Program Syllabus

GLIT 6756: Language, Literacy and Learning
GLIT 6757: Literacy and Inquiry

Corner Brook July 2007

The nature and purposes of the program

These two interlocked courses focus on the theme of "new literacies" and "learning." It will involve a mix of *reflection* about "new literacies and learning" and *hands on activity* involving new literacies. Participants will be arranged in groups (of no more than 6 people) based on one particular "new literacy" in accordance with preferences they will decide prior to the first face-to-face session. In these groups they will engage in actually *learning* a "new literacy" during the first week-long session at Marble Mountain Ski Lodge.

Each group will collect data during the process of this learning engagement. These data will relate to the processes of their own learning, as individuals and as a group. That is to say, they will be "recording" information about their learning *while it is going on* in the manner of researchers. This part of the process will occur in Course GLIT 6756 during the first pre reading week and the first face to face week (July 2-6 and July 9-13, respectively).

Each group will then reflect on their data in the manner of researchers. They will analyze their group's data, and write a report that they will present as a group to the other participants on the last day of the second face-to-face session. This part of the process will occur in Course GLIT 6757 during the second pre reading week and the second face to face week (July 16-20 and July 23-27, respectively).

The main purposes of the two courses will be to actually learn a new literacy and to learn about learning a new literacy in ways designed to inform their work as teachers, adult learners, and teacher researchers. The course is intended to serve as an introduction to teacher research as well as an introduction to the theme of new literacies and learning.

The structural set up of the program

The program is structured around a pre-determined range of new literacies. Participants will read about these new literacies prior to the first face-to-face week (that is, prior to July 9). They will come to the first face-to-face session with a first and second choice of activities. Ideally, participants will choose to learn in areas they do not have much prior knowledge of. That is, it would be inappropriate for someone who is an expert player of video games to choose a video game activity. The point is as far as possible to "start from scratch" in order to *learn* about learning processes.

On the first face-to-face day, the groups will be formed. Groups will immediately get to work learning their "new literacy" and collecting data as they go. During the entire first week the groups will be learning and data collecting. Some will be making tangible products (e.g., a movie), while others will be "making intangible products" (e.g., playing games to different levels of competence, such that "completed games" and "records of their paths through the games" will be the "products").

During the first face-to-face week we will also have a range of short "whole group" activities that will introduce participants to resources for free internet communications – e.g., Skype telephony – and online collaborative writing – e.g., Google docs.

Before the first face-to-face meeting, individual participants will have engaged in relevant prior reading and relevant activities. Some of these will be related to them making informed decisions about the particular "new literacy" they would like to pursue. For example, they will read material online and from anywhere else they can access it about the different "new literacies" they will be choosing among. They will be trying to get a sense of what these are like, what they would like to learn, and why they would like to learn it. On the basis of this work they will decide their first and second choices for activity.

The other prior reading and relevant activities before the first face-to-face week will be about research and data collection. So when we all arrive at the first face-to-face week we will have our activity preferences as well as some knowledge about how to collect data in the context of group-based learning. This will include data collection approaches and techniques like "making field notes of observed data", "recording focused interviews and think alouds", "video recording slices of action", "audio recording stretches of natural talk within the context of the activity", and so on. Ideally, people will also start to read about data analysis prior to the first face-to-face class.

Prior to the second face to face week (that is, during the week of 16-20 July), participants will be reading about data analysis, looking at the data they have collected, starting to make some sense of it, and reading some literature that will help inform their reports. They will be communicating with other members of their group during this period, using email, chat, google docs and other facilities that have previously been introduced.

During the second face-to-face week – the final week of the program – participants will be working in their groups to produce their reports and presentations: the records of what they learned, how they learned it, and the sense they make of *how* they learned *what* they learned, and what they have *learned about learning new literacies* from all of this engagement.

The scope of the program: the range of new literacies available to groups

(a) Resources:

We will be bringing with us to Newfoundland a range of resources for you to use. These include:

(a) A Lego Mindstorms robot building kit. This can used to create a number of robots by a single group.

(b) Wireless base stations to set up a wireless internet network within the Marble Mountain ski lodge. Students who bring laptops with them that have wireless capacity will be able to access this network.

(c) Computers, software and peripherals for making various kinds of movies: such as, music videos, anime videos, stop motion movies, machinima, etc.

(d) Sets of strategy card games (i.e., *Yu-Gi-Oh* card sets, *Magic: The Gathering* sets and the narrative game, *Once Upon a Time*).

(e) Video recording and editing software (i.e., *Fraps, iMovie, Movie Maker*), a video camera, and digital cameras with movie capacity

(f) Online access to "Second Life" via the wireless network.

(g) A range of CD ROM computer games (e.g., puzzle-type games, role-play games, first person shooter games).

We strongly recommend that you bring a laptop computer with you—PC, or Mac is fine. You are also welcome to bring your own equipment or software that "meshes" with what we're providing and the activities we have planned for groups to complete (see below). If you don't have a laptop or relevant software and peripherals that's fine—we have got you covered with the gear we'll be bringing.

For example, if you are interested in strategy card games, you might want to bring your own *Magic* or *Yu-Gi-Oh* cards, or bring along cards from other games (e.g., *Dragonball-Z, Pokémon*).

If you are interested in making movies, you could check to see if your Mac laptop has *iMovie*, or your PC laptop has *Movie Maker* or equivalent (you can download *Movie Maker* for free from: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.mspx).

If you are interested in making stop animation movies, you might want to bring along a web camera and its associated software, or a video camera and tripod, or a digital camera for making your movie.

If you are interested in computer games, you might want to bring along a game you know is popular with your students but that you yourself have never played. For us "computer game" can be widely construed and can include online games like *Kingdom of Loathing* (http://www.kingdomofloathing.com) and *Maple Story* (http://www.maplestory.com). Both of these games are free to use (unlike, for example, *World of Warcraft* or *EverQuest*, which require a monthly subscription). What we're not talking about here, though, is card games like *Solitaire* or *Hearts* etc. or puzzle games like *Tetris* or *Pacman*. You are also welcome to bring along GameBoy machines and game software—especially if you have access to them and have never played them before.

You might also want to bring along video cameras and tripods and/or digital cameras and cassette or digital audio recorders to record/document your group's "play" and learning during the first face-to-face week. You'll find these tapes and photos will be useful data for analyzing in the second half of this summer's institute.

(b) Activities:

There are six activities for you to choose from—your task during the first week of July is to explore all six and select a first and second preference. You will finalize your focus activity during the first face-to-face session. You will work in a group to complete your task.

Activity 1: Strategy card games

Your task is to learn how to play at least two strategy card games—like *Magic: The Gathering* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*—proficiently. This means going beyond basic beginner levels of simply playing the game, to learning how to play the game *strategically*.

Activity 2: Lego Mindstorms robot building

Your task is to build the robot for which instructions are provided. This includes learning how to program the robot to move using a computer hook-up. Your task also involves building two additional robots that are able to complete a number of different tasks and analyzing the relationship between programming and the physics (e.g., shape, weight, form) of these robots etc.

Activity 3: Computer games

Your task is to become proficient at playing a computer game you have never played before. For us "computer game" can be widely construed and can include online games like *Kingdom of Loathing* (http://www.kingdomofloathing.com) and *Maple Story* (http://www.maplestory.com). Both of these games are free to use, although both do require internet access. What we're not talking about here, though, is computer card games like *Solitaire* or *Hearts* etc. or puzzle games like *Tetris* or *Pacman*. You may choose to bring your own GameBoy machine and game software—especially if you have access to them and have never played them before.

Activity 4: Music video making

Your task is to create a music video (of the kind you would find on MTV etc.). Music videos come in a range of genres including: anime music videos, live footage videos (where the live footage is created especially for the song, or where archived footage is spliced together to create the video), and machinima music videos. You need to explore all of these genres online and your group will decide on a specific genre during the first face-to-face session.

Activity 5: Machinima

Your task is to create a short narrative movie using virtual world (i.e., Second Life) or video game characters and settings. We will provide you with the video recording software you'll need

to record the film action on your computer screen. That is, machinima does not need video cameras in order to create footage—everything is done directly on your computer. We will help you get started by showing you how to register with SecondLife.com, create an avatar, how to move, and how to use the video recording software to be found within Second Life to create a short movie.

Activity 6: Live action film

Your task is to create a short film—narrative, documentary, fan text, information text, etc.—that uses live action footage of some kind (either created specially for this project, or using video footage you've previously recorded or have downloaded from the internet etc.). "Live action" refers to real people being recorded doing or acting out something (and as such, is different from, say, animation footage). For example, young people regularly make live action films of themselves skateboarding, or BMX-riding, or snowboarding. Others make live action films of them role-playing scenes from favourite movies or television series (e.g., *Lord of the Rings, Naruto*).

The content of the program: Pre-course readings and activities

(a) July 2 to 6 - Pre-course readings and activities

- Reading about "new literacies"

  1. Read Chapter 1 of *A New Literacies Sampler*, online at http://www.soe.jcu.edu.au/sampler

  2. Read any other chapters in the *New Literacies Sampler* you think might be of interest; e.g., chapters on games by Jim Gee and Jessica Hammer, or the chapter by Angela Thomas.

  3. Read any of the papers at the following website (they are recent papers we have written that deal with some of the new literacies in our course line up) that relate to activities you might be interested in (such as remixes, machinima, etc.) http://www.geocities.com/lanbeltalks

- Reading about data collection approaches

  Lankshear, C. and Knobel, M. (2004) *A Handbook for Teacher Research*.

  Skim read Chapters 9-12 (data collection). Pay particular attention to Chapters 10 and 11.

  If you have time, start to read a bit about data analysis in Chapters 13-15.

- Reading and activities for choosing a "new literacy" to learn

The following online resources will help you get started in terms of exploring the focus of each activity listed in the previous section. Use these as starting places and try to locate other resources as well. (i.e, see *(b) Activities* below).

You Tube (http://www.youtube.com), Break (http://www.break.com)
Search for "AMV" (anime music videos), "music video", "machinima", "fan video", "stop motion" (NB: placing double quote marks around two or more words will search for that entire phrase).

Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org)
Search for anything and everything here.

Google (http://www.google.com)
Use Google to search for specific card and video games. You'll also want to search for "guides" to these games, too. Use Google to help you learn about video editing techniques, and about Lego Mindstorms robotics.

Machinima.com, Animemusicvideos.org
Specialist archival sites for accessing machinima and anime music videos respectively.

(b) July 16 to 20 - Pre-course readings and activities

- Reading for data analysis and report writing

Gee, J. (2007). Good video games, the human mind, and good learning. In his book *Good Video Games + Good Learning*. New York: Peter Lang. (Text provided).

Lankshear, C. and Knobel, M. (2004) *A Handbook for Teacher Research*, Chapters 13-16.

Summary overview of course tasks

Week 1 July 2 to 6 Pre-session tasks	**Week 2** July 9-13 Face-to-face session	**Week 3** July 16-20 Pre-session tasks	**Week 4** July 23-27 Face-to-face session
Explore: All six activity foci; select first and second preference for group work during Week 2. **Read:** 1. Read Chapter 1 of *A New Literacies Sampler*, online at http://www.soe.jcu.edu.au/sampler 2. Read any other chapters in the *New Literacies Sampler* you think might be of interest – e.g., chapters on games by Jim Gee and Jessica Hammer, or the chapter by Angela	**Tasks:** Activity groups will be decided and the week will be spent becoming proficient in a particular new literacy. Groups will collect data on the new literacy itself and on their own learning.	**Read:** Gee, J. (2007). Good video games, the human mind, and good learning. In his book *Good Video Games + Good Learning*. New York: Peter Lang. (Text provided). Lankshear, C. and Knobel, M. (2004) *A Handbook for Teacher Research*, Chapters 13-16.	Groups will begin writing up their research paper. Research papers to be presented to whole class on final day.

Thomas. 3. Read any of the papers at the following website that relate to activities you might be interested in (such as remixes, machinima, etc.) http://www.geocities.com/lanbeltalks 4. Your own background reading in activity areas of interest. 5. Lankshear, C. and Knobel, M. (2004) *A Handbook for Teacher Research*. Skim read Chs. 9-12 (data collection). Pay particular attention to Chs. 10 and 11. If you have time, start to read a bit about data analysis in Chs. 13-15.		**Task:** Groups analyze their data and identify patterns, themes, etc.	