Multimodal Literacy and Theater Education

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Abstract: In this article, the author explores the possibilities of teaching and learning through multiple-literacies in an arts environment. Acknowledging that technologies have a profound effect on our society, and often outpace our ability to properly assess or understand their implications, the author asserts that young people can become critical and active agents in their interactions with new media. Arts education, specifically theater education, is uniquely positioned to substantially contribute to these interactions between teachers and students that acknowledge and explore the new forms of literacy that are essential to navigating our contemporary culture. To this end, the author calls on arts educators to effectively engage with their students' multimodal concerns through interactions that value new multimodal literacies.

Keywords: literacy, multimodal, new media, theatre education

> To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes that students bring to learning. (Cope and Kalantzis 2000, 18)

The universal experience of all arts educators centers on a single issue: relevance. We have all sat through meetings of educational priorities—budgetary or philosophical—in which arguments for the relevance and value of arts in education runs through our minds. Many of us have had to insistently and forcefully articulate our positions to maintain our places in the educational landscape. In my experience as a theater educator, these occasions are frustrating but undeniably constructive in that they ask me to regularly reconsider my conceptions of what art is or could be in the context of a new and rapidly changing world.

Arts education, including theater education, not only has relevance for today's young people but is also uniquely positioned to substantially contribute to the new forms of literacy that are essential to navigating our contemporary culture. These new literacies emerged from our collective reliance on and devotion to new communication technologies. These technologies have a profound effect on our society, and they have often outpaced our ability to properly assess or understand their implications. The rapid pace of development and adoption creates enormous challenges for education. Responding to this pace begins by first understanding the challenges of educating students who, by virtue of their youth, speak in languages and engage with their surroundings in ways that are often alien to their teachers' experience.

The student experience in education has markedly changed, even in the past few years. Students are now wired differently—they actively engage with media technology, including MP3 players, social networking Web sites, cellular technologies, and other interactive digital media tools. These tools facilitate an existence beyond physical identities. Money, for example, now exists more in data streams than in paper notes. As this is the actuality of our culture, is it any wonder that young people, as active consumers of media and electronic technology, value their digital connections over human ones?

In 2005 the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) released a study that catalogued young people's relationship to technology and electronic media. Defining media as preeminent in the lives of eight- to eighteen-year-olds, the KFF study reports that regular access to and use of media increasingly affects the lives of America's children (Rideout and Roberts 2005). The KFF study describes young people's lives as media saturated (Rideout and Roberts). According to the study, young people have an unprecedented access

to media, spending an average of "six and a half hours per day with multiple media forms" (Rideout and Roberts, Web site). The study reports that media access is prevalent in the home setting: more than half (56 percent) of the children surveyed have two or more video game players; 55 percent of these homes also have premium cable television channels; and 34 percent have digital video recorders (Rideout and Roberts). Kaiser also reports that access to new media—gaming devices and other digital technologies—adds to young people's use of older technologies such as television, magazines, and radio (Rideout and Roberts).

Public Policy, Digital Media, and Restrictiveness

Mirroring the experience with artistic expression that arts educators have had for generations, educational policies and governance have often taken a restrictive view of technology. Local school districts and governments that surround the university in which I teach are fearful of the "uncontrollable" nature of information through connective technologies. This concern has led local school administrators to have a restrictive response to the use of these media devices on school property. School documents require that teachers and principals consistently monitor and regulate electronic communication technology and other electronic devices. A case in point is the Alpine School District's (ASD) Acceptable Use Policy (ASD 2007), which states, "Internet services . . . are not intended for personal or private use. ASD system administrators will determine appropriate use. Their decision is final. The system administrator may deny user access at any time" (Web site). The ASD policy further rules, "Students have no expectation of privacy of electronic data or communications," and that

> [s]tudents will not knowingly . . . use one's identity to . . . send email, chat, or any form of electronic communication. . . . Download, upload, install or execute software without prior approval from an authorized teacher/advisor. . . . Execute non-educational gaming. . . . Operate an unauthorized business. (Web site)

Jordan School District (JSD), a neighboring school district, has a similar governing policy that states,

> Any use of an electronic device that exploits personal information, disrupts the educational process, invades personal privacy or compromises the integrity of educational programs is strictly prohibited. Students violating these guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with District policy AS67—Discipline of Students. (JSD 2007, Web site)

These school districts are not alone in their concern with the impact that media and digital technologies consumption has on students. Public policymakers are also promoting narrowly defined studies that presuppose the detrimental effects digital technologies have on young people. For example the 109th Congress introduced Senate Bill 579, or the Children and Media Research Advancement Act (Thomas Index 2006). The bill provides 90 million dollars for research on the effects of media on young people and necessitates the formation of a panel of experts that will review and synthesize research and establish research priorities regarding the impact of electronic media on child and adolescent development. Senator Joseph Lieberman, the sponsor of the bill, describes its purpose this way:

> America is a media-rich society, but despite the flood of information, we still lack this critical knowledge. As policymakers—and as parents—we have a responsibility to examine the effects of media on our children, a responsibility this legislation can better enable us to fulfill. No one is looking out, in a systematic way, for the cumulative impact of today's newer electronic media on our children. (Sawiki 2006, Web site).

Senator Lieberman goes on to assert that "[t]he questions about the effects—positive or negative—of media on our children's health, education, and development are too important to go unasked and unanswered" (Sawiki 2006, Web site). Those aims are worthy of our support, and Senator Lieberman deserves some credit for seeking funding toward those ends. However, it is clear from the tenor of the language that media exposure is equated with negative consequences. The language in the findings section (Thomas

Index 2006) of the bill is particularly unpromising in its overt expression of possible harmful effects. Finding One is an acknowledgment of the prominence that media messages have in our society. Finding Two expresses recognition that issues of technology and media exposure are a public health concern. Finding Three implies a concern for the cognitive and emotional well-being of children after they are exposed to interactive media. Finding Four is an acknowledgment that there are some limited positive effects of exposure to the media. Findings Five and Six are expressions of concern for the moral well-being of children who have been exposed to mediated messages.

Local policies, such as ASD's Acceptable Use Policy, and larger governmental conversations, such as Senate Bill 579, demonstrate that regulatory entities engage in a largely restrictive dialogue when it comes to youth and media consumption. Supporters of media effects research present a harsh but effective image of contemporary American youths in which they are technically sophisticated media device users who lack understanding of the social and ethical implications of their use and misuse. In essence, the collective youth described by media effects researchers are ensconced in what Debord (2001) calls a "spectacle" driven society. Debord proposes that our perception of today's society is an inverted image of society in which the interactions with and through media devices have replaced genuine social activity. Supporters of the restrictive argument posit that parents and teachers must regulate and control children's use of electronic and digital media to protect them from ills associated with content and forms they may not fully understand and to prevent problematic discourses and actions due to interaction with technology.

Efforts to protect children are often formed without proper understanding of the technologies involved. For example, ASD's blanket prohibition of electronic chat originates from fear of Internet predators trolling chat rooms. From this limited experience, district administrators perceived danger in any communication that could be described

as *chat*. They did not understand that chat systems are administered and the conversation is limited to the subject proscribed by the administrator. Furthermore, they did not realize that many electronic publishers use chat systems for customer and technical support and enhanced educational interaction. This publicly places the administrators of the school district at odds with the materials they use and discredits them in the eyes of the students and faculty who see technology as part of the world.

In response to situations such as this, restriction-driven conversations do little to aid contemporary classrooms and student learning—especially when students are already practicing social skills and inventing norms for this new technology-driven culture. Restrictive pronouncements often fail to acknowledge the possibility of teachers and students engaging in the vocabulary of the student's world.

This position should not be construed as advocating a type of technological lawlessness. Clearly, education providers are constrained by legislative mandates, threats of litigation, and public expectations for children's safety. However, many restrictive policies concerning technology are made with little understanding beyond the emotional response to a given vocabulary. Such an environment leads to a technological hypochondria, which limits student exposure to media that impact their daily activities and which also drains educational funds to combat imagined ills.

Therefore, it is vital that educational policymakers and teachers begin to value and work to understand the lexis of new literacies in which young people find value. Administrators should take greater care in constructing policies for engagements with technology. Prohibitive policies should raise a warning to thoughtful educators—not for instant rejection, but for careful consideration as to what skills may be denied to students. Obviously, there will always be a place for prohibitions in any educational environment. However, those prohibitions must come from reasoned positions of understanding rather than emotional reactions to buzzwords.

Multimodal Literacies and Young People

In the students' interest, many education theorists see possible success in the dialogue among students, parents, and teachers that allows for successful engagement with new media forms and content. Whereas these scholars agree with national and local legislators that technology shapes young people, they also believe young people should

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practice navigating the new modalities required to succeed in today's global society. Education theorist Henri Giroux (1997) describes this necessity of educating youth to adapt and respond productively to their mediated environs. According to Giroux, "Young people need to become critical agents able to recognize, appropriate, and transform how dominant power works on and through them . . . . They need a pedagogy that provides the basis for improvisation and responsible resistance" (1997).

There is proof that young people can become critical and active agents in their interactions with new media when given the opportunity to explore, understand, and make use of their natural social environment. Jenkins (2007) documents multiple case studies in which young people were successful in new media environments because they created opportunities to experiment with new media forms. For example, in one of his shared illustrations Jenkins tells the story of Ashley Richardson, a mid-

dle school student who ran for president of Alphaville, the largest city in the multiplayer game *The Sims Online*. To do this, Ashley congregated more than 100 like-minded volunteers to help run her campaign. During the course of the campaign, Ashley debated her opponent on National Public Radio, discussing issues such as the nature of citizenship, the future of democracy in a digital age, and the plausibility of honest elections.

Ashley was experimenting with using multiple literacies while navigating this multiuser platform, that is, her ability to recognize the interplay between meaning-making systems (in this case the systems of history, politics, and technology) and then to integrate those multiple modes of communication to enhance or transform a larger system (all occurring through her performance as a presidential candidate in the game). The descriptive term *multimodal* developed from the growing understanding that young people must acquire, use, and value multiple ways of knowing to succeed.

Multimodal Literacies and Educational Reform

Although an imperative need exists for multimodal education of the young, it is important to note that in-service teachers are often unprepared to provide this kind of engagement with new literacies in the classroom. Prensky (2001) accurately describes teachers as "digital immigrants" struggling to teach a digitally "native" population that speaks

a language(s) that teachers are not acquainted with, let alone adept in.

Like Prensky, I believe that to effectively engage with students' multimodal concerns, educators must be prepared to interact with students' in new ways that support the students desire to communicate. But teacher support of new literacies can only happen when schools and the learning processes advanced by those schools acknowledge the multiple literacies necessary for growth in student learners. This recognition demands a reconfiguration of student and teacher relationships and a revision of outmoded curriculum models which will empower teachers to explore new learning models alongside their students. Writing about new models of education that embrace multimodality, Gee (2000) encourages educators to embrace a set of pedagogical principles that will allow for this shift. His prescription for student success is teachers and educational policymakers acknowledging the following:

1. Students have a right to situated practice, or hands-on, embodied learning experiences that involve authentic and meaningful talk, texts, tools, and technologies.

2. Students should have effective overt instruction that focuses the learners' attention and allows for a meta-awareness of, and reflection on, patterns and relationships in the languages and practices being taught.

3. Students should understand critical framing, or how what they are learning relates to other domains.

4. Students have the right to produce and transform knowledge, not just consume it. (Gee, 68)

Theater and Multimodal Literacy Practice

Historically, theater texts have always been valued for their multivalence. Historians and practitioners acknowledge that audiences' individual and collective interactions with theater texts (performed or read) change the meaning of those texts throughout time. Plutarch contends, "[Poetry] affords sweet and withal wholesome nourishment to the minds of young men, but yet it contains likewise no less matter of disturbance and emotion to them that want a right conduct in the study thereof " (Goodwin 1874, 43).

Early twentieth-century drama educators also saw the magnitude of establishing that contexts are important in the production and reception of youth theater. Those who drew on Dewey's (1938) practical and experiential education movement, which required students to learn by doing, embraced a mimetic educational context that required both the theater student and teacher to embrace new educational theater literacies. For example, Cook's *The Play Way* (1917) required that students' theater proficiency be measured through their ability to play, improvise, and move rather than simply through reading and listening to theater. This shift in the focus of theater literacies for young people from reading, viewing, and listening to active participation grew out of a time of rapid cultural change brought on by new technological developments. The cultural changes in the early twentieth-century United States consisted of a shift from a rural and agrarian to an urban and industrial society brought about by advances in manufacturing and industrial technologies. Today, the changes in our culture are caused by advances in communication technologies that have an equally large impact on our culture and make communicative literacies even more important. As a result, literacy practices again became a common concern in general education settings across the United States in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Recognizing the potential to emphasize theater education in the larger discussion of appropriate models of teaching and learning, theater educators in the 1990s made early efforts to consider literacy as an essential element of a theater education. The reading and writing of key texts in the discipline was valued in discussions about improving the theater classroom throughout that decade. For example, sixteen years ago Wright and Garcia (1992) described literacy as "the ability to read and write in the field of endeavor" (20; theater, in their case).

Drawing on the work of Colby (1990), Wright and Garcia suggested that K–12 students should be able to decode theater texts and employ critical-thinking skills to read and create theater. In addition, their work called on theater educators to implement literacy strategies into their curriculum as one method of defining and advocating for the efficacy of theater in school settings.

Reviewers and writers of the National Standards for Arts Education (Music Educators National Conference [MENC] 1994) also clearly attempted to galvanize the arts education community around conceptions of arts literacy. In *The Vision for Arts Education in the 21st Century* (MENC), contributors to the conversation surrounding the development and creation of the National Standards for Arts Education discuss arts literacy, arts literacy integration, and cultural literacy as key elements of the national standards. When Down (MENC), chair of the National Committee for the Standards in the Arts, described the purpose of the standards as a guide that aids teachers and school systems in aiming for high levels of achievement, he was speaking in a literacy context.

More recently, Woodson (2004) called on theater educators to think about the possibilities of employing a critical literacy with students, one that allows them to embody the practice of social justice in their theater classrooms. For Woodson, a twenty-first-century theater program should be focused on giving students the ability to notice and value social interactions. She describes the ideal students as individuals able to "see the underlying motivations, the differences in power, gender, class, generations . . . that are just below the surface of all human interaction" (Woodson, 29). The exploration of multimodal literacy in the theater classroom builds on both the traditional literacy projects promoted in the last part of the twentieth century and Woodson's (2004) critical pedagogy. Similarly, multimodal literacy requires that theater educators think broadly about the texts that are used and the ways students' access, analyze, evaluate, and create meaning with those texts.

Multimodalities, Theater Education, and Situated Practice

If we apply Gee's (2000) concept of situated practice to the theater classroom, we must consider what meaningful talk, texts, tools, and technologies should be employed in that space to create an effective learning environment for our students and ourselves. More specifically, we must consider and use additional modalities that aid our twenty-first-century-minded students in learning about and through theater.

By accessing new literacies, we enhance our theater classrooms and draw on the success of educators from other disciplines, who borrow from theater to improve their practice. These educators recognize theater as an effective modality for teaching concepts inherent in their fields of study. For example, Worthy and Prater (2002) describe the effective use of readers' theater to increase reading fluency and motivation. Worthy and Prater value readers' theater performance as "an authentic reason to engage in the repeated reading of texts" (295). They additionally assert that the readers' theater performance becomes an effective vehicle for reading at an appropriate rate while attending to meaning, rather than reading fast without understanding the contextual meaning of the words. Worthy and Prater state, "When students read and interpret texts regularly and evaluate others' performances, they make progress reading" (295). In another example, Morrison and Chilcoat (1998) write about using living newspaper theater strategies in language arts and social studies classrooms as a means to sense making. They conclude, "The educational value ascribed to working-class theater is valid because the medium gives students practice in solving problems as they study the significant problems of the past. As an educational tool . . . the living newspaper [format] can provide a creative outlet to make sense of historical facts by putting them into meaningful associations and relationships" (105).

In each of the previously cited examples, theater literacies enhanced curriculum in other educational environments. The educators involved found methods from outside their disciplines that improved their instruction and expanded the comprehension and enjoyment of students in their educational environments. The educators in each of these cases also portrayed the theater texts they used as texts borrowed from popular culture. These teachers valued the notion that they were using texts students could relate to and enjoy.

Like these teachers, effective theater educators also borrow pedagogical strategies from other disciplines. Techniques from English, history, and other subjects are often used to support and enhance their curriculum and instruction. As we work to embrace new literacies, or ways of learning, we should also borrow pedagogical constructs from new technologies and popular culture on a grander scale.

Multimodal literacy can be incorporated into the theater classroom by making small but significant curriculum changes. For example, Eaton (2007), an established secondary theater teacher and graduate student in Brigham Young University's Media Education Masters Program, made a small change to a unit taught in his beginning drama class. Rather than executing a radio play assignment that he had effectively used for years, Eaton instead developed an audio documentary podcasting unit in which his students created audio documentaries that told true stories of their classmates. Eaton's students met the same national and local theater education standards they had with the radio play assignment, but were exposed to a wide variety of audio documentaries and an up-to-date form of communication. Students also learned core principles of media literacy and became conversant with the creation skills needed to make podcasts. Importantly, they learned stories about their peers that created a space for mutual understanding and community interaction.

Eaton describes the success of the unit, saying,

> I feel students grew in both knowledge and creativity . . . . I look forward to incorporating other [media] projects into my classroom now that I have seen the positive effect they had on my students. In looking over the curricula I use in my [theater] classes, I realize that there are discussions to be had on elements of media literacy in everything that I teach. (2007, 50)

In this example, Eaton combined traditional theater principles with popular media tools to enhance students' ability to talk with their peers, experiment with new texts and literacies, and explore the theater creation process through popular tools and technologies. In this vein, theater educators may explore ways to incorporate other technologies into their classrooms. For instance, teachers could capitalize on students' interest in online affinity groups or generate e-portfolio projects for their theater classrooms that document theater learning processes and promote interactive discussions and reflections on theater projects. These technologies even allow for the audio or video capture and dissemination of student-created products that could be viewed by larger, remote audiences.

Overt Instruction, Meta-awareness, and Reflection

In his seminal book *Literacy in a New Media Age*, Kress (2003) challenges scholars to recognize that the world has recently shifted from a "world told," or one that depended on written communication for its exchange of ideas to a "world shown," in which the image and the screen dominate as the primary conduits of meaning making. For Kress, this shift allows for a more public-driven communication that displaces the current balance of power relations. Kress describes this advent as having "profound effects on human cognitive/affective, cultural and bodily engagement with the world, and on the forms and shapes of knowledge" (1).

The shift in power that Kress describes is significant because it marks a struggle between individuals who embrace or reside naturally in the shift (mostly young people) and fierce resistance from those who presently hold power in the current system of language relations (individuals educated in previous decades). Kress's ideas are significant to the field of education because the active

proponents at the crux of this argument, students and teachers, coexist in classrooms daily. Theater educators can make a difference as this shift occurs because of the nature of their vocation. They are trained to reside in the liminal space between written language, or the script, and the creation of the staged dramatic event that depends on the image to convey meaning. With this in mind, theater educators should ask themselves how they might use theater tools and methods

of his students but also the important shift in his own teaching and thinking,

> Technology is constantly changing and we are often left behind without the proper tools necessary for understanding and contextualizing media messages. I turned therefore to . . . drama strategies as navigational tools to aide me in developing [curriculum] that would empower my students and allow them the opportunity to observe, analyze, respond, and transform the way they view the [media] messages that come their way. (23)

because of the fear that a lack of technology training will displace America's children in the global market. To enter this conversation and change its focus, we must understand the broad implications of a technological society and meet the needs of that society with the unique offerings that a theater education provides.

With this in mind it is imperative that theater educators work to critically frame theater as a relevant academic subject that provides opportunities to practice critical inquiry, flexibility, and creative production with students. In addition, we must ask ourselves how learning in the theater classroom specifically aids students in effectively succeeding in technology-driven domains. Educators will be most successful in their conversations with students, parents, and policymakers if they are willing and prepared to use technology and incorporate new literacies related to that technology as part of the theater classroom framework.

The policy paper that the Partnership for Twenty-First Century Skills and its partners wrote opens the door for theater teachers interested in technology training. National organizations have pushed technology teachers to provide technology opportunities across the curriculum. These teachers are also asked to participate in cross-disciplinary conversations with colleagues. Innovative theater teachers will actively seek out these technology-learning opportunities to seek new skills that could be applied to or discussed with students. In these ways educators can insert themselves into conversations about technology and education.

Successful attempts to become a part of the global conversation about student learning will clarify ways that technology and theater aid student learning, demonstrate how theater classrooms can be a space of conversation about technology, and spell out a clear framework for theater education that verifies our profession as a relevant academic subject.

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to increase students' critical awareness of the media that surrounds them. Theater teachers can plan for overt instruction that focuses the student learner's attention on the pervasive media in ways that allow for the meta-awareness of and reflection on patterns and relationships among the students' bodies, contemporary modes of entertainment, and mediums that convey those modes.

This is evident in the work of secondary teacher Neal Johnson (2007). Recognizing the media's influence on life choices that his students were making, Johnson chose to investigate the media's influence on young minds and bodies with his students. Using Boal's (2002) concept of "metataxis"—the ability to see two worlds simultaneously—to explore themes and social issues related to their media consumption, Johnson and his students simulated real-world experiences with media texts through image work, role-play presentations, and other drama techniques. Johnson describes these drama activities as effectively creating a space for conversation that allows students to "form or redefine their personal belief systems and decide media's influence on their personal lives" (47). Johnson not only describes the success

Critical Framing in and of the Theater Classroom

The Partnership for Twenty-First Century Skills, the State Educational Technology Directors Association, and the International Society for Technology Education recently called on policy makers and education agencies to "integrate technology as a part of every program and initiative for the effective and efficient implementation of a twenty-first century education system that includes twenty-first century skills and core subjects" (Partnership for Twenty-First Century Skills 2007, Web site). This statement has currency in education circles because it comes out of intensive voter research that indicates most Americans believe the United States is not preparing its young people to survive in a global economy. The same research specifies the insertion of technology and its accompanying literacies into local and worldwide conversations about resources and funding devoted to education.

This growing focus on technology training could supplant conversations about the arts in the public sphere. Fewer resources are devoted to arts education

Theater Students as Participatory Producers of Knowledge

Finally, it is vital to consider how to prepare students for this technol-

ogy-driven world and what students should look like and sound like as they encounter the challenges and beauties of that world. I am interested in students becoming active participants in local and global conversations. These students are prepared producers and active transformers or creators of the knowledge that surrounds them. To accomplish this, teachers must embrace theater's essential quality—meaning making. Theater skills are a significant mode of production and reception through which students can articulate who they are in the world. Theater teachers must actively encourage students and other interested parties to see the ways that theater interactions prepare us to inquire about and understand how the contemporary world is shaped. Understanding how theater interacts with new literacies is a requirement for this survival. In a recent essay, Dolan (2001) argues that theater is the perfect forum for students to practice a participatory democracy:

> I argue against the isolation of theatre departments in marginalized environments, where romantic discourses about artistry persist, robbing student artists of critical tools with which to engage the world. I argue for the immersion of theatre . . . in public life, lending our forums to debate the issues of the day from multiple perspectives, in all their complexity and contention. (8)

Although Dolan's statement was directed at the university, K–12 theater educators and other arts educators can learn from it. For arts education to remain culturally viable, arts educators and arts policymakers must support and sustain connections and collaborations between art and new literacies. If we can, as Dolan suggests, leave our romantic notions of art behind to embrace a hybrid arts education that values student concerns, we can provide opportunities for active understanding and practice with the literacies required in the contemporary world.

Toward this end, arts educators must take personal, practiced, and persistent actions to move their respective fields forward. First, we must educate ourselves to effectively engage in the great debates of our day. We must seek out or create opportunities for professional development in new content areas and media literacies. Second, we must establish forums of creative research, recognition, and dissemination of curricular models and critical investigation. These forums (journals, conferences, or cross-curricular organizations) help to circulate ideas and establish research priorities. Third, we should review media-prohibitive language in the governing policies of educational entities. Wherever possible, we should challenge prohibitive language and change it to constructive language that defines what technologies should be in education rather than what is not allowed. Constructive language allows for the effective management of technology tools, while encouraging creativity and engagement.

As Cope and Kalantzis (2000) eloquently stated: "To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes that students bring to learning" (18). The subjectivities, interests, commitments, and purposes of students have not significantly changed over time—they desire to join the world. It is the world that has changed, radically, dynamically, and continuously through media and technology. These changes create an opportunity for arts educators to actively engage these media in the best forms of literacy—through examining them, commenting on them, and representing them in original and thought-provoking contexts. With this accomplished, arts education moves from the margins to the center. If we support our students by listening to, learning from, and using their new vocabularies, we engage with them in significant conversations about public life—theirs and ours. We can reside together, practicing and learning in the complexity and contention of the digital world.

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Education

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