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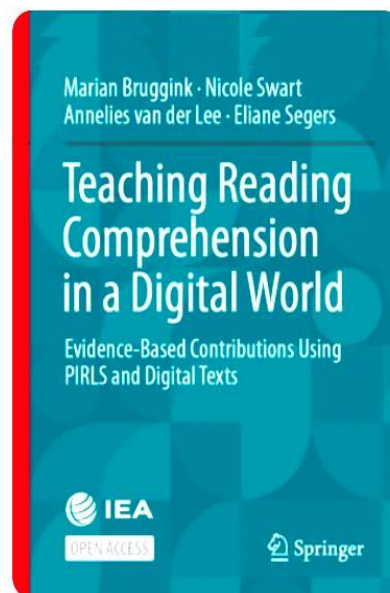
Bruggink, M., Swart, N., van der Lee, A., & Segers, E. (2025).
***Teaching reading comprehension in a digital world:
 Evidence-based contributions using PIRLS and digital texts.***
Springer.

307 pp.

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Teaching Reading Comprehension in a Digital World presents a thorough exploration of the profound influence of digital transformation on reading instruction across diverse educational contexts. Since its inception, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) alongside its electronic counterpart (ePIRLS) has yielded rich empirical insights that the authors deftly weave throughout their analysis of the distinctive challenges and possibilities that digital textual environments create for both educators and students alike. The book perfectly balances theory and practice, offering both clear teaching principles and useful and actionable classroom strategies that educators can actually implement in their classroom environments offering real-world experiments.



Moving beyond isolated case analyses, the authors adopt a broader investigative approach by scrutinizing the multifaceted roles various stakeholders assume in fostering digital literacy development. Teachers are portrayed as adaptive professionals navigating the evolving demands of digital literacy instruction, while students are presented as active participants who must develop new comprehension strategies suited to new digital environments. The book also acknowledges the critical roles played by policymakers and researchers in formulating effective pedagogical responses to growing technological changes.

A significant strength of this volume is its emphasis on digital equity. The authors argue that equal access to digital resources is essential in establishing

¹ This book is open access at <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-75121-9>

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amicable relations with disadvantaged populations and preventing educational disparities.

This discourse is especially pertinent in light of the escalating digital divide that has been illuminated during recent global disruptions to educational systems, underscoring its paramount significance across international learning environments. The text's methodical reliance on empirical instruction meticulously grounded in comprehensive PIRLS and ePIRLS datasets furnishes an exceptionally robust foundation for its nuanced proposals concerning strategic approaches to enhancing digital reading comprehension capabilities among diverse learner populations.

Furthermore, the authors effectively articulate how the changing nature of reading in digital environments and rapidly growing platforms necessitates development of new skills. For instance, the book references important research in which students who receive explicit instruction in evaluating online sources demonstrate significantly improved ability to distinguish credible information from misinformation (see p. 83). This finding is the conclusion of a study in which an evaluation checklist that included source credibility, author expertise, and publication dates, has been used resulting in measurable improvements in critical digital literacy.

The book includes practical classroom activities designed to cultivate these digital literacy skills, such as source evaluation frameworks and structured group discussions on website credibility assessment (see pp. 92–93). While these constitute a decent set of tools, the authors could have more thoroughly addressed potential implementation challenges in time-constrained classroom settings. The source evaluation checklist, while comprehensive, might prove unwieldy in real-world educational contexts—a limitation that deserves more critical examination.

One of the unique and distinctive features of the volume is its accessible writing style, which successfully bridges academic research and classroom application without excessive jargon. Each of the chapters contextualizes research findings by linking them to practical consequences alongside a plethora of international examples from countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Singapore. As a part of these cases, the authors describe an innovative and creative Italian project in which students employed Canva, which is an online graphics tool, to create presentations on the history of photography, promoting critical engagement with digital content, and sharpening their digital literacy skills (see p. 96). Among several case studies that are included, there exists another outstanding case study which presents Singaporean educators' integration of a blog-based lesson into the literacy curriculum, where students navigate and create blog content, thus enabling deep engagement with texts and creation to express understandings (pp. 92–93). Those remarkable pedagogical demonstrations catalyzed my determination to craft parallel learning experiences, thoughtfully embedding digital components throughout the distinctive educational environment I've cultivated over years of practice.

While these international perspectives enrich the book's scope, the majority of the contributors are from Western educational systems, which potentially limits the

global applicability of some findings. The authors could have provided more critical analysis of the contextual factors that might affect implementation across different educational systems and cultural settings. Additionally, a more explicit engagement with established theoretical frameworks would have strengthened the book's foundation—particularly Leu et al.'s (2017) *The New Literacies Framework*, with its emphasis on social and collaborative aspects of online reading comprehension, combined with Coiro's (2011) findings regarding the distinctive mental challenges inherent in evaluating digital information sources, constructs a refreshed conceptual orientation. This novel conceptualization deepens our understanding of how digital reading diverges intrinsically and structurally from conventional and traditional print comprehension—an element the book engages with, though it might have been more robustly rooted in the broader existing scholarly conversation.

The volume devotes good energy in dealing with the practical classroom applications but its examination of how digital tools support higher-order thinking skills could have been more robust. While the authors acknowledge the potential of digital environments to foster critical thinking, they provide limited discussion of how specific digital affordances might enhance or potentially hinder metacognitive development—an area worthy of deeper exploration given its importance to advanced comprehension. Nevertheless, *Teaching Reading Comprehension in a Digital World* represents a valuable contribution to literacy education scholarship. Dispelling the notion that digital reading is merely a technological and newer version of traditional print reading, the authors seek to challenge the existing paradigms in reading instruction. Through its thoughtful synthesis of evidence-based research, conceptual frameworks, and tangible classroom applications, this work establishes itself as a valuable compass for educational practitioners attempting to traverse the intricate landscape of literacy instruction within digital contexts. The book supports this stance by resorting to evidence-based approaches and maintains that an international perspective offers fresh insights into a rapidly evolving field.

This well-structured volume will benefit educational researchers, classroom practitioners, literacy specialists, curriculum developers, and policymakers concerned with improving reading comprehension outcomes in increasingly digital learning contexts. Despite some gaps in critical analysis, the book provides a solid framework for ongoing discussion about effective digital reading instruction in contemporary classroom environments and reforming the traditional mindset of educators and learners.

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About the Reviewer



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Marian Bruggink has a master's degree in education and experience as a primary school teacher. She has worked at the Dutch Center for Language Education since 2001. She started there in the PIRLS project and since then has contributed to various language and reading research projects. Based on scientific research, she develops educational guidelines and teaching materials for language education.



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