Compare the paper in print and online

- Note any differences in how you read them

- How might those differences impact on an adult beginning reader?

Reading online:
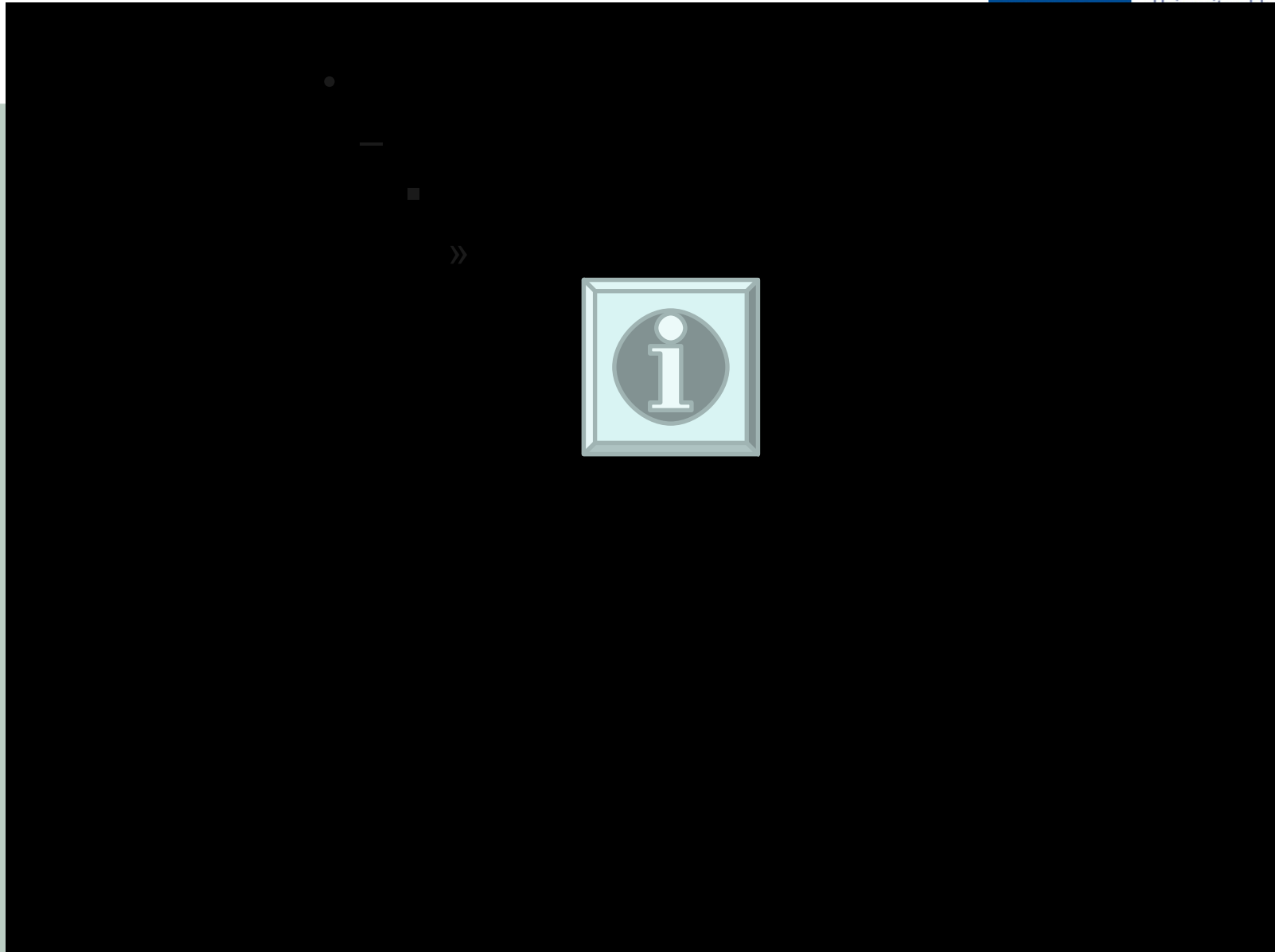## what teachers can learn from adult literacy learners

Irene Schwab

i.schwab@ioe.ac.uk

www.ioe.ac.uk

Rationale for research

- Is there still a digital divide? (Bynner et al, 2008)
- Why aren't teachers using digital texts?
- Why is there no research with adult literacy learners?

- Bynner J, Reder S, Parsons S, Strawn C (2008) *The Digital Divide: Computer Use, Basic Skills and Employment* London NRDC

Aims

The aim of the research was to:

- investigate what adult literacy learners read and want to read on the Internet

- determine what skills and strategies they already use

- find out from them what they feel about online reading

Qualitative research: methods

Brief questionnaire

• all 18 students: for basic biographical information (e.g. age, gender, home language)

Semi-structured interviews

• all 18 students: half to one hour, in pairs

Verbal protocols

• 5 students: thinking aloud while doing reading tasks on computer

Verbal protocol tasks

- Find a news story that interests you
- How do you judge if it is accurate?
- Find an image of the Olympic site
- If you had the money to buy an iPhone, how would you choose and buy one?
- Find the height of David Cameron

The research context

Research site: multi-ethnic, multilingual further education college in inner London

Research participants: 2 adult literacy
classes :

- one daytime class -10 students at Entry level 3
- one evening class- 8 students at Entry level 2

Research participants

- **Gender**

6 men; 12 women

- **Age**

Between 16 and 65

- **Home language**

English (8)

Other languages: Somali, Portuguese, Gujerati, Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, Bengali, BSL (10)

Internet Access

- All students had used the Internet
- Half accessed it every day
- Just over a quarter access it through their mobile phone
- Two thirds use the Internet mainly outside college

- Over half have a first language that is not English
- *But* almost all prefer to access the Internet in English

Research findings

attitudes	practices	skills	strategies
	Finding information	Searching	Supporting language and literacy
	Keeping up-to-date	Negotiating multimodality	Supporting computer use
	Shopping	On-screen reading	
	Multiple purpose	Interactivity	
		Critical reading	j

ATTITUDES TO USING THE INTERNET

Attitudes

Learners want to read on the Internet because:

- There is 'social capital' in reading on the Internet
- They have access to more (and free) information
- They can adjust the size of print
- Internet shopping is cheap and convenient
- They can practise their reading and writing out of college in an engaging way and get instant feedback

BUT...some don't see it as reading

Benefit: more willing to problem-solve or seek help
Limitation: don't necessarily use the reading skills they've been taught

INTERNET READING PRACTICES

Internet Reading Practices

- Different practices inside and outside college:
- Inside: practice exercises and research
- Outside: shopping, news, social networking, jobs etc

Finding information

- Learners use the Internet to follow up their varied interests:
- BUT they rarely engage in forums, respond to postings

Keeping up-to-date

Learners use the Internet to stay updated: news; friends; football scores

Multiple purpose practices

Everything on the Internet involves reading:

SKILLS IN USING THE INTERNET

Search skills

- Searching on Google is a challenge if you can't spell the word you are searching for
- BUT everyone used Google more or less successfully

Using multimodality

Especially useful for learners with disabilities

On-screen reading

- Need for good computer skills to make use of affordances

- Scrolling
- Hyperlinks
- Using menus
- Spatial layout

Critical reading

- Most have awareness that texts are not neutral and strategies for making decisions about what to believe

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT READING ON THE NET

Translation

Some bilingual/multilingual learners use online dictionaries and translation tools effectively

Subtitles

Learners extend their vocabulary and practise reading by watching programmes on YouTube and BBC i-player with subtitles in English:

Collaborative learning

- Students get support from family, friends and peers, as well as the teacher
- Sometimes they even prefer peers to teachers

Conclusions for teachers - funds of knowledge

- Teachers could draw more on learners' current uses of Internet outside college (more authentic tasks)
- Teachers need awareness of strategies learners use, so they can build on them
- Teachers could make more use of the interactive features of Web 2.0 to build social capital (networking)

Conclusions for teachers - Computer and literacy skills

- Computer competence as important as reading skills in reading online; teachers should be prepared to focus on both

- Learners seem happier to problem-solve where computers are involved; teachers could help transfer these skills for more independence in reading

- Teachers need to demystify processes and language of reading online - need to practise online and not in printed out versions

Any questions?

Irene Schwab

i.schwab@ioe.ac.uk

Institute of Education
University of London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL

Tel +44 (0)20 7612 6000
Fax +44 (0)20 7612 6126
Email info@ioe.ac.uk
Web www.ioe.ac.uk

Reading print and electronic texts

Screen – glare, resolution, size (screen and text), contrast, background colour

Text- dynamic (leading display and scrolling text) or static

Design- (spatial not linear), irregular fonts and point sizes, lack of contrast between text and background, combinations of colour, multimodality, menus

Hypertext (increased reader control but also cognitive load) ; different types of links, (words, images, labels, icons)

Different layouts, objects, navigation tools, layout patterns

Online genres?

Culturally inappropriate icons (pointing finger, hourglass, trashcan)

Pop-up adverts

Navigational tools(pull-down/ pop up menus, navigation bar, breadcrumb trail, back button)

Authorship, date-unclear; lack of controls