THE SHIFTING OF READING TEACHERS' DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT ON AN INTERCOLLEGIATE WEB BOARD

A Dissertation

by

SUSAN DEAN GILBERT

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ABSTRACT

THE SHIFTING OF READING TEACHERS' DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT ON AN INTERCOLLEGIATE WEB BOARD (May, 2005)

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Web board communities have the potential for providing for students access into and practice with the complex intersection of educational communities and electronic technologies, thus narrowing the digital divide. This study explored how in-service reading teachers enrolled in a master's level reading course use the opportunity to engage, via an intercollegiate web board, with a primary source author of sociocultural literacy to shape and develop their beliefs about literacy.

The discourse was examined through the lens of feminist theory as explicated in Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule's 1986 text, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (WWK). The data sets included, responses from a pre-course open-ended questionnaire, 45 dialogic exchanges on an intercollegiate web board, responses from a post-course open-ended questionnaire, and three follow-up interviews.

This study explored and revealed how online web boards expose students to a multiplicity of discourses. These include but are not limited to meaning making that is born out of extended relational contact and the ability to use the technology to construct ideas and frame them in a way that is clear and representational. Further, this study explored how meanings created on a web board community endure transfer and how they later manifested in teaching practices that put the student and their primary discourses at the center thus allowing for authentic, meaningful connections between theory and practice.