

Reflective Portfolio

Writings from Composition II

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Composition II

April 25, 2019

Reflection on Composition II

The process of academic research, to me, always seemed to be a rather drab and eggheaded affair. While I aspired to become an academic, my kind of research was more of a personal exploration of a genre or idea -nothing that I'd write down, much less publish. Furthermore, I was intimidated by its complexity, jargon, and, most prominently, the tedious academic tone. However, I found most of these concerns to be ill-placed. Academic research, once I had firmly grasped the process, was as gratifying and interesting as any other academic pursuit. During my Composition II course, I became more comfortable with my writing flexibility, became equipped with better research skills, and, overall, had a great experience.

One thing that was emphasized in both my Composition I and Composition II course was genre adaptability. In the latter, the specific goal was to familiarize us with academic genres and group research. Needless to say, as a former homeschooler, I'm more used to solo assignments and writing in a colloquial tone. It was intimidating working with others, especially others whose majors, interests, and personalities couldn't be any more different from mine. This intimidation began when we had to decide on an issue that the three of us could research from the perspective of our majors. There was considerable gridlock, given that I, a political science major, could not find any points of agreement with the sports and business majors (and vice-versa). But, we eventually settled on the issue of childhood device use, as it affected all of our families. And, as

semester went on, we gradually became more comfortable working with each-other, despite my general lack of social graces.

The first assignment was to create a group research proposal in which each member would explain how they would research the topic from their major. Surprisingly, I was hard-pressed to find anything in the field of political-science about adolescent device use. So, instead I came from a “philosophical” perspective, which, in reality, was mostly centered in the discipline of pediatrics. Same difference. However, this change in discipline and the general academic tone, forced me to seriously re-adapt my writing style for that particular genre.

A contrast that perfectly illustrates the tone of adaptability throughout the course was between the literature review and presentation assignments. In the literature review, I had to maintain a more academic, research oriented tone with specific jargon and conventions. However, with the presentation assignment, I had to find a way to take the research I had done throughout the semester and make it both digestible and rhetorically valuable. The former was an academic text, the latter was a Youtube video. The assignments couldn’t be any more different. However, they taught me quite a bit about genre conventions, context, and the importance of understanding them before writing within them. As someone who intends to write about politics and philosophy, I’ve found these practical lessons to be incredibly valuable.

Another aspect of the course that I found to be extremely valuable was its emphasis on developing a research process. I began completely unorganized, having no knowledge of academic research techniques. I didn’t even know where to find a database, much less navigate one. However, at the tail-end of the course, I now possess the skills to adequately research in the fields I’m most interested in. These research skills have even bled into my other classes, namely

History. Using the research methods and knowledge of genre I gained in Comp. II, I was able to get an A+ for my Historical Research paper -the first time I had written in that genre. Overall, I've found these research skills I've gained not only to be useful for my future academic career, but for my current college experience as well.

As someone who is interested in philosophy and political science, I find the skills I've learned in Composition II to be invaluable. Writing in different genre conventions and academic research are seriously useful tools in these fields; and, I feel that this course has taught me how to wield them effectively. However, outside of the utilitarian approach to evaluating the semester, I had a great time. I made a few new friends, encountered some old ones, and was given the skills to be able to do what I love -write.

Harris, Burks, and Hambright

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Composition II

January 31, 2019

The Wolves Research Proposal

This assignment was my first group project of the semester, and it was certainly a daunting one. DJ and Ricky were very different in major, personality, etc. So it was hard coming up with a topic. However, we eventually settled on an issue that affected all of our families, childhood mobile device use. This paper expresses a quite ambitious goal in each one of our proposals. However, over the semester, research proved we had to be more flexible than the lofty goals of this paper. Also, Ricky dropped out at week 8, but I do not think that we lost much overall.

In the modern day, mobile devices have become a permanent fixture in our daily lives. This revolutionary step in human development has come with many benefits and downsides; however, the implications of their widespread adoption have not been very well understood by the layman. Still, even less understood are the influences, both positive and negative, of the widespread use of mobile devices among adolescents. The goal of our research will be to study the implications of device use among adolescents and present our findings in a digestible and informative format. Our research will encompass the meta-topic of adolescent device use; however, we will derive our specific research questions regarding this meta topic from a philosophical, business, and sports science perspective.

Our philosophical research will be driven by the questions, “What, if any, effect does mobile device use have on adolescent brain development?”. It is important that we understand the effects that devices have on cognition, especially at the adolescent stage of human development. The methodology to answer these questions will be to review the literature from multiple journals and then assess the ethical implications of the findings. Once these implications are discussed, we will discuss some logical ways forward given the evidence. Much parental and societal anxiety is generated by these questions; we want to understand if it is well-warranted. Ultimately, our philosophical research will attempt to provide a logical source of understanding in the midst of this complex issue.

Drawing on our business expertise, we will research the question, “What, if any, effects do businesses and their practices have on adolescent device use?”. From video games to mobile devices, it is no secret that children love technology. Recognizing this inherent fascination, businesses use mobile devices to run kid-focused ads for toys, apps, video games, and virtual currency for video games. The objective of our business research is to understand the incentives of businesses to promote adolescent device use and what tactics are employed to profit from it. Our methodology will be to research business journals, study specific business decisions related to the topic and their success, and interpret market data. The more that children use mobile devices, the more crucial it is to understand who influences them and what incentives they may have.

Finally, coming from the field of sports education, we will research the questions, “What, if any, effect does adolescent device use have on physical play and exercise?” and, “What, if any, effect does adolescent device use have on adolescent social behavior?”. We want to understand

these questions because of the sheer gravity of their implications for the future. Childhood development requires unstructured play and social interaction to produce a well adjusted adult. In the contemporary discourse on the subject, increased mobile device use among adolescents have been characterized as a major impediment to this development. If true, this would require a rapid change in our relationships to devices. So, to better understand whether or not this claim is true, we will research medical, pediatric, and developmental psychology journals, interpret the data, and discuss the implications. Overall, our sports science research will attempt to parse through the anxious and heated public discourse to get to the truth of the matter.

We believe the issue of adolescent device use is universally important. However, we wish to inform the A-State community, in particular, of this very crucial issue. Nearly every member here at A-State knows children in their community; whether they be siblings, relatives, members of the neighborhood, church, club, sports team, etc. If it can be proven that mobile devices are either beneficial or detrimental to them on any level, then it is important to inform other members in our individual communities. We all want the best for the children of our community, that is why we wish to arm the students at A-State with the data to improve theirs at home.

The issue of childhood device use is a cause of much concern, given its sudden prevalence. This concern is further accentuated by the lack of available data regarding the topic and the frantic nature of the discourse. However, we will dive into the available literature, interpret the information presented, fairly represent both sides of the discourse, and come to a conclusion based on data. Our goals are to a.) better understand this topic from a diverse range of disciplines and b.) to present our findings in a research paper that is rigorously researched, easily

understandable, and educational. The impact of mobile device use on us cannot be understated; but how exactly is it impacting our youngest?

Sam Harris

Tabatha Simpson-Farrow

Composition II

February 23, 2018

Reflection (Annotated Bibliography)

This paper was my first test in interpreting the data. The week I wrote this was filled with a rather frantic search for any data regarding the issue. Luckily, as my research methods improved, I was able to adequately interpret the data in this, my first Annotated Bibliography.

While I expected childhood mobile device to lead to more severe and direct results, I found that the effects were more subtle and not entirely harmful. What I found was that the duration of device use in infancy is directly correlated with lower cognitive and language skills as a toddler and that lack of parental mediation in device use can lead to a lack of parent/child bond, which yields the same results. However, I've also found that, past age two, using mobile devices sparingly, as a parent/child bonding activity, and for educational purposes is actually beneficial for small children.

I still have a few questions about the data. One would be, "what are the long-term effects of lower language and cognitive scores in early childhood". While it is obviously negative that toddlers and small children would have delayed cognitive skills, I would like to see what relevance it has in later life. In other words, "does lower cognitive scores in childhood translate to lower cognitive scores in adulthood?" Another question I have would be, " what are the long term effects of a lack of parent/child bonding?" Do the problems only arise in childhood, or are there social and cognitive effects later in adolescence and adulthood. Multiple papers I've read

have demonstrated that device use by both the parent or the child could lead to a lack of bonding. However, I do not know the extent to which lack of bonding effects areas outside of language and cognitive development.

In retrospect, my original research question was a bit lofty. “What, if any, effect does mobile device use have on child IQ,”; slam-dunk, right? My presupposition was that I could search through a database and find a dearth of papers regarding the topic, that all I had to worry about was finding the most accurate ones. However, mobile device use and IQ is a fairly new topic with very little in terms of raw data. Even less was research that was specific to children. I ended up scratching the original question for a better, more tangible one, “What if any, effect does mobile device use have on child cognitive development.” Though this question still yielded sparse results, I found relevant research in the field of pediatrics. So, I’ve found that my research has answered my personal research questions and added to the meta-topic, but not in a way that I expected.

Annotated Bibliography

Kabali, Hilda K. et al. “Exposure and Use of Mobile Media Devices by Young Children”.

Pediatrics, vol. 136, iss. 6, Dec. 2015, pp. 1044-1050, *Academic Onefile*,

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org.ezproxy.library.astate.edu/content/136/6/1044.full>

A study of the mobile device habits of children between 0-4 in a low-income, urban community; published in the AAP journal, *Pediatrics*. The research, data collection, and drafting of the paper was done by pediatricians Dr. Hilda K. Kabali and Dr. Matilde M. Irigoyen; two

Pennsylvania pediatricians with seven and twenty-one years of experience in practice respectively. They found their data by asking parents to fill out a questionnaire with questions regarding how much their children used mobile devices. They found several data points that really flesh out the amount of screen time kids have, what age they use devices, what the rate of daily use is, and how much parents use them as a “digital pacifier”. This ties into my thesis in that it is possible that parental neglect of children via deference to devices is harmful to children’s language and/or social skills. This link becomes stronger when paired with the next citation below that shows that neglectful parental attitudes or a weak relationship with a child is correlated with delayed language development. However, the link between the two citations are neither conclusive nor prove anything about social skills -purely conjecture on my part.

The data does not necessarily say that devices are inherently harmful to children, but that their effects are not very well understood. Furthermore, the data could only apply to low-income, ethnic neighborhoods and not be generalizable. While it is likely that the rate of childhood device use is higher in these neighborhoods, I still find these statistics very useful for understanding how widespread mobile device use is. Also, while anecdotal, I’ve found that this article is one of the most frequently cited pieces of data within the pediatric topic of mobile device use.

Glascoc, Frances Page and Leew. “Parenting Behaviors, Perceptions, and Psychosocial Risk:

Impacts on Young Children’s Development”. *Pediatrics*, vol. 125, iss. 2, Feb. 2010, p.

313-319, *A-State Library*,

<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.astate.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=b1ad3>

[cf4-914c-4701-92c0-9f9b0f85712d%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=48230494&db=eue](https://doi.org/10.1093/pediatrics/kpaa001)

A study that analyzes the correlation between verbal parent/child interaction and childhood well-being and development. It was researched, analyzed and drafted by Frances Page Glascoe M.D., a prominent researcher in the field of pediatric methodology, with assistance from Shirley Leew. The authors analyzed data from a national pediatric study. The study included a sheet that asked the parents if they agreed or disagreed with certain statements about the relationship between the parent and child. They then analyzed the pediatric records of the child and compared them. They found that parental attitudes and behaviors correlated to child language development.

The data shows that positive verbal parent/child interaction was crucial for good language development. While this particular source of data does not directly pertain to mobile device use, it shows how important parental interaction is for child language development. As was seen in the first source, most parents surveyed used their devices as a digital pacifier. Thus, if it can be proven that devices are harmful to parent/child relationships or verbal interactions, parents could be inadvertently negatively affecting childhood language skills.

Tomopoulos M.D., Suzy, et al. "Infant Media Exposure and Toddler Development". *Arch*

Pediatr Adolesc Med, vol. 164, iss. 12, p. 1105-1111, Dec. 6, 2010,

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/384030>

This article studies the effects of infant exposure to media on toddler language and cognitive development, published in the pediatric journal *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. It was researched, analyzed, and drafted by Suzy Tomopoulos M.D. and several other pediatricians in the field. What they found was that duration of media consumption at 6 months predicted delayed language skills at 14 months of age. Furthermore, they found that the consumption of adult/older-child/adolescent themed media at 6 months predicted delayed cognitive development at 14 months.

This data, while referring to older digital mediums, such as TV, DVDS, etc., can be used as an analogue for mobile devices. I may be unaware of some major difference that would disqualify this analogue, but I have found that pediatricians regularly use the data from non-mobile media as an analogue for mobile media. Much like the first source, this could only be applicable to low-income, ethnic neighborhoods. However, I have found that many professionals in the field, including the AAP, cite this source as credible.

While this doesn't prove much in isolation, paired with the two other sources, it adds a bit of weight to the possibility that mobile device use is not cognitively healthy for small children. However, what separates it from the argument I was making with the first two sources, namely that mobile devices are bad for parent/child relationships and cause harmful effects therein, is that something innate in media consumption is correlated to poor development. In other words, there are less degrees of separation from media consumption to poor development.

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Composition II

March 15, 2019

Mobile Media and its Effects on Childhood Cognitive and Language Development:

A Literature Review

This particular assignment was by far the most difficult one of the semester. Not only was the word limit daunting, but so was connecting the different sources in a coherent, non-argumentative fashion. The first draft, bloated with filler, was more like a poorly written argumentative essay. However, with the feedback of my teacher and peers, I was able to better create a proper academic text.

Perhaps if one symbol, or object, could represent the contemporary culture, it would be the smart device. The rise of these small but effective gadgets, in only a ten year span, has been unprecedented in all of human history. Yet, we find them everywhere, from the storefront, to the bedside, to one's own pocket. We understand their uses social, financial, and material. But, when it comes to research, we know very little of their effects. Furthermore, we know even less of their effects on children. Statistics show that, in the past ten years, children's consumption of media through mobile devices has grown rapidly (*Hopkinson, Edsource.org*). The implications of this fact are not well understood by the layman, despite his anxiety. Unfortunately, research has shown that his anxiety has not been misplaced. It should be noted that there are some positive effects to device use -such as increased access to learning material and hand-eye coordination

(Earp, *SafeInternet.org*). However, mobile device use, if not regulated by parents effectively, is correlated to negative developmental effects on children.

Research by Dr. Hilda Kabali and Matilde Irigoyen provides an illustration of the current levels of mobile device use among children. In their survey, they found that 96.6% of children under the age of 4 had used a mobile device. Furthermore, “Nearly half (43.5%) of children <1 year old used a mobile device on a daily basis to play games, watch a video, or use apps; the percentage increased to 76.6% in 2-year-olds and plateaued thereafter.” In the discussion portion of their paper, they explain that, “our study found that household ownership of tablets doubled since 2013... Moreover, we found that most children had their own tablet by age 4, a remarkable uptake of technology considering that in 2013, nationwide, ownership of mobile devices among children aged 0 to 8 years was in the single digits.” (*Kabali et al.*)

The study was conducted in a low-income urban neighborhood with a majority of the participants being African-American. The results showed, “very early and nearly universal adoption of mobile media devices among children 0 to 4 years of age in an urban, low-income, minority community.” However, as noted by the authors of this study, it is centered in a low-income ethnic community. Thus, the data could only apply to low-income ethnic communities. However, this particular source is one of the most widely cited within the pediatric topic of childhood device use. So, while the specific levels of usage may be applicable to only urban neighborhoods, it is still indicative of increased use on the societal level .

The majority of the parents in the 2015 survey said they had used mobile devices as a “digital pacifier” in order to keep them calm while in public, doing chores, running errands, and going to sleep (*Kabali et al.*). It is this data point that is particularly important. Firstly, the data

showed that the majority of the children using these digital pacifiers were less than age 1 when they first used them. At this stage in their development, children are not only undergoing vast physical growth, but mental growth as well. So, we should understand that, during this time, a child's brain is incredibly malleable (*Novella, NeurologicaBlog.org*). Lastly, passing the responsibility of interaction to mobile devices negatively affects parent/child interaction.

The purpose of using mobile devices as a digital pacifier is to distract children without verbally interacting with them. The Kabali/Irigoyen study illustrates that the majority of parents surveyed engaged in this practice for various reasons. However, this substitution for verbal interaction could have immense developmental and social effects on children. A pediatric study conducted by Dr. Frances Glascoe, shows that parental attitudes towards child interaction are directly correlated to their early language and cognitive development. In the introduction to the study, the author states that, "Optimal language development occurs within interactions that are stimulating and supportive, in which young children experience predictable, developmentally appropriate responses from adults." A few examples of these kind of parental interactions would be verbally walking a child through a process, speaking to them in a special way, and reading to them out loud (*Glascoe*). These behaviors are the kind of feedback that children need to understand the linguistic and social landscape.

The study showed that agreement with positive parenting attitudes -such as, "I help my child learn by talking and showing him or her new things,"-, predicted average language development. However, agreement with antisocial or neglectful statements, -such as "my child is not very much fun to be with."- predicted delayed language development (*Glascoe*).

The results of this data are cited in many different pediatric journal articles regarding parent/child bonding. When compared to other findings and recommendations by pediatric organizations such as the AAP and the Italian Pediatric Society (*Bozzola et al*), we find a consensus on its validity. Therefore, while this study has nothing directly to do with childhood mobile device use, it illustrates that a lack of verbal bonding can negatively affect children's language skills. This, in light of the previous data, shows that parents are affecting their children's language development by using mobile devices as a substitute for verbal interaction.

The research above shows a relationship between mobile device use and delayed cognitive development through a lack of parent child interaction. However, the effects come from the lack of bonding with the parent, not necessarily device use in-and-of itself. Earlier research on childhood media consumption shows that not only is mobile device use affecting parent/child bond, but directly affecting language and cognitive ability. A study conducted by Dr. Suzy Tomopoulos demonstrates that duration of media use at 6 months is predictive of cognitive ability at 14 months. According to the study, children with 60 minutes of daily media consumption were predicted to have lower cognitive scores than children with no exposure to media. The type of media was also found to correlate to lower cognitive scores, with educational media correlating the least and adult/adolescent non-educational media correlating the most. In the discussion of the study, the authors say that there are three possible "mechanisms" through which children's development is being delayed (*Tomopoulos*).

First, they affirm that media consumption interrupts parent/child interaction, and thus affects development in the way described in the Glascoe study, "A number of studies have shown reductions in parent-child interactions in association with increased media, including

reduced audible language, conversation, and engagement with the child.”(*Tomopoulos*) Second, media consumption affects playtime, another crucial component of healthy brain development. Third, they speculate that the nature of digital media exposure, “such as rapid scene changes” is related to lower cognitive functioning (*Tomopoulos*).

This study in particular studies media consumption and its effects on low-income minority communities. Infants in low SES (Socio-Economic-Status) households were exposed to a higher volume of media than children in better economic conditions. “Our findings are consistent with prior population-based studies in infancy, which have shown substantial exposure as early as age 6 months, with increased exposure related to low maternal education.” Furthermore, the proportion of adult/adolescent non-educational media that infants consumed was found to be higher the lower the SES, “Our findings underscore the increased risks experienced by children from families with low SES related to early development in the context of greater overall exposure to media and exposure to media less likely to have educational content.” (*Tomopoulos*) The correlation between low-income and media consumption is discussed in the Kabali/Irigoyen study as well. The difference between that study and the Tomopoulos study is that the main mode of media consumption discussed in Kabali/Irigoyen is mobile devices; in the Tomopoulos study, it is television.

This study primarily focused on a low-income Latino community, so it is possible that this study, much like the Kabali/Irigoyen study, is only applicable to this particular community. However, the general observation that media consumption among children is higher in low-SES minority communities is corroborated in the Kabali/Irigoyen study. Furthermore, the effects of media consumption is not dependent on the child’s SES. The SES affects the duration of media

consumed, not the effect of the media being consumed. Thus we could assume that more affluent families with more parental mediation into media consumption would not be as affected; but, this would be due to less media exposure caused by variables related to SES -the effect of the media remains the same. So, even though the findings regarding average daily duration of media consumption and the type of media consumed may be specific to the Latino community, the effect these variables have on children is not. Thus, this data may be applied to a general population.

These studies suggest that excessive media exposure through mobile devices is harmful to children's language and cognitive faculties. The Kabali/Irigoyen study shows that a majority of parents use devices to distract children while doing other things. In the modern day, most parents do not have the time to constantly interact with their children. However, if the data in the Glascoe and Tomopoulos studies are true, parents that are using these devices to keep their child perpetually distracted and themselves temporarily off-the-hook, are stunting their child's potential.

Presentation Assignment:

This is a short video presenting the data that I researched over the semester. The video was fun to edit -I especially loved selecting the music. The downside of this video is that, to me, it is not very entertaining and is flat. However, I still think that it turned out well and was happy to present it both in-class and at the colloquium.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12V80diQLKv5X2MIM_9XGkiddGwyt11MF/view?usp=sharing