



University practices of Reading: A quantitative exploration of traditional reading habits and cyber-culture

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Conference:[ECER 2013, Creativity and Innovation in Educational Research](#)

Network:[10. Teacher Education Research](#)

Format:Paper

Session Information

10 SES 08 B, Language, Reading and Power in the Classroom

Paper Session

Time:2013-09-12
09:00-10:30

Room:A-202

Chair/Discussant:[Anthony Malone](#)/ [Eduardo Garcia](#)

Contribution

University practices of Reading: A quantitative exploration of traditional reading habits and cyber-culture

This paper refers to recent research on the different models of literacy within the Faculty of Education at the University of Seville. The study of the reading habits among the prospective Pre-school and Primary teachers is fundamental for didactic organization. Our results will allow the academic literacy process to be approached using new tools.

This study of literacy within the university students adopts an ethnography approach of the reading and the writing perspective (Maybin, 2007; Purcell-Gates, 2011; Greenhow, 2011). The records of the social reading habits do not usually take into account elements unrelated to university teaching. Thus, today we witness a severe conflict between the vernacular practices of the students (savage reading) and the literary education of the university teachers (Chartier, 1993)

The digital culture has multiplied the variety of reading habits. This fact has separated the university students from the practices of classic reading and is making their incorporation to an academic university culture more difficult (Carlino 2005; Lea and Street 2006).

This research has elaborated an up-to-date catalogue of the university reading habits, and reflects upon the contradictions this new literacy establishes at the academic literacy process carried out at the university. Lastly, we suggest some ideas on university teaching practice, whose current challenge incorporates an inclusive literacy (considered as a social practice) as

well as one that is informative and critical (Cassany, 2006).

The aims of this research are to:

- a) describe the new role of the university reader from the theoretical perspective of the New Literacy Studies (e.g. Pahl and Roswell, 2005; Barton, 2007)
- b) make a reflection on a reading model that unifies different levels: cyber-culture, media culture and literate culture.
- c) impulse the development of tools that facilitate the academic literacy within new learning contexts.
- d) increase the linguistic communicative competence of the students.
- e) promote dialogue between traditional reading habits and cyber-culture.
- f) re-think teaching-learning strategies at the university level.

Method

Our paper is supported by the results of a quantitative research study on current reading habits of university students. The sample is taken from 750 undergraduate students of Pre-school and Primary Education degree programs at the University of Seville. The data compilation employed an original questionnaire and a personal interview. Both have included the four domains of the social contexts for reading and writing established by the New Literacy Studies (Barton and Hamilton 1998): literacy culture, creation and ingenuity, cultural production and consumption, and culture of the memory. The students' answers have been analyzed from a socio-cultural point of view. The social contexts for reading and writing allow the development of the four former domains, as well as the existence of new ways of poly-literacy culture, trans-discipline and post-handwriting. Therefore, both new scenarios as well as communities with different formal and informal reading habits are configured among the current university students.

Expected Outcomes

This paper introduces these main results from the first phase of the research:

- a. Identification of literary practices among undergraduate students.
- b. Characterization of the conglomerates of the different ways of reading within the university classroom.
- c. Elaboration of the main profiles that define reading habits of the Pre-school and Primary Education degree students.
- d. Suggestions for the facilitation of a dialogue between traditional ways of culture and cyber-culture.
- e. Contributions for the design of tools oriented towards communities academic literacy.

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