

FOREWORD

This important new book, *Reading the Web: Strategies for Internet Inquiry*, takes on a difficult question: How do we best integrate the Internet into our classrooms? It also explains things clearly, with both feet planted firmly in the classroom context. Finally, it pushes us to reconceptualize reading.

Maya B. Eagleton and Elizabeth Dobler have crafted an exceptional book with many useful suggestions for integrating the Internet into your classroom through an inquiry model. New literacies of online reading comprehension are increasingly required in the 21st century; this book will provide essential guidance for teachers seeking to prepare their students for those challenges. Preparing students for the new dimensions of reading that many already encounter at home will be one of the greatest challenges our schools will face in the years ahead.

The nature of reading has changed. Over one billion readers are now reading on the Internet, and this number is expanding rapidly. New information and communication technologies such as the Internet itself, search engines, e-mail, instant messaging, wikis, blogs, and online gaming worlds require new literacies and have become important new contexts for literacy, learning, and life. Few of these new literacies, however, have found their way into the classroom. The logistics of providing instruction in these new literacies have proven to be daunting to the educational community, especially when educators are less conversant with digital literacies than the students they teach. This delay in getting up to speed is unfortunate, given the widespread recognition of how important the Internet has become in our daily lives and the data showing that new skills and strategies are required for reading online.

Today, literacy educators are under enormous pressure to increase reading test scores on assessments that have not incorporated the new literacies of online reading comprehension. No state currently assesses students' ability to read search engine results, to critically evaluate information on the Internet, to read a blog, or to read and write e-mail and instant messages. The focus of current policies on testing students' skills and strategies for offline reading comprehension are missing the

mark if what students really need is support in developing the new literacies of online reading comprehension. This is especially true for those students who require our support the most—those who do not have access to the Internet at home. Economically challenged school districts which are already under the greatest pressure to raise offline reading test scores face difficult choices for how to allocate resources for literacy instruction.

The authors of this practical volume are to be commended for challenging us to expand our conception of what it means to be a reader today and for providing teachers with the tools to prepare students for an online world. Each chapter is clearly written and contains numerous examples for classroom instruction. A thorough collection of handouts and overheads is also included.

I expect this volume will increase the number of us who understand that the challenge of the Internet has less to do with technology, and more to do with reading, and that to meet this challenge we will need many new skills and strategies. Thus, the material in this book will make an important difference in the lives of our students, helping us to prepare them for new forms of reading and writing in the 21st century.

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