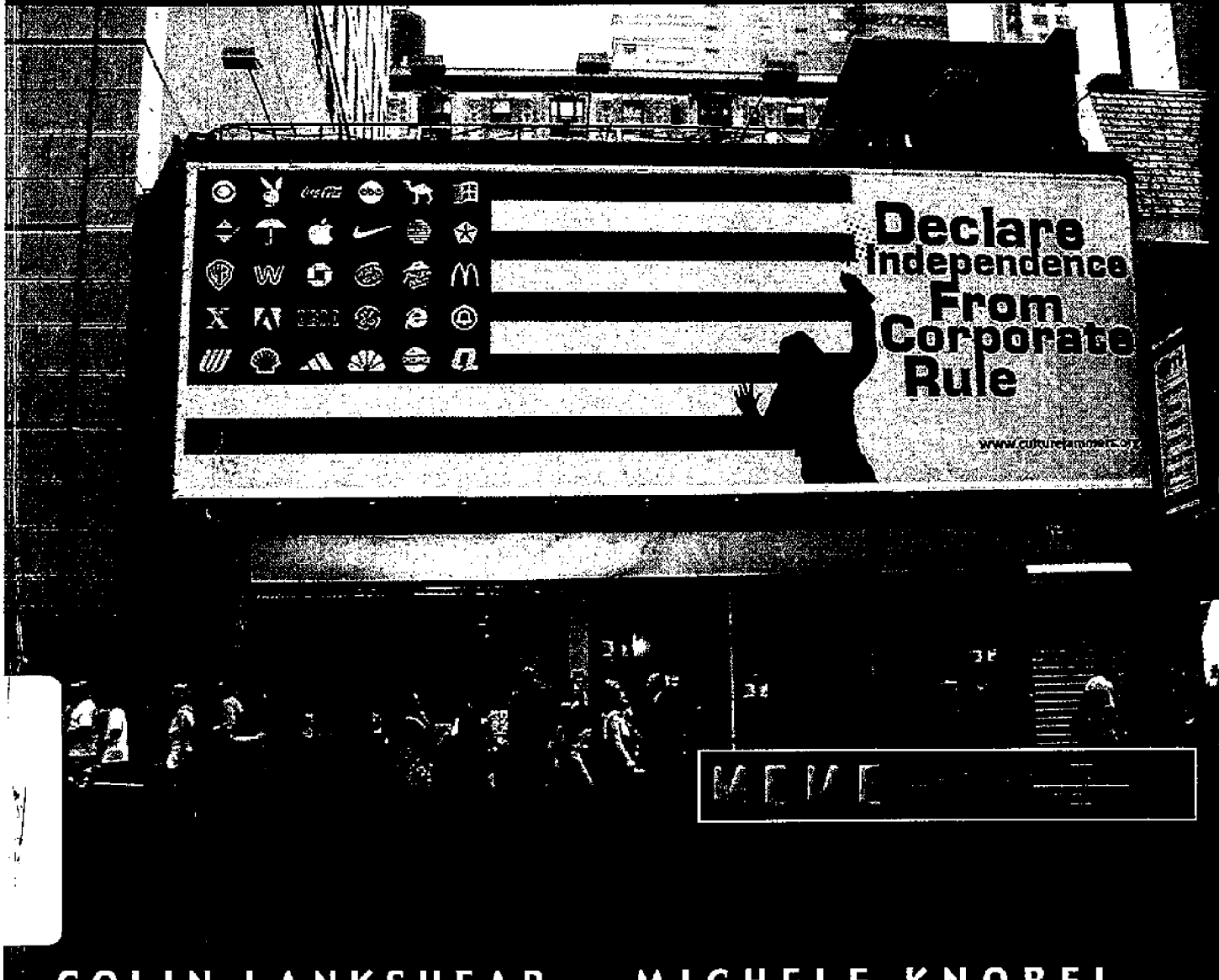


meme: (pron. "meem") A contagious idea that replicates like a virus, passed on from mind to mind..

Changing Knowledge and Classroom Learning



New Literacies

Changing Knowledge and Classroom Learning

“Lankshear and Knobel’s New Literacies: Changing Knowledge and Classroom Learning is a savvy and principled analysis of emerging socio-cultural conditions of digitization, the best take to date on education, Post-Lyotard.” – Suzanne de Castell, Professor, Literacy and New Media Studies, Simon Fraser University

“An intriguing book which argues why the use of new media is transforming ways of knowing and making meaning in the digital age. Essential reading for anyone who cares about literacy education.” – Associate Professor Ilana Snyder, Monash University

“A good book opens a window onto new vistas; an excellent one, on the other hand, pulls readers through the opening and beyond, inviting critical dialogue at every turn. New Literacies belongs in the excellent category.” – Donna Alvermann, University of Georgia

Literacy education continues to be dominated by a mindset that has passed its use-by date. Education has failed to take account of how much the world has changed during the information technology revolution. It proceeds as though the world is the same as before – just somewhat more technologized. This is the hallmark of an ‘outsider’ mindset. In fact, qualitatively new literacies and new kinds of knowledge associated with digitally saturated social practices abound. ‘Insiders’ understand this, ‘outsiders’ do not. Yet ‘outsider’ perspectives still dominate educational directions. Meanwhile, student ‘insiders’ endure learning experiences that mystify, bemuse, alienate and miseducate them. This book describes new social practices and new literacies, along with kinds of knowledge associated with them. It shows what is at stake between ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ mindsets, argues that education requires a shift in mindset, and suggests how and where pursuit of progressive change might begin.

Colin Lankshear is currently a Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Ballarat, and a freelance education researcher and writer based in Mexico. Formerly a Professor of Education and research coordinator, he was a Heritage Fellow of the Mexican Council for Science and Technology during 1999-2001.

Michele Knobel is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Central Queensland University, and is currently working within the Department of Education at the University of California, Irvine. She is also a freelance education researcher and writer based principally in Mexico.

Cover design:

ISBN 0-335-21066-X



9 780335 210664 >

Open University Press
Celtic Court
22 Ballmoor
Buckingham
MK18 1XW

email: enquiries@openup.co.uk
world wide web: www.openup.co.uk

and
325 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

First Published 2003

Copyright © Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel 2003

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited. Details of such licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd of 90 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 0LP.

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0 335 21066 X pb 0 335 21067 8 hb

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Lankshear, Colin.

New literacies: changing knowledge and classroom learning/Colin Lankshear
and Michele Knobel.

p. cm

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-335-21067-8 – ISBN 0-335-21066-X (pbk.)

1. Literacy. I. Knobel, Michele II. Title.

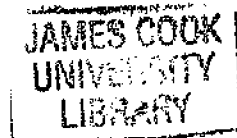
LC149 .L27 2003

302.2'249–dc21

2002074950

Typeset by Type Study, Scarborough

Printed in Great Britain by St Edmundsbury Press, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk



New Literacies
Changing Knowledge
and Classroom Learning

COLIN LANKSHEAR and
MICHELE KNOBEL

Open University Press
Buckingham · Philadelphia

Contents

List of Figures and Tables	viii
Foreword by Donna Alvermann	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Part 1 What's New?	1
1 From 'Reading' to the 'New Literacy Studies'	3
2 The 'New Literacy Studies' and the Study of <i>New</i> Literacies	23
3 Atoms and Bits: Literacy and the Challenge of Mindsets	50
Part 2 Staring at the Future	79
4 Faking It: The National Grid for Learning	81
5 Attention Economics, Information and New Literacies	109
6 The Ratings Game: From eBay to Plastic	132
Part 3 Changing Knowledge	153
7 'Digital Epistemologies': Rethinking Knowledge for Classroom Learning	155
8 New Ways of Knowing: Learning at the Margins	178
References	207

Foreword

A good book opens a window onto new vistas; an excellent one, on the other hand, pulls readers through the opening and beyond, inviting critical dialogue at every turn. *New Literacies* belongs in the excellent category. Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel pull us into spaces beyond the proverbial school door and into different arenas peopled with everyday users of new literacies – the stuff that formal education (and traditional schooling in particular) is yet to welcome, let alone fully understand. Yet it is the promise and potential of just such an understanding that pulls at the curious reader and makes the journey through this book an efficacious and delightful one.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find two scholars better versed than Lankshear and Knobel in the interface between digital technologies and new literacies. The influence of their collective thinking, research, and writing continues to cross national borders, even continents. Through their ears, eyes, and uncanny sense of timing, we are treated to a first-hand, up-close look at the social practices that embed the new digital literacies. But I'd wager it is more than simply 'a look' that is at stake here; rather,

through the authors' careful weaving of theory and research, we are offered numerous opportunities to consider how these practices position us, and, in turn, how we use them to position others.

Lest readers think that *New Literacies: Changing Knowledge and Classroom Learning* is aimed solely at educators and their interests, one need only skim the book's table of contents to correct this misconception. The authors' thoughtful and lively interpretations of such diverse topics as attention economics, eBay's regulating devices, and digital epistemologies provide a context for sharpening our understanding of the ways in which media and the Internet are affecting each of us personally, whatever our walk in life. Recognizing one's membership in this broader audience is but another way of acknowledging the profound impact that new information and communication technologies are having, and most likely will continue to have, on the literacy practices of young and old.

Some readers will view this book as a milestone in literacy education if for no other reason than because it steps to the front and offers rich (and heretofore largely ignored) historical insight into how we in the English-speaking world – teachers, administrators, researchers, parents, policy makers, the general public – have come to think about reading and writing as we do. Others will see *New Literacies* as representing a challenge to their belief that the world is as it always has been, considerably more technologized perhaps, but the same nonetheless. Still others will sense in the authors' writing a willingness to take risks here and there – to stick their necks out, so to speak – perhaps in the hope that doing so will help to loosen the stranglehold that current ideas about literacy education have on us and the students we teach. Presumably, we could learn much from listening to our students, which is the message Lankshear and Knobel seem to convey in their chapter on *New Ways of Knowing: Learning at the Margins*. Finally, there will be readers who, like myself, will finish this book firmly convinced that many of the literacies young people are successfully using outside school can be connected to what goes on within formal schooling, if only we are willing to give it a try.

Donna Alvermann
University of Georgia