

Literacy essay

Profession, Teacher



Natasha Kirlew Professor Stephens English 14 2/2/13 In the articles by the authors James Paul Gee, Lisa Delpit and the short story by Toni Cade Bambara all help readers understand their definition of literacy. I agree with Delpit because literacy allows individuals to communicate and that allow equally. So we can speak and understand each other. If people communicate better they will read and write better, individuals will speak better which allows more opportunities in their lives. In the article "What is Literacy" James Paul Gee advocate that young readers and writers acquire primary and secondary discourse through listening to and imitating the language spoken in their homes by family, friends and the environment. Primary discourse is the first language a person learns before any formal education, school, and careers or outside atmosphere. Secondary discourse is the language that is learned through professional or formal teaching through school, church, community organizations and any other institution. Delpit is right when she argues that all students can learn to move from primary to secondary discourses because if provided with good teachers and an good education then they will know how to relate their primary and secondary discourses. Gee believes literacy helps students, the readers and writers are able to control and manage their uses of secondary discourses; they can easily move in and out of any number of discourses, at any given movement. Gee says discourse is like an "identity kit," which refers the "appropriate costume and instructions on how to act and talk so as to take particular role that others will Gee learned to also recognize others when they do so. (Gee1). Gee has the idea that it is difficult for readers and writers and argues that it is "almost impossible" for students to successfully learn secondary

discourse when they learned and acquired their primary discourse is differently from their secondary discourse the standard English language. Gee has the idea of acquisition which is the process of acquiring is an process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and an process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching. It happens in natural setting which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquire knows that he needs to acquire the thing he is exposed to in order to function and the acquirer in fact wants to be so function. This is how most people come to control their first language. (Gee, 2) Acquisition has to do with the primary discourse. Acquisition is learning in school, colleges, universities and other forms of institution. Gee has the idea of learning that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, through not necessarily from someone designated a teacher, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter. Gee's concepts of acquisition and learning Gee believes that teaching grammar is not a very good way of getting people to control language, second language states as the example that most people aren't very good at attaining a second language in a very functional way through formal instruction of a classroom. People who acquired a second language in a natural setting don't make good linguistics, and some good linguistics can't speak the language they learned in a classroom. Second language performance acquisition and learning are two different things, according to Gee and he relates it to literacy and reading. Reading has to do with literacy and the ability to interpret words and symbols. Learning to read has to do with some aspect of discourse and children should be exposed to learning because, it stresses poor performers. Gee overall idea that poor

performers need to learn the common sense of literacy. Poor performers are able to write and read coherently. (Gee 3). The author Lisa Delpit shares her perspective on the literacy crisis of American students. Delpit has a viewpoint on how literacy rates can be improved. Delpit is an educator and scholar in her article, "The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourses, agrees with most of Gee arguments about literacy, but believes that students the readers and writers can learn a primary and secondary discourse, if they are taught by teachers and have an effort to want to achieve knowledge, success and a new form of discourse. Delpit is trying to understand Gee but finds his arguments to be problematic. Gee states to learn a new discourse is "almost impossible" and that viewpoint is a consequence to Delpit. Delpit believes that students and teachers will give up trying to teach standard English, and students will feel discouraged and embarrassed to learn standard English language. Delpit has a formal and professional respect for teachers, they are trying to bridge the gap between primary and secondary discourse for the readers and writers. Delpit believes it is possible she states referring to Gee first argument that "people are being locked hopelessly into a lower class status discourse". Delpit also has an issue with Gee's second argument about "individuals who are born into one discourse with one set of values may experience major conflict when attempting to acquire another discourse with a other set of values. "Delpit hates that Gee especially pertinent to "women and minorities, " who, when they seek to acquire status discourses, may be faced with adopting values that deny their primary identities. Gee referring to race and skin color, and gender, which makes him seem ignorant. Delpit believes that if teachers listen to Gee that

they will acceptance these low deprecatory values and people of color will have an difficult time acquiring new status discourses and the teaching of discourse will be hinder. Delpit states that the issue concerns her. Delpit provides to the readers of students who actually overcome the problems that Gee asserts and discusses in his article. Delpit then goes in the article and shows her overall respect for teachers. The teachers wanted the children to live up to their expectations. The teachers set high expectations and wanted the children to meet them. Delpit states the " teachers were not an part of the powerful elite or members of dominate discourses". But had a powerful teaching on the students and change the view and concept of allowing students to succeed in mainstream America, who was born outside the power circle and the richer social class. With no chance of learning in an educational institution for the students, Delpit is referring to. Teachers didn't make the obstacle stop them they provided the students the keys to success. The acceptance and entry into the larger secondary discourse world, never knew if the doors would let in the students. Delpit ideas about literacy are close to my own because I also disagree with her individuals can learn a secondary discourse and it is not impossible. Students can bridge the gap, between primary and secondary discourse. Overall literacy will improved the individual's life to be successful. Another author just like Gee, Delpit also has her own perspective. In Toni Cade Bambara's short story, "The Lesson" Miss Moore is the teacher that Delpit is speaking about in her article. Miss Moore changes the children viewpoints and teaches them about discourses. Miss Moore is an educated black woman who returns to Harlem, NY to teach young children some important lessons and how to have a voice

and a piece of the American dream through literacy. That is outside of their little poor neighborhood in Harlem, NY. The children in "The Lesson" was used to speaking in their primary discourse basically slang and mock Miss Moore for being too proper and formal. When the children went to the toy store that was a new experience realizing how other people lived. The toy store was expensive and the other people lifestyles were different. They will spend a lot of money on toys; to the children in "the Lesson" that was a waste. Their families struggle with financial income and in the toy store they state that the money could buy their families food and pay bills for at least a month. Literacy, Miss Moore and toy store customers are definitely a big influence in the story, because the children didn't want to be put down and feel less than their counterparts in the toy store and they knew that they wanted part of that life one day. To be in a better financial income, take education more seriously by actually using the taught secondary discourse and leaving the neighborhood. If Miss Moore didn't return then as Gee says it will be almost impossible for these children to learn a secondary discourse. As for me, I agree with Delpit and Toni Cade Bambara because literacy is important in helping students in reading, writing and speaking. With Delpit I'm an good example of learning how to use both my primary and secondary discourse. At college I used my secondary discourse but when I'm at home I used the primary discourse. Delpit relates to me because she states that African Americans or any other minority group has become "successful" has done so by acquiring a discourse other than the one into which he or she was born. For these African American students acquisition can be attributed to the teachers of a result of their work of one or more committed teachers.

(Delpit 550). I overcame challenges and had to learn from strangers. Examples teachers who didn't believe I will succeed in upper institution such as college or university. Delpit speaks upon this matter that individuals are choosing "not to learn" what is expected of them rather learn than learn that which denies their self worth of who they are. As for Toni Cade Bambara I also agree with her short story myself grew up in an environment where children believe that there was no world, outside their neighborhood. Until one day a teacher at my high school told us there was a lot of education and challenges that we will face in life. Once we leave our neighborhood and branch off to a career in our desire work fields or attend a diverse college or university. I remember that I took and utilize her lesson and I didn't want to forget anywhere in my life. I was becoming a professional by attending an wanting higher education. In the past, I didn't have these dreams or thoughts but now I will like to graduate from LIU and begin to work in my desire field. The moral of the lesson is sometimes people have to listen to someone in their life and they may guide you in the right direction. The person will change how you feel about yourself, others, environment, social class and make you want to become an equal in a part of the American dream.