

Book Review

Digital Media, Culture and Education: Theorising Third Space Literacies

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The developments in digital media technology have made significant changes and impact on education in the contemporary society. The emergence of new disciplinary areas such as digital media studies and new media has transformed the communication and media studies scholarship into a new dimension while the use of digital media and technology has also increased significantly in education. A large number of books are published every year with a plethora of information on the use of digital media from an operational perspective. However, there is a lacuna in the existing literature on the critical reflections of the digital media education.

Digital Media, Culture and Education: Theorising Third Space Literacies is a unique scholarly contribution by John Potter and Julian McDougall published in 2017 by Palgrave Macmillan. The book provides a critical commentary on key issues around learning in the digital age. The book focuses on the impact of digital media on education through a socio-cultural and political lens. This book is a valuable reading source for anyone working in the context of lifelong learning in digital media technology either formally or informally. The book attempts to critically examine key themes and issues relating to media, technology and pedagogy in the 21st century. The thematic foci of the book are the dynamics, challenges, and opportunities in using digital media in contemporary education as well as how to use digital media in creative and novel ways. Even though the focus of the book is education, it is written using an interdisciplinary approach by bringing inputs from cultural studies and new media.

The significance of this book is that the authors critically challenge how the digital education and pedagogical practices are framed and understood in the neo-liberal context. Based on Homi Bhaba's concept of 'Third Space', the book evolves around key fundamental questions such as what happens to people doing education in a digital (third space) world and how the engagements in third space influences the education in general. The book argues that this third space has a literal and metaphorical meaning which is a negotiated and contested area in which meanings are made and shared. For digital media educators, the 'third space' is generally defined as the area between official curriculum and informal knowledge, with skills and dispositions brought in from outside culture.

The book consists of eight chapters and the major thematic areas that are covered in the book are dynamic literacies, third space, digital curation, networked education, open learning and digital struggles. The book argues that there is a critical need to go beyond the

traditional understanding of the concepts such as literacy in order to get a holistic view of education in the digital media environment. Hence, the authors propose the concept of 'dynamic literacies' as an umbrella term which is inclusive enough to encompass the changing nature of meaning making in the digital media and cultural context. The authors claim that the concept of 'dynamic literacies' captures the transformation of the literacy that resulted due to the impact of digital media technologies. The book suggests that communication and media educators should conceptualize literacy from a holistic perspective and dynamic literacies would be a novel way to look at education.

The fourth chapter of the book discusses the concept of 'digital curation' which transforms the traditional idea of curation into the digital learning environment. "Digital curation has both a technical and a social dimension drawing on knowledge of how collections are managed and applying the changed arrangements and practices of digital media to them." (p 65). Digital curation is proposed as a process which helps to organize digital media content in a manner that would make the learning process coherent, creative and interactive.

The book challenges the dominant normative views of digital media education and it brings our attention to how the new popular culture and neo-liberal context have defined education in a way that would serve the system. The scholarly essence of the book is the identification of the contingencies in the concepts such as literacy and traditional, pedagogical practices and the introduction of dynamic literacies, third space learning and digital curation to understand education in the contemporary digital media era. However, one area that this book needs critical attention is the differences in how education is understood and operated in different societal contexts and how it would impact digital media education. The book could have been even more interesting if the issues and challenges of digital media education in the global South had been discussed by focusing on the structural issues in the same. Nevertheless, this book is recommended for the educators in Sri Lanka as the digital media education has been increasing significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Digital Media, Culture and Education: Theorising Third Space Literacies* can be recommended as one of the best theoretical and conceptual intervention in the field of education in the digital era.

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