Apps and Websites as Digital Tools for School-Aged Therapy

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Required Disclosure Statements

Financial Disclosure
Receiving Honorarium.
Receiving royalties for one app mentioned (Wacky Selfie Articulation).

Non-Financial Disclosure
Nothing to disclose.

The WHY for this presentation:

All of us are living in a “rapidly evolving, technology-saturated world” (Jerald, 2009, p. 1).
Today’s Adults

A **significant amount of adults** own smart mobile computing devices, such as an iPhone or iPad (**Anderson, 2015**). A **majority of parents** allow their children to use their smartphones and tablet computers on a daily basis for various digital activities that include playing with apps (**Kabali, et al., 2015**).

Today’s Children

With **children** having as much access to this type of technology (**Given, et al., 2014; Lauricella, Cingel, Blackwell, Wartella, & Conway, 2014**), this might be why today’s youth is sometimes referred to as **digital natives** (**Prensky, 2006**) who are a part of the **Mobile Generation** (**Lauricella, et al., 2014**).

Today’s SLPs

Those who work with children are expected to take advantage of **emerging technologies** to support student learning (**Kale & Goh, 2014**). Many SLPs who previously had minimal involvement with technology are now being required to **be more aware** of it because of the world we live in (**Farrell, 2013**).
Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology

“As technology and science advance,” we are expected to be aware of and utilize “emerging technologies” for “assessment and intervention related to communication and swallowing disorders” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2016).

Technology in Today’s Classrooms

Smart mobile computing devices (iPhones and iPads) have been found to increase teaching moments and learning opportunities (Grant et al., 2016; McKnight et al., 2016; Squire, & Dikkers, 2012). They contain software (apps) that can help students and educators to discover new ways to interact with lessons and content (Domingo & Garganté, 2016; Ling, Harnish, & Shehab, 2014).

Using Apps as Digital Therapy Tools

SLPs utilize apps as digital therapy tools to enhance their students’ and clients’ speech, language, and overall communication abilities (Davis & Sweeney, 2015; Heyman, 2018; Kuster, 2010; Towey, 2012). Customization features in some apps can personalize the educational experience of the user (Ramsberger & Messamer, 2014).
Ubiquitous in 2019

A majority of SLPs use tablet computers and apps with their caseload (Bruno-Dowling, 2012) and now, in 2019, it is safe to say that tablet computers and apps have “become ubiquitous in speech-language pathology assessment and intervention” (Edwards & Dukhovny, 2017, p. 33).

But Here is Today’s Problem

There are over 2 million mobile apps available to download on the Apple App Store (Statista, 2018).

The search for apps can be overwhelming for SLPs (Farrell, 2013).

“I can’t be researching through the app store – that does my head in” (Heyman, 2018, p. 6).

Epica HD by Jun Luo

Direct link

https://apple.co/2vPOgqN
AgingBooth by PiVi & Co
Direct link
https://apple.co/1h7NGZp

Face & Body Photo Editor by Kaeria
Direct link
https://apple.co/2MxA5zW

AlienFaced by Fragranze Apps Limited
Direct link
https://apple.co/2ALDowV
The Power of Seeing Yourself

Parents of children who have speech and language difficulties have reported positive attitudes that were in favor of their children using tablet computers and apps during learning activities (Fletcher-Watson, Pain, Hammond, Humphry, & McConachie, 2016).

Wacky Selfie Articulation by Erik X. Raj

Direct link
http://apple.co/2v6xsNx

Animal Face by Easy Tiger Apps

Direct link
https://apple.co/1Wxh6Be
Crepeau and Garren (2011) found that the use of humor with adults within the therapeutic setting has been found to be beneficial in client and clinician rapport building. Walsh (2007) found that SLPs who introduced humor to their adult clients found that it had a positive influence on the therapeutic experience.
Fourie, Crowley, and Oliviera (2011) explored the therapeutic relationship between SLPs and school-aged clients. One of the themes that their semi-structured interviews revealed was that the children saw the SLPs as a source of play and fun.

**Children Connect with Humor**

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**Action Movie FX** by Bad Robot Interactive

Direct link: [https://apple.co/1kehsvC](https://apple.co/1kehsvC)

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**Super Power FX** by Kujo

Direct link: [https://apple.co/2zHtHj3](https://apple.co/2zHtHj3)
Funny Movie Maker by Electric French Fries

Direct link
https://apple.co/2EcOtdR

BendyBooth by Dave Cheng

Direct link
https://apple.co/2IYG6Rz

The Internet and Websites
**Students’ Perspectives**

A majority of middle- and high-school students reportedly **enjoy** using the Internet (Collimore, Paré, & Joordens, 2015) and **anticipate** that Internet-based technology will play an even **greater role in their futures** as the Internet continues to evolve (Zheng, Arada, Niiya, & Warschauer, 2014).

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**Digital Competencies (Wastiau et al., 2013)**

Digital competences are the abilities needed to understand, navigate, and interact with and on the Internet.

*When we infuse Internet experiences within our sessions, we help to grow students’ digital competences.*

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**Using Websites as Digital Therapy Tools**

As of 2018, there are more than a billion websites on the Internet (Netcraft, 2018).
Time to Brainstorm

How can we incorporate the following random websites into our a therapy session?

NOTE: These websites DO NOT have to be in use for the WHOLE session. Not at all. They could be quick experiences or longer ones. The main point of this exercise is to get you in the habit of seeing the hidden potential in websites like these.
Your Homework

I’ve gathered 8 random websites for you to explore. Your challenge is to incorporate at least one into a therapy session, somehow. Email me (contact@erikxraj.com) with what you did and I will give you a free promo code to any of the apps I’ve made.

https://erikxraj.com/apps/

Your Homework (1-4)

http://www.tacospin.com/
http://www.cat-bounce.com/
http://www.popopopcorn.com/
http://www.ismycomputeron.com/
In closing . . .

Apps and websites can be used as valid digital tools to engage our students
- Relevant
- Humorous
- Open-ended
- Great for all ages

Thank you!

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All references are available upon request:
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