Chapter 9

Integration of Media and New Literacies in Teacher Education Programs:
Preparing Teachers to Adapt to New Literacies

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ABSTRACT

Preparing teachers to meet the challenges of an ever changing and growing multicultural and diverse population of students must become a focus of attention when thinking about the 21st century teacher education. The purpose of this study is to explore how three different teacher education programs are facing the challenge of preparing teachers to incorporate visual texts and diverse forms of literacy as they prepare to become educators. Literature about teacher identity development, teacher education, and teacher literacy education was reviewed to provide an understanding of the notions around the new of incorporation of new literacies as a way to engage future education professionals in the current challenges of the professional practice.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the constant claims about the relevance of the teachers' role to change educational paradigms, there are very few efforts being conducted to revise the teacher education curriculum programs around the world (Cochran-Smith, 2021). Preparing teachers to meet the challenges of an ever changing and growing multicultural and diverse population of students must become a focus of attention when thinking about the 21st century education. In order for today's teachers to comply with these expectations it becomes essential to find interventions within the teacher education programs that provide opportunities

for future teachers to develop understandings and skills that will enable them to engage in professional practices that address the diverse individual and collective needs of students and their families. According to Dotger (2013), "teacher preparation institutions fall short of helping teachers acquires and develop the necessary interpersonal skill sets to engage and communicate…" (p.805). Teacher education programs typically include a Literacy Education class in their curriculum program. This classes tend to focus on teaching reading and writing and rarely incorporate other ways of communication and information interpretation into their teaching. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how three different teacher education programs are facing the challenge of preparing teachers to incorporate visual texts and diverse forms of literacy as they prepare to become educators. This is a qualitative narrative study in which three teacher undergraduate programs will be studied using public information about their courses in order to determine if new literacies have been incorporated in the teacher preparation process. As teachers learn about education and teaching as a profession their own professional identity is influenced by their new understandings of literacy education. This chapter aims to determine if teacher education programs are integrating new literacies as part of their curriculum or what are they doing to provide future teachers with the skills and attitude required to face the challenges of today's literacy education.

BACKGROUND

Teacher education faces the challenge of preparing professionals using the past experiences to confront the future challenges that new generations of an ever evolving society must confront. Teachers are required to adapt and adjust the way they think and the way they teach as a way to respond to their students' needs, in many cases teacher education programs fail to adjust fast enough to provide future teachers with enough strategies and tools for them to become flexible and adaptable learners as their students' needs continuously change (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). As teachers adopt new literacies as part of their professional identity development their understandings about literacy education evolve as well as their teacher identity. In order for future teachers to be able to construct their professional identity, adapt and adjust their perceptions, knowledge and skills to meet their students' needs they need to start by learning about themselves, reflecting about their positionalities and beliefs in order to be able to understand others and the culturally diverse environment that today's educational settings embrace (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). The first part of this literature review explains the relevance of providing future teachers with opportunities to explore their teacher identity during their professional education process as means to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses before confronting the complex and demanding social environments that house educational settings. In the second section, the literature review focuses on teacher education by presenting several viewpoints of what is currently taking place and the challenges of teacher education to effectively respond to the society demands. Finally it explains what teacher education should consider when focusing on incorporating new literacies as way for preparing teachers for the current and future needs of Literacy Education.

Development of Teacher Identity and Positionality

Literature indicates that one of the most relevant elements in teacher preparation to meet today's diverse student population needs is to provide future teachers with opportunities to explore their identities and develop their own voice based on their individual positionality (Korthagen, 2003). According to Blom-

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