

# Digital Childhood: Myths and Realities

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# Myths & realities/ key issues



- 1, Pedagogy versus technology
- 2, Technology versus nature
- 3, All technology is equal
- 4, Technology is either good or bad
- 5, Strategies to influence attitudes
- 6, Examples and recommended resources

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# What really matters

- It is the pedagogy contextualizing the use of technology rather than the device *per se* that makes a difference to children's learning
- Teachers' beliefs, attitudes & perceptions are key to tech use in classrooms (Mumtaz, 2006)
- Teacher leads change in old and new literacies (e.g., Hartnell-Young, Vetere, 2008)
- Context, Content and individual Child matter (Guernsey, 2012; see also Levine & Guernsey, 2015)

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# Technology versus nature



# What is the reality?

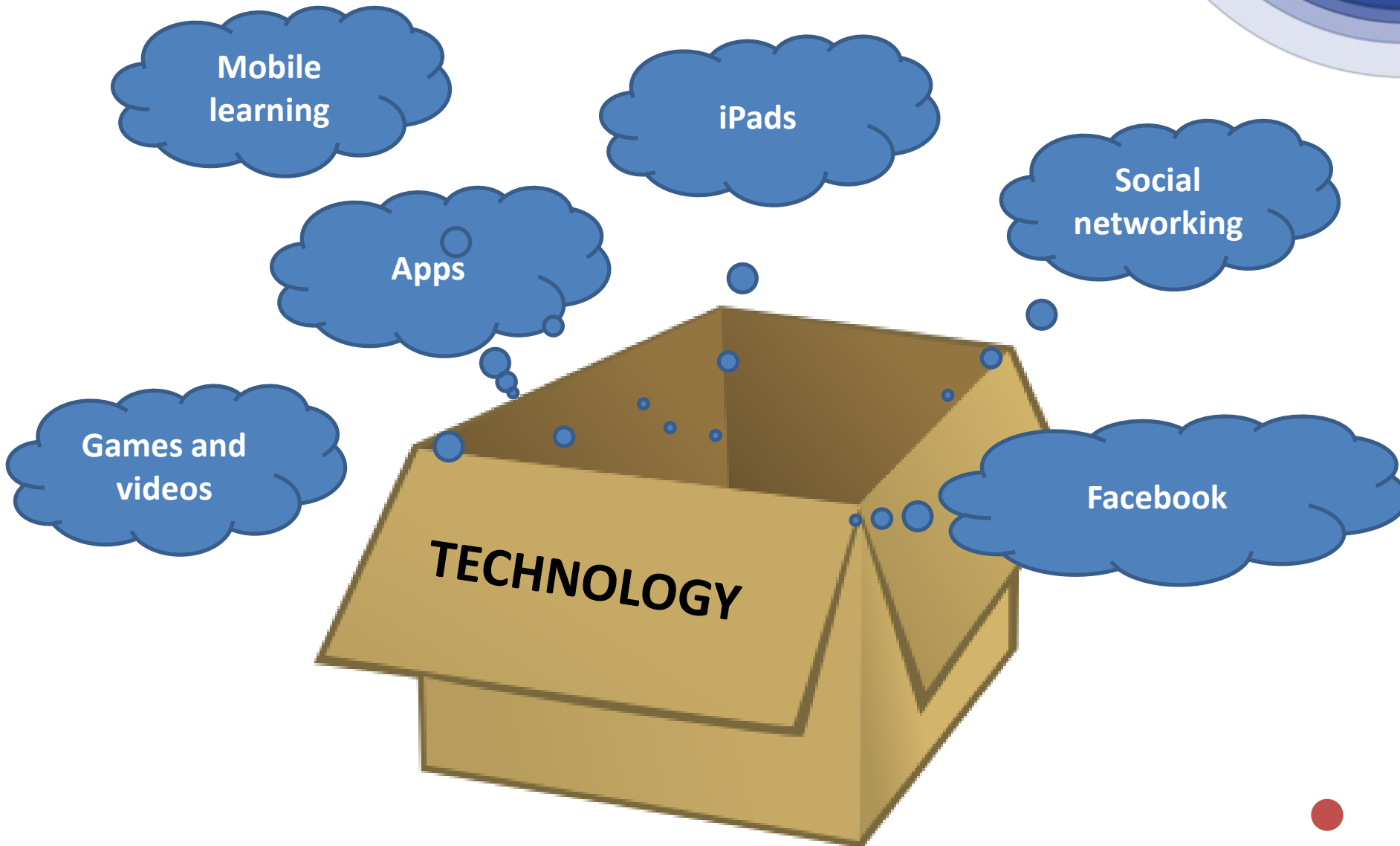
Today's children...

- ❑ Spend more time with media: 26% of preschoolers watch 3+ hours of television daily (National Poll of Children's Health, 2014)
- ❑ Use more digital devices at young age: 38% of children under 2 regularly use smart phones or tablets, and 72% of children under 8 (Common Sense Media Report, 2013)
- ❑ Touchscreen digital media is more pervasive, even in lower income homes (Pew Internet & American Life Project survey, 2013)

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# New affordances of digital books

	Audio rep	Visual rep	Touch screen	Interact-ivity	Custom-isation	Personal-isation
Paper Books	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
PC books	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Simple E-books	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Interactive e-books on iPads/tablets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Kucirkova, N. (2013). Children's interactions with iPad books: research chapters still to be written. *Frontiers in psychology*, 4.

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# Digital books versus print books

- Parents don't use as many helpful reading strategies while sharing digital books (Korat & Or, 2010; Parish-Morris et al., 2013)
- Reductions in dialogic language & children's story comprehension (Chiong et al., 2012; Krcmar & Cingel, 2013; Parish-Morris et al., 2013)
- Interactivity impedes children's vocabulary learning & story comprehension (Bus et al., 2015)



# New tools new solutions

- Technological competence (Stephen, McPake, Plowman)
- Digital Literacy (Marsh, Unsworth, Livingstone)
- New Literacies (Kress, Jewitt, Leu, Coiro et al.)



# MOOC: Childhood in the digital age



## Childhood in the Digital Age

Delve into the lives of children and discuss the potential benefits and limitations of technology in their lives.



Thank you for the course. It changed my perception about technology being harmful to children.

It's definitely got me thinking and opening discussions here and with friends and family

It's great to be able to access and discuss these topics in a balanced way, without a lot of the alarmism that we find in the media

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# Theoretical pointers

- ❑ Learning is situated (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978)
- ❑ Interrelationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1986)
- ❑ Funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2013)

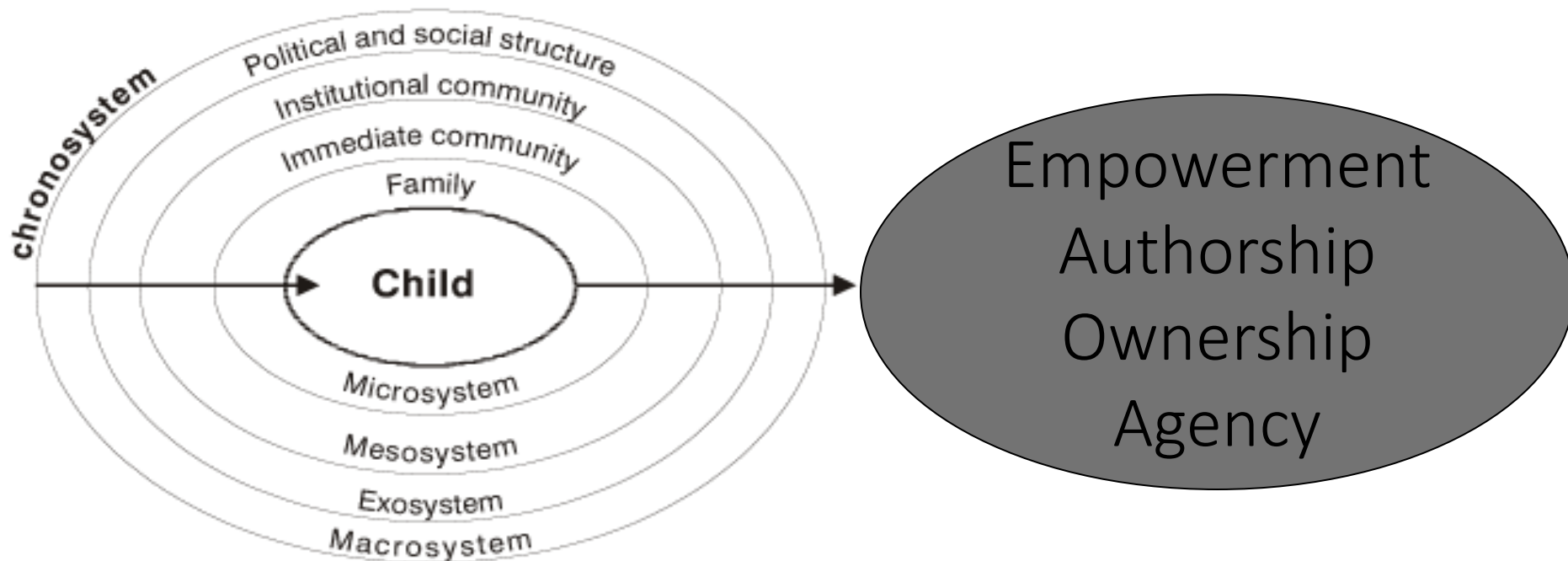


Figure 1 - Ecological theory of development<sup>15</sup>

# Community projects



Kucirkova, N. (forthcoming) Digital personal stories: bringing together generations and enriching communities, In Literacy, Media and Technology: Past, Present and Future, Becky Parry, Cathy Burnett & Guy Merchant (Eds), forthcoming

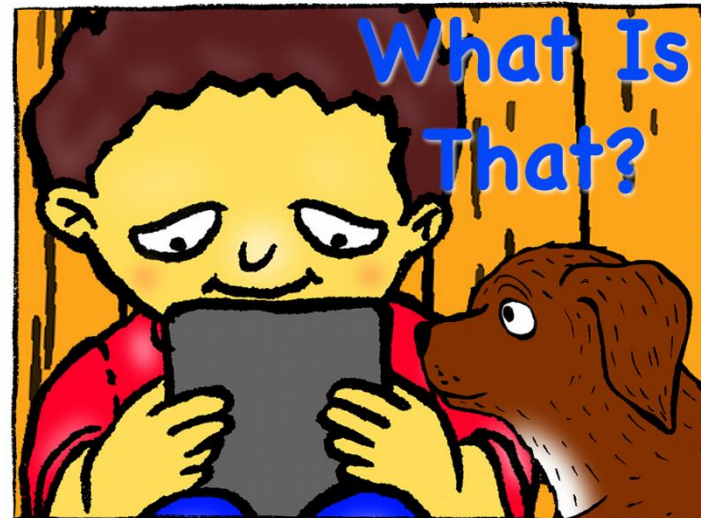
# Design-based research

Understanding the processes . . .

*Our Story app*



*What is that? ibook*



**Kucirkova, N.** & Sakr, M. (2015) Child-Father creative text-making at home with Crayons, iPad, Collage & PC, *Thinking Skills & Creativity*, published online before print, doi: 10.1016/j.tsc.2015.05.003

**Kucirkova, N.**, Sheehy, K. & Messer, D. (2014) A Vygotskian perspective on parent-child talk during iPad story-sharing, *Journal of Research in Reading*, Published online before print: June 3, 2014, doi: 10.1111/1467-9817.12030

**Kucirkova, N.**, Messer, D., Critten, V. And Harwood, J. (2014) Story-making on the iPad when children have complex needs: two case studies, *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, Published online before print March 6, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1525740114525226

**Kucirkova, N.**, Messer, D., & Sheehy, K., Fernandez-Panadero, C. (2014) Children's engagement with educational iPad apps: insights from a Spanish classroom, *Computers & Education*, 71, 175-184.

Flewitt, R.S., **Kucirkova, N.** and Messer, D. (2014) Touching the virtual, touching the real: iPads and enabling literacy for students with learning disabilities. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy Special Issue*, 37(2), 107-116.

**Kucirkova, N.** (2014) iPads in early education: separating assumptions and evidence, *Frontiers, Educational Psychology*, (5), 1-3. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00715

**Kucirkova, N.** (2013) Children interacting with books on iPads: research chapters still to be written, *Frontiers in Psychology, Developmental Psychology*,(4). 1-3. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00995.

# Recommended online resources

## Technology-focused

- Joan Ganz Cooney Centre
- Fred Rogers Center (USA)
- Erikson Technology in Early Childhood Centre (USA)
- The Children's Media Foundation (UK)
- Common Sense Media & Children's Tech Review;
- Connected Learning Research Network (US/UK)
- Kids Media Centre (Canada)

## With a Technology Section

- National Literacy Trust (UK)
- The Hanen Centre (Canada)
- Zero To Three (USA)
- Technology Section of Usable Knowledge GSE (USA)
- Encyclopaedia of Early Childhood Development (Canada)
- LSE-Parenting for a Digital Future (USA)
- LearnNow.org (USA)

# Key take-home messages



- ❑ Be clear about what you mean by technology, be more specific to predict impact & assess merit
- ❑ Learning is situated (including w. iPads & apps), consider the child and the complex interrelationships in relation to the learning environment
- ❑ Be the change you want to see in the world, join communities and forums to share best practice & resources and address common challenges

# Thank you for listening!



## Comments/ questions?

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