Critical Literacy and the Ethical Responsibilities of Student Media Production

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How do we attend to the ethical responsibilities of media making in the 21st century? This article addresses the relationship between media creation, critical literacy, and representation within student filmmaking.

In the digital age, critical literacy is a powerful lens through which to highlight the ethical responsibilities of media participation. Common goals of critical literacy often include analyzing sociopolitical issues, disrupting commonplace understandings about people and our world, and promoting social justice through action (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).

These goals, as incorporated into media production, can allow educators and students to open up "new spaces for possibility" within the classroom to reframe knowledge and understanding (Peters & Lankshear, 1996). Even as the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) for English language arts do not mention ethics or ethical responsibilities of media participation, educators must help their students understand these responsibilities and promote ethical aspects of critical literacy.

Because ethical norms are dependent

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on the specific context in which they take place, the issue of power within media making is important to analyze. And, yet, power is not easily defined. Foucault (1980) argued that power is never fixed but always produced within social interaction such as dialogue, contestation, and other communicative means. As such, power should not be viewed as a thing one possesses, but as implicit and explicit actions that are continually negotiated within relationships.

In this article, I highlight two student filmmakers who rely on a meta-awareness, the ability to think in abstract terms and reflect on their "rights and responsibilities" (James et al., 2009, p. 14), as they negotiate their relationship with their subjects as documentary filmmakers. Lewis and Dockter (2008) referred to this as an ability to be critically engaged in the filmmaker–subject relationship. "Critical engagement" requires students to simultaneously maintain a critical distance with subjects while also being immersed and emotionally invested (Dockter, Haug, & Lewis, 2010).

The 12th-grade documentary project undertaken within Neighborhood Small School was focused on immigration within the unit "Borderlands: The Creation of the Other"; it included themes such as communities and borders within and across racial ethnicity, language,

and identity. To take a stance within the immigrant documentary required students to be both distant and close to their subjects to gain in-depth understanding of their lives and glean potential narrative threads for the film (Wohlwend & Lewis, 2010).

Student filmmakers were to maintain a meta-awareness of their relations of power and the inherent responsibilities of their roles as media makers, analyzing how media creations can add to and potentially challenge the sociopolitical logic of the topic at hand (Peters & Lankshear, 1996). This article attempts to add to the discussion about the integral relationship between critical literacy, the politics of representation, and the ethical responsibilities of media making in the 21st century.

Methodology

Site

Neighborhood Small School is a small learning community within a larger public high school in an urban area in California. (All names are pseudonyms.) Neighborhood has a small student population of 240 students. In 2007–2008, when I gathered data, students in Neighborhood were from a range of ethnic, cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds; the racial demographics of Neighborhood were 49% African American, 25% Latino, 25% White, and 1% Asian. The demographics differed from the high school as a whole: 35% African American, 35% White, 16% Latino, 13% Asian American, and 1% other.

I chose the site for this study because of its devotion to media literacy and focus on social change. The school's broadened notion of literacy paved a curricular opening for mandatory media classes and the integration of media production across its curriculum. Within this integrated media approach, students studied and critiqued both media texts and content from English and history while also creating their own media connected to the content. During the 2007–2008 school year, students engaged in five integrated media projects.

The focus for this study was the 12th-grade "seminar" class, a yearlong mandatory course. Seminar is a collaborative and cross-curricular course, similar to a humanities core (e.g., English/history) model. Yet the course also includes the visual arts element of media production as funded through the state and local career and technical education program. Seminar encompasses three different courses—genre in literature, social studies,

and advanced studio editing—and students attend the three 55-minute classes back-to-back-to-back.

Senior seminar was positioned as the culminating experience within Neighborhood. According to the syllabus, the combined courses "revist[ed] and deepen[ed] themes that were introduced in prior years, particularly examining the questions 'How is social change accomplished?' and 'What can I do to bring about social change for a more just society?'" Literacy in this context was designed as a political project, and seminar teachers attempted to connect academic subjects to students' current experiences and civic lives.

The Borderlands Unit

Two guiding questions framed the borderlands unit: (1) What are the major benefits and drawbacks of living in the United States for Latino immigrants, and (2) What factors affect their success or ability to succeed in U.S. society? Diverse texts such as T.C. Boyle's *The Tortilla Curtain* (Boyle, 1995), the motion picture *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006), photographs taken at the U.S.–Mexico border, Chicano art, and the documentary *Made in L.A.* (Carracedo, 2007) assisted students in addressing the guiding questions.

The main summative assessments for the unit required students to produce a documentary on immigration and write an immigrant interview essay that addressed the guiding questions. Students were to interview an immigrant (preferably from Latin America) and incorporate personal photos to present a coherent narrative of his or her life through film. Sample interview questions included the following:

- How did this person arrive in the United States and what was the process like?

- Why did this person leave his or her home country?

- Are this person's family members with him or her? If so, did they all come here together? If not, where are they?

- How has he or she been treated in the United States? Has this treatment changed over time? Why or why not?

- What obstacles has he or she found here?

After students had completed their documentaries, they then wrote an immigrant interview essay addressing the guiding questions. The essay required a thesis, which compared the interviewee's experience to a character, situation, or theme from

Tortilla Curtain, and it needed to conclude with a "personal reflection on the interview and the process of interviewing an immigrant."

Data Collection

The study relied on qualitative methods such as participant observation and individual and group interviews, which took place from August 2007 through June 2008. The overall data set included field notes, transcribed audio recordings of seminar, digital video recordings of students' media production processes (both in school and on film shoots), and transcribed interview responses. The number of observational hours totaled 450.

Of the 55 students in Neighborhood's senior class, I selected six as focal students (four girls, two boys; two African American, two Latino, and two Caucasian). Because the English and history classes were held concurrently, I varied my observations—sometimes I stayed in one class to view the same teacher with different focal students, and other times I followed the same set of focal students to the other English or history class. The advanced film classes were not held concurrently, so I was able to observe each focal student in this setting. I also observed students during their film productions, followed them on fieldtrips and their class retreat to a local hostel, and witnessed them in school activities such as pasta feeds, film festivals, and graduation.

During students' preproduction processes of their digital video projects, I listened to focal students' conversations with their peers and tried to paraphrase their ideas back to them to make sure I understood their logic. With the shooting of their films on location, I usually observed their process; occasionally they needed help setting up their equipment, and I volunteered. This allowed me to ask questions about the equipment and get an understanding of setting up a shoot. During postproduction in media class, because their projects were usually lengthy, I was able to observe their production processes without missing important steps. Following all stages of students' production processes privileged me as the only adult to have unfettered access into the recursive nature of student filmmaking.

I conducted an ongoing series of face-to-face interviews, semistructured and/or retrospective in nature, with the six focal students and the three seminar teachers, and I tape-recorded each interview. Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. Questions I asked students focused on their filmmaking processes, including their emotional state(s),

challenges they encountered, and what they enjoyed about the experience. Student responses assisted in answering my research questions concerning filmmaker–subject relationships and potential ethical tensions. The number of student interviews totaled 17. Questions I asked teachers centered on their teaching philosophies, their relationships with focal students, and potential benefits and hardships of an integrated curriculum and media literacy focus. The number of teacher interviews totaled 12.

Data Analysis

I began data analysis with the initial coding of data, rereading all my field notes, interview transcripts, and analytical memos, and watching students' films in chronological order. Relying on thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) of field notes and transcripts, I identified dominant themes across participants' experiences and accounted for larger social processes such as "subject–filmmaker reciprocity," "collaborative production," "ethical dilemmas," and "opportunities for agency" that were apparent in the data. This allowed me to compare themes across students' productions and between film genres.

I also drew on current research in the field of digital media and learning. Presuming as a point of departure Jenkins and colleagues' (2006) research on new media literacies and the social skills and cultural competencies required within a participatory culture, data analysis also focused on instances of play, appropriation, and collective intelligence to unpack the complex learning and relationship building required by students' multimodal projects. This assisted in understanding patterns and discrepancies in the data, for I was concerned with moments in which students faced both opportunities and challenges related to their ethical responsibility as filmmakers and the choices they made during these moments.

I relied on "member checks" (Richards, 2005), that is, I consulted with my participants, both students and teachers, during the data analysis phase and the write-up of the study. I completed my analysis independently and then checked my findings with the informants to increase credibility of the analysis. With instances where there were discrepancies, I asked for clarification from the participant.

A limitation of this study includes potential for researcher bias. Eight years before I began the study, I had worked at the large high school for an entire academic year and had met one of the key informants, Ms. Linderman, at that time.

Key Informants and Focal Students

My key informants were Ms. Dolores de Silva, a media teacher; Ms. Beth Linderman, an English teacher; and Ms. Michelle Fujii, a history teacher. The experienced educators, with a combined total of 47 years of teaching, were the teaching triad of seminar. All three were part of the foundational movement of Neighborhood and its transition from a large to a small school. The informants commented on the focal students in a longitudinal capacity regarding their academic standing and their personal growth as adolescents.

I discuss two out of the six focal students in this article, Teresa and Rebecca. Both are white student filmmakers and remarkable students. I highlight their documentary processes because it provides important insight into their negotiation of racial ethnicity and sexual orientation with their subjects. I chose Teresa as a focal student because I wanted to see how an engaged and reflective young woman from a working-class background would use film as a vehicle in which to communicate. I chose Rebecca as a focal student because of her gender ambiguity and introversion. It seemed that film might be a site in which she could experiment with identity and express her own voice, even if she was not effusive.

Engaging in the Critical Reading of Immigrant Experiences

> As a media program, we recognize that humans communicate in important ways using many different formats. This means that we approach reading, writing, and media production skills not from a structural approach but from the demand that the students, in engagement with each other and the text, develop compelling ideas and new insights that they care about.—Excerpt from Neighborhood's Literacy Vision

To prepare students for the documentary project, seminar teachers engaged students in the critical reading of immigrant experiences and worked to develop an understanding of "the other." This was accomplished in an integrated setting by positioning *The Tortilla Curtain* (Boyle, 1995) as the main literary text of the unit, and supplementing Boyle's novel and key themes with multimedia texts, blog entries, and peer critique. Key immigration themes from the book focused on racial discrimination, boundaries, and barriers such as language, citizenship, and gated communities and linked these themes to the conception of "the other."

Seminar teachers chose multimedia texts, such as *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006), as a means to generate and discuss intertextual themes and promote synergy between core academic content and media techniques and analysis. *Babel*, both thematically and narratively, offered stories of difference based on language and culture, in an effort to analyze characters' interactions with "the other" during moments of need and despair. Students analyzed the irony of an American woman, Kate, who is shot and in need of medical attention and is forced to put her trust in foreigners to save her own life. Additionally, without solicitation from the English or history teachers, students focused on filmic topics that interested them, including the director's storytelling techniques, which relied on nonlinearity to weave each story into coherent and sophisticated portrayals of "the other" across four geographic settings.

Student-centered activities such as blogging offered students informal and collaborative ways to analyze themes from *Tortilla Curtain*. Every other week, Ms. Linderman and Ms. Fujii posted a prompt, and students responded to their peers online. Students' blog posts highlighted the interactive nature of the discussions, for students often referenced one another's posts through the use of "I agree with," "I strongly disagree with," and "in response to" and also reinforced a collective analysis through the use of deictic pronouns such as "we," "our," and "us." A blog prompt for *Tortilla Curtain* asked students to consider the book's ending, in which the protagonist, Candido, saves the antagonist, Delaney, from drowning: Would you have saved Delaney? Explain what your answer says about you as a person. Does Delaney deserve to be saved? Explain your response.

Both Teresa and Rebecca discussed the ethical issue of choosing whether or not someone lives or dies. Teresa's response included a specific analysis of Candido because his choice to reach for Delaney's hand made "a huge statement about his humanity and how he was able to see that humanity reflected in others." Rebecca then offered an analysis of how one's thinking can change:

> Even though it is arguable whether or not Delaney was worth saving, letting him drown

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isn't going to change anyone's opinion or mindset. The only way to change him and address his racism is to save him and try and help him learn.

Rebecca's response of how best to change a racist individual underscores the importance of the blog as a space for students to "engage with each other and the text, and develop compelling ideas."

Seminar teachers also relied on both informal and formal peer critique to assist students in analyzing the construction of texts and the politics of representation. As media creators, students critiqued three documentaries from former students, and Ms. de Silva guided the discussion to focus on film techniques such as the framing of interviewees, using close-up shots for emotional responses, establishing good lighting, and narrowing raw footage into a compelling story.

Formal peer critique of student films was based on peer critique in each individual media class. This was an activity facilitated by Ms. de Silva, who posed questions for filmmakers and prompted students for their responses to peers' work. These opportunities for feedback and critique helped to foster a curricular space in which students could appreciate one another's work, demonstrate and deepen their understanding of literature, and focus on the meaning-making techniques of filmmaking.

The Ethical Responsibilities of Representing the Real

Ethical Tensions of Media Making: Relations of Power

> [School's] about getting [students] out and getting them in the world to experience their education and, I think, filmmaking is the right tool for that.—Ms. de Silva, senior media teacher

Even though students had read a fictional novel about immigration and analyzed diverse texts about a clash of cultures, "getting them [out] in the world to experience their education" offered unique challenges. The three seminar teachers had the foresight to present the immigration documentary to students together to address student anxiety and uncertainty related to the project. Students were anxious because they were required to approach an adult and ask to discuss immigration, a topic that is racially and politically loaded.

Ms. Linderman, the English teacher, modeled how best to approach a potential interviewee and

reinforced that the project rested on capturing someone's "story" in a "respectful manner." Even with this support, students alone were to negotiate relations of power and cultivate relationships with their filmic subjects. These ethical tensions forced filmmakers, during their interview shoots, to search for a coherent narrative or at least bits of a narrative that could be woven together later during postproduction on the computer. Student filmmakers, in this case, juggled a number of responsibilities: They needed a meta-awareness of their interpersonal relationship with their subjects, an ability to focus during the interview on asking good questions while searching the subject's responses for potential narrative threads, and a cognizance of the sensitive nature of the topic of immigration.

Teresa and Alicia. The student experience of maintaining an interpersonal relationship with a subject while searching for potential narrative threads is fraught with unknowns. As Teresa explained, "You have all these questions....Is your interview going to be a timeline, is she going to be discussing her journey, is your interview going to be about one specific event, is the narration going to be about their journey?"

To minimize these unknowns, Teresa decided to approach her interview as a way to share the assignment with her interviewee, a family friend named Alicia, rather than impose a story similar to that of *Tortilla Curtain*. Since documentary filmmaking is predicated on multitasking and quick decision making, Teresa set up the camera and the tripod equipment while Alicia reviewed the assignment and the potential interview questions. As Teresa explained,

> I was, like, this was exactly what the assignment is, this is where we are coming from and look[ed] over everything with her....I sort of asked her to talk me through the story she wanted to tell. And out of that, I figured out pieces of information that I really liked and I was able to gear my questions towards those pieces of information (once the camera was rolling).

In this example, the simple decision to share the assignment and potential interview questions allowed Teresa and Alicia to generate an informal conversation about immigration without the burden of the camera's gaze. This decision allowed Alicia to be candid and "talk through the story she wanted to tell," and once the camera was recording, Teresa was prepared to focus on the "pieces of information" that *she* liked about her subject's story. This was a

necessary step in the production process; as Teresa explained, "I didn't know which story I was [going to] get because I didn't know what the story was yet."

By promoting a reciprocal relationship with Alicia, Teresa was able to create what Foucault (1981) referred to as the "condition of possibility," a coconstructed linguistic space open to dialogue and shared understandings. Teresa engaged her subject in her project to "know what the story was," which was predicated on Teresa's own "critical engagement," "a stance that combines critical distance with immersion and emotional investment" in the project as *both* a learner *and* a filmmaker (Dockter et al., 2010, p. 418).

Ms. de Silva explained that the ethical responsibility of reciprocity of student filmmakers was centered on the notion of mutual engagement:

> I think that's the biggest life skill. [Students] are not these passive little people that just go up to people and say, "OK, I have these questions." They have to be able to talk about their project. They have to make it worth their person's time.

The media teacher expected students to be responsible for both their engagement in their projects and their filmmaker–subject relationship. An essential component of critical literacy within a participatory culture is that authors develop meta-awareness, a "life skill," for the choices they make within the processes of media production and how these choices can have an impact on others.

Rebecca and José. Rebecca was determined to approach her interview with José as a chance to develop a friendship. Because he was her older coworker at a local organization for queer youths and also held a position of power within the organization, Rebecca wanted to get to know him before she brought out the video camera. Instead of going to his house, as Teresa did for her subject, Rebecca first went out to breakfast with José, and then they traveled around the area, pointing out places that held importance for them.

When I asked Rebecca about her approach during the production shoot, she stated,

> I could have done, "What's your name? Where were you born? Are you in this country legally? And then why is that hard for you?" I could have easily done that the entire interview. That's one of the reasons why I wanted to talk to him first in a really comfortable setting. We were just talking about our lives and I was sharing about my life

and he was talking about his. That way I would know what questions to ask...that way I would be able to get a better interview.

From an ethical standpoint, Rebecca was interested in creating a setting in which José felt "comfortable" and they could "talk" and "share" experiences. Although José held a position of power in the youth organization, this instance highlights how power is never fixed or determined but always situational. Rebecca did not want to be, as the media teacher warned, a passive student armed with insensitive questions about immigration.

One of Rebecca's ethical dilemmas was to actively remake the assigned project fit her intended goal of friendship—to share aspects of her lived experience just as she asked José to share aspects of his immigration experience. Thus, she embodied the identity of *both* a learner *and* an ethical filmmaker. Her actions then granted her insight into "what questions to ask" and, ultimately, allowed her to obtain a "better interview."

At the heart of the ethical responsibility for the two student filmmakers and their relationships with their subjects were simple gestures, such as the sharing of potential interview questions, as well as more overt decisions, including exchanging stories without the camera's gaze. The two students relied on a meta-awareness of their reciprocal relationships to support their subjects while also remaining emotionally distant to identify important narrative threads. Within today's participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2006), in which media production and distribution are key components, the ability to reflect on one's choices and the potential impact of these choices is a necessary aspect of critical literacy.

Ethical Tensions and Challenges of Representing the Other

Another ethical tension of the filmmaker–subject relationship for Teresa and Rebecca was the issue of trust. Student filmmakers had to earn the trust of their subjects in order for them to openly discuss

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personal and emotional immigration experiences that would allow the filmmakers to create compelling narratives. Thus, being able to represent the other relied on a reciprocity of a shared story: A filmmaker had to trust that her subject had a story to tell, and the subject then had to trust that the filmmaker would respectfully and ethically represent this story.

For Teresa, she learned what it was like for Alicia to come to the United States as a 6-year-old and grow up "without [legal] papers." As she wrote in her reflective essay, "Alicia grew up with the constant fear that her family could be deported at any time. She was taught to never talk about her legal status even with her closest friends, and encouraged to stay at home as much as possible." On film, Alicia explained,

> Just the thought that I can come home and my parents are nowhere to be found...and what am I going to do if they are not there? The fact that you know that you being here is a very unstable condition is very, very frightening.

Although Teresa engaged in what she referred to as a "powerful" interview, an ethical contradiction emerged. Participating in Teresa's documentary contradicted Alicia's upbringing: She had been told her entire life not to talk about being an immigrant, and yet she trusted Teresa to represent her and her story through film. The relationship between filmmaker and interviewee in this instance was one sided.

Unbeknownst to Teresa at the time, for her to represent Alicia's experiences, she essentially asked Alicia to cross another border in order for her to complete her documentary. For Teresa, "the whole interview was a beautiful moment," in the sense of both the trust and reciprocity she and Alicia engendered and the knowledge Teresa now had of the fear and limitations Alicia and her family endured as undocumented immigrants.

In Rebecca's case, her documentary and reflective essay of José's immigration to the United States allowed her to represent him in a way that respected his immigration journey and expanded the sociopolitical discourse beyond what students had discussed in seminar—a racialized and heteronormative portrayal of immigration. Rebecca wrote in the introduction paragraph of her reflective essay,

> [José stated], "I don't consider myself the typical immigrant who comes to this country from a little state in [Mexico] because I have to feed my family. I came because I was searching for something better." José came [to] the United States to escape persecution from the police. He didn't want to go into detail about what happened but from what I could gather, he and his friend were take[n] by the cops and beaten for being gay. This was the experience that set him on his journey to the United States.

Although José trusted Rebecca with his immigration story, "he did not want to go into detail" about the experiences that did make his immigration experiences "different from that of a straight person." Respecting his decision not to share this aspect of his journey, Rebecca focused on his experiences as a gay immigrant in the United States. José explained that once in the United States, he felt he was stereotyped for being an immigrant: "People were a lot more open about me being gay, but they were not very open about me being an immigrant."

José's situation provides an example of what scholars such as Stuart Hall refer to as "articulation" (Grossberg, 1986). The notion of articulation points to specific contexts in which a linkage or connection can or cannot be made—as in, how do issues of race, sexual orientation, or legal/illegal status come to be articulated (or not articulated) within discussions of immigration (Grossberg, 1986)? In José's case, his sexual orientation was viewed in a positive light in the United States, compared with his status as an immigrant. An ethical tension for Rebecca in this project was to honor José's wish not to discuss certain aspects of his journey and trust that his experiences in the United States would offer her, as a filmmaker, a compelling narrative.

Sadly, José's story attests to the articulated tensions and contradictions of race and sexual orientation within and across borders, for it details José's persecution in his native country for being gay and then his acceptance in his new country on the basis of his sexual orientation but not his immigrant status. For Rebecca, a young lesbian who strongly identified with the LGBTQ community, José's story informed her sociopolitical understanding of these tensions and contradictions.

Implications for Educators
Creating Rich Curricular Spaces
Because media making often requires the formation of filmmaker–subject relationships, reflection upon the choices related to representation, and an analysis of how one's media creations can have an impact on others, educators must understand the complex interaction

between media production and critical literacy. For teachers and students in seminar, filmmaking was a not a singular literacy event but a critical and collaborative practice bound by a broadened notion of literacy, an analysis of multimodality, and a reappropriation of a canonical text.

Within this curricular setting, Teresa and Rebecca crossed school boundaries to interview adults on a politically loaded and potentially awkward topic; they created multiple media for their peers and teachers to critique; they were assigned a highly complex and scaffolded project related to immigration yet had choice in whom they were to interview and how to construct their subject's narrative; and they grappled with contemporary issues related to immigration that expanded their sociopolitical understanding of the topic and the assigned novel. Seminar teachers crafted this curricular space by taking a remediation stance (Leander, 2009) toward literacy instruction, with media production situated as a valued part of the learning process alongside written texts.

Yet educators cannot apply a causal approach to media production and assume that student creation will automatically lead to student engagement. Although the four other focal students I followed did not use or nurture a meta-awareness to the same extent as Rebecca and Teresa in the documentary project, they were successful in aspects of the project in which they were capable: interviewing, using unique film techniques, or editing footage. The borderlands unit offered a differentiated form of assessment and provided multiple ways for students to find success as filmmakers, learners, and responsible young adults.

Opportunity for Student Voice

When I asked Teresa and Rebecca what their documentary project and media making in general meant to them, they used words such as *powerful*, *creative*, and *voice*. Seminar students often felt that their media creations were accurate representations of their visions, struggles, and stories, and they did not always feel the same about their written essays. As Teresa explained,

> In an essay, there are way more ways to be wrong than to be right. Your challenge is to see if you can fit your creativity and your voice into those constraints; whereas a movie *is* your creativity and your voice.

The development of critical literacy depends on a student's ability to feel competent as a reader and

Take Action
STEPS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

✓ Strike up informal conversations with students, either in or outside class, about the ethical norms of today's digital media environment. What are some of the ethical issues they encounter with Facebook, Twitter, or texting? How might their responses inform your teaching?

✓ Read pp. 3–18 of Jenkins's (2006) article "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century" and think through how you can help prepare young people for their "increasingly public roles as media makers and community participants" (p. 3). How might you engage your colleagues in this reading and promote dialogue about critical literacy and students as media makers?

✓ Review your current formative and summative assessments and see where it is possible to apply an ethical approach related to a contemporary issue such as immigration. How might students be given the opportunity to make choices about representation, be actively in charge of creative production, and take responsibility for what they create?

✓ Read Kevin Leander's (2009) piece about parallel pedagogy and determine which stance you take toward the relationship between new literacies and print-based literacies. How might Leander's discussion of parallel pedagogy inform your understanding of student media creation?

writer and take ownership of one's creations; producing "powerful" and "creative" media offered Teresa and Rebecca an opportunity to "voice" their understanding of a sociopolitical topic and canonical text. As educators, we must support classroom practices that allow students to think critically, express themselves creatively, and navigate authorial possibilities.

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More to Explore
CONNECTED CONTENT-BASED RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Learn about Common Sense Media's online professional development training in the K–12 Digital Literacy and Citizenship curriculum: www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/professional-development

- Learn more about the GoodPlay Project's key publications and research papers related to ethics: www.thegoodproject.org/good-play/good-play-project

- Download the research findings from Ito et al. (2009) *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media*: mitpress.mit.edu/books/hanging-out-messing-around-and-geeking-out

- Visit the Journal of Media Literacy Education for more information about media literacy: www.jmle.org/index.php/JMLE

Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:
Table S1: Immigrant Essay Rubric
Table S2: Tortilla Curtain Rubric