

“VISITOR TO ALL, NATIVE TO NONE”: HOW DIGITAL-NATIVE
TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS USE *BRICOLAGE* AND
MULTIPLE MODALITIES TO CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE

A Dissertation
by
DONALD LLOYD PRESNELL

Submitted to the Graduate School
Appalachian State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2012
Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership
Reich College of Education

“VISITOR TO ALL, NATIVE TO NONE”: HOW DIGITAL-NATIVE
TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS USE *BRICOLAGE* AND
MULTIPLE MODALITIES TO CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE

A Dissertation
by
DONALD LLOYD PRESNELL
December 2012

APPROVED BY:

Sara Olin Zimmerman, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

Les Bolt, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

David Considine, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Jim Killacky, Ed.D.
Director, Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

Edelma D. Huntley, Ph.D.
Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

Copyright by Donald Lloyd Presnell 2012
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

“VISITOR TO ALL, NATIVE TO NONE”: HOW DIGITAL-NATIVE TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS USE *BRICOLAGE* AND MULTIPLE MODALITIES TO CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE. (December 2012)

Donald Lloyd Presnell, B.A. Appalachian State University

M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Sara Olin Zimmerman, Ph.D.

The focus of this study is the current generation of “digital native” or “millennial” pre-service teachers and how, in their dual roles as last-semester students and future teachers, they adopt and use multiple modes to construct knowledge and actively reflect on the processes and potential of multimodality. It is a hermeneutic phenomenological study, concerned with the lived experiences of the participants and the multiple “texts” they create. The researcher uses the multimodal concept of bricolage—a nonlinear set of processes by which students adopt and “piece together” from multiple sources to construct meaning—as a frame for describing and analyzing how pre-service teacher education students engage multiple learning modes. Included in this process are the different types of multimodal “texts” these student-teachers produce and create.

Using data collected from an original survey (Multimodal Knowledge Construction Survey), student-participant interviews, teaching methods faculty interviews, and classroom observations, the author provides extensive description, analysis and discussion of how these “digital native” pre-service educators construct, synthesize and interpret meanings through

multiple modes—including nontraditional modes and traditional ones, such as print-based—as well as how students engage multiple modalities and different media forms to create or affect meanings, including the types of “texts” students produce and create beyond traditionally print-based ones.

As technologies and media forms proliferate, these simultaneous student-teachers must be aware of and actively reflect upon how different modalities contribute to and shape their own learning experiences as well as the learning experiences of their future students. The researcher calls this process “modal and textual awareness,” or MTA. These future educators must not only acknowledge but also appreciate and embrace multiple modalities and their accompanying affordances as a diverse source of pedagogical strategies for improving student learning.

The conceptual framework and guiding research questions are based on the multimodal studies of Gunther Kress, whose studies in turn are based on the pioneering work of the New London Group. Other components of the framework include Gardner’s multiple intelligences, Mayer’s principles of multimedia learning, and media forms. The two major themes of the study are students’ modal and textual awareness and an inherent, shared tension between structure & guidance and creativity & choice. The three major implications of the study address critical media literacy, assessment, and 21st century learning skills.