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The Reading Paradigm is a journal designed to provide a viable avenue for newsworthy articles, projects, teaching tips, book reviews, and other information to highlight literacy efforts in today's classrooms.

EDITOR
Betty Dean Newman
Professor Emeritus, Athens State University, Athens, AL
President Emeritus, Alabama Reading Association

"Teaching for Tomorrow," the theme of the 2014 ARA Fall Conference reflects continuous discussions of educators, politicians, and parents. We no longer live in "our little world" of community and neighborhood schools. Today, students are connected by cell phones, multimedia devices, digital television, Skype, online education, and a myriad of other devices that present the challenge of teaching with a global emphasis. The Reading Paradigm highlights today's knowledge based on theory, research, policy, and practices to inform educators as they prepare for tomorrow.

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A Brave New World: Pre-service Teachers Understanding and Integrating New Literacies in the Language Arts Classroom

April Sanders
Kathy Voorhees

Educators imagine a world where students cannot wait to devour books and become life-long readers by engaging in literacy skills daily. This imagined world may actually be a reality - an *unrealized* reality. Students can potentially employ literacy skills many times throughout the day and never open a book or pick up a writing utensil. Even though the definition of new literacies is not concrete, the main components of understanding them include new forms of literacy created through the use of technology. Since the world of literacy has changed dramatically with the integration of new literacies, work of aspiring language arts teachers must also change. Students are walking into the language arts classroom expecting and hoping to encounter reading and writing instruction that includes the new literacies since that is part of the basic framework of their lives; therefore, methods instruction for pre-service teachers must adapt and transform their experience to ready them for the modern language arts student.

Theoretical Framework

Progressive education in the fashion John Dewey designed is a learning model that could be quite successful with millennial students as well as pre-service teachers. The millennial generation of students has an increased awareness and capability with digital technology and media. Dewey believed that doing is the reason there is understanding and application of knowledge (Menand, 2001). Learning facts is not as crucial for the present generation since facts are ever-changing in a world that is based in evolving technology. Instead of memorizing facts, millennials could profit from understanding how to direct their own learning, especially in the area of writing and reading, since the technological world where they exist requires them to be continual learners. Language arts teachers can apply Dewey's learning model because literacy is not about constructing answers – instead the process is what is significant to learners. Just as this learning model applies to reading and writing instruction, the model also applies to preparation of pre-service teachers for the language arts classroom. The experiences of pre-service teachers are key to creating such a learning model in the writing classroom, but before they can create such a model with new literacies, they must have their own experiences from which to draw.

Baildon and Damico (2009) apply Dewey's theories to an actual classroom experience. The impetus for the assignment, which is strictly in line with Dewey's theory on interest leading the experience, was a student emailing the teacher and suggesting he look at the video and consider aspects of credibility; other students were also showing strong interest in the video and its connection to their study of credibility. The learned process gleaned from this study can be viewed as a way curriculum is developed. This curriculum based on interest correlates to Dewey's belief that curriculum is a changing document depending on the context of the learner. The understanding of and ability to think through multimodal texts and write about them or with them increased in value as the internet has become a strong influence on students. Language arts teachers should begin to incorporate new literacies into their instruction and use them as tools with their students since students have strong interests in the new literacies. Since the new literacies are rapidly carving a place in literacy instruction, pre-service teachers must have experience with them in order to successfully bring them into the classroom. Traditionally, text has been defined as "a passage of print or a slice of speech, or an image" (Lankshear, 1997, p. 45). But text has been broadened to include much more; students are now involved in reading/viewing from a multimodal perspective, which calls for teachers to include the new literacies in the classroom experience (Bearne, 2005). As this inclusion occurs, engagement with learning can be strengthened by understanding students' interest and experience with new literacies.

Incorporating technology with literacy into the K-12 classroom has been done with a variety of new literacies. Ranker's (2006) study explores how new literacies are being used in the classroom and gives some insight into how effective they are with students. This study is quite typical of studies focusing on the new literacies; one particular perspective is strikingly absent from the literature – work with pre-service teachers. To ignore the pre-service teacher in the literature is in direct contrast to Dewey's theory. Dewey believed that the teacher should be included in the community of the classroom (Faust, 1996). Direction and guidance from the teacher aided in the student's freedom instead of restricting it.

Dewey believed there was no higher source to consult than human experience. Interacting with the environment is considered an experience, but a problematic situation might arise when an obstacle blocks the experience. A successful life is then defined as working through the problematic situations that test intelligence, and the process leads to growth. The unity of knowledge means that knowing something is related directly to experiencing something (Gutek, 2004).

Students are using new literacies in their reading and writing outside of the school environment daily. Research indicates that motivation for learning increases with students' use of new literacies in the classroom. When considering writing used in school as opposed to writing used outside of school, only a small percentage of students (17%) actually enjoy school writing. Participants said relevant topics and feedback from teachers who were challenging were the main motivators for writing in school (Lenhart, et. al., 2008). The level of relevance is connected to Dewey's idea on experience; students are coming into the language arts classroom with new literacies experience and feel motivated when this experience finds a place in their learning. As students work with different new literacies, pre-service teachers need to be just as aware and adept with the same types of literacies. Equally important are the applicable tools for literacy development, and millennial students will become writers and readers in a world where the tools offered to them will include the new literacies. Students will come to school with the ability to make meaning using their available resources, which will include new literacies. Pre-service teachers must be aware and open to the concept of new literacies as legitimate literacy tools that they present to students. Such awareness is connected to Dewey's idea of experience as well. When pre-service teachers are able to have an experience related to the new literacies, then they can bring that level of interest into curriculum development. If they lack understanding of this type of experience, then the ability to relate to their students and create lessons based on this interest in new literacies will be difficult.

Methodology

This case study consisted of 40 pre-service teachers and their perspectives on the implementation of new literacies in the language arts classroom. We wanted to learn about the experience pre-service teachers have regarding new literacies as well as how they plan to incorporate aspects of the new literacies when they begin to construct lessons. The participants were placed at two elementary schools during their first semester of methods courses for the core subjects; during the second semester, they were placed at one of their school sites for a student teaching assignment. Data collection included a questionnaire that participants completed at three milestone points. The questionnaire used with participants was designed based on existing surveys (Whetstone & Carr-Chellman, 2001; Amico, 1995).

Using reflective questionnaires completed by the pre-service teachers at three milestones during a one-year internship (August, January, and April), the data were analyzed for emerging themes based on pre-service teachers' experiences in use of new literacies for instruction in language arts and their changing perspectives changed as they became increasingly embedded in the field. Using the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each questionnaire was read twice after the final milestone of questioning was completed before making a list of emerging themes. Three themes emerged after the first two readings: familiarity with new literacies, level of personal use of technology and importance of technology application in language arts instruction. Each questionnaire was then read a third time to code specific references related to each of the themes.

Results

Familiarity with New Literacies

Responses from participants in August was strikingly similar in that over half of the participants did not supply a definition of new literacies. Participants completed other questions requiring a short answer, so leaving the definition question blank was probably not a result of simply wanting to avoid short answer questions. Only two participants were able to list a definition of new literacies that was accurate; several participants listed it as "teaching outside the box" while others listed it was simply a "form of literacy." None of the participants offered an example of the new literacies as part of their definition. Similarly, most of the participants were not able to list a course where they had instruction about the new literacies. Only five participants listed a course focused on using computers in education. When listing ideas for how they planned to use new literacies in the classroom, only ten participants were able to list any ideas. One participant listed supplementary as a way new literacies would be used in her future classroom, and this lack of detail was echoed in the other vague responses, which included responses such as "student reflection" or "curriculum reinforcement."

The questionnaires from the second milestone in January did show some changes in responses from participants. All of the participants listed a language arts methods course from the fall semester as a course where they had instruction about the new literacies. The five participants who previously had listed the computers in education course also listed that course during the second milestone. Another major change in responses was that all participants were able to supply a definition of the new literacies. The definitions included detail regarding technology use with literacy and half of the participants listed one or more examples at the end of their definition. Participants had finally been exposed to the new literacies in their final semester of coursework. All of the participants except three were able to list detailed ideas for incorporating the new literacies in their future classrooms. Ideas included electronic class newsletters and specific types of blogs. Some participants even detailed different ideas for upper grades than for lower grades showing they understood how different levels could benefit from different ideas. During this second questioning, participants did include gaming as a way to incorporate new literacies in their future classrooms, which was not included during the first questioning, but none of the participants were able to list specific ideas regarding this incorporation.

The third milestone of questionnaires had many similar responses to the second milestone of responses. Participants listed the same courses that had provided instruction in new literacies, and the definition of new literacies were unchanged from the previous responses. The definition and understanding of new literacies had obviously remained clear in their minds. Some changes from the previous milestones included participants were able to list specific ideas regarding the use of gaming their classroom. Most of the participants listed particular games to use. The games listed were focused on grammar development in writers. Only one participant listed the idea of using writing topics dedicated to different video game storylines. The grammar video games were commonly used in classrooms where the participants were student teaching in the spring semester, so this idea came from their experience in the field. Another change in the responses from the third milestone was the number of new literacies that participants planned to use in their future classrooms. All of the participants during this third milestone of responses listed at least four different new literacies that they planned to use with several participants listing up to seven. This growth demonstrates the familiarity with use of new literacies.

Level of Personal Use of Technology

Participants were asked to list the types of technology they used at least once a week. The major change in these responses was striking because participants listed one to three types during the first milestone of responses. These responses included very basic technology such as texting, social networking, and using an e-reader. During the second milestone of questions, most participants added at least four more to their original responses. Additions included blogging, wikis, and digital photography. Further additions to participants'

personal use of technology at the third milestone of questioning with all of the participants adding at least two types of technology they regularly used. Additions at the third milestone included fan fiction and website creation. As participants were more immersed in learning about the new literacies through coursework and then seeing the new literacies used in classrooms, their own personal use with new literacies changed. Another notable difference in responses was with the connection between personal use of technology and planned use of technology in the classroom. As the types of technology ideas increased that participants planned to use in the classroom, their personal use with that technology also increased. A similar increase occurred with participants listing their level of comfort with technology; all of the participants described themselves as comfortable with technology by the third milestone of questioning, which is quite different from a majority of responses in the first and second milestone of questioning listing themselves as comfortable with some aspects of technology or only somewhat comfortable. As exposure to using new literacies or seeing them used in the classroom increased, the comfort level and personal use increased as well. One participant remarked in her third milestone questionnaire, "After student teaching I realized teaching doesn't always have to be in your seat reading from the book or writing to a prompt on notebook paper. Students can learn through gaming, blogging, and other technologies."

Importance of Technology Application in Language Arts Instruction

Questionnaires from the first milestone in August showed that the majority of participants listed science as the most important subject with which to use technology. They further justified that science needed technology in order to "understand and record data." Participants discussed extensively how science used technology more often and had a more vital need for technology over the other core subjects. Reading and writing was typically listed as the least important for incorporating technology. Participants explained that language arts needed little technology and was only used with students when wanting to make the subject matter more interesting to students.

During the second milestone of questioning, about half of the participants listed the addition of technology in language arts as more important than other content area subjects. Their explanation of this change came with experiences from their English methods course. Many of the participants explained they simply did not know how technology could be used with reading and writing. One participant said, "I just thought the only technology you used in writing was keyboarding and after the methods class I know of so many different things!" Participants who had previously not listed the new literacies as substantial to the instruction of writing and had changed their minds by the second milestone of questioning provided explanations such as, "There are many opportunities to use new literacies in research, drafting/editing/revising, and publishing." After just one semester in a course that provided information and ideas regarding the use of new literacies in instruction, participants were listing detailed ways that the new literacies could be used. Those participants who listed other content subject areas instead of language arts as needing technology did rate it consistently higher than they had on the previous questionnaire, and all participants mentioned that they had more knowledge about how to use technology in the areas of reading and writing.

This recognition of how to use new literacies in regard to teaching literacy increased with the third milestone of questioning as well. Thirty of the participants rated technology as vital for use in teaching language arts. In their explanation, they provided examples of how they had seen new literacies used during their student teaching experience. One participant explained: "I realize now that students can read different kinds of writing online like blogging or fan fiction and help it to mold their own writing." Several participants discussed their experiences in using new literacies during student teaching and commented that their instruction in language arts was better due to this use: "My mentor teacher showed me that children express themselves through everything they do. Technology can broaden both their reading and writing."

Implications

Even though the new literacies are an exciting and emerging area of literacy, pre-service teachers are unfortunately not typically offered much instruction in this area. Most university classrooms are not connecting new literacies to language arts instruction, yet that type of connection is how most students must learn because they will function with new literacies outside of school and will need to function as an adult in a very rich multimedia world. Modern literacy will be required to embrace the visual and language connection that is now commonplace in the structure of society's communication.

The study's benefits demonstrate the level of preparation of new literacies with pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers in this study did not have a strong background in understanding how to incorporate new literacies into writing instruction. Participants were not aware of new literacies or how to use them in language arts instruction until their last semester of course work. They were entering their senior year without even being able to articulate a definition of the new literacies. After a one-semester methods course that highlighted some ways to do just this, the results showed dramatic changes in the participants' knowledge about new literacies as well as their understanding of how to use them. Coursework should prepare pre-service teachers for how to use new literacies in literacy instruction as well as a basic understanding of what the new literacies encompasses. As students were exposed to the new literacies and ideas for their use in the classroom, they became much more familiar and open to their use. Participants began to realize a greater importance of the new literacies in language arts instruction as their familiarity increased, which connects to Dewey's ideas on experience within the realm of education. If pre-service teachers are provided with experience in the area of new literacies, they will gain knowledge and interest in using in their future classrooms.

Also, pre-service teachers' perceptions about this new aspect of literacy could add to future research that includes an analysis of data from observations to understand the reality of how often and how well the new literacies are being implemented in the writing classroom. This research only focused on pre-service teachers responses regarding their use of technology, but observation of lessons using the new literacies is needed to evaluate and understand how pre-service teachers are implementing such instruction in actual classrooms. A connection could be made between how mentor teachers use new literacies with instruction to pre-service teachers' instruction in the field. A participant wrote on her third milestone questionnaire, "My mentor teacher taught me that technology elevates the level of literacy and language development from average learning to enriched learning." Further research should examine how mentor teachers in the field are exposing pre-service teachers to new literacies, and such exposure should be consistent with the learning in their university coursework.

Implications from this research demonstrate that more research is needed to understand the rich opportunity of preparing pre-service teachers for their millennial writing students. As experience and relevance grow, the details of how the new literacies could be used in their future writing classroom increased substantially. After substantial time spent in the field working in writing classrooms, the participants were able to use that experience to develop very specific ideas about using the new literacies with their future writing lessons. Dewey's relevance and experience was the key to transforming these pre-service teachers into writing teachers who know how and why to use the new literacies. The study's benefits demonstrate how pre-service teachers' experiences with this new aspect of literacy application in the writing classroom could add to future research that includes an analysis of data from observations of actual teaching using new literacies in the writing classroom to understand the frequency and proficiency with which the new literacies are being implemented. This study only focused on the change of perspectives throughout a one-year period, but further research could follow pre-service teachers into their first year of teaching to discover how well their knowledge and field experience translated into practical application when teaching students to write.

Conclusion

Through this analysis of the questionnaires, themes revolving around the use of new literacies in the writing classroom are shown to saturate these responses. This saturation of themes demonstrated that pre-

service teachers considered language arts instruction as well as including the new literacies as important aspects of the writing process after their experiences changed. This research can help understand the perspective of the process from the view of pre-service teachers, and these themes cannot be ignored when working with them. By dissecting the themes and showing examples from the responses included in this study, we can begin to understand what to look for when preparing pre-service teachers for the writing classroom. A logical next step would be to take the emerging themes from the study and incorporate them into pedagogy that could be used in university classrooms and training sessions with pre-service teachers to strengthen the way experiences with new literacies are understood and implemented in the writing classroom. Such a movement must be grounded in preparing pre-service teachers to understand how to combine experience with technology and literacy.

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April Sanders, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Reading and Literacy,
Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama.
Kathy Voorhees Dixon, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction,
Texas A&M University - Commerce, Commerce, Texas