Chapter 11
New Demands of Reading in the Mobile Internet Age

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ABSTRACT

Changing contexts of literacy in the mobile Internet age demands that readers use higher-order strategies to identify, understand, and evaluate numerous web sources. Sophisticated use of these strategies is a hallmark of competent readers, who are able to make informed decisions about their own reading in the unknown, untested information space on the Internet. The focus of this chapter is on these new demands of reading in Internet settings. The chapter begins by describing changing views of texts and evolving understandings of reading in the digital world. It then describes the core reading strategies that contribute to successful reading in Internet settings, including text location, meaning construction, critical evaluation, and metacognitive monitoring. Conclusions are drawn regarding considerations for designing instruction that fosters students' higher-order reading strategies in the mobile Internet age.

PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

The Internet is central to understanding 21st century literacies, as people read, write, and think with the Internet on a daily basis for a variety of purposes—information gathering, knowledge construction, or personal enjoyment (Alexander & Disciplined Reading and Learning Research Laboratory, 2012; Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Goldman et al., 2010). The Internet is already one of the most worldwide, popular media in our lives (for Internet usage statistics, see Internet World Stats www.internetworldstats.com). Due to mobile devices (e.g., E-Readers, tablet computers, or smartphones), the Internet is becoming even more accessible. Mobile devices lead to the revolutionary change that spurs the use of the Internet as students' primary and central resource for learning in and out of school settings (Brenner, 2012; Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, & Smith, 2007; Lenhart, Simon, & Graziano, 2001).

Changing tasks and contexts of literacy necessarily demand that readers acquire and use the appropriate strategies to identify and interpret numerous web sources and the mindsets to consciously reflect on text, meaning, and the self

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(Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; Rand Reading Study Group, 2002). An opportunistic use of these strategies and mindsets is a hallmark of competent readers who actively construct their own environments for learning within this digital world (Burbules & Callister, 1996; Leu et al., 2011). Furthermore, as mobile devices increase temporal and physical affordances of Internet access, such mobility asks equally increased demands of Internet reading. Internet reading practices are pervasive in multiple dimensions of human life in this mobile age, and thus student readers should become adept at making informed decisions about their reading in the unknown, untested information space on the Internet (Afflerbach & Cho, 2009; Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

While ubiquitous Internet access is one of the most notable benefits brought by mobile technologies, the efficacy of mobile tool use is diminished when students fail to perform sophisticated strategic actions for learning with the Internet. In effect, many children and adolescents, often characterized as digital natives with high proficiencies in mobile technology use, experience struggles in the strategic processing of the complex digital texts mediated through these technologies (OECD, 2011; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Purcell, 2011). Research shows that students possess the basic skills needed to find factual information for simple information location tasks but lack strong development of higher-order thinking strategies to interpret, integrate, and evaluate information across multiple digital sources and build their own understanding of the texts (e.g., Azevedo, Guthrie, & Seibert, 2004; Bilal, 2001; Goldman et al., 2012; Fidel et al., 1999). This disparity, found among many student readers, indicates the reason that international initiatives in education reflect these new demands of reading in their curriculum and assessment (e.g. *PISA 2012 Assessment and Analytical Framework*, OECD, 2013; *PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework*, IEA 2009).

The increased attention to strategic reading in Internet contexts is also the case in the United States, as declared in the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). The standards incorporate educators' commitment to these new literacies in PK-12 grade-specific standards, in order for students to be prepared for life-long learning in the following manner:

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new (p. 6).

The ability to read and learn from multiple digital sources is the key ingredient of successful learning and social participation. It helps students learn complex concepts and subject matters from a variety of content area materials, and thus it significantly associates with student academic achievement. This literacy ability also helps students engage in the navigation and identification of various issues through textual resources and participate in a society as competent literate thinkers. When students are fully supported in their learning and use of higher-order strategies to manage complex digital texts, it can maximize the pedagogical affordances that mobile tools can bring in classrooms. Teachers in such classrooms acknowledge the intersections of content, pedagogy, and technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), at which mobile devices can become meaningful tools for students making progress toward content learning and literacy competence (Reinking, Labbo, & McKenna, 2000).

The focus of this chapter is on new demands of reading in mobile Internet settings, with the underlying premise that any educators interested in mobile pedagogy should take fundamentally