Chapter 46

Students’ Out-of-School Writing Practices in an Educational Facebook Application: The Case of Hot Dish

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors seek to help educators understand trends in students’ writing outside of the classroom, with a particular emphasis on illuminating students’ purposes and practices in writing within social media spaces. The authors synthesize current research on students’ Internet and social media practices and offer a case study from their own research on students’ writing within an educational Facebook application called Hot Dish. This chapter seeks to elucidate the reciprocal relationship between students out of school writing using popular social media and their in-school practices. Ultimately, the authors seek to help readers make connections between what students are doing with new media in their leisure time and the improvement of students’ writing performance in K-12 settings, believing there may be important but under-explored synergies.

INTRODUCTION

The New York Times recently headlined a story that inquired: “If Twitter is a work necessity …” (Preston, 2012). The article argued that digital literacy is fast becoming a necessary skill as employers seek employees with social media savvy. Increasingly ubiquitous access to the Internet and social media in schools, homes, and communities makes new forms of reading and writing possible, and these influence educators’ desired competencies for learners and goals for learning, instruc-
Recent NCTE Policy Briefs suggest the convergence of in-school and out-of-school literacy practices with new media (NCTE, 2011). NCTE’s (2013) framework for designing, implementing, and assessing a literacy curriculum for the 21st century includes: