Chapter 5
Investigating Cultural Models of Technology and Literacy Integration in Pre-Service Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT
This chapter reports research from a larger study that investigates the complexities of preparing digital native students to become digital native teachers in a teacher education program at a large, southern university. Specifically, this chapter examines faculty instructors’ beliefs regarding technology and literacy integration in a required pre-service teacher education course. The authors address the challenges of teaching and learning in the twenty-first century with particular attention to issues of multiliteracies and technology integration in pre-service preparation. Using New Literacy Studies and discourse analysis, the authors analyze instructors’ discourse finding a culture of pedagogical beliefs that embodies an expansion of what media, technology, and literacy integration means in pre-service teacher education settings in the twenty-first century.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently there is a wealth of scholarship reporting that the nature of literacy in the digital world of the twenty-first century is vastly different from the traditional conceptions of literacy that have dominated educational practice in the past. Scholars explain that a range of complex multiliteracies, such as computer literacy, information literacy, and media literacy, are necessary for managing information and for engaging in cultural exchange, communication, and civic discourse (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009; Warlick, 2009). Specifically, research in the field of media literacy education (MLE) advocates for augmented definitions of literacy (Bergsma, et al., 2007; Hobbs, 2010; Thoman & Jolls, 2004) that respond to increasing access and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for gathering information, making decisions, and communicating ideas (http://namle.net).

Recent scholarship suggests that effective incorporation of technology and media may depend on the expansion of definitions of literacy to include ICTs and the complex range of competencies and expertise that emerge from the analysis and production of nonprint media and technology texts in teaching and learning (Gibbons, 2012; Redmond, 2013). Yet, it is unclear whether or not digital natives (Prensky, 2001) entering the teaching profession will be able to more effectively integrate digital media, technology, and literacy in their future classroom practice. Despite their coming of age in a wired world where they have vast prior experiences with digital media and technology (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2010), research reports that being a digital native does not translate to effective classroom pedagogy using media and technology (Dutt-Doner, Allen, & Corcoran, 2005; Lei, 2009; see also Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009).

This chapter explores research that investigated multiple dimensions of a required teacher preparation course called Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age. The course is a core requirement in the University’s teacher education program. Course objectives cumulatively underscore an examination of how emerging technologies are transforming schools and society, as well as the implications these changes have for teaching and learning. The purpose of this study was to examine the course by way of faculty instructors’ beliefs and practices regarding media, technology, and literacy integration in preparing digital natives to become future classroom teachers. A secondary purpose was to investigate pre-service teachers’ knowledge, skills, and perspectives related to literacy, technology, and pedagogy during enrollment in the course. This twofold research focus supports a larger investigative effort to isolate characteristics of effective pre-service teacher education for literacy and technology teaching in the digital age. This chapter addresses the research purpose through an investigation of faculty instructors’ beliefs surrounding media, technology, and literacy integration in teacher preparation.

BACKGROUND

Technology preparation for PK-12 teachers has been the focus of national and international reform efforts, funding and grant initiatives, and professional development at many levels, including district-level initiatives and training for currently practicing PK-12 teachers and programmatic developments for pre-service teachers enrolled in licensure programs. Organizations including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and the U.S. Department of Education are a few examples of groups working to confront the challenges of teaching and learning in a digital age and provide standards and support to address barriers in effective technology integration. ISTE’s National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers and Students describe the essential importance...