



Title of Project:

Digital Identities, Educational Inequities: Investigating Social Class and New Literacies of Migrant Filipino Youth in the Knowledge Economy

Researcher:

Ronald Darvin
University of British Columbia
ron.darvin@ubc.ca



Ronald Darvin

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Bonny Norton
University of British Columbia
bonny.norton@ubc.ca

Project Summary:

This research examines to what extent social class differences of Filipino adolescent learners shape the development of their digital literacies and how contrasting digital literacies impact their English language learning practices. As technology becomes an integral part of the educational system, this study ultimately seeks to understand how such innovations can develop new literacies and new opportunities for learning English, while reproducing certain inequities, and ineluctably altering the social trajectories of English language learners in the 21st century.

Focusing its ethnographic gaze on recently immigrated Filipino learners in Canada, of contrasting social class backgrounds, this study seeks to understand the educational and social ramifications of the different ways digital literacies are developed and valued, and poses the following questions:

1. How do social class differences of Filipino immigrant youth shape the development of their digital literacies?
 - a. Are there class-based views on the purpose of technology and the relevance of specific digital literacies?
 - b. How is the development of digital literacies shaped by the possession of varying levels of linguistic, economic, cultural and social capital?
 - c. In what ways do different digital literacies enable varied contexts for language socialization and language use that in turn develop varying levels of social and cultural capital?
2. To what extent do personal devices, home settings, and mentors shape these digital literacies?
3. To what extent are digital literacies developed at home recognized and valued in school?

The hypothesis is that while new media technologies provide innovative learning possibilities, the development of digital literacies is still segregated by social class, enabling unequal opportunities for English language learning and use. Technology, if unmediated, can result in greater social fragmentation and educational inequity.