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An analysis of e-book learning platforms:
affordances, architecture, functionality and analytics

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Abstract

E-book learning platforms are increasingly used as curriculum resources for independent reading at school and home, although benefits for students' reading motivation and skill are unclear. Using a set of analytic tools, this study describes two e-book learning platforms in terms of platform affordances, digital architecture of e-books, functionality of screen pages and dashboard analytics. Qualitative analyses reveal patterns of strength and weakness along each dimension. Affordances rated highest in content and administration characteristics, but largely unmet in accessibility and communication. Architecture tends to maximize text access, but minimize text/media integration and active reader engagement. Functionality suggests a word-focused pattern that favors word learning over text comprehension. Analytics tend to inform skill building over self-awareness and progress. Analytic tools were designed and/or refined to develop and improve technical adequacy. Findings lay the groundwork for more controlled studies of the effectiveness of e-book platforms as literacy curriculum resources and more active collaboration among publishers, IT developers and educators to improve e-book platform quality.

Keywords. learning platforms; e-books; curriculum evaluation; independent reading

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