ABSTRACT

Title of Document:
DIGITAL STORYTELLING FN ESL INSTRUCTION: IDENTITY NEGOTIATION THROUGH A PEDAGOGY OF MULT1LITERACJES

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Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

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This qualitative descriptive exploratory study investigated how a pedagogy of multiliteracies can be introduced to the ESL curriculum using digital stories and explored the ways ESL learners negotiate their identities through the multimodality of this narrative genre. The study was based on the premise that in language education it is crucial to account for multimodality of discourses and bring students' diverse lifeworlds and experiences into the classroom thus extending an understanding of literacy to multimodal communication and inviting ESL learners to explore their multilayered and dynamic identities. The study elicited data through focused participant observations, content analysis of students' essays, weekly journals, and final semi-structured interviews, and through discourse analysis of the students' drafts of verbal narratives for digital stories, digital storyboards, and final digital storytelling projects. The findings revealed the presence of situated practice; overt instruction; critical framing; and, in a more limited way, transformed practice. While situated

practice evolved with the students narrating about their families, life-changing events, and important cultural practices, overt instruction included explicit and systematic instruction and scaffolding that fostered students' multimodal meaning making through story writing and production. Combined with situated practice it resulted in critical framing when students reflected on their progress as language learners and analyzed multimodal cultural representations in their digital stories. Some nascent examples of transformed practice were evident when students suggested how the projects had influenced their overall approaches to learning and understanding of meaning making. Student, negotiated their identities through the process and product of digital stories. The study revealed that none of the participants articulated as central an ESL student identity indicatmg that this social role was not particularly significant at the time of the digital story project. Instead, the students were storytellers and producers, mothers and sons, daughters and sisters, granddaughters and world travelers, friends, women and men, and people with unique cultural backgrounds and social experiences. And since the students were in constant communication with each other, personal stories became experiences that moved other students and influenced their understanding of cultural diversity. This collaborative process created a multicultural classroom community of practice conducive to the recognition of diverse identities and social roles.