Read-Alouds & Digital Book Apps: What Role Do Features Play?

• The abstract (250 to 350 words)

Introduction
Technological advances have transformed the way teachers interact with students in classrooms. This shift can especially be seen in the instructional practice of teacher read alouds. Instead of only reading from traditional books, teachers now use various technologies such as smartboards and ipads with digital book apps, a readily available literacy tool. These apps are loaded with unique features including but not limited to sound effects, animation, and interactive components. In this project, we take an in-depth look at Shaun Tan’s (2013) *Rules of Summer* in its digital book app form, selected for its popularity, acclaim, and inclusion of multiple features (e.g., picture setting, sound effects, panning, icons).

Methods
After a close analysis of the digital book and associated online materials, we then examined how the digital version was picked up and used by four teacher candidates with young children learning English as an additional language. Data examined included videorecordings of the readalouds, lesson planning, reflecting, and interviews about the experience. Constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006) yielded three themes.

Findings
First, similarities to readalouds of traditional books could be seen throughout the readalouds, particularly in the areas of teaching vocabulary and the connecting comprehending strategy. Second, the teacher candidate’s level of familiarity with the book varied and impacted the quality of the readalouds. Third, though multiple features were available, only one or two were incorporated into the readalouds.

Discussion
With rapid shifts in the platforms adopted by schools, this study has important implications for teachers, teacher educators, and those that support them, particularly as related to engagement and the development of students’ critical thinking. Further, due to the rapid nature of the shift, research and scholarship in this area struggles to stay current.

• A list of keywords (10 maximum)
  o digital
  o book apps
  o read alouds
  o literacy
  o picture book
  o tablet
  o digital book features
  o children’s text