Digital Reading

What's Essential in Grades 3–8

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Principles in Practice

READING IN TODAY'S CLASSROOMS

Contents

Defining Digital Reading

Building an identity means coming to see in ourselves the characteristics of particular categories (and roles) of people and developing a sense of what it feels like to be that sort of person and belong in certain social situations.

—*Choice Words*, Peter Johnston

L ooking up from a reading conference to check in on how the class was doing during independent reading time, I (Franki) noticed two third-grade girls, Julia and Marissa, sitting side by side staring intently at their laptops, each having chosen to read online content for their day's reading. From afar, it looked as though both girls were engaged digital readers. They were focused on the screen, clicking around, seeming to know what they were doing—proficient in their ability to interact with this form of text. Five years ago I might have been satisfied with this scene, but recently I have come to learn that merely reading on a computer does not make a digital reader. From a distance, these two girls look to have similar skills, but when I take a closer look at their reading habits, I can identify big differences.

Watching Julia over time, I would identify her as a strong reader in this digital age because of her habits with a variety of texts. She owns a Kindle Fire and is intentional in her decisions about when she will read a book on her Kindle rather than in its traditional print form. Julia is willing to take risks when it comes to her reading, whether she is reading digitally or traditionally. She tries new genres, explores new tools, and works through any confusions. She is equally comfortable struggling with understandings in a longer print novel as she is with an online nonfiction article. I often see her sitting with an iPad in one hand and a dry-erase board or notebook in the other as she consistently finds the tools she needs to meet her purposes and shows flexibility in her choice of tool. She moves between traditional and digital devices with an ease that makes the device she chooses secondary to her goals as a reader. When reading online, Julia is intentional about deciding when to hit a link and further explore a topic and when to skip the link and just read on. In addition, Julia constantly shares her life as a reader and as a learner with me and her classmates, and the posts she composes on her Kidblogs blog are well crafted because she has spent time reading many blogs and learning from other writers—in other words, her online reading greatly influences her own writing. She regularly talks about what she reads, is always looking for new ways to capture her thinking, and, as she shows in her conversation and blog posts, is reflective about her reading life. She is part of a community of readers, and because of that she learns from others in order to grow herself.

Marissa, on the other hand, merely imitates many of Julia's behaviors. She *looks* like she knows what she is doing when she reads digitally, but with a closer look, I realize there is no intentionality. She randomly bops around the Internet, playing a game or skimming an article, but she doesn't seem to have a plan for where to go or a clear purpose when she is on a digital device. She doesn't seem to synthesize and think across texts, but she is clearly enamored with the technology. She has her own iPad and often carries it around so that she has immediate access to text, but she is unwilling to grab hold of a text and dig into it; rather, she interacts with most texts at a superficial level. Unlike Julia, Marissa is not intentional in her reading choices and often reads the most popular thing in the classroom at the time. She struggles in most areas, including comprehension, decoding, and stamina, regardless of the text, but because she uses the technology of the day, her classmates tend to see her as a fairly strong digital reader.

Julia and Marissa are very different in their approach to reading in the digital age. One has strong reading habits whereas the other disguises her habits as she imitates the actions of her classmates. One is flexible in her approach to a variety of texts whereas the other is more fixed in her habits. One is willing to take risks in her reading whereas the other chooses what is convenient and comfortable.

These two students are at different points in their reading journey, but both are influenced by the digital tools of the day. Their experiences point to the kinds of questions that teachers across the country are facing: How do we move students who are surface-level readers like Marissa to adopt the deeper reading habits of students like Julia? How do the reading skills and strategies that we've taught for years translate into a world and classroom where technology is as much a part of the culture as paper and pencil? These are questions that the two of us, a long-time elementary teacher (Franki Sibberson) and a district technology coordinator and former high school English teacher (Bill Bass), have focused on over the past several years. We explore these questions and others throughout these pages as we consider the implications of what it takes for students like Julia and Marissa to navigate reading in the digital age.

What Do We Know about Reading?

As we attempt to answer these questions, we must return to what we know to be true about reading and reading instruction. In 2012, NCTE released the *Reading Instruction for* All *Students* policy research brief, recognizing and helping to shape the current reality of reading in our schools. Through this brief, we are reminded that it's as important as ever for us to continue to match students with books that will help them to be successful and grow as readers, especially as the texts that students are reading continue to expand in scope and medium.

Along this same vein, the brief reminds us that it is important that we continue to recognize what years of research into reading and reading instruction tell us about our students as readers—even as we move into the digital age. As the policy brief states, we already know some significant things:

- Students come to reading tasks with varied prior reading experiences, or prior knowledge, which can support their reading of complex texts.
- Students who are engaged and motivated readers read more often and read more diverse texts than students who are unmotivated by the reading task.
- Students who develop expertise with a particular kind of reading—science fiction or online games, for example—outside of school may not think this kind of reading will be valued by their teachers. (NCTE, *Reading* ix; all page numbers for the research brief map to the version printed at the front of this book)

Each of these points gives us some insight into the reading lives of our students, but they can also challenge us as we think beyond the printed text and into the digital. How do these understandings of students as readers transfer to students who are reading in the digital age? How does it help us to know that our students' "prior reading experiences" include broad and multiple experiences with online

reading? How does digital reading impact student engagement and motivation? And does the particular expertise students develop in their out-of-school digital reading have a place in schools? Julia's reading habits, in particular, can give us insight: Julia is adept at moving between mediums and choosing her reading mode based on her reading goals. This comes with the experience of being introduced and encouraged to read various types of texts and calls on her prior experience to support her reading tasks. She is also a motivated reader who chooses texts that challenge her and push her thinking and reading skills. Finally, Julia is experienced with reading online texts, such as blogs, and sees them as a part of her reading life.

As we teachers look at the experiences of our own Julias and Marissas, we can see the many challenges in this shift to digital reading that we must recognize and address. Digital reading experiences must be a part of the opportunities we give students on a regular basis. If not, we're discounting much of the reading they will engage with in the future.

Bridging the Home and School Gap with Digital Reading

In October of 2013, Bill sat in on a number of student focus groups covering grades 3–12 convened to look at the role of technology in both their lives and their education. Their thoughts were not surprising: each group identified technology and the Internet as crucial for their current understanding and future work.

One student, Sara, recounted her experiences in the classroom and elaborated on feeling that school is leaving her ill prepared for her future challenges. Sara is an eighth grader who isn't doing particularly well in school. She has too many absences and doesn't always do her work, but according to both her and her teachers, her behavior is good, so, as she says, "adults leave me alone." Sara comes to school and "powers down." While students are allowed to bring their devices to school thanks to the district Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, none of her teachers allows student devices to be used in class because "they can't tell what we're doing on them and they don't trust us. Instead we have to use these old desktop and laptop computers the school gives us." This is a big deal for Sara, who, while acknowledging that not everyone will be responsible with technology and that many of her classmates have made poor choices, feels punished even though she hasn't broken that trust. For her, a big part of the disconnect between in-school and out-of-school literacies is simply access. She's an avid reader but most of her reading is done in ebooks and online—except when she's in school. At school she is distant because the class content seems stale. She is forced to read linearly rather than exploring what she's reading and making her own connections through the hyperlinked texts and multimedia of the Web. "If only I could get my phone or iPad out. Given ten minutes, I could find all the information in the

textbook and more. I can answer any question they ask because all [the questions] require is a Google search." Sara's final appeal to teachers arises from the research projects she does in class:

> The research that I have to do is completely contrived and is always on a topic that my teacher gives me. We go to the library, log in to the computers, and have exactly ninety minutes to gather all our research and then go write a paper. That doesn't give me enough time to really understand the topic. So what I do is just find my three sources or whatever my teacher wants, regurgitate some information, and then turn it in. I really don't know if he even reads it. What it comes down to is that my research in school is just going through the motions. I know that I do research every day, not just during the one or two class periods that my teacher can get us in the computer lab.

Sara's story isn't unique. She feels disconnected from her learning and her reading. She doesn't see the connections between her school and home reading lives because either the school readings lack intentionality or her teachers haven't fully made the connections for her. Her parting words as she left the focus group were, "I know school is important and I want to do well because that's what everyone expects of me. But if I really want to learn something, I do that outside of school."

The Changing Face of Literacy

Over the past five years, the world of technology has exploded, and as part of that explosion, everything connected to technology seems to be termed a *literacy*. Whether we're talking about digital literacy, information literacy, Web literacy, or tech literacy, we notice that all of these terms have one idea in common: literacy. So what does it actually mean to be literate in the digital age? What elements are common among all these literacies that we, as educators, can draw from and work with in a meaningful way? And how do we determine which of these elements are worth focusing on in our teaching and which we should ignore? (Because, let's face it, as teachers we know that every attempt to try something new in our classroom means we have to let something else go.) So how do we decide whether any new thing—especially any new thing concerning technology—has enough potential to try? How do we determine the best ways to use technology in order to teach reading in a digital age?

These questions and many others are also intrinsic to NCTE's *Reading Instruction for* All *Students* policy research brief, especially in its opening statement: "Reading instruction has always been stressed for elementary school students, but today it takes on increased importance for *all* grades. Reports like *Time to Act* and *Reading at Risk* raise concern about a lack of depth in the literacy education of adolescent students and lament a general decline in reading among young adults" (ix). Literacy instruction is paramount to the success of our students, yet we still

struggle with low literacy rates and questions about how to best prepare students for a world that hasn't yet been invented.

Increasing literacy rates, increasing the amount of reading students do, preparing students for a world that hasn't yet been invented—these are the dilemmas that literacy teachers face every single day. Layering on top of these dilemmas the multitude of digital tools available and waiting to be tried makes it all the more important for teachers to understand and articulate what our core beliefs are about literacy instruction and to remain true to them. As two experienced literacy educators, we believe we need to meet students in the digital world in which they live, but we need to do so in a way that is not solely about the technology. We need to find ways to encourage more students to become more like Julia, who uses technology as one of many tools toward becoming a flexible and competent reader, rather than remaining like Marissa, who perhaps sees the glitter of technology but doesn't necessarily know how to use it to become a competent reader.

A starting point for this work is to define what digital literacy actually is, and what it's not. In 2008 the NCTE Executive Committee created a definition of *21st century literacies* (see Figure 1.1) that helped to harness the idea that the digital age is upon us and to give educators direction for literacy instruction. Updated in 2013, this definition does not focus on technology as the driving force behind literacy, nor does it equate the two. What it does is create a distinct connection between the world of literacy and that of technology and digital age skills. This connection is not one that teachers can ignore.

Again, one of the things this definition does not do (which we firmly condone) is suggest that technology equals digital literacy. Just because students are "good" with technology does not necessarily mean they are literate in the digital age. Digital literacy is much more than that. As we work with students in the classroom, it's clear that students in grades 3–8 have spent a lot of time with technology. It's a part of them and their existence. As is often said, this generation has never known a world without computers, smartphones, and high-speed Internet. But even though they've internalized how to use technology, too many students still use it on a superficial level. They may know where their games are bookmarked or where their app folder is on a device, but they aren't necessarily digitally literate. This knowledge makes them technology users but certainly doesn't give them a deep understanding of how the tools work, what the best tool might be for a specific task, or even what other tools might be available—skills that are vital to becoming truly literate. It takes time and experience to become a true digital reader, to figure out where and when particular tools fit into the reading process; and as we've learned, there are plenty of traps along the way. In this book, we explore the experiences digital readers must have to be able to navigate the digital texts they will encounter, as well as the kinds of lessons teachers today must develop.

Figure 1.1. *The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies.*

Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the 21st century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities, and social trajectories of individuals and groups. Active, successful participants in this 21st century global society must be able to

- Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;

- Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so [as] to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;

- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;

- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;

- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;

- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

What Is Digital Reading?

As our understanding of digital literacy has evolved, it only makes sense that what we define as *digital reading* also evolves. But here's the dilemma: Teachers who have immersed themselves for many years in best practices research surrounding reading instruction and who have worked hard to create successful classroom experiences for children already have a good understanding of what it takes to teach someone to read and how to use research-based practices to inform reading instruction. For many teachers, connecting these deep understandings with current changes in technology creates a challenge. How do we help teachers keep true to what we know about the best ways of teaching students to read *and* introduce digital reading into the mix?

We agree with Kylene Beers and Robert Probst's statement about reading in their book *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading*: "The most rigorous reading is to find what those words on that page mean in our own lives" (42). We know this has always been true of all reading, and in this digital age, helping students find the meaning in their own lives becomes even more important. For our students to experience a reading life in which reading changes who they are and thus changes their worlds, our definition of reading in the classroom must expand. Although reading in the digital age still includes reading powerful novels, it must also include digital pieces and digital tools.

One thing we do know: we can't view digital reading as an add-on; in other words, we can't wait until a child is competent with traditional literacy skills and then expect the child to transfer those skills to digital text. It's not quite that easy. While there are clear overlaps between digital and traditional reading instruction, students also need specific experiences if they are to effectively navigate all types of texts and be active digital readers. If we focus only on traditional texts—or on traditional texts first—students will not magically develop these skills. Such skills must be fostered and taught, just as we foster and teach traditional strategies and skills (see Figure 1.2).

We believe that digital reading is a complex idea that has changed the way we interact with various texts. Unfortunately, digital reading is often defined in a narrow way that focuses on format of the text and *what* is being read. For example, Dalton and Proctor have identified four types of digital texts:

- *linear text in digital format*—ebooks and many PDFs are examples of this type of text in which the print version is simply made digital
- *nonlinear text with hyperlinks*—most webpages and blogs and text with links fall into this category
- *texts with integrated media*—another type of nonlinear text that includes video, audio, and interactive pieces to support the message of the work
- *texts with response options*—an invitation to join a discussion outside of the text in a discussion forum or other online community (300)

Although we agree that many examples of digital reading fall into one of these categories, we believe that digital reading is more than merely reading various types of digital text. The work of Dalton and Proctor has helped us begin to think about ways in which reading is changing, but we find the behaviors around these new texts to be most important. We don't want our students merely to be able to read and understand nonlinear texts. Instead, we want them to be intentional about

Figure 1.2. What digital reading is and isn't.

Digital Reading IS	Digital Reading IS NOT
ongoing and embedded	a one-time event
about understanding	about the technology
active	passive
intentional	random
flexible	linear
about choice	the same experience for everyone

when and how to choose which types of texts will help them find and best understand the message and medium. By helping students to recognize the types of texts they will encounter and how to interact with these various kinds of texts, they will gain independence in their reading choices and have more autonomy in their reading lives.

Figure 1.3 lists the skills—based in traditional reading—that we want our students to have if they are to be active digital readers.

Think back for a moment to the description of Julia's reading habits at the beginning of this chapter and you can see that she demonstrates many of the traditional skills that make her an effective reader of any kind of text. She can move easily between text types, and she is willing to try various strategies until she finds one that works. Marissa is not as comfortable with these skills, and so our teaching must support her in developing these.

We continue to recognize that reading in the digital age is not without its challenges. Bill, for example, in his role as a technology coordinator who works with teachers, sees them struggle with bringing digital reading into their classrooms. Gretchen Morrison, an instructional coach and teacher at Highcroft Ridge Elementary School in Chesterfield, Missouri, recently described one of the challenges she regularly faces when conferencing with students:

> With a regular book, when I approach a student who is reading, I can immediately tell what part of the book they are currently working on simply by what page they are on. That visual cue helps me to know what questions I should be asking and where to begin my conference. With a digital text, I don't have that visual cue. I can get around it, but it takes a shift in thinking on the part of the teacher.

This dilemma of finding a new way to easily identify a student's progress with a book is just one hands-on example of an issue teachers need to consider as they work with students on their reading in digital formats. And while it may take a shift in thinking, it's a shift that can't be avoided. Instead, we must embrace the options that are now available and see the possibilities that exist because of the variety of texts students now have access to.

Why Focus on Grades 3–8? The Possibilities and Challenges

Grades 3–8 are critical years for readers. Our students are moving from being emergent readers to becoming transitional readers and finally independent readers. Traditionally in these grades, our students move from reading picture books and early chapter books to reading more complex texts across content areas. This stage of literacy is critical as students build on their early experiences to become more sophisticated readers.

Figure 1.3. How digital reading expands traditional reading skills.

Skill We've Always Taught	Ways These Skills Expand and Change Because of Digital Tools
Annotating	• Ebooks have embedded tools for annotation and note taking. • Several note–taking apps make connecting annotations between multiple books and readers more accessible. • Various tools allow readers to organize and reorganize ideas as their thinking grows and changes across a text.
Reading across texts	• Links within texts create connections between various texts and media elements. • Numerous tools allow readers to bookmark or create collections of sites around reader–defined categories.
Determining importance	• New digital tools are not always linear, creating a variety of distractions for readers and making determining importance of a text and a source a more complex skill.
Connecting and synthesizing	• E-readers allow readers to see annotations and lines highlighted by other readers. • Social networking allows readers to connect with authors, publishers. and readers across the globe.
Monitoring comprehension	• Clicking and skipping around is easy with many forms of digital texts, so it's more important than ever that students learn how to monitor for comprehension.
Repairing meaning	• Skimming and scanning becomes more difficult with visual and audio distractions on online resources. • A variety of sources are immediately at a reader's fingertips and can be used to build and repair meaning. • Readers must be intentional and know when to use links and connected resources for better understanding.
Knowing where to go	• The many resources means students need to gain familiarity with a variety of tools and sources of information in order to find resources. • Students need to understand the strengths and limitations of each source. • Students need to understand how to determine whether source and information are credible and authentic.
Asking questions	• Readers must go beyond the kind of fact finding and trivia finding made easy by technology in order to dig deeply for answers to questions. • Students can move forward in a reading journey more easily as so many sources are available quickly.
Sharing in multiple ways	• Students and teachers can choose tools for sharing that make sense for purpose and audience. • The possibility for authentic audience expands with the ease of sharing. • Using the right tool to share information most effectively becomes more difficult as the number of tools increases.
Changing thinking	• The amount of available information is endless, so readers must constantly add new learning to their understanding and change their thinking.

We believe strongly that students in grades 3–8 have unique needs as learners and that by the time students get to high school, they have already developed a *stance* toward literacy and attitudes about the role technology can play in their lives. While we are not suggesting that it's too late for these older students, their prior experiences with digital tools and texts have already shaped their understanding of the role these play in their lives as learners. As teachers of students in grades 3–8, we have the ability to influence these attitudes and set the stage for students' future success as digital readers.

Between the ages of eight and fourteen, kids find their voices and move toward independence as readers, writers, and learners. In addition, thirteen is considered the "golden age" for children when it comes to digital literacy and online tools—the age at which children can create their own accounts and officially become part of the online world that many adults take for granted. Before students turn thirteen, then, we want them to be independent users of digital tools. To get them there, we have to scaffold that usage in different ways. At the secondary level, many kids are already using a number of digital tools and experimenting on their own, but in third grade, very few children use these tools for the purpose of learning. We have found that they may dabble in educational games their parents have bookmarked in a browser or downloaded to a tablet, but the direct connection between these tools and the process of learning is often foreign to them.

As educators in grades 3–8, we know that our role in schools is to support our students' literacy by helping them intentionally use digital tools for learning and make these tools a part of their daily lives. We do this by being intentional about our own work with students so that they can enter high school and college with a stronger stance as learners who understand the power of digital tools in their own reading, writing, and learning.

Students will not learn to be successful and independent readers of digital texts with just one lesson or one set of lessons. Rather, learning to read digital texts must be *embedded* in the ways we do our literacy work on a day-to-day basis. Just as we know that students come into the classroom with a variety of reading experiences, we know that they come with a variety of experiences in the digital world. We can't assume that because they are growing up in a time when digital tools permeate their lives, they already know how and when to use these tools and which tools to select based on their need. This means that educators must go beyond creating a lesson or unit on digital reading, digital citizenship, or digital literacy. Instead, the processes and tools must be a part of the work that teachers and students do on a regular basis, not an add-on to a lesson or a reward for behavior or a job well done on an assessment.

It is also in grades 3–8 that our students move to more complex texts. Grades K–2 focus on emergent literacy as students are beginning to read, whereas in

grades 3–8 they begin to read texts with more complexity and sophistication. As they make that transition, students need to learn a number of new skills, even if they are competent readers in grades K–2. As Franki and Karen Szymusiak wrote in *Still Learning to Read*,

> Our older readers still have much to learn about reading. It makes sense that students in grades 3–6 need more instruction. The texts they are reading are becoming much more complex and sophisticated. As readers, they will be asked to think through complex themes, analyze characters, and respond at higher levels. For these students to grow as readers, they need more instruction. We can't assume that the skills our students learned in grades K–2 will carry them through their lives as readers. They are ready for new skills and more independence. (2)

We think this statement is as true today as it was ten years ago—and certainly applies to teaching students to read in the digital age. We certainly cannot "teach" students to read every format and medium available. But it is important to stay true to what we know about good literacy teaching: teaching that teaches the reader, not the text. This is especially critical with digital reading so that students can transfer skills to whatever new forms of texts are introduced, regardless of medium.

Why Does Digital Reading Matter in Grades 3–8?

Years ago, during the Harry Potter craze, many very young children were reading the Harry Potter books. It seemed that every time either of us went to a family function or a neighborhood gathering, we'd hear about a seven-year-old who was "just loving" Harry Potter. This concerned us because so many of the nuances of the Harry Potter books seem beyond a seven-year-old's life experiences. We are confident that these seven-year-olds could read the words in the Harry Potter books, probably fluently. And we're sure that these children had an understanding of the basic plot of the books. But the books are complex, and complex texts consist of more layers to understanding than mere plot. While we worry a bit that these students were missing out on some big ideas that older readers understood, we confess to a bigger worry—about the habits toward reading these young readers were acquiring. We worry that when children read books they can understand only at a surface level, they start expecting only that level of understanding from all their reading; surface-level understanding becomes part of their reading habits. When they always read books that are a stretch for their comprehension level, students find it hard to read closely and to be thoughtful about the text.

We believe the same is true of understanding in all media. We know that our students have literacy experiences at home that involve a variety of media types. Whether these types are online video, electronic games, digital audio files, or even social networking, we know that some children do not have the skills to

fully understand what they are reading, watching, playing, or listening to. As with any text-based media, our worry remains the same for these transitional readers: if they continue to read, view, and listen without true understanding, their expectations for meaning are diminished, and they begin to expect that these texts will not always make sense or have meaning. They become passive consumers who read and view in a very simple way. Our worry has been confirmed several times by students who say things like, "We watch videos at home for fun. We don't actually watch them for information. We don't know how to do that!" We want our students to be able to make sense of whatever text they need to make sense of, and we want them to have skills and strategies that work across school and out-of-school literacy experiences.

What to Expect in This Book: A Focus on Three Anchors

Even as we recognize that the text types mentioned earlier (linear texts in digital format, nonlinear texts with hyperlinks, and texts with integrated media) provide some general categories for classifying digital texts, we are more interested in how these texts impact instruction and the needs of students. We believe that what truly matters for classroom practice is bigger than a definition or an activity. What really matters is that our students be engaged in classrooms that focus on *authenticity*, *intentionality*, and *connectedness*. To that end, throughout this book we focus our discussion primarily on these three anchors, emphasizing how they remain the core of digital age workshops as well: *authenticity* (i.e., keeping reading a meaningful experience that extends beyond the classroom), *intentionality* (i.e., making meaningful choices as readers), and *connectedness* (i.e., finding and creating connections between texts, readers, and experiences). Much has been written on these topics, and this book is rooted in the understandings we've gleaned from those who have previously done this work. But as we have thought through these ideas using the lens of instruction in digital literacy, we recognize that each of these anchors requires constant rethinking both as we reimagine their impact through this lens and as we decide where to spend our instructional energy. We ask ourselves daily what matters most within each of these areas and, as we introduce a new tool or strategy, what can we no longer include from our current practice.

Looking back to our two readers, Julia and Marissa, we recognize that we have to think about how to best support all students in a digital reading workshop as they become fluent digital readers. When we talk about digital reading and digital literacy, we are talking about an expanded view of reading and writing. This is not an either/or conversation; we don't want to abandon books completely, and we also don't want to imply that we should access only digital texts. Instead, we want all of our students to be able to read and understand a variety of texts (including

digital ones) at high levels. We cannot presume that students must become proficient with traditional texts before we give them opportunities with digital texts. These two mediums must coexist for a well-rounded reader in the digital age. We acknowledge that the processes of reading and writing remain largely the same as they did before the digital age, but digital tools have expanded what is possible as readers and writers. We explore each of these topics more fully in upcoming chapters and make the case that digital work belongs, and can respond, to each of these anchors depending on how we approach them. We also understand that none of these anchors lives on its own and that by addressing one of them, we also address the other two in one fashion or another. If we are intentional about the connections that we help provide and foster for students, there is a far greater chance that students' experiences will be authentic, meaningful, and influential on their reading lives.

In this book, we explore how digital reading might look in the classroom. We also take a look at the ways digital tools have impacted our reading workshops and how we can embed those in an authentic literacy classroom. We have been lucky to learn from a number of teachers in our journey with digital reading, so we have included classroom vignettes from many of these colleagues throughout the book.

Many of our young students come to school with vast experience in the digital world but too often use digital tools in limited ways because they view technology as merely another form of entertainment. Educators William L. Bass II and Franki Sibberson believe that teachers can help students recognize their expertise in out-of-school digital reading and extend it into the world of school. For this to happen, we need to redefine reading to include digital reading and texts, learn how to support digital reading in the classroom, and embed digital tools throughout the elementary and middle school curriculum.

Bass, a technology coordinator, and Sibberson, a third-grade teacher, invite us to consider what is essential in integrating technology into the classroom, focusing especially on authenticity, intentionality, and connectedness. They explore the experiences readers must have in order to navigate the digital texts they will encounter, as well as the kinds of lessons we must develop to enhance those experiences. Always advocating for sound literacy practice and drawing on the NCTE Policy Research Brief *Reading Instruction for* All *Students*, they lead from experience—both theirs and that of other classroom teachers, grades 3–8.

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