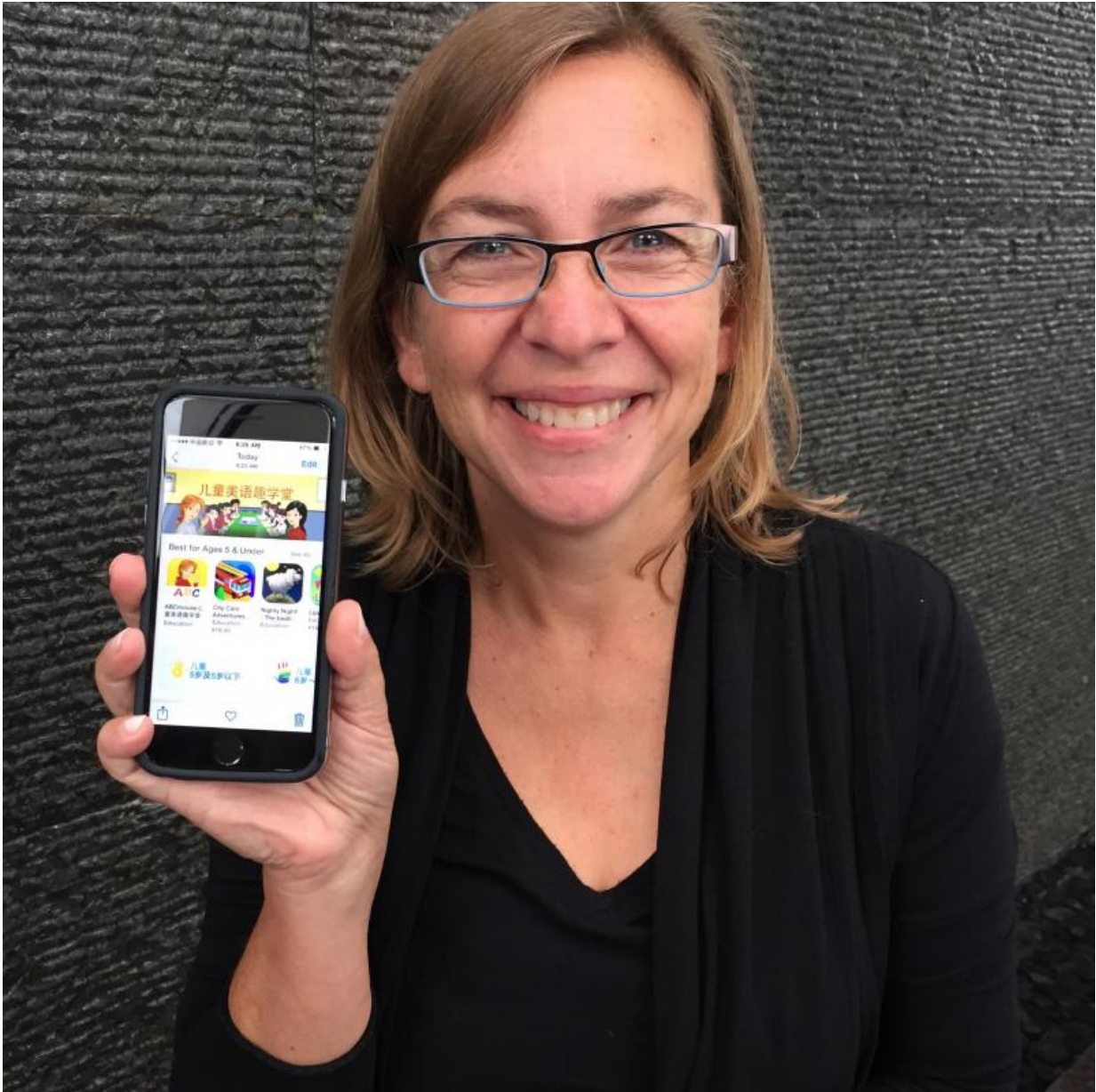


Mobile app helps Chinese kids learn English

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Twila Tardif

A University of Michigan researcher has collaborated on the creation of a mobile app that will help young children in China learn English.

The ABCmouse English Language Learning app for children ages 3-8 is now available to families in China for use on the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. It features 25 creatively designed English language learning lessons, and will ultimately include more than 150 lessons that help children learn to speak more than 1,000 English words and to understand more than 2,500 English words and phrases.

The development team for this highly innovative app includes Twila Tardif, U-M professor of psychology and research professor at the Center for Human Growth and Development, who brought her knowledge of children's early language development to the effort, working with a team of curriculum specialists, writers, professional illustrators, animators, actors and game developers at Age of Learning Inc., the company that created and developed the new app.

Zhou Jing, a professor of [early childhood education](#) at East China Normal University, was also engaged to provide expertise with regards to use of English language learning tools in Chinese early childhood education institutions.

"Our goal in developing the ABCmouse English Language Learning app is to teach children English in a natural way, beginning with listening and speaking as a route to building more advanced vocabulary and phrases," Tardif said. "We know that language is best learned in context, so the app teaches English using engaging situations and environments that will hold a child's attention and model natural English conversation.

"It is especially exciting to be able to use findings from research in

language development about how children learn words to create an app for second [language learning](#). In our testing with young Chinese children, we found that they truly enjoy learning English this way, so we're extremely excited to bring this resource to China."

Tardif has been a primary investigator on a 15-year longitudinal research project tracking language and literacy development in Chinese children, funded by the Chinese National Science Foundation and the U.S. National Science Foundation. Her research on children's early [language development](#) has also been funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The ABCmouse English Language Learning app provides a fundamentally new approach to learning English. Each lesson includes a three-to-four-minute animated English learning episode that takes place in a fun and supportive classroom environment featuring a Chinese teacher, a native English-speaking teacher and six young Chinese students. The sequence of lessons systematically introduces important English words and phrases, and offers a one-on-one oral language practice activity and comprehension quiz at the end of each lesson.

"Our goal is to help children around the world build a strong foundation for academic success," said Doug Dohring, founder and CEO of Age of Learning, the company that creates ABCmouse products. "For [children](#) in many countries, learning English is an essential part of that foundation."

Provided by University of Michigan

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