement to continue to learn
 - Hesitant to work with children because they were afraid that children would do everything



Take-Aways

- Digital storytelling narratives are authentic literacy practices where parents and children create meaningful, purposeful learning experiences. Moving from oral storytelling to digital storytelling, creates a permanent artifact to capture that meaningful experience.
- Technology has the most value when used jointly by adults and children
- For multilingual families to become active participants in the life of schools, they must be welcomed, valued, and connected to each other and to what their children are doing.

Thank you for listening & acknowledgements

- We would like to thank the children and families of the school community for their eagerness, openness, and collaboration that ensured the success of the digital storytelling family literacy program.
- We welcome your comments and contributions.
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