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iContact: Digital Feedback Offered and Used (or not!) in a Clinical Graduate Course

Kathleen Wilson

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, kwilson3@unl.edu

Laurie A. Friedrich

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, laurie.friedrich@cune.edu

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Abstract for DBER Group Discussion on 2014-02-20

Presenter(s), Department(s):

Dr. Kathleen Wilson
Associate Professor
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Title:

iContact: Digital Feedback Offered and Used (or not!) in a Clinical Graduate Course

Abstract:

Quality formative feedback is an integral component contributing to growth in all learners (Shute, 2008). The introduction and convenience of digital devices like iPads and online applications such as Google Docs have created the potential to move formative feedback and professional development to a new level (Borko, Whitcomb, & Liston, 2009). This multi-level case study examined the individualized digital feedback offered to in-service teachers in a graduate clinical course and the changes in their teaching that followed. We studied what characteristics differentiate the type and quality of feedback needed to support positive change in teacher practices that have the potential to foster increases in student learning. Four themes emerged based on the findings.

**i-Contact: How is Digital
Feedback Offered and Used
(or not!) in a Clinical Setting?**



Kathleen M. Wilson and Laurie A. Friedrich
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Purpose of the Study

- To examine the types of digital feedback delivered in a university clinical setting
 - To determine the relationship of the types of feedback to teacher change in learning and instruction.
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Research Questions

- Do teachers in graduate courses respond when formative feedback is offered in a digital format?
 - What changes in teacher learning are evidenced in digitally-gathered course artifacts?
 - What differentiates the type and quality of feedback needed to support change in teacher learning and instructional practices?
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Theoretical Perspectives

- **Situated Learning Theory**

- *situated* in a particular context
- *social* - involving others in the learning affinity space
- *distributed* over individuals / objects found in the context

- **New Literacies Studies**

- Digital tools as *new technologies* for teaching & learning
 - The *nature of learning and participation* through these technologies
-

Feedback Literature

- **Four levels** of feedback response: task, process, self-regulation, personal (Hattie and Timperley, 2007)
 - **Formative** feedback: provided during the learning process and used by the student (Black & Wiliam, 1998)
 - **“i-feedback”** to represent instructor comments to students’ written assignments or learning activities which are submitted on the Internet (Chang, 2011)
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Case Study Methodology

- Multi-level, embedded case study
 - Highlights the voices of the instructors and graduate students
 - Constructs an understanding of how professional development can be enhanced when digital feedback is added to effective content and pedagogy (Mishra & Koehler, 2006)
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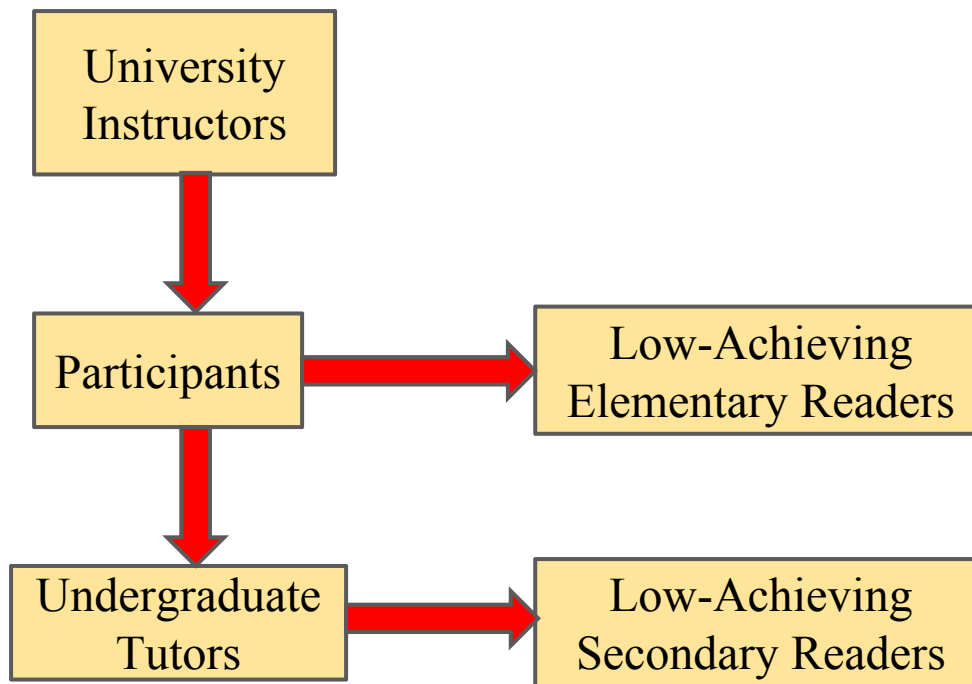
Setting

- Schmoker Reading Center – East Campus
 - Summer Session graduate (undergraduate) courses
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Innovative Course Design

- **Five-week** summer session
 - **Interactive lecture**
 - **iPad 1's:** Exploring, sharing apps, teaching tool
 - **Practicum** - hands-on application of learning
 - **Tutoring** low performing elementary grade readers
 - **Coaching** undergraduates tutoring a secondary student
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Multilevel Case Study



Participants



Convenience sample

6 Masters students

2 Doctoral students

No previous experience with iPads
or tablets

Data Sources

- Elaborated **lesson plans** - 4/week (n=103)
 - **SOAR Note** reflections - 2/week (n=47)
 - **End-of-week reflections** - 1/week (n=30)
 - Participant **coaching notes** - up to 4/week (n=74)
 - Instructor **coaching notes** - up to 4/week (n=40)
 - Exit **interviews** (n=8)
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Findings - Four Themes

- Teacher Learning Through i-Contact
 - Immediate Digital Feedback and Enduring Learning
 - Creating an Affinity Space
 - Transfer with a Ripple Effect
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Teacher Learning Through i-Contact

- i-Contact provided timely two-way online communication for connecting with students and providing feedback.
 - Short nonspecific feedback became a substitution for nonverbal comments made face-to-face.
 - Feedback became increasingly detailed for inexperienced teachers: telling - to- modeling - to scheduling meeting.
 - Most participants enacted feedback the following day.
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Immediate Digital Feedback / Enduring Learning

- Digital feedback was immediate, permanent, and efficient
 - Feedback suggestions yielded immediate and sustained applications
 - Technical literacy terminology from feedback emerged in the lesson plans and reflections - an unintended bonus
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Creating an Affinity Space

- Learning community of participants, instructors, pre-service teachers, and children all connected via the Internet
 - Google Docs and BlackBoard: instructor/student interactions
 - App shares, email, and class case studies provided ongoing interaction between participants
 - Notes app, Google Docs, and email: points of digital contact between participants and undergraduates they coached
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Transfer with a Ripple Effect

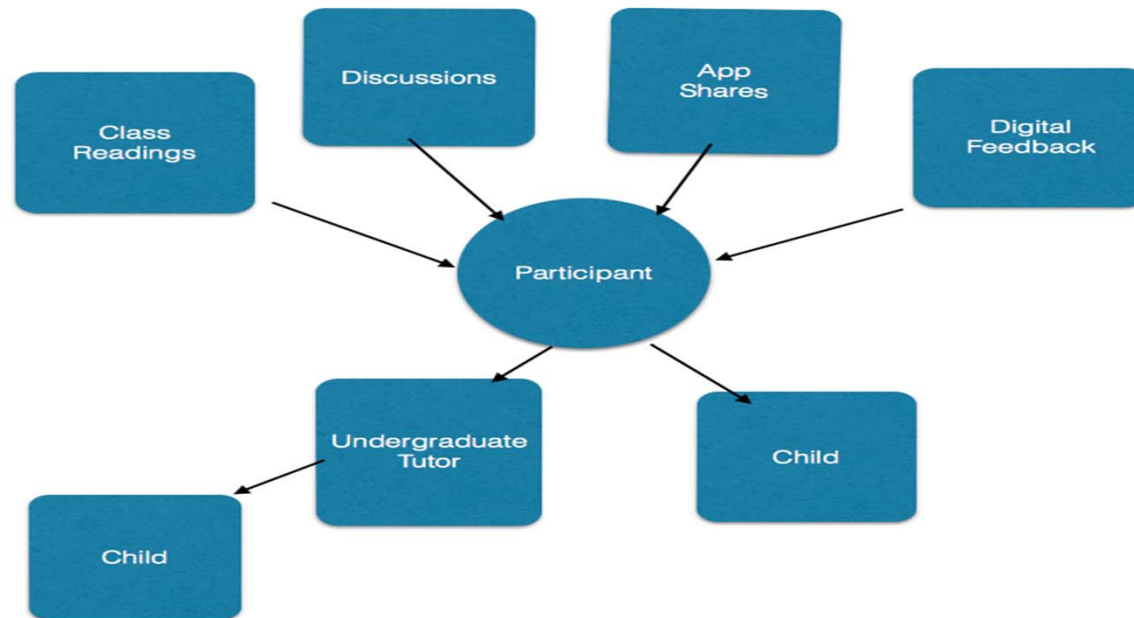
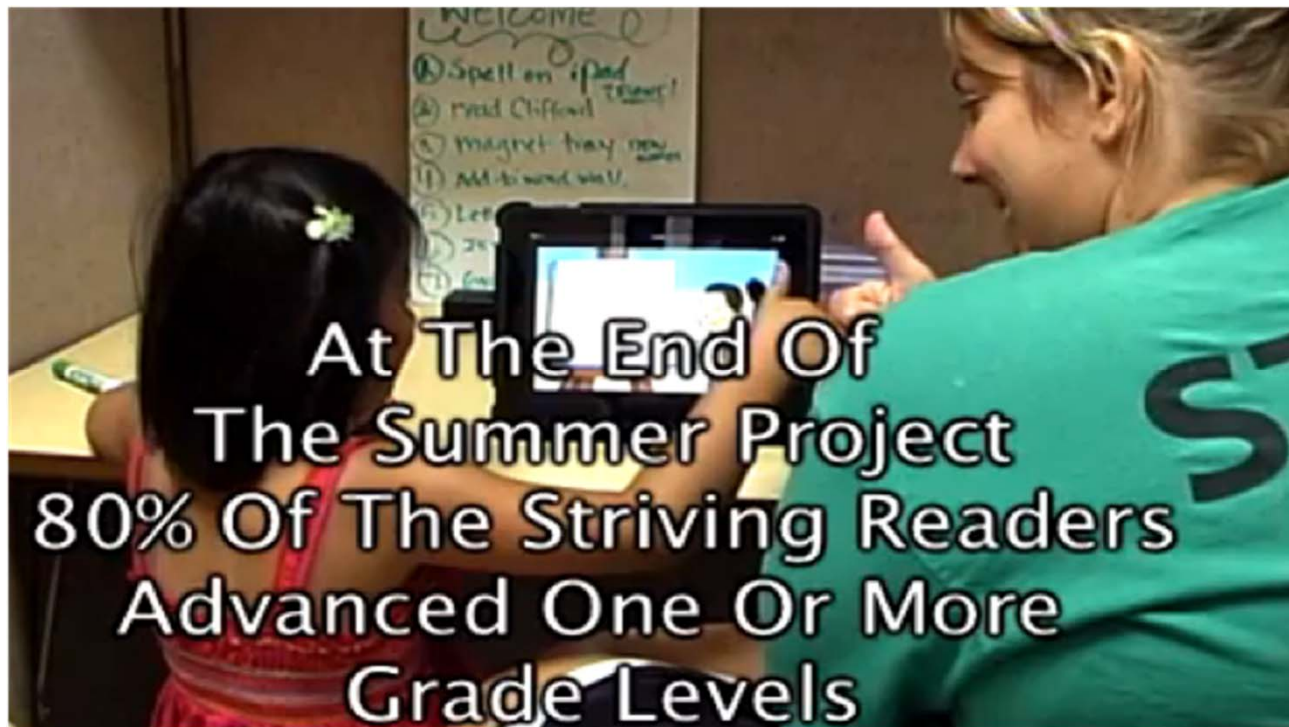


FIGURE 1. *Transfer Ripple Effect*
Transfer of learning from course sources to coaching and tutoring

Discussion

- All participants read the digital feedback and incorporated it into their instructional practices in multiple ways.
 - Participants grew quickly in ability and confidence to integrate iPad into teaching and coaching.
 - Transfer of learning happened on multiple levels.
 - Professional vocabulary growth was an unexpected outcome.
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Increased Reading Performance



At The End Of
The Summer Project
80% Of The Striving Readers
Advanced One Or More
Grade Levels

Conclusions

- Blending digital and face-to-face feedback can be a successful and efficient model for university courses and school-based practica settings.
 - Instructors can successfully integrate new literacies before knowing all the technical applications themselves.
 - Teachers can demonstrate impressive growth quickly in: comfort and usage with digital devices, coaching ability, and use of reading strategies with low-performing readers when formative digital feedback is provided.
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Thank you!

Kathleen M. Wilson
kwilson3@unl.edu

Laurie A. Friedrich
Laurie.Friedrich@cune.edu

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

