

Project: Traditional and New Literacies in the Middle & High School Classroom

Overview

The project will require you to systematically gather and interpret information about how both traditional and new literacies are integrated into your student teaching classroom, school, and district to support student learning. The information you gather will help you better understand the elements that impede and facilitate the integration of traditional and new literacies into math, science, foreign language, and English classrooms. Your analysis will be a written Report, submitted at the end of the semester and shared with your colleagues and me. The Report should contain the following sections:

School & District Context

- I. A rich description of the context of the district and school setting in which you teach.
- II. The aspects of your *school and district context* facilitate the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom and how this may increase opportunities for learning. (See Part A, Question 1)
- III. The aspects of your *school and district context* that impede the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom and how this may impede opportunities for learning. (See Part A, Question 2)

Classroom Context

- IV. A rich description of the context of the classroom setting in which you teach.
- V. The aspects of your *classroom context* that facilitate the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom and how this may increase opportunities for learning. (See Part B, Question 3)
- VI. The aspects of your *classroom context* that impede the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom and how this may impede opportunities for learning. (See Part B, Question 4)

Analysis & Recommendations

- VII. Your analysis of the contexts and recommendations for how universities might better prepare content area teachers for traditional and new literacies in your area.

The purposes of this project include:

1. developing research skills in your secondary content classroom and at your school site, including both data collection and analysis;
2. thinking carefully about ways in which the school and district context might either support or impede the integration of both traditional and new literacies in the content area classroom;

3. thinking carefully about ways in which the integration of both traditional and new literacies in the content area classroom can be used to support student learning as well as ways that it might impede student learning.

Email Requirement

During this assignment, you are required to email your colleagues and me at least 6 times during the semester, responding to email from one of our grad researchers or your classmates. When replying, please “reply to all”. Additionally, visit the WebCT bulletin board prior to finishing your analysis. Compiled there will be all your colleagues’ email responses and suggestions from the semester. This information may help you to address additional aspects of the school and district and/or classroom contexts not previously considered.

Procedures

Part A:

Gather as much information as you can about the general nature of your school and district. See Worksheet I for possible information sources. Add additional sources to this list. Organize the information that you collect in a way that will allow you to summarize the general context of your district and school setting in several pages for your report.

Question 1:

- Which aspects of your *school and district context* facilitate the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
- a. Specifically, how do these elements *in your school or district context* increase the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
 - b. How might this increase learning of the content that you teach in your class?
1. As you gather information about your district and your school, pay particular attention to data that appear to support the integration of either traditional literacies, new literacies, or both. Look for patterns in your data that appear to support the integration of traditional and/or new literacies in common directions. Describe each of these patterns in your report. Provide several examples of each pattern in your description and explain the role of this pattern increasing the integration of traditional and/or new literacies into your classroom.
 2. Discuss the implications of each pattern that you find for increasing learning in the content area that you teach. How does it assist learning? Be specific and provide examples from your class.

Question 2:

- Which aspects of your *school and district context* impede the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
- a. Specifically, how do these elements *in your school or district context* decrease the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
 - b. How might this impede learning of the content that you teach in your class?

1. As you gather information about your district and your school, pay particular attention to data that appear to impede the integration of either traditional literacies, new literacies, or both. Look for patterns in your data that appear to impede the integration of traditional and/or new literacies in common directions. Describe each of these patterns in your report. Provide several examples of each pattern in your description and explain the role of this pattern in impeding the integration of traditional and/or new literacies into your classroom.
2. Discuss the implications of each pattern that you find for impeding learning in the content area that you teach. How does it impede learning? Be specific and provide examples from your class.

Part B:

Gather as much data and information as you can about the general nature of your classroom. See Worksheet II for data sources. Add additional sources to this list. Organize the data that you collect in a way that will allow you to summarize the general context of your classroom setting in several pages for your report.

Question 3:

Which aspects of your *classroom context* facilitate the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?

- a. Specifically, how do these elements *in your classroom* increase the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
- b. How might this increase learning of the content that you teach in your class?
1. As you gather information about your classroom, pay particular attention to data that appear to support the integration of either traditional literacies, new literacies, or both. Look for patterns in your data that appear to support the integration of traditional and/or new literacies in common directions. Describe each of these patterns in your report. Provide several examples of each pattern in your description and explain the role of this pattern for increasing the integration of traditional and/or new literacies into your classroom.
2. Discuss the implications of each pattern that you find for increasing learning in the content area that you teach. How does it assist learning? Be specific and provide examples from your class.

Question 4:

Which aspects of your *classroom context* impede the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?

- c. Specifically, how do these elements *classroom context* decrease the integration of traditional literacies and new literacies into your content classroom?
- d. How might this impede learning of the content that you teach in your class?
1. As you gather information about your classroom, pay particular attention to data that appear to impede the integration of either traditional literacies, new literacies,

- or both. Look for patterns in your data that appear to impede the integration of traditional and/or new literacies in common directions. Describe each of these patterns in your report. Provide several examples of each pattern in your description and explain the role of this pattern in impeding the integration of traditional and/or new literacies into your classroom.
2. Discuss the implications of each pattern that you find for impeding learning in the content area that you teach. How does it impede learning? Be specific and provide examples from your class.

A WORKSHEET TO ORGANIZE YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND DATA COLLECTION AS YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

You should use this worksheet to list the data that you plan to gather, and as a checklist to monitor what you actually do gather, as you collect information that will help you to comprehensively describe the nature of your district, school, and classroom. You will be able to find much of this information on the Internet. Some, you may only be able to locate in your school and district. Listed are several items that you are required to collect for each context. These should only be considered as your starting point, however. You are expected to go substantially beyond these data. Your goal is to provide a comprehensive description of your school, district, and classroom, especially with respect to data that may impact the integration of traditional and new literacies into content area classrooms such as yours.

Useful Data and Sources to Describe the General District Context:

1. Describe the size, location, and the population characteristics of your district using online demographic data. You may find the online summary of your district demographic data useful. See: <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/> and look for your district strategic profile.
2. Identify your district's ERG group. See: http://discovery.wcgmf.org/communities_byerg.html What is this and how is it calculated? What, if any, problems exist with this measure? There is a current debate taking place about this designation. You may wish to become aware of the issues that are involved.
3. What are the state standards for the content area and grade(s) that you teach. Locate them on the Internet and review them.
4. Can you find any information to suggest that your district encourages you to teach to the state standards? What information does this? Conversations with your school leaders? Materials you receive from the district or school office. Content of professional development days? Informal conversations? (Record what was said in writing, as best as possible, as well as when and where this conversation took place.)
5. Review and evaluate any state assessments in your area.
6. What data on your district's technology can you gather? What is the ratio of students per Internet computer in your district? How does your district compare to others in Connecticut and within the U.S. in this area?
- 7.
- 8.

Possible Data and Sources to Evaluate the Extent to Which the General District Context Encourages or Impedes the Integration of Traditional or New Literacies Into Your Content Area Curriculum:

1. Which state standards appear to include traditional literacy skills? Which appear to include new literacies? To what extent will this influence your integration of traditional and new literacies?
2. What evidence can you find that indicates traditional or new literacy skills are required to successfully perform on state assessments in your content area.
3. Can you find any information to suggest that your district encourages you to integrate traditional or new literacies into your content area curriculum? What information does this? Conversations with your school leaders? Materials you receive from the district or school office. Content of professional development days? Informal conversations? (Record what was said in writing, as best as possible, as well as when and where this conversation took place.)
4. Does your district have a technology plan? If so, review it. To what extent is technology taught as a separate subject or integrated into the content areas?
5. Are students permitted to use a word processor on the state writing assessment? Why or why not? What meaning do you assign to this policy? How might it impact your own class?
6. To what extent are new literacies measured on the state assessments? Why or why not? What meaning do you assign to this policy?
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Useful Data and Sources to Describe the School Context:

1. What is the size, location, and what are the population characteristics of your school? You may find the online summary of your district demographic data useful. See: <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/> and look for your school strategic profile.
2. What percentage of your students come from different minority backgrounds? What percentage of your school's students have a primary home language other than English? What percentage of your students receive free or reduced price lunches?
3. What data on your school's technology can you gather? What is the ratio of students per Internet computer in your school? How does your school compare to others in Connecticut and within the U.S. in this area? How many professional development days have been devoted to this issue in the past year?
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Possible Data and Sources to Evaluate the Extent to Which the General District Context Encourages or Impedes the Integration of Traditional or New Literacies into your content area curriculum:

1. Review school curriculum materials and syllabi in your area. How do they deal with integrating traditional and new literacies. Do they do this extensively or not at all?
2. Look at any formal or informal measures of evaluation in your content area. To what extent do they support the integration of traditional and new literacies into the classroom? How? Save examples to include in your analysis.
3. Talk to colleagues in your school about how they think about the integration of reading and writing (traditional literacies) into content areas generally and into your content area specifically. If you are at the middle school, be certain to discuss this with your team. If you are at the high school, be certain to discuss this with your department chair and other colleagues. Keep a journal on this issue. Record salient quotations, especially those that capture an important perspective.
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- 10.

A WORKSHEET TO ORGANIZE YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND DATA COLLECTION AS YOU DESCRIBE THE CONTEXT OF YOUR CLASSROOM

You should use this worksheet to organize the data that will help you to comprehensively describe the nature of your classroom. You will be able to find much of this information on the Internet. Some, you may be able to locate in your school and district. Listed are several items that you are required to collect for your classroom context. These should only be considered as your starting point, however. You are expected to go substantially beyond these data. Your goal is to provide a comprehensive description of your school, district, and classroom, especially with respect to data that may impact the integration of traditional and new literacies into content area classrooms such as yours.

Useful Data and Sources to Describe Your Class Context:

1. Number of classes that you teach and the grade and title of each class.
2. The number of students in each class.
3. What do you know about students in terms of their district test scores?
4. How do students think about your content area. What interview data or quotes from informal conversation tell you this. Record this in a journal, if possible.
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- 13.

Graphic Overview

	Facilitators	Impediments
<i>Traditional Literacies</i>		
<i>New Literacies</i>		