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‘Meme-orising’ visual literacy in the classroom: Investigating the role of meme in literacy development

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Abstract

As educators, it is our responsibility to be conscious of new resources that become available to the learners that we teach. As a result of an exponential technological development within society, new forms of visual and digital texts have emerged, and are employed as part of learners’ out-of-school literacy practices. Among the most prominent forms of learners’ visual literacy are memes. Memes are an engaging and effective visual text that constantly develop so as to appeal to their viewers and target audiences. In order to provide a fair and comprehensive overview of visual literacy resources to the learners that we teach, educators must include memes in their teachings. Memes are valuable resources that can activate learners’ reading, viewing and writing skills. They also success at varying degrees, which enables all learners to be able to produce their own. On the basis that learners willingly engage with memes as part of their out-of-school literacy practices, it is essential that these learners critically appreciate the composition, purpose and relevance behind the memes with which they engage. Learners’ out-of-school literacy practices inform their interrogation of content in the classroom because these develop their ways of ‘reading’. Thus, as with the technology that has adapted to account for new devices, educators must ‘meme-orise’ visual literacy education, by adapting as well.