

Read, write, touch Co-construction and multiliteracies in a third-grade digital writing exercise

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Abstract

Many researchers and educators believe that reading and writing instruction needs to change in order to reflect the multimodal, technological, interactive nature of communication today. To date, few studies have examined how touchscreen devices may influence primary school students' reading and writing practices. Guided by Vygotsky's notion of co■construction and aspects of the New London Group's multiliteracies framework, we built an original multimodal tablet tool and examined how 51 third graders in Costa Rica used it to co■construct and design meaning in a reading■to■writing activity. The first aim of this study, therefore, is to understand how multimodality and technology can work together to support young people's reading and writing. Secondly, we asked how a specific interactive, touchscreen feature might positively contribute to third graders' writing samples. The key findings were that the tool used in this study encouraged a broad range of writing practices, that the touch feature supported co■construction, and that the careful integration of touchscreen features can engage and motivate students in reading and writing activities..