



**LANGUAGE
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The *Language Experience Forum* Journal is a refereed journal of the Language Experience Special Interest Group of the International Literacy Association. The journal is aimed at teachers of literacy at all levels. It provides a forum for discussion of ideas and issues related to the teaching of literacy to all groups of students and across multiple disciplinary areas.

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LEA for Movers and Shakers: Updating D-LEA with Mobile Technology

Sheri Vasinda, Ed.D., Oklahoma State University

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Abstract

Mobile technologies, such as iPads, are updating Digital-Language Experience Approach, or D-LEA. Often it is challenging to choose appropriate technology tools to pair with traditional strategies. This article shares the TPACK model as a framework for considering technology integrations, as well as considerations specific to digital publishing apps. With customizable book-like affordances, transformational options only found in eBooks, and several sharing options, digitally published eBooks transform the emergent reader's text to a multimodal publication, amplifying the personalized power of LEA, and making it a perfect match for 21st century learning and learners.

In an age where almost everything can be customized from the screensaver on your computer or smartphone to your specialty coffee drink, the Language Experience Approach (LEA) is poised for a renaissance. LEA has tremendous appeal to provide a customized approach for emerging readers of any age. LEA's hallmark process of using personal and meaningful dictated stories transcribed by a fluent language learner as reading texts (Allen, 1982; Cramer, 2003; Stauffer, 1980) make it a natural partner for digital mobile publishing options. As Cramer (2003) notes, words describing a personal experience provide a context of maximum support while words written by someone else may not. Digital publishing apps have the potential to elevate these words and stories

from often stapled sheets of paper to electronic publications with turnable pages like real books and can sit on a virtual bookshelf alongside works of professional authors. As e-books become more commonplace, digital publishing has the potential for the dictated stories of emergent readers to have a more authentic book-like feel when compared with other digital books.

TPACK: A Framework for Thinking about Technology Integration

The advent of new technologies continues to challenge teachers to consider the benefits, or affordances, of new tools (McLeod & Vasinda, 2009). In much the way that Shulman (1986, 1987) identified the intersection of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge to form a unique knowledge that effective teachers develop called pedagogical content knowledge, or PCK, today's teacher must develop a newly unique knowledge base that includes Technological Knowledge (TK): technological pedagogical content knowledge, or TPACK [See Figure 1] (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). TPACK is a new specialized knowledge that leverages and integrates the affordances of technological tools and applications with PCK to support student learning and engagement in dynamic ways. With the rapid rate of change of digital technologies, teachers can struggle to keep up with the new digital options, but it is these new digital options that can bring important affordances with the possibility to transform learning experiences.

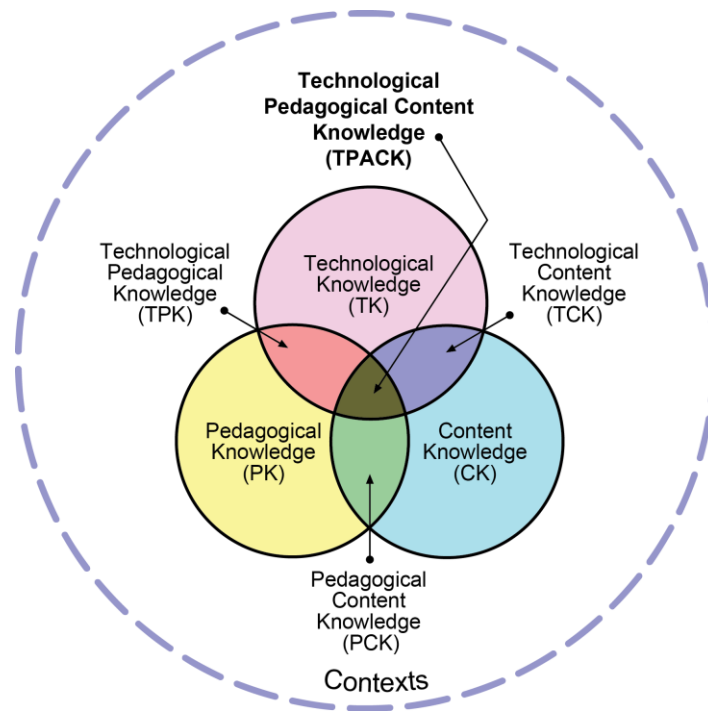


Figure 1: TPACK Model Source: <http://tpack.org> Reproduced by permission of the publisher tpack.org

Advent of Digital LEA: Purposeful and Powerful Pairings Transforming LEA

Earlier this century, Labbo, Eakle, and Montero (2002) began exploring the integration of computer technology and LEA with kindergarteners as they recognized the potential to amplify the power of LEA when paired with digital photo stories and computer publishing. They used digital cameras, tape recorders for students to record their thinking when using the digital cameras, and Kidpix software to publish on the computer. The research team typed the dictated stories captured with digital photos, and the kindergarteners used the drawing tools and sticker features to customize their photos. They found that students engaged more with print than they had with traditional LEA. Labbo and her colleagues coined the term Digital LEA, or D-LEA, for this integration.

Intrigued, Turbill (2003) followed up with first graders in Australia. Like Labbo, et al., she used digital photography to document the experiences. She used Microsoft PowerPoint as the publishing software for two students to create texts for kindergarteners that were posted on the school's intranet so that the kindergarten teachers could then use them as texts on their classroom computers. Turbill found that in addition to leveraging the best aspects of LEA, D-LEA also offers opportunities for teaching children to use digital literacies. In both of these studies, D-LEA utilized computers and digital photography to compose D-LEA texts. Currently, with the ubiquitous nature of mobile technologies, updated D-LEA continues to provide an opportunity to personalize the reading process as well as transform the product and the process through the use of mobile publishing apps.

In our work integrating technology with traditional strategies, we have referred to the thoughtful matching of a traditional literacy approach to an appropriate technology, “powerful and purposeful matches”, or pairings (Vasinda & McLeod, 2011, 2013, in press). Our primary goal has been to maintain the integrity of a proven instructional strategy or approach, in this case LEA, with an appropriate technology that holds the potential to amplify the power of the literacy strategy, making it more than it could be without the technology. The aspects of LEA that we want to maintain are the personalized stories of the reader that provide support with a context they already understand. Using personal stories that have been written down for the teller-reader and creating a customized text establishes reading as a meaning-filled act. The purposeful, powerful technology pairing is book-like digital publishing apps on mobile tablet devices, specifically the iPad, elevating their customized text to be on par with any other eBook on the iBookshelf.

Technology Goes Mobile

Technology on the Move: Transforming D-LEA

Tablet computers, specifically iPads, lead the national trend as the most common mobile devices adopted or planned to be adopted by K-12 schools (Interactive Education Systems Design, Inc. [IESD], 2013), and they continue to hold the majority of the market share of all tablet sales (Spence, 2015). While working in schools implementing iPad integration, we saw the potential for updating D-LEA with iPad digital publishing apps. The iPad offers two distinct advantages over past technology integrations: its transportable nature and its all-in-one options. When Labbo and colleagues (2002) explored D-LEA over a decade ago, the children used digital cameras, tape recorders, and a desktop or laptop computer. With the iPad, the camera, voice recording options, and publishing options are all in one device. Additionally, most of the publishing app include camera, voice recording, and other options within the app.

Illustrating the dynamic nature of language as well as technology, “app” was first attested in 1992 (etymology.com, n.d.) and was voted Word of the Year in 2010 (American Dialect Society, 2011). It is an abbreviated form of the word application, meaning software application, and the shortened form of the word mimics the nature of its meaning, as well. Apps are special software programs typically designed for mobile operating systems such as smartphones and tables. They are specialized to perform one set, or a smaller set, of functions. When we began this exploration in 2012, there were relatively few apps to even consider. We also looked for free apps for digital publishing. The only one we found for iPads was Composer by Demibooks. It does create beautiful digital books, but it was designed for professionals. It has been successfully used in middle school and up, but it takes some degree of technical skill. We were looking for

digital publishing easy enough for busy teachers, volunteers, or older book buddies to use with little help. The apps we explored and analyzed for this article were designed for use with student authors and are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 *App Publishing and Purchasing Information*

App	Developer	Cost	Additional In-App Purchase
Book Creator	Red Jumper Limited	\$4.99 Free Lite Version	no
My Story	HiDef Web Solution	\$3.99	no
Scribble Press	Fingerprint Digital	\$3.99	yes- \$0.99 options for story templates
StoryBuddy 2	Tapfuze	\$2.99 Free Lite Version	no

Using these apps with students from Kindergarten through 4th grade gave us some idea of the benefits and drawbacks of various apps. The affordances and features we have come to appreciate for our purposeful and powerful pairings are: 1) customizable, book-like options, 2) transformative options afforded by digital technology; and 3) many options to share widely. A description for each of these affordances and features follows:

Customizable, book-like options. One of Apple’s key design principles is including interfaces that imitate the physical world object, referred to as skeuomorphism (Janssen, n.d.). The skeuomorphic design principle for digital publishing includes pages that turn with a page-like curving bend and covers that open as if the cover is rigid, which we have labeled “book-like”. We found this affordance of digital publishing in the e-book format to be intriguing and powerful as it positions an emergent reader’s book in the same authentic format with the published e-book of a professional author. This is a dramatic

shift from the traditionally stapled or even plastic comb bound LEA books of the past. The D-LEA texts published by Labbo, Eakle, and Montero (2002) and Turbill (2003) did not offer these more book-like features. Their texts were software specific (Kidpix and Microsoft PowerPoint respectively) and did not mimic book-like affordances. Digital publishing apps offer a powerfully 21st century authentic text opportunity.

These features are made more powerful because students can customize their books. While the hallmark of the 20th century was mass production, the hallmark of the 21st century is mass customization. The challenge for business and industry is the ability to customize while keeping costs relatively low and responsiveness swift (Da Silveira, Fogliatto, & Borenstein, 2001). Because LEA texts originate with the teller-reader, it is the most customized approach to reading. We looked for digital publishing apps that included the ability to position texts and images in various places on each page, using drawing tools, and changing colors and background of pages or covers. In others words, the author can arrange the work in flexible ways rather than static designs. Further, we did not include apps that included picture prompts, story starters, or interchangeable story parts (such as choosing a ready-made character or setting). We wanted more of a blank slate to best match the integrity of LEA so that reader' unique and personal stories are the focus (see Table 2).

Table 2 Customization Book-like Options as of May 2015

App	Flexible Text/ Image Layouts	Book-Like Features	Images
Book Creator	Flexible Text is add from dropdown box and then positioned and sized on page, challenging to rearrange pages, offers landscape, portrait or square options	Hard cover open, turnable pages	Digital Drawing Can take photos within app or upload existing
My Story	Static - No choices on image and text placement.	Hard cover open, turnable pages	Digital Drawings
Scribble Press	Flexible Text is composed at bottom of page. Cut and paste features.	Turnable pages and cover	Drawing - Many options for markers / stamps Photos
StoryBuddy 2	Flexible Can position text directly on page, Easy to rearrange pages	Hard cover open, turnable pages	Digital Drawing Photo uploads from existing camera roll- can't use camera from app

Transformative options. While customization takes traditional book-like characteristics, such as text and images, and makes digitally published texts compelling and easy to use with children, there are also features that can be used with digital texts that are not possible with traditional texts. We were very interested in the ways that eBooks can leverage digital tools and embed video and audio within a story. We have found tremendous benefits of using audio and video with students, including enhancing students' ability to self-assess, especially reading fluency. We have observed children as young as Kindergarten determine immediately if they want to keep their voice recording or delete it. With LEA, audio and video can more accurately capture students' stories and can bring them to life in a new way. Audio and video can also help teller-readers who still need additional supports as they read their stories. These multimodal opportunities

transform the product, as these options are not possible without digital technology (see Table 3).

Table 3 *Transformative Options as of May 2015*

App	Video	Audio/ Voice Recording
Book Creator	X	X
My Story		X
Scribble Press		
StoryBuddy 2	X	X

Sharing options. The potential for the eBooks to be both at home and at school maximizes their power, too; therefore, sharing options are important. Further, digital texts can be emailed to extended family or even uploaded to the Web for further sharing. Our top choice for sharing is iBookshelf since that is also the format in which the book-like features are best retained. We are also sensitive to having additional sharing options such as PDF, movie, and ePub for additional reach of these personalized texts (see Table 4).

Table 4 *Sharing Options (as of May 2015)*

App	email /text	iBook shelf	iTunes App Store	PDF	MyCloud Dropbox Evernote	Face book	Twitter	Pinterest	ePub	Video/ web
Book Creator	email text	x	iTunes	x	My Cloud Dropbox Evernote	x		x	x	x
My Story	email text	x		x					x	x
Scribble Press	x	x				x	x	x		
Story Buddy 2	email	x		x	My Cloud Evernote	x		x	x	

Conclusion

Each of the apps we analyzed will publish an eBook with authenticity difficult to achieve with our 20th century classroom publishing. When we first started exploring digital publishing, Scribble Press was the first digital publishing app we found, and we were delighted with ease of using digital photographs to capture experiences that students would dictate to us and all the drawing tools students could use for embellishments. When we discovered Book Creator and its affordance of voice recording, D-LEA was never the same for us. The transformation of capturing the teller-reader's voice gave another authentic reason to read and reread their text, not only for the enjoyment of reading their own text, but also to read it smoothly and well for a good recording, and it included video options as well, where pictures could come to life. Book Creator had been our favorite "go to" publishing app for the transformational aspects it offers as well as the most sharing options. When emergent readers read and reread their D-LEA books and then record and listen to themselves they are often surprised that they are reading. My Story has improved since we first explored it, now offering voice recording and many picture options. While we find this distracting from authentic experiences, those pictures may prompt a creative story that is just as powerful. Story Buddy 2 is a recent discovery and it has many of the affordances we appreciate in Book Creator with an easier option for positioning text. But often with various technologies, there is a Faustian Bargain. For something gained, there is something lost. Story Buddy 2 has its logo swathed across the front of each book, somewhat overpowering the author's title. So, while all of these apps were designed to publish student writing and create engaging digital books, our goal was to develop guidelines for consideration when choosing digital publishing apps to support LEA and update D-LEA.

LEA has long been the most personal approach to reading. Digital publishing has the potential to elevate child published stories to sit alongside a professionally published eBook. The skeuomorphic nature of our favorite digital publishing apps provides a level of authenticity that was not possible in the paper-based world of the 20th century, thus potentially amplifying the powerful personalized approach to reading that hallmarks LEA. By the time this article is published, there could be more digital publishing apps on the scene and over time there absolutely will be. When considering purposeful and powerful pairings of mobile publishing apps with LEA, or any teaching or learning strategy, we need frameworks to guide wise choices. We advocate considering the power of the original strategy or approach and pairing with technology that amplifies that strategy. Lean on TPACK as a framework for thinking about these purposeful matches, but also consider the affordances of the technology. In our work using technology-rich LEA with emerging readers, we found three factors were very significant to consider: book-like publishing, customizable books which leverage audio and video, and share ability.

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Dr. Sheri Vasinda continues to seek ways to engage and support learners in developing all types of literacies. She is especially interested in the possibilities technologies afford for amplifying the effects of traditionally strong literacy strategies, such as LEA. She also strives to model powerful technology integration in her preservice teacher courses at Oklahoma State University where she is currently an assistant professor of Literacy. She earned her doctoral degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Dr. Julie McLeod is an avid proponent for powerful student work and deep-thinking teachers. With a deep background in Educational Technology, Julie has created technology rich learning experiences for students from first grade through graduate school. She currently serves as the Assistant Head of School for Educational Innovation and Technology at Good Shepherd Episcopal School in Dallas, Texas as well as teaching graduate courses in Educational Technology at George Washington University and Texas A&M-Commerce. She earned her Ph.D at University of North Texas.

FROM THE FIELD

A Reflection on Bibliotherapy

Dr. Gerra Perkins, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

As a former school counselor and play therapist, I have worked with many children and their families on issues ranging from first week of school anxieties to instances of sexual abuse. While the experiences, stories, and faces of the children changed, one thing was always the same—the desire to be heard and understood. As a school counselor, I served a population of 500 students (the American School Counseling Association recommends a 1:250 ratio), and it was important that I serve every child. In many cases this was done through classroom guidance, which entailed teaching lessons about a counseling-related issue within the classroom. However, I also worked with students who needed intervention services, such as individual counseling or small group counseling. And that is how I discovered the power of bibliotherapy.

The term ***bibliotherapy*** was first published by Samuel Crothers in a 1916 issue of *Atlantic Monthly* to describe the technique of giving clients books to read as a way of helping them understand their problems (Crothers, 1916, p. 291). Later, Carolyn Shrodes developed the theoretical model on which the current practice of bibliotherapy is built. She posited that the success of bibliotherapy came through an individual's identification with the character(s), thereby allowing clients to simultaneously work through the character's problem/issue while gaining insight about his own

problem/issue (Shrodes, 1955, p. 24). Shrodes identified the three-step process as *identification, catharsis, and insight*.

The practice of bibliotherapy typically falls within two categories: (1) developmental bibliotherapy, and (2) therapeutic bibliotherapy. Developmental bibliotherapy is commonly used by educators and deals with common, "normal" issues. This type of bibliotherapy is often used in guidance lessons with topics such as self-acceptance, caring, respect, and bullying. Children's books which address these issues are easy to find and adapt (e.g., *Berenstain Bears*, *Franklin is Bossy* series, *The Recess Queen*, etc.).

Whereas developmental bibliotherapy involves common issues which affect individuals across a broad spectrum, therapeutic bibliotherapy is specific and targeted for an individual. The topics are personal and often serious in nature (e.g., death and illness, divorce, homelessness, substance abuse, parent in prison), and, when used in counseling, bibliotherapy becomes part of the client's treatment plan. While counselors are certainly not the only professionals who can recommend these books, the gravity of the emotional experience for an individual cannot be overlooked. It is imperative for the child/adolescent to have an opportunity to discuss the thoughts, feelings, and emotions the story evokes with a caring and nurturing adult who can then refer the child for additional services/resources if needed.

Bibliotherapy is often seen as a "safe" introduction to a topic that most do not want to discuss or simply do not know how to broach. It can normalize an issue, assuring the child she is not the only one who has experienced this problem. It can also teach coping skills (e.g., how the character(s) handles the issue) and provide a context for children to understand their thoughts and feelings. "Books and stories can express

in written form thoughts and emotions that a child may think about and feel but not yet be able to express" (Pehrsson, 2006, p. 7). That expression may be lacking due to the inability to articulate those thoughts/feelings or because of the belief that it is not safe to do so.

When appropriate to do so, involving parents/guardians in the child's bibliotherapy can be valuable. As professionals who work with children, our goal is to support and promote a healthy child-parent relationship. Just as bibliotherapy normalizes an individual's issue, it can also normalize the issue for those around (e.g., parent/guardian). Bibliotherapy can also act as a catalyst for the family to discuss a problem in a productive manner.

I was recently reminded of the importance of this aspect of bibliotherapy when my eight- year-old daughter confided to me that she sometimes finds her two-year-old sister annoying. "I really like her sometimes, but other times everything has to be about her and I really don't want to be around her," she told me somewhat hesitantly, as if she were a horrible big sister for having even thought such a thing! I immediately dug out an old copy of Judy Blume's, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, which focuses on a nine-year old boy named Peter Hatcher and his relationship with "Fudge", his two-year old brother. The story itself, the special one-on-one reading time, and looking back at picture albums of my oldest daughter when she was two helped us connect and have meaningful discussions about the trials of sisterhood and the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of two-year olds. "*Tales*" became much more than just a humorous look at life as an oldest sibling; it became the conduit for understanding, catharsis, and a stronger mother-daughter relationship.

"We lose ourselves in books. We find ourselves there too" (unknown). This adapted quote depicts my view of bibliotherapy—the connection made with the characters, the coping that is learned, and the deeper meaning that is derived when the individuals apply the book to their own lives. There is nothing quite like the power of a good book.

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Dr. Gerra Perkins is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Registered Play Therapist, and a Nationally Certified School Counselor. She now serves as the Counseling Program Coordinator at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. She can be reached at perkinsg@nsula.edu.

**LESIG: Language Experience Approach to
Literacy Across Content Areas
Saturday, July 18, 2015, 3:00-5:00 pm
60th Annual Convention, St. Louis, MO**

This session explored the use of the Language Experience Approach (LEA) in a variety of settings and across age groups with a particular emphasis on using this literacy strategy with ELLs, struggling readers, and across content areas. LEA provides support for readers because they are actively engaged in creating meaningful communications. This strategy is especially beneficial for reading across content areas and for struggling readers because it draws on students' experiences, thus providing meaningful and relevant texts which students can use to hone language skills. If you were there, we hope you left with great ideas and food for thought. If you missed it, please plan to be a part of a friendly and passionate discussion of Language Experience Research and Activities at the 2016 International Literacy Convention to be held in Boston.

Session Chair

Leslie Haas

Keynote:

Dr. Tim Rasinski led the program by sharing demonstrations and information on how the Language Experience Approach "primes the pump" to motivate children to read and write so they will engage themselves in the task and bootstrap their way to full literacy. The second half of the program consisted of several roundtables where new research on and methods for using the Language Experience Approach were shared as each related to supporting English Language Learners, leveraging technology opportunities, supporting grammar instruction, and incorporating real world connections.

Tim Rasinski

Kent State University
Kent, OH

Round Table Presentations:

Stephen Adamson

Dallas Independent School District
Dallas, TX

Dorothy Idris

School District of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

Jane Moore

University of Texas at Arlington
Arlington, TX

Mary Strong
Widener University
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