

Elementary reading

Education



Elementary Reading Elementary Reading Literacy is a concept which has many categories and definitions. To there is no consensus of the specific definition of literacy. On a personal viewpoint, literacy should be taken in a broad sense and without disregard to its relation to cultural and social contexts (Wheeler & Swords, 2004). One should understand that literacy may mean differently for different individuals or communities depending on the needs and demands of their culture and society (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002). Literacy is not something that can be defined on neutral grounds because it is influenced by race, orientation, culture, class, and even gender.

Three articles discuss this matter extensively. The first one is Susanne Lapps article entitled “ Literacy and the English Language Learner,” which discusses different behaviors of English Language Learners (ELLs) inside the classroom. The second one is the article by Karen Cadiero-Kaplan, entitled “ Literacy Ideologies: Critically Engaging the Language Arts Curriculum,” which discusses how, for whom, and for what purposes literacy is defined. The third article is written by Rebecca Wheeler and R. Swords and is entitled “ Codeswitching: Tools of Language and Culture Transform the Dialectally Diverse Classroom”. It discusses the best way to teach Standard English to ELLs for classroom use without disregarding the fact that these individuals have a language that is correct in their own right.

(Fatma, 2011)

(Toronto District Board School, n. d.)

It is ironic how the world seems to clamor for diversity, yet fails to adapt to it in the most basic classroom setup --- interaction between teachers and students. These two images above directly show how respect for diversity should be supported. Classrooms nowadays are becoming more and more

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culturally diverse, thus, the need for a greater weight to be placed on a student's individuality and background. The common points among the articles stressed in these images are:

literacy should not be based on the student's knowledge and use of "standard" English

correcting a child regarding "incorrect grammar" will usually end in the child being too shy to speak in time

literacy is not neutral because it is a standard set as a benchmark to hone individuals based on the needs of the particular society

To answer these common points stated in the articles, it is good to understand that modifying classroom instruction and lecture content and style is essential in ensuring that native speakers, ELLs, and those that come in between, are provided with a fair range of classroom experience that would benefit everyone (Lapp, 2010). Additionally, background of every student should be taken into consideration because it is possible that what is learning for Native American students may be different from what is learning for those of, for example, Arab immigrants. It is good to understand that literacy is set within the political boundaries of a particular jurisdiction; therefore, it cannot be the same across the world (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002). This would mean that different students may have different styles, ideologies, and processes in learning. Furthermore, to promote a rigid "right and wrong" usage of the English language will not encourage students to learn Standard English (Wheeler & Swords, 2004). On the contrary, it might just push the student to refuse to participate in classroom discussions.

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