

# Chapter 1

## Enhancing Linguistic and Intercultural Competencies through the Use of Social Network Sites and Google Earth

**Ellen Yeh**

*Columbia College Chicago, USA*

**Greg Kessler**

*Ohio University, USA*

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this chapter is to explore the role of global literacy in academic settings as the effect of increasingly digital technologies is being felt across areas of teaching and learning. Digital, global democracies require global literacy skills of individuals for twenty-first century citizenship and intercultural and linguistic competencies. This chapter covers four areas of this topic: (1) the enhancement of global literacy through linguistic and intercultural competencies; (2) the use of technology to enhance intercultural and linguistic competencies in language courses; (3) the use of technology in teacher training for administrators and policymakers; and (4) instructional approaches for using technology (i.e., social networking sites, Google Earth) in the classroom. The chapter also addresses how these technologies are anticipated to change in the future to further support global awareness. Using these social media and geographical tools, students will expand global awareness in education.*

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the role of global literacy in academic settings, as the increasing impact of digital technologies is being felt across areas of teaching and learning. To succeed in the digital age, individuals need to be

aware of intercultural and linguistic competencies in addition to their normal reading and writing requirements. In anticipation of the realities we face today, Alvin Toffler (1970) commented on the increased importance of global literacy by saying “The illiterate of the twenty-first century are not those that cannot read or write, but those

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that cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn” (p. 271). In other words, global literacy is the ability to think critically, work collaboratively, access information and digital technology, participate in social media interaction, and interact in global and cross-cultural communication. Moreover, it should also focus on bilingual and multilingual proficiencies, analysis of issues from multiple aspects, and understanding multinational issues in the world (Pacino & Nofle, 2011).

In order to help students become globally literate, educators should consider the following questions while designing curricula:

1. What can parents, teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers do to provide a learning environment that meets the demands of the twenty-first century?
2. How do they implement these curricula into academic settings and daily life?

This chapter will answer these questions and introduce ways to enhance global literacy through linguistic and intercultural competencies by the use of technology. This chapter will cover four areas in this topic: (1) the enhancement of global literacy through linguistic and intercultural competencies; (2) the use of technology to enhance intercultural and linguistic competencies in language courses; (3) the use of technology in teacher training for administrators and policy-makers; and (4) instructional approaches for using technology (i.e., social network sites, Google Earth) in the classroom.

## **BACKGROUND: ENHANCING GLOBAL LITERACY THROUGH LINGUISTIC AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES**

A large number of research studies reveal strong relationships among linguistic competency, intercultural competency, and global literacy (e.g., Baker, Ellwood, Nakane, Wennerstrom, Winer,

Kubota, 2009; Jiyoung, 2013; Kessler, 2013). Global literacy is always socially and culturally situated; therefore, individuals cannot learn global literacy out of context. As the authors will discuss, global literacy is not just the multidimensional act of reading, writing, and thinking, but involves creating and understanding meaning from social and intercultural contexts. Thus, teaching and learning global literacy should be connected to developing both linguistic and intercultural competencies. The following paragraphs will discuss (1) the concepts of global literacy, intercultural competency, and linguistic competency; (2) the relationships between linguistic competency and intercultural competency; and (3) the connection of global literacy with linguistic and intercultural competencies.

## **Global Literacy**

As mentioned previously, global literacy reflects the ability of individuals to interact in various forms of global and intercultural communication using various skills. Global literacy skills in the twenty-first century can be divided into three types: (1) learning and innovation skills, (2) information, media, and technology skills, and (3) life and career skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). These three types of skills are based on Trilling and Fadel’s twenty-first century knowledge-and-skills rainbow. This rainbow concept illustrates the knowledge and techniques an individual should acquire in order to be a twenty-first century citizen (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In the first type, learning and innovation skills refer to critical thinking, problem solving, communicating, collaborating, developing creativity, and fostering innovation. Academic and professional environments require individuals to have higher level thinking and complex communicative abilities to work with people around the world. They also need imagination and creativity in order to adjust to the ever-changing global marketplace (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

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