Chapter 3
Engendering Multiliteracies Using Digital Games and Digital Literature: Towards a Pedagogical Framework

Nolan Bazinet
University of Sherbrooke, Canada

ABSTRACT
Recent calls for critical education in regards to social and digital media argue for the importance of 21st century media and literacy skills (Butler, 2017; Storksdieck, 2016). These calls join a chorus of academics who have long been calling for the importance of multiliteracy development in education (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; New London Group, 1996). In searching for texts that may facilitate multiliteracy development, digital games has emerged as an option in formal education, given the complex critical thinking, learning, and literacy practices they can afford (Beavis, O’Mara, & McNeice, 2012; Gee, 2007; Squire, 2008; Steinkhueler, 2010). The chapter explores the multiliterate affordances when using digital literature and digital games at an English language college in Quebec. Results show that the implications of using digital games to engender multiliteracy development are substantive.

INTRODUCTION
Digital technology has had an increasing presence in the lives of children and young adults over the last 20 years. The American, non-profit organization Common Sense Media claims that 89% of teens now own a cellphone while 70% use social media multiple times a day (Rideout & Robb, 2018). Similarly, Statistics Canada reports that 96% of Canadian young people use the Internet on a daily basis or own their own smartphone (Statistics Canada, 2018, p.13). Given the ubiquity of digital media in young people’s lives, recent calls for critical education in regards to social and digital media argue for the importance...
Engendering Multiliteracies Using Digital Games and Digital Literature

of 21st century media and literacy skills (Butler, 2017; Storksdieck, 2016). Their concerns join others in New Literacy Studies who have been calling for the importance of more extensive literacy development in education (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee & Hayes, 2011; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; New London Group, 1996). More specifically, the authors above emphasize the importance of students being literate within multiple literacies, hence the term multiliteracy, a concept first conceived by the New London Group (hereafter NLG) in their influential article “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures” (1996). Their article argued for a more sociocultural understanding of literacy that reflects the literacy practices young people are engaged in outside the classroom. Thus, the NLG argued that an emerging cultural, institutional, and global order was being confronted by a variety of forms of digital communication and media. Consequently, language as the principal mode of meaning needed to be reassessed. Hence an equal or greater emphasis on multimodality, defined as the dynamic relationship between various modes of meaning, became apparent, particularly in the media saturated age of late 20th century society.

Concerns about multiliteracy development in education are equally present in the province of Quebec, Canada. Similar apprehensions were particularly evident in the Quebec’s government Politique de la réussite éducative (MEES, 2017), evident by one of their policies to “better integrate 21st century skills and digital opportunities” (p.43). Moreover, a focus on the development of critical thinking in regards to media and technology is equally emphasized within the ministry’s general objectives featured in college course curricula. These objectives demand that students need “to become aware of the role of the media and technology in culture and lifestyles” and to “develop their critical and ethical thinking” (MELS, 2009, p. 22). Yet despite the growing concern about multiliteracy development, it is not clear how teachers (especially English literature teachers) may develop multilliterate teaching.

One of perhaps the most intriguing possibilities for multiliteracy development has been in regards to digital games. This field falls under digital game based learning (DGBL), which has been a developing phenomenon within, and outside academia. DGBL first began gaining prominence through the works of authors such as Pensky (2001). DGBL has since been appropriated for the complex critical thinking, learning and literacy practices they can afford (Ferdig & Pytash 2014; Gee, 2007, 2011; Salen & Zimmerman, 2004; Squire, 2008; Steinkuehler, 2007; 2011; Steinkuehler, Squire, & Barab, 2012). Recent trends to use games in formal learning environments have inspired scholars to champion games and their ability to enact a “constellation of literacy practices” (Steinkuehler, 2007, p. 301-302) in which youth in particular are often involved in, while others state that digital games allow for meaning-making that can offer “multiple trajectories and directionalities” (Abrams, 2015, p. 354). Potential trajectories have been explored by scholars in Australia (Beavis, O’Mara, & McNiece, 2012; Beavis, Walsh, Bradford, O’Mara, Apperley, & Gutierrez, 2015) who have theorized the potential for digital games in the English classroom. These scholars explicitly tie literacy development to digital game playing and document potential avenues to explore this; yet despite their ground-breaking work, little is offered on what occurs in the classroom.

In Canada, multiliterate development with DGBL for has demonstrated interesting possibilities. For instance, Sanford and Madill (2007) interrogate whether using digital games as a point of engagement for adolescent boys can facilitate the attainment of multiliteracies and engage them in effective learning. The authors position their study with regards to research that highlights the difficulties boys are having acquiring traditional literacy skills (reading and writing). Thus, the authors question whether such
Related Content

Promoting Spoken Interaction and Student Engagement With Board Games in a Language Teaching Context

Using Multi-Modal Data to Examine Equity in Activity-Monitor Gaming Within Real-World Communities
Mary K. Stewart, Danielle E. Hagood and Cynthia Carter Ching (2020). *Global Perspectives on Gameful and Playful Teaching and Learning* (pp. 118-142).

Case Study of an Epistemic Mathematics Computer Game: Investigating Players' In-Game Mathematical Identity
Chantal Buteau and Eric Muller (2020). *Global Perspectives on Gameful and Playful Teaching and Learning* (pp. 27-56).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/case-study-of-an-epistemic-mathematics-computer-game/242541?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/case-study-of-an-epistemic-mathematics-computer-game/242541?camid=4v1a)

Preservice Teachers Consider Game-Based Teaching and Learning
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/preservice-teachers-consider-game-based-teaching-and-learning/242553?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/preservice-teachers-consider-game-based-teaching-and-learning/242553?camid=4v1a)