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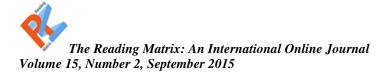Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.umw.edu/education

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of rethinking the content and delivery of literacy instruction in university courses for pre-service and in-service teachers by aligning curriculum and instruction to new literacies to prepare the next generations of teachers to support the literacy learning of students in K-12 schools in the 21st century. The author proposes rethinking curriculum and instruction in literacy courses by building up on the recommendations of the Middle State Commission on Higher Education to rethink our curriculum and instruction in literacy courses in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy instruction is said to be the cornerstone of any effective curriculum in K-12 schools. Teachers and teacher educators share the responsibility to prepare future generations to be successful in a global and interconnected society where the demands for high literacy skills are becoming more and more important to access college and high competitive jobs. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2007) claims in its report "all students should be grounded firmly in the foundations of literacy" (p.2). McLaughlin (2010) argues that students in K-12 schools should be exposed and be instructed in the use of new literacies crucial to become literate in a society where literacy left the narrow boundaries of reading, writing, and numeracy to embrace the world of technology where literacy is continuously redefined in its content and scope.

Reinking (1998) points out that the digital revolution in literacy brought changes not only at the pedagogical level or the way we read and think about a text but also and more importantly the way our cognitive apparatus processes literacy in an environment in which new forms or reading and writing are emerging and are being adopted by new generations of learners in K-12 schools. According to Gunning (2012) literacy has been going through a process of redefinition of its functions in a new literacies society. Gunning's (2012) position on the new frontiers of literacy see literacy instruction in higher education redefined by the challenges of teaching the 21st century generation of students. This generation was born in a time where it witnessed the evolution of literacy from books to iPods. From the 90s to the 2000s this new generation of college students engaged in the drastic variety of literacies from paper to pixels and by communicating via blogs and other types of internet access (Leu, 2002). Therefore, the compelling question for literacy instructors in colleges and universities in the United States today is how to prepare the new generations of literacy teachers to integrate the new literacies revolution to support students in K-12 schools in the 21st century.

This article aims to rethink the role and positionality of literacy instructors in colleges and universities in the U.S. to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers of literacy to support the literacy learning of students in K-12 schools by taking into account the crucial role of new literacies and technology developments in our global and interconnected society. A self-reflective approach will be used to rethink teacher's quality in literacy programs in colleges and universities in the U.S. and how the CCSS are changing the literacy landscape in K-12 schools. The following questions will be the lens through which I will discuss the conceptual changes literacy instructors should go through if they want to prepare a new generation of literacy teachers to effectively support students in K-12 schools: (a) what kind of literacy instructors do we want to become? (b) What curriculum changes are we going to make to support the new literacy needs of future teachers in K-12 schools?

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

Schon (1987) claims that in the world of professional practice we make sense of what we see, learn, and hear by a systematic use of self-reflective practice. Schon's (1987) positionality is further supported by Street (1992) who contends that through self-reflection our professional knowledge will be uncovered and we will become aware of where we need to improve as professionals in our fields or disciplines. Kadar (1997) also points out that our ability and commitment to develop a systematic self-reflective agenda allows us to fine-tuning our knowledge and begins a journey of professional transformation. This self-reflective agenda is the blue print and map that will guide us throughout our professional life and will enable us to become better professional in our fields of study or disciplines.

LaBoskey (2000) in her work reflective teaching for educators, leads us to begin to think how we can develop and fine-tune a self-reflective agenda with stop or checkpoints to see where we start, where we are going as professionals in the field, and begin to path the way for future endeavors in our professional fields or disciplines. Loughran (1994) invites us to consider the profound implications that reflection has on our professional identity and development. Loughran (1994) contends that reflection "is something that when understood and valued (by teacher educator and student teachers) can be developed through teacher education programs where teacher educators practice what they preach." (p. 291) Loughran (1994) bring our attention to the importance of coherence and reliability in our professions by being aware of our core values as educators through a systematic self-reflective practice.

Johns (2000) maintains that self-reflective practices is the breeding ground of the self-practitioner due to a commitment on behalf of the self-practitioner to reflect on things that matter to his/her own practice and ask questions on why things are as they are and envision and propose solutions to change and consistently improve the practitioner professional field of study or discipline. In the field of education self-reflective practice becomes paramount for educators in higher education who hold the responsibility to prepare teachers to support students in K-12 schools at a crucial moment where policy makers are asking to address the literacy demands of a complex society. Kind, Irwin, Grauter, and de Cosson (2005) write

> Education is longing for a deeper more connected, more inclusive, and more aware way of knowing. One that connects heart and hand and head and does not split knowledge into dualities of thought and being, mind, and body, emotion and intellect, but resonates with a wholeness and fullness that engages every part of one's being (p. 33).

Kind et al. (2005) invite educators to see education and the challenge to educate new generations of students as an endeavor where future teachers can continuously and systematically design, assess, and refine their content knowledge by using self-reflective practice. Self-reflective practice according to Kind et al. (2005) must try to answer the question: "How can reflective practice support and develop effective design and assessment of teachers' content knowledge to support students' learning in K-12 schools?" Such a question is at the core of teacher's education programs that are committed to develop professional educators to meet the demands and challenges of the 21st century schools.

Attard (2008) invites educators and professionals in the field of education to see self-reflective practice as a discovery process of one's inner potential through uncertainties, false starts, and epiphanies. In particular, Attard (2008, p. 307) identifies three areas crucial for the self-reflective practitioner journey of maturation and identity formation in his/her field or discipline: (a) uncertainty is ever-present in a journey of self-maturation as a professional; (b) reflection helps in revealing the complexity and uncertainty of teaching; (c) a tolerance of uncertainty promotes ongoing inquiry. The main argument in Attard (2008) is that uncertainty for the reflective practitioner "can be a sign of constant growth, development and learning." (p. 307).

Pollard (2002) maintains that self-reflectivity entails an ongoing analysis where the self-reflective practitioner experiences growth through uncertainty, ambiguities, and the ability to use critical thinking to systematically solve problems during his/her professional and personal growth. Ellis and Bochner (2000) see narrative as the path of the self-reflective practitioner and claims that self-reflection is found at the crossroads of what is expected and what is found with the self-reflective practitioner rethinking the possibilities of getting more information and in depth analysis emerging from the process of self-reflection and deep thinking. Yin (2003) supports Ellis and Bochner's (2000) positionality on self-reflective thinking by commenting on the importance of seeing self-reflective practice as an ongoing analysis instead of unrelated steps in a linear process.

Self-reflective practice in professional development contexts, as pointed out before, is a double edge sword since it appears linear on the surface, the narrative form it takes, but it becomes complex when the self-reflective practitioner begins the self-analytic journey to look back and reflect upon the thick self-narrative emerged from the bottom-up of the self-practitioner experience (Attard, 2008). Borko (2004) writes that "meaningful learning is a slow and uncertain process for teacher" (p. 6). Self-reflective teachers practitioners always move on the quick sands of self-reflective practice where the maze of false starts, uncertain beginnings and epiphanies never have clear and defined boundaries (Causarano, 2011). Self-reflective practitioners, even the most experienced ones, always start from rethinking and reshaping their self-reflective process and journey every time a new challenge, a new issue emerges in their professional growth.

Richert (2001) in his research on narrative as an experience text claims that life for educators in the classroom is always dynamic, chaotic, indefinite and uncertain. According to Causarano (2011) life as a professional educator is never the same even though the same routines are experienced every day. A disconnect between form and content in life in schools is expected if self-reflective practice is used by teachers and educators as a path for professional growth. Parker (1998) contextualizes self-reflective practices as "dynamic interrogation" (p. 122). According to Parker (1998) if we engage in self-reflective practice, we abandon our certainties, our ways of observing our professional field as a motionless, never-changing landscape. Instead, self-reflective practice bring to the surface incongruence in our field, intellectual ferment, and prepare the terrain in conceptual changes in beliefs and practices that prelude to paradigm shifts in curriculum and pedagogy in our fields or disciplines.

Dewey (1910/2010) argues that doubt stimulates inquiry. Dewey (1910/2010) writes

> In the suspense of uncertainty, we metaphorically climb a tree; we try to find some standpoint from which we may survey additional facts and [get] a more commanding view of the situation. Demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection (p. 11).

As educators who see our field as dynamic and ever-changing, self-reflective practice is the key to unlock new possibilities, to allow us to see the hidden path not taken and to try to support our students in their learning process by always attempting to refine our pedagogy in the delivery of the curriculum we teach. Self-reflective practice is the uncertain path that makes us uncomfortable in our own assumptions as educators and stimulates us to begin an uncertain journey to refine our thinking and pedagogy as educators, to go through an intellectual catharsis with the goal to be models for our students to follow in their professional development in the field of education. Lifelong learning in students in K-12 schools does not begin in the school setting but in teacher education programs where instructors continuously challenge and are challenged by future teachers to explore the hidden path of the new literacies curriculum through self-reflection and conceptual change in the ways literacy courses are designed and implemented in teacher preparation programs.

A FRAMEWROK TO BEGIN THE SELF-REFLECTIVE JOURNEY

What kind of literacy instructors do we want to become?

The National Commission on Teaching and American Future (1997) strongly suggests that we need to recruit, prepare, and support teachers who strive for excellence in teaching and want to prepare students to be lifelong learners for the 21st century. This is even true for literacy teachers in the new media literacies who are entering the profession with new challenges in teaching literacy to a generation of students born and raised in the Read/Write Web Era (Richardson, 2010). Carr (2011) points out that the new media revolution in society will change the way we read and use the printed word in the years to come. Carr (2011) writes

> Soon after the author Steven Johnson began reading e-books on his new Kindle, he realized that "the book's migration to the digital realm would not be a simple matter of trading ink for pixels, but would likely change the way we read, write, and sell books in profound ways." He was excited by the Kindle's potential for expanding "the universe of books at our fingertips" and making book searchable as Web pages." But the digital device filled him with trepidation: "I fear that one of the great joys of book reading-the total immersion in another world, or in the world of the author's ideas-will be compromised. We all may read books the way we read magazines and newspapers: a little bit here, a little bit there" (p. 103).

Whatever fear or trepidation we have for the new digital era and the emergence of New Literacies in our society and in schools, we need to realize that as literacy instructors, preparing literacy teachers for the 21st century, we need to understand the profound impact that new media literacies will have on our students and ourselves and the way thinking and learning will be affected by this paradigm shift in literacy learning in K-12 schools in the United States.

> Siemens (2002) argues that the nature of knowledge in the digital era is changing due to new modes of learning and new ways in which our students process information in an interconnected media culture. The new generation of students in our K-12 schools can be defined

as the generation living and learning in a connected/connective world. This new generation sees learning not as a linear process reproducing the left-right reading processes embedded in book reading but learning and the acquisition of knowledge as dynamic and multidimensional where linear connections leave room for multiple mode of searching for and creating knowledge. This is what Siemens (2002) defines as connectivism or the continual expansion of knowledge where new and novel connections open new interpretations and understandings on particular topics or issues.

Poore (2011) explains that new literacies open up not only new modes of thinking and understanding in K-12 schools but also and more importantly new literacies will open up new knowledge spaces for the students and teachers in K-12 schools in the 21st century. Poore (2011) following Levy's work on anthropological spaces writes

> It is obviously this last space, the knowledge space that concerns us in the digital age. For Levy, knowledge is necessarily shared and cannot be separated between human individuals. Such knowledge is knowledge of the other, a 'knowledge of-living' which is 'inseparable from the construction and habitation of a world' (Levy, 1994/1999, p.12). We must view others as a source of knowledge, says Levy, not as an object or repository of it, and it is through this way of thinking that we come to know ourselves. Thus the computerization of society, via the knowledge space, has the potential to 'promote the construction of intelligent communities in which our social and cognitive potential can be mutually developed and enhanced' (Levy, 1994, 1999, p. 12) (p. 21).

If this is what is happening in our schools with our students, the question posed at the beginning acquires new meanings on what kind of literacy instructors we want to be for our pre-service and in-service teachers who will join the profession in a new media literacies world. The most important paradigm shift in preparing literacy teachers is how to integrate the new media with diverse methods, materials, and different learning styles the new generation of students presents in K-12 schools. As McLaughlin (2010) contends we need to prepare the new generation of literacy teachers to have an in-depth knowledge of various aspects of learning. Also, McLaughlin (2010) points out "new abilities to engage with text" (p. 3) that students are developing in K-12 schools in the United States. This engagement with the text is not limited to traditional forms of text but extends to new forms of text that includes digital forms of text that require to rethink the way we apply the traditional analytical tools of reading to new forms of textual analysis.

Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz (2011) claim that new literacies are transforming the way we read and write. Vacca et al. (2011) write

> In less than a decade (specifically the 1990s), the Internet made information accessible to a degree never before imagined. Even five-year olds, if they know how, can find the most arcane bits of information in seconds. And therein lies the challenge for teachers in this era of "new literacies": How can we help our students be effective readers and writers when our concepts of "literacy" are evolving so rapidly? How will we help students find, make meaning of, and evaluate the information available to them via electronic media? How do we help young people keep up with the immense changes occurring in electronic media when we may have trouble keeping up with these changes ourselves? (p. 29).

What Vacca et al. (2011) are pointing out here is the need to rethink ourselves as literacy instructors to support our pre-service and in-service teachers to enter the teaching profession ready to engage students in meaningful and effective literacy practices where New Literacies must be taken into account in the curriculum in K-12 schools. Vacca et al. (2011) states that "It is simply not possible to adequately prepare students for reading and writing in the twenty first century without integrating new literacies into the everyday life of today's classrooms." (p. 29) Thus, the question

that follows is on how to rethink through self-reflection these new changes and challenges in literacy to reconstruct our curriculum in teacher's education programs to align it to teach our pre-service literacy teachers how to integrate new technologies in the teaching of literacy.

Changes in the higher education curriculum

As literacy instructors we need to rethink the way we design our literacy curriculum to prepare literacy teachers in K-12 schools. Vacca et al. (2011) talk about the importance of using new literacies as an integral part to the strategic knowledge and skills that every student in all content areas will need to develop to be discipline-literate in the twenty-first century (p. 35). But the most compelling question to ask is the way we are going to address the curriculum changes to prepare the next generation of literacy teachers to support student learning in K-12 schools. The issue at stake has important ramifications for public education in the years to come since a systematic and coherent reflection on literacy curriculum in higher education will give opportunities to our students in K-12 to be ready for the job market and to acquire critical thinking skills to be life-long learners.

Henderson and Scheffler (2003) claim that the impact of the Information Age exacerbated its importance and expanded the types of literacies students need in the new information society. Henderson and Scheffler (2003) propose to rethink literacy curricula in higher education by aligning them with state curriculum, which incorporate new media literacies as a core component of literacy instruction in K-12 schools. Dorr and Besser (2002) comment

With the proliferation of technology in public and private arenas, it is important for teacher education programs to develop strategies for ensuring that teacher candidates are able to understand the complexity of information literacy. Teachers must be prepared to use technology for their professional growth and learning. In addition, teachers need to be able to teach in ways that connect to students' lives and expand their students' understandings, knowledge and use of technology (p. 4).

Henderson and Scheffler (2003) align to Dorr and Besser (2002) analysis that a paradigm shift in literacy curricula in higher education is necessary to prepare students to become literate in the 21st century. Henderson and Scheffler (2003) report the study conducted by the National Forum on Information Literacy (2002) as supporting evidence that teacher education programs need to integrate information literacy into instruction. Henderson and Scheffler (2003) explain

The National Forum on Information Literacy (National Forum, 2002) was to work with teacher education programs to ensure that new teachers could integrate information literacy into instruction. However, in its Progress Report on Information Literacy (National Forum, 1998), the Forum reported that no progress had been realized toward modifications of teacher education and performance expectations to include information literacy concerns (p. 391).

Kist (2005) proposed a framework to align literacy curricula in teacher education programs with the new literacy classroom where literacy teachers are able to support daily work in multiple forms of representation. Moreover, Kist (2005) also envisions a new literacies classroom where students learn via a balanced instruction between the traditional print and the new technologies. Content and process in a new literacies classroom is embedded in a constant state of dynamic development where students access knowledge through multiple sources by applying critical thinking skills to new modes of learning (Kist, 2007a).

Luke (2000) in her article on New Literacy in Teacher Education invites literacy instructor to self-reflect, to systematically ponder on the importance to take into account what New Media Literacies can offer to support students' learning in public schools. Luke (2000) claims that

educators should abandon the "techno-phobic" attitude towards New Media Literacies and begins to analyze the possibility to incorporate new forms of reading and writing and interpret the world around us with the new digital generation of students in our public schools. This echoes what Jee (2000) claims in his article on A New Media Literacy Studies.

Jee (2000) argues that new media literacies are an important component of the new literacy curriculum in schools and teacher education program since they address changes in literacy in the new capitalist society. According to Jee (2000) new capitalism demands new graduates to have a knowledge of literacy that goes beyond the traditional definition of literacy (reading, writing, numeracy) and asks the new generation of graduates to interact with multiple literacies where the boundaries of the word are not so well defined or confined in the traditional forms of texts as it used to be the case one decade ago. The interrelationship between new capitalism and schooling (curriculum and instruction) is at an epochal turning point in the history of American education (Gee, 1998).

Gee (1998) points out that the new global society will force use to rethink, to profoundly self-reflect on the way we teach our pre-service and in-service teachers of literacy to align curriculum and instruction to the new ramification of language in a complex society. This process of self-reflection and revisiting the principles and applications of curriculum instruction in literacy programs in US colleges and universities must begin with the ability to reconnect to the curriculum guidelines of states to become aware and understand how literacy is changing in an interplay between the classroom and the sociocultural environment in which literacy is taught and acquired by the new generation of students in K-12 schools (Luke, 2000).

This rethinking of our roles as literacy educators in the age of new media literacies is where the convergence of curriculum, and instruction, and self-reflective practice takes place. The process of analyzing state requirements for literacy instruction, literacy curriculum in literacy programs in colleges and universities and self-reflective practices to redesign the way we prepare our future literacy teachers to become literacy leaders in a complex society is a matter of literacy metacognition (Luke, 1997). This process of literacy metacognition should create the condition for literacy learning in what Raphael, Florio-Ruane, Kehus, George, Hasty, and Highfield (2001) define as Literacy learning in a diverse teacher inquiry network (emphasis in original). According to Raphael et al. (2001) collaboration and dialogue among literacy teachers can lead to knowledge and understanding how to create, support and implement a network of literacy professionals that can propose important changes to literacy instruction in K-12 schools. These changes must come from a serious rethinking of how to reconstruct curriculum and instruction in a complex knowledge society where teachers are ready to take the challenge to teach new generations of students by creating a network of engaged educators able to support the curriculum and instruction demands of US public education today. I contend that this comes from our commitment as instructor to self-reflect to our teaching philosophy and pedagogy and to lead the way towards a paradigm shift in literacy instruction in our courses in higher education. As Raphael et al. (2001) claim we need one another from policy makers to school districts to begin this paradigm shift in literacy instruction and to understand how to create a community of practice for literacy curriculum and instruction.

Raphael et al. (2001) write

>…we have drawn on the Teachers Learning Collaborative to illustrate the potential of teacher for research for informing our field, as well as to demonstrate a particular model within which such research can be accomplished. Teachers work with peers, as well as university-based researchers and teacher educators, to investigate complex problems both

in theory and practice…Through conversation in professional study groups, we became convinced that we needed a new, or at least a substantially modified curriculum (pp. 604-605).

The new and substantially modified curriculum we need, following the suggestions of Raphael et al. (2001), is a systematic integration between media literacy, media education, and the academy (Christ and Potter, 1998). According to Christ and Potter (1998) we need an integration of curriculum design, teaching and assessment of new media literacies that will be aligned with university courses in teacher education programs. This is more important than ever since the penetration and establishment of media in cultures and society around the world is already part of our educational landscape (Jee, 2000; Luke, 2000). The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003) writes

The National Research Council (2001, pp. 78-79) recommends the use of a metacognitive approach to learning, because it enables students "to step back from problem solving activities" and to reexamine their progress. Drawing on research, the Council also discusses some of the merits of metacognition and its strong links to "domain-specific knowledge and expertise." (p. 2).

New media literacies according to the report of Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003) can enhance metacognition in students due to the ability to support multiple modes of learning and teaching. One crucial aspects of using new media literacies to prepare literacy teachers for K-12 education is that knowledge is dissected and critically assessed from multiple sources creating the opportunity for teachers and students to co-create and analyze knowledge within new contexts of learning (Richardson, 2010).

As a literacy instructor in a liberal arts college, I see the use of new media literacies not as a substitute for the traditional teaching and learning but as an addendum to enhance metacognition and social and communication skills in future teachers of literacy in K-12 schools. These components of teachers' professional development are crucial to help pre-service teachers to become agents of change in schools. Starkey (2008) comments that this revolution in teaching and pedagogy will ask educators from schools to colleges to reconsider the way we design, implement and assess our curriculum. The more we advance in the 21st century, the more our concept of literacy changes according to the new modes of learning of our students and the reception of literacy in our complex society. It is in turn an issue on how literacy instructors will receive and rethink their mode of teaching and the curriculum in the light of changes in the new media literacies era.

I propose following the model of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003) to self-reflect and rethink our curriculum and instruction in literacy courses in higher education as follows: (a) support pre-service literacy teacher's comprehension by exposing them to subject knowledge and principles of literacy content knowledge and instruction by a systematic use of new media literacies; (b) the use of new media literacies should enable pre-service and in-service teachers to make connections with the pedagogical content of their areas of expertise with the goal to transfer this knowledge into their teaching by selecting appropriate resources and methods to enable student to make connections between prior knowledge and developing subject knowledge; (c) new media literacies should be used by pre-service literacy teachers to design, apply, and implement formative and evaluative assessment of students' content knowledge; (d) new media literacies can support pre-service teachers to use metacognition to create a virtuous literacy cycle of learning and teaching in K-12 schools.

This model is paramount because it allows literacy instructors to design and develop literacy courses by addressing the new modes of learning of students in K-12 schools and support pre-service teachers in becoming aware of the new literacies modes of learning and new knowledge spaces (Poore, 2011). The model presented in this paper aims to connect in a more systematic way the literacy demands of states department of education with the goal to model literacy instruction according to the standards of the core curriculum in K-12 schools in the United States. A literacy matrix from which we can systematically self-reflect on how to improve and refine our courses on literacy in teacher education programs based on the dynamic changes in literacy standards in K-12 schools.

English Language Learners and Multiple Literacies: The Next Steps in literacy instruction

The systematic changes brought by technology and multimodality in K-12 schools in the US impacts the way students who are linguistically and culturally different learn the academic language and lexicon across the curriculum. In the context of the present discussion on self-reflective practice and literacy learning in the 21st century, the leading question is: How is the literacy curriculum going to change to support English Language Learners in literacy instruction in K-12 schools? The question represents the beginning of a more complex exploration at the crossroads of literacy curriculum and instruction for second language learners in an age of multiple literacies. What follows is an attempt to present an initial framework to lay out the foundations for self-reflection and multliteracies models to support ELL students in K-12 schools.

English language learners benefit from an interactive and multimodal approach to literacy by reading texts in different modalities (Lewis & Fabos, 2005). English language learners acquire literacy in a second language more effectively if they are immersed in a rich literacy environment where multiple forms of texts are used in planning curriculum and instruction. Vygotsky (1934) claims that learners acquire critical skills when the environment-the context of learning and the educator-scaffold and systematically support the learners in his/her endeavor. If we translate this into the context of English Language Learners and multiple literacies, we see how crucial multiple texts become in the learning of English as L2.

The above discussion focuses our attention to the content and delivery of curriculum and instruction in literacy courses in higher education taking into account that pre-service and in-service teachers will support a growing population of second language speakers in K-12 schools in the US. One answer among many is to recognize that English Language Learners, as first language speakers, access texts using sophisticated literacy competencies. These competencies range from popular culture, visual and digital technologies, different genres of texts and actively participating in social networks (Witte, 2007). In turn, English language learners participate in the L1 literate culture by accessing sources in their new context of learning.

As literacy instructors preparing the next generation of literacy teachers in US schools, we need to acknowledge the importance of multiple literacies to support English language learners in the classroom. We must acknowledge that English language learners are an integral and crucial component of the education landscape in US schools. Therefore, our curriculum design ad literacy instruction must take into account the linguistic and cultural processes of second language learners and how new concepts of texts influence the literacy learning process in English language learners.

As literacy instructors in higher education we must self-reflect on how English language learners are affected by literacy as a social practice (Street, 1995). Skinner and Hagood (2008) write

> Literacy seeks to shed light upon how students' cultures, contexts, and histories are embedded within their literacy learning. Moreover, a social perspective of literacy highlights the idea that students will bring their own cultural resources, agendas, and purposes to literacy learning (p. 13).

This is crucial for English language learners and their literacy education in a second language. This approach to literacy supports literacy learning in English language learners since it validates the rich background knowledge, personal histories, and life experiences that contribute to second language learning within a rich literacy environment. This is the challenge and the blessing in literacy instruction in the 21st century. Literacy instructors in higher education must teach to the next generation of literacy teachers in K-12 schools in the US.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article discussed the importance of self-reflection and multiple literacies as a starting point to rethink curriculum and instruction in literacy courses in colleges and universities in the US to prepare literacy teachers for the 21st century. In particular, the goal here is to invite literacy instructors in colleges and universities to rethink and re-align the curriculum of their courses to consider new media literacies as new possibilities to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to teach literacy in the content areas in K-12 schools. This is a challenge in some ways since as literacy instructors we are asked to rethink the way we conceptualize, develop, and deliver literacy instruction in our universities courses. Moreover, we need to learn new media in order to instruct our pre-service teachers to be ready to take the challenge to use literacy instruction in new and oftentimes uncharted territories of literacy learning (Hobbs and Jensen, 2009).

Hobbs and Jensen (2009) argue that multiple literacies must be integrated into the K-12 curriculum by a systematic and well planned agenda where the new ways of teaching and learning literacy aim to support students' literacy acquisition in the content areas. However, as Hobbs and Jensen (2009) point out this conceptual change in teaching literacy with new media is not an easy task both for educators and students alike. The challenge is not only to create a new culture of teaching literacy with the new media in pre-service teachers in teacher education programs but also and more importantly to help students in K-12 schools to see new media as educational more than entertaining. A conceptual change that is not easy to achieve in the short term due to the sociocultural environment in which the media generation was born and raised with the idea of media as the main form of entertainment in their lives (Fahri, 2009).

Hobbs and Jensen (2009) and Hobbs (2008) comment that when students, parents, and teachers talk about the use of the Internet they are not talking about the same thing. Adults use the Internet in a way that differs conceptually from adolescents since adults see the Internet as a more business-like professional environment while adolescents see the same environment as a place for entertainment and less academic (Hobbs and Jensen, 2009). Thus, the challenge is to initiate a paradigm shift in the use of the new media in the media generation in K-12 schools. This paradigm shift has to be planned and implemented from the top to bottom or from teacher education programs down to the classroom since we need to teach literacy courses in a way that will help future literacy teachers to be ready to walk the path of this paradigm shift and

conceptual change in teaching literacy to pre-service teachers in teacher education programs in the United States (Vaidhyanathan, 2008).

Domine (2009) and Sewell (2010) maintain that educators have the ethical responsibility to teach students how to use the new media to learn literacy in a way that is appropriate to academic tasks and environments. But literacy teachers need to enter the classroom and implement this agenda with a new media code of ethics already acquired in their teacher education courses if they want or wish to become agents of change and leaders in the literacy lives of their students. This requires a systematic and in depth reflection on the part of literacy instructors and administrators in teacher education programs in the United States to support pre-service teachers to become part of changes in literacy instruction. Nothing will percolate down to the students in K-12 classrooms if the paradigm shift does not begin in teacher education programs where as literacy educators we must take the first and hardest step to question the way we think about literacy instruction and the core curriculum itself if literacy in the 21st century wants to become part of a democratic process to prepare students to read the world from different and complex perspectives (Mihailidis, 2009).

In an era in which educators, policy makers, and interested parties are discussing how to lead American public education into the 21st century, we, as literacy educators, must take the lead to rethink our crucial role in preparing the next generation of teachers to support students' learning in a complex and competitive society, an open society where job markets are not confined to the local anymore. As literacy educators, we have the ethical responsibility to continually challenge our assumptions on the pedagogy of literacy and its meaning in changing times. It is our responsibility, I believe, to self-reflect on the efficacy of our teaching literacy to future literacy teachers in K-12 schools and always put under scrutiny our own assumptions on our knowledge about literacy and literacy instruction and take risks to explore new and often uncharted ways in teaching literacy (Brauer, 2010). We cannot create literacy teachers as agents of change in K-12 schools if we are not ready to become those agents of change ourselves and become models for future generations of literacy teachers. The challenge has just begun.

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