



Renita Schmidt, Paul Lee Thomas

# 21st Century Literacy

If We Are Scripted, Are We Literate?

Series: Explorations of Educational Purpose

- Discusses literacy holistically and within the context of literacy instruction throughout the twentieth century
- Offers the reader a comprehensive research base that is strongly tied to the practical needs and experiences of classroom teachers
- Places the discussion of literacy within the current mandates of NCLB
- Offers practical approaches to addressing both best practice and political mandates

Renita Schmidt and P. L. Thomas The guiding mission of the teacher education program in the university where we teach is to create teachers who are scholars and leaders. While the intent of that mission is basically sound in theory—we instill the idea that teachers at all levels are professionals, always learning and growing in knowledge—that theory, that philosophical underpinning does not insure that the students who complete our program are confident about the act or performance of teaching. In our unique program, students work closely with one teacher and classroom for the entire senior year and then are supervised and mentored during their first semester of teaching; the program is heavily field-based, and it depends on the effectiveness of mentoring throughout the methods coursework and the first semester of full-time teaching. Students tell us this guidance and support is invaluable, and yet we feel the disjuncture between university and school just as many of you in more traditional student teaching settings. Students hear “best practice” information from us in methods classes and they receive ample exposure to the research supporting our field, but have a hard time implementing research-based practices in their classroom settings and an even harder time finding it in the classrooms around them.

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