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

A Dissertation
by
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Abstract

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

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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.