Methods for Assessing Online Processing of Multiple Sources

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Processes matter: learning is not only an outcome reflected in a score or grade, is also an ongoing process that leads to an outcome. This presentation reviews the various methods that have been used to assess the processing of multiple sources of information, either digital or in print. Self-reports, thinking aloud, note taking, reading times, log-files, and eye movements are focused. The nature, characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of each method are critically discussed with reference to theory and studies that have involved students at different educational levels. The link between online processes and offline outcomes of reading multiple sources emerges from the empirical studies. Possible methodological advances for research on multiple-text processing and comprehension are also mentioned. Overall, the presentation highlights that process-oriented research contributes to theory development on multiple-document literacy. Accurate assessment of online processes is also crucial from the perspective of educational implications, especially for supporting the acquisition of advanced reading skills.