

JOURNAL OF LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY
VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1: APRIL 2008

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**Using Multimedia Anchored Instruction Cases in Literacy Methods Courses:
Lessons Learned from Pre-Service Teachers**

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Abstract

Multiple theoretical perspectives are employed in the analysis of interviews and written reflections from pre-service teachers who used web-based video cases in their literacy methods courses. The four theoretical perspectives: Transformational, Transactional, Deictic, and Critical illuminate the multiple and complementary aspects of pre-service teachers' interactions with the web-based video cases. Findings are presented in four categories: 1) Patterns in Case Use; 2) Patterns of Transaction; 3) Patterns in Conceptions about Literacy/Technology Convergence; and 4) Issues of Equity and Access. Implications related to the intersection of web-based video case technology, literacy, and teacher education are drawn for literacy professors, researchers, and literacy teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

From the recent review of research on teacher preparation for reading instruction by the International Reading Association Teacher Education Task Force (IRA, 2006) to the Report of the American Educational Research Association Panel on Research and Teacher Education (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), it is clear that teacher education in general and literacy teacher preparation in particular are topics receiving considerable attention. Both research trends and federal policy have raised noteworthy issues in the area, one of which is the development of effective literacy methods courses for pre-service teachers.

The study reported here, like the work of Pearson and colleagues (e.g., Boling, 2004; Hughes, Packard, & Pearson, 2000) investigates the use of web-based video as a resource in literacy methods courses. Building on the work of Baker (2005), Baker & Wedman (2000), and Risko, Peter, & McAllister (1996), this study furthers our understanding of how web-based video cases can be used to prepare literacy teachers. This inquiry is couched within the larger CTELL project (Teale, Leu, Labbo, & Kinzer, 2002; Kinzer, Cammack, Labbo, Teale, & Sanny, 2006) and focuses on reports and written reflections from 21 pre-service teachers who used web-based video cases in their literacy methods courses. The research questions for this inquiry were as follows:

1. In what ways do the pre-service teachers' interview reports and written reflections add to our understanding of their literacy methods course experience and web-based case use in it?
2. What course changes, interactions, conceptions, and contexts influenced pre-service teachers' case use?

3. What insights about web-based case use can literacy researchers and professors gain from pre-service teachers' reports?

CONTEXT

Case Technologies to Enhance Literacy Learning (CTELL) has studied the ways in which the use of web-based video cases of K–3 classrooms in pre-service reading methods courses can (a) enhance pre-service teacher candidates' knowledge of best practices for teaching reading, (b) result in the implementation of these practices in the candidates' classrooms when they become teachers, and (c) foster teachers who teach in ways that positively and significantly affect children's reading achievement (Teale, Leu, Labbo, & Kinzer, 2002). The work has been conducted at a variety of research sites around the country – Chicago, New York City, various locations in Connecticut, Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas – and contributes to answering a key question posed by the Rand Reading Study Group:

What is the relative power of various instructional delivery systems (e.g., field-based experiences, video-based cases, demonstration teaching, micro-teaching) for helping teachers acquire the knowledge and skills they need to successfully teach comprehension to students of different ages and in different contexts? (Snow, 2002, p. 51).

The CTELL project employed random-access video as part of case design, allowing teacher education students to revisit a scene to analyze what is occurring from multiple perspectives and hence promote knowledge about classroom complexity. Random access also allows a pre-service instructor to configure a class into groups with multiple assignments – perhaps various groups or individuals focusing on a particular

student, on the teacher, on the instructional materials and procedures being used, and so forth – and to revisit a single piece of video to look at each of these items as they arise in class discussions. By looking repeatedly at a video segment from different perspectives and for different purposes, one is left with a deeper understanding of the interaction of factors that are involved in the respective instructional situation.

In CTELL, case content is taken from authentic classrooms with enough data provided in the case so that learners can analyze and compare classroom cases to enhance their understanding of instructional decisions and to foster the ability to suggest alternatives. In case-based instruction, analysis and reflection are critical, and cases provide learners with opportunities to revisit the data and decisions in the case, along with the chance to consider alternative solutions. Revisiting case content provides a sustained and recursive learning environment; reflection occurs in groups and individually as part of case analysis.

Our web-based video cases are comprised of an interface and the case-based content. The interface includes tool functions that facilitate reflection, provide for constructivist exploration of the case environment, and allow for socio-constructivist communication with others. The interface also includes administrative functions so that a course instructor can leave messages and assignments for students, define areas that students should look at, and more. The tools include e-mail and chat room capabilities, help functions, and "bookmark" functions used to define segments of the video within a case that can be easily revisited and sent to others via e-mail. In a very real sense, the interface allows users to segment the video, revisit scenes within larger video segments, e-mail portions of video to peers for class discussion purposes, and create video

portfolios for reflection and assessment purposes. These interactive capabilities are what make the web-based video cases powerful. Without an interface that organizes the case components and allows for repeated interactive access, video could only be viewed in linear form.

The content elements of CTELL cases relate to facets of classroom instruction and decisionmaking and include school/community information (school demographics, interviews with teachers in the target school, parents, the school administrator, and literacy experts in the field), classroom-instructional aspects (the anchor segment, lesson plans, ancillary teaching segments, and teacher commentary), and student aspects of the case (three target children who are highlighted in each case, running records on these children, standardized test scores for all children in the class, and children's interviews and writing samples). In all, cases contain approximately 55 minutes of video and, as stated above, much additional material. Exploring the rich content of the cases through an anchored instruction procedure and using support tools such as the book-marking and portfolio functions provided through the interface allow students to understand the context in which instructional decisions are made and in which instructional procedures are implemented.

Anchored instruction (Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1997) and situated cognition (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996) provide a context where all participants in the learning environment (teacher and students) experience a situation that becomes the springboard for future learning. Anchored instruction has been used successfully in elementary-grade mathematics and literacy classrooms (e.g. CTGV, 1997).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Borko and Putnam (1996) and Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) cite the need to change teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, and advocate doing so through constructivist perspectives and situated cognition. Borko and Putnam note the following factors as contributing to successful teacher learning:

1. Addressing teachers' [existing] knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learners, learning and subject matter;
2. Providing teachers with sustained opportunities to deepen and expand their knowledge of subject matter;
3. Treating teachers as learners in a manner consistent with the programs' vision of how teachers should treat students as learners;
4. Grounding teachers' learning and reflection in classroom practice; and
5. Offering ample time and support for reflection, collaboration and continued learning. (Borko & Putnam, 1996, pp. 700-701).

We believe that traditional methods used in teacher education are hard pressed to provide the experiences that address the items on Borko and Putnam's list. Traditional transmission methods operate from a different set of assumptions; most present learners with a set of procedural steps and their appropriate uses in a direct rather than a constructivist mode. Multimedia technologies that present cases of classroom practice offer especially promising opportunities. Through the delivery of visual and textual information on the Internet, students can share a common experience or an anchored

understanding that grounds further learning in a rich socio-constructivist environment.

Because the intersection of technology, literacy, and teacher education is a complex phenomenon, multiple theoretical perspectives were employed in data analysis. Four perspectives—Transformational, Transactional, Deictic, Critical—were applied so that the multiple and complementary aspects of pre-service teachers' interactions with web-based cases could be understood. The Transformational Perspective (e.g., Reinking, 1995; Reinking, McKenna, Labbo, & Kieffer, 1998) enabled examination of how case use changed the pre-service teachers' course experience, and the ways in which these changes affected their development as literacy teachers. A Transactional Perspective (Rosenblatt, 1978; Bruce & Hogan, 1998) recognized that technology changes its users but that users also can change the technology, sometimes employing it in ways its designers originally had not intended or thought of. This theoretical perspective suggested that it was important to examine the interactive purposes and practices that the pre-service teachers' brought to the cases in order to inquire as to whether their uses surpass or challenge the original intent. From a Deictic Perspective, technology was viewed as changing and converging with literacy (Leu, 2000; Leu & Kinzer, 2000). Thus, when studying the integration of technology in pre-service literacy methods courses, we would want to inquire how pre-service teachers' conceptualized the changing nature of literacy and its convergence with technology. The Critical Perspective conceptualized technology in pre-service teacher preparation as involving issues of access, equity, power, politics, and economics (Bromley & Apple, 1999; Kamil & Lane, 1998). Thus, it was important to understand how pre-service teachers were impacted by the availability of human and technological resources, and their learning environment. Applying these

varying theoretical stances provided a way of extending the theoretical conversation in pre-service literacy teacher education research to understand more fully the multiple realities and complexities related to web-based case technology as an instructional resource.

METHODOLOGY

The overall CTELL project is structured as a quasi-experimental study, and we have designed within it a number of qualitative inquiries to help elucidate a variety of factors related to case use, a decision supported by preliminary analyses of case use (Sanny, 2003), which showed that understanding the use of complex cases like those developed for CTELL is possible only when reflective data such as interviews and journals are combined with statistical analyses. The present study is one of these inquiries. As we examined pre-service teachers' interviews and written reflections, it became clear that the use of the cases and thus their impact varied across users. Accordingly, we felt that an analysis of the patterns of case use as reported by pre-service teachers would provide critical information necessary to understand the impact of case use in literacy methods courses. Furthermore, we were interested in whether the pre-service teachers had similar or different reports as compared to the reports of their professors (Sanny & Teale, 2005), thus adding to our understanding of case impact.

Data Collection

Data in the form of interviews and written reflections were collected over two years of case use. The pre-service teachers were interviewed twice per semester and completed written reflections once during the term in which they used the cases in their literacy methods courses. The 21 pre-service teachers who participated in this study were

students in literacy methods courses taught by seven professors around the Chicago area and were selected for this study because their professors had been randomly-selected participants in previous studies that examined the impact of case use on the teacher educators' curriculum and pedagogy. Because the researchers were familiar with the professors, the learning environments, and the methods courses, the pre-service students' interview responses and written reflections were examined from a vantage point that was mindful of previous lessons learned via case use.

The methodology utilized for previous professor studies (Sanny, 2005; Sanny & Teale, 2005) was also used for this study so that patterns revealed could be compared and contrasted to patterns indicated in prior studies, revealing similarities and differences between pre-service teachers' and professors' responses. The interview questions were designed to probe (1) how and when the cases were being used in the methods courses and (2) in what ways the pre-service teachers used the cases. The pre-service teachers were all asked the same questions that were on the interview protocols, and interviews typically lasted 15-20 minutes. (For complete interview protocols see Appendix.) Written reflections were completed in response to the following prompt: How are you learning about teaching reading and writing in your class so far this semester?

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded by visit and themes present within interview questions. Coders practiced identifying themes on samples of interview transcripts and written reflections; once they became consistent with theme identification on practice samples, they coded all sets of transcripts and reflections. Reliability checks on coding between two different coders showed a 90% level of consistency across the

various themes. A content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990) of the themes was conducted to determine what was reported and how often it was reported. The frequency counts resulting from the content analysis were analyzed for patterns across the 21 pre-service teachers. Using a content and comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the written reflections were analyzed and reliability checks on coding between two different coders showed a 95% level of consistency across the various themes. Similar to the interviews, the frequency counts resulting from the content analysis were analyzed for patterns across all 21 participants.

Triangulation of analyses of both interview and reflection data was facilitated through an examination of the interview patterns through the four theoretical lenses. For example, patterns in case use, transaction, conception, and context were closely examined through the lenses of Transformational, Transactional, Deictic, and Critical Theory.

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings are presented in four categories: 1) Patterns in Case Use; 2) Patterns of Transaction; 3) Patterns in Conceptions about Literacy/Technology Convergence; and 4) Issues of Equity and Access. This section is organized in two levels: First, the findings are presented, and then each category of findings is followed by a discussion of the implications that can be drawn for literacy professors, researchers, and literacy teacher preparation programs. The authors have decided to present results and implications within the same section so that findings can be directly tied into lessons learned from pre-service teachers. The research questions are explicitly addressed and results are summed up in the discussion summary that follows this section.

Patterns in Case Use

Pre-service teachers reported that it was essential for the professors to connect the cases directly to course curriculum. When cases were intimately tied to course content and were used in activities that were meaningful, pre-service teachers were able to view them and engage them in ways that allowed them to make connections to theory, research, and practice. Professors needed to explain why cases were being used and how they would be helpful to pre-service teachers as they entered the field, and they needed to scaffold the viewing of the cases so that pre-service teachers could focus on methods, approaches, styles, and techniques employed by the K-3 teachers within the web-based video cases.

Pre-service teachers reported that case use required more time for completion of assignments because activities required viewing components of the cases, then reflecting on what was viewed, and then infusing course readings and discussions in a manner that was beneficial for them as developing literacy teachers. They discussed the importance of knowing what the different components of the cases entailed and how these components fit together to help them understand the larger picture of teaching. For example, when using a first-grade case, it was helpful if the professor viewed the anchor segment with pre-service teachers and then facilitated a focused discussion on what they had viewed. Next, viewing writing samples and reading assessments for each of the three target students within the case helped pre-service teachers understand the continuum of literacy abilities that may exist in a first-grade classroom. Professors who then went on to show segments related to the parents of target students, the teachers they had in kindergarten, and the teachers they would have in second grade increased pre-service teachers' awareness and understanding of how children develop differentially and how

adults play a significant role in that development. Professors who continued to provide pre-service teachers with scaffolded and integrated instruction with the cases impacted the pre-service teachers in positive and powerful ways. For example, one pre-service teacher explained, “We talk about what we viewed and observed in the cases and then we talked about ways that we could actually use the information in them as future teachers.”

Pre-service teachers reported that their professor’s attitude toward case use, time spent planning, and implementation of case use directly impacted how much effort they themselves put forth in understanding teaching and learning via the cases. The more familiar pre-service teachers became with the cases, the more selective they became about which case components were most beneficial to them in understanding what a literacy teacher does and why. Pre-service teachers overwhelmingly reported that viewing the cases and completing activities that connected them to readings, lectures, and field experiences helped them visualize the complexity involved in teaching literacy much more than if the cases had not been used. One pre-service teacher shared, “The cases were helpful as a whole, just showing me exactly what we’re doing, how we’re doing it, giving ideas on how I could use them in the future.”

Even though they reported having to put much more time and effort into course assignments due to case use, they repeatedly informed us that it was worth it because they had an understanding of teaching and learning that they would not otherwise have gained from print-based media alone. Another pre-service student remarked, “I believe the cases are providing another concrete source of information to reinforce the information we are learning in our methods classes. From these cases and the class, I am more comfortable in realizing that I am not going to have all the answers right away.”

Implications for literacy methods courses include re-thinking course purposes, organization, learning experiences, and evaluation. Use of the cases impacts what is taught and how it is taught, an important consideration when planning for case use. Using the web-based cases poses a challenge for professors who plan case use as an add-on, as well as those who re-construct their courses so that case use becomes integral in instruction. Overcoming the integration challenge requires time to organize and plan, access to cases by both instructors and students, and familiarity with navigating the interface and case content. The depth and power of integration and the thoughtfulness behind case use directly impact learning experiences of pre-service students enrolled in the literacy course.

The professors who use cases will spend a great deal of the first term experimenting with case use, a value-added investment that pays off as the cases are used in future terms. They develop an understanding that case use impacts the organization of their courses from as little as adding time for viewing cases to as much as influencing how they plan and organize on-campus and off-campus assignments and the degree to which they encourage independent student use of the cases. The implication here is that knowledge and experience gained from first-time case use facilitates future changes in course organization and learning experiences and, as the cases continue to be used, instructors become increasingly confident and creative with case integration in their courses. The activities planned in the first term become substantial course projects integrating lectures, field experiences, web-based cases, research, and theory. The effort put into changes in organization and learning experiences was evident in evaluation or assessment of student work. Several professors used the portfolio function within the

cases to assess their students while others used a combination of assessment approaches, demonstrating that as professors develop coherence between course curriculum and instruction, they utilize assessments that are holistic and authentic. It is significant to note that issues of student access to the cases must be taken into account when assessing or evaluating pre-service teachers. Successful case integration implies that all students within the course are able to access the cases as they need.

The implication for literacy teacher preparation programs is that the use of cases within the program must be organized and coherent. The CTELL cases were designed for use in beginning literacy methods courses, and our results show that the courses they were used in were typically the first in a sequence of methods courses in literacy. We also found that most professors teach literacy methods for grades K-8. This is significant to note because the cases range only from K to Grade 3 and thus cannot provide the range that many professors may need, elucidating that case use requires a re-examination of the content and sequence of courses and that the rigor and quality of the pre-service program impacts case use. Programs where faculty discuss courses together and collaborate with each other provide professors with much needed support as they use the cases.

Patterns of Transaction

The pre-service teachers reported that their professors' use of the cases and attitudes toward the value of the cases directly impacted their own transaction with them. For example, professors who thoughtfully integrated the cases into their curriculum and pedagogy and modified their instruction to allow the cases to fit meaningfully into their course had pre-service students who transacted with the cases in a positive manner compared to those who simply added the cases on to what they were already doing. Pre-

service teachers reported that the enthusiasm their professors shared with them about the dynamic capabilities the cases brought to their own instruction generated an enthusiastic response from pre-service teachers. Professors modeling the use of instructional technology and positive behaviors even when technology glitches arose encouraged pre-service teachers to use web-based cases on their own time to gain insight from them about literacy instruction and use of instructional technology. Increased opportunities provided by professors for pre-service teachers to use the cases outside of the university and in varying ways fostered a sense of ownership of the cases within the pre-service students. They shared the cases with their friends who were not enrolled in courses that used the web-based cases and took part in discussion about literacy teaching outside of class time. For example, one pre-service teacher explained, "Well they're really helpful. They were great to view because you hear and see how things work. The case teachers model techniques and it takes a lot of our anxiety away."

Pre-service teachers reported that their positive transaction with the cases increased with more familiarity and increased case use. They also explained that they were more relaxed in their transaction with the cases when they had time to explore them without a grade tied to each time they used the cases. In other words, professors who gave pre-service teachers time to become familiar with the cases without the pressure of a grade provided pre-service teachers with opportunity to construct meaning without stress. According to pre-service students, viewing without having to always produce a product allowed them to "play around" with the cases first and then use them in assignments leading to more depth in class discussions and written work. One pre-service student explained, "I am also learning teaching strategies through group work, as we interpret

information about teaching methods and explain them to the class and learn to evaluate different teaching styles by watching the cases and through my field experiences.”

An implication for individual professors is that making web-based video cases a part of one’s pre-service literacy methods course is not something that comes easily to every teacher educator. Individual professors require varying degrees of preparation in the effective use and integration of web-based video cases. Professors need to develop familiarity with navigating the interface and the content within each case. The CTELL project attempted to address this issue by having participants attend a summer institute where they were introduced to the cases and the theory behind the cases, and during which they explored a variety of ways to use the cases in literacy methods instruction. During case use a manual assisted the professors in accessing and maneuvering through the interface, a necessity for those who had limited experience with using web-based technology in instruction.

Additionally, they were placed on a listserv where they could share their experiences with each other regardless of where in the country they were located. The listserv provided a common forum to exchange ideas, voice concerns, and plan for research and teaching (Labbo, Leu, Kinzer, Teale, Cammack, Kara-Soteriou, & Sanny, 2003). Preparation such as the CTELL institute and a common space such as the listserv were necessary for professors to implement case use. The implication here is that preparation and continued professional development are needed for effective web-based case use in literacy methods courses. It is apparent that powerful and transformative case use occurs on a continuum and is impacted by the professors' envisionments of how

the cases will benefit their course and their students. Preparation and professional development strongly influence their vision for case use.

Patterns in Conceptions about Literacy/Technology Convergence

The pre-service teachers reported viewing the cases as instructional technology, a web-based tool to help them with their learning. The 21 pre-service teachers varyingly used all available case parts and the high-tech functions within the cases such as the bookmarking function for creating video clips from the cases to email to their peers or to post clips to a discussion board in order to connect to specific lecture topics and grade level foci. Interestingly, the pre-service teachers used this "cutting-edge" technology but did not report changes in their ideas related to the intersection of technology and literacy. Furthermore, they used the cases to understand conventional or traditional literacies but did not report using the cases to understand new literacies. Even more interesting is that there is no report of pre-service students teaching their professors about new literacies through their use of the web-based video cases.

We find noteworthy that although the participants were using a technology that provided dynamic instructional capabilities not previously possible, pre-service teachers did not report on changing their conceptions of literacy and technology. This pattern may be present because their professors used the cases to teach about conventional literacies and did not engage the pre-service teachers in discussions of new literacies. Another reason we believe this pattern may have been so prominent is because the cases that were used during this time did not include new literacies and illustrated the use of instructional technology to develop traditional literacies in K-3 students. Because of this emphasis within the cases and from their professors, pre-service teachers may not have had the

opportunity to engage them through a new literacies perspective. During this study there were only four cases available, and all four were focused on using technology to teach traditional literacy. Now there are 11 cases available, and several of them include a new literacies perspective. It would be interesting to study how the pre-service teachers' reports would vary with the use of the newer cases.

The pre-service teachers' reports revealed that their professors were focused on developing traditional or conventional literacies, implying that professional development needs to be provided so that literacy professors can conceptualize the deictic nature of literacy and technology and how the emergence of new literacies is impacting teacher preparation. In particular, literacy professors need to be at the forefront of understanding changes resulting from technology use so that they can prepare high quality pre-service teachers who use technologies effectively in instruction (Leu, 2000).

Issues of Equity and Access

The most frequently reported issues of equity and access by students were related to the availability of technology – for instance, high-speed connection – as well as to problems such as slow download, garbled sound, freezing interface, lack of required software or bandwidth, and lab/class technology set-up. The second most frequently reported issues were those related to access to the cases by professors and pre-service teachers within the university and off campus. Personal and institutional contexts and resources impacted case use so that in some universities on-campus case access was possible only during class time in a lab setting while in other universities pre-service students had unlimited access to wireless laptops in wireless classrooms as well as access at home. On-campus resources also ranged from limited human and technological

resources to well-equipped labs with staff available to answer questions and help with case access. This access to the cases directly impacted how often professors and pre-service teachers were able to use them. Off-campus access ranged from pre-service teachers and professors with no Internet access to students and professors with unlimited high-speed connections. Access to the cases influenced the activities professors assigned to their students as well as the length, depth, and focus of course assignments.

The equity-related issue that most clearly stood out was the continuum of professor quality in thoughtfulness of case use. For instance, pre-service teachers' reports revealed that the professors in this study ranged from those who had very little commitment to changing their instruction to those who had a strong desire to improve their pedagogy and the learning experiences of their pre-service teachers. Professors who wanted to positively transform their instruction used the cases to extend certain elements within their course and added other dimensions to their courses that were not there before, in contrast to those who used the cases only as examples of what they were already teaching.

Depth of case use by professors was impacted by background experiences, access and familiarity with instructional technology, and student access to the cases (Sanny & Teale, 2005). Hence, the depth of case use directly impacted the learning experiences of the pre-service students. For example, while some students made deep connections between theory, practice, lectures, and clinical/field experiences both on and off campus, other students viewed and discussed the cases once in a while during limited class time. Equity and access issues were reported frequently and need to be critically considered if web-based video cases are going to be used in positive transformative ways. The

findings indicate that the complexity of integrating web-based technology into literacy teacher preparation is multi-faceted, including factors related to individual professors and their students, their institutions, and the larger context of teacher preparation for improving literacy achievement in schools. The findings further elucidate that the decision to use cases in literacy teacher preparation has implications not only for the individual professors who use them but also at the program and department levels.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The response to the first research question (In what ways do the pre-service teachers' interview reports and written reflections add to our understanding of their literacy methods course experience and web-based case use in it?) may be summed up as follows: Web-based video case use provides pre-service teachers with a course experience that they otherwise would not have. This anchored or common experience enhances conceptual understanding of the complexities involved in teaching literacy to young children. Pre-service teachers come to understand that good teaching requires problem solving, decision-making, flexibility, and organization, along with knowledge about students, parents, administrators, and school community. They begin to comprehend the breadth of the literacy curriculum, its interrelatedness to content areas as well as technology, the importance of strategies instruction, and the need for multi-faceted assessment. In sum, the web-based video cases afford pre-service teachers the opportunity to unpack the complex art and science of good literacy teaching.

The answer to the second research question (What course changes, interactions, conceptions, and contexts influenced pre-service teachers' case use?) may be summarized as follows: Professors who integrate web-based video cases in their course topics,

assignments, lectures, discussion, and field experiences have powerful impact on the development of pre-service teachers. This impact is even more profound when pre-service teachers have access to the cases on their own and focused access to the cases during classes. Professors who thoughtfully design course experiences, conceptualize the intense impact of anchored and case-based instruction, have positive attitudes toward improving their own teaching practice, and create contexts for learning via virtual and real environments provide their pre-service teachers with experiences that are not otherwise possible.

Conclusions about the third research question (What insights about web-based case use can literacy researchers and professors gain from pre-service teachers' reports?) may be recapped as follows: Pre-service teachers' reports help literacy professors and researchers understand that pre-service teachers require diverse ways of experiencing their courses in teacher preparation. Traditional methods of delivery are not enough, hence, via anchored instruction and web-based case use, pre-service teachers can be exposed to various teaching styles and encouraged to critique these to form their own style. Spurred on by the present investigation, some future research directions involve examining the impact of web-based video cases containing new literacies on the conceptual development of professors and pre-service teachers. It would be valuable to study how professors and pre-service teachers develop conceptions of the convergence and intersection of literacy and technology in this digital age. Some questions worth asking include these: Are we preparing literacy teachers for the new literacies their young charges will come to school with? Do we as professors and researchers understand the changing nature of literacy and the importance of using technology in our own

instruction? Are we using appropriate methods and strategies to prepare teachers to teach children growing up in a digital age?

CONCLUSION

Utilizing multiple theoretical perspectives in data analysis helped us understand the complexities, realities, and possibilities involved in web-based case use in literacy methods courses. The pre-service teachers' interview reports and written reflections were imperative to help us understand what happened as literacy professors used the web-based cases in their courses. The four theoretical perspectives (Transformation, Transactional, Deictic, Critical) illuminated the personal, professional, and institutional factors associated with patterns of case use, transactions, conceptions, and issues of equity. The insight gained through this inquiry is important for professors who are currently using the cases and those who are planning to use them in the future. Issues of access and equity in professor quality, program rigor, and human and technological resources are fundamental to consider as professors employ the web-based cases to improve literacy teacher preparation.

An important limitation of this study was the quantity of data collected from pre-service teachers. The researchers agree that both reflection and interview data should have been collected at least three times during the semester so that developmental patterns could have been better observed. Another limitation of this study was the quality of wording used in the interview questions and reflection prompts. Looking back, the researchers suggest using questions and prompts that directly ask about case use and its impact on pre-service learning.

As mentioned earlier, teacher education is currently a topic receiving a great deal of attention, creating the necessity for research that highlights the important efforts teacher educators and researchers are making to prepare high-quality teachers; the CTELL project and the present inquiry illustrate such work. It is our hope that research examining experiences of pre-service teachers and their professors will provide insight into improving the preparation of pre-service literacy teachers and in turn positively impact the literacy achievement of K-8 students.

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APPENDIX

Protocol for Interview #1

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself and your goals as a future teacher.
2. I'd like you to visualize a classroom and describe that classroom for me. Another way of saying this is that I'd like to have you give me your conceptualization of a classroom and classroom environment.
 - a. Probe: What will influence your work and decisions as a teacher of reading?
 - b. Probe: When you answered this question, what was the background that you drew on for your ideas and conceptions?
3. Please describe this class as compared to other classes that you are taking.
 - a. Probe: Does this class differ in its expectations for how you learn? If so, in what way(s)?
 - b. Probe: Do the activities and assignments differ from other classes? If so, in what way(s)?
4. Please tell me which case or cases you've used this semester.
 - a. Probe: Are you focusing on one case more than the others, to this point in your class? If so, which one?
5. Just a quick yes or no will do for the following. Have you used (either in or out of class) any of the following items from one or more of the cases?
 - Anchor segment
 - Teacher interview
 - Principal interview
 - Parent interview
 - Child's interview
 - Expert/discussant interview
 - Ancillary lessons (classroom video other than the anchor segment)
 - Children's work
 - Children's formal test scores
 - Children's informal assessments (running records)
6. Please talk about how you've used the cases so far this semester.
 - a. Probe: Could you tell me if (and how) you have used the cases during your regularly scheduled class period?
 - b. Probe: Could you tell me if (and how) you have used the cases outside of regularly scheduled class time?

- c. Probe: About what percentage of time have the cases have been used during your regularly scheduled class period?
7. What would you say to instructors considering the use of the cases for the first time?
 - a. Probe: How do you think an instructor approaches the class differently when using cases?
8. What are your general impressions of the cases so far, as you've used them this semester?
 - a. Probe: Could you tell me some details about <insert from their general response>?
 - b. Probe: How is this class different, when cases are being used, from other classes that don't use cases (it's ok to say there's no difference)?
9. Have you had any conversations about the cases with other students in the class, about how they feel about the cases or about how the cases are being used?
 - a. Probe: What are some of these comments?
 - b. Probe: How do you think the class as a whole is reacting to the cases; what do the students think about the cases?
10. Have you had any major difficulties with the cases so far this semester?
 - a. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with the interface; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
 - b. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with hardware; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
 - c. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with students accessing the cases; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
11. Where are you using the cases most often: in your designated classroom, a computer lab, your home or dorm room, or other area?
 - a. Probe: How has this affected your use of the cases?
12. Has the instructor integrated the cases into the class? If so, how does this occur; in what way(s)?
 - a. Probe: Do students refer to the cases during class discussions? Any examples?
13. How do you expect to use the cases during the rest of the semester?
 - a. Probe: Is there anything that you expect to change, with regard to the use of the cases in your class, as the semester goes on? <Ask for specifics as needed>
14. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best possible, how would you rate the cases so far?
15. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being easiest, how easy have the cases been to use so far?

1. I'd like you to visualize your first classroom teaching position. Can you describe this classroom and tell me what you will include in your reading program to ensure that students receive effective reading instruction?
 - a. Probe: How do you define effective reading instruction? What things are important for teachers to do to ensure that students learn to read.
 - b. Probe: When you answered this question, what was the background that you drew on for your ideas and conceptions?

2. Please describe this class as compared to other classes that you are taking.
 - a. Probe: Does this class differ in its expectations for how you learn? If so, in what way(s)?
 - b. Probe: Do the activities and assignments differ from other classes? If so, in what way(s)?

3. Please tell me which case or cases you've used this semester
 - a. Probe: Are you focusing on one case more than the others, to this point in your class? If so, which one?

4. Just a quick yes or no, will do for the following. Have you used (either in or out of class) any of the following items from one or more of the cases?
 - Anchor segment
 - Teacher interview
 - Principal interview
 - Parent interview
 - Child's interview
 - Expert/discussant interview
 - Ancillary lessons (classroom video other than the anchor segment)
 - Children's work
 - Children's formal test scores
 - Children's informal assessments (running records)
 - a. If the interviewee states s/he has used some of these, pick **two** of the items that have been identified and ask: Could you tell me a bit more about how you've used <insert item here, e.g., the principal's interview>

5. Please talk about how you've used the cases so far this semester.
 - a. Probe: Could you tell me if (and how) **you** have used the cases during your regularly scheduled class period?
 - b. Probe: Could you tell me if (and how) **you** have used the cases outside of regularly scheduled class time?
 - c. Probe: About what percentage of time have the cases have been used during your regularly scheduled class period?

6. What are your general impressions of the cases so far, as you've used them this semester?
 - a. Probe: Could you tell me some details about <insert from their general response>?
 - b. Probe: How is this class different, when cases are being used, from other classes that don't use cases (it's ok to say there's no difference)?
7. Have you had any conversations about the cases with other students in the class, about how they feel about the cases or about how the cases are being used?
 - a. Probe: What are some of these comments?
 - b. Probe: How do you think the class as a whole is reacting to the cases; what do the students think about the cases?
8. Have you had any major difficulties with the cases so far this semester?
 - a. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with the interface; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
 - b. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with hardware; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
 - c. Probe: Have you had any difficulties with students accessing the cases; if so, how have you tried to work around them?
9. Where are you using the cases most often: in your designated classroom, a computer lab, your home or dorm room, or other area?
 - a. Probe: How has this affected your use of the cases?
10. Has the instructor integrated the cases into the class? If so, how does this occur; in what way(s)?
 - a. Probe: Do students refer to the cases during class discussions? Any examples?
 - b. Probe: What activities have you done with the cases?
11. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best possible, how effective were the cases in helping you to become a teacher of reading? Can you tell us why?
12. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being easiest, how easy have the cases been to use so far? Can you tell us why?
13. How could the instructor use the cases more effectively in the future?
 - a. Probe: How could the cases be used more effectively to help you learn?
 - b. Probe: Should the cases be used in future methods classes?
14. What was most helpful about the class in preparing you to teach reading effectively?
15. What was least helpful about the class in preparing you to teach reading effectively?

16. What was most helpful about the cases in preparing you to teach reading effectively?
17. What was least helpful about the cases in preparing you to teach reading effectively?

Reflection Prompt: How are you learning about teaching reading and writing in your class so far this semester?

**Learning to Leisure? Failure, Flame, Blame, Shame, Homophobia and Other
Everyday Practices in Online Education**

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So the impulse towards democratic education is both cross-institutional and cross-cultural, and those in the vanguard are a mixed bunch. One of the crucial commitments they have in common, however, is the commitment to the right use of language. . . . Those who “bear witness” spot their own recurrent images and are alert to the linguistic usage of others. A commitment to democratic education involves a deep entanglement with the exactitudes of communication. Saying what you mean and saying it in such a way that others will grasp what it is you intend to say is central to the democratic process. It is also, crucially, the substance of humanistic, democratic education.

Jon Nixon (2007, p. 69)

Publishers churn out teaching textbooks and warm celebrations of the e-education age. The affirmations of the value of online platforms to and for teaching and learning seem obvious and indisputable. Digital dissenters struggle to gain space on such lists. Rarely do educators hear about – and even more rarely do we read about – stories of e-failure in the classroom. Funding agencies do not like such talk. Neither do writers of university strategic and corporate plans. However, in this article, we disclose and discuss an e-teaching failure. The causes of this failure are complex but invoke a significant warning for those who write curriculum. We map a singular teaching hypothesis: when using platforms most frequently positioned in leisure-based environments, such as the iPod, text messaging and discussion fora, there are institutional and ideological blockages to creating a successful learning experience and scholarly environment. We are interested in how leisure platforms can translate into education and how to manage the residues of conversation, informality, blame and shame.

Clichés of Web 2.0, social networking, user-generated content and user-generated contexts presuppose that citizens who are literate in the digital environment will also be literate in social and legal codes that govern behavior. Yet significant statistics reveal a more complex story. Hopkins suggested that Web 2.0 users are “voyeurs rather than

creators.” She confirmed that active participation through the generation of content is incredibly low:

The 1% rule (1% make content, 10% add, 89% just view) overstates it. Of US internet visits to YouTube, only 0.16% were to upload videos; 0.2% of Flickr visits were to load photos. Wikipedia bucks the trend: 4.59% of visits are to edit or create entries. Those tend to be older than the average Wikipedia visitor (over 35) and more likely to be male. (2007, p. 4)

Too often social networking is a mask for puffed-up self-absorption, libertarianism in the name of democracy (Kelly, 2005), or – at its most excessive - individualized flaming. Phrases, words and descriptions that would never be spoken to the face of a teacher or student are freely exchanged from behind a pixelated screen. The consequences to universities, teachers and learners of aligning student-centered learning, facilitation, collaboration and team teaching in an environment of Web 2.0 are underwritten projects. This current paper presents the costs of intrinsically valuing students’ voices and words and how this ideology may undermine wider goals of social equity and justice.

Hartley stated that “universities will ignore the lesson of consumer-led, distributive, iterative and multi-sourced learning at their peril” (2007, p. 144). Ignorance is not an option, but validating homophobia, malice, laziness and disrespect because they are “consumer-led” and “distributive” should not be part of the default rationale for deploying user-generated content or social networking sites or even serve as an affirmation of University 2.0. Too often pseudo-democracy is valued over leadership. In education, the cost of such a decision is not only a denial of expertise but a destruction of the expertise that creates a curriculum.

In a research project based in a working-class school in the analog age, Willis (1977) foreshadowed our e-education future. In *Learning to Labour*, Willis entered the cultures of young working-class men. His research found that the lads – through smoking, swearing and truancy – negotiated a transitory resistance against the system. They challenged the hierarchy and power structure of a school but were then disenfranchised from social mobility via education. Such a tactic meant that working-class boys became working-class men. While, as students, they probed the ideologies of schooling, the greatest cost was to their future, not “the system.” In our current analysis, we carry forward Willis’s analysis and explore student behavior at universities in and through the digital platform, probing the consequences of student “resistance.”

EDUCATION: TEXT AND CONTEXT

Making (not receiving) messages and meanings in your own context and from materials you have appropriated is, in essence, a form of education in the broadest sense. It is the specifically developmental part of symbolic work, an education about “the self” and its relation to the world and to others in it. Where everyday symbolic work differs from what is normally thought of as “education” is that it “culturally produces” from its own chosen symbolic resources.

Paul Willis (1990, p. 137)

There is a well-established historical trend of projecting great optimism or intense pessimism onto information and communication technologies. The Internet and its associated platforms have not been immune from this ideological shaping and have alternately been heralded as ushering in a “brave new world” of democratic education or corrosive of teaching and learning. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is subject to the same utopic and dystopic claims. Arguments range from championing the ability of CMC environments to grant users an equal voice, thereby reducing or

eliminating “real world” power differentials, or the recognition that unmediated communication, devoid of “real world” social identifications, serves to foster uninhibited and aggressive communication behaviors including flaming.

The increasing incorporation of virtual and/or managed learning environments into higher education institutions creates opportunities to use computer-mediated communication such as discussion boards and chat rooms as an integral part of classroom delivery. The adoption of information and communication technologies, in the form of virtual or managed learning environments (VLEs and MLEs) has been increasing within the UK higher education sector. Research from Wallis suggests that over 70% of UK institutions of higher education “are currently engaged in some kind of MLE development activity,” with “enhancing the quality of teaching and learning” being seen as the key driver (2003). The term MLE refers to the totality of systems and processes within an institution that contribute to the management of learning. VLEs are a subset of these. The term refers to the components which provide online learning, such as discussion boards, email facilities and spaces for the delivery of teaching materials.

The adoption of online learning has largely been met with enthusiasm, at least at the level of infrastructural rollout, with “teaching support” often conflating with “technological support” in universities. The ability of the technology to deliver distance (and – importantly – low cost) courses has been a way to enhance an institution’s reputation, branding and worldwide reach. The University of Phoenix is a clear example of a branded institution which has based its fee-paying success on flexibly delivered online distance education courses. Similarly, the Open University in the United Kingdom, long a specialist and innovator in the field of distance education, is now aiming

to expand its brand internationally (MacLeod & Ford, 2006). Much of the literature is enthusiastic about the role of CMC within online learning environments, providing lecturers with advice on how to build and develop online spaces and to encourage participation.

The University of Brighton has been developing an MLE over the last few years which uses the software platform Blackboard to deliver the VLE component. The ideological directive of this program is captured by its name: Studentcentral. Such a label not only connotes a hub of student activity but also the central educational focus on student discussion and information. The functions include email, discussion boards, and a “Virtual Classroom” (online chat room). While many monographs and papers confirm the value of such online education initiatives, this current article offers a caveat and corrective. Instead of providing theoretical affirmations of the Virtual Classroom, we explore an actual incident that emerged through the use of Studentcentral by a group of first-year undergraduate students and involved Juliet Eve, one of the authors of this paper. At that time, she was new to the experience of computer-mediated education. Through collaboration with Tara Brabazon, a personal view of a teaching moment has been broadened to explore the significance of an accidental experiment in teaching and learning (van Es & Sherin, 2002). We argue that there are consequences in shifting leisure-based platforms and tropes of social networking and dialogue into an educational environment. There are many consequences, including a flattening of the hierarchy between students and teachers.

Much of the research and writing about CMC has focused on the absence of social cues available to participants in online communication environments (generally presumed

to be isolated and/or geographically distant), and the attendant factor of anonymity.

These are presumed to lead to a loss of identity and a weakening of social norms, known as deindividuation. Consistent with trends in projecting utopian or dystopian qualities onto the Internet more generally, the characteristics have been used to argue that CMC is more democratic and egalitarian than face-to-face (F2F) interaction as it allows greater and more equal participation (Tiffin & Rajasingham, 2003). Conversely, Bordia (1997) notes that because communicators are deprived of visual cues that indicate social context, CMC may encourage greater antisocial – or anti-normative – behavior including flaming (p. 99). This recognition leads to these questions: How does normative group behavior manifest itself, and *which* salient group norms are drawn on if there is more than one mode available? Does the choice permit anti-normative and/or uninhibited behavior?

TO FLAME OR NOT TO FLAME

The elitism of intellectuals comes, not merely from our assumption that we already know the answers, but even more from our assumption that we already know the questions. It would, however, be too easy to assume that we simply need to ask our students what the questions are. We need to use our authority, mobilized through a pedagogy of risk and experimentation, to discover what the questions can be in the everyday lives of our students and what political possibilities such questions open up. We have to be willing to enter the terrain of everyday life, the terrain of dispersed Others, in order to make sense of the realities of their (our) lives. Only then can we prize open already existing contradictions.

Lawrence Grossberg (1994, p. 20)

Flaming is non-normative behavior in a digital environment (Vrooman, 2002 pp. 51-70). Vrooman challenged the idea that flaming is unique to CMC by virtue of the lack of social cues. He located it within a historical tradition of “performative invective” which includes the rant and “the dozens” (p. 54) and which can be seen in musical forms

such as calypso or rap. Flaming becomes an artistic performance, a “strategic negotiation of rhetorical and social situation” (p. 65) A “flame war” becomes a performative game where silencing the opponent indicates a win.

Similarly, Kayany in his study of flaming in four newsgroups confirmed the hostility and ridicule of these environments (1998, p. 1135-1141). O’Sullivan and Flanagan challenged the focus on defining and *interpreting* flaming and sought to “reconceptualize” such messages within a framework that allows for greater flexibility of interpretation based on the intentionality of the communicators. They suggested that the key question is one of perception:

For example, the casual use of profane language between close friends can be a marker of relationship closeness. Friends have been known to address each other with hostile or vulgar terms as a form of play or friendly verbal jousting. (2003, p. 69)

They cite a 1992 study by McCormick and McCormick which suggests that, rather than being hostile, or an expression of dislike, threats and put-downs “may be an adolescent sign of affection and trust among some male, undergraduate, computer users” (p. 90). While noting this reading of intimacy, O’Sullivan and Flanagan (2003) developed what they term an “interactional norm cube,” which allows for eight possible interpretations of a given message, seen as “appropriate” or a “transgression” by the sender, receiver and third-party observer. For example, a message may be seen by both sender and receiver as appropriate in local literacies and modes of communication but viewed as transgressive by a third party: “In organizations, such messages may involve language that violates policy or legal standards on their face even though they are perceived as appropriate to

interactants” (p. 83). O’Sullivan and Flanagan’s framework allows them to define “flames” as “intentional (whether successful or unsuccessful) negative violations of (negotiated, evolving, and situated) interactional norms” (p. 84). They draw a distinction from unconscious or unintended contraventions of discursive normalities within online communities. While their model allows for flexibility and is helpful in distinguishing what may be seen as appropriate by the different parties involved, there is an ambivalent application of this model in the case revealed in this current article. There was a series of inappropriate statements made that violated and transgressed the norms of formal education. The desire of some students was to flame and challenge power and authority in a setting where leisure-based modalities bled into educational institutions and the rules governing students’ identities as formal learners.

The O’Sullivan and Flanagan model is useful in understanding harassment, which may also come fall into their category of miscommunication (“the misalignment of norm sets”) where intent is not present. They found this distinction “also helps to highlight instances when speech that inflicts harm on a recipient is best understood as miscommunication when the intent to violate norms is absent” (p. 88). Their work is valuable, but there are caveats and concerns with this form of distinction. There is a disregard of the complex power issues that are involved in cases of harassment. Conflicting norms create difficulties in aligning expectations and resolving disparate codes and forms of behavior.

O’Sullivan and Flanagan also made no reference to the masculine inflections of flaming. Vrooman (2002), for example, acknowledged that there does seem to be something “resolutely masculinist” about invective performances and notes their often

sexualized character. He sees them as “displays of the prowess and skill of a chosen identity, an aspect of masculine display” (p. 64). Herring maintained that “it is virtually only men who flame” (1994). While he confirmed that both men and women dislike flaming, it is more tolerable for men due to a valuing of freedom from censorship and adversarial debate. Similarly, Vrooman’s discussion of “the art of invective” suggests a Western tradition of this type of “privileged rhetorical identity” that is overwhelmingly masculine (p. 55). For Vrooman, cyberspace is a performative space, created through programming and communicative interaction. Similarly, a seminar in a university can be seen as a performative space, governed by rules and conventions. There are actors involved, such as tutors and students, as well as the physical space of the seminar. While this space is constituted via communicative interaction, it is regulated with reference to a particular set of normative behaviors, if not rules. These may well be open to challenge, (re-) negotiation and resistance, but it is unusual for them to be completely overturned or transgressed.

Common Culture

Insofar as education/training becomes ever more subordinated to technical instrumentalism and to the “needs” of industry, it will be seen as a necessary evil to be tolerated in order to obtain access to the wage in order to obtain access to leisure and consumption and their cultural energies ... We need an altogether new approach to education.

Paul Willis (1990, p. 147)

In a CMC environment, the rules and normative behaviors may be much less clear in online environments due to the relative newness of their existence within higher education. Further, Willis’s critique signifies how education is justified and framed in a post-Fordist environment of lifestyle and post-work (Aronowitz, 1992). The use of CMC

discussion boards or chat rooms is not yet an established feature of the majority of teaching practice and is therefore not enfolded in precise guidelines and regulations. Much CMC research has focused on the key aspects of anonymity, de-individuation and absence of social cues that characterize online environments. While the literature encompasses a range of positions – ranging from the utopian to the dystopic – much CMC research is focused on the consequences of separating bodies from identities and actions from socially sanctioned responsibilities.

The data presented in our article emerged not from a deliberately constructed experimental setting but from an accidental teaching event arising from the use of a CMC space – the Virtual Classroom – as part of an undergraduate teaching session. Juliet Eve was a session facilitator and was a novice user of CMC environment. She had not thought through the implications of running a virtual seminar for the first time and the possible scenarios and trajectories of the session. Significantly, without a clear modality and guidelines in place about group norms for behavior, students shifted leisure-based language and practices into an educational environment. The key – which is even more significant through the rhetoric of Web 2.0 – is that intervention is required so that students disconnect web-based behavior for leisure from the web-framed behavior in teaching and learning. While the literature from Flew and others has valued the positioning of education in life and work – as exemplified by his phrase “learner-earner”(Flew 2002) there are consequences of blurring teaching and learning moments with consumerism, life and lifestyle.

The aim of the teaching session was to introduce students to debates encircling the use of the Internet as a tool for political engagement. There was attention to the use

of websites and email by politicians and activists, to explore the potential of online communication to enhance democracy. The students were first-year undergraduates studying a media and communications module. After an introductory lecture, in which students were directed towards issues for discussion and shown a short video, they re-assembled in the computer suite and logged into Studentcentral, where they were able to interact using both the Virtual Classroom space and a discussion board. This was an artificial setting that should have provided the discursive clues to separate this online event from leisure-based digital dialogue. The students were known to each other and were an established group at this stage in the term. They were also sitting in close proximity to each other and the tutor. In terms of conducting experiments within CMC research, the physical presence of not only their peers but also the tutor (and another facilitator) undermines the *raison d'être* of online communication – namely that it facilitates communication for geographically separated people. However, what is significant about this setting was the extent to which students behaved in ways that might have been expected to be facilitated by anonymity and physical disconnection.

The aim of the session, as conceived by the tutor, was for students to discuss issues arising from the video, structured around a set of initial questions that they had been given and that were also posted alongside the directions in Studentcentral for logging into the Virtual Classroom. At the end of the session, the tutor downloaded the complete text of the session for analysis. Additional material came from a number of messages posted to the discussion board over the two days following the session by two of the students.

Twenty-one students logged into the Virtual Classroom during a forty-minute period. Some remained for about half an hour while others entered and quickly left again. What became clear from early in the session was the inability of the tutor to “control” behavior, or even to lead/mediate/ facilitate discussion. The rapid descent into “flaming” meant that within minutes three male students had precluded any attempt by others to discuss the set educational tasks. What also emerged was the “anarchy” of communication, with several unrelated strands carrying on simultaneously. Significantly, the voice of the tutor was ignored. Two female students entered the VC first and were on their own for five minutes. They began to discuss issues such as access to technology but soon left the discussion to experiment with the discussion board. In fact, they then continued the discussion offline and face to face instead. What is significant when reading the printout of the session is that the two women stayed on topic and their discussion was both appropriate and useful. The moment that two male students entered the space, the modality was transformed, and the abuse commenced. Obviously, all names have been changed to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Trish	hello chums
Liz	wondering if any one else was here
Trish	just us two
Juliet Eve	hi you found it well done!!
Liz	wasn't too difficult
Trish	yeah, its really lively!
Juliet Eve	so, will this way of communicating create a revolution?
Trish	I think it already has
Juliet Eve	how so?
Trish	well that video was from 1995, right? Which is like 7 years ago
Trish	technology has become even more useful
Trish	video conferencing etc
Trish	and no one can predict the future either
Liz	the amount of people connected to the internet has increased
Trish	very true
Liz	but what they said about Africa not having access

Trish yeah, what was that, like 2 out of 100
Liz well most people in Africa don't have fridges or food
Trish exactly
Liz more importantaly
Trish it's a different culture
Phil ello peeps
Liz but I do think that what the academic said about like minded
 people only contacting and connecting with other like minded
 people is true but it also the case in real life
John *****, i'm gonna rinse you.

It is a stark and startling transformation in the discussion from this point. While Liz and Trish stayed on topic and replicated a tutorial mode of discussion, the moment that Phil and John entered the space, the potential for learning moments or scholarly dialogue declined. The other members of the group were unable to reclaim this discussion.

Tanya has anyone got anything remotely interesting to say?
Phil erm.. no
Tanya well that says it all!
John erm... beavers and ducks.
Phil john likes boys
Juliet Eve so, how do you think this different from physically being in a
 seminar?

The students were soon able to answer Juliet Eve's question, but in an unexpected way. An aspect of the VC that was also available to the students was a "blackboard" that allowed them to draw pictures. They took immediate advantage of this facility to draw male genitalia. Juliet Eve, rapidly learning how to use the controls to clear content, wiped these drawings and finally closed off that aspect of the VC. Some of the commentary reflects attempts to use this feature:

Phil i'm about to draw something good ...
John x-rated...
Karen drawing the willy?
Paul !'£\$%^&**&&%(&*\$*(
Phil got it in one

As well as being able to ignore tutor interventions and attempts to drag the discussion towards the learning goals, students were also able to make the kind of comments they would not make in the presence of a tutor. For example, mocking the content of the lecture session and the video in particular was a favorite activity:

Christina	that video today was enthralling
Laura	I fell asleep...
Paula	Felicity is staying in tonight she has borrowed the video of[f] Juliet to watch again

Again, learning quickly to use the behind-the-scenes controls, Juliet Eve realised it was possible to eject students from the classroom. This decision led to a more overt power struggle as students found ways of sneaking back in or taking over other students' identities.

A few students hijacked a communication space to perform aspects of their social identities rather than their students-in-classroom identities.

Felicity	whats the crack tonight?
Juliet Eve	interesting how the technology encourages you all to behave like kindergarten children
John	cocktails?
Phil	mike needs a date for 2nite? Any offers?

The early interventions by two male students set the framework and modality for the majority of their fellow online contributors. The usual power dynamics of a seminar setting, facilitated by the lecturer, were immediately transgressed and became impossible to re-establish. The normative behavior of the group was dictated by their self-characterisation as socializing students rather than learning students. The social rules of group behavior overwrote the more formal normative behaviors associated with sitting in a classroom. The leisure inflection of chat rooms, friends and flames flooded the digital space. The dominant mode of expression in the contributions was flaming, indicating

that students were expressing informal, social aspects of themselves not usually conveyed in classroom settings. In addition, the communication was gendered and sexualized.

Women were involved in this non-sanctioned behavior but were less extreme in their attacks on others. Significantly, as the swearing and drawings emerged, the women absented themselves from the Virtual Classroom and began to discuss the session-related questions in a discussion board area of the (more) managed learning environment. The session seemed to facilitate a dominant mode of communication that may, outside of that setting, be a minority way of communicating among the students. A fascinating feature of this session was the fact that students acted as though they were anonymous users.

Actually, their names came up on screen as they typed in contributions. A few students continued the flaming performance outside of the synchronous setting by sending personal messages to each other via the associated noticeboard area of the MLE.

Phil: XXXXX, despite your clear obsession with my unfortunately normal sexuality, wishful thinking, will not make me turn homosexual... You have already been banned from going swimming at the local pools due to your unhealthy attraction to young and small children, that 8 year old boy was so defenceless, nobody saw your thumb coming. I do understand that the medical problem of u having small genitalia is probably the origins of this fetish, but please, I urge you to seek help. Have that, eat my insult.

This post was made on the course's asynchronous discussion board. All enrolled students could view this post. The behavior commenced in synchronous chat spilled over into the other modes and sites of communication.

There are many significant points of interest in this teaching event. One fascinating component is the role of anonymity and its function in the relationship between gender, technology and performance of a participant's identity in terms of perceived, actual and challenged power. The ability to set an agenda, curriculum and

learning goals is usually located with the lecturer in a higher education setting. This authority is open to challenge and disruption by students in a CMC environment. While such “resistance” may be valued in some models of student-centered learning and seen as a way to “de-school” universities (Illich, 1972), there are consequences for learning and assessment. Even more seriously, there is an impact on other students through the personal attacks of the few. The question is how these troubling interventions in the culture of respect, tolerance and anti-discrimination are managed when using MLEs in classroom settings.

Steve	Danny takes it in the arse
Catherine	HOW RUDE
Felicity	Nice to know
Phil	u love it mate
Chris	we are in brighton
Hollie	we are in brighton
Felicity	so do you chris ...
Hollie	your officially one of them
Phil	Dee is a les
Trish	always believe iiiiiiiiiiiittttt

If homophobia and misogyny emerge in a synchronous chat room that is framed by a university curriculum, then what is the role of the teacher in such a setting? If student-centered learning reveals discrimination against fellow students, should such a dialogue be valued as educational in any way? The last contributor to the online forum, Catherine, perhaps captured the scale of the mediocrity and banality when she stated, “This is as interesting as watching pencils.” To find a way to enliven teaching, learning and scholarship on and off line, the final part of our article takes these questions as its focus, investigating the consequences of aligning student-centered learning with user-generated content and the “project” of a university.

UNIVERSITIES 2.0

With the public sector, education, the welfare state – all the big, “safe” institutions – up against the wall, there’s nothing good or clever or heroic about going under. When all is said and done, why bother to think “deeply” when you’re not being paid to think deeply?

Dick Hebdige (1988, p. 167)

Face it: You’re always just a breath away from a job in telemarketing.

Douglas Coupland (1996, p. 17)

The student-centered learning movement has meant that educators – for nearly two decades – have prioritized words like *flexibility*, *experience*, *negotiation* and *collaboration*, displacing the intellectual importance of discipline, integrity, respect, motivation and commitment. Intrinsicly valuing student voices and views without question, debate or challenge has presented a bill. The lives and intelligence of teachers are now seen as equal to those of the students they are instructing. Teachers’ experience, expertise, knowledge and curriculum are dragged down to the level of the basic, the banal and the everyday.

The knowledge of teachers and that of students are not equivalent. Teachers know more. They write and read expansively. They write and interpret curriculum. They set assignments. They moderate and examine. They study, think and translate complex ideas into the stepping stones of lesson plans. Students can perform none of these tasks. Two forces have decentered awareness of these distinctions between teachers and students. Progressivist and liberal politics have celebrated the value of the students’ voice in a form of mock-1960s libertarianism. Concurrently, neo-liberal forces have added the inflective of the market to the educational mix. As Pegrum confirmed,

Western education has become increasingly subject to the economics of the market and the creed of neoliberalism, where the state's overwhelming object is to supply the standardized workforce – that is, human capital with transferable skills – necessary to compete in the ever more globalized knowledge-based economy. (2007, p. 16)

Students now whine at predictable intervals that “we’re paying for this” and even “we pay your salary.” Like obedient shop assistants, teachers ignore the disrespect, the ignorance and the laziness to ensure that the students are “satisfied” and enjoy their “experience” of learning. They are paying for the right to be mediocre at best or to judge and ridicule others at worst. In the context of our accidental class experiment, students believed they were paying for the right to ignore the curriculum, abuse other students and disrespect educators.

Teachers have always been the object of humor and ridicule. Tirades were scrawled as toilet graffiti or through hushed gossip. It was a Bakhtinesque carnival of resistance: the disempowered mocking the powerful. However, this abuse would rarely be delivered to the teacher's face. Respect and/or fear kept a hierarchy in place. The hierarchy and power were based on a fundamental premise that teachers help students learn important ideas, concepts and knowledges that will allow them to move through their lives with consciousness and care. But the starting point of such a journey is that teachers have expertise that students do not. In our current culture of equivalence, as expressed through leisure-based platforms that have moved into education, this view is unmentioned and disregarded.

It is not simply liberalism with lashings of libertarianism and neo-liberalism that has fed the pyre of teacher contempt and encouraged the attacks on fellow students. The user-generated content “movement” – including Flickr, wikimedia, blogs, podcasting, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube – has provided a channel and venue for the emotive excesses of grievance, hostility and insolence against teachers, students and education. More attention must be paid to “situated literacies.” Hamilton described this concept as a “time-bounded interaction between people and texts or other literacy-related artifacts is taking place” (2000, p. 28). It has now become part of popular culture to humiliate teachers and justify this abuse through the facade of social networking.

Educators have been so respectful of other cultures, experiences and people that we have permitted the undermining of the value of teaching and learning. Nearly a decade ago, the remarkable scholar of popular music and popular culture, Andrew Goodwin, recognized the consequences of these “concessions”:

This point was made for me recently at an academic conference where the audience heard from a distinguished panel of journalists and academics, who, as is usual, talked past each other about their work. What invariably happens is that the academic, eager (like me) to find ways of addressing a non-academic audience, make all kinds of concessions to the difficulties and limitations of journalism, eager in autocritique concerning the politics of academic writing, and discuss our yearning to work as or with media producers, and so forth. We are then treated to career histories from the practitioners, who berate the professors for using bloodless “jargon,” without revealing the slightest interest in figuring out why academics use technical language, or what forms of knowledge might be

produced on campus that cannot emerge in a 200-word record review. Because they operate just a little closer to the marketplace than the professors, the critics evidently believe that they are also closer to “the street” (1998, p. 122).

In the nine years since Goodwin published these words, the condition he diagnosed has spread from academic conferences to the worldwide web and popular culture. The concessions made by academics have extended far beyond journalists and into “communities” of bloggers, wiki editors, Flickr photographers and YouTube filmmakers. What has been weathered in the democratic desire to make connections beyond the gates and gardens of the university is recognition that qualifications, credentials and specialist knowledge hold value. Fascinatingly, it is now journalists who complain about their loss of credibility through the “citizen journalist” movement with such “services” as the BBC’s user-generated content team and CNN iReport.

The culture of grievance and complaint about education has also fed into the phenomenon of Facebook. With 18 million users, it is currently the sixth most visited site in the United States and includes more photographs than Flickr. The site makes its money through advertising, selling products to students while they click through the lives and livelihoods of others. The transgressive and transformative purpose of education is corroded through Facebook’s discourse. As in the teaching “experiment” discussed in this article, the blurring of leisure and learning has corroded the respect that is necessary to commence a scholarly journey. Insults are not the basis of either learning or democracy. A recent survey by the Association of Teachers and Lectures and the Teachers’ Support Network reported that one in six teachers had been cyber-bullied (Meikle, 2007, p. 5). Entering Facebook.co.uk, the evidence for this number is clear to

see. It is extraordinary how many groups discuss such topics as “Is XXXXXXXX the worst teacher in the world?” Harassment of instructors has emerged and digital mauling by groups of students is common (Pepitone, 2006). What is stunning when reading the harassment and ridicule of teachers on Facebook is how few teachers have replied to the abuse. Perhaps it is a mark of their self-respect that they do not scan and upload the corrected papers of these students who attack them for their peer group to see their errors and the real rationale for their abuse.

The greatest gift that a life of the mind provides is awareness that we are responsible for our own failures, inadequacies and laziness. The greatest gift that chatrooms, blogs and Facebook provide is the construction of endless cycles of displacement where others – writers, teachers, politicians, boyfriends, girlfriends, (ex)best friends and mothers – can block the knowledge that we are accountable for the decisions we make in our lives. Homophobia is not a legitimate strategy or method for creating an empowered identity.

There is a movement for change in the land of user-generated content. Even Tim O’Reilly, oft-claimed “inventor” of the phrase *Web 2.0*, and Wikipedia czar Jimmy Wales complained about the increasingly abusive nature of the online environment and asked for greater civility. If they are concerned, then the rest of us should be worried. But when they proposed something as simple as a “Bloggers’ Code of Conduct,” the new media site 910am stated that “controlling what people say and do on blogs can only be a recipe for the decline of the medium and the introduction of totalitarianism online” (Pilkington, 2007). The confusion of civilization with totalitarianism signifies the loss of

the former and a victory for those whose “freedom of speech” drowns out the views of others.

In anti-intellectual times, experts have replaced expertise. Freedom of speech for the few has suffocated the rights of the many. But teachers are also to blame. We have gone too far in valuing the student “experience” over scholarly responsibilities to knowledge. We have “facilitated” an unproductive confusion between valuing student views and validating ignorance, discrimination and oppression. Certainly, the arguments in favor of student-centered learning are convincing and effective. However, new technologies cannot automatically create new democracies. They do not necessarily “transform our worlds.” They can reify and reinforce already existing oppressions and inequalities. Instead, teachers need to bring the revelation and the transcendence back to scholarship and learning. This process may not involve new technologies at all but use older platforms to question older modes of prejudice and discrimination.

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Aligning Hip-Hop, Curriculum, Standards, and Potential

Nadjwa E. L. Norton

Peering into your brown bodies
I see the power of the digital divide
The gulf of separation
That pours the distance
Between you and them
They—who have access not just to
Internet
But to PowerPoint and higher order technological thinking

Feeling your soul reflecting into mine
I know that you must learn to manipulate this
This power, this capital, this
Technology needed to place you on par

Looking into your heart
I knew
That I had to tap into your strengths
Be mindful of your critical abilities
And work to teach from your strengths

Listening to your words
I chose to begin with
Music, CD covers, hip-hop, culture, and image
Not open, save, format, and apply design

Moving into conversation with you
With educators, teachers, administrators, and researchers
We discuss and envision the potential in this pedagogy
And the divide is still not conquered or erased
But we are armed with yet one more tool.

Nadjwa E. L. Norton

In writing the poem above, I set the context for this article within the social-political everyday nature of the digital divide. In particular, I call attention to the original concerns about the digital divide that raised awareness about the lack of computer and

Internet access of poor and ethnic minority children compared to middle class White¹

children (Pearson, 2002). Further, although the disparity in computer ownership between struggling class ethnic minorities and Whites is decreasing, the digital divide has expanded far beyond computer ownership. It now also includes disparities in the access that children have to printers, paper, ink, scanners, software, and technological pedagogical practices (Knight, Dixon, Norton, & Bentley, 2004). Many educational researchers with an equity lens detail a variety of dimensions of the digital divide and explore access to the aforementioned technology and pedagogical practices in home, school, and community environments (Swain & Pearson, 2003).

A similar equity lens is embedded in my poem as well as the works of scholars such as Valdez and Duran (2007) and Swain and Pearson (2003), positing that educators who provide children with low-level and low-interest technology experiences are solidifying the digital divide. Currently, research about the digital divide asserts that high-level standards and effective pedagogical practices that integrate technology with academics enhance learning environments (Smith, 2002). Attention is being paid to illuminating for educators and administrators that they have the power to diminish this digital divide by growing more adept with technology, weaving technology into the content areas, and reevaluating and revising their current technology-related curricula (Swain & Pearson, 2003). In many cases, educators will have to refrain from using computers as reward systems, change their perceptions of the relevance of computers in school, and organize classroom management and pedagogical strategies that best utilize limited resources (Moore, Laffey, Espinosa, & Lodree, 2002).

¹ For the purposes of this manuscript the Norton is using APA guidelines to capitalize White and Black because they are situated as proper noun social groups.

In order for these pedagogical teaching shifts to occur, they must be accompanied by the belief that all children can learn. Such constructs are evidenced in the poem above and speak to the urgency for educators to become more conscious about the choices that they make to engage students' technological abilities. Even educators who have high degrees of access may have to reconsider moving away from low use and low-level usage of the technology in an effort to stop increasing the inequities (Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001; Natriello, 2001) Rather than finding ways to implement drill-and-skill activities or directed teaching software into already existing pedagogies, efforts may be designed to promote more creativity, problem-solving abilities, and inquiry skills (Sternberg, Kaplan, & Borck, 2007). In a similar vein, researchers are calling for educators, as part of their reflection processes, to consider motivation, social processes, and the willingness of children to experiment and interact with technology (Warschauer, 2003). Despite what we have come to know through the literature, educators are still searching for ways to support struggling class ethnic minority children. Seeking to overcome these challenges, scholars such as Beilke and Stuve (2004) present small pockets of hope by demonstrating how urban middle school children integrate technology and literacy for the purposes of construction, communication, and expression. They offer viable suggestions for the ways in which educators may work with children via digital video technology to close the gaps, promote higher order thinking, and encourage technical competence. Like Goetze and Walker (2004), who see the potential of drawing on technology, specifically Hyperstudio graphics and drawings, they make space for ethnic minority children to produce images and other sign systems that communicate complex meanings.

It is within this conversation that the opening poem and this article belong. This article offers some springboards for educators and researchers that allow for the integration of critical thinking, higher order meaning-making, technology, popular culture music, and literacies. I seek to contribute to the field opportunities for children to interact with technology to create visual sign systems in a manner that strengthens both their technology and literacy abilities. First, I build theoretical and conceptual

frameworks that highlight culturally responsive pedagogy and contextualize hip-hop as a culture. Next, I offer two standards-based, technology-infused literacy lessons implemented with second through eighth grade children in urban alternative schools and educational afterschool programs. The first example details how children made meaning about the concept of spectacle in relation to hip-hop CD covers and in turn produced their own spectacle CDS. The second example portrays how children built their interview skills by producing constructed interviews with musicians based on music sampling. Then, I conclude with implications for making pedagogical choices that include higher-order thinking skills in relationship to technology and literacy. All of this writing is offered as another pocket of hope for teachers and researchers to adapt and modify when working with children who may be on the destructive side of the digital divide.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGIES AND HIP-HOP CULTURE

Essential to this article is the notion of culturally responsive pedagogy—pedagogies that use cultures and lived experiences to enhance, support, and further learning processes (Gay, 2000). Researchers from multicultural, feminist, and/or critical perspectives push for teachers and school officials to embrace these pedagogies that promote academic success for all students in an increasingly diverse society (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In so doing, they argue against solely theorizing and implementing culturally responsive pedagogies with an exclusive focus on race and ethnicity (Norton, 2005; Norton & Bentley, 2006). Instead, they define culture in a more expansive way that includes but is not limited to total ways of being around sexuality, dress, race, class, age,

Recently, hip-hop has been reconceptualized as a culture able to join the non-exhaustive previous list. Like all other cultures, hip-hop provides tools, values, practices, and artifacts in the form of its five common elements that shape communicative practices (Chang, 2005). Through the music, DJing, MCing, clothes, dance, graffiti, and movement, hip-hop has shaped the way many people see and experience the world (Pough, 2004). Attending to hip-hop as an aspect of culture is significant because the globalization of hip-hop has increasingly shaped entire generations of people despite differences in age, race, class, language, gender, and education (Brown, 2006; Scherpf, 2001). For these generations of people, the culture of hip-hop provides communicative practices whereby members can converse about societal oppressions, disenfranchisement, daily realities, and environmental conditions (Fenn & Perullo, 2000; Forman & Neal, 2004). Like any other culture, hip-hop gives space for its members to form community specific dialogic practices and discourses (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2003).

Yet, despite the magnitude of hip-hop's impact on people, the knowledges, diverse literacies, depth, and sustenance within the culture continually remain invisible, or discarded (Dyson, 2004; Price, 2005). Invisible for many educators are the ways in which they may align hip-hop literacies practices with mainstream literacies practices that are valued in educational institutions (Cooks, 2004; Mahiri, 1996). Building from the notion of hip-hop as culture and not solely music, my writing offers educators and researchers the space to concern ourselves with children's enjoyment of the music as well as the potential of hip-hop to support children's reading, writing, speaking, technology

skills, and creation of diverse texts. Thus, hip-hop literacies practices within this article are situated as literacies practices where youth and children read and write hip-hop based texts, encode and decode meaning, compare and contrast life experiences, formulate arguments, create audio, visual, and gestural texts, while expressing and negotiating their cultures and the world in which they live (Norton, 2006; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

HIP-HOP LITERACIES PRACTICES

There is an expanding cadre of researchers and educators who are exploring how hip-hop literacies practices are implemented inside and outside of educational institutions (Christen, 2003; Pardue, 2004). For example, Crossley's (2005) work *Metaphorical Conceptions in Hip-Hop Music* helps to align hip-hop literacies practices with literacy standards and mainstream school literacy practices. Throughout his work he details how rap embodies metaphors and metaphorical traits including signifying, irony, satire, similes, and figurative language. He argues that studying the metaphorical concepts within hip-hop culture is a venue for shedding light on the knowledges, experiences, and activities of those who participate in hip-hop. His work explores how metaphors permit people to express thoughts and meanings too difficult to express literally. He posits that metaphors provide a venue for expressive vivid language through compact communication. Crossley notes that metaphors are ascribed community-specific language and understandings. Therefore, they have immense abilities to serve as a catalyst for new understandings of collective experiences and to create new realities.

Like Crossley (2005) Bruce and Davis (2000) contend that hip-hop is full of metaphorical content. By focusing on metaphors and other literary content, they articulate

examples of incorporating hip-hop into school curriculum. They contend that infusing hip-hop, rap in particular, into the English curriculum validates culturally specific languages, develops school literacies, and aligns hip-hop's elements with the skills that English teachers must cover. Specifically, they illustrate how rhyme, repetition, mimesis, ruptures, and flow are equivalent to poetic tropes and devices such as rhyming couplets, similes, metaphors, and alliteration. Bruce and Davis also focus on creating successful poetry slams for children to participate in. They believe that such teaching is a strategy to "intervene in the structural and systemic violence that has marginalized the knowledges that they bring with them to the classrooms. A Hip-Hop oriented pedagogy seeks first of all to reconstitute as subjects those who have been treated as objects" (p.122). Such work that focuses on creating equity and bringing marginalized knowledges to the center of curriculum shares similar goals and philosophies with scholars who explicitly name culturally responsive pedagogy as the foundation for their work (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Similar positions are taken by other educators who align hip-hop with school literacies in order to contest the tendency to locate youth who enact hip-hop practices on the outskirts of academic discourses. For example, Cooks (2004) focuses on including rap as a genre in which students can write and respond to literature. Further, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) offer us multiple possibilities for such work. In articulating the significance of hip-hop as a pedagogical site, they call for critical pedagogues who provide learning opportunities for youth to use hip-hop texts as springboards to interpret the messages in the music and for social action as well as to analyze themes, motifs, character traits, and plots. They integrate an English poetry unit with hip-hop and focus

on historical and literary periods that include the Civil War, the Elizabethan Age and the post-Industrial Revolution era (Morrell, 2002; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

Students worked in groups and were asked to analyze the links between a poem and rap song that related to their particular historical and literary period. Additionally, students were required to individually gather an anthology of poems and to write a critical essay on their song. Their pedagogical strategies successfully incorporate hip-hop into the literacy and Social Studies curriculum.

The trend and contributions of these educators and researchers who align hip-hop with school literacy rest in incorporating hip-hop into classrooms by focusing on rap and print, mainly by linking lyrics to poetry. This theorizing and teaching of rap as hip-hop's most visible signifier is possible because songs and song lyrics are more easily commodified than other aspects of hip-hop (Dimitriadis, 2001). When I first began bringing hip-hop in the classroom, this too was my focus. While this offers tremendous opportunities for educators, it ignores the multiple literacies practices that exist in hip-hop and people's lives. Having come to this realization over the last few years, I continue to link rap to poetry and focus on print, but I also create hip-hop literacy learning by drawing on multiple literacies practices that include print, oral, gesture, and visual texts in the forms of art, clothing, dance, music, and lyrics. Seeking to expand culturally responsive pedagogy and articulate effective and socially just technology and literacy pedagogies, the remainder of this article highlights the multiple intersecting dimensions of hip-hop, literacies, and technology.

Aligning Hip-Hop, Multiple Literacies, School, and Spectacle CDs

Pedagogical Decisions and Strategies for the Spectacle CD

Educators seeking to implement effective pedagogical strategies that build technology and literacy skills for children who are negatively impacted by the digital divide may choose to begin in a way that focuses on creating the conditions of teaching and learning (Nieto, 2004). Selecting a major focus and a grounding theme for children that will inspire them to want to strengthen both their technology and literacies abilities is of the utmost importance. Although there are a range of possibilities, the most effective content for this learning environment will be one that speaks directly to your children's interests and cultures. In my context, many of the urban ethnic minority children that I was teaching were part of the hip-hop culture and identified themselves in relation to the culture. Therefore, I chose music as the crux of our activity.

Further, it was important to me to draw on their visual literacy strengths at the same time that I was introducing them to new technology knowledge. Like other urban children they had demonstrated great ability to relate visual images to one another, to process images, and to encode meaning from a range of visual images (Beilke & Stuve, 2004). Through our interactions they displayed capabilities of understanding, questioning, and critiquing visual representations within the media (Semali, 2003). Like others, I believed in the possibilities of technology to enhance music knowledge as well as music to augment technological abilities (Ho, 2007; Knight et al, 2004). In light of these pedagogical considerations, I narrowed the focus of this activity to illuminate the purposeful choices that hip-hop artists, producers, and public relations managers make in selecting and creating the images on CD covers. It was my contention that providing the space for children to read CD covers, discuss these images, and make meaning of the decision processes aligned with the necessary critical and visual literacies that

deconstruct and construct messages and representations in cultural images (Beilke & Stuve, 2004; Vasquez, 2004).

It was from these pedagogical conditions that the Spectacle CD activity arose. This activity began with children examining 20 CD covers and discussing initial thoughts that came to mind. Children ages seven to 12 shared initial thoughts and articulated patterns and themes they saw across the images. For example, one child said, "In a lot of these they have crosses or symbols that look like they are praying." Another commented, "A lot of these also have guns." "Some of these have people's pictures and some have cartoons." Children made text-to-self connections including, "I like this look at their clothes." And "Look at the baby. Don't you think he's so cute?" Children also made text-to-world connections: "Look here it is like slavery times," and "These have lots of people thinking, like so many things to think about in the world."

This initial conversation about the visual images on the CD covers was built upon by linking it with the definition of spectacle. In sharing the following definition, "A spectacle is something extraordinary that people look at. It is like something that would make people stop and stare or go 'oh wow look at that,'" I sought to deepen the conversations for the children. Pedagogically I sought to draw on higher-order thinking skills by giving them an additional lens, the spectacle lens, with which to view the CD covers. I elaborated further with the intention of having the children create more developed schema and lens that would enable them to have new insights when they re-examined the CD covers.

Sometimes spectacles can be good, bad, unfamiliar, or just very different. A spectacle can be like something you are amazed at or never seen before or can

hardly believe that you see. A spectacle can be a show – like the circus or a concert. A spectacle can be something you see like a mural or parade or when people perform on the street. A spectacle can be something that is also embarrassing. Like people say don't make a spectacle of yourself, like a kid throwing a tantrum, people fighting on the street, or kids acting the fool.

I utilized analogous strategies to introduce other key words such as *sphere*, *marginalized*, *exclusionary*, and *historical* that would be necessary for children to comprehend the print text they would receive. For example, I explained that “*marginalized* and *exclusionary* were very similar— like when people treat other people bad and leave them out, ignore them, or treat them different.” I provided them with examples:

Exclusionary is when people leave you out of a game, don't invite you to a party, or tell you that you can't be part of their friend group. *Marginalized* is like the same. When people make fun of you, tease you, don't want you to be in their group. Or like when White people treat brown people bad, don't want them in their neighborhood. Or when people follow you around the store like you are going to steal something.

Such pedagogical decisions demonstrated the high expectations that I had for all children involved. I exhibited a belief that each child at the table could read complicated images because they were of personal interest. By passing along information and culturally responsive examples and definitions of *exclusionary* and *spectacle*, I presented the children with a sense that I valued their abilities to think deeply and to understand complex topics. I wanted to create space and structures that required and expected them

to analyze, articulate meaning beyond surface level, and to relate our discussion to their everyday realities.

Next I provided students with the following quotations taken from Pough's (2004) book entitled *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*:

Rap music and Hip-Hop culture provide a spectacle . . . by making creative use of spectacle.

Rappers with their bold use of language and dress, also use their image and spectacle as their initial entry into the public sphere. In this instance, spectacle functions dually as both style and a plea to be heard, to be allowed to represent.

The show, the spectacle, is the first step toward change- the first part of getting heard.

For a historically marginalized and invisible group, the spectacle is what allows them a point of entry into a public space that has proven to be violent and exclusionary.

In presenting these quotations, I deliberately chose a professional and political pedagogical act that represented urban ethnic minority children as capable of higher-order thinking and intense engagement. My intention was to support and extend the literacies of the children that required them to read, analyze, and evaluate a range of visual media images (Semali, 2004). In response to my expectations and the context that I created, the children demonstrated that they were able to engage in lively and intense discussion about what these quotations meant and how this related to hip-hop. Here is a snippet of that conversation:

Eli: Like when people create videos and they are all showy and fancy with stuff like cars, jewelry, and pools.

Iesha: Yea and when girls be having no clothes on shaking their butts on the video. Like people make themselves look so bad sometimes.

Eli: Or when they have concerts and a whole bunch of people come on stage and they drive their cars on stage. They have on all these clothes, and sometimes bring all that stuff on stage.

Iesha: Yeah and sometimes when people fight at the concerts.

Upon hearing children question and make meaning about what hip-hop images they hear and see, I knew they were capable of being both critical viewers and entertained viewers (Taylor, 2006). They were aware of the messages inherent in the visual images that were part of their hip-hop culture. Their conversation would mark them as having a high level of media literacy – abilities to critically analyze, create, consume, and participate in media (Semali, 2003)

Based on these strengths, I chose to deepen their knowledge even further by helping them to understand that all spectacles are not bad. I redirected the children to go back and re-examine the CD covers and to specifically discuss these images, keeping mind their connections to these quotations and the meanings that we discussed. Children were asked to look at the details on the CD covers and to pay attention to the outside and inside flaps on the CD covers. They were then required to name specific CD covers and specific images that related to the particular words and quotations.

Nadjwa: Pick one of the images and tell us why you would think this was a spectacle.

Dion: On this Game CD, look at this picture with his fists up and his angry face. People would stop and look because he was mad at something. He looks angry ready to fight.

Iesha: On this Nas one he is praying and getting power from God.

Eli: He looks like he is drawing power from all the buildings behind him and the whole city.

Brittany: This one makes you stop and think of slavery. The White people chasing the Black people.

Iesha: Yeah because the White people don't want the Black people around. That always used to happen like when Martin Luther King was around.

Nadjwa: Yes, this is a picture not from slavery but what they used to call Jim Crow times. The Jim Crow law separated Whites from Blacks.

Throughout these analyses I realized that children of all ages demonstrated higher-order thinking capabilities. Eli, age nine, was one of the most verbal children in the group. When he contributed to the conversation, he offered nuanced details and meaning-making that drew from all of the smaller images within the overall CD cover. He never once repeated what other people said, and he often focused on the CD covers that required more in-depth postulating. In a similar vein, eight-year-old Iesha spoke very passionately and added depth to 11-year-old Brittany's comment about a CD cover on which White police officers were hosing down Blacks. She was more accurately able to place the CD into its accurate historical time of the Civil Rights era and constitute the behavior as a long-term occurrence since slavery.

It was at this point that I knew the children were invested enough in thinking about the spectacle topic in relation to hip-hop CD covers. Pedagogically speaking, it was now time to incorporate technology as a tool to enhance the literacies and to build upon the foundational knowledge that the children readily displayed. Children were now required to create their own spectacle CD covers utilizing PowerPoint. In making this

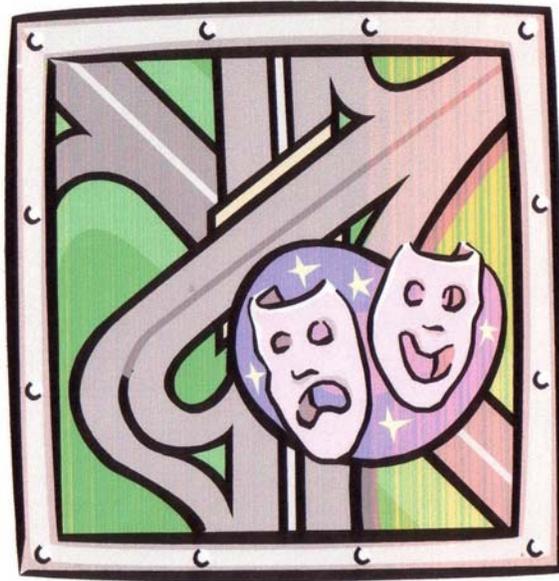
decision I believed that children could use their technology skills to further understanding about music content, maintain high interest and motivation, and allow educational technology to have positive effects on their learning and motivation (Ho, 2007).

Since most of the children did not have prior knowledge of PowerPoint, I sought to give them technology knowledge that would decrease the digital divide. PowerPoint is a well-known program used in many schools and workplaces to both receive and impart information. I wanted these urban ethnic minority children to be familiar with mainstream technology capital that would help them both in the present and future. In order to teach the technology, I did a demo lesson that focused on creating one PowerPoint slide and not an entire show. I included instructions and pointers about choosing and incorporating clip art pictures, searching with key words, including print text, resizing images, and moving images.

These pedagogical decisions were particularly important in light of the fact that we were operating in some of the restrictive conditions that maintain the digital divide. For example, I was working with about 15 students, and we had access to five computers, only one of which had online access. Due to the limited resources, including sparse clip art and crowded sharing conditions, I might have chosen not to engage this activity and to have children play a game. However, due to equity pedagogy and the need to supply children with technology access, I chose otherwise. Children huddled together sharing computers waiting for me to provide them step-by-step oral directions because we did not have the visual support of a Smartboard. They took turns trying out each of the directions that I voiced and worked diligently with a very unfriendly set of clip art images that did not readily lend themselves to hip-hop visual representations and culture.

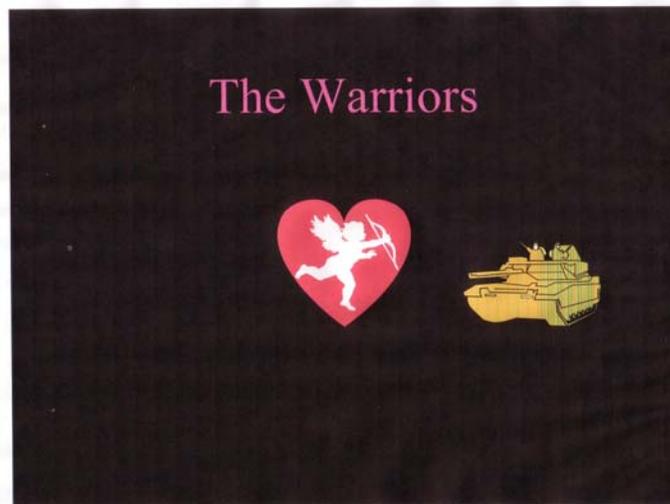
The children diligently worked to incorporate their literacies and technology skills in order to produce their Spectacle CDs. They visibly displayed attentiveness and eagerness as they manipulated the PowerPoint tools. Children sat in pairs and typed in key words such as *life*, *rap*, *music*, *dance*, *microphone*, and *video* in order to find the images that they desired. In most cases children had an idea of the images that they were looking for. With this focus in mind they demonstrated literacies that require students to monitor their use of visual texts and languages to effectively communicate with people for a range of reasons (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Four). All the children were clearly aware that they were producing these CDs for particular purposes and with the intent to communicate understanding of the concept of spectacle. Sometimes frustration arose when the key word did not bring up the image that they desired. I explained to children how limited clip art was and also how the range of images was going to be different for the children depending on whether or not their computer had online access.

The children's CD covers represent their abilities to search for and find visual images that represent an understanding of spectacle – something that would make somebody stop and take a closer look at the CD cover. The first example demonstrates the way Kassidy, a 10-year-old girl, was able to combine three separate images and create a CD cover. She titled her CD cover “Sad Face Film” and demonstrated a remarkable ability to place the masquerade masks on a large complex road while angling the camera in a direction that captures the interactions of life.



Her work required that she move, resize, and overlay images upon one another. She also chose not to add any print text to her CD cover but only to save this file with the chosen name.

Kaili, a nine-year-old girl, also demonstrated abilities to select, resize, and reposition images in order to make her CD. She chose two striking clip art images and interfaced them against one another, illustrating her understanding of a spectacle as well.



She also included print text on her CD by labeling the CD with the title, “The Warriors.” Kaili was interested in providing additional color to her CD cover and asked me additional questions. In order to further her technology skills, I conferred with her individually and taught her how to change the font color and to add background color. She was very excited about finding certain colors and changing how the words looked.

The children demonstrated that they have reached benchmarks that require students to “participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities” (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard 11). It is clear from reading both these CD covers that they have grasped how to create images that make people stop and think. The individual images of a road, mask, camera, love, and war all speak to recurring themes and content within hip-hop songs and videos. In addition to illustrating their hip-hop knowledges, reflectivity, and creativity, they displayed how they situated themselves as helpful members of their literacy and technology communities. For example, once I showed Kaili how to change the font, font color, and background, she in turn taught four other children these skills. My fieldnotes indicate her helpfulness and the accuracy with which she transferred knowledge. Moreover, Kaili was not the only child who demonstrated effort to share knowledge with others:

Iesha turns and asks Kaili how she got that background color. Kaili tells her what to go and do. Kaili also shows Eli how to change the font on his sports CD. They are really helping each other. They don’t even seem to mind having to stop their

own creations to help one another. Seven-year-old Chris asks eight-year-old Iesha for help with how to spell a key word she spells it for him. It doesn't show what he wants and he asks her for more help. She gives him another word that doesn't work. Finally, she goes and types another word for him. A few minutes later he wants help thinking of something else for his "Things That Matter" CD and she helps again.

Both Standards 11 and four were incorporated by a vast majority of the students. Moreover, throughout the course of this session five out of 15 students took on the role of helpers and teachers, where they willingly, frequently paused their own work in order to help other children. Dion, an 11-year-old boy who taught others how to animate their images, represents another example of this ability to help others and to transfer knowledge. When I visited Dion to check in on his work, I was awestruck because he was one of the quietest people in the group discussion yet I could see how he had absorbed so much of the information. His CD was labeled "Angry" and illustrated conscious choices to demonstrate emotion and everyday concepts of anger that would make anyone stop and take notice.



While talking with him and his good friend nine-year-old Eli, who was working at the adjacent computer, I decided to show them both how to animate pictures. We went through a few techniques and tools for animation including experimenting with timing, flying, wheeling, checkering, and fading. I then left them alone to experiment with the animation tools. Here are some of the fieldnotes that document their explorations:

Eli says “ooh ooh look at what this does.” Dion looks at Eli’s computer and then returns back to his computer and tries something. Dion calls me over to look at his computer. I go over and learn new animation technique that I didn’t know before.

I return to other groups. They keep calling me over and screaming in excitement. I hear them back and forth showing each other some new feature that they have just explored. I tell them that I can't keep coming over. I tell them work more and then I will come over in 10 minutes. They even share some of their animation techniques with Iesha who is sitting nearby.

It is apparent that Dion and Eli as well as some of the other children involved in this Spectacle CD project have gained technology skills and confidence with technology in a manner that permits them to share information with each other. Their actions continue to chip away at the digital divide that makes it impossible for many young urban ethnic minority children to become familiar with PowerPoint. Moreover, they were so motivated by their knowledge they shared techniques, strategies, and possibilities with other children in the room. In numerous ways their motivation and engagement with the technology as well as the creation of the spectacle CD made it possible for them to manipulate spoken, written, and visual communication for advancement, pleasure, persuasion, and information exchange (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard 12). Throughout the work session, children could be heard laughing, talking, and sharing information. Dion and Eli eventually began calling over other students, counselors, and adults who would enter the computer room when they could not maintain my attention. Eventually, children from our group and others in the room were very impressed with their computer abilities and immediately wanted to learn how to either add animation or begin the project.

In many ways the success of this lesson resulted from incorporating pedagogical strategies evidenced in the literature. Primarily, it was the pedagogical foundation that

placed hip-hop culture and knowledges at the center of the lesson that gained children's initial interest. By presenting visual images in the form of CD covers, children were able to uptake serious discussion, draw on their strengths, offer perspectives, and critique representations of their culture. The degree to which children were able to further and deepen their knowledge made it possible to sustain these children's interest over time. Consequently, by the time that I introduced the technology, it was an integrated pedagogical component rather than an add-on and it served as a means to an end (Smith, 2002).

HIP-HOP SAMPLING INTERVIEWS

The hip-hop sampling interviews are the second example of a lesson that is embedded within pedagogical practices that interconnect higher-order thinking skills, technology, literacy, and hip-hop. In this lesson, I sought to draw on technology skills and practices that were a part of each child's daily routine: listening to music. Like other scholars I wanted to create the conditions of teaching and learning that bridged home school practices and school and vernacular literacies practices (Li, 2006; Williams, 2005). Seeking to develop higher-order skills by building an understanding of the interview genre, developing the skills of creating humorous texts, and working on integrating technology into original texts, I introduced the hip-hop sampling interview. Specifically, we were going to create a humorous mock interview with a famous person around some incident that was in the media by including music sampling from songs as well as the students' voices. The technology skills that I sought to incorporate here relied on searching the computer, editing music, and creating a product via a tape recorder.

The lesson began by asking some of the following questions that tapped into students' prior knowledge about interviewing. What is an interview? What kinds of interviews are there? Where are places that we can see, listen to, or watch interviews? Have you participated in, seen, read, watched, or listened to an interview? We then discussed characteristics and purposes of different types of interviewing. In making this pedagogical choice, I wanted children to see the importance of interviews, understand the range of purposes interviews may serve, and consider the plethora of contexts in which interviews may occur. I wanted them to draw on their prior knowledge of interviews that were evident in their cultures and their hip-hop cultures. In setting the contexts with these questions, children offered responses that related directly to them, family members, and representations in the media.

After this discussion, I shared an example of this genre by Chris Rock, where he does a feigned interview with O.J. Simpson and interposes his answers with sampling from hip-hop songs. The mentor text was a 3:37 minute interview titled *Press Conference*. The interviewer for this text is female, and she asks questions such as "O.J., why did you run?" The sampling answer is "Murder was the case they gave me." The reporter then asks, "What about Nicole? Do you still think about Nicole?" The reply is from a LL Cool J song: "When I'm alone in my room sometimes I stare at the wall and in the back of mind I hear my conscience call." She ends the interview with "Do you have any last words?," and the sampling response is from Bone Thugs and Harmony: "See you at the crossroads so you won't be lonely. See you at the crossroads so you won't be lonely."

The next pedagogical decisions included helping children explore the technology and literacy strategies that Chris Rock used to make his interview successful. In particular my pedagogical rationale sought to highlight children's abilities to use intertextual strategies and to incorporate media images in their own creations (Dyson, 1997). Further, I believed that children's products would be strengthened as they actively incorporated media and particular discursive elements that caught their interests (Dyson, 2001). Therefore, after listening to the mentor text I asked, "What made this interview different from the other interviews that we discussed previously?" The students immediately talked about the humor and the music sampling. I then asked, "What makes something funny? What strategies did Chris Rock use to make this funny?" We discussed the strategies used to create such texts and covered aspects of perspective taking, figurative language, popular culture knowledge, music sampling, lyric sampling, focusing the interview, humor, and finding concrete evidence to draw answers from. I noted that this interview wouldn't be funny if Chris Rock hadn't picked somebody who was very popular in the media. Children continued to draw on multiple literacies and evidenced capabilities to draw on prior experience and to interact with other creators of texts (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Three). Their ability to comprehensively participate in these literacies practices were visible when I tapped into students' prior knowledge of popular culture and famous people in the world. They were easily able to come up with celebrities who were the focus of gossip or exposure in the media. Most of them had extensive prior knowledge in terms of burning, locating, and downloading music. Because of

these knowledges that they brought with them, they were all confident about producing their own original texts.

The students were eager to start their own mock interviews, but before we began, I taught them about open-ended questions and the difference between an open-ended question and a closed-ended question. We brainstormed a list of words and phrases that ensure open-ended questions. These included “how,” “why,” “in what ways,” “when,” and “can you explain.” Next, I shared with them that if the goal of an interview is to receive detailed information and more than two-word answers, they might engage this conversation not only with questions but also with statements. The following were suggested starters: “tell me a story about,” “describe a time when,” and “explain what you.”

The students were then given the option of working individually or in pairs to brainstorm a list of people that they might want to interview and the focus of that interview. In these same formations they wrote questions and answers that came from sampling lines of songs. Most people worked in pairs and served as resources for each other to recall lines of songs, make questions funnier, and articulate interview questions. While they were working, I circled the room visiting the formations for brief periods, providing feedback and serving as a resource to strengthen their productions. In cultivating a learning environment that valued their prior knowledge and hip-hop cultures, I was able to work as a facilitator extending their genre knowledge concerning interviews.

In addition to helping them understand how to create successful interview questions in the whole group, I worked with them through conferring and feedback

around the flow of an interview. I showed them how to order and organize interview questions that gave coherence to the interview. I explained the necessity of creating interviews that supported the interviewee in moving from easier to more difficult questions. I also informed them about how important it was to group questions around lines of thinking so that the interviewee would not feel like a ping pong ball being tossed around back and forth from one idea to the next and back to an earlier idea. Students were then asked to incorporate my feedback when revising their first drafts of these hip-hop sampling interviews. Through this curricular activity, I explicitly taught them how to build literacies practices concerned with implementing a range of strategies that help them communicate with an audience (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Five). To that end, I taught them about interview questions and the purpose of an interview.

During this component children's minimal technology skills were visible as only a few children needed to search the Internet for specific song lyrics. In most cases, using this technology was unnecessary because the children knew the words to songs very well. Since students were easily able to draw on their knowledge of hip-hop culture, they merely had to recall the song lyrics and incorporate them into their writing. By drawing on their strengths, we completed the written part of the project in two days. Throughout the entire process the children demonstrated high capabilities of evaluating, analyzing, comprehending, and interpreting texts (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Three). Everyone thought the O.J. interview was funny and discussed Chris Rock's choice of songs to sample. People gave suggestions for other songs that Chris Rock could have used to sample for answers. Additionally, most were easily able to identify songs and lines from songs that they wanted to sample for the answers to their own interview questions. In

accomplishing this part of the project where they wrote their questions and selected their answers, they exhibited the ability to apply knowledge of media, language, and genre (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Six). The power of this project as well as the engagement and creative processes that students demonstrated were at an advanced level because the children already brought with them a particular motivation, engagement with music, and knowledge of music.

However, technology use was essential in the next component of developing the hip-hop sampling interview. Once the children finished composing their written interviews, their next step was to find CDs or burn the songs that they needed that contained the sampled answers. We brainstormed how people might acquire the songs that needed to be sampled. People suggested bringing in their CDs and tapes, borrowing CDs and tapes, and burning music from the computer. This incorporation of technology entailed that they use diverse skills in order to tap into a range of resources including the Internet, MP3 players, and other people. Once we identified these resources, they brought them to class, where I had three tape recorders. The students then used these recorders to create their sampled interviews. In some cases when neither students nor I could locate the song, they chose to sing the line or to replace it with another sample.

During the final phase of the project their engagement allowed me to suggest tips about how to search and acquire resources in an effort to strengthen their literacies practices in synthesizing technological and informational resources (<http://www.ira.org>, Standard Eight). Students were then asked to gather the resources for homework and be prepared for our next session to create the audio sampled version. Throughout the next session, I made pedagogical choices to extend their knowledge concerning editing and

integrating information. I provided them with the tape recorders as resources and helped them to create the final audio version that included their voices asking the questions and the sampled music as responses to the questions. While they were taping, we discussed the choices that they were making about the exact music and words that they wanted to include for their sampling responses. We talked about different options and the strengths and weaknesses for the choices before students made their final choices. In some cases, the students changed what they originally wrote on the paper because listening to the music gave them a stronger line to choose. In other cases, the students had to make choices, which focused on the music as well as the lyric response. For example, in many songs lines were repeated within and across different beats, pronunciations, and tempos. All of these musical choices influenced the different ways that lyrics would be presented and responded to by the listener.

As this hip-hop sampling interview began to wind down, I contemplated the manner in which the completed projects would have been different if these children were not on the deficit end of the digital divide. Despite an enjoyable and successful project where children successfully combined literacy and technology skills to produce their own hip-hop sample interviews, the lack of access to technology was ever present. For example, had our center been endowed with computers with editing equipment, recording equipment, a music expert, and/or a technology consultant, the children would have been exposed to greater technology access and would most likely have acquired other skills. Even against these limitations, 11-year-old Toya worked individually and chose to interview Michael Jackson.

In reflecting on her experience she states,

When we listened to the interview it gave us the idea of what we were supposed to do. First I thought of a controversial incident. Then I came up with Michael Jackson. I was looking for an edge but also something that could be a comedy, very humorous.

Toya quickly found the subject of her interview and then produced the following interview:

Reporter: What is the statement that you made to the boy's mother that accused you of molestation?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Michael Jackson) Just beat it beat it

Reporter: What about your affair with Billie Jean?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling- Michael Jackson) Billie Jean is not my lover she's just a girl who thinks that I am the one. But the kid is not my son.

Reporter: Where did you and your ex wife meet?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Nelly) in da crib

Reporter: Would you rather molest boys than girls?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Lil John) oh yeah yeah

Reporter: How do you feel about the incident with Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-NA) I don't know

Reporter: Is there any fire between you and your ex-wife?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Usher) let it burn

Reporter: Is there anything else that we need to know about any other boys?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Usher) If I'm going to tell it then I got to tell it all.

Reporter: What would you like me to say to any other reporters if they ask me about you?

Michael Jackson: (music sampling-Alicia Keys) You don't know my name.

The final creation of the audio text was completed a week later once we were able to acquire all the necessary samples. In successfully creating this sampling interview of Michael Jackson, Toya drew on her love for hip-hop and other genres of music and unearthed her ability to integrate many diverse literacy practices. I was privileged enough to have her accompany me as a co-presenter for a social service conference where she also shared her sampled interview.

PARTING THOUGHTS

To this point I have demonstrated how I implemented culturally responsive pedagogies in two curricular activities that integrated hip-hop culture, higher-order thinking, technology, and literacies. I sought to provide insight for educators and researchers seeking to lessen the digital divide and to strengthen the literacies practices of children. I present this article as another pocket of hope, a tool for educators and researchers to call upon when they are re-envisioning the possibilities of creating learning environments for children. In so doing, I also acknowledge the current state of social and political contexts of our schools but contend that it is more than possible to negotiate our mandates and to tap into children's cultures and interests. To that end, it is my intention that all of these literacies and technologies are

used to mutually inform each other, rather than in a manner that sets out to allow the dominant school literacies to co-opt or appropriate hip-hop literacy practices.

It is my hope that after reading this article that you have received some concrete teaching strategies and practices that serve to help you augment how you combine literacies and technology in your teaching and increase student engagement by incorporating popular culture music. Even though I focused on hip-hop as culture and the content, you may use other genres of music or music in general. The specific genre of music that you choose and the specific activities that you choose are important, for, in order to be culturally responsive, they need to be aligned with the cultures, practices, and identities of the children that you serve. However, those are not the most significant implications of this article.

By illustrating what is possible through the use of hip-hop, the greatest implication that I offer is about constructing a pedagogical schema for you to build culturally responsive pedagogies that can be used with any other culture that will chip away at the digital divide and the literacies gap. Regardless of the music genre that one selects, it is imperative that educators understand that this pedagogical schema has multiple components. Although these components are inextricably linked, iterative, and non-linear, I will try to separate them with no distinction in importance or order.

1) Before planning any curriculum, you must understand the culturally responsive literacies practices and technology skills that are being drawn upon. This pedagogical strategy might require you to experience the music, experiment with technology, do research, and gather resources. 2) You must identify the dominant school literacies or knowledges that are inherent in these practices. In order to do this you must become

more familiar with the genre that you choose. Dissect it, immerse yourself in it, see how it is relevant to what you learned in your teaching preparation or what you have been asked to cover in terms of academic content. Jot down the definitions and components of literacy and technology. Decide what aspects of this genre fit into these broad definitions.

Once you can identify general connections between the dominant school literacies and the cultures, map these literacies and technologies onto the standards. This necessitates keeping abreast of your standards, pacing calendars, and school mandates. You will have to be detailed and careful when making lesson plans. You will need to be able to articulate your pedagogical rationale to yourself, students, administrators, and family members. In this way we acknowledge the political contexts in which our students and we teach and learn while valuing the culturally diverse literacies and technologies as well as the dominant literacies/knowledges. Remember to collaborate with other colleagues. This collaboration will provide you more support, energy, creative ideas, and access to resources and skills that you might not possess. Additionally, working with other educators might enable you to extend your projects across curriculum content areas, thereby deepening children's learning experiences, integrating the curriculum, and allowing you to take whatever you are teaching to a more intensive level. Moreover, working with others will provide you with allies in the event that you are one of the few people trying to implement such teaching against the rigid constraints of political teaching content. The increased number of teachers creates more power to actually implement this desired teaching. In combining all of these implications and pedagogical strategies, you are now more

prepared to tap into your children's strengths via higher-order thinking skills in order to strengthen the necessary literacies and technologies. You have moved one step further in diminishing the educational divide facing so many of our children.

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What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy

Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 240pp, ISBN-13: 978-1403961693

In *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy* (2003), James Paul Gee explores the relationships among video games, cognition, and learning electronically. After reading his work, we can understand how he examines specific simulation and narrative-based interactive video games with multiple players online and also examines how games are played. The book integrates video games with semiotics, identity, situated meaning and learning, narratives, culture, and society. Eventually, Gee also provides 36 learning principles that he considers an important foundation for learning.

Generally speaking, people would think that playing a video game is waste of time; they would not think it is helpful for learning different contents. However, first, Gee explains that people are learning a “new literacy” when they play video games (p. 13). Moreover, this literacy is not merely reading and writing in print, but it includes diverse semiotic domains such as images, symbols, graphs, or visual signs, all used to convey particular meanings in different domains.

There is also a “situated meaning” under the domains. People might not understand the meaning of words or images if the particular semiotic domain is not provided. When game-players are interacting with affinity groups online, they develop an attitude toward critical learning. Gee argues that human learning is not just a matter of what goes on inside people’s heads but is fully embedded in a material, social, and cultural world. For example, children have to search for helpful tips to deconstruct the embedded meaning of contexts when they face tasks or changes during the game. Finally, he clarifies that playing video games is not a waste of time because learners can learn to share experiences with others in a new way and learn how to collaborate with others in a

new world and how to use different types of semiotics to socialize with people, developing problem-solving skills that they can apply in the future (p. 45-46).

Second, Gee states that “all learning in all semiotic domains requires identity work” (p. 51). Players have to take on new identities for characters they create (e.g., in the game *Arcanum*, players must construct their characters). Gee discusses three types of identity: *virtual identity*, one’s identity as a virtual character in the virtual world; *real-world identity*, the identity of players; and *projective identity*, the beliefs or values that the player projects onto a virtual character or wants that character to become as it develops (p. 54-55). He further states that if schools can integrate identity work into learning, it will be more successful because it develops students’ active learning and critical thinking skills. For example, when students take on virtual identity in a science classroom, they are expected to act, interact, and behave like scientists. When students take on real-world identity, they are encouraged to try and learn. Once they have created a new, valued identity, they are given power to learn in the classroom. When they take on projective identity, they imbue their “character” with their own values, beliefs, and desires about how they want to act. When students take on these different types of identity, they can interact with peers and engage more opportunities to learn.

Third, Gee discusses how human beings use their previous experience to reason things and solve problems. He considers the game *Deus Ex*, which takes place from a first-person perspective, playing from a character’s view in a three-dimensional environment. Players have to make connections among video games, situated meaning, and learning between the written texts and background knowledge to make sense of the virtual world. Players even need to read the manual to search for strategies to complete

different tasks. This reflects that many students are frustrated with a text or a textbook without the prior knowledge to allow them to situate the meaning between world and text. Gee suggests that “learning is a cycle of probing the world” (p. 107), which encourages learners to use multiple means to gain critical thinking skills useful in the world. Students have experiences and save these experiences in their minds; however, it is more important for them to make connections or associations between learning and past experiences in order to continue learning.

The last concept Gee discusses is cultural models in video games. Many people think that video games do not have any content; however, Gee argues that video games do have content and children will learn content from games, even violent ones. From his examination of many video games, he concludes not only that children take on different identities when they create characters but also that they have to use cultural models to make sense and solve problems in the games. Students come to school with different cultural models. In order to help students effectively, the content and lessons should be taught so that students can think reflectively about their cultural models.

Although Gee’s book is oriented more toward K-12 audiences, his principles are also applicable to learners in higher education. While he does not suggest that video games replace standard classroom instruction, Gee compares how a player navigates a game with how a learner solves a problem in the classroom. Video games simulate identities, experiences, contexts, and social relationships in virtual spaces. Players have to construct avatar identities, undergo many trials, and solve problems. This is similar to how students take on different learning identity types in the classroom. The book is a valuable resource to suggest how to integrate educational technology or gaming into the

classroom to motivate teachers and students instead of using rote memorization and passive “skill and drill” learning. This will result in students not only learning the game that they are playing but also developing different types of literacy skills.