

James paul gee what is literacy

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



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What is Literacy James Paul Gee Reading Questions How does he define the word 'discourse'? Write the definition that he uses, then put it in your own words.

2. Here are some quotes: what do these mean? (in your own words):

a. "Some other examples of discourses: being an American or a Russian, being a man or a woman, being a member of a certain socioeconomic class, being a factory worker or a boardroom executive, being a doctor or a hospital patient, being a teacher, an administrator or a student, being a member of a sewing circle, a club, a street gang, a lunchtime social gathering, or a regular at a local watering hole" (p. 135)

b. "Discourses are inherently 'ideological'" (p. 135)

c. "It is sometimes helpful to say that it is not individuals who speak and act, but rather historically and socially defined discourses speak to each other through individuals."

According to the author, discourse of an individual is rather connected to his inherited identity or gender. This happens because he learns from his surroundings, which enables him to think, act and speak according to his gender, culture, nationality and values. With the term ideology, James Paul Gee is mainly implying that a person of a certain culture or a nation thinks, speaks and acts according to his inborn beliefs. Thus, discourse is certainly a course of speech, which involves psychological implications of a person's background in respect to his associations.

3. What is the difference between acquisition and learning, according to Gee, and how do these relate to his understanding of 'discourse' and 'literacy'?

Acquisition is gaining of knowledge unconsciously like learning native

language or learning via observation. It is a process in which a person does not put effort or concentration to learn, but it so happens naturally in his innate setting. On the other hand, Learning is a conscious process of gaining knowledge, it requires details, steps, examination and many at times experience to learn. This requires a mentor and individuals also require appropriate concentration levels to learn it. Acquisition enables an individual to establish a discourse, but learning defines, shapes, accelerates and establishes his literacy levels.

4. What does the author mean by primary and secondary discourses?

The author has described the oral mode of communication of a certain culture, society or nationality as primary discourse. Primary discourse is usually present in social circles, families, friends and acquaintances where a person is restricted to demonstrate his beliefs, values, norms, behaviour and other religious or cultural values. On the other hand, secondary discourse is connected to legitimate academic and professional places where a person is associated to learn and establish his experiences. Like schools, churches, colleges, workplaces and so on, here the discourse requires more proficient touch rather than emotional one. Thus, secondary discourse ensures both written and oral communication in a formal way.

5. How does the author define ' literacy'?

Hence, the author defines ' Literacy' as a power and expertise on discourse and knowledge, both written and oral according to primary and secondary settings. He further extends the magnitude of his discourse by describing it as a power and control discourse, which enables him to change or persuade any mode of communication according into his favor. Thus, learning is the

key idea behind literacy.

6. How are discourses (and literacies) mastered? (p. 140)

It is often believed that children learn at school in fact they learn through experiences at home. The cognitive and linguistic skills acquired at home by analyzing different discourses enables them to shape their perceptions, which later on establish their pattern of discourse. Therefore, learning should not be focused whilst teaching in fact the teachers should focus on acquisition of knowledge for better learning.

7. How can you have the ability to critique discourses (literacies)? (p. 140)

Meta level cognitive and linguistic skills development is associated to learning and mentoring. Thus, if acquisition of knowledge becomes preferred approach of the teachers then individuals can learn to absorb this knowledge without being forced to learn them.

8. How does his presentation of these areas relate to education and literacy?

Gee explicitly emphasized on curricula of schools for the acquisition of literacy, as schools have been neglecting the main stream discourse power of the children in the learning process and in fact focusing on the opposite approach for teaching them language and literacies.

9. What discourses do you use (operate within)?

I have been using primary and secondary discourse according to my inherent values and academic level. Hence, I have been using a blend of both in respect to the setting I am in. However, I believe that acquisition of knowledge obtained from an indirect means enhanced my discourse and established my literacy level, as in such a setting I am learning

unconsciously without being forced to emphasize on my grades. Therefore, learning of literacy is exclusively attached to hands on experiences.

10. Top of Form

Reference:

Gee, J. P. (January 01, 1989). What Is Literacy?. *Journal of Education*, 171, 1, 18-25.

11. Bottom of Form