We hope you'll enjoy our final publication of Reading in the Middle!

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR, DR. NANCE S. WILSON

In this final issue of *Reading in the Middle*, you can find strong articles to support online research and comprehension in the content areas. The article by Dr. Jennifer Van Allen supports literacy teachers in meeting the common core standards by supporting students as they engage in Internet research. This article is supported by research and links to support all teachers. The digital theme is continued by Shalander Samuels as she presents her experiences with the Springboard curriculum. This article provides insight into the curriculum as well as implications for practical applications and teacher

professional development. Lorna Kesner shares the FASTT model and how it's implementation using technology helps teachers to meet state standards while noting that all of the integration of digital literacy is not complete without considering the perceptions of classroom teachers. To close, Adam Ulenski shares his experience as an elementary reading coach in guiding teachers to implement technology into the classroom.

It is appropriate that our final issue is focused on digital literacies, as the changes in how we receive information about teaching and learning are at the heart of why this is the last issue of

Reading in the Middle. Over the last few years this newsletter has served the middle level literacy community with research based articles, book lists, and teaching tips. The newsletter began as a print item mailed out to members and presented at the Annual International "Reading" Association conference, and in recent years the newsletter moved on-line. It has been shared through our website http://middleschoolreadingsig ira.weebly.com/

Thank you all for your support for the *Reading in the Middle*, the newsletter of the Middle School Reading Special Interest Group of ILA.

~Dr. Nance S. Wilson

Jennifer Van Allen

How to Support Online Research and Comprehension in the Content Areas

Abstract

College and career readiness requires our students to use new technologies to locate information, critically evaluate and analyze that information, collaborate and connect with others, produce and share information, and achieve personal, professional, and academic goals. The purpose of this paper is to describe online research and comprehension skills of successful Internet readers and make two practical recommendations, using a social studies and mathematics context, for incorporating these skills in the content areas. Content area teachers can help students create a word bank to identify relevant discipline specific information and use a think aloud process consisting of modeling, guided practice, and reflection to model thinking through online sources.

Key Points

- Students lack the skills to fully research, comprehend, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret content area information online
- Readers use similar reading strategies when reading unbounded online texts, as when reading bounded offline, traditional texts
- Middle school teaching and learning requires advanced discipline-specific literacy knowledge and skills
- Content area teachers can improve students' online research and comprehension skills by helping them come up with a word bank to identify relevant discipline-specific information
- A think aloud process can be utilized to aid teachers in teaching students discipline-specific online reading comprehension skills consisting of modeling, guided practice, and reflection

How to Support Online Research and Comprehension in the Content Areas

Digital literacy education is at the forefront of conversation nationally, locally, and professionally. Many recognize that college and career readiness requires our students to use new technologies to locate information, critically evaluate and analyze that information, collaborate and connect with others, produce and share information, and achieve personal, professional, and academic goals. In his presidential address, the most recent former president of the National Council of Teachers of English, Ernest Morrell (2015) states "Educators who are bringing tomorrow's English to life in classrooms today are engaging the media. They are not only creating more critical consumers of the media, but they are helping young people become critical producers of the media" (p. 315). Through this statement, he emphasizes the importance of guiding students to become critical consumers and creators of a variety of media formats, including digital formats (Morrell, 2015).

Digital literacy remains a hot topic in professional and political discussions. But, is a change in instruction occurring in middle school classrooms? As a literacy coach in a large school district in the southeastern United States, I would reply "no," based on my personal experiences and conversations with fellow literacy coaches in other schools. Given the wide access schools have to the Internet today, I believe the Internet is an underutilized resource in our middle school classrooms. I agree that students can easily use the Internet to search for lyrics to their favorite songs or find out the latest news in pop culture. However, these same students lack the skills to fully research, comprehend, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret content area information online. A recent study conducted by Leu et al. (2014) examined the online research and comprehension skills of seventh grade students and found that only 50% of the students from economically advantaged backgrounds were able to successfully complete the task compared to 21% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. My experiences in schools lead to me believe that students are lacking these skills because they are not receiving sufficient instruction in online research and comprehension skills. Instructional changes will not occur if online research and comprehension skills are not fully understood by middle school teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to describe online research and comprehension skills of successful Internet readers and make two practical

recommendations for incorporating these skills in the content areas.

Online Research and Comprehension Strategies and Processes

Readers use similar reading strategies when reading unbounded online texts, such as websites, audio, video, hyperlinks, and images, as when reading bounded offline, traditional texts, such as books, textbooks, and newspapers (Coiro, 2007). For example, all readers must rely on general word recognition strategies to identify known and unknown words in text. Online research and comprehension skills build on traditional reading strategies typically activated when reading informational texts (i.e., activating prior knowledge, making inferences, and self-regulation of reading processes). Yet, online research extends the application of these reading strategies in many ways. For example, when activating prior knowledge, students must have "prior knowledge of the topic, prior knowledge of printed information text structures, prior knowledge of informational website structures, and prior knowledge of Web-based search engines" (Coiro & Dobler, 2007, p. 229). In addition, students often have to make inferences and hold through search engine results and self-regulate their search for information to keep their attention focused on the search topic (without getting distracted

by advertisements or lost in hyperlinks) (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Table 1 provides a summary comparison of these reading comprehension strategies.

Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, and Henry (2013) have identified five processing strategies that include the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for online research and comprehension: "read to identify important questions, read to locate information, read to evaluate information critically, read to synthesize information, and read to communicate information" (p. 1164). Since most Internet reading is conducted to solve a problem or answer a question, readers must begin with a driving question that represents their current understanding of the topic. Next, readers must generate related key words or phrases, identify websites that may include valuable information in search engine results, and efficiently scan a website's information for relevant facts or information. As a reader processes the information found within a website or across multiple webpages and sources, he or she must evaluate the information for bias, accuracy, and reliability and then synthesize the information to form a general understanding of the problem or answer. Teachers must model and explicitly teach students what bias, accuracy, and reliability mean and how to identify each, especially within the context of their discipline-

Table 1. Comparison of Reading Comprehension Strategies of Traditional Texts and Internet Texts

Reading Strategies	Traditional Texts	Internet Texts
Activating Prior Knowledge	Recall experiences and information related to topic	Additional knowledge of website structures and search engines is needed
Inferential Reasoning	Read between the lines using literal matching skills, structural cues, and context clues	Make forward inferences; Manage multilayered reading processes across three dimensional Internet spaces
Self-Regulate Reading Processes	Self-monitor and apply fix-up strategies when comprehension breaks down.	Additional rapid-information seeking strategies across multiple texts and incorporation of cognitive comprehension strategies with physical reading actions is needed

Adapted from Coiro, J., & Dobler, E. (2007). Exploring the online reading comprehension strategies used by sixth-grade skills reading to search for and locate information on the Internet. Reading Research Quarterly, 42(2), 214-257. doi: 10.1598/RRQ.42.2.2

specific narrative or expository texts. Finally, readers often communicate new information to peers or others through email, blogs or wikis. All of these processes happen quickly, often, and simultaneously making online research and comprehension a complex activity (Leu et al., 2013).

Implications for Practice

A frequent concern of middle school content area teachers is that many students are coming to them unprepared to read and comprehend the texts in their specific discipline. Middle school teaching and learning requires advanced literacy knowledge and skills specific to each discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Disciplinary literacy is comprised of the "cognitive literacy processes used to make meaning, the cultural tools, . . . and the epistemic beliefs about knowledge and knowledge production that constitute the discipline" (Manderino, 2011, p.121). This view of disciplinary literacy will frame the following recommendations for including online research and comprehension skills within content areas. Practical applications, from the content areas of social studies and mathematics, are provided in this section demonstrating how to use some of these strategies in daily lessons.

Teach Students Discipline-Specific Keywords

Once a reader has identified a question or problem to solve, the next step in online research is to locate relevant information. In order to effectively search for information, students must be able to identify keywords and/or phrases that will bring up relevant search results. Each discipline has its own specialized discourse and content area textbooks typically have discipline-specific vocabulary. Therefore, content area teachers can improve students' ability to locate relevant information to their specific content area questions by helping students identify commonly used discipline-specific phrases and vocabulary as keywords.

For example, disciplinary literacy in social studies involves analysis of authors' perspectives, arguments, and biases as a story is woven together (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). In order to engage in this mental representation of a historical event, era, or time, the reader must read across multiple primary and secondary sources offering a variety of perspectives. The Internet provides access to hundreds of thousands of such sources. Numerous websites provide access to authentic primary source materials

(http://www.archives.gov/education/, http://www.loc.gov/, and http://primaryaccess.org/). As such, middle school history teachers must continue the quest to help students identify the difference between primary and secondary source material, with the added challenge of identifying these resources in online environments. Helping students create a bank of keywords that can be used when searching for primary source material will aid readers in the recommended online reading strategy, read to locate information. Teachers can model and encourage the usage of keywords such as *narratives, diaries, correspondence, interviews, records, newspapers, sources, papers, and manuscripts* when using search engines to locate primary source material on the Internet. Alternatively, a word bank to aid students in locating secondary sources on the Internet may include the use of keywords such as *review, criticism, analysis, editorial, encyclopedia, textbook, and commentary*.

This teaching strategy may be embedded throughout the curriculum or may be addressed in short minilessons that guide students to research topics within the discipline. To prepare, first the teacher must think about the specific language patterns and vocabulary used when experts of the discipline are explaining or discussing the topic at hand. As another example, geography lessons on the physical and cultural attributes of different regions, students may hear and be expected to use terms such as *physical characteristics, population distribution, population density, landforms, elevation, region, attribute, elevation, urbanization, absolute location, standard of living, etc.* After creating the initial list, the teacher must consider which of these terms and phrases would be most useful to students as they search the Internet for information on the topic. To begin the minilesson, the teacher should model for students how to think about their problem or question and generate search terms. In the geography example, a teacher might model how to search for the answer to the question, "What are the physical attributes of the Pacific Northwest?" When modeling for students, the teacher should guide students in creating and recording a word bank of keywords or phrases students might use in their research. In this case, the word bank may include terms such as *Pacific Northwest, climate, elevation, landforms, etc.* Finally, the teacher may release students to create their own word bank specific to their particular question or problem. Once students have these terms in their toolbox and selected terms specific to the topic they are researching, the teacher should help students examine search term results with their keywords in mind (note that key words searched are indicated as bold words in search engine results) and identify relevant hyperlinks to investigate further.

Teaching students discipline-specific search terms will help students' online research skills by helping them to target specific information on the Internet. What discipline specific language is used in your content area that may help students more effectively engage in online research?

Model Discipline-Specific Thinking with a Variety of Online Texts

The definition of literacy has fundamentally changed with the introduction of the Internet. If literacy is defined as a meaning-making activity, then the multiple forms of media, such as audio, video, presentations slides, and more, must be included in instruction as students will be required to make meaning from multiple modes of text (Leu et al., 2013). Each discipline has its own predominant forms of text that are frequently used to communicate ideas. For example, scientists often rely on charts, tables, and graphs to communicate data from experiments, which are often interactive in online environments. Mathematicians attend to precision when conveying information. This includes using precise language and vocabulary to express and justify answers. Websites such as eHow Education (http://www.ehow.com/education/) or Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org) provide instructional videos that math teachers can use to help students attend to precision when explaining how to perform a mathematical operation.

Coiro (2011) has suggested a think aloud process for teaching students online reading comprehension skills consisting of modeling, guided practice, and reflection. Using this model, a middle school mathematics teacher may choose a specific eHow Education or Khan Academy instructional video relevant to a topic currently under study to notice how the speaker attends to precision. Prior to teaching the lesson, the teacher would view the video thinking the about the precise language used by the speaker when explaining the steps taken to solve the problem. To effectively design the lesson, the teacher should "anticipate what students will struggle with most as they approach, navigate, monitor, and respond to the online text; and offer think-aloud models of the thinking and (viewing) strategies one would use to scaffold their understanding in these areas" (Coiro, 2011, p. 111). He/she may begin by involving the whole class or small group in a shared viewing experience, thinking aloud at identified, strategic points. Then the teacher should engage students in

guided and collaborative practice and reflection. During reflection, the teacher's focus should be on helping students summarize, look deeper into their findings, make connections, and asking further question. In addition, this time for reflection allows students to examine their strategy use, evaluate their effectiveness, and generalize how these strategies may be used in other situations.
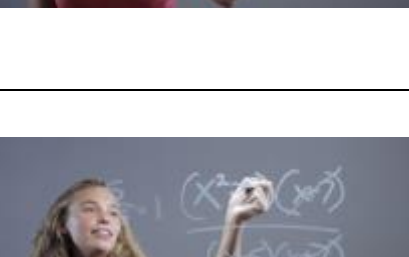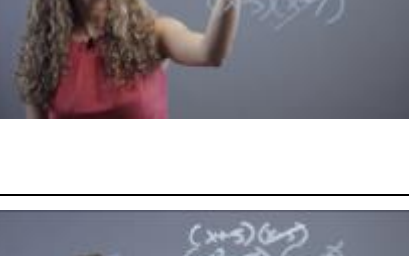
Mathematics think aloud. An example of a mathematics think aloud process using the instructional video on *How to Simply Expressions in Algebra 1* (https://youtu.be/xDU-IPdA-Xo) is provided in Table 2. This discipline literacy example models how mathematicians attend to precision using precise language in their explanations. After several think aloud models have been completed in viewing an instructional video and noticing the precise language, the teacher should provide students with opportunities to collaboratively engage in similar tasks and reflect on their progress. The example provided in Table 2 addresses how mathematicians can better comprehend varied forms of online texts, in this case a video, using the discipline specific skills.

Both of the previous examples provide hands-on, practical applications supporting students' online research or online comprehension skills within specific content areas. Reflecting on the examples, one can clearly see the teaching decisions made. To start, a clear learning goal was established (locating primary sources in the social studies example and attending to precise language in the mathematics example) and an instructional strategy was selected (a think aloud process in the mathematics example). Next, technology was integrated that made the connection between the learning goal and discipline-specific practice (keyword search strategies using search engines in the social studies example and watching a mathematician explain a procedure in the mathematics example) using online research or online comprehension skills.

Challenges and Unanswered Questions

Clearly, more research is needed to address unanswered questions about instructional practices that best support online research and comprehension, specifically with regards to varying disciplines and forms of text. What type of support do students need to develop online research and comprehension skills within different disciplines? What are the overarching strategies that occur across disciplines? How are

Video Clip	Purpose	Think Aloud
	Model	I noticed that she used the word expressions. Expressions could mean many things, but I need to think of the precise meaning of this term in algebra. Expressions are mathematical phrases used to represent variables, constants, and operations. I will keep that in mind throughout this video clip. (0:12)
	Model	The speaker explains that we will be looking at an expression with fractions. I know that fractions consist of a numerator and denominator. She will likely use these precise terms. Let's review what they mean right now. *Either define these terms for students or enlist their help.* (0:34)
	Model	Here she discusses how to simplify the equation. I need to remember the precise meaning of simplify as it relates to algebraic expressions. So, I know that when I simplify an expression I'm trying to write it in the most efficient manner without changing the value of the expression. Understanding the precise meaning of simplify helps me to better understand why she can cross out $x + 7$ in both the numerator and the denominator without changing the value of the expression. (0:57)
	Model/ Guided Practice	Now she uses more precise language. She states that we need to simplify $x^2 - 25$ by factoring it. Let's review this before we move on because it is important to understanding the next step. Can anyone remember what factoring is and how you perform factoring? *Elicit student responses and provide feedback.* Let's try to predict her next step since we now that is is going to factor $x^2 - 25$. *Guide students in predicting/performing the next step.* Once a prediction has been made, continue the video. (1:11)
	Guided Practice	At the conclusion of this video, the speaker uses another term that we have discussed before, *polynomial*. It's important to examine how a polynomial is similar to and different from an expression. Any ideas? *Facilitate student discussion.* Then discuss why the speaker may have chosen to end the video with this precise language. After discussion, replay the video having students identify the precise language. (1:47)
	Guided Practice	After discussion with the class, replay the video having students identify the precise language and reflecting on the reasons for using this language in the mathematics video. (0:02) [Screenshots of eHow Education video *How to Simply Expressions in Algebra 1* retrieved from https://youtu.be/xDU-IPdA-Xo reproduced with permission of the publisher.]

different forms of text supportive or challenging to different disciplines? Additionally, teachers will face many challenges as they navigate through these uncharted waters. First of all, technology breaks. Schools must provide teachers with the support and training they need to troubleshoot when technology fails. In addition, teachers must be quick to modify lessons when the Internet connection goes down or the light bulb goes out in the projector. These are the realities and questions that teachers face daily.

However, one fact remains. In order to equip our students with the digital literacy skills they need to succeed in college and careers, teachers must incorporate instruction in online research and comprehension skills into daily lessons across content areas. The rewards to students are great as they learn the necessary skills to effectively find, evaluate, and communicate in global online environments.

References

Coiro, J. (2011). Talking about reading as thinking: Modeling the hidden complexities of online reading comprehension. *Theory Into Practice, 50*(2), 107-115. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2011.558435

Coiro, J., & Dobler, E. (2007). Exploring the online reading comprehension strategies used by sixth-grade skills reading to search for and locate information on the Internet. *Reading Research Quarterly, 42*(2), 214-257. doi: 10.1598/RRQ.42.2.2

Leu, D. J., Forzani, E., Rhoads, C., Maykel, C., Kennedy, C., & Timbrell, N. (2014). The new literacies of online research and comprehension: Rethinking the reading achievement gap. *Reading Research Quarterly, 50*(1), 37-59. doi: 10.1002/rrq.85

Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J. L., Castek, J., & Henry, L. A. (2013). New literacies: A dual-level theory of the changing nature of literacy, instruction, & assessment. In D.E. Alvermann, N.J. Unrau, & R. B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (6th ed.) (p. 1150–1181). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Manderino, M. (2011, November). Disciplinary literacy in new literacies environments: Expanding the intersections of literate practice for adolescents. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Literacy Research Association, Jacksonville, FL. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/2235092/Disciplinary_literacy_in_new_literacies_environments_Expanding_the_intersections_of_literate_practice_for_adolescents

Morrell, E. (2015). The 2014 NCTE presidential address: Powerful English at NCTE yesterday, today, and tomorrow: Toward the next movement. *Research in the Teaching of English, 49*(3), 307-327.

Shalander Samuels

Middle School Students Using a Digital English Language Arts Curriculum

Introduction

This year I started teaching at a so-called "digital school" as a seventh-grade English Language Arts (ELA) teacher in a large metropolitan school district in Southeastern United States. Until this year, I had never used the term "21st century literacy" as part of my instructional conversations with my Professional Learning Team (PLT). It was not a term used when planning for and creating lesson plans or being involved in regular teaching and learning activities. I had never taken the time to define or even assess what was happening in my school or in my classroom in terms of 21st century literacies. I was, however, aware that digital learning was happening all around me, as each student in my class and school had a digital device that he or she was expected to use in each class daily. Today, how teachers and students read and how they approach literacy are much different than in the past. Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek and Henry (2013) describe literacy as being both deictic and multimodal: neglecting this new literacy no longer seems an option for fully functioning in society. This is a new literacy that encapsulates both online research and comprehension, and it embodies a great meticulousness and accuracy in learning today. Research has suggested that online comprehension possibly includes additional distinct skills and strategies when compared to offline reading comprehension. Those browsers, emails, and search engines that are a part of online technology seem to better help students in reading and writing and enhance student technology skills (Coiro, 2011).

Digital literacy represents a person's ability to effectively perform tasks in a digital environment. In this context, the word "digital" means there is information presented through a computer or other device. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, whether the form is through sounds, images or texts, to reproduce data and images. The middle school where I teach embraces the semiotic perspective for each student's learning. This can be done through digital manipulation, and is used to evaluate and implement new knowledge gained from digital environments (Leu et al., 2013). My students receive support in utilizing computers and engaging in digital literacy. This middle school was one of the first schools in its district to be used as a pilot school for "full" digital learning, "imposing" digital literacy on all school stakeholders. The purpose of this paper is to present my experiences as a middle school teacher with the digital Language Arts curriculum used at my school; its goal is to highlight curriculum elements and discuss successes and challenges associated with the use of a digital curriculum.

Due to recent advances in technology and because literacy has become increasingly deictic, the classroom has to be capable of accommodating the students' academic needs (Larson, 2013). As a result of technological advancements that have made literacy deictic (Leu et al., 2013), many students across the U.S. are using technology for academic purposes today. Some principals, including my own, have adapted a full digital status at their schools. This means that all students have technological devices and they are expected to read and complete most assignments using these devices. In the next two years, all schools in this district will be required to go fully digital. It will no longer be necessary for the classroom teacher to struggle to give presentations using overheads or discuss geography using paper maps, as all those lessons will be conducted using technology. A teacher

using a chalkboard, or an overhead projector to explain and discuss concepts will be considered an "ancient" practice. Research indicates that web-based tools can support student learning and help build up their critical reading skills (Baker, Pearson & Rozendal, 2010). This avenue can provide opportunities for students to construct meaning in texts for authentic purposes. By changing the way information is absorbed, processed, and used, technology is influencing how students are taught to read, write, listen, and communicate (Baker et al. 2010). For the purpose of this paper, I chose to discuss the e-text, *SpringBoard, a CollegeBoard*. All grade levels utilize this e-text book; regardless of whether students have transferred from a digital school or not, they are required to engage in daily lessons using these devices.

My Experience with the Springboard Curriculum

It is clear that digital literacy is important and that students need foundational skills in technology in order to function in society (Larson, 2013). SpringBoard is the College Board's official Pre-AP curriculum for all students in grades 6-12. The curriculum is described as rigorous in instruction and is meant to prepare students for advanced placement and college level work (SpringBoard, 2016). As this was my first year utilizing the online version of SpringBoard, I needed to thoroughly examine how different and how helpful the adjustments would be for my students and myself. SpringBoard is one of the latest curriculum creations of College Board and is being utilized in many schools in the Orange County school district. CollegeBoard boasts that it "provides a customizable pathway integrating rigorous instruction, performance based assessment, and exemplary professional learning" (SpringBoard, 2016). SpringBoard (2016) notes they have found correlation between the program and the Common Core State Standards. Together, with the Common Core ideals, the SpringBoard curriculum, which is a resource or tool for teachers, and should assist in addressing the "who" and "how" that is needed to help students meet proficiency levels for state assessments.

How does it work?

This year, while analyzing the online version of the SpringBoard curriculum and its digital, I was impressed with the elements it had to offer; however, I developed some concerns as well. At first glance, SpringBoard seemed quite intimidating to me, but it was much easier to use and navigate than I expected. The user interface or structure made it easy for me to grasp how to maneuver through the text. On the Dashboard, there is the Table of Contents area that is hyperlinked to the units in the text. Each unit has multiple activities and assessments readily available to the students. The Bookshelf for each grade contains icons to the left of each grade level to help users better maneuver through the curriculum. The 7th Grade SpringBoard Curriculum includes a bubble to send Messages to students as well as a Table of Contents showing the different units and the assignments required for all the units for that grade level. There is one feature that I felt was very significant to me and my counterpart and me when planning the lessons for class: the *Map icon*. This icon enabled us to identify different Florida State Standards and find the assignments in SpringBoard that correlates with them. This icon allowed us to ensure that the assignments we were giving that day were appropriate based on standards that were to be addressed based on the lesson plan. For certain assignments, students are asked to type their answers; the teacher can then grade and make comments for each individual.

This online curriculum is designed to efficiently run on any device students or teachers have, whether it is an interactive whiteboard, a Promethean board, a laptop, a desktop, or a tablet with Internet access. At the beginning of the school year, each student is given a laptop computer that provides access to the SpringBoard text. The student's edition of SpringBoard is a little different from the Teacher version, which includes answers for some of the questions and allows the teacher to manipulate lessons, create exam questions, and communicate

with students. It also suggests pacing for the students and offers teaching steps to guide learning and provide assessment when necessary. The student version of the text allows students to use interactive tools that help them to stay focused and engaged. They also can make edits to their own work, as well as write, rewrite, or delete in many assignments in each unit. The students have access to sticky notes, highlighters, click-definitions and audio play for the poems and stories in each unit. They then have the opportunity to save their own notebook work, so answers that they have inputted in their assignments can be reviewed or graded. The students are given the opportunity to look at different learning strategies to see their definitions and functions, and there are extended assignments in an Independent Reading Link. As the classroom teacher, I was able to give real-time feedback and instantly message my students when we had something to discuss. Additionally, I could evaluate their assignments and add notes or any other markups necessary, either to individual student for my entire classroom.

How can we use it in class?

This year, before taking the Florida State Assessment (FSA) Writes test, students had to practice writing in multiple capacities. SpringBoard gave multiple opportunities for the students to practice their writing to help in their preparation for the FSA writing test. One example of how SpringBoard works to prepare the students for this writing test is with the writing assignments that are included in the curriculum. I was captivated by how the writing opportunities were set up for the students.   The information contained in SpringBoard is mostly nonfiction text, and the writings are intended to engage with such increase opportunities to engage with such texts. The students can even print out assignments, and a teacher who is trained would be able to look past what might seem messy or confusing about the writing assignments given in each unit and activity. The writing activities allowed us to write and read, brainstorm, and use graphic organizers, as well as give and get feedback. They give the students the opportunity to cultivate ideas, and they empower students to enhance their writing

skills. The activities are intended to be engaging, and include many nonfiction stories that are relatable to the students.

ESOL Students and Accommodations

With students having to learn in a media-saturated world, this new literacy has to be embraced in all aspects of academia. Online comprehension forces readers to do some forms of research, construct meaning from online texts, and gain knowledge as they are reading, as well as evaluate, synthesize, and read to communicate information (Leu et al., 2013). SpringBoard proved to be helpful to me this school year, because in each unit there are expository writing prompts that allow the students to practice: argumentative, narrative and expository writing. I found it helpful that there were charts and graphic organizers that could be utilized to draft ideas and to create organization based on the information that was previously read. These graphic organizers aided students in preparing for whatever prompt was to come after reading. I have even heard some assessors say that the best practices of the "Writer's Workshop" will be destroyed because they believe it will not fit into the measurable data that the Florida State Assessment requires. I must admit that some of the language can be considered difficult for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Some assignments ask the students to create a graphic organizer of the writing process, which might deter them from the engaging, authentic writing that is required for 7th graders. Words such as "persona" "coherent" and even "recursive" are repeated through each unit learning goals and objectives, and some students were unable to make connections with what was required of them. At one point they were asked to "Write a draft to develop points in the preliminary organizational structure." Many were confused by this, and felt frustrated trying to figure out who the audience was as they wrote. Some teachers felt the students were pushed to master something they could not understand, despite the fact that

the point was *not* to confuse the students, or make them write like scholars; the point was to get them to write effectively. Even struggling readers who are not an ESOL students may find parts of the Writing Workshop daunting or even intimidating, which stunts their willingness to try and excel at writing. On the other hand, one advanced ESOL student expressed that it was easier for her to use the curriculum because the graphic organizers were helpful. She appreciated that her writing assignments were based on information that previously was chunked before they were to write. She noted that she found it accommodating that the writing prompts provided some ideas of items that must be included in the final product (e.g. topic sentence, transitions, supporting details etc.). She enjoyed maneuvering from unit to unit, because it was easy for her and she knew what to do most times. Another student, on the other hand, noted that he needed help when he was given instruction about how to move from one area of the text to the next: For him along with many others, SpringBoard was challenging.

What about the Standards?

State standards addressed in many Springboard lessons to help teachers plan their instruction. The curriculum gives teachers the opportunity to create lesson plans with differentiated instruction in mind. Although many standards are connected to the lessons in SpringBoard, some do not correctly correlate with the lessons provided. SpringBoard cannot address some standards, which leaves the teacher to research and find other lessons and materials to serve as appropriate supplements. This process has the potential interrupt the flow of the lessons in each unit, depending on the level and the capabilities of the students in each class. Those missing standards should be added because compilations of all the standards are necessary to allow the students to be better-rounded. By itself, SpringBoard cannot meet the level of each student, but with supplements and a teacher who is vigorous in deliberate practice, the students will have the ability to engage in learning activities that provide rich and effective lessons.

SpringBoard was not meant to be scripted it was designed to be adapted and customized by teachers based on the needs of their students (SpringBoard, 2016). It is meant to be supportive and to encourage educators to creative with the materials and strategies given.

Implications

Alber (2013) explains that the understanding of technology tools is a key to being a proficient reader and writer in the 21st century. This review was my personal experience with SpringBoard in the 2015-2016 school year. My school district and my school chose to use SpringBoard as the curriculum, because they felt it was adequate to meet the needs of all learners and would allow students to work to improve their abilities. After my personal assessment, I discovered that all students should be given equal opportunities to advance themselves. These students have the capability to handle the changes happening in literacy, and they are willing to try if given the opportunity. Further, society has been adamant that low students achievement is due to poor competence of the teachers and a lack of rigor in their lessons. Teachers need to be properly trained properly and receive professional development so that they can learn how to address the needs of a wide range of learners in the classroom. They need the skills to give each student the opportunity to demonstrate and increase achievement. Teachers need to be equipped and aware, because they will become the orchestrators of learning context instead of dispensers of literacy skills (Baker, 2010). Teachers do have to realize however that because children's learning is connected to their background and culture, educators must find digital ways to make connections for them. Although teacher plays a large role, they are not the only one responsible for student learning. The community and parents are also responsible for encouraging diversity and 21st century attempts at acquiring knowledge in the classroom. I also learned that the semiotic

systems in place on digital texts are potentially helpful; they allow students to be more engaged than when using offline texts.

Some practical suggestions from a teacher who has experienced and used SpringBoard would be for teachers take the time to practice your own skills with utilizing the programs. There are so many hidden tools that many teachers did not get the opportunity to use them with their students because they did not take the time to explore the program prior to lessons in class. It is a great idea to use SpringBoard and its Online Community as a professional resource to connect with other teachers on lesson ideas, which might include writing and grammar. It is important to know that each class might have a vast range of knowledge on how to utilize digital tools in an academic setting. With this in mind, it might be important when using a digital curriculum to do mini lessons on how to productively proceed through the program. While some teachers might not do this, I found that teaching foundational skills is mandatory. These skills allow students the opportunity to effectively navigate and be successful at intended tasks. Digital citizenship is also a topic many teachers forget to address or do not feel the need to address with their students, but it is vital when allowing students to explore and engage with others online. It is important to know that respecting oneself and others even when online allows for digital elevation in the educational setting.

Conclusion

The decision to incorporate SpringBoard in my school's curriculum was made by the school district. Although this digital curriculum has many advantages, I still have questions about its applicability in a culturally diversity learning environment and its supports for addressing the needs of all students. Many teachers and students may feel uncomfortable with the digital literacy skills and abilities needed for using a digital curriculum. Digital curricula can help educators embrace new educational possibilities about preparing students to learn and work in a technologically advanced world.

References

R. (2013, January 21). Deeper learning: Defining twenty-first century literacy. Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/blog/twenty-first-century-literacy-deeper-learning-rebecca-alber.

E.A., Pearson, P.D., & Rozendal, M.S. (2010). Theoretical perspective and literacy studies: An exploration of roles and insights. In E.A. Baker (Ed.), *The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice* (pp. 1-22). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

J. (2011). Predicting reading comprehension on the Internet contributions of offline reading skills, online reading skills, and prior knowledge. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *43*(4), 352-392.

bring, T.S. (2010). Reading proficiency, the struggling reader, and the role of technology. In E.A. Baker (Ed.), *The New literacies: Multiple Perspectives on Research and Practice* (pp. 23-40). New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

, S. (2014). Kids need to learn digital literacy—not how to code. Retrieved from http://readwrite.com/2014/09/08/learn-to-code-digital-literacy

D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J., Castek, J., & Henry, L. A. (2013). New literacies: A dual-level theory of the changing nature of literacy, instruction, & assessment. . In D.E. Alvermann, N.J. Unrau, & R.B Ruddell (Eds.), Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading (6th ed.)(pp. 1150-1181). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Board. (2016, June 1). Retrieved from http://springboardprogram.collegeboard.org/

Lorna Kesner

21st Centuries Literacy Forum

Introduction

In February 2014, the Florida State Board of Education approved the Florida Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts for full implementation in grades K–12 in the 2014–2015 school year. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop and administer new statewide assessments. The Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) transitioned to replace the Florida Comprehensive Assessment (FCAT) in the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, this is the third year of the FSA assessments.

The school where I work, Apollo Elementary School, is comprised of kindergarten through sixth-grade with a population of over 800 students nestled in a suburban neighborhood on the east coast of Central Florida near the Kennedy Space Center in Brevard County. Due to the past economic events resulting from the recession on the Space Coast, Apollo Elementary School shifted to a Title I school with federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education serving low-income students. Currently, Apollo Elementary has a 70% free and reduced lunch rate and a minority rate of 44%. Apollo Elementary held an "A" school grade for 11 years consecutively from the 2003-2004 school year until 2014. In 2014-2015, the school grade dropped to a "B" status and continued this grade for the 2015-2016 school year.

Upon looking through the digital literacy lens, a problem at my organization, Apollo Elementary, is that the students in grades 4-6 are not sufficiently prepared to take the 2017 Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). The end goal in mind is for all fourth through sixth-grade students to be adequately prepared to take the 2017 Florida Standards

Assessment (FSA) in the spring at Apollo Elementary School. The topic for review with the 21st-century literacies forum is to examine the digital tools that accompany the 2017 Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). The area of focus will be on the English Language Arts (ELA) component of the computer-based testing in grades 4-6. The transition from paper-based to computer-based testing with the Florida Standards Assessment has created new prerequisite skills for students to learn prior to the state assessments. Students in grades 4-6 must address learning the content material for the ELA with companion digital tools simultaneously in a timed format. A specific area of interest is with online research and comprehension, one of the lower case literacy theories to read and identify important questions to solve and respond (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castik, and Henry, 2013).

Description

The portal for the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) offers students access to practice tests with online digital tools for the ELA. This past year, a website link was sent out in the school newsletter with the intent for students to go online to take the FSA practice tests at home. The teachers also had the students practice taking the practice FSA assessments on the computers for additional practice with the digital tools in grades 4-6.

The global menu with navigation buttons is displayed at the top of the toolbar for students to access. A context menu is available to students for each reading passage or test item as noted in the Florida Standards Assessments Quick Guide

2016-2017 (2016). A keyboard navigation is a tool for shortcuts on the keyboard along with a help button for students to use. There are 15 online tools made available to students for the Florida Standards Assessment with the ELA component.

According to Hasselbring (2010), deliberate practice, the three stages of memory, and the role of technology are crucial for automaticity and fluency in reading. The deliberate practice provides activities to maximize student learning "just beyond one's level of competence" (Hasselbring, p. 26, 2010). In order for students to reach higher levels of automaticity and fluency, there needs to be feedback and repetition at higher levels (Hasselbring, 2010). The information on working memory that students should be limited to three to seven items for ages 5 to 14 could be applied to learning online. This concept explains how the alphabetic principle and decoding have caused students to have lower levels of proficiency in reading. The Fluency and Automaticity through Systematic Teaching with Technology (FASTT) model to store information in long-term memory in chunks was quite an impressive research finding to discover.

Examples

The FASTT model is implemented through technology with a specific set of procedures in place to develop automatic recall of information for all learners (Hasselbring, 2010).   There are six instructional procedures to follow with the FASTT model. First, the learner's level of automaticity and speed are determined. Second, a small instructional set is stored in long-term memory. The, expanding of recall presentation is utilized. Next, a structured response time is used by the student. Feedback with corrections is made available when errors arise. Lastly, information of the store information in long-term memory is reinforced through practice (Hasselbring, 2010). Students could apply these same strategies as mentioned in the FASTT Model in learning how to utilize the online digital tools for the FSA with the ELA component.

Summary & Implications

If students use a focused disciplinary base, the semiotics of multimodal online media can scaffold electronic support for learning the online digital tools as noted by Castik, Zawilinski, McVerry, O'Byrne and Leu (2007). Electronic organizational tools can benefit students, especially struggling readers with support to locate the responses in the reading passages quickly. A notepad can be populated in one of the windows to organize thoughts while reading. Another way to locate information is through the highlighter to find pertinent information in a reading passage. The line reader is a tool to highlight single lines of text to support the online reader. A tutorial video is offered to students from the context menu to navigate the reading passage. A semiotic perspective is embedded in the online digital tools through sign and symbols throughout the FSA ELA testing. Students can make meaning from recognizing the signs and symbols as a developmental schema for literacy. This is especially helpful if the student is below grade level in reading (Labbo and Ryan, 2010). The student needs to have the new material broken down into meaningful units at their optimal level for short-term memory. It is recommended that teachers adapt to the new materials structured to the learner, not the teacher best mode of instruction (Nokelainen, 2006). Immediate and encouraging feedback by a human is also recommended to increase learning motivation and to understand the problem at hand (Nokelainen, 2006). The feedback from a computer is rarely valuable to the student to support learning (Nokelainen, 2006). The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (2005) offers support with basic computing skills such as learning keyboard skills, which can support learning the online digital tools.

Lastly, the traditional methods of teaching reading and writing should remain in place with hard paper and pencil in my opinion. There can be a blended curriculum to support the shift of digital literacies to the 21st century for integration with technology and use of traditional methods of reading pedagogies. Clearly, there needs to be significant research conducted to support the online learner with learning how to implement the digital tools for the FSA ELA testing. Teachers need specific professional development on how to best instruct using the digital instruments for the reading passages with online learning.

References

Castik, J., Zawilinski, L., McVerry, G., O'Byrne, I., & Leu, D. J. (2007). The new literacies of online reading comprehension: New opportunities and challenges for students with learning difficulties. In C. Wyatt-Smith, J. Elkins, & S. Gunn (Eds). Multiple perspectives on difficulties in learning literacy and numeracy. (pp. 1-21). New York, NY: Springer.

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. (2005). Retrieved from http://www.ctdlc.dorg/remediation/type.html

Florida Department of Education Computer-Basted Testing. (2016). Retrieved from http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/computer-based-testing.stml

Florida Standards Assessments. (2016). Retrieved from http://fsassessments.org/resources/

Florida Standards Assessments Quick Guide 2016-2017. (2016). Retrieved from http://fsassessments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FSA-Practice-Test-Quick-Guide_FINAL.pdf

Future Ready Schools. (2016). Retrieved from http://futureready.org

Hasselbring, T. S. (2010). Reading proficiency, the struggling reader, and the role of technology. In E. Baker (Ed.). The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice. (pp. 23-40). New York: Guilford Press.

Labbo, L.D., & Ryan, T. (2010). Traversing the "literacies" landscape. In E. Baker (Ed.). The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice. (pp. 88-105). New York: Guilford Press.

Lackner. C. (2014, October 18). The digital classroom: Innovative design helps students relax and focus (with video). Ottawa Citizen. Retrieved from http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/the-digital-classroom

Leu, D.J., Kinzer, C.K., Coiro, J. L., Castik, J., & Henry, L. A. (2013). New literacies: A dual-level theory of the changing nature of literacy, instruction, & assessment. In D.E. Alvermann, N.J. Unrau & R. B. Ruddell. (Eds.). Theoretical models and processes of reading (6th ed.) (pp. 1150-1181). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Nokelainen, P. (2006). An empirical assessment of pedagogical usability criteria for digital learning material with elementary school students. Journal Of Educational Technology & Society, 9(2), 178-197. Retrieved from https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=85866426&site=eds-live&scope=site

Adam Ulenski

Teacher Perceptions of the Integration of Digital Literacies in a Literacy Block

Introduction

As an elementary school-based literacy coach, technology has been a topic of discussion among the educators in my building. This discussion stems from the faculty's realization that the students in our classrooms use various technology platforms in every aspect of their lives. Many students use it to play games, text message, listen to music, post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram… the list could go on and on. Teachers see the use of technology and digital platforms as a way to get students involved with learning. They see their ~~own~~ students playing games for hours on end and think, "how can we get them (the students) to read and write for equal amounts of time with the same interest and determination?"

This question is worth exploring because my school district in Central Florida recently adopted I-Ready® as their instructional technology component for students in grades K-8. In addition, my school and several others have adopted MyOn® as another digital resource for our students. Through the use of technology, classroom teachers and district administrators hope to engage students in learning with passion and stamina. Over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, the district and my school began implementing these digital platforms in classrooms with the expectation that classroom teachers will utilize these resources. As the literacy coach in the school, I have provided initial professional development for teachers with I-Ready® and MyOn® platforms

Teachers' perceptions of these programs, thoughts about the benefits, barriers, and suggestions for integration in the classroom were collected through professional dialogue. This article will highlight how three classroom teachers from different grade levels perceive the use of digital platforms, I-Ready®, and MyOn®, for supporting student literacy development. Additionally, their discussion provides insight into the ways to support the integration of digital literacy into everyday literacy instruction.

Digital Platforms

I-Ready®

Teachers at my school have been experimenting with the use of the I-Ready® online learning platform for reading instruction since August, 2015. Classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade have had the past year to integrate this digital learning platform into their literacy block. Initially, students take a reading diagnostic assessment that is adaptive to their responses, serving up a higher-level question in the same domain in response to correct answers, or giving a lower level question in the same domain in response to incorrect answers. According to the staff developers of the program, this enables the assessment to pinpoint where the student should be placed along a grade level continuum for instructional lessons. After the diagnostic, the student is placed into the instructional component of the program. I-Ready® focuses on six domains in reading; phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, comprehension of literature, and comprehension of informational text (Curriculum Associates, 2016). The student can advance in each area by scoring at least 70 percent on lessons, passing a progress monitoring assessment, or demonstrating improved proficiency in that area on a new diagnostic. Several areas in the reading component of the I-Ready® program extend up to twelfth grade such as; vocabulary, comprehension of literature, and comprehension of informational text.

MyOn®

MyOn® is a tablet based platform for reading digital text. Students are given an assessment to determine their Lexile level before they can begin accessing text. Once a student's Lexile level has been determined, they can begin reading digital versions of texts within their Lexile range (MyOn®, 2016). The program allows for students to take Accelerated Reader® (Renaissance Learning, 2016) quizzes on the books they have read, but this is not mandatory. MyOn® is intended to provide students with a rich library of books for independent reading. The library consists of over 5,000 digital capstone books which are texts that also appear on traditional library shelves. The texts that appear in this digital platform were not created for just this program; they are a substitution, as explained in the SAMR model for technology (Romrell, Kidder, & Wood, 2014), of the print version that appeared in bookstores and libraries. In addition, students can select digital texts based on their interests such as; sports, mystery, or animals. After a period of time, students are prompted with a mini-assessment to determine their new Lexile level. The program suggests new texts and allows the child to access additional pieces of digital literature based on the new Lexile level.

Teacher Dispositions Towards Digital Literacy

Three classroom teachers from different grade levels discussed their experiences with MyOn® and I-Ready®. Each teacher shared their perceptions of each program including; what they like about the digital platform,

any barriers they have experienced as they use it in their classrooms, and their suggestions for other teachers for integrating these digital literacy platforms.

I-Ready ®

A kindergarten teacher perceives the integration of I-Ready® in the classroom as problematic. She stated that she is not a fan of this digital literacy platform. One problem is that her students have a difficult time logging into the program. Another issue she has observed is that many of her students click through the instruction to get to the games and "brain break" activities. This teacher also thinks that some of the material is difficult for her students. She said that she would like additional training to better understand how she and her students can implement I-Ready® more successfully. Coiro (2012) suggests that any teacher training should be planned across multiple short settings, allowing the teacher to experiment with the technology in a risk-free environment. The short sessions suggested by Coiro would provide this teacher with more interaction and a better understanding of the program. The kindergarten teacher suggests is that if a teacher wants to use this digital literacy platform, it should be introduced through whole group lessons and then used in centers for independent practice. Also, the teacher recommends having a class usage competition to motivate students to use the program more at home.

A third grade teacher commented that she thinks the program is "awesome". She sees I-Ready® as a digital tool to help students focus on literacy standards. This teacher said she felt as if she was in survival mode during the first year of implementation because there are many different features of the program and a wide variety of different data reports. She also said she wants to focus on the program more next year. The teacher explained that the advantage of I-Ready® is students work at their own pace based on their specific needs as determined by the diagnostic assessment. She recognizes that the plethora of data is useful as a teacher, however she expressed frustration with having too much data at the beginning of the year. Stating, "It was a lot to pine through." This third grade teacher explained that there are barriers for integrating the program into her literacy block. These barriers are a lack of interest by her students and she also sees the games as a distraction. She suggests that future teachers should set expectations for their students, analyze the reports, and make instructional decisions based on the reports from I-Ready®.

The fifth grade teacher perceived the I-Ready® digital instructional platform as an additional instructional resource. She explained that it is a way to add on to the reading standards they were teaching in class. However, the fifth grade teacher explained that she perceive the program as a way to help balance classroom teacher and computer-based instruction. This was possible through small group instruction or independent practice. This teacher noted that fidelity was important in her eyes because it

related to student growth. One of the reasons she complimented I-Ready® was because it provided students with short lessons and intermittent games to keep the student's attention. Castek, Zawilinksi, McVerry, O'Byrne, and Lue (2011) noted in a study that shorter texts and multimedia features supported meaning construction of online text among struggling readers. The short lessons imbedded in I-Ready® would benefit struggling readers in constructing meaning of online text. In addition, this fifth grade teacher felt that the program was a good digital resource for students because it kept track of their progress as soon as you logged in. The fifth grade classroom teacher expressed that there were some barriers integrating I-Ready® in the literacy instructional block. She stated that there were not enough computers and there was a need for the whole class to engage with the program at the same time. Her reasoning for this was because many students did not always get a chance each week to engage with this digital literacy platform. Additionally, the teacher expressed the need for further professional development and wanted to learn how to run reports to understand the needs of her students. This fifth grade teacher explained that if other teachers were to use this digital literacy resource she recommended going to a computer lab once a week so every student could access it. As well as, she recommended for teachers to login and show students how to use the tools and navigate the program before they begin. Northrop and Killeen (2013) suggested using the gradual release of responsibility framework for introducing and teaching students how to use digital tools and platforms. Teachers that use the gradual release framework would have opportunities to model, provide feedback, and support the use of digital texts and tools independently. Finally, she recommended giving rewards or having a competition for using the program in school and at home.

MyOn®

MyOn® was perceived very well by the kindergarten teacher. She liked that she could pull up a large variety of books on different topics. She thought it was a strong digital resource for texts related to science content. Kiili, Makinen, and Coiro (2013) noted that a multidimensional framework of five domains in academic digital literacies can be embedded into content area teaching coupled with feedback and peer dialogue would build disciplinary knowledge. The kindergarten teacher used the digital texts for science and writing primarily through read a louds. She explained that the texts were too hard for most of her kindergarten students. In addition, she felt that the login was a barrier for integrating this digital platform into her classroom. She believed she needed additional training in using this program with her students and needed to learn

more about how her students should have utilized MyOn®. This kindergarten teacher suggested that if a teacher were to integrate MyOn® into the classroom at the lower grades then it should be through whole group lessons and taking the quizzes together as a class. She explained, that her students wrote the answers to the quizzes on white boards.

A third grade teacher vocalized that she thought the MyOn® program was "awesome". She explained that from her point of view it was a great digital literacy tool that got her students excited about reading. She felt it made it easy for kids to access lots of text if they could not make it to a library. The third grade teacher explained that MyOn® was a good digital literacy tool because it leveled digital books by Lexile and guided reading levels. In addition, she expressed that the digital texts were highly accessible and students took comprehension quizzes after reading each book. She thought that the progress charts were useful to her as a teacher to track how well students were doing with online reading. This third grade teacher expressed that it was difficult to integrate this digital literacy tool because of a lack of classroom computers and tablets. Also, she said a barrier for using the program was that students mostly wanted to read graphic novels instead of other text. It was difficult to monitor this issue on the spot. The third grade teacher suggested that future teachers should set expectations with their students about what to focus on in reading, how many books they should be reading, and their interest.

A fifth grader teacher expressed that she "loved" the MyOn® program and that her students felt the same way. She perceived the program as a way to get students to read lots of text and to enjoy reading. She said, "it's a friendly way to get them (students) to read." Additionally, the fifth grade teacher perceived that her students were more engaged with MyOn® than any other digital literacy platform that was being used in the classroom. She explained that it provided a variety of resources, students can read any text they are interested in, and it had mini assessments, as the many reasons why she favored the program. However, she mentioned that she was not able to access reports and interpret them to gauge student progress as barriers to using it regularly in her classroom. She explained her hesitation for letting students use iPads without knowing if they are actually reading. As a result, the fifth grade teacher recommended that if other teachers were to use MyOn® then, students should have a writing task about the books they have read. Also, she recommended showing the students how to login and access books. The fifth grade teacher suggested sending home flyers to parents explaining how to access the program at home and offering rewards to students for completed work. Roswell, Kress, Phal, and Street (2015) explained that reading is linked to the landscape that it existed within. This means, that the home life and the cultural norms of the family or community impact the literacy practices of children. As such, this teacher's suggestion is to help build a culture of literacy at home by helping family members understand how their child can access digital literacies in any environment.

Summary

Overall, the three teachers expressed positive perceptions of the use of multimodal texts in the classroom. Each of the teachers elaborated on the use of digital platforms for reading online texts in various settings, either whole group or in centers. In addition, all of the teachers discussed their perceived high level of interest among students in using at least one of these online platforms. Roswell, Kress, Pahl, and Street (2013) vocalized prolonged engagement with digital texts offered experiences in developing a strong understanding of how to read digital literature. Students that are interested in any of the three digital platforms would be engaged with digital literacy longer and would eventually develop an understanding of how to read digital texts.

The three teachers explained that they liked that the various digital platforms offered a large variety of online text for their students to read or to be read to. In addition, the teachers favored the use of digital instructional tools that met the student's needs and interests. The understanding of how and when to use digital tools is required for students to be proficient readers in the 21st century (Vasquez, Harste, & Albers, 2010). One of the repeated responses from teachers was the use of leveled texts or differentiated instruction in order to make sure students are working on appropriate text or working on appropriate literacy skills.

One of the biggest challenges expressed by teachers was the need for more computers and tablets. All of the teachers discussed that in order to integrate these digital literacy platforms further there would need to be more computers in the classroom or easy access to tablets. In addition, the variety of logins required were a challenge because some students forgot or mixed up their login information. This prevented some students from using the program independently.

All three teachers suggested using MyOn® and I-Ready® as literacy centers during the literacy instructional block. As well as, each teacher expressed using whole group instructional time to explain the programs and set expectations with students. Another repetitive recommendation was to encourage the use of classroom competitions to increase in school and at home usage. However, expectations and provisions must be explained to students to ensure that such usage is appropriate and adequate for their learning and not for winning a prize.

Implications

The need for continued professional development is clearly evident as teachers need support and guidance in integrating digital literacy platforms into their literacy instructional block. McKenna and Conradi (2010) explained that the role of the teacher would change and teachers need training in taking on their active role in developing digital literacy skills for students. The kindergarten teacher highlighted this notion as she expressed the desire to receive more professional development for the use of these digital literacy platforms.

Teachers seemingly have a strong grasp on the use of technology for center time or rotations. However, teachers need professional development in the area of integrating multimodal text and digital literacies into the areas of well-balance literacy framework as outlined by Fountas and Pinnell (1996); read a-louds, shared reading, choral reading, guided reading, interactive reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Providing teachers training on using digital platforms in the areas of well-balanced literacy provides teachers with ways to imbed new literacies into work they are already doing as teachers. Mikulecky (2012) suggested that the best way to train teachers is to mirror the training after the tasks that teachers are expected to perform in the classroom. Teachers need support in using multimodal texts in these areas of reading and writing as called for by the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association, 2010) and as students are assessed by different states through the use of computers. The need to train teachers in using digital platforms such as MyOn® and I-Ready®, can help teachers integrate digital text into a child's literacy learning and research has hinted that struggling readers may perform better with online texts (Castek, Zawilinski, McVerry, O'Byrne, & Lue, 2011).

In addition, there is a resounding voice in the need for school leadership teams to discuss the ability in increasing the accessibility to the tools used for digital literacy. These teams need to strategically decide on ways to purchase and disseminate technology resources such as computers and tablets. A plan should be developed by the school-based leadership team for the integration of any digital literacy platform. The plan should include, but not be limited to funding, student access, teacher access, integration into curriculum, professional development of the program, and professional development of using the technology instrument. This is imperative in helping teachers and students develop 21st century literacy skills.

References

Castek, J., Zawilinski, L., McVerry, G., O'Byrne, I., & Lue, D.J. (2011). The new literacies of online reading comprehension: New opportunities and challenges for students with learning difficulties. In C. Wyatt-Smith, J. Elkins, & S. Gunn (Eds.) *Multiple perspectives on difficulties in learning literacy and numeracy* (91-110). New York, NY: Springer.

Coiro, J., & Moore, D. W. (2012). New literacies and adolescent learners: An interview with Julie Coiro. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 55(6), 551-553.

Curriculum Associates. (2016). *Ready Florida Overview.* Retrieved June 02, 2016, from http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/ready-florida-overview.aspx

Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kiili, C., Makinen, K., & Coiro, J. (2013). Rethinking academic literacies: Designing multi-faced academic experiences for pre-service teachers. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Liteacey, 57(3), 223-232.

McKenna, M.C., & Conradi, K. (2010). Can behaviorist and constructivist applications coexist in the new literacies? In E. Baker (Eds.) *The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Mikulecky, L. (2010). An examination of workplace literacy research from new literacies and sociocultural perspectives. In: The New Literacies: Multiple Perspectives on Research and Practice. Baker, E.A. (Ed). Guilford Press, New York.

MyON. (2016). Retrieved June 02, 2016, from https://www.myon.com/

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers (NGAC and CCSSO). 2010. *Common core state standards.* Washington, DC: NGAC and CCSSO.

Northrop, L., & Killeen, E. (2013). A framework for using iPads to build early literacy skills. The Reading Teacher, 66(7), 531-537.

Renaissance Learning. (2016). *Accelerated Reader.* Retrieved June 02, 2016, from http://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader

Roswell, J., Kress, G., Pahl, K., & Street, B. (2013). The social practice of multimodal reading: A new literacy studies- multimodal perspective on reading. In D.E. Alvermann, N.J. Unrau, & R. B. Ruddell (Eds.), Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading (6th ed.) (pp.1150–1181). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Vasques, V., Harste, J.C., & Albers, P. (2010). From the personal to the worldwide web: Moving teachers into positions of critical interrogation. In E. A. Baker (Ed.), The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on