TECHNOLOGY TOOLS IN TEACHING READING AND WRITING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract: In this article, we examine how teachers are using reading technology to address reading and writing challenges discussed in other articles in this issue. Although many early reading technologies have so far focused on basic reading skills, we examine how technology can build knowledge and support higher-level reading strategies and behaviors. Advances in digital technologies are dramatically changing the texts and tools available to teachers and students. These technological advances have excited many as they can be used as teaching tools for reading and writing. But with the promise of these advances come problems that can exacerbate the literacy challenges identified in the other articles in this issue.

Keywords: iPad, text media, literacy, double-tap text, teachers, administrators, researchers.

Technological advances are dramatically changing the texts and tools available to students and teachers. Since 2007, the number of devices available to display digital text has grown exponentially. The first e-reader to hit the market, the Amazon Kindle, sold out two days after its launch in November 2007. As of June 2011, Amazon has sold more Kindle books than hardcover and softcover books combined. Meanwhile, the first large-scale release of a touchscreen tablet, the Apple iPad in April 2010, with the inclusion of the iBook application, further expanded readers' ability to access digital text media. When the iPad 2 was launched in March 2011, more than 15 million units had already been sold, in June 2011 it was 27 million. Analysts forecast that 89.5 million units, both tablets and e-readers, will be sold worldwide in 2014. These technological advances have raised high hopes among many teachers, administrators, researchers and policy makers who believe the digital devices hold promise as literacy teaching tools. Simple applications of existing e-reading technologies, e.g. Things like changing the font size on the screen, using text-to-speech capabilities to double-tap text, or using the internet to collaborate on learning activities can greatly improve the learning of many students. The annual International Conference on Computers in Education 2011 brought together

researchers from around the world to share ideas on more advanced applications of e-reading technology, ranging from providing customized feedback through artificially intelligent animated avatars to fostering critical thinking skills through Computer-assisted collaboration to predict ranged students' interest and frustration based on brainwave signals and mouse click behavior.

However, with the promise of these advances come problems that may further exacerbate the literacy challenges identified in other articles in this volume, such as: B.: However, new e-technologies can unintentionally enlarge such gaps. For example, parents are increasingly using technology to provide learning and reading opportunities for their children, and parents are now the fastest growing group of consumers purchasing e-reading technology. But parents cannot offer their children these opportunities equally. This also applies when purchasing behavior is disaggregated by income level. The resulting technology gap closely resembles the demographic literacy gap described in the article by Sean Reardon, Rachel Valentino, and Kenneth Shores in this issue, and raises the worrying possibility that new technologies to develop literacy skills will create additional difficulties for students in low-income families. And even as policymakers and educator's close gaps in access to technology, experts warn that if students are not given adequate opportunities to learn how to use technology to achieve a variety of goals, achievement inequalities could continue to widen.

Although demographic gaps in accessing technology at home are being narrowed by students increasing access to schools, libraries, and community technology centers, serious gaps remain in students' ability to use technology in sophisticated ways. High-performing students are not only more likely to use technology for interest-driven activities. B. research topics or create new media together online, but are also more likely to be instructed by adults in their use. Lower-performing students are more likely to use it for socially motivated activities, such as B. Chatting or playing games with friends on social media, following pop-ups, or browsing links from celebrities and athletes. Such differences in the way students use technology not only do little to fill knowledge gaps, they can actually exacerbate them. Students need more than access to technology; They must learn to use them strategically to improve their reading and writing skills, especially the conceptual and knowledge-based skills that will become crucial for later reading and writing tasks. In her article in this issue, Susan Goldman describes how navigating large amounts of unfiltered information at different levels of complexity and in different forms can complicate

learning for students who are already struggling to master strategic approaches to reading and critical thinking. While the need for students to acquire literacy skills is not new in the digital age, technology is making this need even more pressing. This slippery terminology can be confusing for educators, parents, and policymakers who need to make informed decisions about these technologies. Although we focus on digital text, we find, as Goldman notes in her article in this volume, that it is often supplemented by other digital media and is therefore increasingly difficult to isolate from other media. In this article, we use e-reading technology to refer to the hardware and software used to display and interface with digital text. Hardware includes devices such as e-readers and tablets, as well as smartphones, laptops and even desktop computers that display digital text. Software includes a set of applications and programs that enable readers to interact with the text, either locally on the device or over a network; it may or may not contain statement functions. Although many forms of e-reading technology can be used for more than just reading, we focus on technology's role in literacy. And while many other technologies, including audio players, video players, interactive whiteboards, and clickers, can be used to learn to read and write, they cannot store and display digital text.

The question is not the narrow question of how to fit technology into literacy, but the broader question of how to transform literacy to meet the changing needs of today. The good news is that technology can be a tool to alleviate many reading and writing problems. It is already being used in new and promising ways to address the full range of skills, both procedural and conceptual, needed to improve students' literacy skills. However, technology can be more than just a tool to teach students skills; it can be a tool for acquiring the vocabulary and background knowledge essential for an experienced reader. While technology isn't a panacea for literacy problems, it can be part of the solution. However, for its promise to be fulfilled, its tools must be strategically embedded in coherent, evidence-based educational programs.

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