



Pre-service Teachers on the Use of New Media Literacies in K-12 Schools in the United States

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Abstract

Literacy education and new media literacies are at the forefront of pedagogy in our 21st century schools. McLaughlin (2010), Leu (2002), Leu and Kinzer (2000) acknowledge the importance of teaching new media literacies in literacy courses in higher education to prepare teachers to support the literacy learning of students in K-12 schools in the United States who will live and interact in a complex literate society in a global economy. According to Henderson and Schaffer (2003) new media literacies and their importance in addressing a changing paradigm for teaching and learning in today's U.S. schools cannot be longer ignored due to the different ways in which learners in K-12 schools in the United States read and access content knowledge by relying more and more on new media as pedagogical tools.

This study investigated the self-reflective practices of pre-service teachers (N=25) in a graduate literacy course in a Liberal Arts University for two semesters on the importance of using new media literacies in their content areas in K-12 schools in the United States. Self-reflective practice was supported by the use of reflective papers asking pre-service teachers to critically analyze the issue of teaching with new media literacies versus the more traditional approach based on the use of the textbook in the classroom. The instructor asked the pre-service teachers in the course to write five reflective papers for each semester during the two semesters of the study. The pre-service teachers in the course using the reflective papers had to critically evaluate the advantages and setbacks on the use of new media literacies in the classroom and how teachers could address the changing nature of literacy in K-12 schools in the United States.

The findings of the present study suggest that the pre-service teachers saw a co-existence between the new media literacies and the more traditional ones in the teaching of literacy in K-12 schools in the United States. In particular, the reflective papers revealed a preoccupation of the pre-service teachers for an abandonment of traditional, paper text, reading and penmanship in the teaching of literacy in K-12 schools. The pre-service teachers in the study advocated for a balanced approach in the teaching of literacy to help students understand the importance of learning by accessing multiple modes of literacy instruction in content and process.

References

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