
**Summary:**
This study was based in the Midwestern United States, and looked at e-reading and e-responding in a fifth grade classroom, consisting of 15 boys and 11 girls.

**Research Question:**
1. How do fifth graders socially construct learning while interacting with and responding to literature when using an online message board?

**Methodology:**
A qualitative methodology was chosen for this study because it provided an expressive narrative description within a natural setting. Two E-books were selected to enhance a unit on the American Civil Rights Movement, *Bud, Not Buddy* and the *Watsons Go to Birmingham*, both by Christopher Paul Curtis. Throughout the 15 session study, the author took extensive field notes and used a digital voice recorder to depict the sounds of the classroom as well as individual interviews with the students and their teacher. The students’ electronic journals and online message board transcripts were collected and analyzed. During a typical session the students read the books and responded in their e-journals for approximately 30 minutes then spent 15-20 minutes “discussing” on the message board. Only 10 of the 26 students’ data were included in the results, five students per book title.

**Findings:**
The author and teacher almost immediately discovered that the students wanted to take much more of a leadership role in the message board area. While they were willing to respond to the threads the teacher began, they wanted to expand the discussion further. The teacher was also able to monitor the student’s performance in the journals and message board, and through
one-on-one conferences make suggestions to students who were writing less than expected compared to their regular classroom participation, or who were writing very short comments as one would in an instant message, rather than a more appropriate comment for classroom use. Classroom observations and online discussion transcripts clearly support that engagement in online literature discussions encouraged students to respond deeply to the literature, share their ideas with others and carefully consider multiple perspectives and thoughts.

Implications:
I found this study very interesting, as I am very curious how students interact with e-books and how they learn from them compared to traditional print books. It is interesting that the author wrote, “Since the e-books, e-journals, and online message boards were accessed through the student’s laptops, the transition between reading and responding was smooth and efficient.” That’s a lot of clicking back and forth, which often takes longer than having one document (such as a book) in one’s hand to reference while typing on the computer. I think this study would have had more significant meaning to build on, if there had been comparable data for the same titles begin taught the traditional way – print book, handwritten journal, in-class discussions. As we’ve discussed in class, the groups could have been split so that there were seven students reading Bud, Not Buddy in the traditional learning environment for ½ the study, and seven students reading Bud, Not Buddy in the new e-reader environment for ½ the study and then they should swap learning environments. The same could have been done with the remaining 12 students for the second title. This too, would have produced more accurate data, than having the teacher select the ten students based on criteria of being communicative (in writing or verbally) and willing to work hard.