

How Reading Comprehension Has Changed While We Weren't Looking: Why Students Who Need our Help The Most With New Literacies of Online Reading Comprehension Actually Receive It the Least

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Abstract

Rapid changes to the technologies of information have altered the nature of reading comprehension in fundamental ways. While our society is moving online, reading instruction, educational policies, and state assessments have yet to reflect these changes. It is increasingly clear that the Internet is a reading comprehension issue, not a technology issue (Castek, 2007; Coiro and Dobler, 2007; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Moreover, research demonstrates that online reading comprehension differs in important ways from offline reading comprehension (Leu, Zawilinski, *et.al.*, 2007). Indeed, if you look carefully, some of the your most challenged offline readers may actually be skilled online readers. This presentation will share a new and broader vision of reading comprehension, one that includes preparing all students for the new reading comprehension demands of the Internet. We argue that the impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), current state reading standards, and current state reading assessments, is to deny online reading comprehension opportunities to students who need our help the most, those who are challenged by reading and those in our lowest performing school districts. As a result of our collective failure to understand the changes taking place in reading, few students are supported in developing the new literacies of online reading comprehension in our schools (Castek, Leu, Coiro, Gort, Henry, & Lima, 2007). Current public policies, state and national standards, assessments, curriculum, and instructional practices must change if we hope to prepare all students for reading in the 21st century.

General References

- Castek, J., Leu, D. J., Jr., Coiro, J., Gort, M., Henry, L. A., & Lima, C. (2007). Developing new literacies among multilingual learners in the elementary grades. In L. Parker (Ed.) *Technology-mediated learning environments for young English learners: Connections In and out of school*. (111-153). Mahwah, NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Coiro, J. & Dobler, E. (2007). Exploring the online reading comprehension strategies used by sixth-grade skilled readers to search for and locate information on the Internet. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42, 214-257.
- Kara-Soteriou, J., Zawilinski & L., Henry, L. (2007). Children's books and technology in the classroom: a dynamic combo for supporting the writing workshop. *The Reading Teacher*, 60 (7), 698-707.
- Leu, D.J., Jr., Kinzer, C.K., Coiro, J., Cammack, D. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies. In R.B. Ruddell & N. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading*, Fifth Edition (1568-1611). International Reading Association: Newark, DE. Available at http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/leu

Introduction

The New Literacies Research Team on The UConn Site: <http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu/team.html>

I. The Internet Is This Generation's Defining Technology

Current data on worldwide Internet use is at: *Internet world stats: Usage and population statistics*.

<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

Kaiser Family Foundation. (2005). *Generation M: Media in the lives of 8-18 year-olds*. Retrieved September 15, 2007 from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7251.cfm>

Pew Internet & American Life Project (2005). *Teens and Technology*. Retrieved April 15, 2006 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/topics.asp?c=4>

II. The Internet Requires New Literacies -- Additional Online Reading Comprehension Skills And Strategies

Leu, D. J., Zawilinski, L., Castek, J., Banerjee, M., Housand, B., Liu, Y., and O'Neil, M. (2007). What is new about the new literacies of online reading comprehension? In L. Rush, J. Eakle, & A. Berger, (Eds.). *Secondary school literacy: What research reveals for classroom practices*. (37-68). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Available online from <http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu/docs/whats%20new%20about%20online%20reading%20comprehension.pdf>

III. Our Weakest Offline Readers Are Sometimes Our Most Proficient Online Readers

Additional videos of students reading online may be found at:

<http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu/reading.html> and <http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu/iesproject/videos/>

IV. Current Policies Actually Increase Online Reading Achievement Gaps

63% of children from households earning more than \$75,000 annually, report that they use the Internet at school

36% of children from households earning less than \$15,000 annually report that they use the Internet at school

Lazarus, W., Wainer, A. and Lipper, L. (2005). *Measuring digital opportunity for America's children: Where we stand and where we go from here*. Washington, DC: The Children's Partnership. Available online from

http://www.childrenpartnership.org/Content/NavigationMenu2/Research/PublicationsfromTheChildrensPartnership/Focus_on_Digital_Op.htm

TICA Basic Skills (Phase One) Checklist

Most of the students and all of the groups in my class know how to:

Computer Basics	Comment
<input type="checkbox"/> Turn a computer on/off	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use the mouse/track pad	
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow classroom and school rules for computer use	
<input type="checkbox"/> Open programs and files using icons and/or the Start Menu (PC)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Log on and log off from individual file space	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create/open a new folder/file	
<input type="checkbox"/> Launch a word processor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Open a word processing file	
<input type="checkbox"/> Type a short entry in a word processing file	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy text	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cut text	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paste text	
<input type="checkbox"/> Delete text	
<input type="checkbox"/> Name a word processing file and save it	
<input type="checkbox"/> Open a new window	
<input type="checkbox"/> Open a new tab	
Web Searching Basics	
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate and open a search engine	
<input type="checkbox"/> Type key words in the correct location of a search engine	
<input type="checkbox"/> Type addresses in the address window	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use the refresh button	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use the "BACK" and "FORWARD" buttons	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use a search engine for simple key word searches	
General Navigation Basics	
<input type="checkbox"/> Maximize/minimize windows	
<input type="checkbox"/> Open and quit applications	
<input type="checkbox"/> Toggle between windows	
E-mail Basics	
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate and open an e-mail program	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attach documents to e-mail messages	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compose, edit and send email messages	
<input type="checkbox"/> Receive and reply to messages	

TICA Phase II Checklist

Most of the students and all of the groups in my class know how to:

Understand and Develop Questions		Lesson Evidence and Comments
Teacher-Generated Questions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use strategies to ensure initial understanding of the question such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rereading the question to make sure they understand it. • paraphrasing the question. • taking notes on the question. • thinking about the needs of the person who asked the question. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use strategies to monitor an understanding of the question such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing when to review the question. • checking an answer in relation to the question to ensure it is complete. 	
Student-Generated Questions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine what a useful initial question is, based on a variety of factors that include interest, audience, purpose, and the nature of the inquiry activity.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine a clear topic and focus for questions to guide the search for information.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Modify questions, when appropriate, using strategies such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrowing the focus of the question. • expanding the focus of the question. • developing a new or revised question that is more appropriate after gathering information. 	
Locate Information		Lesson Evidence and Comments
Locating Information By Using A Search Engine And Its Results Page		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Locate at least one search engine.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use key words in a search window on a browser that has this or on a separate search engine.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use several of the following general search engine strategies during key word entry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • topic and focus • single and multiple key word entries • phrases for key word entry 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use several of the following more specialized search engine strategies during key word entry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quotation marks • paraphrases and synonyms • Boolean • advanced search tool use 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy and paste keywords and phrases into the search engine window while searching for information.	

<input type="checkbox"/>	Read search engine results effectively to determine the most useful resource for a task using strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing which portions of a search results page are sponsored, containing commercially placed links, and which are not. • skimming the main results before reading more narrowly • reading summaries carefully and inferring meaning in the search engine results page to determine the best possible site to visit • understanding the meaning of bold face terms in the results • understanding the meaning of URLs in search results (.com, .org, .edu, .net) • knowing when the first item is not the best item for a question • monitoring the extent to which a search results page matches the information needs. • knowing how to use the history pull down menu. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor the multiple aspects of search engine use and make appropriate revisions and changes throughout the process	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Select from a variety of search engine strategies to locate useful resources when an initial search is unsuccessful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows the use and meaning of the "Did you mean...?" feature in google. • Adjusts search engine key words according to the results of a search. • narrows the search. • expands the search. • reads search results to discover the correct vocabulary and then use this more appropriate vocabulary in a new search. • Shifts to another search engine. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bookmark a site and access it later.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use specialized search engines for images, videos, and other media sources.	
Locating Information Within A Website		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quickly determine if a site is potentially useful and worth more careful reading	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read more carefully at a site to determine if the required information is located there.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Predict information behind a link accurately to make efficient choices about where information is located.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use structural knowledge of a web page to help locate information, including the use of directories.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize when you have left a site and know how to return back to the original site.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to open a second browser window to locate information, without losing the initial web page.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to use an internal search engine to locate information at a site.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor the reading of a web page and knows when it contains useful information and when it does not.	
Critically Evaluate Information		Lesson Evidence and Comments
Bias and Stance		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify, evaluate, and recognize that all websites have an agenda, perspective, or bias.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and evaluate bias, given a website with a clear bias.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and evaluate the author of a website whenever visiting an important new site.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use information about the author of a site to evaluate how information will be biased at that site.	

Reliability		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Investigate multiple sources to compare and contrast the reliability of information.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify several markers that may affect reliability such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a commercial site? • Is the author an authoritative source (e.g., professor, scientist, librarian, etc.)? • Does the website have links that are broken? • Does the information make sense? • Does the author include links to other reliable websites? • Does the website contain numerous typos? • Does the URL provide any clues to reliability? • Do the images or videos appear to be altered? 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Understand that Wikipedia is a reasonable, but imperfect, portal of information.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the general purpose of a website (entertainment, educational, commercial, persuasive, exchange of information, social, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the form of a website (e.g. blog, forum, advertisement, informational website, commercial website, government website, etc.) and use this information when considering reliability.	
Accuracy		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluate information based on the degree to which it is likely to be accurate by verifying and consulting alternative and/or especially reliable sources.	
Synthesize Information		Lesson Evidence and Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Understand both the specific information related to the task as well as the broader context within which that information is located	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Synthesize information from multiple media sources including written prose, audio, visual, video, and/or tables and graphs.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separate relevant information from irrelevant information.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize Information effectively.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Manage multiple sources both on and offline including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose tools to meet the needs of managing information (file folders, electronic file folders, notebooks, email, etc.) • Cite sources • Take notes with paper & pencil, when appropriate. • Take notes with a word processor, when appropriate. • Type notes using short cut strokes such as highlight/cut/copy/paste 	
Communicate Information		Lesson Evidence and Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Understand that messages have consequences and will influence how others react.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use a variety of offline writing/editing tools such as a word processor spell checker, dictionary, thesaurus, pdf., etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy/paste text or URL to use in the message.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to use email including attaching and downloading attachments, logging in, sending messages, opening messages.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to use IM	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to use blogs including reading and posting information.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor communication of information for audience or voice (i.e. formal versus informal writing styles)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Uses a wide array of Internet-based forms of communication, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email and attachments • blogs • wikis • Google Docs • instant messaging • websites • presentation software 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is aware of the audience and the relationship between audience, purpose, medium, message.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knows how to include multiple-media sources within messages.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Uses formatting such as headings and subheadings to communicate the organization of information within informational text.	