

BEING MULTI-LITERATE: A BASIS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION TODAY

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My future includes my continued work in teacher education. My job as Coordinator of Instruction focuses on professional development on literacy instruction- *all* literacies. I must model and teach the examination of multiliteracies and how technology influences the ways students communicate, consume, compose, collaborate, evaluate and publish texts. As such, the professional development experiences I create and lead for teachers, whether these be face-to-face, or web based must intentionally include these multiliteracies and opportunities for teachers to learn and use them.

What does it mean to be "multiliterate" anyway? - According to Anstey and Bull in *Teaching and Learning Multiliteracies*, the term "multiliteracies" stems from the need to equip students for a complex world that is "constantly changing, socially and culturally diverse, globalized, and technological" (Anstey and Bull, 2006). While there are many evolving definitions of "multiliteracies," Anstey and Bull offer one. They define a "multiliterate person as flexible and strategic and able to understand and use literacy and literate practices 1) with a range of texts and technologies; in socially responsible ways; in a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse world; and to fully participate in life as an active and informed citizen" (Anstey and Bull, 2006). In order for students to become the multiliterate individuals, their teachers must be one step ahead. My constant goal moving forward in my job is to lead teachers to this level of multiliteracy in professional

development so that in turn, they may lead their students there. Emerging technologies are always adding to our literacies, so this goal will always be a work in progress.

Due to emerging technologies from Web 2.0. to podcasting, to blogging, Tweeting, and screencasting, the nature of literacy is always changing. Teachers who apply these technologies in the classroom do more than motivate students with the latest “cool tool,” they prepare students with literacy skills for the realities of the technological world. Part of my teacher preparation in professional development must include always paying attention to multi-literacies through:

- The examination of the evolving nature of texts and the literacy skills associated with consuming and producing those texts.
- Introduce research regarding the relationship between technology and literacy.
- Identify and discuss technology-based strategies to enhance traditional methods for teaching Language Arts.
- Demonstrate specific technology applications for classroom use.
- Reflect on participants’ current teaching practices, thinking about where we are and where we want to go.

To achieve this effective and relevant professional development for teachers, I must always strive, “to find the appropriate technological solution to (a) this pedagogical problem” (Mishra and Kohler, 2008). My hope is that this use of technology for presentations on important educational topics creates learning, not confusion or resistance to new technology. Research shows that for successful learning using technology ,

several factors must be in place: 1. Clear learning objectives, 2. Students actively involved, 3. A good rapport among those in the session, 4. Sufficient wait time for student response, 5. Instructor answered all questions, 6. Students could participate, 7. Topic is appropriate for venue (Baron A. E. et. Al 2005). These look the same as a live teaching/learning experience, I need to work to achieve all of these factors while providing an online learning experience that will supplement my face-to-face time, or eventually, stand alone.

With my diverse academic and professional background in psychology, curriculum, teaching, and literacy, the common thread has been technology. I continue to use [blogs](#) and [Wikispaces](#) to collaborate and communicate with teachers, and continue seeking ways to use new technologies to engage learners. I plan to stay active in new educational technology through professional groups such as MACUL (Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning), and I'd like to take advantage of the Google Teacher Academy one day, as well as the MAET refresher course.

I wish to continue my role in education in a leadership position where I can be a pillar of support for teachers to learn to be multiliterate by learning and getting involved in technology. I must collaborate with other educators to keep the educational system flowing with the technology that is here to stay, yet ever changing.

Antsy, Michele and Bull, Geoff. Teaching and Learning Multipleliteracies: Changing Times, Changing Literacies. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2006.

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