8

IMPLEMENTING THE DIGITAL/MEDIA LITERACY STANDARDS

One of the major developments in teaching ELA is the increased focus on use of digital tools for responding to and creating digital/media texts. In one survey, 73% of teachers indicated how that their students employ mobile phones for classroom work; 45% employ e-readers, and 43% employ tablet computers to acquire use of digital and media literacies (Purcell, Heaps, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). Teachers view digital tools as enhancing student writing, with 96% noting that digital technologies "allow students to share their work with a wider and more varied audience," 79% noting that these tools "encourage greater collaboration among students," and 78% noting that digital technologies "encourage student creativity and personal expression (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013, p. 3).

Through use of digital devices and apps outside the classroom, students are bringing a range of digital/media literacies associated with use of social media, video production, or gaming to the classroom that you can build on for supporting their learning. The CCSS refer to these digital and media literacies in grades 6–12 (Common Core Standards, 2010):

- reading standard, "integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words." (p. 35)
- writing standard, "Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others." (p. 41)
- speaking/listening standard, "Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations." (p. 48)

For more information on how to address the CCSS related to media/digital literacies, see Tucker (2015), as well as Richard Beach's website (teachingmedialiteracy.pbworks.com) and Frank Baker's website (tinyurl.com/pv7axxd).

While the standards refer to general use of technology, they do not describe pedagogical methods for building on students' experiences with digital/media texts outside the classroom (Abrams, 2014). These pedagogical methods are more explicitly formulated in the International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), which define how teachers can employ technology to foster learning to "facilitate and inspire," "design and develop," and "promote and model" use of technology in the classroom (Abrams, 2014, p. 24).

Given the centrality of use of digital/media tools in students' lives and in the classroom, it's important that use of these tools not be framed as simply an add-on support for use of print literacies, but rather a transformation of print literacies involving use of both digital and print literacies. The perception of technology use as add-on is reflected in a national survey of 1,441 US literacy teachers, in which most teachers perceived technology integration primarily in terms of a technological rather than curricular framework—that technology serves more as supplementing rather than redefining their curriculum and instruction (Hutchison & Reinking, 2011). For example, teachers may assign students to use a blog post to write a five-paragraph essay, as opposed to using a class blog to foster students' collaborative sharing of ideas.

Transforming the ELA curriculum requires redefining or "remediating" what has largely been a print-based literacy curriculum and instruction through the uses of digital/media literacies. For example, rather than have students write essays about characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, teachers had students create MySpace profiles, blog posts, and multimodal posters portraying these characters' traits, interests, and language, thereby using technology to modify or redefine what was a print-based assignment (Lewis, 2011/2012).

Transforming Classroom Learning

Use of digital/media tools can redefine classroom learning in positive ways consistent with a "connected learning" approach that seeks to mesh students' learning across their peer group, home, community, and school experience (Garcia, 2014; Ito et al., 2012). For example, increased use of hybrid classes that combine face-to-face time in class with time in media centers or fewer classroom meeting hours, or use of "blended," "hybrid," or "flipped" classrooms in which students employ digital tools for working and interacting within and outside the classroom, including viewing digital videos about content as homework, allows you to devote more class time to peer and/or your interactions with students.

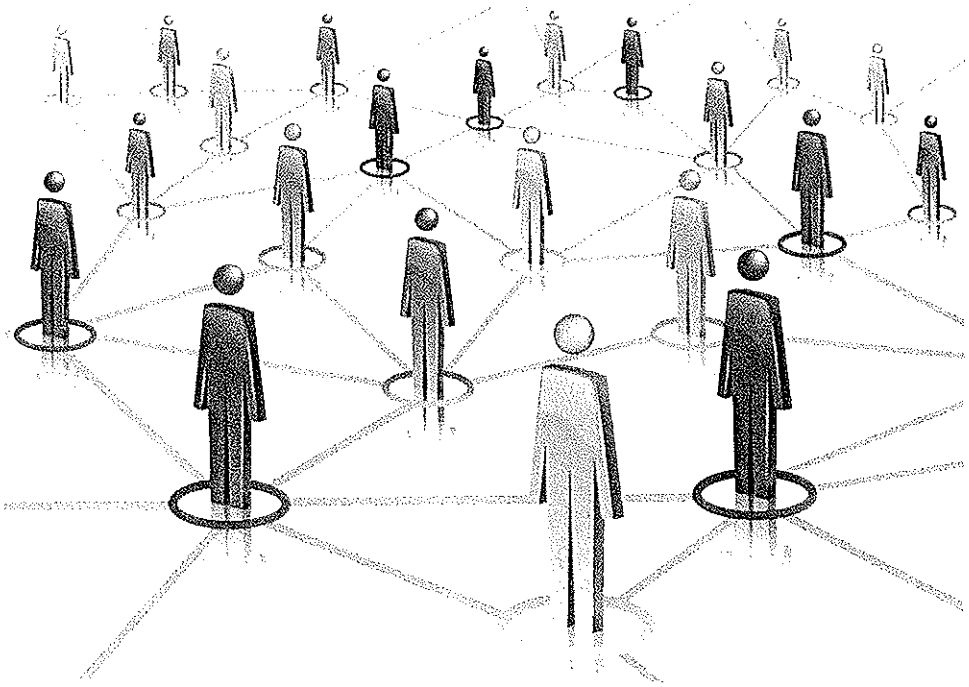

Figure 8.1 Networking

Part of this redesign of schooling is driven by increased use of mobile devices associated with BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policies: 89% of high school students have personal access to Internet-connected smart phones; 60%, access to laptops; and 50%, access to tablet computers (Riedel, 2014). In high schools, 60% of students use mobile devices for research and 40% for collaboration with their peers to support "mobile learning," for example, using their smartphones to record interviews or create video as part of a place-based writing assignment about issues facing their local neighborhood. Students who employed mobile devices for geocaching information in their neighborhoods noted the benefits of devices' portability (Jones, Scanlon, & Clough, 2013).

Students are also employing e-readers for reading and annotating texts, with 10th grade students in one study indicating a more positive experience with e-readers compared to reading in print, particularly for male and/or reluctant readers (Tveit & Mangen, 2014). College students indicated that reading texts on Apple iPads provided them with more information and interaction with peers than when they were using traditional textbooks (Angst & Malinowski, 2010). Some research shows that reading digital texts through mobile apps and devices involves more interactive, collaborative, and multimodal literacy practices than in reading print texts (Rowsell, 2014), while other research points to some of the limitations of digital reading (Mangen, Robinet, Olivier, & Velay, 2014).

Students in Advanced Placement literature classes at Bret Harte High School in Calaveras, California received Amazon Kindle e-readers to replace their 2,000-page print textbook. These Kindles can contain 1,000 books and provide access to a million books (Castro, 2014). Students can use the Kindle's X-Ray feature to search for relevant passages related to a topic, person, or character; acquire word definitions; or share comments and notes to peers.

Students are also actively involved in after-school and in-school programs such as The Digital Youth Network (digitalyouthnetwork.org), which is located in cities across America (Barron, Gomez, Pinkard, & Martin, 2014) or the Youth Radio project in Oakland, California (for a description by Elizabeth Soep, visit the LT media.lab at tinyurl.com/l954qqn) designed to foster digital video or radio production activities in ways that enhance students' sense of agency as media producers who can influence audiences through their productions.

Using Digital Tools

Given the marked increase in the use of digital tools, in planning instruction it is important to consider how use of certain digital tools will best support learning in your activities, as opposed to simply using tools for their own sake (Beach & O'Brien, 2014). It is therefore essential to first focus on creating engaging learning activities and then select those digital tools that will best support that learning. For example, to foster your students' collaborative writing, you can turn to a tool such as Google Docs or a wiki tool that allows different students to simultaneously collaborate on their writing at the same time. Rather than overwhelm students with a multitude of available tools and apps, it's useful to select a finite set of tools or apps that they become familiar with for use in achieving certain goals.

Using Digital Video

For sharing videos with students as part of the "flipped classroom" model in which students view videos on topics they are studying as homework to then allow more time for interaction during class, you can access online videos from a range of different sources: YouTube (www.youtube.com), YouTube EDU (www.youtube.com/education), TeacherTube (www.teachertube.com),

SchoolTube (www.schooltube.com), Google Videos (tinyw.in/5GHI), TED Talks (www.ted.com/talks), Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org), OVGuide (www.ovguide.com/education), BrainPOP Featured Movie (tinyw.in/RtMr), Discovery Channel (www.discovery.com), Vimeo app (tinyw.in/Sequ), Snagfilms (www.snagfilms.com), Hulu (www.hulu.com), ShowYou (showyou.com), Yahoo Video (screen.yahoo.com), PBS Videos (video.pbs.org), Veoh (www.veoh.com), WatchKnow Educational Videos (www.watchknowlearn.org), Media History Digital Library (mediahistoryproject.org), and MIT Video (video.mit.edu). Given some of the issues in using YouTube, which may be blocked in some schools, you can use YouTube EDU (www.youtube.com/education) that includes educational videos. There are also literary adaptations created as videos, such as the following:

- *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (tinyurl.com/pk4dsam), based on *Pride and Prejudice* in which Elizabeth Bennet is a 24-year-old graduate student coping with school and jobs with her sisters
- *Emma Approved* (tinyurl.com/mxboppr) in which the heroine of the novel *Emma* is a lifestyle coach
- The *March Family Letters* (tinyurl.com/mq8le38), which is based on *Little Women*
- The *Classic Alice* (tinyurl.com/k5h77ax) series portraying college students adopting roles from classic novels

(Moeny, 2015)

Students need to know how to analyze the uses of video techniques for not only appreciating film quality, but also for creating their own videos. Such analysis involves determining how uses of camera shots and angles, editing techniques, sound effects, and music are employed to portray story development or characters by positioning viewers in certain relationships with actors/persons or events. For example, the use of a camera angle shooting up at an actor or person positions a viewer as perceiving the actor or person as powerful. Framing an actor or person using a long shot to show them as alone within a landscape or scene positions a viewer to perceive the actor or person as isolated.

Analysis of these cinematic techniques is particularly relevant for analyzing film adaptations of texts students are reading. In comparing the film and the text, it is important to recognize them as representing different media in terms of the use of cinematic techniques in a film versus use of language in a text. Films that attempt to provide a literal representation of text with rich language use often do not succeed, as is evident in unsuccessful adaptations of *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 1991).

To contrast differences in the variations of adaptation of text, students could determine the extent to which film is a "loose," "faithful," or "literal" adaptation (Giannetti, 2007, p. 406). In "loose" adaptations, a director constructs her of his own original story based roughly on a text, while in "faithful" or "literal" adaptations, a director attempts to replicate the text as closely as possible. Loose adaptations are often more successful because they are more likely to exploit the strength of film techniques (Giannetti, 2007).

Students can also create their own video adaptations of texts they read, working as teams to first create scripts and storyboard versions that serve as starting points for filming those scenes. For example, working in small groups, in response to *The Outsiders* (Hinton, 2007), students created a video tableau production to use body placement and facial expressions to enact certain scenes from the novel (Miller, Knips, & Goss, 2013). This included a reality-show "confessional" in which characters expressed their feelings about other characters and events in the novel. In another production, students created videos portraying the connections between a text they were reading and

their own lives. One student drew on a scene from *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993) to portray the theme of courage through his physical enactment.

In creating their own videos, students should first plan their videos using storyboards and scripts, recognizing the need to avoid use of experimental camera shots or editing. They can also create animation or claymation videos where students can control the movements of figures, puppets, cut-outs, or clay figures (Hepple, Sockhill, Tan, & Alford, 2014). Once they complete their videos, editing tools such as iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, or WeVideo provide transitions and cropping features as well as ways to add sounds or music tracks.

Students can also share short video clips on a classroom Twitter account using apps such as Vine, Instagram, Flipgrid, Meerkat, or Periscope as did students in the #WalkMyWorld Project (tinyurl.com/kfug57t) in responding to poetry or places in their lives. For her mini-ethnography in Elizabeth's class, Margaret Daggett described how sharing these clips on Vine served to foster social relationships within her Jefferson High School "Jaguar Girls" soccer team:

> The Jaguar girls had a special way of sharing their interests. This was through Vine. Vine is on iPhones and they are short clips that people make and share to the world. Some can be really funny and some can be really dumb. The Jaguar girls shared their laughter with Vine. By memorizing and acting out the different sorts of vines everyone was apart of it. They'd be on the bus and someone would start the beginning of a vine and then all of sudden everyone was acting or saying it out loud. This interest played a great role in the representation of the team.
>
> (Margaret Daggett essay)

To share their responses to images or videos, students can employ annotation tools such Voice Thread (voicethread.com), YouTube Annotations, VideoAnt (ant.umn.edu), eduCanon (www.educanon.com), Metta (for teachers, www.metta.io), or EDpuzzle (edpuzzle.com).

For example, in using VoiceThread, students search for Creative Commons images on Flickr that can be automatically imported into VoiceThread, as well as short video clips, to then add audio or written annotations to these images or clips. Both peers and/or yourself can then collaboratively share annotations to these images or clips, mimicking an online discussion. Once students have completed their VoiceThread, their URL links can be added to a class website, blog, or wiki. (For more on digital communication tools, see "Digital Communication Tools" on our website (englishccss.pbworks.com).

Audio Listening and Recording

One important instruction resource involves having students listen to podcasts, audiobooks, and/or music as well as recording audio files or podcasts such CNN Student News to gain knowledge of current events related to issues or problems they are studying. To do so, they can subscribe to relevant podcasts available on iTunes or the iOS Podcasts app.

Students can create their own audio files and podcasts using GarageBand for Mac (tinyurl.com/lemswvx), GarageBand for iOS (tinyurl.com/mmkcto3), or Audacity for Windows or Mac (tinyurl.com/5b8w7). For example, when using GarageBand, students select the New Track option and then Real Instrument to then begin recording. Because a podcast requires the addition of an RSS feed to an audio file so others can subscribe to it on iTunes or a blog, students then add a 2.0 RSS feed using apps such as Feedburner (www.feedburner.com) or FeedForAll (www.feedforall.com). Students could record interviews with grandparents and parents as part of a family history project or interview peers or adults about their interests in certain hobbies, topics, issues, or events. The StoryCorps app (storycorps.me) is particularly useful for conducting these interviews. Its sample

interviews (https://storycorps.me/interviews) can be used to demonstrate the interviewing process for students.

Infographic Tools

Much of current nonfiction writing makes use of infographic tools for visual representations of information in an accessible and appealing manner. Students can employ infographic tools such as Visual.ly or Easel.ly to create images, graphs, charts, or figures to visually represent information about a problem or issue. For example, in studying the issue of income inequality in America, an infographic created by ValueWalk (located at tinyurl.com/o2kyc6l) portrays how the recent inequality rates were similar to those of the late 1920s. A video (located at tinyurl.com/lpts2r2) identifies seven steps for collecting an infographic: selecting an engaging topic, identifying a purpose and mode/genre (narrative, comparison/contrast, argument, etc.), gathering data to include in the infographic, organizing the data with the most significant in the beginning, selecting an infographic program that includes templates, creating an infographic using clear presentation of information, and then publishing. For examples of students' infographics, go to tinyw.in/ciXE (Kincy, Quinlan, & Vest, 2014).

Digital Mapping Tools

One primary practice in analyzing problems or issues is the ability to "connect the dots," to perceive certain consistent patterns across different aspects of a problem or issue. For example, in studying the issue of adolescent obesity, students are examining how different phenomena—diet choices, fast-food restaurant options, the processed food industry, lack of exercise, time spent sitting, etc.—are factors associated with increased levels of adolescent obesity. Or, in responding to a novel, students are inferring connections between different characters' acts, goals, and beliefs, connections they can portray using maps to define relationship between characters. Digital maps such as the desktop or iOS Inspiration app (www.inspiration.com) or free online tools such as bubbl.us (bubbl.us) and Popplet (popplet.com) can be used to visually represent connections between different aspects of a problem or issue.

Engaging in Critical Media Literacy

Central to our critical inquiry approach is the ability to engage in critical analysis of media texts. Adopting a critical stance on the media is necessitated by the fact that commercial media is produced by a small number of media conglomerates that control the content provided to audiences often determined by preferences of company sponsors who perceive their products as consistent with program content and audience. For example, it is often the case that pharmaceutical companies sponsor evening news programs given the senior audiences for those programs. Unfortunately, there are few if any references to critical media literacy in the CCSS, a major limitation given adolescents extensive use of media.

Critiquing Media Representations

Engaging in critical inquiry involves critiquing media representations of certain phenomena portrayed in the media—websites, digital stories, blog posts, advertisements, TV shows, movies, music, etc., as representations of differences in power, diversity, or knowledge (Janks, 2013) as well as how they are used to promote or challenge status quo practices. Students can collect examples of media

representations (tinyurl.com/8u9ho9o) to then use to create different digital productions described on Remix-T (learning.nd.edu/remix) to generate digital productions.

Engaging in critical analysis of media representations such as the 250 media texts on the Critical Media Project site (criticalmediaproject.org) involves posing the following questions:

- How are different groups portrayed and what does it mean for you?
- How would you articulate a response to problematic representations and advocate for better ones?
- Which messages are so common that they seem "natural?"
- How does this affect your own daily media use?

(Lee, 2014)

Students can also reflect on how their self-perceptions of their bodily performances related to race, class, gender, sexuality, age, or social status are influenced by unrealistic, stereotypical media representations of body images (Common Sense Media, 2015). To engage in critical analysis of these media representations, students can combine photos or images together to create collages to then discern certain consistent patterns in these photos or images reflecting certain consistent patterns, for example, how female athletes are often portrayed just as much in terms of their appearance as they are in terms of their athletic prowess or how females are portrayed in advertising or media primarily in terms of their appearance or as physically thin (Smith, Choueti, Prescott, & Pieper, 2013) while male action figures are portrayed as excessively muscular (Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki, 1999). They could then discuss the influence of these self-perceptions on females' eating or dieting behaviors (Roberts & Good, 2010) given that 1.3 million adolescent girls in the United States have anorexia (Rosen & The Committee on Adolescence, 2010).

These representations also over-emphasize the importance of physical appearance associated with selective sharing of images on social networking sites as a means of enhancing their self-confidence (Toma, 2013), even though 74% of females agree that these images may not provide valid representations of their actual identities (The Girl Scout Research Initiative, 2010). To critique these images, students could pose the questions:

- Where do these representations come from?
- Who produces these representations?
- Why are they producing these representations?
- How is complexity limited by these representations?
- What is missing or who is silenced in these representations?

Students could critique representations in films or television shows by conducting content analyses of types of roles in films or shows according to gender, race, class, and/or age. Of the 100 top grossing 2014 films, just 12% of the protagonists were female, and these characters were identified primarily as mothers, wives, or girlfriends (Lauzen, 2015). In 2013, 60% of news anchors were males; 66% of TV news reports were by males; 90% of sports reporters were male; and 63% of reports in the top ten American papers were written by male reporters, who typically focus on politics, crime, business, technology, and world affairs, while female reporters were more likely to focus on education, lifestyle, culture, and health (Gray, 2014).

In a communications class, high school students shared their analysis of negative media representations of adolescents (Bruce, 2015). To counter these negative representations, they then created their own videos to portray their positive uses of media. More than half of the productions focused

on music in terms of influences on actions, dress, emotional impacts, or gender representations, with one group portraying the influence of hip-hop culture on students' clothing, jewelry, display of tattoos, dance moves, and language use.

Another interesting example is representations of teachers in Hollywood films as "saviors" of disenfranchised students or as deviant innovators. One analysis of portrayal of teachers' methods of instruction in six films found that while the teachers moved from a more teacher-centered to a more student-centered approach, the films portrayed their changes as due to their own individual motivation rather than resulting from changes in the schooling system itself (Kelly & Caughlan, 2011).

These critiques of media representations can lead to students creating parodies or remixes of media content employing what the Mozilla Foundation describes as "Hack Jam" activities (tinyurl.com/prsyv6g), for example, using the Gendered Advertising Remixer (www.genderremixer.com) app for children's toy ads that involves switching videos of ads for boys to ads for girls and vice versa. For more on critical media literacy resources and activities, see "Critical Media Literacy Resources and Activities" on our website (englishccss.pbworks.com).

Critiquing Advertising

Television viewers view about 15.5 minutes for each hour of commercial TV, resulting in viewing an average of about 26 hours of advertising a month (Nielsen Company, 2014). Students can analyze how ads seek to have their target audience equate use of certain products with achieving personal satisfaction or social status, for example, wearing certain brand-name clothes as markers of class identity. To critique this audience appeal, students can ask:

- Who is the intended or target audience?
- What signs, markers, images, language, social practices imply that audience?
- How is the audience linked to use of the product?
- What are the underlying value assumptions connecting use of a product/activity and satisfaction/social status, for example, having white teeth enhances your popularity or engaging in casino gambling is an enjoyable pastime.

For her *1984* unit described in Chapter 4, Elizabeth Erdmann had students analyze Apple's 1984 Super Bowl commercial (tinyurl.com/8vgoqjp) in which Steve Jobs introduces the Macintosh computer. In the ad, a set of workers representing the brainwashed workers of *1984* are marching while a runner protagonist is challenging the mind-control of these workers by throwing a hammer at the thought-control screen. She asked students to respond to the language of the ad:

> "Today, we celebrate the first glorious anniversary of the Information Purification Directives. We have created, for the first time in all history, a garden of pure ideology. Where each worker may bloom, secure from the pests of contradictory and confusing truths. Our Unification of Thoughts is more powerful a weapon than any fleet or army on earth. We are one people, with one will, one resolve, one cause. Our enemies shall talk themselves to death and we will bury them with their own confusion. We shall prevail!"
>
> In response to this language, Morgan Fogler noted that:
>
> "The words chosen are interesting and the way they state what their ultimate plan makes it sound like the best thing to ever happen and that their world will only be filled with good people."

> She describes the workers as:
> "Brainwashed and focused on what the big screen is saying, keeping others and any common sense out. They are ruled under a totalitarian government, they show order that doesn't seem pleasant, and they can't think for themselves."
>
> (Morgan Fogler essay)

She perceives the protagonist's destruction of the screen as representing "stopping society from being brainwashed to believe what the ruler on the screen was telling them," a symbol that we're all being controlled with a mindset to thinking what is right and wrong."

When asked to compare this commercial with current commercials, Morgan noted that "some commercials today still express individuality and how you can take something everyone else has and put your own spin on it," while Apple's corporate image has changed "so it will continue to attract people with a new image and match more of what's popular today" (p. 2).

Critiquing Film and Television Genres

Critiquing popular film and television genres such as detective, mystery, science fiction, horror, romance, soap opera, musical, comedy, reality TV, etc., involves identifying prototypical roles, goals, plans, norms, and beliefs for a particular genre, for example, by posing these questions about the crime detective genre:

Roles:	who engages in and solves the crime?
Goals:	what is the detective's purpose?
Plans:	what means or tools does the detective use to solve the crime?
Norms:	what are the norms constituting appropriate actions?
Beliefs:	what are the underlying value assumptions related to the above?

(Beach, 2007, p. 66)

Crime dramas assume that crime is largely a function of minority people in urban settings who are prone to violent actions, requiring tough deterrents in the form of law enforcement. This portrayal of urban settings fails to examine many of the other factors—poverty, lack of employment, poor services, etc., that may lead to crime.

Critiquing News

Having students access current news in some manner is significant in terms of their ability to engage in critical inquiry. The more students access and respond to news and documentary stories, the more likely they are to engage in offline and online discussions on problems and issues (Kwon, Wilcox, & Shah, 2014).

One factor influencing adolescents' accessing news is that they are less likely to read print newspapers or view television news and more likely to access online news or share news items on social networks, resulting in declines in print newspapers due to reduced ad revenues given that people acquire news from online outlets for free (Mitchell, 2014). This decline in sales has resulted in a 30% drop in the number of reporters since 2000, a drop that influences the quality of reporting and an increase in organizations, companies, and the government using technology to communicate directly with the public without editorial scrutiny (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2013).

You can have students analyze print, radio, or television news in terms of the quality and depth of reporting, use of evidence, and issues of bias or objectivity. For analyzing local television

Figure 8.2 You Write What You're Told

news, students can keep logs of the number of minutes devoted to different types of stories as well as the depth of coverage in terms of contextualizing stories. Such analyses typically find that that 40% of the news consists of sports, weather, and traffic, along with a reduction in the length of "news" stories (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2013). One reason for this superficial coverage has to do with ownership of local stations by large media conglomerates, so that 25% of local television news providers do not create their own newscasts (Mitchell, 2014). (See Figure 8.2 on corporate control of the news.)

Local television news also often features urban crime stories associated with deficit representations of cities as crime ridden. To counter negative representations of Washington, DC and

Detroit, students engaged in The 524 Project (Gilliland, 2014) using iPads to record themselves sharing positive narratives and poems about their cities (for examples, visit YouTube at tinyurl.com/qjbfw5q).

Students can also critique aspects of bias and objectivity not only in news, but also in documentaries. For instance, you could ask them to examine the degree to which editing, voice-over commentary, or selection of material may or may not capture the reality of a topic, event, or issue. Extreme examples of lack of objectivity such as propaganda films like Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 *Triumph of the Will*, which glorified Hitler and the Nazi Party, can provide a useful starting place for this work. They may then view some of Frederick Wisemen's "cinema verite" documentaries about schools, hospitals, towns, government/welfare agency sites, prisons, stores, parks, etc., that have little or no editing or voice overs.

Conducting Media Ethnographies

In critically analyzing media texts, students also need to recognize that different audiences ascribe different meanings for the same texts given differences in audiences' needs, purposes, or stances. As suggested by the discussion of ethnographic research in Chapter 6, students can study how audiences or participants as fans construct meaning in television viewing, Internet chat rooms, blogs, online fan club activities (soap operas, *Star Trek*), responses to magazines/e-zines, participation in media events (sports broadcasts, rock concerts), playing video games, or surfing the Web. For example, students could study game players' social participation in their game playing or sites for fans of:

- *Star Trek* (www.trekcore.com)
- *Star Wars* (www.fanpop.com/clubs/starwars; tinyw.in/bv7i)
- *Harry Potter* (fanfiction.mugglenet.com)
- *Lost* (www.fanpop.com/clubs/lost)
- *Twilight* (community.livejournal.com/twilight_fandom)

In doing so, they can examine how members of these sites define their identities through participation on these sites. Middle school students could study how online Barbie Doll game sites (www.barbie.com/en-us/games; www.girlgames.com/games/barbie) engage females in ways that reify traditional feminine gender roles. Students' participation in fan-base sites such as Neopets (tinyw.in/hb60), The Hunger Games (tinyw.in/v1P9), and The Sims (www.snootysims.com) serves to motivate students to write through modeling different modes of representation ways to participate as authentic audiences (Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013).

For a mini-ethnography assignment, Elizabeth Erdmann asked students to observe a particular place or event by focusing on peoples' behaviors, dress, and/or language use. Kelly Klehr observed people at the Minneapolis airport waiting for their flights, noting that

> The "language that was spoken" was no language at all actually. It was people not talking and staring at their device/headphones in not saying a single word to another human being. The observation of people being so addicted to technology was so fascinating. All teenagers are addicted no doubt, but even people 60 years and older sitting with headphones is was just shocking. No one spoke to each other because people were too involved in what was happening on their own device. People would walk up to an open seat and not even smile at the person they were about to sit next to.
>
> This group that was observed as a whole compared to a group that was without technology in their setting would be very different to observe. People would then be able to

> speak to another human being sitting next to them, and ask a couple of questions. Learn something by someone else and maybe if you're lucky and get to speak to something with wisdom who is older than you, or someone who has had more experience than you, you could gain something from their presence . . . We have ruined the chances of getting to know one another by over obsessing about a device that keeps us connected. The wisdom from our elders will no longer be shared because we will forever be to involved in our little devices.
>
> (Kelly Klehr essay)

Using Video Games for Learning

Given that 84% of male and 59% of female adolescents play video games (Lenhart, 2015), they are experiencing certain ways of learning through game playing that have implications for learning in your classroom (Gee, 2007; McGonigal, 2011). A national survey of K–12 teachers' use of games in their classrooms found that 57% employed digital games weekly or more, with 79% of grades 3–5 teachers using games in contrast to 47% of middle school and 40% of high school teachers using games (Fishman, Plass, Riconscente, Snider, & Tsai, 2014). The same survey also found that 34% of teachers employ games for formative assessment; those teachers who are more likely to use digital games in their classroom focus more on acquiring information on student engagement and motivation, use that information to create alternative teaching activities, rank student progress to give them feedback, and are less likely to report that they lack the time to conduct formative assessment than teachers who are less likely to use games. Teachers indicated that barriers to use of games included the cost of games, lack of technology resources and time in the curriculum to devote to games, and not knowing where to find quality games.

One benefit of playing games is that students are continually receiving "just in time" feedback and data about how they are progressing as well as the fact that they have clearly defined criteria for what constitutes success (Gee, 2007). In receiving this feedback as to their success in playing the game, students are learning how to formulate certain goals for playing the game to employ certain strategies or moves to score more points, a process Abrams and Gerber (2013) describe as the "feedback loop" associated goal-related strategies/moves, success in the game, positioning oneself in the game, and achieving certain scores. For example, when players recognize that they will have difficulty achieving certain goals based on feedback from a game, they learn to modify or abandon those goals to adopt alternative goals.

This experience with the feedback loop can be transferred to students' learning in any goal-driven task based on posing these questions:

- What do you want to accomplish at the end of the assignment?
- What steps do you need to take to accomplish this goal?
- What have I accomplished thus far?
- How does this relate to my overall goal?
- What do I need to re-do to improve?
- What do I continue doing?

(Abrams & Gerber, 2013, p. 102)

In adopting the roles of avatars in games, students are acquiring alternative perspectives about the world. For example, players of The Sims adopted the perspective of a poor, single parent leading to creating a graphic novel about that experience (McGonigal, 2011). Given the narrative nature of games, students are drawing on their knowledge of mythic and genre narrative patterns

to understand the challenges and storyline development of games, knowledge they can use in creating "paratext" summaries of how to play certain games for their peers (Rowsell, Pedersen, & Trueman, 2014).

There are some free, online, interactive games you could use in the classroom that may be consistent with the themes or issues you are addressing in your classroom. In an English methods course, preservice teachers each sampled one of the following games in terms of the degree to which they fostered critical inquiry in engaging, multimodal ways in teaching the game as part of their in-school tutoring experience as well as teaching the game to their peers: *CyberSense and Nonsense, Allies and Aliens: A Mission in Critical Thinking, Ad Decoder: Decipher the Media, Darfur is Dying, Ayiti: The Cost of Life, Setting: Not Just Time and Place, Surviving Charles Dickens' London, A Shakespeare Murder Mystery: Who Killed the Very Reverend Toby Spoon?*, and *Renaissance Florence: Time Machine Adventure* (Sardone & Devlin-Scherer, 2011). The preservice teachers noted how these games could be incorporated into their teaching, for example, how the *Darfur Is Dying* game could be used as part of a larger unit on issues of poverty and human rights.

Students can also create their own video games. For example, seventh graders created their own video games over a three-month period using the software program GameMaker: Studio (www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker) based on their responses to Madeleine L'Engle's (2010) 1973 *A Wrinkle in Time* (Oldaker, 2010). Drawing from scenes and characters from the book, the students wrote narrative plans for different levels for their game. For each level, they had players coping with a conflict in a certain situation involving multiple complications. In creating their games using GameMaker, the students recognized that some of their original written plans had to be modified in creating their games. Students then wrote narratives describing what they learned in creating their games. For more on games for use in ELA, see "Games for use in ELA" on our website (englishccss.pbworks.com).

Using Digital Media for Promoting Change

Consistent with our critical-inquiry approach, digital media productions can be used for promoting change and civic engagement through portraying problems or issues in particular places and spaces (Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, & Moen, 2013). For the Out-The-Window project, students in Los Angeles created short videos for viewing by the 1 million daily riders of buses in Los Angeles County, videos tailored to particular bus routes documenting problems and issues faced by residents of neighborhoods associated with those bus routes (for the videos, see out-the-window.org/videos).

In another Los Angeles–based project, the Council of Youth Research consisting of faculty at UCLA working with students in local high schools participated in creating videos about the problems and issues students were encountering in their schools for sharing with parents, teachers, as well as conference session of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) (Garcia, Mirra, Morrell, Martinez, & Scorza, 2015). The students' videos incorporated interviews with creative use of images and music to adopt a critical stance on problems and issues. For example, in one video:

> A Council member facing the camera asks, "How do we build organic leadership?"
>
> Next a disembodied adult voice says, "They are just born that way, as natural born leaders" while an image of a leadership book appears on the screen followed by large, skeptical red text: "born that way?"
>
> Almost imperceptibly, tense piano plays beneath the quick, hyperedited audio and visuals. (Garcia et al., 2015, p. 160)

Through creating these videos, students learned how their videos "are embedded in critical literacy for civic action; these tools are used purposefully to sway, convince, and provide dialogue for social change" (p. 162). In addition to videos, students also create multimodal presentations based on research on problems and issues in their schools. Drawing on survey results of their peers' perceptions of their school, students created multimodal presentations indicating that students perceived their school as a prison. Based on the positive feedback students received from the AERA presentations, one student noted that

> It tells me that I am not someone that will sit around and take oppression; I am someone who will be an advocate for change. After listening to educators and administrators applaud us on our work, I realized that I can make a change.
>
> (Garcia et al., 2015, p. 163)

CASE STUDY: MS. IN-NETWORK'S HALLWAY (DIGITAL LITERACY)

In this chapter, we've discussed ways of using digital tools for communicating with others, tools such as cell phones that students frequently use outside of school. The challenge for you is how to consider using these tools to foster learning within school.

In this case study, while observing teachers at this middle school, you will find yourself an active member in addressing crisis, as a shooting has taken place at the neighboring high school and middle school students, faculty, and staff must cope. In particular, you will observe how one teacher, Ms. In-Network, addresses the traumatic events of the day, as well as how her students deal with the day. Interestingly, she engages the students in freewriting about the day's events and their emotions.

After class, Ms. In-Network suggests meeting after school to read through students' responses and plan a follow-up lesson or unit that addresses either or all of the following issues: domestic violence, violence and trauma in schools, and suicide. After reading students' papers with other intern teachers, you realize that many students wrote about being able to communicate during times of crisis. Many were thankful for their phones today. You and Ms. In-Network see this as a perfect opportunity to tackle the issues that came up today from a digital/media literacy framework; you'll make more specific plans with your peers.

Please go the Literaryworlds.org site and the Teaching to Exceed Virtual School link to find this case study for Chapter 8.

Summary

In this chapter, we described the use of various digital/media production tools for engaging students in responding to and creating multimodal, digital texts in ways that engage them in communicating with a range of different audiences. Given adolescents extensive use of media, we suggested methods for engaging them in critical analysis of their use of media, as well as how they can use digital media to promote change.

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