Chapter 4
Theoretical and Practical Concerns Regarding Digital Texts in Literacy Instruction

Lourdes H Smith

College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida, USA

Vassiliki I. Zygouris-Coe

College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida, USA

ABSTRACT

The role of literacy and learning is easily incorporated into many areas of using technology in the classroom. The purpose of this book chapter is to share results from a research study that provides a framework for teachers to develop their knowledge about open educational resources (OERs) as digital texts for developing students' disciplinary and literacy knowledge. Specifically addressed is how participants expressed their knowledge and understanding about using OERs to support their students' online reading comprehension skills (i.e., questioning, locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and communicating), along with recommendations for preparing students to become 21st century literate.

INTRODUCTION

The ever-evolving digital technologies have created new vistas for teaching and learning and have also been responsible for the evolving nature of literacy in the 21st century. According to the International Literacy Association's (2018) definition of literacy,

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. The ability to read, write, and communicate connects people to one another and empowers them to achieve things they never thought possible. Communication and connection are the basis of who we are and how we live together and interact with the world.

The new concept of literacy, often deemed the New Literacies, is considered multimodal, dynamic, deictic, and multifaceted as we consider how new technologies are created and generated (Baker, Pearson, & Rozendal, 2010; Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013). Students require not only a change in the delivery of the content, but a change in the skills, strategies, and dispositions of the reader (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Leu asks, "Is someone who is 'digitally literate' equally literate when searching for information, when critically evaluating information, when using Snapchat, when using email, when using text messaging, when using Facebook, or when using any one of many different technologies for literacy and learning? I think not" (Heitin, 2016). With this in mind, and as technology, like social media, digital applications, digital environments, eTextbooks, and other types of media continues to grow, so does our view of what literacy instruction means *today* to educators.

Recent educational standards (e.g., Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010) and policies provide a focus on the importance of digital materials, digital literacies, and technology in 21st century teaching and learning. Specifically, the English Language Arts (ELA) Anchor Standards of the CCSS state that students should be able to integrate and evaluate information that uses media and other formats, including visual, quantitative, and audio while also making strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data. Although some see the focus on digital literacies and technology in the standards as a step in the right direction, others call for new curricula and pedagogies (Heitin, 2016).

Technology has become ubiquitous in almost every aspect of daily life. As a result, mobile and other forms of technology have been introduced in schools to support teaching and learning. Since the early 2000s, specific kinds of technological tools, digital texts, and Open Educational Resources (OERs), have been gaining much attention at the college and university level, with an increase in the use of digital textbooks and open course curriculum by professors and students in academic courses (Ross, 2015). Though initial interest focused on higher-education, states, school districts, and publishers have begun considering how best to support K-12 students with their content and literacy learning by using some of the same types of digital tools and applications (Ross, 2015). Both the 2017 National Education Technology Plan (NETP) and the 2010 National Broadband Plan advocate that the best of modern technology is needed in order to transform how teachers teach and how students learn.

21st Century Literacies

Living and learning in the digital era require different types of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. For students to become digitally literate, they need different texts, tools, and learning opportunities in a variety of learning spaces (Leu et al., 2004). Developments in literacy, along with the heavy use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in both the public and private sectors, have influenced our goals and understandings of what students need to know and be able to do in order for them to learn and succeed in a highly networked world. With the development and integration of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) skills per the new state standards, and the emphasis on digital learning and critical thinking, students need to be taught in new and different ways in order to meet and exceed the expectations required by the 21st century world we live in. Trends in digital learning and literacy are both considered to be essential for educational reform and represent an area of research deemed valuable per the Alliance for Excellent Education research center as part of their CCR goals (2015). Used in an educational environment, the usage of digital devices, applications, communications, social media, and

23 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/theoretical-and-practical-concerns-regarding-digital-texts-in-literacy-instruction/238423

Related Content

The Reality of Virtual Reality: Second Life as a Tool for Online Peer-Teaching Activities
Karen Lybeck, Dana Bruhnand Solen Feyissa (2011). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 1-19).*
www.irma-international.org/article/reality-virtual-reality/58659

Motivational Influences for Higher Education (HE) Students
Robert Costelloand Murray Lambert (2019). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 38-50).*
www.irma-international.org/article/motivational-influences-for-higher-education-he-students/216930

Application of Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis and Optimisation Methods in Evaluation of Quality of Learning Objects
Eugenijus Kurilovas, Irina Vinogradovaand Silvija Serikoviene (2011). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 62-76).*
www.irma-international.org/article/application-multiple-criteria-decision-analysis/58663

Pedagogical Design Perspective of Digital Game-Based English Language Learning: An Analysis of Journal Publications From 2000 to 2021
Panicha Nitisakunwut, Gwo-Jen Hwangand Natthaphong Chanyoo (2022). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 1-28).*
www.irma-international.org/article/pedagogical-design-perspective-of-digital-game-based-english-language-learning/311437

Conceptual Model of Generic Learning Design to Teach Cultural Artifacts in Computing Education: An Analysis Based on Akan Culture in Ghana
Ebenezer Anohahand Jarkko Suhonen (2018). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (pp. 50-64).*
www.irma-international.org/article/conceptual-model-of-generic-learning-design-to-teach-cultural-artifacts-in-computing-education/211155