Investigation into Whether Teenagers Read Faster and Retain More Information When Tested Using Various Media

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With the increasing use of digital devices in the classrooms the aim of this project was to determine if the reading speed and retention of information of teenagers benefited from the use of technology. Fifty learners between the ages of 15 and 17 years were tested. A simple, single-word list for reading speed and simple passage for comprehension were presented first on paper and then on a digital device. A more complex single-word list and comprehension passage were then presented first on paper and then on a digital device. All tests were checked using referenced standardized reading framework programmes, namely ATOS and Lexile. Words read per minute were calculated for each medium. Multiple-choice questions were then answered, on paper, based on the information read in the comprehensions. The data was represented graphically and statistical analysis determined. The investigation showed that there was no significant difference in reading accuracy between the simple and complex wordlists read in either of the mediums tested. Analysis of the simple comprehension passages showed a significantly higher recall of facts in the printed version when compared to the digital device. Results from the more complex passages showed a significantly higher percentage of memory recall on the digital device. In conclusion, this project demonstrated that there is minimal difference between the reading speed of either media in both defined difficulties. The age group tested retained more from the complex passage as presented on the digital device whereas they retained more from the simple passage on printed media.