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 Sheridan-Thomas, Heather K.
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Making Sense of Multiple Literacies 121

Making Sense of Multiple Literacies: Exploring Pre-Service Content Area Teachers' Understandings and Applications
 Heather K. Sheridan-Thomas
 Binghamton University

Abstract

Over the past decade, numerous literacy researchers have investigated the multiple literacies of adolescents. Connecting with adolescents' multiple literacies, including digital texts and high interest print-based texts, holds promise as a way to build bridges to subject area content and academic literacies. Although pre-service content area teachers are required to take a content area literacy course in most US states, little has been written about whether those courses include a focus on multiple literacies or what pre-service teachers understand after learning about multiple literacies. In this study, the author analyzes student work from three semesters of a content area literacy course to find out what the students learned about multiple literacies and how they applied the concept of multiple literacies to developing content area lessons.

Increasingly, state certification regulations for secondary content area teachers require pre-service teachers to take some version of a literacy or reading in the content areas course. By 1994 reading courses were required in 37 states plus the District of Columbia (Romine, McKenna, & Robinson, 1996). This relatively recent focus on preparing pre-service content area teachers to assess and enhance their students' literacies suggests a growing understanding of the importance of literacy to obtaining and communicating content area knowledge. At the same time, there has been increasing focus within the literacy field on multiple literacies, especially those engaged in by adolescents (Hull & Schultz

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