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New Bridges to New Literacies : Year five and six students' use of hypertext in information literacy acquisition

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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The reseacher asserts her right and that of Dr. Ken Ryba to be identified as co-authors of the diagram *Analysis of the Collective ZPD*.

Abstract

This thesis addresses the some of the new issues for older New Zealand primary school students' information literacy acquisition. These issues have arisen as the result of the advent of computer-mediated interactive non-linear hypertexts, a new text type as opposed to traditional linear texts. The thesis maintains that the branching, expansive nature of hypertexts, coupled with socially constructed, strategic student learning, transforms the nature of learning itself, and creates a new synergistic learning environment and new conceptions of "literacy".

This potential for transformation is seen by the researcher as an ideal opportunity for teachers to design and implement new approaches to information literacy activity, and the process of this thesis puts this opportunity into action.

The research, then, seeks to clearly identify implications for teaching and learning of hypertext in relation to information literacy acquisition, through analysis and reflection of the experiences of the researcher in a classroom of year five and six students.

An ecological constructivist research perspective was selected as the philosophical, theoretical and methodological foundation of the research. This perspective clearly aligned with the research design and process. The research was designed as an ethnographic case study which was based on a model of analysis of the class "collective zone of proximal development" over three phases of development and observation.

The collection, analysis and "triangulation" of the eclectic range of data obtained from the ethnographic case study informed the analysis of conditions for successful "dynamic hypertextual literacy". This analysis in turn informed the construction of the findings, implications, and recommendations of the thesis.

Results from the study confirmed that hypertext does indeed require specialised strategies for accessing, processing and authoring. In addition, given the complexities of information hypertexts such as the Internet, socially-mediated settings which also allow opportunites for teacher guidance are critical to effective deep learning and construction of knowledge when these texts are used.

Further, the thesis suggests that the success or otherwise of "dynamic hypertextual literacy" is in the hands of teachers and the research embodies practical applications as well as outlining theoretical possibilities.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Peter and Gwenyth Sharp,
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