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TECHNOLOGY AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Storytelling Among Israeli and Palestinian Children in the Era of Mobile Innovation

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(Editor's note: See full text for reference citations.)

This study emerged out of a desire to understand how educational technology can not only promote academic achievement, but also improve other social problems through its impact on education. Prior research has shown that schools are powerful socializing agents, and that educational media and technology, namely television, can influence children's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

This article is excerpted from *Educational Media and Technology Yearbook: Volume 36, 2011,* published 2012. Read the full text by logging in at the AECT website, http://aect.org/, clicking on Publications.

Building off of this literature, we advocate a research agenda that investigates the role that newer educational technologies can play in socializing young people and shaping their identities, values, and characters, as well as their knowledge about the issues that shape their lives.

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The idea that technology can link people across borders has become a platitude in the popular media today; but the focus on how technology can connect individuals across borders tends to obscure the fact that borders of all kinds still shape our social world and our lived experiences.

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Page 2	Page 5	Page 6

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Patterns of Kindergarten Children's Social Interaction With Peers in the Computer Area

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In this study, the researcher explored how young children interact with their peers in a public kindergarten classroom. Patterns of young children's social interaction with peers in the computer area in this classroom were examined. Children's social interaction, as defined in this study, is the action of giving and taking information that results in children's knowledge construction and cognitive development that can be accomplished through peer-to-peer interactions. This kind of social interaction is referred as "Cognitively Effective Social Interaction (CESI)" in this paper. This social interaction is not merely the exchanging of information or just sharing emotions. It should be more than simple responses.

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The findings of this study have the potential to provide information to teachers who want to integrate computer technology into their classrooms in developmentally appropriate ways, to software designers who want to develop educationally meaningful software programs for young children, and to policy makers who are open to changing their legislation and state standards regarding technology use.

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At the computer, children might see electronic storybooks or songs via the Internet, and this was done largely without interacting with others. Therefore, it was easy to see why people might think that computers isolate children. But, as a matter of fact, it does not have to be this way.

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The patterns of children's interactions were categorized as follows: (1) parallel play, (2) simple verbal conflicts, (3) sociable interactions, (4) knowledge gained through positive interaction process, (5) knowledge construction through negative interaction process, and (6) non-verbal communication.

Computer technology used in early childhood education settings does not isolate children and it supports young children's social interaction with peers in developmentally meaningful ways. Young children are interacting with their friends happily and meaningfully, just as interacting in other activity areas such as block areas, manipulative areas and so on. Based on the findings, exploring the ways teachers can support young children's social interaction at the computer area in developmentally appropriate ways is an important topic for future study.

AECT Mission

The mission of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology is to provide international leadership by promoting scholarship and best practices in the creation, use, and management of technologies for effective teaching and learning in a wide range of settings.

Goals:
- Define the disciplines and professional activities that comprise the field of educational communications and technology.
- Serve and represent professionals in the field and support professional growth.
- Advance scholarship and practice that contribute to and enlarge the knowledge base of the field.
- Promote policies that ensure the humane and ethical use of educational communications and technology at all levels, from the personal through the international.

Storytelling...continued from page 1

Digital storytelling offers an innovative method for young people to share their narratives about peace and conflict with others, while also reading and learning from others' experiences in conflict. Through a lived-experience approach to narrative storytelling, we believe children can begin to develop cross-border awareness and a sense of commonality through universal themes of hope and compassion. Through an initial action-research project of a storytelling model for mobile learning devices, we believe that multimedia stories have the distinct advantage of making students' narratives come alive, while also overcoming the traditional barrier of literacy.

However, our initial study revealed that while mobile technology offers many possibilities, a number of challenges remain. It remains quite difficult to keep the mobile learning devices affordable, while also making them durable and functional, particularly if we want to include advanced features such as cameras and voice recorders. In addition, more studies are needed to maximize the usability of mobile learning devices for children of all ages while also ensuring the sustainability of the education model (e.g., structure, funding, resources, etc.). These obstacles, however, if overcome, could prepare many young children, whose access to technology is currently limited, to leverage digital tools of the twenty-first century to confront the many obstacles they will face in their futures, a peaceful solution to political conflict being only one such problem.

At the same time, we must not forget that the devices themselves are simply vehicles for content and pedagogy. They must be filled with meaningful content and integrated in proven pedagogy, which promotes the higher values of shared peace and prosperity. Any content that is not integrated in pedagogy does not support our larger mission of educating and nurturing our children, and perhaps more importantly, any pedagogies purposefully nullifying or disrupting shared peace and prosperity must be identified and stopped.

Lastly, this study argues that mobile applications can be incorporated into educational initiatives in myriad ways, many of which are yet unexplored. At the present time, we are investigating opportunities for incorporating health education and financial literacy programs into mobile devices and applications. The opportunities are limitless, but they require us to go beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom to examine the role technology and media can play when placed at the intersection of society and schooling.
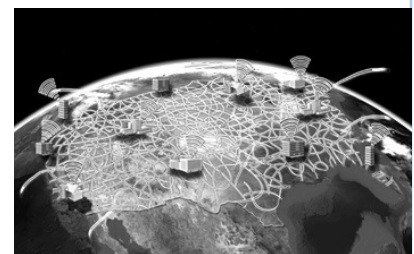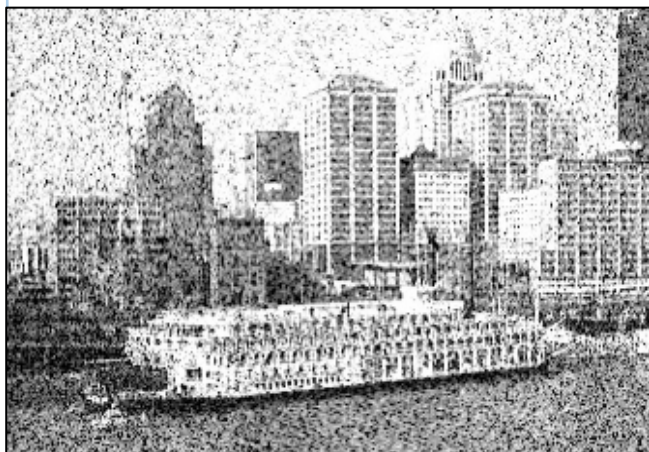
Louisville This Fall – October 31-November 3

Don't Miss the Boat!

The AECT International Convention is fast approaching. If you have not yet registered, visit the AECT website soon at http://aect.org/.

Every year AECT members highlight networking as a key benefit of their membership and conference attendance. From councils and divisions to special interest groups and graduate student meetings, the convention program offers a myriad of networking and collaborative opportunities.

ICEM Conference Draws Members To Nicosia, Cypress, in September

The International Council for Educational Media (ICEM) will hold its 62nd annual conference in conjunction with the 5th Innovative Learning Environments conference in Nicosia, Cyprus. The joint gathering will take place from September 26 to 29 at the University of Nicosia.

Three recent ICEM presidents, Dick Cornell, Marina McIsaac, and Otto Benavides, are members of the AECT International Division (ID).

For the first time, a sitting president of AECT, Ana Donaldson, will attend the ICEM conference.

According to Bob Doyle, AECT Board Representative, "The ICEM conference should be on the

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Research Roundup

Web Resources Abound for Civic Education

Critics of education in the United States often lament the scant curricular attention paid to civic education, a subject that is increasingly important in our Internet-connected world. Fortunately for teachers, however, Web resources abound for teaching civic education from many national and international perspectives.

Civic education cast in terms of human rights is common among many nations. An information source for educators in Asia is the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, HURIGHTS OSAKA (http://www.hurights.or.jp/english/), which publishes a wide range of materials, from research reports to curriculum guides, on human rights education. The materials (and website) are available in multiple languages, though predominantly English and Japanese.

In the United States a leading resource is the Center for Civic Education (http://new.civiced.org/), which offers numerous programs and publications, including the We the People textbook series, related resources for instruction and professional development, and the experiential simulated congressional hearings activity for students from upper elementary grades through high school.

The Center's Civitas International programs bring exemplary civic education curricula to students worldwide in partnership with organizations in 81 countries, including nations in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

In Germany a counterpart to the Center for Civic Education is the Federal Agency for Civic Education, or Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BPB at http://www.bpb.de /die-bpb/51236/the-federal-agency-for-civic-education). Indeed, the two organizations have a longstanding tradition of co-hosting conferences of scholars on civic education that alternate between locations in the United States and Germany. BPB promotes awareness for demo-cracy and participation in politics; issues publications; organizes seminars, study trips, exhibitions, and competitions; provides training for journalists; and offers films and online products.

The Israel Democracy Institute (http://www.idi.org.il/) is a nonpartisan "think-and-do-tank," as it characterizes itself. The website notes, "Like many of the developed nations in the post-modern age, the State of Israel faces a crisis of civic participation." IDI develops education programs to foster civic knowledge and engagement, with descriptions online.

Australia has launched a new national civics and citizenship curriculum that Education Minister Peter Garrett has said will emphasize "respect, tolerance, and an understanding and appreciation of our nation's culture and history." The curriculum rests on three platforms: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sustainability, and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia—all upon a basic commitment to liberal democratic values, civic duty, and a multicultural/multifaith society. Students will be encouraged to use Twitter, blogs, and Facebook as study tools (Hall 2012).

In 2009 retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor founded iCivics (http://www.icivics.org/), an online initiative designed to help prepare American students to be engaged citizens. In the three years of its existence iCivics has been used in classrooms in all 50 U.S. states.

"Civics" and "civility" are often paired concepts, and so an extension of civic education has focused on Internet civility. Incivility, in particular cyberbullying, has come under increased scrutiny at all levels and around the globe. In the United States there is a federal initiative at stopbullying.gov.

Hall, Bianca. (2012, June 5). New civics curriculum calls for students to be citizens of the web. *Sydney Morning Herald*. smh.com.au.