

Chapter 14

Using Media Literacy to Teach and Learn the English Language Arts/Literacy: Common Core State Standards

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ABSTRACT

Forty-three states out of fifty states in the United States of America have adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy as a means of setting attainment levels of what students should know at different benchmarks during their schooling. The Common Core State Standards will be viewed through the lens of how they can be taught and learned by utilizing digital literacy media. This chapter will discuss how the goals of digital media literacy are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, how resources can be used to teach teachers and school district personnel about the Common Core State Standards, and finally how digital media can aid in helping students learn the standards and can aid in helping community members learn and then teach these standards. This chapter will conclude with questions and controversies about the Common Core State Standards and how media literacy education can alleviate many of the fears and challenges associated with the growing debate on this topic.

INTRODUCTION

Standards, a level of quality or attainment, can be used to measure a norm in education. Forty-three states out of fifty in the United States of America have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA)/literacy as a means of setting attainment levels regarding what students should know at different benchmarks

during their schooling (In your state, 2014). These standards are provoking widespread debate about curriculum, testing, teaching, and policy making across the nation. While there is a heightened focus throughout the nation on the CCSS, few resources are available to aid students, teachers, and community members to learn and teach about the standards so that they may effectively discuss them, use them, question them, and become part-

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ners in revising them. This chapter seeks to discuss how media resources can be used to first teach teachers and school district personnel about the CCSS, then how media literacy can aid in helping students learn the CCSS, and finally how digital media can aid in helping community members learn, teach, and support the CCSS.

In order to understand the CCSS and how media literacy can enable not only students but also the multiple stakeholders involved to teach, learn, and support them, it will first be necessary to understand the idea of mastery learning and the idea behind a standardization of educational attainment nationwide. Bloom's Taxonomy as it relates to what it means to know or understand will be discussed, as will E.D. Hirsh's cultural literacy and his critique of progressive education. Both of these will be related to the CCSS, as education is social and political in nature, and our nation has moved from focusing on prioritizing process-oriented education to results-oriented education. Media literacy will then be discussed and defined as it is intricately linked with the success of the CCSS. An in-depth look at the CCSS will be performed including their development and adoption.

Strategies for utilizing digital media sources for teaching and learning the CCSS will be focused on in-depth in this chapter. Websites, applications, and videos sources will be discussed and referenced. Finally, the growing controversy surrounding the CCSS will be discussed, as the ability to adapt and utilize digital media is key to the success of the CCSS.

Literature Review

Throughout the twentieth century, Dewey and the progressive notion of education influenced education in the United States. Free education was available to students from first through twelfth grade, and the aim of this education was mainly to produce democratic citizens. Standards of education, or a basic level of attainment of

what students should know or be able to achieve at what level were not part of a progressive form of education. Outcomes of progressive education varied significantly from school to school, state-to-state, and across the nation. While many educational movements challenged the progressive form of education in our nation, the most sweeping reforms to take route have been the standards movement, which is grounded in the work of Benjamin Bloom, his Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956), the theory of mastery learning (1968, 1971), and the work of E.D. Hirsh and his theory of cultural literacy (1988).

Bloom's Taxonomy and Mastery Learning

Benjamin Bloom was a psychologist and educational theorist who is best known for the creation of Bloom's Taxonomy and his work in the area of mastery learning. A look at these theories and the taxonomy itself is necessary in order to comprehend further the theoretical shift in education, not only in this country but also worldwide. Bloom's Taxonomy was a practical model of cognition and learning developed by Bloom and other researchers that defined the different types of cognition possible or what we, as educators, have come to know as different types of educational objectives.

Bloom and other curriculum and measurement specialists began work on the Taxonomy in the late 1940s and completed their work in 1956 (Bloom et al., 1956). The goal of the taxonomy was to create a common language or statements for what students were to learn so that exams could be utilized across universities. Bloom was himself a professor at the University of Chicago, and he worked on this Taxonomy with colleagues nationwide. The original Taxonomy sought also to serve as a means to discuss common learning goals, to provide a basis for facilitating broad curriculum goals, and to aid in creating questions and learning activities.

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