



EDITOR'S REMARKS

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Digital Literacies and the Future of Schools

At the 2008 American Educational Researchers Association Annual Meeting, I had the privilege of serving on a panel focused on “Digital Literacies and the Future of Schools,” which is also the topic of this issue of *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*. On this panel, we described the possibilities in store for schools, given the emergence of accessible information technologies, coupled with our developing understanding of literacy as not just reading and writing text, but “new literacies” that involve multimodal communication across time and space (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

Among the speakers on this panel were Allan Collins and Richard Halverson, whose new book, *Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology* (2009), outlines the history of technology in schools and the role technologies have played in both classroom and school communities. Also on the panel was Katie Salen, who, in partnership with New Visions for Public Schools, recently helped launch Quest to Learn, a 6–12th grade public school that uses game-inspired methods to teach both traditional and critical 21st-century skills and literacies (<http://q2l.org>). Collins and Halverson’s historical perspective brings us a broad, high-level view of the relationship between technologies and schools. Salen’s design-based approach represents one on-the-ground effort to fully realize a digital literacies-based learning experience for students.

In this special issue of *JCTE*, we aim to fill the gap between these two approaches. When we set out to put together this issue, we were interested in representing both the wide array of digital media practices in learning environments and the myriad methodological approaches researchers have taken to document, represent, and evaluate these practices. The articles in this issue reflect our current understanding of the role digital technologies play in the lives of learners, their impact on teachers and teaching, and implications for teacher education.

Rich Halverson and Annette Smith set the stage for the issue with their article, “How New Technologies Have (and Have Not) Changed Teaching and Learning in Schools” (p. 49). In this article, they argue that there are two kinds of technologies that affect teaching and learning: instructor-directed “technologies for learning” and client-directed “technologies for learners.” Instructor-directed technologies, such as virtual charter schools, have gained legitimacy in the K–12 arena. Client-directed technologies, such as video games and social networking Web sites, are wildly popular with learners yet remain marginalized in schools. The distinction between these two technologies highlights the key challenge for educators in understanding the role of digital media in learning.

Danielle Herro and Constance Steinkuehler focus on schooling, particularly the relationship between Web 2.0 technologies and their use in schools, in their article, “Web 2.0 Literacy and Secondary Teacher Education” (p. 55). They argue that Web 2.0 technologies have the potential to expand schools’ definitions of literacy to focus on the kinds of user-created content tasks in which youth are already engaged in their lives outside of school. Despite the lack of widespread adoption of Web 2.0 technologies

in classrooms, they describe some “grassroots efforts” underway in K–12 schools to highlight possibilities for more broad-scale change.

One of the fundamental assumptions in Herro and Steinkuehler’s push for the integration of Web 2.0 technologies into secondary classrooms is that young people are already fluent users of these technologies. Christine Greenhow, J. D. Walker, and Seongdok Kim pose this assumption as an empirical question in their article, “Millennial Learners and Net-Savvy Teens? Examining Internet Use among Low-Income Students” (p. 63). Greenhow, Walker, and Kim found that, although the students in their sample are all regular Internet users, “students’ experiences deal primarily with simpler communication and presentation technologies, and that students frequently perceive their role as consumers, not producers, of Internet-based materials.” These findings point to the crucial role schools can play in helping students from under-resourced communities to become productive contributors in our 21st-century knowledge economy.

Erica Halverson and Damiana Gibbons’ “‘Key Moments’ as Pedagogical Windows into the Video Production Process” (p. 69) and Rebecca Black’s “Online Fan Fiction and Critical Media Literacy” (p. 75) shift the conversation from the use of new technologies in schools to youths’ participation in new media literacy practices in structured environments outside the classroom. Through four case studies with youth media arts organizations around the United States, Halverson and Gibbons describe the key moments across organizations where participating youth reveal their emerging understanding of the relationship between narrative ideas and modes for representation. Black takes an idiographic approach, describing two individuals’ experiences with publishing fan fiction, particularly the complex literacy practices involved in writing, editing, and publishing online stories in a community of interest. Taken together, these two pieces describe what can be for students who choose to participate in digital media literacy practices that require complex interaction between new technologies.

Finally, I want to mention that this is the last issue of this journal under the name *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*. I am proud to have helped the editorship relaunch the journal under the name *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education* in spring 2010. This is a result of our early conversations on the role of technologies in learning environments, specifically that the terms *computers* and *computing* do not capture the wide array of digital literacy skills and practices that we have documented in this research. I hope this issue, and the issues to come, help lead the way in understanding the role for digital learning in teacher education and K–12 classrooms.

Resources

Collins, A., & Halverson, R. (2009). *Rethinking education in the age of technology*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2006). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Open University Press.