



September 26, 2012

Dear Fall Forum Colleagues:

I hope that your new school year is off to a lively start. I am looking forward to seeing you in a few weeks (either face-to-face or virtually) at Fall Forum.

As a teacher of preservice librarians and classroom teachers, my major area of interest in the Fall Forum theme of transliteracy is how we translate its Big Idea -- that the world is increasingly multimedia, and that our students need practice "reading" and "writing" in a variety of often intertwining genres and formats -- into nuggets of implementable practice.

In preparation for our time together, I hope you'll join me in marinating on these ideas, which we'll talk about when we convene on Friday afternoon.

While the term "transliterations" was coined by Alan Liu of the University of California, Santa Barbara, the term "transliteracy" is attributed to Australia's Sue Thomas.

1. Please take a look at her jointly-authored *First Monday* article, "Transliteracy: Crossing Divides," available at <http://bit.ly/OQfrlw> (that's an "oh," not a "zero" in the URL!).
What resonates with you theoretically? What questions do you have as you move your thinking from theory to praxis?
2. The subtitle "crossing divides" and Thomas's own definition of transliteracy make reference to the crossing of boundaries. Thomas thinks in terms of "transliteration". Take a moment to look up the prefix "trans-" and the word "transliteration." How are they defined? **How do they help you think about what transliteracy might look like in practice with your students? How does transliterate work cross divides? What are**

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those divides?


3. When you talk about transliteracy with your classroom colleagues and administrators, how do you explain it in a way that makes it different from the multimedia work they have done for the last 20 years? **How does adopting the term "transliteracy" raise the bar of understanding and practice? Or is this just new vocabulary for what you've been doing all along?**

4. On my campus, our College of Literature, Science, and the Arts regularly hosts a "theme semester." This term, the theme is "translation," and the topics being explored seem very similar to those librarians might use when talking about transliteracy. Take a look at <http://translation.lsa.umich.edu>, where the word transliteracy appears nowhere in the documentation. Outside of librarianship in the United States, we see very few references to transliteracy. **If very few people are talking about the term transliteracy, does that put us wildly ahead of our time, or are we using terminology that divides rather than unites us with other educators?**

5. Remember the film *Mean Girls*, in which the Tim Meadows character assigns his class a research project and tells them to "be creative"? We often find ourselves and our colleagues uttering the same, as creativity tools abound online and in apps. **If we are committed to transliterate students, what do we need to teach today's students about the art of making and "reading" videos, podcasts, digital posters, and more so that they understand and maximize these art forms ... without sacrificing content?**

These are all questions that intrigue me, and I hope they grab your imagination, too. I know that we have a lot to talk about in South Carolina!

Sincerely,



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