Literacy in the Digital Age, 2nd ed.

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of literacy practices, from reading habits to notions of morality and values embedded in literacy practices (Chapter 9), and patterns of practices, in terms of gendered practices as well as multilingual literacies (Chapter 10). They also interrogate the intersections and borderlands as well as the power structures that complicate those spaces where literacy practices happen (Chapters 11-13). Perhaps vernacular literacies are the most complicated spaces of literacy practices, and Barton and Hamilton discuss some of these complications in Chapter 14. According them, "vernacular literacies are in fact hybrid practices which draw on a range of practices from different domains" (247). In other words, the lines between literacy practices are permeable in that practices from one may, and frequently do, affect those in another area. For example, literacy practices and knowledge learned from participating in a hobby may influence and be influenced by literacy practices from work or school.

In brief, Barton and Hamilton's *Local Literacies* is a classic text on literacy and ethnography. It provides a solid framework that continues to move literacy studies forward.

Works Cited

Barton, David, and Mary Hamilton. *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community.* 1998. London: Routledge, 2012. Print.
Heath, Shirley Brice. *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983. Print.

Literacy in the Digital Age, 2nd ed.

Burniske, Richard W.
Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008. $29.95.

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In the digital age of computer technologies, writing teachers must often choose to either refurbish their classes and pedagogies with new technologies or risk losing their students' attention and interest. Teachers are required now more than ever before to make decisions to move away from the functional literacy that governed the education system in the U.S. and many countries for decades. Such changes create space for new forms of literacy our students desperately need to live and prosper in such a digitized world.

The title of Burniske's book can be quite misleading because it connotes that the book is about digital and computer literacy. In reality, this book makes its central argument that literacy in the digital age is not limited to computer or technical literacy; literacy is an umbrella concept that embraces a wide spectrum of literacies that emerged and became integral over time. This book presents these literacies and a computer-based approach to bringing each literacy to the writing class. The essence of the book is the literacies introduced, rather than computers or other technologies.

The book has two fundamental features: definitions and literacy challenges. This book provides working definitions of each type of literacy presented. These definitions establish a common ground for readers of varying experience with literacy theory. Burniske's definitions break down each literacy into a set of complementary passive and active skills and practices. For example, civil literacy is defined as "the ability to read, interpret, and respect the moral and ethical beliefs embraced by a particular social group and apply them in a responsible manner" (19). This definition does not stop at the passive skills of reading and understanding the beliefs of a given social group, but it enacts these skills in active application.

Literacy in the Digital Age also "serves as a philosophical guide while providing practical ideas for classroom practitioners" (2). These practical ideas come in the form of literacy challenges, or detailed activities that can be adopted and adapted to different classes, students, and contexts. One good example of these literacy challenges is in chapter 4 on personal literacy. The "Why List" literacy challenge (64 – 65) is an interesting and thought provoking activity that helps readers think critically about
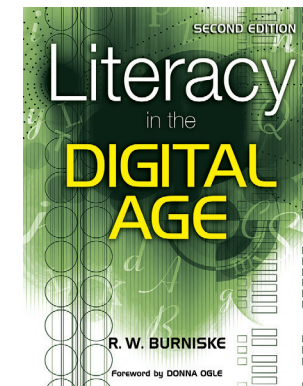
technology-related social beliefs and phenomena. Students are expected to generate their questions that they will answer later. This activity can be implemented in any class in which students are asked to write a research paper.

It shouldn't go without saying here that the technologies discussed in this book may not be the state-of-the-art ones that are available for teachers and scholars today to use and examine. This is due to the rapid leaps in social media and Web 2.0 technologies that happened after this book was initially published. For example, the book introduces activities for technologies like synchronous chat rooms, a technology that has evolved. Nevertheless, it is important to note that because the prime focus of the book is developing a wide range of literacies rather than examining new technologies, the book can still be of value to writing teachers, scholars, literacy specialists, historians, and curriculum designers. Writing teachers, for instance, can import many of the activities included in this book to some of the newer technologies available now, whereas scholars and historians may examine the evolution of literacy applications across different generations of technology. Media specialists, though, may not have the same degree of interest in the book, particularly if they are looking into newer forms of digital technology that are not present in this book.

The book is divided by literacy into eight short chapters. Each chapter deals with a different literacy and activities that can be applied in networked classrooms to develop this literacy in students. The systematic structure of chapters follows the following format: A short introduction of the literacy; A definition; Literacy challenges and/or case studies; Some explanatory thoughts. This makes it a handy source for teachers looking for activities, for literacy theorists looking for links between the literacy definitions and applications, and for scholars exploring rationales behind each activity.

The first chapter, "Media Literacy," lays the foundation to the literacies that follow in subsequent chapters. Burniske cautions teachers of the sheer enthusiasm that would make many of them jump into bringing all forms of literacy to their classes at once. He frames his media literacy definition with the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) and uses this framework to extend computer literacy to become community literacy where all activities "require participation in the ancient art of persuasion that scholars of ancient Greece called rhetoric" (11). This approach provides a feasible way for teachers to link the small community of the classroom to the larger communities outside the classroom while allowing rhetoricians to investigate the links between media and rhetoric.

The second chapter, "Civil Literacy," is a call to teachers integrating any form of technology to teach students computer ethics in order to be responsible users of technology. The chapter posits collaborative learning as an essential civic literacy skill. Collaborative learning can be enacted in the form of students helping each other and their teacher with technology. Burniske brings the concept of civil literacy to a very practical level that students would appreciate and be able to practice.

The "Discourse Literacy" chapter deals with an essential form of literacy, the literacy of composing and presenting ourselves in online learning discourses. The biggest challenge, according to Burniske, is that "potential conflict exists between the

expectations that students and teachers bring to these activities" (42). This chapter appeals to many audiences: it provides teachers with illustrations of example prompts to generate a thoughtful virtual discussion, it gives literacy theorists an approach to understanding and enacting discourse literacy in different contexts, and it stimulates a number of rules and directions for curriculum designers and teacher trainers to consider upon dealing with writing in virtual spaces.

Complementing the discourse literacy chapter, the personal literacy chapter focuses on students and how to make them go through the journey of self-reflection and awareness of their identity in an online community. Chapter five takes the inward-looking concept of personal literacy to the outward-looking concept of community literacy. Burniske presents a number of literacy challenges that aim to help students collaborate as connected members in an online community. Although the telecollaborative, sequential story activity is presented as a case study of community building, I could not think of it beyond a collaborative writing project that students may not perceive as a community-building one. Because this activity is implemented in sequence of emails, rather than exchanges and interaction, students may not feel they are part of a community the way they would do if they developed the same story on a discussion board or a blog. Needless to say that the book does not cover any Web 2.0 technologies due to its year of publication, which may limit its appeal to new media scholars, digital literacy theorists, cultural studies theorists, or teachers who incorporate such technologies in their writing classes.

Chapter six on "Visual Literacy" is a very interesting chapter that addresses evaluating websites and online resources through a number of innovative activities. Burniske borrows John Berger's argument that "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (Berger as quoted in Burniske, 94). The central question in this chapter is "How might educators stimulate their students' critical literacy through the development of more astute visual literacy?" (94). The answer the chapter endorses is a sequential application of a rhetorical framework of evaluating websites. In this framework, ethos is represented in the creator and owner of the website, logos in argument and logical information presented on the site, and pathos in the use of visuals and textual arrangement. In reality, applying this framework involves different types of literacy, such as critical and personal literacy.

In a relatively short chapter on evaluative literacy, Burniske discusses developing students' critical judgment as an initial step toward improving their own writing. The chapter revolves around how the use of technology can "help students develop more evaluative literacy" (110). Through one literacy challenge and two case studies, the chapter demonstrates an electronic peer review of writing session, documenting and archiving online writing and learning activities through electronic portfolios, and keeping track of learning by using online learning records, respectively. The ideas and processes introduced in these activities can be adapted to more modern technologies teachers may use nowadays.

The pedagogical literacy chapter can be read as a personal message to all educators whether or not they integrate technology in their teaching. This is the only chapter that

has no literacy challenges. This may be because pedagogical literacy is the teacher's central challenge. Through contemplating on their pedagogical literacy, teachers are capable of bringing all other literacies to their classes.

Burniske asks teachers who pay excessive attention to their materials at the expense of students to reverse the situation by intellectually challenging their students. He also challenges teachers who use technology for technology's sake, thinking that technology brings all positive influence to class, students, and teaching: "Telecomputing is not about computers. It's about educating our students, serving our communities, and improving our societies" (127).

Burniske's concluding statement remains true years after the book was published and as technology continues to entice and challenge teachers, literacy theorists, media specialists, and other communities of scholars. They all have to consider students as the core of education, students who will be responsible for advancing their communities and moving the whole society forwards. Therefore, students' mastery of the different literacies Burniske discusses in this book makes the book a valuable resource to different communities of readers.