

## Appendix

### CEHD Grant Application Form

Submit this application form by one of the following due dates along with your proposal. Applications must be received, at [tate-center@wmich.edu](mailto:tate-center@wmich.edu), by 5:00 p.m. on August 15, November 15, March 15, and June 15.

Application					
Applicant Name:	Laura Teichert				
Title:	Assistant Professor				
Department:	Special Education and Literacy Studies				
Title of Proposal:	Co-Use and Digital Literacy in Parent Literacy Forums				
Amount Requested:	\$2000				
Dates of Project:	September 2020- September 2021				
Evaluation Guidelines					
Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Undecided 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	
The proposed research/creative activity is well conceived and organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1
The proposed work will increase the likelihood that the applicant will secure external funding in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1
The methods and/or procedures are clearly stated and appropriate for the proposed activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1
The plans for data analysis or evaluation critique are clearly stated and appropriate for the proposed activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1
The costs for the proposed budget are clearly itemized and justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1
This project has the potential to advance the scholarly/creative reputation of WMU.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	4	3	2	1

## **Exploring Co-Use and Digital Literacy in Parent Literacy Forums**

### **Purpose and Background**

It has been well-documented that children engage with digital technology in their homes (e.g., Marsh et al., 2017, Rideout, 2017). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) recommends parents/caregivers co-use digital technology with children. Yet, little research documents parents'/caregivers' understandings of this technique.

This study is situated in theories of literacy as a social practice. From this perspective, literacy is understood as a set of social practices, which can be inferred from literacy events mediated by texts (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices are purposeful and are embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, texts are no longer limited to printed texts, such as novels or newspapers, but are broadened to include websites, social media, cloud technologies, and so forth. Literacy as a social practice can be extended to the concept of digital literacy, whereby digital literacy is bound by social, cultural and ideological contexts. People become digitally literate by interacting with other members of their community and using relevant digital devices within digital networks (i.e., Twitter on a smartphone).

Previous research has documented the ways families and caregivers teach and socialize young children in literacy practices in their homes and communities (i.e., Anderson, McTavish, & Kim, 2017; Gregory, 2005; Heath, 1982; Taylor, 1983). This research resulted in a number of family literacy and kindergarten readiness programs being successfully implemented across North America (i.e., Head Start, Parents as Literacy Supports). With the increased use of digital technology in many western societies, more recent work has examined the assistance parents and caregivers provide young children during playful digital technology interactions in the home (i.e., Author, 2020; Gillen et al., 2018; Marsh et al., 2017; McPake, Plowman, & Stephen, 2013). These studies have dispelled the notion that children intuitively learn to use digital devices (see Plowman, McPake, & Stephen, 2008).

Few studies and programs have focused on the combined learning of adults and children. Heydon, McKee, and Daly (2017) reported on an existing intergenerational art program in Southwestern Ontario. The program united skipped generations (i.e., grandparents and children) and introduced digital media to art projects using iPad applications (apps). Stacy and Aguilar (2018) capitalized on three Latinx mothers' regular smartphone use as a means to bridge Latinx oral storytelling practices and school-based storying practices in a Head Start preschool. Lewis Ellison (2016) noted the strength of the Dig-A-Fam: Families' Digital Storytelling project in parent-child relationship building by creating opportunities for parents and children to develop personal stories centered on past and present experiences of family members. Though few, all these studies showed that an intergenerational approach is effective when developing digital literacy of both parents/caregivers and their children.

Much of the research documenting families' digital technology use has been conducted with middle-class, suburban families. This study is a collaborative project with the Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC). The families served by the KLC live in poverty and have low literacy levels. Little is understood about the challenges these families experience with digital technology and how it is used with their children. The purpose of this study is to better understand the needs

and challenges of KLC families in relation to digital technology. Given the current pandemic, and the possibility of future national closures, it is of great importance to ensure equitable access to both physical technology and digital literacy development. This study seeks to address digital literacy development through parent literacy forums. These parent literacy forums will bring parents/caregivers together (either online or face-to-face) to learn about digital technology use in homes and to demonstrate effective co-use techniques.

### **Methodology**

The project will use a mixed-methods, multiple case study approach. Merriam (1998) described case study as, “a single thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. I can ‘fence in’ what I am going to study” (p. 27). This study is bound in three ways: family unit; child; and parents/caregivers.

The following research questions will guide data collection and analysis:

1. How do parents/caregivers understand their children’s engagement with digital technology?
2. How do parents/caregivers understand co-use and engage in co-use with their children in the home?

KLC supports 785 adult learners (e.g., adult education), with 228 being families of school-aged children. Of the adult learners KLC is serving, 64% have less than a high school diploma, 24% have graduated from high school or have a GED, and 6% have a college degree (from another country). 74% are unemployed and 86% are of working age – between 19 and 59 years old. Approximately 40% of KLC learners do not have reliable access to the internet—a concern most recently highlighted by COVID-19. KLC supports learners with a laptop lending program and local hot spot connections.

### **Data Sources**

Data sources will include parent pre-and-post surveys, forum content, and program materials. The goal is to recruit 50 families to complete the surveys and participate in the forums. The study aims to begin data collection in September 2020.

### ***Pre-and-Post Surveys***

The pre-survey questions will focus on families’ access to digital technology in their homes and how digital technology is used in the home. Questions will be adapted from the national Common Sense Media Zero to Eight survey. Post survey data will be collected after the conclusion of the parent literacy forums. Questions will focus on the efficacy of the parent literacy forums and how co-use techniques have been used in the home.

### ***Forum Content***

The parent literacy forums will focus on three aspects: adult digital literacy, co-use, and child digital literacy. Five to six forum sessions will be held weekly (i.e., every Friday afternoon) and last approximately 75 minutes. Each session will focus on a specific topic (e.g., how to choose age-appropriate apps) but will connect through broader themes of how to best support K-12 children’s learning and how parents/caregivers can co-use digital technology with their children.

Online forums will be housed on the KLC website. Sessions will be live-streamed with parents and their children attending each session from their homes. Parents will be invited to participate in activities with the guidance of the facilitator (WMU faculty member). Because sessions occur in real time, parents can ask questions and provide feedback so that the facilitator can best tailor content to parents' specific needs. Children will attend peripherally; meaning children are not expected to sit through lessons, but to participate in adult-child digital literacy activities. Sessions will also be taped and made available to the wider public through the KLC website archive.

Face-to-face programs will emphasize parent/caregiver-child interaction through demonstrated co-use techniques. These sessions will be held at KLC program sites. Parents/caregivers, and their children, will be provided opportunities to share how digital technology is used in their home and provide strategies for effective use with the facilitators and other participants.

### ***Program Materials***

Program materials will be developed for use in the parent literacy forums. These materials will be in the form of a program manual that defines digital literacy, co-use, and other parent forum content. The manual will include a suggested program outline and weekly topics, descriptions of co-use techniques and visual depictions of those techniques. As well, a video demonstration will be developed.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis will be informed by Merriam (1988) who described qualitative case study research as “not a linear, step-by-step process” (p.151) and that a “qualitative design is emergent” (p.155). Thus, qualitative case study research is an iterative and interactive process with data collection and data analysis occurring simultaneously, beginning with the first interview or observation. Qualitative case studies use “emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses” (p.151) to inform the next phase of data collection and refine research questions. Once data collection concludes, the analysis process intensifies, as all information about the case is brought together and organized so that details are easily retrievable in a case record. The researcher builds a case record from raw data and brings together all the major information that will inform case analysis and the final case study. The researcher edits the case record for redundancies and organizes it either “chronologically and/or topically” (p. 194). Case records and survey data will then be analyzed using content analysis. Themes, or codes, will be created and used to define results of the study.

### **Anticipated Outcomes and Plans for Continuing Research**

The goal of this program is to create a family literacy program that supports families living in poverty to access and develop necessary digital literacy skills with their children. The parent literacy forums will help families navigate digital technology with their children through access to digital technology, technical skill development, and how to leverage the skills parents/caregivers already possess as they co-use digital technology with their children. This study has the potential to provide insight into struggles families living in poverty face in accessing and using digital technology. Through the parent literacy forum, materials will be

developed that can be more widely distributed and that can serve as a template for other agencies and/organizations to use in developing other family literacy programs.

The parent literacy forums are not the end goal of this project. The recent experience of COVID-19 has highlighted the need for digital literacy skills for both adults and children. From a larger community perspective, we aim to gain insight into how systems can better support those living in poverty to access hardware and develop necessary digital literacy skills. The results of this study may lead to better localized supports for these families and further skill development.

In terms of professional recognition, this project has the potential to result in numerous conference presentations at national and international conferences of prestigious organizations such as the Literacy Research Association and the American Educational Research Association. Multiple publications could also result from this work. Target journals for results from this research project include *School- Community Journal*, *Literacy*, and *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*. The program manual has the potential to be published and distributed broadly across North America.

### **Budget and Justification**

(Redacted)

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