Developing Teacher Reflexivity and Communities of Practice through the Incorporation of New Literacies in a Content Area Methods Course: A Case Study of Student Teachers’ New Literacies Experience

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Web-based formats are increasingly emerging as 21st Century modalities for effective teacher preparation. In this article, the author draws findings from a larger case study which focused on the incorporation of new literacies in a semester-long content area methods course. Two major questions guided the research: (1) How did student teachers’ participation in electronic-threaded discussions contribute to their understanding of concepts related to content area literacy? and (2) In what way(s) did student teachers’ weblogs serve as an effective tool in promoting their reflective practice? Data were gathered using focus group interviews, reflection logs and discussion transcripts. The findings revealed that participants’ engagement with new literacies created opportunities for collaborative learning, sharing, critical thinking and reflection that led to the development of ‘third space’ knowledge, discourses and communities of practice. The findings further support a socio-cultural paradigm which posits that learning and reflection are interactive, collaborative, technologically-mediated and situated. Based on the findings, the author recommends that teacher education programmes be restructured to foster teacher reflexivity, equip future teachers with new literacies and embrace a disciplinary literacy perspective.

Key words: new literacies; reflective practice; content area literacy; disciplinary literacy; third space; student teacher; communities of practice.

References


