Hello, everybody.

My name is Adaliz Barroso. I am a teacher at Raul Ysaguirre in Houston, Texas. I specialize in early childhood education. And today I want to talk to you about how a classroom problem became the heart of my innovation plan and eventually an article designed to help educators like me.

So, when I started my master's program in Applied Digital Learning, I had to come up with a tech-focused innovation plan. Right away, I thought of my Pre-K 3 students. These are children that are 3 and 4 years olds who almost have no access to technology. While the other kids in our district were using devices regularly, I mean almost throughout the whole day. I knew that if we waited until kindergarten and Pre-K 4, the students would be left behind. Whenever I would discuss it with kindergarten teachers, what was going on, they often mentioned the stress they would get from having to lose a whole hour of critical instruction time to only log in the students.

So, I decided to go to my principal and propose the idea of introducing iPads at Pre-K 3 classrooms to support the students not only in early digital literacy, but also numeracy and phonics. She gave me the green light to pilot the idea and we started using programs like ABC Mouse.But ABC Mouse was the only program in Spanish. Meanwhile, Pre-K 4 and kindergarten focused on ABC Mouse in English. I do think that is also a different problem, but we're not going to discuss that today. Because, I mean, if you're teaching students in Spanish, but then you bring them in English at Pre-K 4, that's only a year of Spanish. I don't think that's the most effective, but again, there's not up for discussion today.

As I was saying, we only got five iPads per classroom to pilot the program, which made it a challenge. But, this also gave me a huge opportunity because I was able to sit with a small group of students, five students per group, I would sit in my round table.

I was able to watch how they would interact with technology. The limited number of devices made me realize something very important. So, whenever you give a student a book, and I'm talking about Pre-K 3 students, so whenever you give them a book, what do you see them do? They grab the book, they open it, they flip pages, they look at the drawings, and they start telling you what they think the book is saying. But they're not actually comprehending what is written in the book because they cannot read it.

They don't understand that letters connect with sounds and that letters form a word. They don't really understand all that just yet. So, they just kind of play with the book. They flip pages, they close it, they have it upside down. And I realized that it was almost the same way. You know, you give a student an iPad, and they're doing the same thing. They're just clicking, tapping. They didn't know how to swipe and tap and drag. They didn't understand that.

They didn't understand that every touch had a meaning, that it had significance to something. And many of them just pressed random parts of the screen. They got frustrated. They would shut down. I had a student, and this is a child that needs a little

extra support. And every single time the iPad was not doing what he wanted it to do, it was frustration, chaos, the end of the world. And it was a total meltdown.

And he would throw the iPad, throw himself on the floor, scrimp, kick, cry, all of that stuff. But, you know, it wasn't their fault. I felt like it fell on me because I just handed an iPad. I didn't teach them the basic digital literacy skills. And that's when I realized my innovation plan needed to go deeper. So I developed a structured five-step guide to scaffold digital literacy in early childhood, focusing on basic skills like gestures, digital etiquette, and purposeful screen time.

My article titled *Scaffolding Digital Literacy in Pre-K Classrooms* outlines a practical, developmentally appropriate framework that any teacher can follow. It aligns with the ISTE standards for students and offers a real strategy that I've used with real kids, and I've seen real results. Some students that once struggled now confidently turn off and turn on the iPad. They comfortably turn on and turn up and turn down the volume. They swipe up when they have a problem. They hold it to make sure it shows the screen where all the tabs go.

And then they swipe up to close the program they wanted to close. They now are able to complete tasks, open apps, and even help their peers. You know, sometimes I'll see a student struggling, and they'll be like, Ms. Barroso, I can't do this. And then their friend that's sitting next to them will be like, oh, well, you just do this. And they help each other out. And like that, they're also learning.

So, teachers who were hesitant to use tech now ask me and come to me for support, not only because I'm the lead of the pilot program, but also because they realize that I did something that worked not just for my class, but it's also working for them. One of my proudest moments would be whenever I would see a student that would cry every time that we would bring out iPads, to now smiling and happy that they're going to be on the iPad, they're going to be on ABC Mouse.

They know what to do on ABC Mouse. And I think that's real growth. It all started with a little guidance.

If you're curious about how to start scaffolding digital literacy in your early childhood setting, I invite you to read my full article. You can find the link in the notes or on my website. Thank you for listening, and I hope you're ready to empower education with one swipe at a time.