Chapter 19

Teaching Transformative Learning and Digital/ Online Education:
From Theory to Practice in a Second and Foreign Language Education Context

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on transformative learning and digital literacies/online education in the context of second and foreign language teacher preparation. Building upon research begun in Village Voices, Global Visions: Digital Video as a Transformative Foreign Language Learning Tool (Goulah, 2007b), this chapter describes a graduate bilingual-bicultural education seminar coupling transformative learning theory and digital literacies for pre- and in-service teachers in Chicago, Illinois, in the United States. The author examines how transformative learning and digital literacies/online education can be applied to language education and considers specific theory-to-practice means for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students to conceptualize, critique and resist planetary trends and meet the needs of English language learners across the curriculum through digital literacies.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on transformative learning and digital literacies/online education in the context of second and foreign language teacher preparation. It builds upon research begun in my article *Village Voices, Global Visions: Digital Video as a Transfor-*

mative Foreign Language Learning Tool (Goulah, 2007b), which was one of the first in the field to couple digital literacies with transformative learning theory and was awarded the *Stephen A Freeman Award* for best integrating theory into practice in language education by the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. While the Conference recognized the article mainly for its application of digital literacies, its consideration

of transformative learning theory and language education is equally important at this juncture in educational policy and practice.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) call the present moment (from 2005 on) a "'fractured future' concerned with moral discourse, with the development of sacred textualities" (p. 3). O'Sullivan (2008) argued that, "(i)t is a time fraught with cataclysmic dangers as well as creative opportunities" (p. 27). According to O'Sullivan (1999) and others (e.g., Andrzejewski, Baltodano & Symcox, 2009; Goulah, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009, in press a, in press b; Kelly, 2009; O'Sullivan, Morrell & O'Connor, 2002; O'Sullivan & Taylor, 2004) these cataclysmic dangers are induced by market-based globalization. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon declared that chief among the cataclysmic dangers is global climate change and its impact on culture, politics, and human and planetary sustainability. Concurrent with and as a partial consequence of climate change is the dramatically increased dislocation of culturally and linguistically diverse peoples. In the United States this has resulted in English language learners becoming the fastest growing segment among K-12 students (US Census 2009), comprising 10 percent of the entire student population (GAO-09-573, 2009). While the forces of globalization have brought people of different languages and cultures together across real and virtual space(s), they have also conspired to further human-induced climate change and its destabilizing effect on environmental, human, cultural, political, spiritual and linguistic diversity and sustainability. Teachers and teacher educators must develop curricular theory and practice that educates culturally and linguistically diverse students to navigate dislocation and simultaneously addresses climate change, environmental degradation and resultant political instability, war, migration and decimation of cultures and languages. In other words, both pre- and in-service teachers and their students must understand how to conceptualize, critique and resist such

planetary trends while moving from the assimilationist paradigm to one of actively valuing and activating languages and cultural norms diverse learners bring. I have argued elsewhere (Goulah, 2007b, 2008) that a transformative learning approach through digital literacies provides creative opportunities to meet this challenge because of the power digital media has to immediately connect the local with the global across and within language(s) and culture(s).

Since publication of *Village Voices, Global Visions*, I have received queries from scholars and teachers about its content and about how to teach that content to pre- and in-service teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In short, teacher education programs—or even single courses—that prepare pre- and in-service teachers to foster students' ability to conceptualize, critique and resist planetary trends and meet the needs of English language learners across the curriculum through digital literacies are conspicuously absent or limited. This chapter aims to address the abovementioned queries through analysis of my graduate-level language seminar for pre- and in-service teachers enrolled in a bilingual-bicultural education program in Chicago, Illinois.

THE CONTEXT

Chicago is one of the most culturally, ethnically, linguistically, racially and socioeconomically diverse but segregated cities in the United States. It has the country's third largest public school system and the largest Catholic school system. According to *Perspectives on a Population: English Language Learners in American Schools* (2009), Chicago's population of English language learners is third largest in the United States. The course, Advanced Language Seminar, aims to foster transformed attitudes and behavior among pre- and in-service teachers (hereafter candidates) who then cultivate similarly transformed attitudes

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