

READ Journal Highlights

Benita R. Brooks, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Language, Literacy and Special Populations
Sam Houston State University

Winter 2016

Welcome to the third issue of *READ: An Online Journal for Literacy Educators*. The theme of this issue is **Globalizing Digital Literacies**. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2008), the term *digital literacies* is described as “a shorthand for the myriad social practices and conceptions of engaging in meaning making mediated by texts that are produced, received, distributed, exchanged, etc., via digital codification” (p. 5). Undergirding digital literacies are social practices that go beyond mere technical competencies to include the development of a particular way of thinking or “mindset” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Myers, Erickson and Small (2013) declare there is no unified definition of digital literacies. Yet, they point out that *digital literacies* can be seen as either: a) the acquisition of information age skills; b) the cultivation of habits of mind; or c) the engagement in digital cultures and practices. It is the third approach that is evident in this current issue.

In the article, “**21st Century Digital and Global Teacher Preparation Efforts: A Content Analysis of Major Assignments and Assessments in Stand-Alone Children’s Literature Courses**”, Laurie Sharp, Betty Coneway and Elisa Diego-Medrano present an in-depth study examining whether course syllabi for stand-alone children’s literature courses from university-based, traditional educator preparation programs in Texas are preparing preservice teachers seeking a Generalist (Grade Level EC-6) certification for success within 21st century digital and global environments. Employing a content analysis methodology, the findings reveal educator preparation programs need to consider ways to transform stand alone children’s literature courses to better accommodate the development of digital and global competencies among preservice teacher candidates.

In the article, “**Creating teachers’ digital toolboxes through modeling: Lessons learned from technology-rich teacher education classrooms**”, Tracey Hodges and Chyllis Scott argue that teacher educators need to provide preservice and in-service teachers with opportunities to practice and learn about new technologies because these experiences will help them better understand the benefits and limitations of different types of technology and build their confidence in using technology for instructional purposes. In support of this, the authors highlight their personal experiences with modeling technology pedagogy in teacher education courses. They share their experiences with the hope that technology is embraced as an integrated part of teacher preparation.

In the article, “**Understanding the Video Game Experience through Reader Response Theory**”, April Sanders conducts a case study of 15 participants to examine three mainstream video games using Louise Rosenblatt’s reader response theory. Sanders explains that adding gaming to the language arts classroom and the world of literacy means that games must be evaluated in all their complex splendor, meaning the visual and semiotic and interactive nature of the game must be considered wholly as text instead of looking at only one part of the game as text. According to Sanders, the way we view traditional print text as literacy cannot be the complete lens through which we view this new area of literacy.

In “21st Century Teaching, Learning and Play”, Elizabeth Cunningham, Rachel Lechmann and Elizabeth Lasley explore 21st century research on teaching practices in early childhood including play and technology. The purpose of this action research project was to develop a broader perspective on the future of early childhood teachers and their understanding of play and technology in the 21st century.

Finally, Burcu Ates and Alma Contreras-Vanegas recognize the Internet revolutionized the way we interact and communicate. In their book review of a recent publication, *Sociolinguistics of digital literacies* by Patricia Freidrich and Eduardo H. Diniz de Figueiredo, they discuss the author’s perspectives on how language has changed by globalization and digital communication. The book’s review/content go hand in hand with the theme of our issue, yet specifically exploring the globalization with regard to spread of English and Englishes and its status of a global language.

In his book review of a recent publication, *Conducting qualitative research of learning in online spaces*, by Hannah Gerber, Sarah Abrams, Jen Curwood and Alecia Magnifico, Slimane Aboulkacem discusses the ways the authors lay the foundation of researching learning in online spaces. The book helps researchers connect with various communities online with limited intrusion to the space. Additionally, this book provides researchers with methods to gain insight into learning in online spaces as well as the efficient tools for research design, data collection, and analysis with rigor. The book calls for using a multi-method approach and invites researchers to be creative. Information in the book also describes learning theories, such as behaviorist, socio-cognitive, and socio-cultural as connected to learning across online spaces. The important highlights also include the profile of a creative qualitative researcher and the ethical responsibility in collecting data from human subjects. Gerber et al., encourage researchers to push the traditional boundaries of traditional qualitative research methods and provide ideas to match with the technological advancement. Their work incites the community of scholars and researchers of online spaces to consider an array of research tools in researching the fluid networked field sites.

This issue includes an eclectic selection of book reviews written by Sam Houston Writing Project participants, a National Writing Project site and by preservice teachers enrolled in undergraduate literacy courses for those seeking grades 4-8 certification in the state of Texas.

Stay tuned for the next issue in June 2017: **(Re)envisioning Literacy for Struggling Readers.**

References

- Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (Eds.). (2007). *A new literacies sampler*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2008). Introduction: Digital literacies—Concepts, policies and practices. In C. Lankshear & M. Knobel (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Concepts, policies and practices* (pp. 1–16). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Meyers, E. M., Erickson, I., & Small, R. V. (2013). Digital literacy and informal learning environments: An introduction. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 38(4), 355–367. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2013.783597>

