Micro-Paper 5 : *Digital Literacies*

Christian A. González

Defining the Term

Digital literacies relates to the use of 21st century technologies and the idea that people today should develop certain skills embedded inside the digital worlds and the Web 2.0. Digital environments and technologies have strongly changed and impacted conventional literacies in schools. More than learning how to use equipment, digital literacies are concerned about the new skills and learning that people today need in order to construct meanings in new ways. Digital literacies are, then, about managing, interacting, participating and collaborating with different genres and modes that converge into these digital worlds.

The constant presence of electronic gadgets is requiring users to develop a new set of skills in order to use them correctly. Most of these gadgets have very similar usage patterns such as: touching screens, applications, or functional buttons among others. Besides the technical matters, these new electronic devices provide access to the world of information more quickly. These new affordances, in turn, provide new challenges and new ways to read and write that are far different from traditional and print literacies.

The range of skills within digital literacies includes the skills required to upload, drag, copy, paste, and download media to the extended knowledge needed to create multimodal platforms and participate in social networks. Other necessary skills include new ways to read texts in digital format, new forms to compose and create texts online, and different forms of social interaction in virtual environments.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, the idea of digital literacies is mostly present in my master's thesis. My current research is exploring how to use smartphone applications (apps) to foster critical reading in preservice education. This study requires a deep understanding of the concepts of digital literacies, online reading comprehension, and multimodality since participants will engage with certain kinds of digital literacies to successfully solve online reading and multimodal activities.

Expanding Second Language Research

The potential to explore digital literacies in research in the field of second language studies is quite large. Research options include the use of videogames, combined with multimodality, to describe the contributions of videogames for learning a second language. Other potential areas of study in second language research include the use of blogs, participation in online gaming communities, fan communities, and social networks and how to translate that into the curriculum.

References

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2008). "*New literacies or new challenges?": The development of the concept of literacy in the context of information and communication technologies and language teaching.* Retrieved from ERIC Database. (ED502132)

Grushka, K. & Donnelly, D. (2010). Digital Technologies and performative pedagogies: Repositioning the visual. *Digital Culture & Education, 2*(1), 83-102.

Thorne, S. L. & Black, R. W. (2007). Language and literacy development in computer-mediated contexts and communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 27*, 133-160. doi:10.1017/S0267190508070074

.