

Progressive Education 2.0

Stacey Lince
November 26, 2011
EDCT 585
Professor Marker

Introduction

From my perspective, the purpose of this course was to explore curriculum theory, question the current state of curriculum, and conceptualize how curriculum and educators might best serve students. In the following pages, I will argue that 21st century educational reforms need to be undertaken using a progressive approach to curriculum. Using a popular culture prospective, I will argue that a progressive theoretical approach should be applied to educational reforms in an effort to provide the skills required for students to be successful in today's information age. In the opening of this essay I will discuss why I have chosen to explore progressive theory through a popular culture lens. As additional criteria, I will define 21st century learning skills and participatory culture. I will also discuss the need for a progressive approach to curriculum as it relates to participatory culture. I will continue by providing an analysis of five popular culture artifacts including *Harry Potter*, Facebook, the *Call of Duty* video game, Justin Bieber, YouTube, and the television show *Glee*. In conclusion, I will discuss what I have learned from this experience. The information contained in this essay was obtained from class lectures, course readings, and the viewpoints of current media literacy theorists.

Key words: participatory culture, 21st century skills, media literacy, read-write culture, appropriation, homophily, remix, mash-up

Why a Popular Culture Approach?

Progressive curriculum theorists such as John Dewey (1929), Jane Adams (1908), and Maria Montessori (1912) have argued that "much of present education fails because it neglects [the] fundamental principal of the school as a form of community life" (Dewey, 1929, p.36).

Schools today have overlooked the need to incorporate student's experiences outside of school

and have focused on an essentialist and scientific approaches to education. Through use of Bobbitt's scientific methods and directed training, schools have sought to "maximize output (i.e student learning) and minimize cost (i.e. paying teachers)" (Flinders, 2009, P. 8). In the wake of No Child Left Behind and rigid standards, schools continue to adopt an essentialist approach to curriculum. By enforcing objectives rooted in perennialism and essentialism schools are reliant on, "past, agreed-upon knowledge that has stood the test of time" in which student interests or social issues are considered wasteful (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988, pp. 33-35). In today's media saturated world, educators need to consider that student interests outside of schools are not "wasteful" but are, in fact, providing valuable learning experiences

According to the *Kaiser Generation M2 Study* (2010) 84 percent of youth ages 8-18 have access to the internet be it through the use of computers, ipods, cell phones, or gaming devices (p.4). In today's world children are spending over 7.5 hours a day (longer than the average school day) multitasking between media such as doing homework while listening to music and working on a computer or texting friends while watching television (Kaiser Generation M2 Study, 2010). These statistics on media use reflect what David Buckingham (2007) describes a "digital divide" between in-school and out-of-school learning environments (p.96). As Henry Giroux (2004) contends where today's schools fall short is in their lack of "critical pedagogy" and the failure of schools to incorporate "the sites that people concretely inhabit and actually live out their lives and everyday existence" (p.41). The amount of time children are spending online is also indicative of the shift in the ways children are "hanging out" or the sites they concretely inhabit. The days of adolescents being able to meet friends at the park or on school grounds after the bell has rung have long passed. Most schools do not allow this kind of hanging out today. In the 1980s, kids were hanging out at the mall. Today, the malls have increased security and no

loitering policies. In response to this lock down mentality, youth have increasingly turned to the media and popular culture to find ways to hang out with friends and interpret the world in which they live. As students continue to increase their media use, schools adopt strict policies on access to new media during school hours. This includes no cellphone policies and restricted access to the internet.

What are 21st Century Learning Skills? (Additional Criteria)

Before analyzing the types of popular culture with which students are engaging, it is important to shed some light on how researchers define 21st century skills. As additional criteria for this paper I am providing a synopsis of the skills acquired by today's youth based on studies from current media theorists such as Henry Jenkins and David Buckingham.

There is great difficulty in defining specifically what skills are required in the 21st century. The struggle to define 21st century skills, in many respects, is similar to the debates between essentialist, progressive, and social reconstructionist curriculum theories. Essentialists would hold that 21st century skills involve the fundamental skills required to operate today's technology such as programming, word processing, sending emails, and creating PowerPoint presentations. The teaching of fundamentals computer skills is often referred to as information computer technology (ICT) (Buckingham, 2009). From a progressive perspective, the social aspects children's media use should be considered. As Dewey (1929) contends, "The only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (p. 34). Social reconstructionist would aim to include opportunities for youth to engage in civic debates, challenge current media systems, and enlist teachers as change agents. As George S. Counts (1959) emphasized in *Dare the School Build a*

New Social Order, "the profession should rather seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely and in the interests of the great masses of the people" (p.45). In terms of new media, this would mean students should be taught to produce their own media content and to challenge media systems to represent the general public rather than elitist views.

Progressive media theorists such as Henry Jenkins refer to 21st century skills as media literacies. As Jenkins (2009) reflects in his white paper *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, "The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking. These skills build on the foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical analysis skills taught in the classroom" (p.1). Jenkins (2009) highlights eleven skills which include skills working within social networks, collective intelligence and problem solving, multitasking, collaboration, judgment and critical thinking, and appropriation – which means the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content. Children are developing these skills outside of school through their use of the mediums such as social networking sites, forums, blogs, video production, and video games.

The way in which youth acquire new literacies is by collaborating and networking with peers and adults through informal learning environments rather than classroom environments. Jenkins (2009) defines this networking and collaboration as "participatory culture" or a culture with "relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices" (p.xi). This form of participatory culture defines the way in which today's youth are engaging online. Today's youth teach each other how to

navigate digital technology, freely post their thoughts and opinions for all to see, express their feelings through videos, pictures, and song; and support the creativity of their friends.

What is problematic is that children are acquiring these skills at different rates in society (Jenkins, 2009). There is also an assumption that all children are "actively reflecting on their media experience and are able to articulate what they learn from there from their participation" (Jenkins, 2009, p.20). Through reflection, children are able to create meaning from their media use and apply the skills they have acquired to other areas of their lives. Additionally, it is assumed that children can develop the skills required to make ethical decisions in "complex and diverse social environments" online (Jenkins, 2009, p.25). These ethical decisions include online interactions such as appropriate and inappropriate communications with friends and strangers, the sharing of personal information, and visiting trusted or reputable internet sites. Lastly, there is the question of access to media technology or what Jenkins (2009) calls the "participation gap" (p.16). Children of low income families are at a disadvantage from acquiring the same skills as middle and upper class children who have greater access to technology devices.

According to the fore mentioned *Kaiser Generation M2 Study* (2010) statistics on internet participation, the access gap to technology does seem to be in decline; however, participation in these new media differ in that children in higher socioeconomic households are more likely to have media literate parents who can help children understand and navigate the digital landscape (Jenkins, 2009, p.17). Additionally, while more children may be able to access the internet via cell phones or gaming devices, this does not mean they own computers which allow for more complex software and learning experiences (Watkins & Everett, 2009). Jenkins views parallel those of George S. Counts (1932) who spoke to the need for technological equality when he stated, "If the machine is to serve all, and serve all equally, it cannot be the property of a few" (p.

50). By adopting media education programs into school curriculum, all children would have access to the skills and technology necessary to be media literate in the 21st century.

The Importance of Progressive Theoretical Approach

By acknowledging that today's youth are engaging in a participatory culture, acquiring valuable skills, and they are acquiring skills at different rates; what must then be recognized is that we are at a turning point in education and curriculum. According to Professor Cathy Davidson society has shifted into its fourth "cataclysmic information age" (Video File, August 17, 2011). The first information age was the written word, followed by moveable type and the printing press. The fourth paradigm is the advent of the internet. In today's information age, "anyone can think a thought, publish it and put it out there for the world to see" (Davidson, Video file, August 17, 2011). According to Larry Lessig (2007), Professor of Law at Harvard University, today's society can also be considered a "read-write culture. It's a culture where people participate in the creation and the re-creation of their culture" (Video File, 2007). Today's youth are reading and writing their own culture through the use of new media and web 2.0 technologies such as social networking sites, video games, remix, and YouTube.

The skills required to be literate in today's read-write culture have been inadequately defined under the nebulous catch phrase "21st century skills." According to an American Society for Quality (2008), 96 percent of adults believe that students today need to improve upon the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. Skills listed by adults and parents as needing more development include organizational skills, communication skills, problem solving and reasoning, creativity, teamwork, and science and technology skills" (as cited by Stansbury, 2007, para12). While these skills are not being required in the classroom, they are being developed in the digital

sites children visit outside of school. Yet, according to President Obama's "Race to the Top" press release in 2009, none of the skills highlighted by adults made the cut on the agenda. The four reform strategies included:

- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and
- Turning around our lowest-performing schools. (Press Release, ed.gov/news/pressreleases, 2009)

These strategies align with Tyler's (1949) four design elements and Bobbitt's (1918) scientific method. The goals of education reform have once again become a curriculum that is focused on objectives and a "means to an end" (Flinders, 2009. p.66) approach to education. The purpose of education is tied to the needs of the economy and training the best workers. As Bobbitt stated in 1918, "Education will aim, not at average bricklayers, but at its best type of bricklayers" (p.20). President Obama reflected similar statements in his announcement of the Race to the Top competition: "Race to the Top will help prepare America's students to graduate ready for college and career, and enable them to out-compete any worker, anywhere in the world" (ed.gov/news/pressreleases, 2009). The objectives become the means and the end result is a worker who can compete in the global market.

The problem with this pragmatic approach in the 21st century is that the participatory spirit of today's youth is not linear without a clear starting point or finale. As media theorist David Rushkoff (2011) suggests in a recent article on the Occupy Wall Street Movement,

"This is not a movement with a traditional narrative arc. As the product of the decentralized networked-era culture, it is less about victory than sustainability. It is not about one-pointedness, but inclusion and groping toward consensus. It is not like a book; it is like the Internet." (CNN.com, para 9).

Today's youth participate in a cultural medium that is vast without a definitive end. Youth read-write their own narratives and if something seems doomed to end, they take the initiative to recreate and modify it to keep it in existence. As Ornstein & Hunkins (1988) have outlined, a progressive approach to curriculum will allow for knowledge to be gained in a "living-learning process," where teachers serve as guides for problem solving (p. 47). Schools need to shift away from a means to an end approach by incorporating progressive models that include participatory culture and the way in which children are engaging in their worlds outside of school.

Criteria for Five Popular Culture Artifacts

Critics of adopting participatory culture and 21st century skills into curriculum argue that if children are acquiring these skills on their own it is not necessary for schools to incorporate these skills into curriculum (Jenkins 2009, Buckingham 2009). On the contrary, while children are developing 21st century skills outside of the classroom, they are left to decipher media messages on their own. In these spaces, kids formulate their identities, share personal information, obtain research, and communicate with others. The mainstream news media often

highlights the dangers of online participation such as the sharing of privileged information, pornography, and misinformation on sites such as Wikipedia (Buckingham, 2009). As educators and parents we should be concerned about who they are sharing information with, who is using their information (such as advertisers), and if the information they are receiving is reputable. However, what is also relevant are the increased ways in which students are learning in these participatory environments which lead to civic engagement, collaboration, building of friendships and alliances, problem-solving, and appropriation.

In the topics that follow, I will provide examples of popular artifacts that represent the participatory culture and the skills that children are acquiring through informal learning environments. These artifacts include *Harry Potter*, Facebook, The *Call of Duty Modern Warfare* video game series, Justin Bieber and YouTube, and the television series *Glee*. I have selected these artifacts because of their popularity among both children and adults. In each of these artifacts, I will show how they allow for civic engagement, building of friendships and alliances, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration. While these are skills to be modeled and celebrated, there are also deeper issues that lie within each medium such as sociocultural issues of race, sex, gender, and class. I will also explore these issues as topics that should be brought to the attention of educators which also highlights the need for schools to begin addressing the social division in the digital landscape into the educational process.

Harry Potter and Civic Engagement



"That will do," he said, sharply. "It is a myth! It does not exist! There is not a shred of evidence that Slytherin ever built so much as a secret broom cupboard! I regret telling you such a foolish story! We will return, if you please, to *history*, to solid, believable, *fact!*" (Professor Bins, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*)

With seven novels that have been translated into sixty-eight languages and have sold over four hundred million copies; not to mention eight film adaptations (Scholastic, 2011) – the name *Harry Potter* would be difficult to miss. As an embedded phenomenon in popular culture, *Harry Potter* is representative of a "read-write" culture (Lesig, 2010). Devoted readers are able to gain deeper understanding of the J.K. Rowling's books by participating in fan sites such as fanfiction.net and the newly created pottermore.com. Within these sites, registered users can continue the story of Harry Potter and the Hogwarts by creating their own versions of characters, storylines, and plots. On fanfiction.net, users are able to review and provide constructive feedback on each other's work as well as collaborate on storylines. The pottermore.com site was produced by J.K. Rowling in dedication to her readers after publication of the *Deathly Hallows*, the final installment of the *Harry Potter* series (Rowling, 2011). The website allows *Harry Potter* fans to continue *Harry Potter's* adventures through their own retelling of the story even

though the book series has ended. The site is still in beta testing mode; however, *Harry Potter* themed artwork created by users of all ages has been uploaded for all to enjoy.

The participation in literature through fandom sites such as these allows readers and authors to engage with "content that is salient to the student and draws upon the knowledge and energy of the student's peers" (Parker, 2010, p. 95). The ability for *Harry Potter* fans to write without the pressure of a grade heightens their sense of learning and allows them to make their reading experiences meaningful. As fandom expert Becky Herr Stephenson suggests, "students [feel] comfortable taking more risks with ungraded writing" (as cited: Parker, 2010, p.95). If this creativity and risk-taking were harnessed in a classroom setting, the school might allow for the "free manifestations of the child" which might open the door to "broader and bigger possibilities" (Montessori, 1912, p. 25-28).

In the case of Harry Potter, these broader and bigger possibilities include formation of organizations such as the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) whose goal is to:

"Approach to civic engagement by using parallels from the Harry Potter books to educate and mobilize young people across the world toward issues of literacy, equality, and human rights." (retrieved from: <http://thehpalliance.org/what-we-do/>, 2011)

The HPA is a non-profit organization with a membership of over 100,000 people world-wide. HPA has hosted campaigns to end child slavery, hunger, literacy, global warming, and bullying.¹ By connecting the *Harry Potter* series to civic engagement, HPA has been able to harness what schools haven't. As Dewey (1929) noted 80 years ago in *My Pedagogical Creed*, "at present we

¹ Information Retrieved from: <http://thehpalliance.org/what-we-do/> November 22, 2011

lose much of the value of literature and language studies because of the social element" (p.38). HPA has united youth for a civic purpose of bettering society by connecting empowerment and civic engagement with popular culture. Young members of HPA are able to effect change and become leaders in ways that are meaningful by connecting their personal interests and love of Harry Potter to a greater social purpose.

While civic engagement is not an easily obtained goal under the current constraints of educational standards, teachers can take a more active role in promoting a democratic learning environments by allowing children to retell, or read-write, their assigned literature through new media projects such as blogging, podcasts, or video storyboards. This would allow students to make connections from their lives outside of school with what they are learning in the classroom.

Facebook: Networking and Building Alliances



Facebook is a social networking site that was developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his former roommates (Wikipedia, 2011). Facebook is a platform that allows users to network, build and maintain relationships, and upload pictures and video to tell their stories. To participate in social networking sites like Facebook, adolescents must be able to communicate through written words and images. Whether updating their status about their day or commenting on a friend's post, Facebook users are allowed to use language as an "an open

system of expression' which is capable of expressing 'an indeterminate number of cognitions or ideas to come'" (Merleau-Ponty as cited by Greene, 1971, p.158). Facebook allows a form of open expression in which adolescents are able to dialogue and deliberate on a constant stream of words, thoughts, and ideas which, according to Paulo Freire (1970), true words have the potential "transform the world" (p.145). Social change such as the Occupy Movement and the end of Egypt's leader Hosni Mubarak thirty year regime are just two examples of organized movements that have taken place through social media like Facebook or Twitter. Politicians such as President Obama have been able to use Facebook as a way to launch campaigns and allow a freer forum of ideas that is open to public input and debate.

Facebook is important to adolescents because it allows them to learn to communicate with others, build and maintain friendships, and understand their community (boyd, 2008). While Facebook has the potential to heighten awareness around community, global issues, and unify individuals on a common cause, this is not necessarily the norm. What is often reflected by adolescent users on Facebook is representative of the fact that within their posts and ideas are socially constructed ideas of gender, race, sexuality, and class. In a 2009 speech given to the attendees of the *Personal Democracy Forum*, danah boyd² observes that social relations reproduce themselves online. Her analysis reveals that, contrary to our belief that technology is the "great equalizer," it is rather a breeding ground for the digital reproduction of the social divisions that exist within the United States. As boyd (2009) points out we humans, have a tendency to gravitate towards those who are similar to us, share our interests, and engage in similar pastimes.

² danah boyd uses only lower cases letters in her name to honor of her mother's love of typographical balance and to satisfy her own political irritation at the importance of capitalization (retrieved from danah.org October 15, 2011).

This concept of *homophily*, as boyd (2009) describes, is powerful and fosters discussions of divisions, diversity and social dynamics. Adolescents' need to organize themselves into social groups and hierarchical affiliations is consistent with the development of their identities which are most often influenced by what Paulo Freire (1970) describes as the banking concept of the dominant elite (p150). The dominant culture encourages passivity which creates even more fear of freedom (Freire, 1970, p. 150). For adolescents, Facebook becomes oppressive in that users are less likely to post their opinion or reflections which might go against the dominant social group.

The challenge for educators is to help adolescents navigate away from that which they are most comfortable by encouraging and supporting diversity. This can occur by allowing forums within schools to debate and explore issues such as cyber bullying. School systems often put the responsibility of these discussions on parents because the activities are happening outside of school hours. However, the events that occur outside of school on Facebook often find their way back to the school yard. For example, after posting a comment on Facebook at home, the student may encounter animosity when returning to school the next day.

Call of Duty Modern Warfare and Problem-Solving



Call of Duty Modern Warfare is a first-person shooter game that can be played using gaming consoles such as Play Station or XBox. According to Grant Collier (2007), Studio Head of Infinity Ward (the original creators of *Call of Duty*), the *Modern Warfare* series is not about Iraq. It is a global conflict of two equal forces clashing against each other in a seesaw battle of fictitious villains in a fictitious setting (Video file, retrieved 2011). According to Activision, producer of the *Call of Duty* video game series, over 30 million players world-wide participate in online multiplayer modes (as cited,(Kohler, 2011) and players spend over 58 minutes inhabiting an online gaming community, which is longer than the average amount of time a user spends on Facebook (as cited, Snider, 2011, para 9). With a paid membership, gamers can meet each other online and work together to navigate through military campaigns to defeat other opponents. Players communicate through headsets and instant messaging.

While critics of war games express concerns that games such as *Call of Duty* perpetuate stereotypes of war and gender and have potential harmful effects such as increasingly sedentary lifestyles of youth and childhood obesity, addiction, gender socialization, poor academic performance, and aggressive behavior (Everett and Watkins, 2008, p.159) . There are valuable skills that are acquired despite the negative stereotypes and violence. Scholars such as James Paul Gee (2005), hold that “good” video games – even those that involve violence -provide important learning experiences that allow players to feel like active agents (producers) not just passive recipients (consumers) (p. 6). Good games also offer players identities that allow a deep investment on the part of the player. To navigate the game means players use analytical and problem solving skills, serve as mentors and resources for other players, and strategize how to win alongside friends. These digital worlds are communities of practice (Wegner, as cited by

Gee, 2006) where adolescents are spending considerable amounts of time and are also learning valuable skills such as collaboration and problem-solving.

The skills that children are acquiring in these communities of practice are 21st century learning skills that have the potential for youth to become sophisticated and critical citizens. According to Henry Giroux (2004), critical pedagogy involves "learning to become a skilled citizen" (p.34). In today's media saturated world, education at its best bridges the "gap between learning and everyday life" (Giroux 2004 p.34) and "highlights considerations of power, politics, and ethics" (Giroux, 2004, p. 41). By recognizing the skills adolescents are acquiring in video games as valuable and dialoging with students about the content within the games such as issues of power and gender, educators can begin to bridge the gap between the messages adolescents receive and the sociocultural issues that exist in society. As Dewey (1929) contends "these powers, interests and habits [of children] must be continually interpreted - we must know what they mean" (p.36). By bringing conversations about video games into schools, we have the opportunity to not only engage students in collaborative learning processes, but also better understand the worlds in which they are participating and help children interpret the messages they receive.

"Bieber Fever," You Tube, and Creativity



"Never Say Never"

"I'm just a regular 16 year old kid. I make good grilled cheese and I like girls."

- Justin Bieber (Online source, 2011)

Perhaps Justin Bieber is a "regular kid" but his rise to stardom was far from ordinary. The Canadian born singer, songwriter, and self-taught musician was discovered by American talent manager, Scooter Braun, at age 13 after uploading videos of his songs and compositions to YouTube. By age 16, Bieber became the youngest solo male artist to reach number one on the Billboard 200 since Stevie Wonder (Herrera, Time Magazine, March 19, 2010). With 2.5 million followers on Twitter and his appropriately titled album "My World 2.0" which sold 283,000 copies in its first week (Hampp, 2010), Bieber has become a pop culture icon (at least in the eyes of "tweens"). Known for his trend setting hair, his "regular kid" demeanor, and millions of swooning tween followers, the "Bieb's" sudden rise to success has been coined as "Bieber Fever."

Bieber's success differs from other teenage pop stars in that his career was launched through YouTube whereas other teenage performers have crossed over from other mediums such as the Disney Channel. YouTube is a global video-sharing site that allows people to upload their own videos without cost. YouTube's slogan "Broadcast Yourself" offers a way for even amateur videographers to record, produce, and publish their own work for the world to see. Bieber is not the only YouTube success. Other adolescents who have made their way to stardom include Rapper and record producer Soulja Boy who uploaded his self-produced music in 2004 on the website SoundClick, and after getting positive feedback he created his own YouTube page; LonelyGirl15, a teen who posted YouTube videos about her personal thoughts on life in 2007,

and Greyson Michael Chance whose YouTube performance of Lady Gaga's "Paparazzi" led the way to his singing on the Ellen DeGeneres Show on two separate occasions (Greene, 2010).

Digital and online media like YouTube are "ways of opening new avenues for young people to create and share media" (Lange & Ito, 2010, p. 245). In today's high tech society, children can access video cameras on their cell phones, iPods, or inexpensive video cameras such as FlipCams. Many of these devices now include instant connections to YouTube and Facebook with wireless internet access. Children are able to create a video and instantly upload to a digital site. Part of YouTube's appeal is that in addition to uploading videos, registered users can post comments and provide critique, advice, or encouragement to the original creator (Parker, 2010). David Buckingham (2009) also suggests technology such as video production allows students to engage in a process of drafting and redrafting – and in the process, provides critical self-evaluation (p. 184). By incorporating video production into curriculum the idea is not to create professional filmmakers but to allow children and teachers an opportunity to explore what Maria Montessori refers to as the "the child's own social activities" (1912, p.17). These activities include the retelling of stories through the use of a medium that makes sense to the child and allows children to connect to their world outside of school. For example, using video to create a modern version of classic literature. This type of reproduction is referred to as remix, which I will explore in the next section.

Glee Remix and Appropriation



"*Singing in the Rain*"

The television show, *Glee*, is a musical "dramedy" (comedy and drama) that airs on the Fox network. Now in its third season, the show has held the attention of an audience count of up to 12 million viewers (Rice, 2010, para. 1). The storyline focuses on a fictitious high school glee club in Ohio as it prepares for choir competitions. The characters grapple with relationships, sexuality, and social issues. What is so appealing to both teens and adults is *Glee's* ability to speak to the "geek or outcast we all were in high school" (Silver, 2009, para. 3). What is also unique about *Glee* is that the producers incorporate the activities and creative processes adolescents are engaging in online. The musical scenes within the show are not simply "cover-songs" performed in their original form. *Glee* producers "remix" popular culture music and performances into new productions which are known as "mash-ups." A mash-up is a form of remix that combines two different genres which creates a surprise for the listener or viewer while introducing a new type of production (Parker, 2010, p.150). For example, one of *Glee's* most notable mash-ups is "*Singing in the Rain/Umbrella*" which is a combination of Gene Kelly's

Singin' In the Rain from the 1952 film *Singin' In the Rain* and pop star Rihanna's song *Umbrella* from her album *Good Girl Gone Bad*. The performance incorporates not only the lyrics from both songs, but also uses a combination of popular tap dance styles from 1950s and moves from today's hip-hop culture.

Mash-up is a popular art form created by youth which can involve the use of music, stories, videos, or print art. The idea is to "make things change," (Parker, 2010, p.150) by transforming the original into a piece that becomes uniquely their own. While youth may use pop culture art forms that are produced by others, the end result is a work of art that becomes uniquely their own and is uploaded to multimedia sites such as YouTube or Flickr. In this re-creation, the participant becomes a producer of media, not just a consumer.

By including appropriation in curriculum, educators offer a way for students to reflect on the images that they view outside of school in popular culture and "mash" these images with the subjects they are learning in school. According to Dewey (1929), "The image is the great instrument of instruction. What a child gets out of any subject is presented to him is simply the images which he himself forms with regard to it" (p. 39). Through appropriation of content, educators can see to it that students are "continually forming definite vivid, and growing images (Dewey, 1929, p.39) of the subjects they learn both in and out of school and, thereby, empower students to become producers of their own knowledge rather than passive recipients of subject matter. As empowered producers, children are then able to develop the skills necessary to apply to any social situation, not just a precise set of circumstances (Dewey, 1929, p.35).

Conclusion: What I learned from this experience

Progressive curriculum theorists have long argued the need to incorporate the student's experiences outside of school with the subjects they are learning in school. The problem with today's fundamentalist and objective oriented curriculum is that it excludes the important skills that students are learning outside of school. While many schools do incorporate the technical skills required in the 21st century, they exclude the skills that involve social relations. Popular culture artifacts such as Harry Potter, Facebook, video games, YouTube, and remix should be recognized as media that have the potential to develop important social skills such as civic engagement, networking, problem-solving, collaboration, and appropriation which can allow students to become empowered as producers of their own knowledge. By incorporating the activities outside of school into curriculum, educators can begin to understand the important skills students are developing in the digital landscape.

Growing up in the digital era means navigating new media spaces that are fun and engaging; but, at times, are also confusing and conflict with societal expectations. In the words of Dewey (1929) education should "simplify existing social life"(p.36). Instead of leaving children on their own to interpret the images they perceive outside of school, educators need to assist children in reflecting on the meanings of these images and make the connections between their home-lives and school. By first recognizing the sociocultural differences in participation with new media, parents and educators can begin to explore ways to teach and participate alongside children in the new media in which they immerse themselves. Through this participation a dialog can be created by, not only finding value in children's experiences with new media, but also by helping them analyze the hidden sociocultural issues such as gender, race, class, and identity.

References

- Bobbit, F. (1918) *Scientific Method in Curriculum-Making*. Flinders & Thornton (Eds.), *Curriculum Studies Reader* Third Edition (pp.15-21), New York : Routledge, 2009
- boyd, danah, Hargittai, Eszter, Schultz, Jason, AND Palfrey, John. "Why parents help their children lie to Facebook about age: Unintended consequences of the ‘Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act’" *First Monday* [Online], Volume 16 Number 11 (31 October 2011)
- Collier, Grant (2007). *Evolution of Call of Duty*, [Video file] retrieved from <http://www.gametrailers.com/video/evolution-and-call-of-duty/20746>
- Davidson, C. (2011) *Cathy Davison on Shifting Attention*, Duke Today [Video file] posted August 17, 2011 retrieved from: <http://today.duke.edu/2011/08/cathy-davidson-shifting-attention#video>
- Dewey, J. (1929) "My Pedagogic Creed," Flinders & Thornton (Eds.), *Curriculum Studies Reader* Third Edition (pp.34-41), New York : Routledge, 2009
- Everett, Anna, and Craig Watkins (2008) "The Power of Play: The Portrayal and Performance of Race in Video Games." *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning*. Edited by Katie Salen. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 141–166. doi: 10.1162/dmal.9780262693646.141. retrieved from http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/full_pdfs/The_Ecology_of_Games.pdf
- Gee, James Paul. (2005) Learning by Design: good video games as learning machines, *E–Learning*, Volume 2, Number 1, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.wwwwords.co.uk/pdf/freetoview.asp?j=elea&vol=2&issue=1&year=2005&article=2> Gee ELEA 2 1 web

- Gee, James Paul (2008), "Learning and Games." *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning*. Edited by Katie Salen. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 21–40. doi:
- Giroux, H. (2004) "Critical Pedagogy and the Postmodern Divide: Towards a Pedagogy of Democratization," *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Winter. Retrieved from: *EDCT 585 Curriculum Development: theory, practice, and evaluation: Course Reader*, compiled by Marker & Kornfield, Sonoma State University, Cotati.
- Greene, A. (2010), "YouTube Success Stories: See which performers made it big after their videos went viral," *Woman's Day.com*, Posted July 07, 2010
- Hampp, A. (2010). "By Singing Directly To His Fans, A Pop Star Is Born" *Advertising Age*, 81(21), 12. Retrieved from: Academic Search Premier November 27, 2011
- Herrara, M (2010), "Justin Bieber - The Billboard Cover Story," *Billboard Magazine*, March 19, 2010 retrieved November, 27, 2011 from: <http://www.billboard.com/news/justin-bieber-the-billboard-cover-story-1004074692.story#/features/justin-bieber-the-billboard-cover-story-1004074692.story?page=2>
- Lange, P. and Mizuko Ito, (2010) *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New*, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series in Digital Media and Learning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Jenkins, H. (2009) *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Flinders & Thornton (Eds.), *Curriculum Studies Reader* Third Edition (pp.34-41), New York: Routledge, 2009

Kohler. (2011, May 31). "Call of Duty Elite" gives players' stats - CNN. *CNN.com*. Retrieved December 4, 2011, from [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-31/tech/call.duty.stats.wired_1_black-ops-modern-warfare-duty-players?_s=PM:TECH)

[31/tech/call.duty.stats.wired_1_black-ops-modern-warfare-duty-players?_s=PM:TECH](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-31/tech/call.duty.stats.wired_1_black-ops-modern-warfare-duty-players?_s=PM:TECH)

Lessig, L. (2007) "On laws that choke creativity," *Ted Talk* filmed March 2007; retrieved from:

http://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity.html

November 21, 2011

Montessori, M. (1912), "A Critical Consideration of the New Pedagogy," Flinders & Thornton

(Eds.), *Curriculum Studies Reader* Third Edition (pp.22-33), New York : Routledge, 2009

Ornstein & Hunkins (1988) *Philosophical Foundation of Curriculum*, Curriculum: Foundations

Principles and Issues, New Jersey: Prentice Hall (pp.25-51). Retrieved from: *EDCT 585*

Curriculum Development: theory, practice, and evaluation: Course Reader, compiled by

Marker & Kornfield, Sonoma State University, Cotati.

Parker, J. (2010). *Teaching Tech-Savvy Kids: Brining Digital Media Into the Classroom, Grades*

5-12, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin

Petrecca. L. (2011), "Bieber fever arrives Justin time for Black Friday," *USA TODAY*

11/17/2011 Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/money/media/index>

President Obama (2009), *U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan Announce National Competition*

to Advance School Reform <http://ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/07/07242009.html>

Rice, L. (2010, September 22). Fall 2010 ratings: "Glee" wins big, "The Biggest Loser" attracts

smaller audience | Inside TV | EW.com. *Entertainment Weekly, Online Article*. Retrieved

from [http://insidetv.ew.com/2010/09/22/fall-2010-ratings-glee-wins-big-the-biggest-](http://insidetv.ew.com/2010/09/22/fall-2010-ratings-glee-wins-big-the-biggest-loser-attracts-smaller-audience/)

[loser-attracts-smaller-audience/](http://insidetv.ew.com/2010/09/22/fall-2010-ratings-glee-wins-big-the-biggest-loser-attracts-smaller-audience/)

Rowling, J.K. (1999), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Retrieved from: EDCT 585

Curriculum Development: theory, practice, and evaluation: Course Reader, compiled by

Marker & Kornfield, Sonoma State University, Cotati.

Rushkoff, D. (2011) "title" , CNN retrieved from

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/05/opinion/rushkoff-occupy-wall-street/index.html>).

Scholastic (2011), Harry Potter Series, retrieved from

http://harrypotter.scholastic.com/series_information/

Silver, C. (2009, December 7). We're All Gleeks - 10 Questions With Glee Co-Creator Brad

Falchuk | GeekDad | Wired.com. *Wired.com*. Retrieved December 4, 2011, from

<http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2009/12/were-all-gleeks-10-questions-with-glee-co-creator-brad-falchuk/>

Snider, M. (2011) *USA Today*, "Activision counts on 'Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3" May 27,

2011) retrieved from: http://www.usatoday.com/tech/gaming/2011-05-26-call-of-duty-modern-warfare-3_n.htm

Stansbury, M. (2009), "Educators to Obama: Focus on 21C skills," *eSchool News* January 8,

2009 retrieved from : <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2009/01/08/educators-to-obama-focus-on-21c-skills/>