

For next class:

Find two or more sources that define something related to your topic. You want two sources that have competing definitions. You are to read both and consider both definitions. Then write a ADAPTED précis for the one with which you agree. Make sure you include direct evidence AND the competing definition within your précis. Use Maxson's example to help you.

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English 12--Definition Précis

James Gee's ✓✓ article, "What is Literacy? (2001), ✓✓ asserts that ✓✓ "literacy is the control of secondary uses of language" and has certain implications for American schooling paradigms. ✓✓ Gee suggests that there are two types of discourses that we need to attend to when thinking about literacy and its implications: primary discourses that are acquired and focus on performance, while secondary discourses, which are learned, enhance meta-level knowledge. Gee reinforces his distinction of acquisition and learning by examining the use of reading classes. ✓✓ According to Gee, reading should not necessarily be taught "in a vacuum," rather it is a performance that should be acquired in the pursuit of other secondary discourses. Gee goes on to state:

Any discourse is for most people most of the time only mastered through acquisition, not learning. Thus, literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning, that is it requires exposure to models of natural, meaningful, and functional settings, and teaching is not liable to be very successful.

Unlike Keefe and Copeland's article, "What is Literacy? The Power of Definition (2011) which argues that literacy is "a human right" and no matter how one defines it, its definition has political implications, Gee's purpose is ultimately to convince his readers the literacy needs to be parsed out and reconsidered in order to have educators adopt the philosophy that children in school must "acquire" literacy not learn it through the practice of developing skills. And that non-mainstream children will have conflicts present in their abilities to become literate because they are non-mainstream. ✓✓ Given the technical language used in the article, Gee is writing to an well-educated audience with some knowledge of linguistics and education. ✓✓