

Chapter VIII

An Interactive and Digital Media Literacy Framework for the 21st century

Wei-Ying Lim

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

David Hung

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Horn-Mun Cheah

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

ABSTRACT

We are entering into a milieu which makes the global world look much smaller because of digital communications and technologies. More recently, there has also been a coming together of participants from the media world such as those in cinema and animation with those from the technology sectors. This partnership forms what we now know as interactive and digital media (or IDM). In this chapter, the authors aim to articulate the importance of IDM literacies in relation to the 21st century. They attempt to clarify the distinctions between ICT (information and communications technology) and IDM, and from their analysis, they propose a matrix integrating both.

BACKGROUND

Today, with the amelioration of technology, in particular the Internet, information becomes increasingly accessible to people in our society. Apart from information search, people now use

the Internet as a platform for social activities such as online chat not counting the conduct of commercial activities such as online banking or online shopping. With the Internet, the means of communication amongst people have substantially expanded. Beyond the traditional modes of com-

munication through surface mails and telephone calls, people now can stay connected via the sharing of their lives (and photos) in blogs, instant messaging, online forums or by calling someone on the mobile phone using a computer, just to name a few. This shift in the way our everyday activities are conducted constitute one distinct characteristic of the 21st century—a connected world (Carr, 2001) where geographic distance poses less of a barrier than before.

In what follows, we expound the nature of the 21st century literacies and explicate how the Singapore Education Ministry, drawing upon these literacies, conceived a set of digital-age literacies for the local Singaporean context. This is followed by our attempt to outline the backdrop of Information Communication and Technologies (ICT), and Interactive Digital Media (IDM) in terms of teaching and learning interactions from which we argue that the relationship between ICT and IDM can be better understood in a matrix in terms of *realism* and *connectivity*. We conclude this chapter by articulating the productivity of this matrix and how it is useful for both research and practice.

NATURE OF LITERACIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Set against this backdrop of the 21st century world, there is now a demand for a knowledge workforce—people who are innovative, resourceful and efficient in order to increase the per capita output in order to grow the economy. Thus, a premium is given to employees who demonstrate 21st century skills such as critical thinking, risk-taking, social and collaborative skills (<http://www.metiri.com/features.html>; <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php>). To develop such employees, Jenkins (2006) stresses that learning must now occur in multi-cultural and multi-lingual contexts, and our technologies, media forms, and practices have to sustain communication among geographically

dispersed and culturally distinct communities. In this new learning landscape, we can no longer afford to focus on learners as autonomous and independent agents. Rather, they need to be understood as part of a larger learning community which actively collaborates.

Literacy has traditionally been regarded as the acquisition of skills and knowledge for reading and writing. Partly influenced by social cultural theories, the notion of literacy has evolved to recognize the multiplicity of literacies, varying across time and space, as well as to view literacies as community-based social practices as opposed to universal autonomous cognitive skills (Street, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel 2007). This ontological position of literacies as *practices* offers an alternative perspective on understanding how people learn to read and write in a more situational sensitive way. Just as we subscribe to ideas of situated cognition, where knowledge, agency and context are tightly intertwined, we argue that literacy practices and contexts are an inseparable coupling.

Literacies, when viewed as sociocultural practices, would enable us to examine the relationships between the social cultural contexts and literacy practices. In today's modern society, the influence of technology, particularly the pervasiveness of the Internet, has changed the way our everyday lifeworld is done. Learning within and outside of schools is no exception. The Internet has given us the unprecedented power as knowledge consumers (& producers with Web 2.0 technologies) such that the challenge is no longer in the accessibility and creation of information but the ability to discern information and information sources. In fact, the concern to instill media literacy in people has given rise to a “New Literacies Perspective” (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004), one that rightfully addresses the complex interrelationship between literacy practices, ways of technology use and learning.

Although the new literacies movement has yet to produce rigorous, comprehensive theories,

7 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/interactive-digital-media-literacy-framework/35910

Related Content

New Media Literacy and the Digital Divide

Jörg Müller, Juana M. Sancho and Fernando Hernández (2009). *Handbook of Research on New Media Literacy at the K-12 Level: Issues and Challenges* (pp. 72-88).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/new-media-literacy-digital-divide/35907

School Multimedia Design Teams and Projects

Irene Chen and Jane Thielemann (2008). *Technology Application Competencies for K-12 Teachers* (pp. 161-175).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/school-multimedia-design-teams-projects/30170

New Media Pathways: Navigating the Links between Home, School, and the Workplace

Helen Nixon, Stephen Atkinson and Catherine Beavis (2006). *Handbook of Research on Literacy in Technology at the K-12 Level* (pp. 118-136).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/new-media-pathways/20924

Stereoscopic 3D: Going Beyond Texas Tech University Libraries' 3D Animation Lab

Ian Barba, James Brewer and Brenda Swinford (2013). *Cases on 3D Technology Application and Integration in Education* (pp. 258-287).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/stereoscopic-going-beyond-texas-tech/74413

The Development and Application of Regional Education Informatization in China

Mingzhang Zuo, Sisi Liu and Ziyun Zhao (2014). *Transforming K-12 Classrooms with Digital Technology* (pp. 320-336).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-development-and-application-of-regional-education-informatization-in-china/88979