

Co-authoring a review of a book that relates to teaching gives both teachers a chance not only to conduct some scholarly research on the pedagogical practices in their discipline, but also to dialogue about their responses with someone else. Discussing and then writing a review that focuses on a book's implications for (or connections to) teaching can parallel the work of imagining how one's teaching portfolio might be read or used.

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## Arizona State University Preparing Future Faculty Portfolio

Lisa Cahill  
1999-2001

Shelley Rodrigo Blanchard  
1999-2001

**Review: *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web***

**Who:**

ASU Writing Programs (outside link) newsletter, *Writing Notes* 2.1

**What:**

We reviewed:

Hawisher, Gail E., and Cynthia L. Selfe. Eds. *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web*. London, England: Routledge, 2000.

**When:**

*Writing Notes* 2.1, October 18, 2000

**Where:**

ASU Main

**Why this particular experience?**

Lisa needed to read *Global Literacies* for a course she was taking. Shelley needed the excuse to read the book too. Shelley also needed a book review for *Writing Notes*.

**How did this facilitate professional development?**

Lisa and Shelley were able to practice writing scholarly reviews in a "safe" publication.

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**Supporting Documents:**

*Writing Notes* 2.1, page 10 (Adobe PageMaker)

**Review: *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web***

Edited by Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe  
London, England.: Routledge, 2000.

This book consists of co-authored chapters that explore how the Internet is perceived, used, and understood in different countries and for different cultures. Its contribution to technology theorizing is that it encourages readers to think beyond borders in order to consider the following questions: “But how ‘world-wide’ a literacy environment is the Web? How do cultural contexts affect the communication that occurs within this globally networked system of computers which appear to be culturally transparent? In what ways is the system itself culturally determined, structured, and ordered?” (1). Using these questions as one of many lenses through which to read the chapters encourages readers to explore the limits imposed by their own assumptions when it comes to the Internet.

In particular, the chapters in this collection explore the way that the following cultural literacy constructs influence uses of the Web: Hungarian, Greek, Aboriginal Australian, postcolonial Palauan, Norwegian, Japanese, Scottish, adolescent Monterrey Mexican, Cuban, plus American and South African Hip Hop. To do this, editors Hawisher and Selfe asked teams of authors (consisting of at least one person who lives in or was born in a country other than the United States) to explore a set of web sites and to read Brian Street’s *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography and Education* (London: Longman, 1995).

Many of the chapters argue and show that technologies are not easily transferable from one sociocultural context to another. In other words, Internet technologies are not neutral. As Sugimoto and Levin argue in chapter six, technologies often bring cultural and social ideologies and value systems with them (133). Cultures do not automatically adopt these ideologies and values when they implement technologies. Rather, they adapt technologies in order to align them with their own cultural values, behaviors, and needs (133).

On the one hand, this text may preach to the choir of critical technology users and researchers who are (implicitly) aware of cultural dominations and adaptations that occur on the Internet. On the other hand, this text can be a critical teaching tool for instructors who teach and/or use Internet technologies. Each chapter makes readers stop to assess issues of Internet access, material resources necessary for speedy connections, and cultural interfacing with a predominantly (American) English language environment. In particular, this book is a useful means for challenging ethnocentric conceptions about the Internet.