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Warp Speed Ahead! Developing a Spoc to Measure Teacher Completer Impact on K-12 Student Learning

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WARP SPEED AHEAD! DEVELOPING A SPOC TO MEASURE TEACHER COMPLETER

IMPACT ON K-12 STUDENT LEARNING

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Abstract

Teacher preparation programs are charged with providing evidence of teacher completers demonstrating

positive impact on K-12 students' learning. The purpose of this paper is to share an initiative that one

university is taking to meet this need. A Small Private Online Course (SPOC) is being developed this

fall of 2014 for graduate teacher completers to take after receiving training on curriculum reading

applications and provide data on the implementation of the K-12 student's reading progress. Details on

how to setup a similar initiative are outlined.

The International Reading Association (IRA, 2009), states

> To become fully literate in today's world, students must become proficient in the new literacies of 21st-century technologies. IRA believes that literacy educators have a responsibility to integrate information and communication technologies (ICTs) into the curriculum, to prepare students for the futures they deserve... (n.p.)

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education (2010) presented the Administration's National Education Technology Plan, *Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology* that called for improving student achievement through personal and professional use and implementation of every day technologies into our educational system throughout the nation (NETP, 2010).

However, in November of 2013 a small private southern university's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and Reading Graduate Program's Advisory Council indicated that their teacher completers were not using technology to the fullest potential in the classroom. Specifically, the Advisory Council recommended using iPads to support literacy instruction throughout the curriculum. Advisory Council members indicated that it would be beneficial to have graduate students trained even if the iPads were not currently available in their school districts, so that when the technology became available, teacher completers would be able to effectively use them in the classroom and ultimately be the trainer for their school. Based on this identified need, internal funding was secured to purchase iPads and provide training to the graduate students.

iPads do not currently have the applications (apps) which have been identified through research as having a positive impact on K-12 student learning in literacy (Hutchinson, Beschorner, & Schmidt-Crawford, 2012). Melhuish and Fallon (2010) indicated that the iPad was considered the tool of choice for students receiving special education services due to size, the ability for audio and recording, and capacity for supplemental instruction by accessing several different educational applications (apps).

They also discussed the use of the iPad for individual learning because the student could adapt the iPad to fit his/her needs (Melhuish & Fallon, 2010). Not only can the iPad be used for individual use, it can also be used as a collaborative instrument for the entire class and can provide a source of motivation for some students through such partnerships. The iPad Train-the-Trainer session which was conducted on October 25, 2014 for ESE and Reading graduates, provided the necessary information for the ESE and Reading graduate students on how to use the iPads with three specific apps (see Table 1) which were identified and selected by the Reading program administrator as a way to help increase literacy skills for both struggling readers with and without forms of disabilities as well as English Language Learners and ultimately all students in a classroom.

Both ESE and Reading graduate programs require teacher candidates to complete a culminating reading project using research based instructional strategies and procedures for developing oral/aural language; phonological awareness; phonics and word recognition; reading fluency and endurance; academic and domain specific vocabulary; higher order thinking; and critical comprehension. Even though all teacher candidates are required to demonstrate proficiency in all reading areas and have acquired this background knowledge on how to teach these skills to graduate from the respective program, the iPad initiative focused on literacy development which corresponds to the education received in their graduate program for struggling readers and students with disabilities, in essence, reinforcing acquired knowledge from their graduate program. Moreover, the iPad apps selected are specifically are in alignment with Florida statutes (2013) with 6A-6.053 K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan.

Exceptional Student Education (n= 5) and Reading (n = 8) graduate students that attended the iPad Train-the-Trainer session received information on various literacy apps available that can be used to improve literacy skills for K-12 students and learned how to integrate this technology immediately into their classroom. Examples of how to infuse three specific apps, Popplet (see Figure 1); Subtext (see Figure 2) and Story Buddy 2 (see Figure 3) to their existing literacy lessons was provided. An overview

of "how to" use these apps was provided and then participants were asked to practice using the apps during the training.

As part of the training, ESE and Reading graduate students were given iPads to use in his or her classroom. In exchange, participants agreed to the following:

1. Train other university ESE or reading graduate alumnus in his/her as well as teachers in the respective school district on the apps that were used during the training;
2. Enroll for a minimum of 5 years in the Small Private Online Course (SPOC) to record your use of the apps in the classroom and to help the ESE and Reading programs determine its effectiveness for improving k-12 students with disabilities or struggling readers literacy skills and;
3. Join the ESE and/or Reading Advisory board for one year.

The SPOC is currently being developed and the university's Learning Management System is being used to build the SPOC course shell. The current LMS was selected since (1) graduate students have an existing university identification which can be used to enroll the students; (2) no cost is incurred by the students for the course; (3) students are familiar with the LMS; and (3) the ESE and Reading program administrators are able to collect, monitor, and assess data that will be used to determine the effectiveness of apps in the classroom to improve literacy as well as document impact on K-12 students. The latter data reporting will be used for the university's report which is submitted to the Florida Department of Education state approval system which requires "methods and processes are in place to assess candidate impact on P-12 student learning based on student achievement data during the first year of teaching." Florida Department of Education (2006, np).

The graduate completers enrolled in SPOC will post to the discussion board examples of how she or he is using the apps in the classroom. In addition, providing a description of what apps work or not and an analysis will also be expected from graduate completers. It is anticipated that each month, a new literacy app will be introduced, with an example of how it can be used in the classroom. Every grading term (typically 9 weeks) graduate completers will be asked to provide assessment of K-12 student's use of the three apps. After one year, an analysis will be conducted by the ESE and Reading Program

Administrators to determine the effectiveness of using apps to increase literacy skills for struggling readers or students with disabilities.

Figure 1: Using Popplet App to Build Background Knowledge
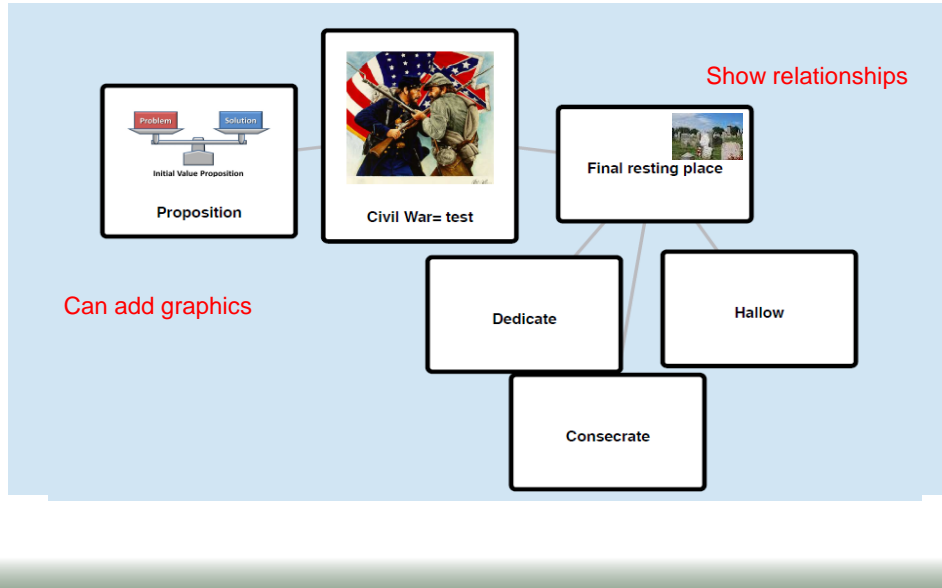
(Skarbek, Carver, Mukherjee, 2014)

Figure 2: Using Subtext App to Make Text Connections

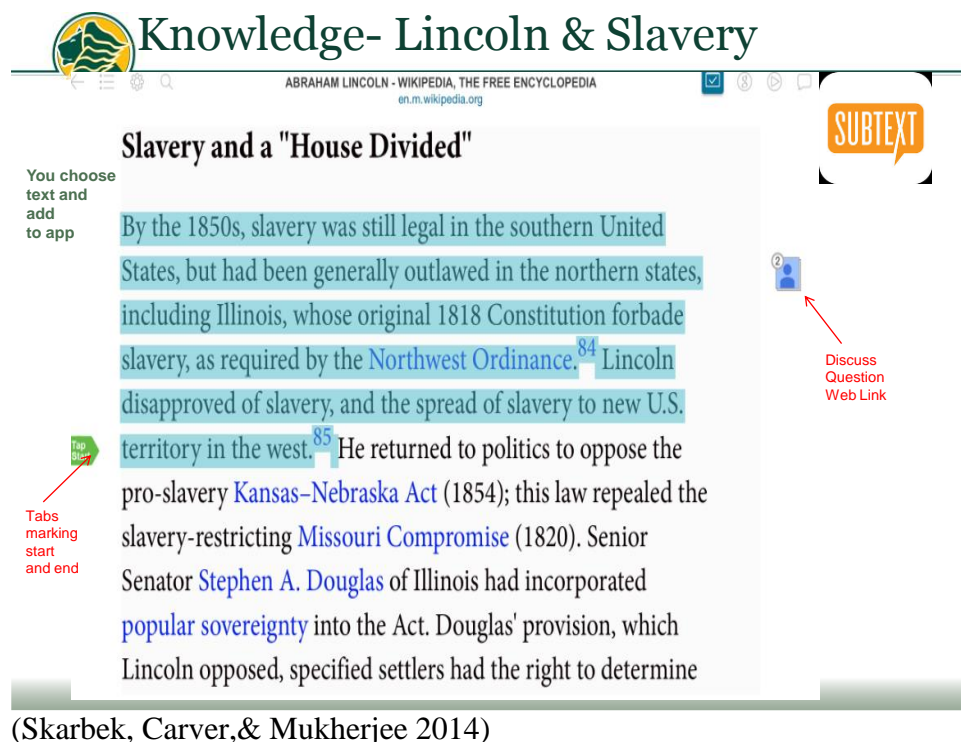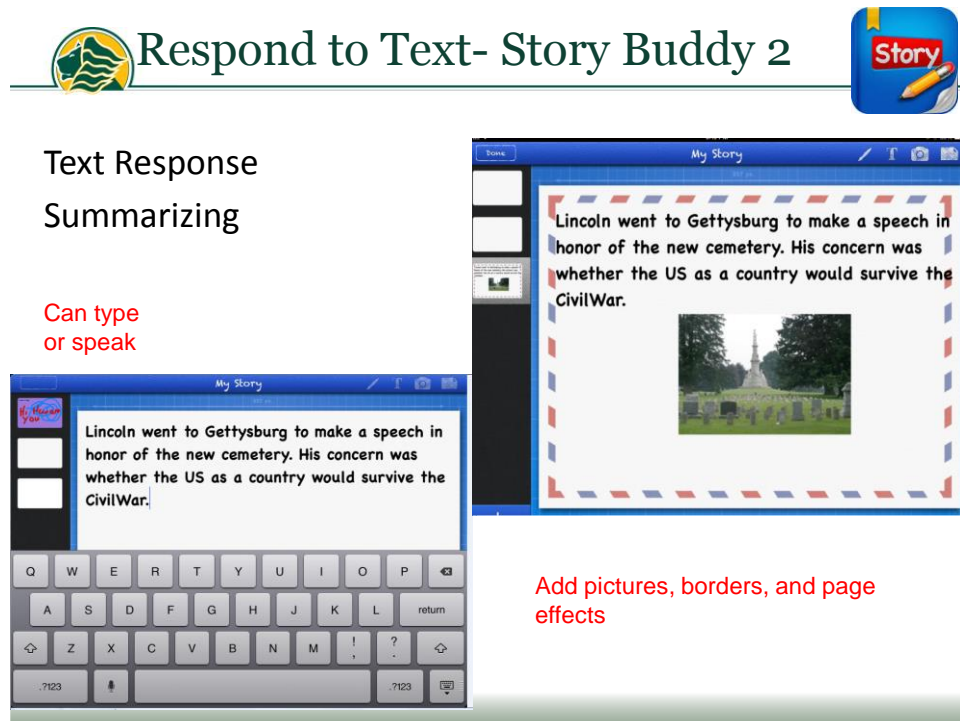(Skarbek, Carver,& Mukherjee 2014)

Figure 3: Using Story Buddy 2

(Skarbek, Carver, Mukherjee 2014)

Table 1: iPad Apps Used for Literacy Training

Literacy skill or area addressed	App	App Description	Description of Literacy Activity
Developing Background Knowledge/brainstorming/sequencing	Popplet	brainstorming tool used for images	Work one-on-one or in small groups to show the relationship between text and background knowledge
Summarizing/ Comprehension	Story Buddy	Story creating and texts to share with others	After reading instructional level text, students create a story demonstrating understanding of main ideas
Text Response	Subtext	Make connections to text with other text support	Embed instruction from the passage being studies notes can be linked to a specific passage, which can help with close reading, citing text evidence, and supporting claims.

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