



Exactly How Technology Can Make Reading Better

Description

Reading is just the communication of ideas through alphanumeric symbols. I'm not sure what this represents such hallowed ground for teachers, but it does. Personally I'd be more concerned with reading habits, reasons for reading, the quality of reading materials, etc. Symbols change, forms change, media change. See the gif and memes and language and acronyms that become words and words that become metaphors again. This is your audience, and these are the symbols they gravitate towards.

With more personalization, more access, and more connectivity, we should be creating a generation of close-readers that can't get enough. So if we're not, the question is, why isn't that happening? The pieces are there.

Technology Makes Reading Better. Here's Exactly How.

1. Social readers are connected readers

Through apps with social components, readers can be connected through texts. Reading groups, reading contests, reasons for reading, book suggestions, building social credibility for the process of reading, and more are possible when reading is, at least on some level, a social act.

No, we don't always 'need to be connected.' This isn't an either/or circumstance, however. We can be alone with our book and then socialize our reaction to the book. We can get an idea for a book and then be alone to read, then socialize again after. We can 'socialize' an idea and gain background knowledge for a certain chapter in a book, then read alone and not 'socialize' at all after. The point is, we can choose who we don't and don't socialize with, when, and how.

We have the choice.

2. Adaptive learning algorithms can lead to personalization

With adaptive learning algorithms, readers can have the pace, diversity, complexity, and form of their reading materials personalized instantly.

3. Increased access & choice

Through digital storefronts, free eBooks, RSS feeds, social magazines, and more, there has never been a time where students had more content at their fingertips. Like this book using an eReader like Kindle or iBooks? Here are 25 just like it.

Also, here are 10 other authors that those who liked this book also liked.

And here are 750 reviews that you can sift through to get a feel for what other people think. And please, download a free sample of any book you'd like.

And it's easier than ever to publish, so while that means there's more garbage out there, there's also more variety. Fanfiction has exploded. If you can't find something you like, you're not trying.

4. Technology can distract, technology can focus

Technology can allow readers to annotate texts and share notes, which is physically interactive and 'social.' There are also apps—white noise apps, for example—that can block out class distractions, and more. Before you blame technology for 'distracting' students, make sure you're honest with yourself about how focused they were without the tech.

5. Technology makes learning easier

Let's break reading up into three separate categories: Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading.

During each of these times, readers have different needs.

Before Reading: A young reader starting a story set in a different culture may benefit from watching a YouTube video about that culture, or reading a quick Wikipedia overview about it.

During Reading: A high school student reading a poem may want to Google the literary allusions in that poem to make better sense of what they're reading.

After Reading: A PhD student may want to check previous studies by that study's authors to evaluate some claim being made—or to follow up on some other data point found in the study to learn more.

The point is, technology (used well) improves 'sensemaking.' No, it's not absolutely necessary in the same way that I don't need to drive a car to drive to Henry County, Kentucky. I could walk if I wanted—and there are benefits to walking. Cars aren't 'superior.' But because of that technology, I have the opportunity.

6. Analytics can personalize the mechanics of reading

Analytics can be, well, analyzed for the practice of reading—time spent reading, how often readers clicked on certain words, etc. I know this is vague. I'm not a reading specialist or an app developer. The point is that data can be used to keep all readers in their 'literacy sweet spot,' supporting struggling readers, challenging advanced readers, and offering choice to grade-level readers.

7. Texts can have their levels adjusted instantly

Take the data from #6, and you've got a powerful combination. This means less or more complex sentence structure, syntax, vocab, etc. Platforms like Epic reader and news-o-matic make it easier to match a reader to a text level, as do a variety of apps and desktop programs.

And using eReader apps, students can touch a word and get its definition instantly. Not that they necessarily will, mind you—close reading is still a matter of will. But they can.

8. Reading speed is more 'visible'

With apps that allow the practice of sight words, others created expressly to increase reading speed, and others that measure time spent reading, words read per minute, and more, more than ever reading speed is visible, and higher reading speeds generally translates to increased comprehension.

Category

1. Video & Tips

Tags

1. data science
2. tips

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