Chapter 11
Access, Opportunity, and Curriculum Making Through Multimodal Meaning-Making and Technology Integration in Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes an investigation into exploring meaning making through multimodal literacy practices and technology integration for teacher education within the context of an online, secondary reading course for K-12 teachers. Through the use of a collaborative conference protocol, discourse with cross-disciplinary critical friends, and visual thinking data analysis strategies, a teacher educator examined existing multimodal literacy practices and then studied course redesign and technology integration. Results include recognizing opportunities for diverse learners to access and use prior knowledge in the construction of new knowledge, reframing the course delivery platform as a multimodal “text,” increasing opportunity for learners to construct and communicate complex understandings through multimodal texts and technology-infused assessments, and learners’ curriculum making through transmediation mediated by technology.

INTRODUCTION

Existing literature focused on educational research and the study of teacher education practices has characterized construct of experience as both problematic and promising for growth in the knowledge and practice of teaching (e.g. Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Bullough, 1997; Dewey, 1938; Edge, 2015; Hamilton, 2004; Loughran & Russell, 1997; Munby & Russell, 1994; Nolan, 1982). Tensions between

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depictions of experience in education acknowledge that while the “authority of experience” (Munby & Russell, 1994) honors the knowledge individuals develop from personal experiences, the challenge for teacher educators is to both value their learners’ experiences while also challenging them to see and “to interpret their own meaning in ways that they have not had to before and to translate insights into future teaching” (Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 164). As Berry (2004) noted, few studies clearly illustrate this tension in action.

This chapter illustrates a teacher educator’s negotiating the authority of experience within the setting of teaching, examining, and redesigning a graduate literacy course in response to the teacher educator’s and learners’ experiences. Results from this multi-phase investigation include recognizing opportunities for diverse learners to access and use prior knowledge for constructing new knowledge, reframing the course delivery platform (learning management system) as a multimodal “text,” increasing opportunity for learners to construct and communicate complex understandings through multimodal texts and technology-infused assessments, and teachers’ curriculum making through transmediation mediated by technology. Technology integration was not an intentional focus of the investigation; however, incorporating VoiceThread and Camtasia technologies as ways to facilitate multimodal teaching, learner-learner, and learner-content, and instructor-learner interactions, and learners’ multimodal assessments resulted in teachers generating new knowledge for use in their own teaching practices. This chapter focuses on the process of re-seeing multimodal pedagogy in an online course through collaborative self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) methodology, and then describes course design through technology integration intended to foster practicing teachers’ learning experiences, knowledge construction, and K-12 instruction using technology.

BACKGROUND

In teacher education, meaningful teacher learning is essential; teachers who learn to use technology for professional learning in meaningful learning contexts and in collaboration with other professionals are more apt to provide similar agentive learning experiences for their learners (Standerford, Sabin, Anderson, Edge, Lubig, & Cameron-Standerford, 2012; National Writing Project, n.d.). If teachers are to help their K-12 learners to read and make meaning from multimodal texts, this knowledge must be a part of teacher education (Riddett-Moore & Siegesmund, 2014; Serafini, 2015).

Technology in Knowledge Building

According to Langer (2011), technology is one of the richest spaces for engaging learnes in knowledge building. Through technology, there is space to explore, generate, and imagine. There are opportunities to acquire language, modes of thinking, and problem solving. Langer (2011) writes:

*From an envisionment-building perspective, the most productive and promising use of technology is its ability to provide learners with cognitive “playgrounds” that let them take on disciplinary problems and manipulate ideas in thinking through their understandings and further developing them, with assistance from peers and teachers as well as the wider world. Online interactions with classmates as well as teachers are important opportunities for learners to learn the vocabulary and modes of presentation and argument that are appropriate to the discipline. Uses of technology designed to involve learners in*