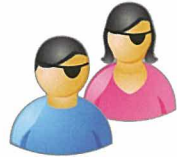


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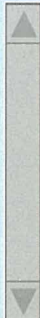


NEW LITERACIES

SUBTITLE



Everyday
Practices and
Social Learning



AUTHORS



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and
Michele Knobel



New Literacies

New Literacies

Third edition

COLIN LANKSHEAR and
MICHELE KNOBEL



Open University Press

Open University Press
McGraw-Hill Education
McGraw-Hill House
Shoppenhangers Road
Maidenhead
Berkshire
England
SL6 2QL

email: enquiries@openup.co.uk
world wide web: www.openup.co.uk

and Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2289, USA

First published 2011

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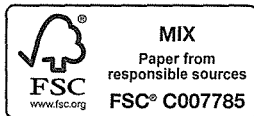
A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-0-33-524216-0 (pb)
eISBN: 978-0-33-524217-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
CIP data applied for

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed in Great Britain by Ball and Bain Ltd, Glasgow

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To JPG
colleague, compañero, friend

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Foreword

In *New Literacies: Everyday Practices and Social Learning*, Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel invite readers to participate fully in coming to grips with why the *new* in new literacies will be with us for some time to come. Not *new*, as in a replacement metaphor, but new in the sense that social, economic, cultural, intellectual, and institutional changes are continually at work, even as I write. It is this perceived permanency of the new that is destined, in my opinion, to make a difference in how educators view and respond to new literacies in relation to everyday social practices and classroom learning.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me back up and recount some of the ways in which the authors invite us, as readers, to experience new literacies first hand, regardless of where we are on our personal learning trajectories. If grounding in new literacies is what we need, it is readily available. The authors provide the most accessible account of the evolution of new literacies that I have read anywhere. Not satisfied with words alone, Lankshear and Knobel point us to websites that exemplify the very points they are making, and in a timely fashion. This modelling of just-in-time learning is effective, to say the least. What is more, the websites

they have chosen typically invite us to interact with content in ways that makes concepts such as *participatory culture*, *collaboration*, and *distributed expertise* meaningful, and above all useful, especially when dealing with the demands and constraints that are part of teaching and learning in today's schools at every level, including post-secondary institutions.

This third edition of *New Literacies* invites us to go beyond merely imagining how advances in technology and a rapidly ascending social paradigm are affecting our ways of being, both professionally and in our spare time. It does so by taking us behind the scenes to witness first-hand how the authors use new literacies in applying contemporary principles of social learning, (e.g., 'performance before competence') to their own work as teacher educators. An up-to-date account of how these same literacies and principles apply to curriculum and learning in an urban public school serving grades 6 through 12 is but another indicator of the authors' attention to existing examples of the concepts they explore.

Like the two earlier editions of *New Literacies*, this third edition offers an abundance of state-of-the-art content. It has the added advantage, however, of making its appearance at a time that coincides with a sea change of reform-minded initiatives driven in part by well-known international evaluations, such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), which compares countries globally on the basis of their 15-year-olds' scholastic performance in the domains of reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy. PISA, unlike most nationally administered large-scale assessments, offers countries a choice in terms of whether or not their students will be assessed using e-texts. This choice seems particularly cogent given that PISA evaluates young people's acquisition of skills deemed essential for full participation in a global society. Moreover, it is a choice that is in direct alignment with the goals and purposes of *New Literacies: Everyday Practices and Social Learning*.

Finally, and most importantly for the first time, in this third edition of a universally respected text, Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel put their scholarly credentials to work in ways that afford unique and practical insights into how current approaches to formal schooling stand to benefit from incorporating new literacies embedded in a social learning framework. Time has never been more urgent. Any lingering notions that expertise is limited and scarce are outdated and potentially damaging in a world where new literacies hitched to ever advancing technologies are fast determining who will (and will not) be available to interact in a participatory culture – a way of living and being that values collaboration, collective intelligence, and the means for mobilizing distributed expertise.

Donna Alvermann
University of Georgia

Preface to the third edition

When the Open University Press negotiated a third edition of *New Literacies*, we welcomed the opportunity to revise and update our previous work. When we produced the second edition, Facebook was in its infancy, Twitter had not yet been launched, ‘apps’ were but a twinkle in the ‘i’ of the smart phone, and social learning was still almost entirely thought about in relation to non-formal or informal learning contexts. The White Paper, *Confronting the Challenge of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century* (Jenkins et al. 2006) was not yet published, and John Seely Brown and Richard Adler’s (2008) call to address social learning within formal education was two years away.

As people worldwide flooded to social networking and microblogging services, as ‘mashing up’ serviceware applications became a routine pastime, and as educators interested in serious reform advanced the case for restructuring formal learning along ‘participatory’ cultural lines, it was time to rethink our ideas about new literacies in relation to education.

This edition builds further on our conception of new literacies in terms of new technical and new ethos ‘stuff’ from the previous edition, and extends

our account of literacy in theory, policy, and practice from 'reading' to the 'new literacies'. The bulk of the book, however, comprises new content. Our accounts of blogging and digital remix have been seriously reframed in order to build on our attempt to put more punch into our thinking about literacy in terms of 'practice theory'. We pay careful attention to the relationship between Web 2.0 as a business model and the affordances of the Read/Write web for participatory culture, and make a concerted effort to address qualitative aspects of participation and collaboration within a range of popular everyday pursuits. The influential argument about the strength of weak ties and the trend toward networked individualism is taken up within the context of discussing online social networking and the significance of network awareness in terms of new literacies.

Part 3 of the book, on social learning, is entirely new. In Chapter 7, we discuss concepts, research, and ideologies pertaining to far-reaching changes that have occurred during recent decades, and some of their potential implications for and applications to formal learning. These include the concepts of 'learning to be', 'collaboration platforms' for learning, 'push' and 'pull' paradigms for mobilizing and allocating learning resources, and the significance currently attached to innovation and productiveness. In Chapter 8, we address some empirical attempts to pursue ideals of social learning within formal learning contexts at school and university levels. We expect to see a rapid growth in theory, research and experimental practices in this broad area during the coming decade.

As always, the chapters that follow are but points on our personal learning trajectories. We believe there is vastly more to be thought and said about new literacies in the current conjuncture than we could ever think or say, let alone say *now*. At the same time, we are hopeful that readers will find something in this book that may be helpful in taking them from where they presently are to where they might want to go in their reflection and practice at the interfaces among literacies, technologies and everyday social engagements.

Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel
Mexico City
30 May 2011

Acknowledgements

This book has been encouraged and supported in diverse ways by many people to whom we are indebted. We want to acknowledge their support and generosity here.

We have drawn heavily on inspiration from friends and colleagues with whom we work in different ways and in different contexts. We owe much to Donna Alvermann, Chris Barrus, Chris Bigum, Rebecca Black, Bill Cope, Julia Davies, Betty Hayes, Erik Jacobson, Henry Jenkins, Mary Kalantzis, Kevin Leander, Matt Lewis, Guy Merchant, Leonie Rowan, Angela Thomas and, as always, James Paul Gee. In their individual ways, they exemplify the critical, inquiring, progressive spirit that seeks to maximize human well-being using the material and non-material resources available to us. Long may they run.

We want to acknowledge the inspiration we have drawn from work by dana boyd, John Seely Brown, Mimi Ito, Lawrence Lessig, Tim O'Reilly, Andreas Reckwitz, Howard Rheingold and Katie Salen. Their perspectives are absolutely integral to how we think about new literacies, everyday practices and social learning.

Donna Alvermann and Donald Leu have done much to help us understand more clearly who we are trying to write for and why. They have supported our work in the most generous and unobtrusive ways, while at the same time continuing their own tireless and selfless work in the name of better education for all, and especially for those who have received less than their due share of social benefits from the systems within which they are constrained to live. Despite already having more than enough tasks to complete, Donna generously accepted our invitation to write the Foreword for this book. We know what this kind of unsolicited added pressure involves, and treasure the collegiality woven into her text. Don invited us to present the opening Plenary Address at the 2004 National Reading Conference annual meeting in San Antonio, which provided an important motivational opportunity for us to develop material that has been further refined for this book. With Julie Coiro, Don has also extended our range of interest in new literacies through our collaboration in an edited *Handbook of New Literacies Research*.

As always, we appreciate greatly the support of Shona Mullen and our other colleagues at the Open University Press – in particular, Fiona Richman, Umar Masood, James Bishop, Kiera Jamison, Richard Townrow, and Zen Mian. We also thank Susan Dunsmore for her careful copyediting. They are a wonderful team to work with, and we hope that our efforts in this book are enough to repay their continuing faith in our work.

Some chapters in this book build on work that has been published in journals and conference proceedings. We have benefited from the opportunities we have had to rehearse ideas in other places. Thanks are due here to the *International Journal of Learning*, the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *The 54th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference* and Peter Lang (USA).

During the period in which this book has been conceived and written we have enjoyed strong support from friends, colleagues, and institutions in México, Spain, Australia and Canada. Without this, our work during the past four years simply would not have been possible. We want to thank Angela Guzmán, Hilario Rivera Rodríguez, Ma. del Pilar Avila Guzmán, Gustavo Cabrera López, Gabriel Arreguín Cervantes, Toni Chao, Guadalupe López Bonilla, Alma Carrasco, Pep Aparicio Guadas, Neil Anderson, Ruth Ann Brown, Andrew Manning, the Faculties of Education at Montclair State University, Mount Saint Vincent University, McGill University, and the School of Education at James Cook University.

We want to thank those students who have kindly given us permission to use their work, and the many cohorts of students who, since 2004, have ‘come along for the ride’ as we have conjointly explored ways of learning

that have been new and different for all of us so far as formal educational contexts are concerned. In particular, we want to thank Shannon Donovan, Susan Whitty, Jenny Hawley, Karey Lee Donovan, Marie Barry, Rhonda Currie, Patricia Donovan, Janice Ciavaglia, Holly Stone, Ann Landry, Sonja Beck, Carolyn Coley, Krista Conway, Deborah Hoven, Paula Maynard, Tanya Hunt, Sherry Healey-Jennings, Joy Seaward, Michelle Patey, Anne Payne, Michele Dawson, Dara Best-Pinsent, Robyn Hillier, Lori Deeley, Heather Wood, Donna Powers-Toms and Rosena Dunphy for graciously allowing us to make explicit reference to their work.

We appreciate the work of those anonymous reviewers of the previous edition of this book who responded to invitations by the Open University Press to provide feedback to guide this new edition, and also thank the authors of published reviews of the previous editions for their constructive critical feedback and the boost they gave the previous editions of our book in the marketplace. We'd also like to thank people within the blogosphere who have discussed different chapters and ideas from previous editions, and who have helped us to think more closely about what we mean by 'new literacies'.

Finally, we simply could not survive in our everyday and professional lives without the kinds of resource support provided by Google and Wikipedia, and know we are not alone here.

