

CRITICAL LITERACY AND PODCASTING IN A 2ND GRADE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Research with young children, critical literacy and new technology is limited (Burnett, 2009; Carrington, 2006; Marsh, 2005.) The purpose of this study is to describe the literacies produced in a second grade classroom, through podcasting, where the teacher attempted to frame my teaching from a critical literacy perspective. The study of this classroom reveals the literacies that come within a critical literacy structure for learning as well as those developments that were significant during the classroom's creation of a podcast. Such efforts also reveal the social practices of a teacher and her students as well as the identity and positioning work of selected individuals. A case study approach was used to provide the unique details that describe the classroom experiences of students engaged in such literacy work. The information that this study provides will be useful to researchers and educators as they seek to understand the shifts and possibilities of what critical literacy involves in a second grade classroom. Key findings include changes in the children's literacy learning when engaged in critical literacy and the literacy work that occurs with the use of technology

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CHAPTER 1:

RATIONALE

A critical literacy framework for teaching provides teachers and students a dialogical structure for bringing forward concerns of the class during their interactions with text (Comber, 2001; Vasquez, 2004), such as books, websites, everyday print, and media publications. Together, the teacher and students ask complicated questions about the relationship between language and power, people and lifestyle, morality and ethics, who is advantaged by the way things are, and who is disadvantaged (Comber, 2001; Janks, 2001; 2010; Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2007; Vasquez, 2004; 2010). As one seeks to define the many facets of literacy and the potential for what one can do with literacy, it is important to explore the contributions that critical literacy provides. For instance, a critical literacy framework provides students and teachers with the means to deconstruct and reconstruct inequities that they discover in the texts they interact with in their daily lives (Janks, 2010). For example critical questions can be asked about the characters depicted in texts, why they were chosen and for whom they were created.

Literacy researchers are re-visiting what it means to be literate and what counts as literacy particularly in today's globalized, technological environment. Literacy in the 21st century includes a broader set of practices than those involving pencil, pen, and paper (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2008; Evans, 2005; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Some ideas of literacy and what it involves include new media that are multimodal, resulting in new forms for expression and new approaches in meaning making. As

technologies continue to advance and influence everyday literacy work, literacy practices extend beyond traditional literacy definitions that focus on mastering specific print-centric reading and writing skills. Literacy researchers are not only looking at the emerging literacy practices that include the technology of the Internet, but are also looking at frameworks surrounding literacy mindsets.

Children of the 21st century come to school exposed to the internet, video games, cell phones and other forms of technology that have only been widely available in the last ten years. Due to such technology, how children read and write and the tools they use has led to changes in literacy practices, the kinds of literacies produced and what it means to be a literate being. As children develop their abilities to use and navigate such technologies, they embrace a world where communications are passed and received in seconds. With this, children embrace more global communities whether it is through the cultural diversity in their classrooms or connections made through the World Wide Web at home or in school. By engaging in critical literacy practices with new technologies, classroom literacy practices are able to extend beyond school walls.

Statement of Problem

Literacy researchers already see the affordances of new technologies, such as podcasting, but the empirical research particularly with early literacy is scarce (Burnett, 2009; Larson & Marsh, 2005; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Further, due to the rapidly changing technologies of the digital age, research needs to “keep up” with how technologies are affording new opportunities for literacy (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear &

Leu, 2008; Merchant, 2007). There is significant need for continued documentation of the emergence of newly constructed literacies and their associated social practices (Burnett, 2009; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).

This study describes critical literacy in a second grade classroom where children were engaged in the creation and production of several podcasts. More specifically, the study explores the relationship between podcasting and critical literacy as well as the opportunities podcasting creates for critical literacy. Examined are the literacies produced through the process of podcasting, including the instructional value of podcasting in a 2nd grade classroom. Finally, the study explicates the social practices developed through podcasting as well as the impact of these social practices on the classroom community and the effects of these social practices on student identity and positioning in the classroom.

Podcasts are digital audio files that can be played on a computer or a personal audio player such as an MP3 player. Such digital recordings are commonly of a radio broadcast or other type of program with the intention to be shared and heard. Though the use of these digital audio files is not a new technology tool, these recordings have recently become easier to create and more popular to use to disseminate information. Some educators believe that by creating podcasts students have further reasons to focus on the content of a message they want to express and how to best deliver this message if it is only to be heard (Armstrong, Tucker & Massad, 2009; Stern, 2005). There is growing documentation of the popularity and support that podcasting provides teaching and learning (Lee, McLoughlin & Chan, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is a critical literacy perspective that is informed by a sociocultural approach. This framework provides an authentic perspective regarding the development of literacy and social practices of young children in the 21st century. Steeped in the notion of transformation and the promotion of social justice and equity through purposeful literacy teaching and learning, this study highly supports and encourages a social theory of learning from a critical literacy perspective.

Critical literacy

Critical literacy relies on a social approach to literacy demonstrated and practiced by Freire's (1972) pedagogy for literacy. The literacy work practiced by Freire promoted and embraced the idea that there are varied meanings within a single text. Such meanings are determined and influenced by the knowledge, assumptions, values and opinions of the individual reader. Due to how the meaning of a text has the potential to vary from one individual to another, individual readings reveal implied and non-mainstream ideas. As texts are interrogated and discussed, these implicated or "unseen" ideas come to the forefront of discussion allowing readers to explore and confront the inequities of texts. Such work with literacy is reflexive, meaning that there are possibilities for transformation for both the teachers and the students.

Literacy researchers (Comber, Thomson & Wells, 2001; Luke, 2000; Vasquez, 2004) note that how each classroom navigates critical literacy varies due to differing contexts. Teachers and researchers often have different approaches when they begin to

work with critical literacy. This not only complicates defining critical literacy, but also upholds Luke's (2000) theory that there is not a "formula for 'doing' critical literacy in the classroom" (p. 454). Some classroom examples include how some researchers (Comber, Thomson & Wells, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2009; Vasquez, 2004) view critical literacy as dependent on the contexts and situations of the class and place the focus of the work on the ideas and suggestions that come from the children. Thus, as each classroom holds its own differences, critical literacy will take up different issues with each class. Still drawing from critical literacy research in the classroom, other researchers (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2007; Lewison & Heffernan, 2006) use texts that demonstrate social inequities as a starting point for engaging with critical literacy. Such examples demonstrate not only how critical literacy will appear differently with various contexts, but also how critical literacy maintains its authenticity for the particular classrooms or groups of people involved.

Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theory in literacy focuses on the social elements or interactions involved in the learning processes. This framework emphasizes how language, literacy, and learning are only understood when viewed in their social and cultural environments (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). Meaning that, literacy meaning and its elements are dependent on the social constructs maintained and created by a group of people. In practice, literacy work is dependent on the contexts and situations of the participants. According to Street (1984; 1993; 2007), this theory is particularly significant in educational contexts due to the social nature of classrooms.

Further, Barton & Hamilton (2000) explain that a social theory of literacy is a conceptualization of literacy as reading and writing activities influenced by surrounding social structures. Within this concept, Barton & Hamilton discuss the units within literacy as literacy practices; what people *do* with literacy (2000). This involves people's attitudes, values, feelings, and social relationships (Street, 1993). This concept also includes people's understandings of literacy, how they describe, discuss, and make sense of literacy. From this perspective, literacy is understood as "a set of social practices" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p.9) which connects people through shared ideas and social identities. Barton and Hamilton note, "...these are observable in events which are mediated by written texts" (2000, p.9).

Sociocultural theory therefore informs a critical literacy perspective by highlighting social practices and focusing on the social elements or interactions involved in the learning processes. Lewis, Enciso, and Moje (2007) refer to this combination of critical literacy and sociocultural theory as "critical sociocultural theory" which they believe helps researchers better understand the nature of identity, agency, and power in literacy practices.

Purpose of Study

As mentioned earlier the purpose of this study is to describe the literacies produced in a second grade classroom, through podcasting, where, as the teacher, I attempted to frame my teaching from a critical literacy perspective. Studies on literacy and technology in the classroom (Carrington, 2006; Evans, 2006; Marsh, 2005; Sprague

& Pixley, 2008) focus on how technology affects literacy (Carrington, 2006; Halsey, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006) or how specific uses merely replicate already existing literacy practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) despite the use of new tools or media (Larson & Marsh, 2005). Few studies document the affordances of new technologies with early childhood teachers and students in critical literacy classrooms. Case study research (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) provides one way for researchers and educators to understand the classroom work of students engaged in such literacy work.

Specific questions that frame my research are as follows:

1. What literacies are produced through the process of podcasting?
 - What is the instructional value of podcasting in a 2nd grade classroom?
2. What social practices develop through podcasting?
 - What are the affects of these social practices on student identity in the classroom?

Significance of Study

School is a place centered on exploring literacy practices (Street, 1996; Evans, 2005). Therefore, studying and co-constructing literacies and social practices alongside students allows for a close examination of how students negotiate literacy in the 21st century. Specific to this study are the literacies developed while podcasting in a 2nd grade critical literacy classroom. The study of this classroom reveals the literacies that come

within a critical literacy structure for learning as well as those developments that were significant during the classroom's creation of a podcast. Such efforts also reveal the social practices of a teacher and her students as well as the identity and positioning work of selected individuals. The information that this study provides will be useful to researchers and educators as they seek to understand the shifts and possibilities of what critical literacy involves in a second grade classroom. Further, this study provides insights into what literacy practices look like as they involve new technologies such as podcasting.

Definitions

Agency. A feeling of self that if one acts in a certain manner and acts strategically, certain goals can be reached (Johnston, 2004). This can also be viewed as a strategic making and remaking of self (Moje & Lewis, 2007) as one physically, intellectually, and/or emotionally asserts herself in different situations in order to create change in a social dynamic. The change in social dynamic is intended to change one's achievements or goals within a situation.

English acquisition. English acquisition is the process of learning the English language.

Identity. A means of defining one's self with a fluid, socially, and mediated construct. This self-definition takes into account the different positions individuals enact or perform in particular settings and with different social groups, cultures, and institutions (Gee, 2005; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007).

Literacy. Literacy is commonly defined as the ability to read, write, and make sense of the written word (Janks, 2010). To further this definition, literacy includes the ability to communicate messages, which can be done orally or in print (Dyson, 1993). 21st century literacy definitions expand this definition to include the ability to make sense of images and print that comes with new media, particularly the computer screen.

Literacy practices. Literacy practices are what people “do” with literacy, and, within social contexts, meaning “the general cultural ways of using written language which people draw upon in their lives,” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7).

Multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy involves making meaning by using various signs or modes of expression. This does not mean simply adding a mode such as music to a written text, but rather by juxtaposing the two modes in order to create a specific meaning. The combination of the two modes creates a new meaning as well as a different kind of meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Podcasting. Podcasts are digital audio files that can be played on a computer or personal audio player such as an MP3 player. Such digital recordings are similar to radio broadcasts or other type of program with the intention to be shared and heard.

Positioning. In the classroom, positioning is how a person is considered or regarded by others or by herself (Gee, 2008). A teacher in a classroom can position children when a teacher chooses specific experiences or situations that create or maintain certain expectations for the children. At the same time, children can position themselves in classrooms by performing at certain levels or meeting specific expectations in order to achieve specific outcomes.

Power. For purposes of this study framed by critical literacy, power is the ability or capacity to act or make change in a situation. Within critical literacy, such strength can be seen negatively as it enforces and reinforces the production of inequitable social relations (Janks, 2000).

Semiotics. Semiotics is a field of studies that involves the research of how meaning is made through various signs outside of the written word. The study of how meaning is made through various signs includes understanding signs that also include pictures, gestures or music (Siegel, 2006).

Social practices. Social practices are the perspectives that individuals and groups construct due to cultural, social, historical and political contexts (Street, 1995). Literacy conventions such as letter writing, legal documents, academic research, etc. reflect the social practices of a group.

Texts. Texts are socially constructed materials created from particular perspectives. Texts come in a variety of forms that can be print-based (books, letters, reports), media based (TV commercials, advertisements, magazines) or technologically based (websites, videos, or podcasts).

Organization of Study

The study is presented in five chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the study and the problem, purpose, research questions, significance of study, research definitions, and the theoretical framework that guides this research. Chapter 2 is a review

of the literature as it pertains to literacy, critical literacy and new literacies including technology. Chapter 3 includes the methodology used and provides an overview of methods, research design, setting, participants, and data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 contains three narratives created from the data of the study. Chapter 5 presents the summary, findings, limitations, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review examines critical literacy in practice in primary grade classrooms and discusses how new technology intersects with critical literacy. This review will first explain the foundations and ideas of literacy and what literacy for young children involves. Second, it will examine existing critical literacy research and critical literacy practices with young children. Third, the review will describe new literacy and new technologies and why they hold a significant place for literacy work with young children. In conclusion, this review will discuss how critical literacy and new technology in early childhood classrooms is an area that needs further research.

Literacy

The definition of literacy varies widely between literacy scholars. Some researchers describe literacy as a set of skills that one acquires when making progress towards obtaining literacy (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001). In contrast, other scholars describe literacy as a social and cultural practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Kress, 2003; Street, 1984) meaning that, literacy is something people do and is situated in the contexts of use (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1995). Street (1984) offers an alternate conception of this dichotomy as he discusses an “autonomous” approach to literacy where literacy is more individualized versus an “ideological” approach or a more social, or participatory, interactive understanding of literacy. These two differing views

of literacy provide a wide base for what literacy is, which causes debate among those who study literacy. Such opposing views also provide substantial reason for on-going studies of literacy and its practices.

Literacy is also commonly defined as the ability to read and write (Gee, 2008; Janks, 2010). Within this definition is a more individualized understanding of literacy that follows Street's (1984) idea of an "autonomous" approach to literacy. This more individualized definition, most familiar to the literacy programs and standards for the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), entails an acquisition of literacy skills. The emphasis is placed on whether individual students can read and write a standardized set of texts and demonstrate a mastery of specified reading and writing skills.

The other side of the argument envisions a social approach towards defining literacy. A social approach to literacy looks to the work or practices of a group of people to see what that particular group emphasizes as important in communication and understanding. This follows Street's (1984) "ideological" approach to literacy. This more expanded and social definition of literacy describes literacy as something people do and emphasizes that literacy "is not a set of skills to be learned, but rather is social and involves the interactions between people" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p.3).

A social approach to defining literacy also means there is the potential for multiple literacy definitions due to varying cultural approaches to meaning making processes. Within this idea, researchers suggest the idea of literacies – literacy as plural when examining literacy work.

New literacies

Literacy researchers continue to examine the meaning of literacy particularly as media and technology offer more multimodal, multifaceted means for expression; thus a shift in what literacy “is” or “can be” (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008). Part of this shift involves a pedagogy of multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996) where literacy focuses on “the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity” (The New London Group, 1996, p. 63). This idea of multiple literacies entails multiple modes or forms of literacy representation, which extend beyond traditional print forms of literacy. Such representation can include art, drama, technology, music, or any other means of expression. Arguments for this more encompassing idea of literacies are common with theories and frameworks regarding new literacy particularly due to the rapid changes that come with the technology involved with such an approach to literacy (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Lewis & Fabos, 2005).

Literacy studies of young children

Seminal literacy studies with young children argue the importance of multiple literacies and social definitions of literacy especially in the emergent phases of early literacy (Dyson, 1993; 1995; 2004; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). As described in the earlier work of Harste, Woodward, & Burke (1984), young children and their work with print needs to be recognized through the children’s practices and not measured against the practices of adults. This shift of ideas took literacy from “adult conventions to children inventions” as the researchers began to define literacy through a semiotic

perspective, meaning that literacy entails the construction of meaning through many types of signs (art, drama, music, etc.) and not just traditional print (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984).

In Dyson's explanation of children's compositions within a sociocultural space, she emphasizes how children's social actions and negotiations are part of how children learn about composition as well as learn about their place and their relationships in the world (Dyson, 1993). Dyson emphasizes how children come to school with an already developing means for "using words" (Dyson, 1993). "In practice, are the children's abilities to take action through narratives and other genres as they develop a sense of control and agency, and a sense of connection with others" (Dyson, 1993, p.18). Dyson further argues how children come to school with diverse backgrounds, families and traditions. Within such diversity, the children have varying holds on how they use their words or language.

Dyson also emphasizes how children bring with them "themes, discourse structures, and styles from their unofficial world and use them to compose texts in the official world of school" (Dyson, 1993, p. 19). At the same time, children bring their official school worlds into their unofficial worlds and "play with it" (Dyson, 1993) in order to negotiate, take action, and make connections as they compose and comprehend text. Such work leads the children's texts to contain an intricate weave of children's home culture and school culture. Ultimately, Dyson's earliest research grounds the ideas of how children's stories have the potential to bring together voices of diverse worlds for "artful presentation, playful entertainment, or reflective contemplation" (Dyson, 1993,

p.19). Classrooms with sociocultural environments and spaces are where such work is most encouraged.

When considering the recent theories and concepts of literacy such as critical literacy, sociocultural theory or multimodal literacies, these earlier studies by Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) and Dyson (1993) provide a significant foundation (Siegel, 2006). In more recent work, Siegel (2006) encourages and supports this earlier literacy shift towards a more social idea of literacy, and notes that multiple literacies and multimodal means of communication and expression continue to be significant as literacy tools continue to evolve and develop. Siegel further argues this more social shift in literacy with the inclusion of Dyson's studies (1993; 2003) of young children and their use of writing through talk and social interactions.

Today's generation of literacy learners

A growing proportion of today's students have always known a world influenced by computers. They are accustomed to being connected to the Internet and looking for and finding information in the palm of their hands. With such modes and medium in common and daily uses for communication and expression among today's learners, literacy instruction and assessment too needs to take such work into consideration (Marsh, 2005).

Some researchers define this generation in and through their experiences with digital computer technology (Buckingham, 2006). With this digital generation comes a new generation gap where parents' fears and anxieties over the changing pace of society and loss of connection with the past suggest the growing fears and anxieties of new

technology (Buckingham, 2006). As the digital generation works its way in and through school settings, new pedagogy and instructional practices are necessary for teachers in order to meet these students' needs (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).

In this new media age, literacy and its understandings need to be readdressed (Kress, 2003; Merchant, 2007). Previous and continuing literacy research observes the developing literacies of children where researchers notice how children make meaning and how they grapple with meaning (Dyson, 1995; Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984; Rowe, 2008). With such work as a foundation, current literacy research also extends literacy studies to look at how children construct meaning with the addition of today's technology (Burnett, Dickinson, Myers, & Merchant, 2006; Carrington, 2008; Marsh, 2005; Roswell & Pahl, 2007). As children partake in literacy work in the 21st century, literacy researchers continue to emphasize the social phenomena around literacies, which create literacies unique to their particular group of people (students' immediate classmates and teachers) and site (school) (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008; Lewis & Enciso, 2009; Street, 1995). As noted, literacy researchers are working to "keep up" with societal advances and technological advances, which are often reflected in "everyday" literacy practices.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy language learning involves the understanding that there is socially constructed knowledge and experiences written and expressed in texts (Hall, 1998). Being aware of these processes of literacy is one of the ideas behind critical literacy. As

Comber states, “critical literacies involve people using language to exercise power, to enhance everyday life in schools and communities, and to question practices of privilege and injustice” (Comber, 2001, p.1). Further Comber notes that critical literacies are created from everyday life. Students need to be able to understand their personal reading processes and realize that when they interact with texts it is not always a personal or individual response, but rather a response that could be socially constructed.

The scholarship and practices of Paulo Friere contribute greatly to current understandings of critical literacy. Freire (1972) saw the purpose of literacy as personal empowerment and social transformation. From the documentation of his educational practices in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), educators and scholars such as Ira Shor (1998); Hilary Janks (2001), Barbara Comber (2001; 2006), Vivian Vasquez (2004; 2010), and Mariana Souto-Manning (2009) have worked with his methodology of literacy and added to the growing evidence of the impact of critical literacy practices in education. Freire’s efforts demonstrate a strong focus on the importance of participation (Shor, 1992), and how literacy work goes beyond the classroom community and walls in order to seek understandings about how to transform injustices that students encounter in their everyday lives.

As noted by numerous literacy scholars and researchers, there are multiple meanings for the idea of critically approaching reading and literacy (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; Siegel & Fernandez, 2000). In defining these critical approaches, the foundations stem historically from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, to Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of literacy, to more contemporary scholarship based on Michel Foucault’s (1980) ideas of power. The approach to critical literacy used for the classroom

pedagogy and research in this study primarily bases itself on the work of Paulo Freire, though it does not exclude the other approaches. The following discussion explicates critical literacy involving those constructs that helped to shape the current study.

Significant for the contributions of Paulo Freire was his work with workers from oppressed social groups in Brazil (Larson & Marsh, 2005). In the mid twentieth century, Freire was the Director of the Pernambuco Department of Education and Culture in Brazil. In this position, Freire designed an adult literacy campaign in the 1960s that utilized a critical pedagogy. His literacy design was based on critical social theory emphasizing a critical pedagogy that put schooling in a political context and challenged teachers and researchers to uncover “implicit oppression” found with inequities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity (Larson & Marsh, 2005). Freire emphasized that his program was based in a model where student creativity was valued as well as the ideas of empowerment.

Freire’s educational practice was an “educational tactic” designed to develop a strategy to politicize the Brazilian people (Freire & Macedo, 1987). When he began his work with the Brazilian adult literacy learners, he wanted the learners to look at themselves as people living and producing in a given society. He wanted them to leave the feelings of being “dismissed from life” or “de-humanized” as they were affected by the oppressive conditions of the country at the time. He challenged his learners to understand that they were the makers of culture. With this new look at the realities they lived in, they began “to understand the importance, necessity and possibility of owning reading and writing. They became literate, politically speaking” (Freire & Macedo, 1987,

p. 7). This was how he and his students engaged in literacy practices that aimed at social transformation.

Table 1. Critical Literacy Tenets

Some Key Tenets of Critical Literacy <i>Based on work from Larson & Marsh, 2005; Vasquez, 2010</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The world can be read as a text.• Texts are never neutral: they carry particular views and ideologies.• Learners are positioned differently by texts, and learners differently position texts.• Critical literacy practices can involve political awareness and social change.• Some positions carry more privilege than others.• Text production and design can provide experiences for critique and for the transformation of power.• Learners' cultural and semiotic backgrounds should be central in the classroom.

Reading the word and the world

The most prominent tenet of Freire's pedagogy is the idea that, "reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word of language; rather it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 29). Because of Freire's belief that reading and writing were only part of being literate, his pedagogy enabled oppressed groups to "read the word and the world" (Comber, 2001; 2004; Giroux, 1993; Janks, 2001). The idea of "reading the world" offers a critical lens on societal constructs and challenges the dominant ideals of society.

Reading the world encourages students and teachers to develop literacy understandings together in order to look at societal power and try to understand who it

supported, who it excluded and whose ideas it advanced. Such work takes learners from being passive recipients of information to actively participating in the construction and application of literacy work (Vasquez, 2004).

Participation

Shor (1992) worked with critical literacy practices based on Freire's research and wrote about the importance of participation in education. Shor writes:

Participation challenges the experience of education as something done to students. This is key to the passivity and resistance produced by the traditional syllabus: education is something done to them, not something they do. They see it as alien and controlling. To reverse this passive experience of learning, education for empowerment is not something done by teachers to students for their own good, but something students co-develop for themselves, led by a critical and democratic teacher.

Participation from the first day of class is needed to establish the interactive goals of this pedagogy, to shake students out of their learned withdrawal from intellectual and civic life (Shor, 1992, p. 20).

Shor's work incorporates Freire's pedagogy into his own, which he calls "empowering education." This concept was exemplified when he described a participatory pedagogy as one that is designed from "cooperative exercises, critical thought, student experience, and negotiated authority in class" (Shor, 1992, p. 21). Shor emphasizes the difficulties that come with such pedagogy due to how it differs so much from more traditional practices that emphasize the acquisition of specific reading and writing skills.

Giroux (1993) further argues that literacy needs to be redefined as a form of “cultural citizenship and politics” that allows for non-dominant groups to understand the knowledge required to empower themselves, and to be socially empowered. With this education and literacy, groups will have the chance to participate in education and literacy rather than being part of a marginalized group (Giroux, 1993). As for those within the dominant groups, participation in critical literacy provides the challenge for groups to experience non-dominant positions and perspectives in society. Through the deconstruction of texts, dominant groups as well see the implied messages that marginalize some, but maintain norms for dominant groups. Both dominant and non-dominant groups develop new perspectives on situations or issues that are seemingly acceptable in society.

Giroux further expresses his ideas of literacy as not only knowing how to read or write, but how to recognize the “identities” of others. Giroux’s view of literacy expands beyond the written words on the page to include the multimodal texts that people are consumed with every day. As his work seeks to uphold democratic practices of literacy, he supports the idea that there are visible texts, and that there are the stories behind the texts. Through critical readings of the visible texts, he argues that readers and writers will be able to understand the social constructions that are within texts (Giroux, 1993).

Identity/Discourse

Gee (2008) emphasizes in his definition of critical literacy the idea that social worlds are discursively constructed. Discourses, as defined by Gee, carry different weights of power when analyzed with a critical perspective. The differing levels of power

are made visible in spoken, written, and visual texts. Gee uses a capital “D” with this particular definition, which entails the specific ways of using language involving ways of thinking, being, acting, interacting, knowing, feeling valuing, dressing or using one’s body to enact a certain type of person (Gee, 2008).

Gee’s definitions of literacy use the analysis of these Discourses towards understanding the socially recognized ways of using language, gestures, semiotics and interactions with other people and things towards personal and social identities (Gee, 2006; 2007). Gee’s discourse studies seek to understand how language use and social interactions carry relations with power and how such power plays out socially and in printed text. Through such deconstruction of language, his analyses reveal the issues of power that come with texts, language and identity. Such recognition leads to the study of a person’s agency in various settings, how people position themselves or how they are positioned, and the role of power as literacy takes form in printed text or in social situations.

Access and redesign

Janks asserts that future preparations of literate people must include critical readings of text and suggests that people also need a critical understanding that language can contest or maintain systems of domination in society (Janks, 2000). Janks’ research led her to work with the deconstruction of the language of the oppressor to then develop a liberating discourse of power for the oppressed (Janks, 2000). “Critical literacy has to take seriously the ways in which meaning systems are implicated in reproducing domination and it has to provide access to dominant languages, literacies and genres

while simultaneously using diversity as a productive resource for redesigning social futures and for changing the horizon of possibility” (Janks, 2000, p. 178). Janks (2000) argues that domination, access, diversity, and design are part of critical literacy work and one aspect does not work without the others.

When Janks discusses these four orientations of literacy education (Janks, 2000), she begins by explaining how those who work with *domination* as a view of power see language, other symbolic forms, and discourse as a way to maintain and reproduce domination. She considers the idea of how a teacher can provide *access* to dominant forms, while still valuing diverse languages and literacies of students in greater society. Her definition of *diversity* looks to the idea that there are different ways of reading and writing the world through a variety of modalities and this is a central resource for changing consciousness. She addresses the area of *design* that she believes encompasses the idea of “productive power” and the ability to challenge and change societal situations. Finally, Janks emphasizes that the four orientations are “crucially interdependent” on each other, and these elements are held in “productive tension” in order to achieve the goal of critical literacy work of equity and social justice.

A framework for critical literacy

Luke and Freebody are researchers whose work involves observing critical literacy practices and how curricula are created with critical literacy at the core of the work. They argue that critical literacy creates an “opening in the curriculum” that enables students, teachers, and communities to construct different ways of working with text as they address new cultural and economic contexts as well as new forms of practice and

identity (Luke & Freebody, 1999). Their “four resources model” explains how reading is a social practice (Luke & Freebody, 1999). The resources are: decoding practices (code breaking), text-meaning practices (text participating), pragmatic practices (text using), and critical practices (text analysis). With this new approach to reading instruction, their hopes were to enhance teachers’ approaches to reading instruction by embedding critical literacy in their practices.

The intent of the model is to move the focus of literacy instruction from finding the right method for teaching reading to questioning if the range of practices in a reading program incorporated and integrated the many textual practices needed in today’s economies and cultures. In explaining the language of the model, Luke describes a needed ‘critical competence,’ which is the development of a critical meta-language for talking about how text codes, cultural ideologies, and readers are positioned in subtle and exploitative ways. In order to question or rewrite a cultural text, one needs to recognize and talk about the various textual, literary and linguistic devices at work (Luke, 1992). Finally, Luke argues that a socially constructed critical literacy program would enable students to work with the elements of literacy instruction throughout their days and declares that such practices are necessary in a “post-modern” society (Luke, 1992).

Critical literacy in the classroom

As one takes a closer look at today’s literacy and how educators approach their classroom practices, much evidence comes forth about critical literacy and how it enhances classroom instruction. The work goes beyond the written word and is described as reading the world as the classroom community works to transform injustices that they

encounter and explore (Friere, 1970). Classroom work is generated with dialogical practices or discussions between the students and teacher, which alleviates power struggles and opens spaces (Comber, 2001; Vasquez, 2004) for applying such power analysis for all literacy events in the room and the community.

Research by Hall (1998) discusses and illustrates what critical literacy “looks like” in practice from her study of a classroom teacher teaching five-eight year olds. She describes a reading lesson that begins with the types of questions a teacher asks when she finishes reading a story. The teacher asks her students what they think and furthers the conversation with questions of what realities are demonstrated in the text. Through such questioning and discussion between the students, the teacher and the text, they expand their conversations about the content of the text to the unspoken messages that are implied in the writer’s work. Questions for the students to think about and discuss could be:

1. What do writers say about girls, boys, mothers, and fathers in the books you read?
2. What do adults think that children like to read about?
3. If you knew about families only from reading this book, what would you know about what mothers do?
4. What would you know about what fathers do?

The questions encourage the students to consider the realities that are presented and not presented on the pages of the author’s book. As the students relate the ideas of the story to their personal realities, they discover that there are multiple ways of presenting the

realities of the world (Hall, 1998). Within this consideration of multiple realities, they have an opportunity to see how texts and authors can position readers through the text's description of reality. Hall's work emphasizes that there is more than one understanding to gain from a text as she further supports the idea that literacy is not just in the skills of reading or writing words.

Researchers and educators use the tenets of critical literacy and bring critical literacy practices into early childhood education settings as well as into the elementary grades. Research by Comber, Thomson, Wells, Vasquez, and Souto-Manning also provide examples of how critical literacy in practice operates in classrooms and especially in classrooms of young children. They focus on how teachers develop time in the school day for critical dialogue and questioning to occur. Finally, they emphasize that critical literacy is not an "add-on" to the curriculum, but rather something that enhances the teaching and learning of the classroom (Comber, 2001; Vasquez, 2001; 2004). In this sense, critical literacy pervades the classroom.

Conversations and Questions

Comber describes teachers and students engaged in critical literacy as those who will be asking complicated questions about language and power, about people and lifestyles, about morality and ethics, about who is advantaged by the way things are and who is disadvantaged (Comber, 2001). Her research with Thomson (2001) in the 2/3 classroom of Wells in Southern Australia addresses how the class became involved in a local urban renewal project and how through the process the children addressed the ideas of place and power. The critical literacy work focused on the drawings and writings of

the children as a means of academic, intellectual, and emotional learning, but also as a means of social practices and political activism.

Wells and her class were located in a school in an impoverished area of their city. Many of the children lived near the school and began to bring questions to class about how the city was beginning to tear down some of the housing in the area as well as preparing the area for a new housing plan by also taking down many of the trees. By taking up the children's concerns, Wells engaged with the children in drawing and writing activities that demonstrated their concerns. From their drawings and writings of the local issues the children faced, the children began to recognize some of the more global issues taking place such as the consideration of the environmental and economic concerns that come with the removal of the trees and the destruction of homes. In the class trip into the area under reconstruction, the children began to create re-designs of the area in order to provide alternatives for the local environment and housing.

The effort of the class to address their concerns for the neighborhood was an opportunity for the children to have authentic and purposeful reasons for literacy work. Wells assisted her class further by delivering their work to local personnel involved with the urban renewal project. Overall, the children were not only learning how to voice their opinions, but also how to take action through a variety of literacy means in order to create change.

Curriculum with the students

Research done by Vasquez in her half-day junior kindergarten (JK) class in Toronto provides examples of a teacher and her students in a dialogical process of

understanding the word and the world as Comber demonstrated in her studies with 2/3s. Vasquez, like Comber, describes a critical literacy curriculum as something that “needs to be lived”; it is a curriculum that comes from the social and political conditions in the communities where we live (Vasquez, 2004). Vasquez sought to provide spaces where social justice issues could be discussed and a critical curriculum could be negotiated with children (Vasquez, 2001; 2004).

One account of Vasquez’s research with this young group of children discusses how they were not invited to go to the “French Café,” unlike everybody else in the school. The class recognized this as being “unfair” and wanted to do something so they could go and be with the rest of the school for this event. Vasquez heard the children’s concerns in a class meeting, but did not tell the children what to do or what to think. She notes in her research how in her role as teacher she wanted to offer other ways to do something about the “unfair” situation that the class encountered. The children decided to petition the other JKs and Ks who were not invited to the French Café. They also created an audiotape discussing their concerns and gave both the petition and the tape to the chair of the event. Because of their efforts, the JKs and the Ks were invited to the French Café. Through their efforts in a critical literacy curriculum, the teacher and the students raised social justice and equity issues which they could interrogate, obstruct, contest, and/or change (Vasquez, 2001, 2004).

Listening

Souto-Manning (2009) presented her study of young children and critical literacy through a teacher researcher study of her first grade classroom. Her classroom work

employed a critical theoretical framework, again based on Freire's concept of literacy. The intent of her research was to demonstrate how children's literature served as a beginning for critical dialogue in her classroom.

Through various multicultural books, Souto-Manning provided an opening in her class' literacy work for critical conversation of what is fair and unfair in different social situations. From the social issues exposed in the multicultural children's books, authentic and pertinent conversations emerged, such as with respect to the segregation in the pull-out groups of their class. In order to resolve the inequities, the class proposed that the pull-out teachers come into the classroom so that the whole class could benefit from their expertise. After many conversations with parents, resource teachers, and the principal, Souto-Manning continued to teach the same group of students in the second grade with their new "push-in" model. Though the class' effort to work through the segregation of the class was successful, Souto-Manning emphasizes that the work was difficult and came with much pressure from skeptical parents and faculty. Overall though, she notes that the children's ideas were put into action and upheld the ideas of Friere (1972) where their literacy not only was based on writing words, but rewriting their classroom worlds (Souto-Manning, 2009).

Critical literacy as a theory and as exemplified in practice seeks to provide a more equitable approach to literacy. By critically exploring issues such as diversity and power in language, theorists, researchers, teachers, and students create a place in their conversations for questioning, problematizing, deconstructing, and reconstructing implicit and explicit issues of injustice. Such a framework for research and for classroom pedagogy allows for multifaceted, multilayered perspectives necessary for uncovering the

implicit and explicit power found in everyday participation and actions, thus everyday literacy. Such a lens continues to prove its place in research and in classrooms especially as 21st century literacy work brings people closer together through access to technology or farther apart through lack of technology.

New Literacies

New Literacy Studies

New Literacy Studies embraces the literacy theories and concepts associated with sociocultural literacy, multimodal literacies, multiple literacies, new literacies, and new technologies (Gee, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; New London Group, 1996). Such literacy research is concerned with a social approach to literacy and emphasizes the significance of what people do with literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). To recognize the “new” in these literacy studies means to move away from the print-centric view and understandings of literacy as skills that one acquires. Instead, within the New Literacy Studies, people participate and interact in their literacy constructions through social work or practices. With each social construction of literacy, there are varying ideas for how to make meaning due to different cultural backgrounds coming together. Due to such variation, this creates many types of literacies.

Sociocultural literacy

As sociocultural literacy researchers (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Gee, 2008; Street, 1995) gather more information and questions about changes in what literacy “is”, they focus on the social dynamics involved with literacy as well as a need for a more critical look into the power relations that come with such changes. With such a focus, researchers

and educators begin to consider and integrate such factors into classroom literacy practices as well as question how such work impacts literacy definitions and opportunities overall. As the 21st century progresses, research requires a “new” examination of literacy as well as the practices involved with literacy work.

Street (1984; 2003) explains social practices as the recognition of multiple literacies in use by a group at a particular time and place. Defining social practices also involves recognizing how a group problematizes literacy or how a group questions literacy and its relationships with power. When considering the social practices of a group, Street argues that new literacies needs to acknowledge the often times “taken for granted” aspects of literacy and social practices as they too are distinct to each social group.

Street (1984; 1995; 2003) further emphasizes that literacy and literacy practices are “interpersonal” and socially conditioned. He argues that in order to understand the literacy and literacy practices of a group, it is essential to understand the social aspects of the group as well. Street explains that “literacy is always embedded in some social form, in conventions such as letter writing, charters, business styles, academic ‘texts,’ etc., and it is always learnt in relation to these uses in specific social conditions” (Street, 1984; p. 43). Thus, the literacy of a particular group is constructed through the social practices of the group.

Barton and Hamilton (1998) also support the theory of literacy as a social practice. They assert that the concept of literacy practices provides a way of understanding the connections between the activities of reading and writing with the

social structures from which they come and that the practices help shape. Further, they argue that literacy practices are what people do with literacy. Attached to this definition are also the unobservable components of literacy practices, which concern values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1993;).

Situated Literacies

Situated literacies begin with Lave & Wenger's (1991) view of learning as a situated activity in which learners work together as a community to create meaning. Further, as new participants join the learning community, they too grow to participate in the sociocultural practices of the community. The practices of such learning communities entail learning the "knowledgeable skills" as practiced by the community.

Lave & Wenger (1991) view a theory of social practice as one that:

[E]mphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing. It emphasizes the inherently socially negotiated character of meaning and the interested, concerned character of the thought and actions of persons-in-activity. This view also claims that learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from socially and culturally structured world (pp. 50-51).

Such a focus brings forth the individual and her contributions, but as an individual that is part of the world or as a member of a sociocultural community (Lave & Wenger, 1991);

in other words, the idea of knowing is constructed through activity by certain people in certain situations.

Multimodal literacies

Multimodal within the context of literacy definitions addresses a distinct movement from the acceptance of one mode of expression, print, to the use of various modes such as oral language, image, music, sound, gesture, etc. for expression. Researchers Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) discuss multimodal concepts through a theoretical literacy framework that addresses how people use a variety of modes to make messages within specific social contexts. This concept is inclusive meaning that all forms of communication are recognized as part of meaning making.

An example of the significance of multimodal and multiple literacies is seen in the work of researchers Rowsell and Pahl (2007). They assert that within New Literacy Studies, texts are multimodal. Basing their argument of multimodal texts on Kress' (1997; 2003) work, they focus on how children create texts that employ a variety of modes. Such modes include printed text as well as music, art, dance, theatre, media, etc. Rowsell and Pahl further explain how children make decisions about which modes they want to use for expression. Such decisions are "evidence of the paths they make as meaning makers" (Rowsell & Pahl, 2007, p. 391). By observing this decision-making process, the researchers also assert that such work allows these New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1996; New London Group, 1996) ideas to draw links to the ways that people live their everyday lives and produce texts. The incorporation of this expanded definition of literacy, grounds much of the work and concepts within the development of new

literacies and its practices as well as the research of 21st century literacy (Rowse & Pahl, 2007).

Another example of literacy research focused on multimodality is the study by Hull & Nelson (2005), which investigates the roles that digital multimodal texts play. The study is based on the construction of a multimedia digital story by a young man, whose interests included music, poetry, photography and videography. Digital storytelling is a form of multimedia composing that includes images and video pieces intertwined with music and voice-over narratives, which exemplifies the use of more than one mode for communication of a message. The researchers note the expansion of opportunities due to the technological advances of the digital. They also emphasize that the digital modes do not necessarily privilege the piece, but they focus on the opportunities that occur when print and various modes are integrated. Ultimately, such work leads to different forms of meaning and increases the meaning-making potential of texts (Hull & Nelson, 2005).

New Technologies

Work by literacy researchers brings new definitions and dimensions to literacy. Phrases such as “media literacy” or “digital literacy” are recognized in literature as phrases that involve literacy work when technology is used (Buckingham, 2003). With this in mind, “old technology” begins to be used in new ways and researchers begin to discuss new technologies. New technologies and how they work with literacy practices continue to expand definitions of literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). Structures of literacy that are mediated by new technologies can be seen in communicative practices

and literacy events that include written, oral, visual, and corporeal forms of meaning making (Larson & Marsh, 2005).

Lankshear and Knobel (1996; 2007) research literacy practices and new technologies based on their understanding that literacy involves socio-cultural perspectives. They explain this as how reading and writing can only be understood in the contexts of social, cultural, political, economic, historical practices that they are a part (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). Their socio-cultural definitions of literacy embrace Gee's concept of Discourse. Building on Gee's research, Lankshear and Knobel defined literacy as socially recognized ways of generating, communicating and negotiating meaningful content through texts that can be worked with independent of the creator and within the contexts of Discourse participation (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007).

Technology and the classroom

Web technology and its multimodal approaches to literacy now meet classroom-based instruction creating new questions in teacher pedagogy (Lankshear, 1999). Teachers need to seek new ways to reach students and use their students' knowledge of new technologies in their classrooms. Teachers also need to be aware that there will be some students who have more skills than they do with new technologies. Teachers need support as they learn new technologies and the language that goes with them (Lankshear & Bigum, 1998) while they make new educational decisions for their instruction.

Lankshear and Bigum (1998) conducted a two-year longitudinal study on the links between literacy and technology in teaching and learning that emphasized the use of new information and communications technologies in classrooms. Lankshear and Bigum

(1998) report that such links change teaching and classroom dynamics in complex ways. Such complexities are seen in the use of the Internet due to the expanded range of subjects incorporated into the community of the classroom. The Internet gives students and teachers new access to other classrooms and computers around the world, which inevitably complicates the work of the classroom. No longer does the class just connect with local communication, but now they interact internationally, which brings about new responsibilities of cultural awareness and understandings of different world experiences and views. At the same time, they are also realizing that many technological complications need to be managed (Lankshear & Bigum, 1998). Lankshear and Bigum (1998) conclude in their study:

It is not that we lack strategies and practices that can open up schooling and futures for the young. What we believe is missing is a mind-set that is able to re-perceive schooling, teaching, literacy and new technologies in ways that are resonant with the very different circumstances existing outside schools (p. 19).

New technologies and young children

Marsh's (2006) work with four-year olds and animated films provides one example of technology and new literacies with young children. The study explores the digital communicative practices of these children as they put together still images with a computer to create animated films. The children used small plastic figures to tell a story that was captured image by image through a webcam attached to a laptop. The film-editing software *imovie2* facilitated the organization of the children's pictures. To begin their work, the children drew pictures of what they wanted their stories to say. What was

of most interest was how the children transformed their stories from the page to the screen and how instead of working to create action in their animated films, the children were mostly concerned with addressing the main points of their stories. Marsh considers that this could be one way that children were “transferring understanding of plot located within print-based narratives to the new mode...as if the activity were about the transformation of plot from paper to screen” (p. 39). This work demonstrates how young children are able to manipulate not only print-based literacy and technology, but also new media. Marsh concludes that such work in the classroom assists in shaping a curriculum that is relevant for the digital age.

Most studies on literacy, learning, and the use of podcasting in education emphasize powerful learning in high school and even more so in university level education (Armstrong, Tucker, & Massad, 2009; Lee, McLoughlin & Chan, 2008; Sprague & Pixley, 2008). The findings of these studies first concentrate on the importance of involving such technology in education due to the growing popularity of podcasts in student populations. Through further analysis of these studies, the argument becomes also about that it is not just how students are learning from this new vehicle of disseminating information, but more importantly is the learning that is occurring through the creation of the podcasts (Armstrong, Tucker, & Massad, 2009; Lee, McLoughlin, & Chan, 2008). The findings of these researchers surpassed their expectations that podcasting is a valuable tool in learning. The findings also met with the literacy and learning calls that ask for teachers and educators to keep up with the changes and new affordances that come with new technologies.

Halsey (2007) provides a narrative that describes her work to incorporate new technologies in her work with literacy and learning in the classroom. The premise of her writing was to demonstrate how she began to “imagine new possibilities for literacy and learning, transform existing technologies to construct this vision, and then share their work with others” (Leu & Kinzer, 2000, p. 117). For Halsey, this work consisted of constructing a website with her class of six year-olds, which led to the creation of a podcast hosted by the website. She sought the motivation, metacognition, bringing of the world into their classroom, and taking their learning out to the world that she was in the process of learning that podcasting could do. In her work with the children on the podcast, she noted how children wanted to participate in podcasting (motivation and metacognition work), how children paid particular attention to how they read, listened, and spoke during podcast recordings, and finally how the children went through the processes of reviewing, editing, and refining their work after it was recorded. Most significant to Halsey was how these processes took place before the podcast was posted to the internet where the messages of the children would be received and responded to by an authentic audience around the world (the purpose of their efforts). The experience of Halsey (2007) demonstrates that additional research should be conducted on the possibilities afforded by podcasting in the classroom with young children. Her narrative is evidence that podcasting, literacy and learning have a place in teaching and learning with young children.

To bring the importance of the ideas of new technologies, literacy and learning together, Carrington (2005) explores the need for change in literacy practices when understanding work in this field. She discusses how change in literacy work is evident in

the “textual landscapes” that people are immersed in as they move through their daily lives. Further explained, these textual landscapes are the multidimensional and multimodal filled environments that people live in and are exposed to daily in a text-rich society (Carrington, 2005). In other words, as one goes through her everyday routines and actions, the text that she encounters requires traditional print-rich literacy as well as literacies comprehensive of the multidimensional, multimodal texts of today. Navigating through such a text-filled world requires people to have conscious and unconscious interactions with a range of texts. Since “textual landscapes” can no longer be viewed as print dominated, new approaches to literacy are necessary (Carrington, 2005). Education in the classroom needs to meet the literacy demands of the greater society that students and educators live in today.

Though there is a growing amount of work done in the area of new technologies and its impact on literacy, there are not many empirical accounts of this work to assist the primary teacher’s practice (Burnett, 2009; Larson & Marsh, 2005; Marsh, 2005). Marsh (2005) highlights the need for more research with young children and the role of popular culture and new technologies. She recognizes that much research has been done about the technological transformations that occur daily and how they are impacting literacy education, but such work has not been documented especially with young children (Marsh, 2005). Because of the limited accounts of literacy and these technological transformations, she works to share research that emphasizes the paradigm shift that occurs with such literacy and technology advancements and how they relate to the development of young children’s communicative practices.

Conclusions

This review of literature shows how critical literacy in practice values and promotes understandings of reading and writing through the written word, but also that critical literacy extends the comprehension of what words can do and the power that they hold. At the same time, New Literacy Studies and its concepts of new technologies continue to grow and develop. Within this area of literacy studies there is room for students even as young as early childhood learners, to begin to explore these new modes of literacy.

Studies of critical literacy in practice with young children contribute to the understanding of literacy as a source of power and strength in the greater world and not just a set of skills to acquire. The tenets of critical literacy lay a foundation for students and learners to push forward in their discoveries and comprehension of the world eliminating the power struggles (and discovering new ones) that come with traditional practices of the classroom where students are passive learners and teachers are there to impart their ideas to the students. Teachers and learners partake in dialogical analysis of everyday texts where together they recognize and deconstruct the power that texts hold. In doing so, both the teachers and students gain their own power as they acknowledge textual power in the word and in the world as Freire brought forward in his original workings with the critical literacy methodology.

Further, critical literacy is beginning to explore the literacy events found with new technology. Researchers are examining the literacies required for fully comprehending the potential of new technology. The multimodalities of literacy, new media or new

technology are dimensions of literacy that need to be addressed and researched (Kress, 2003). Current research has only begun to explore the significance of critical literacy practices in the classroom with new technology especially with young children (Larson & Marsh, 2005).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This case study employed qualitative research methodologies to explore the literacies produced in a second grade class where children were engaged in podcasting and where the classroom teacher attempted to frame her teaching from a critical literacy perspective. The following research questions guided the exploration:

1. What literacies are produced through the process of podcasting?
 - What is the instructional value of podcasting in a 2nd grade classroom?
2. What social practices develop through podcasting?
 - What are the affects of these social practices on student identity in the classroom?

This chapter describes the research design and rationale, procedures, and limitations of the study.

Design

A case study was chosen “for its very uniqueness for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to” (Merriam, 1998, p. 33). In case studies, research begins by identifying a social unit such as a person, place, activity or a combination of units as defined by a case study. The unit focuses on a particular activity, or phenomenon. By studying the details of the phenomena, researchers seek to gain insight to some of the factors that are involved in the construction of the phenomena. For this study, one 2nd grade class was studied over a five month period (February-June, 2007) in order to gain insight towards the literacies produced while creating a podcast in a critical literacy classroom.

A case study is used to cover contextual conditions and “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). For this study, the case study method enabled me to follow my interest of the unique and common patterns that arose in my classroom. In seeking to understand these interests, I gathered data on how the class worked together in their everyday pursuits and setting while letting go of any previous assumptions of their work (Stake, 1995). This descriptive study as the final reporting of the case includes thick “rich” descriptions of the phenomenon of the study (Merriam, 1998).

Researchers Dyson & Genishi (2005) argued that the goal of some case studies is to explore what a phenomenon means when it is socially enacted within a certain case. When a phenomenon is socially enacted, this means that it is put in a context where social situations contribute to meaning. Research by Dyson and Genishi exemplifies this

as they provided case studies of classrooms where young children participated in curriculum that encouraged social action. The curriculum that Dyson and Genishi described involves the interests of the children. Thus, the meaning that emerged from their studies develops from the social nature and social practices of the class. In this case study, the case is the children and their literacy practices, while the phenomenon is their critical literacy podcast. Like Dyson and Genishi, the descriptions used in this case study provided highly detailed accounts of the class, which contribute to the understandings of the literacies developed while podcasting a 2nd grade critical literacy classroom.

Descriptive methods inform the case study. Detailed descriptions or reconstructions of people, social communities, organizations, schools, and institutions (Creswell, 2009; Flick, 2006) were created. Specifically, the descriptions of the literacy work of the second grade class contributed to an understanding of what occurred.

Theoretical Design

Case study research was used because of how it is directed towards understanding situations over making judgments or critiques (Bissex, 1987). Specific to case studies in education, Dyson and Genishi (2005) define case study researchers as those who are interested in how teachers, children and other educational participants engage in the world around them. Such researchers deliberately collect information regarding place, time, and people in their particular sites, and soon begin to collect specific information of the case of interest. This initial intake of information assists in focusing questions and interests of the phenomenon(a) of the study. From this, researchers are able to make more

informed decisions about their project in order to take the next steps towards investigating their case.

A qualitative research design provides a means for exploring and understanding the meanings that groups or individuals develop towards a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). The process of the research includes questions and procedures that emerge during the data collection period, the data collected in the participants' setting, data analysis that builds from the specifics of the findings towards more general themes, and finally the interpretations of the meaning of the data. Such a design lends itself to an understanding of the complexities of a situation (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative design supports the research goals to gain an understanding of the literacies produced while podcasting in a critical literacy classroom.

For this study, the specifics that bind the case are the class, their activities and their literacy work. To further bind the case, focus was placed on the activity occurring from February to June, 2007 due to the specific work on composing and publishing the class podcasts.

Setting/Site Selection

The setting for this study was a 2nd grade classroom in a large elementary school. The school was part of a large school district in a major metropolitan area of the United States. The selection of this classroom was one of convenience since it was my instructional site. Although a site of convenience can be seen as one with many limitations, my rapport within the school and the daily access to the class provided for a

potentially deeper study than could have been found in a randomly selected site. The student population in the classroom was not one with extreme situations or characteristics.

From the onset of involvement with the children, a letter and permission form was sent home to families (Appendix A). As the study went forward, the families were kept aware of the study through follow up letters (Appendix B). Informal meetings and email correspondence were held with the principal in order to keep him informed of the work as well.

Participant Selection

The participants in this study were the classroom teacher/researcher and the 20 second grade students assigned to my class in the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. The students' ages ranged from 7-9 years of age throughout the school year. The home countries for the students included the United States, Saudi Arabia, India, Columbia, El Salvador, and Kenya. Of the 20 students in the class, 14 were on free or reduced lunch plans and two families were considered homeless. Eight of the students were diagnosed with learning disabilities or in the process of being tested, while 7 students participated in a gifted program.

Pseudonyms in the form of radio names chosen by the students are used throughout this document. Radio names were used by the students while they took on the role of podcaster.

Researcher as Instrument

In qualitative studies, the researcher often serves as the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. Due to this close position with the data collection, the researcher can respond easily to situations that arise in the moment with the study. At the same time, due to the close relationship the researcher has with the data, there is increased risk of personal bias. As with any project with a human as an instrument, there is the potential for mistakes and missed opportunities. One means for accounting for the bias that such studies carry is for the researcher to admit to such bias, a quality unique to qualitative research (Merriam, 1998).

Also characteristic of most qualitative case studies is the interpretive nature of the research. As such, the work is also highly reflexive, meaning that, “the researcher’s data gathering, analysis, and eventual write-up of others’ experiences are mediated by their own lives” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 81). The work of the researcher is not only to collect and organize the data, but to also try to identify and develop insights of the phenomenon being studied. In doing so, the researcher’s theoretical framework(s) and personal/professional experiences inevitably inform the project (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

Researcher’s background towards study

In my 2nd year of teaching, I was asked by my principal to join a study group that focused on critical literacy. The study group was composed of about 15 teachers and administrators and was facilitated by a university professor (Dr. Vivian Vasquez) and two of the school’s reading teachers. Monthly meetings consisted of discussions of literature on the subject of critical literacy, classroom work with critical literacy, and personal

engagement with critical literacy. Throughout the 5 years of my involvement, presentations of the group's work with critical literacy were made at national, regional, and local conferences and meetings. In my 5th year with the group, I embarked on a study with Dr. Vasquez to closely document what critical literacy looked like in a primary grade classroom. The earlier five years of study with the group provided the base for my participation and strong interest with critical literacy in the classroom, which grounds my work throughout the study.

For example, throughout those five years, I paid close attention particularly to the literature choices for the class. Not only were texts chosen to illustrate what readers and writers do when they work, but also texts were chosen that evoked questions about who was or was not included in the text. Texts were also chosen to assist in recognizing that there could be different understandings or opinions about what an author wrote. I purposefully chose texts that would allow for questions and conversations about the story, pictures or author in order to work with the class towards an understanding that print material and media, regardless of its form (advertisement, picture book, newspaper, magazine, TV, websites, etc.), can carry various meanings, can be challenged and can be questioned. Further, I encouraged the children's ideas of what is fair and unfair, by asking the class how they could create change or develop new arguments when they disagreed with texts.

My 5th year of work with critical literacy studies and 6th year teaching involved a year-long study of critical literacy in the classroom. In the second half of the year, the idea of using a podcast as another means for the class' critical literacy learning was suggested to the students by Dr. Vasquez and myself. In staying within the critical

literacy framework, the class negotiated if they wanted to participate in a podcast. The class agreed to do the podcast, which made for the beginning of this study.

Data Collection

In case studies, researchers collect data using a variety of collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2009). These descriptions and reconstructions are bound within a particular time period or activity. Due to how critical literacy framed the classroom work from the beginning of the year, a timeline for data collection was created at the onset of the school year to assist in collecting data appropriately and efficiently for the study (Appendix C).

I collected data to provide a rich, thick description of the affordances that podcasting provides with critical literacy work. In order to provide such descriptions, multiple data collection methods were employed to assist in gathering specifics required to construct a detailed case study. Such data collection included: student writing samples, produced podcast shows, transcriptions of class discussions, evaluations by students, field notes, and researcher journal entries. From the fuller data corpus, the data selected for this study focused on the period in which students were engaged in the podcasting project. To keep the large quantity of data organized, a data list was made (Appendix D).

Most significant to the data collection of this study are the classroom observations by the researcher. My stance as a researcher was one as a “participant as observer” (Gold, 1958 in Merriam, 1998). With such a stance, the researcher is a member of the group

being studied. The researcher role was secondary to the work as a participant. I collected the data through the following means:

Field notes. Written notes of classroom observations were taken throughout the study, which constitutes field notes (Merriam, 1998). The notes were then combined with initial analysis and/or questions into a fieldwork journal at the end of the day or the beginning of the next day. The notes consisted of my comments about the class as well as descriptions of the students and class activities (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). During class meetings and conversations, field notes were taken to capture short quotes or the main content of what participants were saying. Field notes were also captured through photos of classroom and the students engaged in class activities.

Fieldwork journal. My fieldwork journal contains proposed lessons and activities for the class, reflections on the class and their activities relevant to the study, elaboration of fieldnotes, and questions and conclusions based on daily events and activities. The journal also includes reactions to the experiences.

Artifacts. Numerous artifacts were collected throughout the study. The artifacts from the children came in the forms of artwork, media files and written materials, which included writing plans, published scripts, class reflections (individual and group), blogs, emails and CDs containing the podcast shows by the class.

Audio recordings. Recordings of class meetings and lessons particular to the class podcast were taken throughout the process. Specific class meetings that contained decisions and discussions about the podcast were transcribed.

Documents. The Virginia Standards of Learning for Grade Two (2003) were aligned with lessons contained in the data. The Standards were also used to align the work during the data analysis.

Data Quality Procedures

In order to validate the results of a study or make the conclusions of the work trustworthy, specific measures were used. These measures include, but were not limited to, triangulation and acknowledging my biases (Merriam, 1998). In constructing validity for this study, the multiple forms of data collected for the study were used to triangulate the data and develop stronger and more accurate conclusions (Yin, 2003). Highly significant to case studies involving the participant observations, is the admittance of the researcher's bias in order to inform the reader of the potential biases from the beginning of the study (Merriam, 1998).

Triangulation

One way the case study's validity was checked was by using various forms of data. Given the fallibility of any one source, researchers gather data from multiple sources to triangulate and add conceptual depth (Merriam, 1998). By using a variety of data sources, I triangulated emerging themes from each source of data. Confirmatory and contradictory evidence across iterative reads of the data assisted in verifying that the findings were significant for the study (Creswell, 2009). By triangulating the data collection methods and data sources, the overlapping descriptions of the case contributed to the validity of the research.

Researcher's Bias

Due to the inevitable bias due to my dual role of teacher and researcher, separation between my interpretations and the descriptions of the case were integral towards the validity of the study. To assist in not choosing only those parts of the data that support my beliefs of literacy, all the data collected within the bounded period of the study was coded. This includes the proposed and actual plans within my reflections, all transcriptions of the period, and field notes. By stating my position upfront, not only will the reader be prepared for the potential bias, but this also assisted me as I sorted through possible threats to validity (Creswell, 2009).

Generalizability

Generalizability from case studies is not a significant strength of the research (Merriam, 1998). The complexities of classroom interactions and events are unique to each classroom setting (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Due to varying findings of each case study, there are limitations of predictions and in the ability to control the behaviors of the individuals of the study. The replicability of such studies is also limited, which reduces the overall generalizability of the understandings gained from the research. Further, such specific and detailed studies provides opportunities for researchers to look closer at more “true to life” events, for case studies seek to provide detailed accounts of individuals or groups “in action” (Bissex, 1987). The findings of this type of research are not meant to be a means for more universal findings, but rather a means of providing a holistic view of particular contexts.

However, though generalizing from a sample to an entire population is not applicable with case studies, comparing the analysis with already established theory or

studies can be viewed as transferable (Reissman, 2008). Similarly, “analytic generalization” is a form of generalization used with case study findings when “a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the study,” (Yin, 2003, pp. 32-33). Such generalizing enables the reader to move from the specifics to the broader conceptualization of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analyses used in case studies vary in order to provide the significant details and descriptions needed to present findings pertinent to the research questions and the study’s focus. For this case study, various levels of analysis were used in order to provide significant and substantial theories from the data. To begin the process, the data was coded to allow for initial patterns and themes to emerge from the data. Following this, narrative analysis was used in order to organize the many forms of data into a cohesive document.

Coding

My goal with analytic coding was to explore the conceptual importance of the actions and reactions captured in the data (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). In case studies, coding the data enables researchers to develop a means of establishing more specifically what is happening in the case. The specified data pieces become the substance of the analytic narratives about the study. When reviewing the collected artifacts, transcripts, journal entries, etc., I looked for words, examples and themes that were pertinent to the study and then from this, coded the data. Coding the data entails reading through data, line by line noting words, phrases, themes or patterns that are relevant to the study

(Dyson & Genishi, 2005). By coding the data, I identified common themes from the data, which contributed to the final discussion and conclusions of the study.

Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis refers to methods for text interpretation that are in a “storied form” and gives a structure for a systemic study of personal experience and meaning (Reissman, 2001; 2008). Through such analysis, researchers have an entry into the active lives and thoughts of participants through the power of stories that participants/researchers use to shape their personal identities. In turn, narrative analysis encourages “readers to think beyond the surface of the text, and more to the broader commentary” (Reissman, 2008, p. 13). The narratives and their analysis provide a distinctive genre for analyzing and representing identity in its various forms and in differing contexts.

Narrative analysis for this study more specifically used thematic analysis (Reissman, 2008). Similar to, and often confused with, grounded theory, thematic analysis concentrates on the content of the study. The analysis differs though, as the narrative “keeps the story ‘intact’ by theorizing from the case rather than from component themes or categories across the cases” (Reissman, 2008, p. 53). By applying such analysis, the researcher is interested in the explicit meaning of the content of the language as well as the underlying positions, attitudes or purpose for the message by the author of the message.

For this study, the narratives provided a structure for bringing together participants’ contributions in classroom literacy activities and how they constructed a podcast that provided opportunities with critical literacy. Significant to the creation of

these narratives and their analysis, the researcher does not find the narratives of a case, but rather participates in their creation. I utilized the transcriptions of class conversations, photographs of the classroom, the podcast scripts, field notes, and researcher journals to create the narratives. The analysis was significant for this study as it addressed the specific questions that guided the study as well as assisted me with disclosing and explicating the reasons behind the narratives.

The final layer of analysis came after the construction of the narratives. By reading the narratives using key tenets of critical literacy, narratives were analyzed using a critical literacy framework informed by sociocultural theory.

Summary

This study seeks to provide a closer look at the opportunities that podcasting creates for a second grade class framed by a critical literacy perspective. As noted by some literacy theorists and researchers, such research with young children and technology is sparse (Burnett, 2009; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008; Marsh, 2005). Due to the lack of studies in this area, this qualitative case study seeks to contribute to a growing base of research. Conclusions are proposed and discussed from the analyses, but are significant to the particular group and situation of the study only. Characteristic to qualitative case studies is the discussion and interpretation that pertains to the bounded study presented. This study does not assert and does not seek to assert that the processes or actions by the researcher and participants are *the* “truths” of such literacy work, but rather a place for readers to associate with in their own work.

Chapter 4:
DATA AND ANALYSIS

This chapter consists of three narratives: Peter, Subrina and Antarctica that were created using the data from the study. Using the narratives, I created educated statements as a way of interpreting the case study data. Following the criteria for narrative analysis in the human sciences, the various texts and forms of data collected for this study were selected, organized, connected and evaluated in a purposeful and meaningful manner for the reader (Reissman, 2005). The research questions presented in chapter one were used as a guide to create the narratives, which were then analyzed using a critical literacy framework.

Peter

Peter: Do we have to? Do we have to do it?

Teacher (T): We don't have to do it, no.

Peter: Ok.

T: Can we do it with Vivian? Yes.

Kids: Yes.

Peter: But the question is do we want to.

T: The question is do we want to.

Emma: I want to.

Peter: I do not want to.

The opening conversation is from one of the initial class meetings about creating a class podcast. After introducing what a podcast was, I told the children we could do one in our classroom. Up to this point, the class seemed interested in the idea as demonstrated by their enthusiasm and questions. I saw this in their reactions as they gasped with excitement when they heard other young students' voices and giggled to each other whispering "We can do that too!" Prior to this conversation, I was ready to celebrate this new endeavor and begin planning for a podcast project. I was therefore surprised that someone opposed the idea, and even more surprised that the challenge came from Peter.

Meet Peter

Peter came from a white, middle class family with a mom, a dad, and a younger brother. His experiences at Stapler Elementary began in Kindergarten, and as of this writing, he graduated from 5th grade and the school. Peter came to Stapler through the school's magnet program, which meant his family submitted an application to a lottery for admission to the school along with other families throughout the county.

Peter's mother and father were both highly involved with the class. His mother was our classroom mother, which meant she worked as a liaison between the families of the class and me when we set up field trips and special events for the class. His father assisted with numerous class fieldtrips and did read alouds for the class. Peter also had a younger brother, who was four at the time of this study. Nathan, his younger brother was autistic. Peter was very protective and took close care of his little brother. Nathan visited the class with his mom a few times and Peter showed him around the room and introduced him to his friends. Such visits were short because Nathan often became

nervous, but they were special moments where Peter was a very proud and confident older brother.

Academically, Peter was consistently on grade-level in reading, writing and math. He was in my morning Language Arts class and in the afternoon he was part of the Spanish Immersion program where he learned math and science in Spanish. Throughout the day he participated in class lessons with many questions and comments about the various topics of discussions. As a more verbal student, Peter often led class conversations and was an active participant in class group work. His questions concerned academic and social experiences. He was also purposefully inclusive of his classmates as he often invited and welcomed other students into conversations. His caring and sensitive demeanor throughout the day made him stand out as a leader in the class.

As upbeat and involved with classroom experiences as Peter was, there were times where he became frustrated with himself or his friends. During such moments, he removed himself from the activity and calmed himself down before returning to the activity. There were also times that Peter became upset where he cried or yelled at his friends because the activity was not working the way he wanted. In such cases, he asked for help from adults as a way to ensure the activity would continue. It was clear that Peter was very self-aware.

Peter's shifting identities

As Peter's words in the opening transcript demonstrated, he did not want to be part of the podcast. Knowing Peter and his constant enthusiasm for group work and new activities in class, I was surprised that he did not want to participate in the podcast project, nor did he want the class to do one. I was also surprised that Peter's behavior and mannerisms seemed so defiant. To me, this was a different student than the usual Peter whom I expected would want to lead the podcast work. I wondered if the podcast would carry the excitement that I thought it would without Peter's leadership and overwhelming enthusiasm. In other class projects, Peter was usually the first to take interest or he would initiate the projects with the rest of the class looking to follow his lead. I became nervous without Peter as an enthusiastic participant.

Peter challenged the podcast through a series of questions. At first, his line of questioning was directed at me, "Do we have to? Do we have to do it?" He wanted to know if podcasting was being offered as a choice. I was honest with Peter and responded "no." We did not have to make a podcast. I made it clear I only wanted to pursue the project if the class was interested. I explained that the podcast was a possibility due to the offer and idea from Vivian. I thought perhaps our new friendship with Vivian might sway Peter to want to participate.

Peter went on with his questioning of the podcast project implying that it was not a matter of being able to do it and having someone to help do the work. The question he posed was "...do we want to...." With this, Peter changed his question from a stance investigating if the project was one that was a choice to one where he expressed that his classmates may not even want to do a podcast. Contrary to Peter's expectations, Emma

quickly responded that she did want to do the podcast. After Emma's positive response to want to do the podcast, Peter's attempts to sway his classmates not to do the podcast came to an end. As a result of the conversation coming to an end he simply stated, "I do not want to."

In reflecting back on this conversation, it is interesting to note how Peter uses specific language to position himself differently within the class conversation in order to make his point heard by me, the teacher, and by his classmates. Peter's language and the timing of his questions during our class meetings were deliberate, as he searched for particular responses from specific class figures (the teacher and his classmates). He was "trying on" different identities (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2007; Vasquez, 2010) – one of the student checking to see if the work was a mandatory assignment dictated by the teacher. The other with the identity was of a friend looking out for others who might not want to do the podcast but who felt they could not say so.

Further reluctance

The class decided through a vote to create a class podcast. With the podcast project going forward, I thought Peter would join in the project with his usual enthusiasm. His friends and classmates were excited and demonstrated a readiness to begin the podcast as they were prompt in returning the permissions to participate in work. Again, Peter demonstrated an unexpected resistance. This time the resistance was not in a defiant or challenging manner, but instead he created a story about why he could not participate. Below is an excerpt from my reflections about this incident.

[Peter's] first podcast role was in the art design of the banner. He said that it would be okay and wanted to do it. So I thought we were ready. Because the permissions went home the day before, and he didn't turn one in, I asked him if it was in his backpack. He then responded that he didn't think his parents would give him permission. I told him not to worry about the form, and to just bring it in the next day and this way we could just focus on his artwork for the banner. He tried to make his drawing of his face and then he gave it to me and said that I should really get rid of it because he knew his parents wouldn't give him permission to participate. Knowing the family, I figured it would be fine, but I felt I had to follow Peter's lead. I told him he could partner up with another friend and talk about ideas for the show, but no one would know they were from him. He said he probably couldn't do that either. I called his mom later and gave her the whole story. She laughed and said of course he has permission, but she also said that Peter is very nervous. I agreed, and told her that I would continue to follow Peter and what he felt comfortable with throughout the creation of the 1st show.

--Reflection 2/26/07

The conversation with Peter's mom provided me with a new perspective on Peter's actions, behaviors, and language about the podcast. Knowing his reactions towards the podcast were not typical for him and that he was working hard to be sure he

was not part of the podcast work concerned me. To hear that he talked and shared at home that he was nervous about the podcast made sense, but due to his previous hardworking and confident behaviors in class, it was hard for me to believe. I considered Peter to be outgoing and a strong leader in the class as he consistently worked to involve the whole class in his excitement for academics and social time. As noted above, I needed to step back and follow Peter's lead. For Peter's role with the podcast, I felt I needed to start again with him and simply observe where he demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in other children's work. By doing this, I could re-evaluate where Peter wanted to take part in the work, and from there further encourage and support his efforts. In the meantime, I also needed to find Peter a role outside of the podcast work, which was something I had not anticipated needing to do. With the kids' excitement to produce their own podcast, I did not include plans for those who were uninterested.

I continued to consider Peter's resistance towards the idea of the podcast, and then how he lied about not having permission to participate from his parents. I was beginning to reconsider his behavior as a fear of something unfamiliar. Peter's identity prior to this project involved his efforts to be a strong part of group work and inclusive of those around him in such work. However, the podcast offered new learning opportunities and experiences that were unknown to Peter and his classmates. Such changes were unfamiliar and would require new ways of working and interacting or new ways of being (Gee, 2008; Vasquez, 2004; 2010) which directly influenced Peter and his classmates' participation.

Marsh's (2005) discusses how children "shape their own media-related literacy practices in ways which allows them to express or explore identities" (p.45). She notes

how children's identities are strongly influenced by the practices of others and that "these identities in turn impacted the range of communicative practices in which they engaged" (p. 46). Peter saw how the class took pride in the podcast being their own as demonstrated by the title of the podcast, "100% Kids." The children voted and agreed on this title following their conversation about how the podcast was made by kids. They followed through on the meaning of the title as they informed me, an adult in the room, that I could not participate or have my voice included because I was "not a kid." Also included in the definition of the title was an explanation of the purpose of the podcast: "100% Kids is a podcast about how we are trying to help change the world with our own two hands and make it a better place for all." The title and this explanation were in the banner at the top of the podcast webpage. As the children chose the topics for each show, they referred back to why they did the podcast and what each week's podcast explored.

Influenced by his classmates' enthusiasm for doing the show led Peter to want to participate in some way. It was when he noticed that most of the segments in the show were serious in nature that he decided to draw from his comedic talents and suggest a segment known as "Jokey, Joke, Jokes." This segment reflected Peter's sense of humor and how much he enjoyed laughing with his friends. The intent of the section was not only to make their audience laugh, but as Peter said with his "Jokey, Joke, Joke" script writing group as well as to their listening audience, they wanted to "give their audience a break from all the hard work." As the class set up the order for the segments of the show, they made sure that "Jokey, Joke, Jokes" always followed the "Opening" of the show. The opening of the show discussed their theme of the show for the week, which the class considered very "serious."

Jorge: Hi my name is Miles.

Luis: Hi my name is Zack.

Peter: Hi my name is Drake. We are here to introduce a new part of the show called Jokey, Joke, Jokes.

Jorge: We think this is important to make you laugh and give you a break from listening to all this hard work.

Luis: The jokes give us a break from all the hard work too!

Peter: Here we go! I hope your stomach doesn't hurt too much from laughing!

-Excerpt from final script, Show #2

Posted 3/05/07

The boys who put this section of the script together were all known as the “sillier” students in the class who enjoyed jokes and finding moments to laugh. In his attempt to make the podcast “funny”, Peter created manageable writing opportunities for those students who were struggling with reading and writing and for those who were learning how to speak English. The type of jokes that the boys were used to reading in books and telling each other involved a limited amount of text. The shortened writing and reading of the joke section provided opportunities for children with struggles with reading and writing a less intimidating experience. Overall, due to being able to tell jokes into a microphone and laugh for the podcast, the section became the most popular part of each show.

Through Peter's already established "silly" personality, he was able to help his close friends bring their "silliness" to the podcast as well. From a class-wide interest in joke books throughout the year, the boys found a connection from making themselves laugh to sharing this laughter with their podcast audience. Working with Peter's need to make those around him feel comfortable, the section brought a "relief" to his friends and to their audience.

New participation

I am excited for Peter and Kelly this week because they volunteered to do the opening part of the show. Kelly has tried this before, but Peter has not. So far he is very proud of his script and I give them a lot of support as they tell me what they want in their writing. They were very productive yesterday and very explicit with me about what they wanted to write. A few times I did not hear them correctly on how they wanted the sentence written and both of them would step in and say things like "No, that doesn't sound right. What I want to say is..." or "I don't like that word, take it out," or "that part Kelly should say and then I will say..." The two of them talked through the script and wrote out a true conversation as they put into the script lines such as "That is a great idea that you planted 2 apple trees for [E]arth Day, Peter," As they wrote they demonstrated how they were listening to each other's words.

-Journal Entry 4/29/07

The above entry about show #7 records and describes Peter's increased work with the podcast. The children recognized the opening of the show as the most important part of the show and the part of the show that was the hardest to write, read, and record. To be

in the opening was also considered an honor because it went first. The children often discussed how if people didn't like the opening of the show they might not listen to the rest of the show. They compared it to watching cartoons and how people knew if they wanted to watch the rest of the show by the beginning. Although the class chose the topic or theme of each show, there seemed to still be a pressure on the opening speakers to start the podcast show in a way that audiences would like. With this added pressure, there was much at risk for the opening speakers.

Peter's pride with his contributions and efforts with the podcast became evident again when he came to school one morning wearing a necklace that spelled out "Drake," his radio name for the show. Peter wore his necklace through the end of the school year. I asked his mother where the necklace came from and she said he made it at a birthday party. She said the other children spelled out their names, but Peter wanted to spell out his "radio name." She said he also made it very clear to the other children at the party that "Drake" was his radio name that was part of a podcast he helped make. His choice to wear his "radio name" as a necklace at the end of the year showed the pride Peter had in his identity of "Drake."

Peter's initial statements regarding not wanting to do the podcast to his taking on a lead role in show #7, demonstrates a transformation in Peter and his feelings regarding the podcast. By the end of the podcast and the end of the school year, Peter continued to be a leader in the class despite his difference in feelings from many of his peers towards the podcast at the start of the project. In Peter's written reflection about the podcast he writes, "I like the podcast because I like the jokes. And I like it because I think it is fun.

Because it is cool to work with my friends. I am proud of my work because I like team work,” (Peter, reflection, April, 2007).

Throughout his work on the shows, Peter had opportunities to try on different identities within the class community and the new podcast community. He was able and he was encouraged to try different parts of the podcast and participate in those parts of the podcast shows in ways that he invented and created. His strengths and need to involve his peers and make them feel comfortable was able to come through in his work for the show demonstrating his growth as a part of the class and the community. It also showed how Peter was able to continue to claim his identity as a leader in the class.

Reflecting on Peter’s new means of participating with the class provided me a place to consider my assumptions of students and how this has the potential to hinder my relationships and expectations with the class in a democratic manner. Due to the leadership and position of power that I expected from Peter, his saying no to the project in the beginning resulted in disappointment and negative regard for him. I viewed his behavior as an act of “defiance.” The “defiance” was against my assumption that he would lead the project.

By positioning Peter as the leader at the onset of the project, not only did I hold disappointment that he did not want to lead, but I also indirectly took leadership possibilities and expectations away from other students who might partake in the project as leaders. Within my practices with critical literacy that uphold democratic values, my expectations for the children were not democratic. I already placed the children in specific roles in my mind due to their previous work

and participation in past class projects. By doing so, I did not provide the students with the room to try new roles or have new opportunities to discover and explore different ways of participating in their learning.

Subrina

Intro to Show #2:

Briana: ¡Hola! Me llamo Scarlett. Puede ser que me recuerdas de la parte musical de la semana pasada. Esta semana les vamos a contar sobre como vamos a ahorrar dinero para el excursión al Acuario de Baltimore en Baltimore, Maryland, EEUU. Vamos a contarle el cuento de cómo vamos hacer esto.

Briana: Hi! My name is Scarlett. You might remember me from the music part last week. This week we are going to tell you about how we are raising money to go on a fieldtrip to the Baltimore Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. We are going to tell you the story of how we are doing this.

During one of our early class meetings about what to include in the class podcast, Subrina, one of the students, stated that the show needed to be in Spanish because “their families didn’t understand English.” Subrina’s home language was Spanish and over half of the class came from families who spoke Spanish at home. Following Subrina’s statement, the class agreed that the podcast needed to be in Spanish as well and many students volunteered to help make the podcast in “their language.” The conversation went further to include that there were also some kids with families in the class who spoke

Arabic and Urdu, so those languages needed to be included as well in the show. This was a significant moment for the class and their decisions for the show. Such recognition of the various languages of the class and their families brought attention to a larger subject of who would be able to listen and understand the shows and the messages the children shared through the podcast. The children's awareness of who would be excluded due to language struck me.

Meet Subrina

Subrina was in my morning language arts class. She was born in Guatemala and moved to the United States with her family when she was five. Her family consisted of her, her mother and her baby sister and they lived in the apartments next to the school. During the school year Subrina and her family moved 3 times within the neighborhood. Her family's final move of our school year was to a room in an apartment that was rented to them by a classmate's family. With this as their formal residence, it technically labeled Subrina and her family as homeless.

Subrina began her schooling at Stapler Elementary in Kindergarten and as of this writing, she graduated from 5th grade and the school. On the playground and afterschool Subrina had many friends. She played with her close friend, Amy (whose family she and her family lived with at the end of the year), mostly, but was very inviting to other girls in class. She often found herself involved with discussions about who she was or was not friends with, but Subrina usually found her own ways to maintain her friendships. Subrina's attentiveness to social dynamics was evident through her efforts with friendships and classroom concerns.

Subrina was always proud to talk about her family and speak in Spanish. One of her favorite parts of the week was the Spanish Reading Club that met after school once a week. There she was able to participate in reading, writing and singing activities in Spanish. The goal of the club was to provide a place for Spanish speaking children to maintain and further their use of their first language of Spanish. Subrina's love for her family, language and community became evident with her recognition and action towards including the Spanish language in the podcast.

Exclusion/Inclusion

I was not sure how we would be able to best translate our shows into the many languages spoken in our class, but I could not overlook how cognizant the children were about how people would not be able to understand their podcast if we did not include translations. As I did with many situations that confronted our class that were difficult, I provided space for the children to share their ideas. I made sure to emphasize to the children that I only understood English and French, so my assistance would be limited. The children began counting those in the class who spoke English and some children volunteered to write scripts in Spanish. The children told me "not to worry" because Senora Duarte spoke Spanish, so she could take my place during the "Spanish parts".

At the time of this discussion, I began to think about the other languages spoken by the families in our class such as Arabic and Urdu –how could we have those languages included as well? I remembered Loucie, one of the students and Mr. A, the PE teacher, developing a growing relationship that was predominantly carried out in Arabic. They could speak Arabic on the show. For the two girls who spoke Urdu, one of the girls said

that her mom could help us. The class was overwhelmed by excitement with the children's side discussions about how they could get "their languages" on the podcast.

In the days that followed, I began to realize that translating the show into Spanish was a challenge for the class. Most significant to this dilemma was that many of the children could speak Spanish, but were unable to read or write the language. At the same time, some of the students felt too shy to speak "their language" on the show regardless of what language it was. I saw this dilemma as a problem that went beyond our inability to do our show in various languages. Although I worked hard to incorporate the children's first languages into our school day, this practice was not the same throughout other classes during the children's school day.

Throughout the children's look into and finally the actual translation of some parts of the shows into Spanish, the efforts of Subrina again stood out from the other children's work. Most of the conversations about the importance of translating the podcast were led by Subrina. She proudly shared her thoughts with the class in Spanish. The work and exploration of how important it was to have Spanish in the podcast was where I began to see more confidence in Subrina than I had in her other work with the class.

By Subrina bringing up the concern that people who spoke languages other than English would not be able to understand the podcast, she brought up an issue that was "socially significant" (Vasquez, 2004) to her and many of her classmates. Together, we worked to make the podcast more inclusive by including sections translated into Spanish and by providing parts in various shows that were in the various languages spoken by the

class. Although we did not have complete solutions to the need for the podcast to be translated into many different languages, the children became very much aware that their audiences may understand a language different from their own.

Telling our own stories

On Friday, Subrina, who is always excited about her work with the podcast, found herself very sad and upset and mostly frustrated with her work for the show. She wanted to be a translator, and then said she couldn't read in Spanish. I said that was fine because she can translate very well if someone speaks to her in English. It's only the reading of the words. This is the same for when she reads in English. She is coming along fine and is developing confidence, but with what happened on Friday, I am not sure the confidence she shows is as solid as I think.

-Journal Entry 3/11/07

I pushed Subrina hard as she seemed ready to take on more responsibilities with the podcast. My pressures came with the confidence I witnessed when she became a "boisterous" news reporter who clearly and expressively spoke about daily class events and friendships in Spanish when handed a microphone. When she chose the role of "translator" I thought it was the perfect opportunity for Subrina to recreate the character she created when she earlier played with the microphone for other parts of the podcast. The role of the translator for Subrina meant that she would listen to what the children said in English, and translate their lines into Spanish without creating or working with a written text. My intention was not for her to have to read the many words on the page that made her part of the script, but rather to create the stories and use the facts she already

knew and use them for her spoken script. Subrina's strength was her ability to speak and tell stories that consistently engaged her classmates and adults. By having her translate the shows, she would have the opportunity to tell stories in Spanish without having to rely on reading the written scripts.

Though I kept choices open for Subrina and provided her the time to find where she felt she could contribute to the show, I realized I was imposing my ideas of how she could do this. Subrina volunteered to be a translator. However she defined being a Spanish translator as someone who speaks Spanish not someone who takes other people's words and transposes them into another language. Looking back, I realized Subrina wanted to find a way to use Spanish to tell her stories, not to use Spanish to tell other people's stories. This resulted in a drop in her enthusiasm for participating in the show.

In show #6, Subrina was asked by the other children to participate in the opening of the show. As mentioned earlier, this was considered an honor for the students as well as the hardest part of the show to do. What made it difficult is that the opening involved unscripted conversation. This however, is what Subrina found exciting. The following journal entry describes Subrina's contributions and reflections after recording the opening for show #6.

Subrina was especially excited as she "talked from her ideas" as she called it. I have to admit that I worried about Subrina not having a script because of how nervous she gets about the show. She told me that she messed up once "but it was okay". This relaxed response meant a lot for me to hear as I think about her as a learner, and as she said the words, her whole body stood tall and she had a truly

confident smile on her face. No one spoke for her as she explained how well her group's recording session went. I felt like today was a great spark in her confidence as a reader, writer, and speaker.

-Journal Entry 4/21/07

It was after this show that Subrina chose to come back to working on the podcast. Subrina once again participated in writing her group's script and practicing her part. This time however, she chose to "talk from her ideas" as she explained it. Following is an example of her group's work.

Yessinia: Hi my name is Amy and welcome to the opening of our show.

Subrina: Hi my name is Caire today we are going to talk about endangered animals.

Emma: Welcome, I am Hannah and we are talking about the animals in danger of dying.

Yessinia: Maybe we need to have some good zoos to help protect them. We are going to the zoo in April and we want to talk with the zookeepers.

Subrina: Some animals are dying because they don't have food. People are cutting down the plants and trees that animals eat.

Emma: The animals and trees are important to the world because they give food and air to make us live. One way we can help is to plant more trees and plants. Me and my dad are planting tomatoes.

Subrina: My dad is planting a lot of apple trees and other trees. These trees will help us, the animals and the world. I like apples so does Emma and Amy.

Emma: No, I don't like them, I love them!!

Yessinia and Subrina: Us too!

As evidenced from the more conversational format of the transcription that came from the show, Subrina found a way to participate in the show that gave her a place to contribute to the storyline and to be a valued member of the group. Crucial to Subrina was being able to work with various groups of friends to deliver a message and a story. She wanted to be part of the work that created an excitement for those she worked with as well as the listeners who heard her words and stories. Subrina created her place with the reading, writing, and oral work required, which she was often left out of or shied away from during other types of projects. The podcast with its requirement of more verbal work provided Subrina a unique and purposeful place to demonstrate her reading, writing and oral development in Spanish and English.

Subrina's literacy

Not only was Subrina a second language learner, but there were growing concerns on my part and among her previous teachers that she was struggling in reading, writing, and math. Academically, Subrina was on the "at-risk" list and had been since her start at Stapler in Kindergarten. Children were on the "at-risk" list when their reading, writing, and math work was not on grade level at the end of the school year. I was collecting information in order to look into the potential that she had learning disabilities due to the contrast in strengths and weaknesses that she showed in her academics.

At the time of the year that the podcast work began, she was reading at an almost end of first grade level, about half a year behind where she would be expected to be. Her writing work was at a beginning first grade level, but her oral and listening skills were on grade level as was much of her math work. Subrina was a “B1” level (just above beginner) English language learner although she had been in an English speaking school for 2.5 years. Her low progress in English acquisition was another reason she was placed on the at-risk list. Subrina could not read or write in her first language of Spanish either, but, as mentioned earlier, she was part of the Spanish reading and writing club offered by the school to assist children in remaining fluent in their home language. Subrina was often involved with class discussions that were all in English, and she understood enough that she asked many questions as well. Despite her struggles with academics and the dominant language of English in the classroom, she “loved” school and worked very hard. By the end of the school year, she missed the grade level benchmark by a few points.

Subrina also worked hard to make sure her friends did not know that reading and writing were difficult for her. I observed Subrina closely because I knew she would enjoy working on a “show,” so I wanted to see where she would feel most comfortable joining the work. I closely watched to see what would be her literacy strength while creating the podcast and how I could best foster and assist her participation with the podcast work.

I noted in my journal that I believed Subrina would be highly motivated to push herself and her efforts in reading and writing for the podcast. Typically excited about school, I saw her excitement towards the podcast as infectious and a way to get other children who were more hesitant to regard the podcast as safe or “ok.” Subrina also

enjoyed doing activities with her classmates and that involved an element of pretend. In this sense, I saw the act of using a microphone to record her work as a specific motivator since it brought in a part of “rock star” or “celebrity.”

I also saw the idea of having a microphone and a large audience to change some kids from being shy to having quite a boisterous personality as it also gave others a push to find the language they wanted to use so they could say more on the podcast.

-Journal Entry 3/07/07

I saw some of the kids come to life in a different way as they imitated their favorite TV stars (Hannah Montana, characters from “the Suite Life”) and music artists (Britney Spears) when they practiced holding a microphone. Subrina particularly came to life as a “TV news reporter.” Most of all, she used the time to talk with her friends in Spanish. Seeing Subrina use the microphone opportunity to use her first language caught on quickly with other classmates who spoke a language other than English as their first language. The microphone was time that the children could become other people – the microphone made such changes “safe.” I looked forward to seeing how Subrina would further her work with the podcast due to the risks she found she could handle with the microphone.

The work with the podcast created a new means for participation in a class activity particularly for the English Language Learners. Nixon & Gutierrez (2008) discuss how in many traditional classrooms, the way play and the use of imagination with younger grades is often dismissed or included in a way that it is overly structured. They believe that the use of play in the classroom is especially important for English learners

as it affords them time to participate in learning environments that are not part of scripted learning models or “readiness.” Further, Nixon & Gutierrez believe that such play and participation in imaginary worlds “can support learning and development by changing how individuals see the world, how they act in the world, and how they think about possibilities for the future” (Nixon & Gutierrez, 2008, p. 125). Participating in the podcast opened many opportunities for the children to play and use their imaginations as they constructed and produced their shows each week.

Subrina’s part in the final show demonstrated her growth in confidence with reading, writing and participating in literacy activities with friends. The topic or theme for the show was something she was comfortable with and that she knew she could contribute to best: moving away and friendships. Since Subrina was a student that was in the class from the beginning of the year, she was one who said good-bye to the five students who moved. Each time she was very sad to say good bye, but for some children, they were learning “how” to say good bye. Also as mentioned, Subrina had many friendships in the class and was a kind and caring friend to many of her classmates. For Subrina, the topic was one that motivated her and kept her interest. With her area of knowledge being so high with the topic, it made for some of Subrina’s most extensive work, but more than that, a time where she was most comfortable that she could share so much for the show.

Subrina: Hi my name is Subrina. We want to talk about the end of school and how we are moving schools and different houses. We are so sad we are leaving because we love our bestest friends who always take care of us. We will miss them on the last day of school. SO MUCH because we love each other a lot.

What about Antarctica?

During one of our planning meetings for the podcast, the children spent time looking through the website of the podcast Vivian was hosting and noticed what they described as an error. We were observing her site in order to make decisions on what we wanted to put on our site. In order to do this, we closely looked at the banner across the top of the screen that carried her title and how the words were placed within the banner. We looked at the colors she chose for the banner, the background for the webpage, and the various headings throughout the site. The children noticed she had links to other podcasts and websites around the page as well, which led listeners to more information about the topics discussed on her podcast.

Lastly, the children noticed there was a map on the site with red dots on it. I explained to the class that it was a map of the world like the map we had in our classroom and the dots represented the listeners in various countries around the world. As we looked closer, we observed that the dots were different sizes, which translated to the number of people who listened to her podcast in different places around the world. The children were impressed with how many “dots” there were on Vivian’s map and how they were all over the many continents. Then one student said, “What about Antarctica?”

Reading the Clustr Map

As we looked even closer at the map, the child’s observation was correct: Antarctica was not on the map. The initial reaction by the class to the student’s observation was that we needed to let Vivian know that her map was incorrect. We needed to “alert Vivian that the makers of the map forgot to put in Antarctica,” as the

children said. As a class, we went to work to contact Vivian to inform her that the continent of Antarctica that was missing from her map.

While we sat on the floor, my laptop in my lap, and began composing our email to Vivian, the children continued to discuss how Antarctica was not on the map. The conversation began to turn from how Vivian's map of the world was inaccurate to the question of what this meant for her listeners that lived in Antarctica. Without putting Antarctica on the map, the children questioned how readers of the map would know how many listeners were there. The children went further with their questions to get to the fact that the people of Antarctica were not represented on the map, so they were not included in Vivian's count of listeners either. From our continued conversation of what it meant to leave out or forget to include Antarctica on the map, our email to Vivian came out as follows:

February 12, 2007

Dear Vivian,

All of us in our 2nd grade class are looking at your podcast site. We noticed on your map of the world that Antarctica is missing. Do you think there are listeners there?

Love,

Stapler's M-1

2nd grade

--Email exchange 2/12/07

At first, the children thought the makers of the map forgot to put Antarctica on the world map, which is why they asked Vivian if she knew about the problem with the map.

For the children, the map was wrong because it only had 6 continents and not the 7 that they knew were in the world. This beginning inquiry of the “missing” continent soon led to their second concern that was directed to Vivian and her podcast. The children asked Vivian if she was aware of the missing continent also because she would not be able to see if people in Antarctica were listening to her podcast.

The observation of the map was significant for our class and our social studies curriculum for the year. Part of the second grade social studies curriculum involved being able to use maps. More specifically, the standards included knowing and being able to locate the seven continents of the world. As the children’s teacher, the observation that the students made about leaving out Antarctica was an informal assessment for their understandings of what the continents were and how they were represented on a map. The children’s concern for what could happen because Antarctica was left off the map took our learning to a more critical place.

The observation was now the beginnings of a conversation about people not being represented or counted on the map or about how people can be included or excluded. The problem of leaving out Antarctica for the children meant that there was a continent/country of people who were not included. They felt that leaving out Antarctica was unfair to the people of the continent because readers of the map would not know about their continent. They also felt it was unfair for Vivian because she would not know about the listeners there, which would create an inaccurate count of her podcast listeners. Writing the email to Vivian was the beginning of how they took action to make a change.

Literacy action

The children chose to send Vivian an email because of the urgency of their concern. In the children's experiences and observations of email, people responded "fast." The children felt Vivian could respond to their observation and question "fast" because "email goes straight to the person." Their ideas of how quickly they could get a response was evident and appreciated by the class as Vivian sent the following response to the class the next day:

February 13, 2007

What an excellent question. I think I will write to the clustr map folks to ask them about 'missing Antarctica' or if you would rather do it then please feel free to act on this.

Can't wait to see you.

Vivian

--Email exchange 2/13/07

The children were very excited to receive a response from Vivian addressing their concerns for her map. Vivian's response not only kept their concern active, but she also demonstrated how to further work on the problem. In Vivian's statement of "I think I will write to the clustr map folks to ask them about 'missing Antarctica'" she demonstrates to the children of the next step to take in order to get more information about the map. Further, Vivian keeps the ownership of the observation with the children as she states "if you would rather do it then please feel free to act on this." In saying this, she encourages the children's further work and recognizes that they too can work with the company to alert them that their maps are "missing" Antarctica.

What stood out to me more than to the students in Vivian's email was her statement to the children "to act" on the problem. Vivian's background with critical literacy and her work to use literacy to take action were evident in her word choice. Her response modeled the use of letter writing to take action as well as re-enforced to the children that their first step in emailing/writing the letter to her was already taking an active part in searching for information, creating awareness of a problem, and ultimately, taking a part in making a change.

Moments following Vivian's response, her husband also responded to the children's concern. Andy wrote in his email response:

February 13, 2007

Hello Stapler's M-1 2nd Grade Class,

I actually have an answer to your question about the lack of Internet traffic on the CLIP map for Antarctica.

It seems that the Internet connection in the Antarctic is very very slow...in fact they are only able to get "dial-up" speeds...This means that they can only have enough bandwidth to be able to check e-mail and are not able to use a browser to visit any websites, like the CLIP website.

In fact, a fellow podcaster was asking us podcasters to send CDs and MP3 files to the only radio station in Antarctica so that the people living down in Antarctica could have something to listen to besides the wind and the penguins.

--Email exchange 2/13/07

Andy's response gave the children gave the children some potential answers to their question about "missing Antarctica" as well as some ideas of how they could get their podcast to Antarctica so the people there would be able to listen to podcasts. The children saw Andy's answers only as "potential" answers because they still saw the map of the world as incorrect since it did not include Antarctica. They did not see leaving the

continent off of the map as “fair” because it made it seem like “the continent did not exist”, as the children stated, “so the people there could be forgotten”.

The children were content with Andy’s response of why Antarctica was left off the map and did not follow their initial inquiries about the map. The children did not go further with their questions about Antarctica being left off the map or how to assist Antarctica with hearing their podcast. The conversations within the classroom and with Vivian and Andy over email brought the children’s thinking beyond their initial concern that the map was inaccurate. The children’s thinking went further to consider what leaving out Antarctica on the map meant for the people. The conversations moved to what it meant to be left out or excluded. From Andy’s response that the people there did not have strong enough Internet to hear the podcasts, the conversations were about what it meant not to be able to have the same technology as we did. These conversations became about what it meant to have access or in the case of the podcasting in Antarctica, not to be able to have access.

The class use of the Clustr Map

The Clustr Map was included on the 100% Kids site as well so they too could document and learn where their listeners lived in the world. Often, the Clustr Map was the part of the podcast the children wanted to know about first when we listened to the podcast on Mondays. We would “check the dots” to see where they listeners lived and to see how many people listened. The children asked who lived in the different states and countries that were marked as they worked to figure out who listened. Some of the time the children knew for their aunts and uncles especially across the United States told them

they would “tune in” to hear their podcast on their computers. Other times, it was Vivian’s colleagues at various universities around the world. The children also were quick to show each other where “their countries” were on the map with many of them hoping that a dot would appear.

As we continued to make connections between our Clustr map, the “dots,” and our classroom map, we used post-it notes to note on our classroom map where our listeners lived. This moved into further lessons about the continents and comparisons of where most of our listeners lived. These conversations also gave us a place for conversations about why we did not have listeners in some countries and continents, which stemmed from our early inquiries about Antarctica. Finally, we received a “dot” in one of the “children’s countries,” which led our class, Vivian, and I to a new place with our thinking and work with the podcast.

A dot in one of the “children’s countries” appeared in the country of Columbia. Scarlett and Martha were both very excited as their families were from Columbia. Martha, who was a quiet student, began to talk about her grandparents who lived in Columbia and how she could not go there to see them. She continued to talk about how much she loved her grandparents though and how much she knew they loved her too. She shared that they were her mom’s parents and that her mom did not get to see them a lot either.

At the end of the school year, Martha’s mother came up to Vivian and I and shared that her parents were the ones in Columbia. Her parents listened to the podcast each week so they could hear their granddaughter’s voice and learn about what she was

learning in school in America. The mother thanked us for providing their family with a link between the grandparents and their granddaughter.

This final example of what the podcast did for the children, and more so the families, was more than Vivian or I ever thought could happen. From the onset of the project we knew the children would be reaching a new audience through the use of technology, but we did not realize that we were also assisting in connecting families who could not otherwise access each other. The podcast not only provided a means for the children to express their concerns and opinions to a greater audience, but the podcast also became a vehicle for demonstrating the learning of the children. The mother's story about how the student's grandparents could hear their granddaughter speaking Spanish and talking about what she was doing in her American school provided Vivian and I with a view from the familial affordances of the podcast. Such affordances were beyond what we considered when we started the project with the children.

After the school year ended and into the next year I continued to check the podcast to see how many people still listened and where they lived. What again struck me was how many new dots were on the map of the children's home countries. Many of the children went home to be with other members of their families over the summer, so they showed their families what they did in school. Some of the families moved back to their home countries, so I saw their "dots" too.

Summary

The preceding narratives detail some of the activities and moments that occurred during the creation of the 100% Kids podcast in the 2nd grade classroom of the study. As noted, “narratives do not speak for themselves or have strength without being analyzed. Narratives require interpretation when used as data in social research” (Reissman, 2005, p. 2). This chapter focused on three narratives that represent the data. In then next chapter I revisit the three narratives by interpreting and analyzing them from a critical literacy perspective.

Chapter 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on exploring the literacies produced in a second grade classroom, through podcasting, where as the classroom teacher, I attempted to frame my teaching from a critical literacy perspective. A case study approach was used in order to gather the details necessary for creating the narratives used in the analyses. Data used to create the narratives were, anecdotal notes, journal entries, state standards for learning, classroom artifacts, photographs, transcripts of conversations, and audio recordings including the podcast episodes. Data triangulation supported the construction of the selected narratives, which were then connected to arguments in the existing literature. Such arguments include the changes in children's literacy work when engaged in critical literacy and the literacy work that occurs with the use of technology.

The narratives that make up this case study present a close up view of the literacies produced in the classroom. The following questions were used to guide the research and assist in the construction of the narratives:

1. What literacies are produced through the process of podcasting?
 - What is the instructional value of podcasting in a 2nd grade classroom?
2. What social practices develop through podcasting?
 - What are the affects of these social practices on student identity in the classroom?

The narratives were analyzed using a critical literacy framework informed by sociocultural theory. In particular the key tenets of critical literacy described in chapter 2 were used to highlight the literacies produced through podcasting.

What Literacies Are Produced Through The Process Of Podcasting?

The narratives exemplify how the children's work on the podcast exceeded the 2nd grade Virginia Standards of Learning for English. In the opening statement for the English Standards of Learning of Virginia for Grade Two states: "The student will expand vocabulary by speaking and listening effectively in classroom discussion, use a combination of strategies when reading, and read age appropriate familiar selections with fluency and expression," (VDOE, 2003). Table 2 offers an overview of the Virginia Standards for English for Second Grade and the literacies produced through podcasting from a critical literacy perspective.

In fact our work on the podcast was cross-disciplinary involving science, social studies and math concepts as well. For example, science standards were met through the children's investigations of environmental issues and their studies of endangered species. They worked on social studies standards as they explored what it means to be a responsible citizen as well as used their map skills to understand where podcast listeners lived. Finally, the children demonstrated their understanding of time as they addressed previous shows or shows in the future. The references to the various shows assisted them with the practical purposes of a calendar and time.

Table 2. Second grade standards and our literacy work

English Standards of Learning of Virginia, 2003	What we did
<p>Oral Standards</p> <p>2.1 <i>the students will demonstrate an understanding of oral language structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expand listening and speaking vocabularies</i> • <i>Use words that reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge</i> • <i>Clarify and explain words and ideas orally and</i> • <i>Give three step directions</i> <p>2.3 <i>the students will oral communication skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use oral language for different purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain</i> • <i>Share stories orally with an audience</i> • <i>Participate as a contributor or leader in a group</i> • <i>Summarize information shared orally by others</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retelling of their experiences • Adjusting oral delivery of stories according to content (reporting, joke telling, singing, introductions, thank yous) • Class meetings: decision making discussions for what to include in weekly show or how to organize the show • Varying speaking parts each week
<p>Reading Standards</p> <p>2.5 <i>the students will use meaning clues and language structure when reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use information in the story to read words</i> <p>2.8 <i>the students will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction and non-fiction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relate previous experiences to the topic and to ask and answer questions about what is read</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children read websites, magazines, fiction and non-fiction texts to create informative scripts or scripts to entertain • Used background knowledge from work in science classes to understand which texts to use when generating scripts • Understood that some scripts were for reading and spoken for entertainment and some were to inform
<p>Writing Standards</p> <p>2.11 <i>the students will write stories, letters, and simple explanations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Generate ideas before writing</i> • <i>Organize writing with a beginning, middle, and end</i> • <i>Revise writing for clarity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in large and small groups to generate ideas for scripts • Worked together to be sure their audiences would understand their stories or concerns • Revise their scripts in order for classmates to be able to read them

Standards based on the Virginia Standards of Learning: Virginia Department of Education. (n.d). Standards of learning in effect for Virginia public schools. Retrieved July 15, 2006, from www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml

What social practices develop through podcasting?

Our podcasting project not only produced numerous literacies, it also created spaces for negotiating identities, developing social consciousness by understanding the perspective of others, and developing the children's analytic skills.

Negotiating Identities

As children participate with a critical literacy curriculum, they develop questions of texts and the world that they may not have before. Such questions by students in a critical literacy classroom are brought to the forefront of classroom conversations as a place to begin discussions. As the children's interests become focal points for such conversations, children's roles shift to those of co-constructors of learning. "Becoming critically literate means building *the identity* of a person who does some things and not others. It comes about as a result of trying on what it is like to be a certain kind of person in a certain kind of social space," (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2008, p. 89). Meaning that children begin to participate in some conversations and not others as they form and develop a sense of where and when they need and want more information about activities and actions in particular situations. The children begin to understand that there is time to seek more information before agreement.

Negotiating identities connects with the tenets of critical literacy particularly under the idea of how views and ideologies are embedded in text. With such an understanding of text, learners grow to understand that they can be positioned by texts and in return, how learners can use text to position others. Through such work with text, people begin the construction and negotiations of identity. This critical awareness becomes part of how they participate and when they participate in various social interactions and situations.

Positioning and re-positioning. As defined by Gee (2005), identities are different ways of participating within different social groups, cultures and institutions. The work of the podcast brought new ways of being and new ways of learning for some children. Gee (2003) addresses learning and identity, suggesting that “all deep learning –that is active, critical learning –is inextricably caught up in identity in a variety of ways” (p. 59). Further, he discusses how people need to be committed to such learning by creating new identities for themselves. These “new” identities mean that learners work to see themselves as the kind of person who can participate in the learning and believe that their efforts will be valued and accepted by the working group (Gee, 2003).

For Peter, his actions and behaviors throughout the podcast demonstrated a process of shifting identities. As Peter committed to various roles over time in the podcast shows, he gradually committed to deeper levels of participation. In doing so, he tested out the work and the expectations in order to understand where his contributions could be most valued and where he felt most comfortable. At the same time, he was also working to understand where he could grow as a learner and as an accepted member of the group. Peter’s initial statements about not participating with the podcast were the beginning of his negotiation with identity. Peter did not want to be part of the unfamiliar work. For Peter, his discomfort was part of an identity process that ultimately led him to discover new aspects of his classroom behaviors and actions. Peter found multiple places to contribute and participate in meaningful ways as *Peter* saw necessary.

Peter’s identity work gave him new means for approaching experiences in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom. The stretch from his classroom identity as Peter into his out of school identity was most apparent when he created the necklace

where he spelled out his name, “Drake.” Peter’s necklace demonstrated a pride that he held in his work as “Drake,” which demonstrated to me that his various attempts with his work on the podcast were of value to him and his learning.

By changing his approach to the work and learning involved in the podcast he was able to take more risks and open up new possibilities for himself and the other students in the class. Such identity work provided him time to analyze what he wanted to give of himself to the podcast as well as what he wanted the audiences and participants to gain from his work. Gee writes of such work overall, “humans, when they are thinking and operating at their best, see the world in terms of affordances for actions they want to take. Thus, we see the world differently as we change our needs and desires for action” (Gee, 2007, p.107).

Dominant language and privilege. Studies of children’s construction of identities have come to the forefront recently (Gee, 2003; Marsh, 2005; Vasquez, 2010). This work is about who children are, how they see themselves, and who they want to be in the world. Such work embraces the complexity of children’s everyday lives particularly as they navigate daily experiences at home, school, and their social places. Subrina recognized that the podcast was only in English, which meant that the majority of families in the class would not be able to understand the podcast due to being native Spanish speakers.

Subrina recognized how the podcast was positioning others if only the dominant language of English was used. The families who did not speak English were being positioned by the podcast as it excluded those who did not speak English. These families were implicitly being told that in order to be part of the children’s podcast

audience, they needed to understand English. Languages other than English were not considered until Subrina brought her concern to the class' attention.

Positioned by being left out. When the class realized that Antarctica was left off the Clustr Map, the children began to question what the text was “really” saying if it left off Antarctica. Their reading of “missing Antarctica” became a social issue as they viewed “missing Antarctica” as leaving out a group of people. To them, the people of Antarctica could not be represented as listeners for their country/continent was not included even as a potential place for listeners. The children read leaving out Antarctica as the creators of the map saying that the people there were not important enough or that they had the potential of hearing the podcast (or being counted when other texts used the Clustr Map to collect information).

Janks (2010) writes, “‘Who gets access to what?’ is a key question for a critical approach to education in general. ‘Who gets access to which languages, linguistic varieties, literacies, genres, discourses?’” (p. 127). Such questions are central to social issues involving the inclusion and exclusion of certain people. As noted by the children in their reading of the Clustr map, the people of Antarctica were not only excluded from the map, but through their email conversation with Andy, they learned that the people of Antarctica do not have access to the Internet connections like many other parts of the world.

Identity assumptions and surprises. Due to Peter's direct statement of “I do not want to do the podcast” and indirect statement when he lied that his parents would not give him permission to participate in the podcast, I recognized that Peter's apprehension about participating in the podcast was not just about resistance to what he felt was a

mandatory activity. At the start of the podcast work I let the class know that it was up to them to do what they felt comfortable doing, whether it was group writing, speaking or creating artwork. Though I created ways for my students to participate that I felt would provide opportunities to meet the many needs of the children, the opportunities were created from my perspective of what I thought the children needed or would want. When students, such as Peter, reacted in unexpected ways within the context of the new podcast work, I saw their actions as defiance instead of critical explorations of identity. Peter no longer fit into the identity that I associated with him.

Peter's and his classmates' work with identity became apparent as the children choose their pseudonyms in order to maintain their anonymity on the Internet. The children called these their "radio names" due to the connection many of the children made of the podcast to the radio. Peter chose the name Drake, which I learned at the end of the year from his mother was the name of one of his favorite TV show characters. Peter was excited and quick to choose this name. Peter's choice of "Drake" as his radio name gave Peter a place to bring to life and take on the identity of his favorite TV character. When I learned more about the TV character, I discovered the playfulness and high energy that I also knew of Peter outside of the podcast conversations. By taking on the radio name of "Drake," Peter also gave himself the space to be the more jovial, energetic person he wanted.

Social Consciousness

Within critical literacy frameworks for teaching, teachers address issues of social justice and equity that arise from the social and political conditions in the communities where students live (Vasquez, 2004). The idea of learners' cultural backgrounds as being

often central in the classroom again follows the tenets of critical literacy. What this meant for the students' experiences, activities and curriculum was that the issues and topics for discussion came from the children and what they saw as important in their lives and their communities. By putting the children, their concerns and questions at the center of the curriculum, the children and teacher co-construct a critical curriculum that allows for social issues and issues of equity to be authentically and purposefully addressed.

Curriculum construction. By co-constructing the curriculum with the students, I was able to base the curriculum on the children's concerns and triumphs that they encountered in their everyday lives (Vasquez, 2004). Vasquez (2004) writes that such curriculum work is a way to "engage in the literacy work that would offer students more opportunities for contributing to social change and that would give them access to more powerful literacies –that is, literacies that could make a difference in the students' lives, for example, as young people, females, or underrepresented minorities" (p. 27). The interest and investment that came from the students into the podcast work was far greater than what I thought. I knew that building on children's interests would assist with raising the children's initial understanding and investment in the learning, but I did not expect the children to have the level of ownership that they did of the project. By bringing the children's interests and observed needs to the forefront of my work with the children, the students and I became partners in learning. Their observations of what was happening in the classroom, school, and the world, came through the eyes of twenty young individuals who came from culturally, economically, and ethnically diverse backgrounds. With these many perspectives we constructed a classroom atmosphere in which we learned to listen to each other and learn from each other. In doing so, our conversations often lent

themselves to raising great social questions that we may not have explored without such an open time for conversation.

The children demonstrated their familial pride as they were constantly looking for “their countries” or the countries from where their families originated. They wanted to show each other where they came from and use the map as a place to begin sharing stories and information about themselves. The children had authentic reasons for understanding the map and where they were from in the world. This was part of a curriculum that brought together the standardized curriculum, the children’s experiences, and finally creating a critical curriculum as the teacher allowed time for questions about the text (in this case a map) and who or what was represented. These critical readings to be sure that their countries were represented provided the children with a more intrinsic reason for wanting to learn about maps.

Globalized problem-solving. Through the construction of the podcast, the children of the class had another platform for expressing their questions and concerns about the world as well as a forum for problem-solving with an audience beyond their classroom walls. The children grew accustomed to having opportunities to share their ideas and bring concerns up to their classmates due to the class meetings that were part of the classroom’s decision-making process.

In the class meeting forum, the children’s voices were heard on topics that they brought up for discussion. The class chose the topics for the podcast as well, and they were in charge of how to deliver the material to the audience whether it was through art, music, comedy, or reporting. In order to keep such decision-making in the hands of the children, I worked to maintain a role of facilitator and guide. I wanted to provide

suggestions when asked and structure when needed, but to be sure that throughout the process the children's interests were first. The children worked on this forum for decision-making and problem-solving from the beginning of the school year. As they brought their concerns to their more global audience through the podcast, the children already knew how to address complicated topics with a group of people. The children saw their bigger audience as an opportunity to raise social awareness with more people, not as a bigger audience that brought intimidation.

Exclusion by language. The example of Subrina asking to have the podcast spoken in Spanish as well as English provides insight to how bringing the children's interests and backgrounds into the curriculum raises awareness to what may have gone untouched without her voicing her thoughts. Though I was aware of the different languages spoken in the class and I felt that I did well in working with the children and their families in their home languages, I did not include the podcast in such consideration.

Subrina was very proud of her family and her language and was very much aware of the many families in our class who spoke Spanish as well. She wanted to make sure that those families would be able to understand the ideas that came through the podcast. Her awareness and sensitivity to the families who did not speak English heightened the social awareness or lack of awareness that came with the podcast. Our podcast that was spoken in English excluded many families of the class. This helped us take up the bigger question of how people are excluded due to languages in particular. Subrina's awareness of her needs and her family's needs led us to this greater social issue. As their teacher, this also informed me how my practices to honor and uphold the children's first

languages impacted how the children viewed the importance of their languages at school.

Analytic Skill Development

Comber asserts that early childhood education is often discussed with the ideas to maintain the thought that young children are innocent and naïve in nature. She counters this perception with the idea of young children as being “only too aware of what’s fair, what’s different, who gets the best deal long before they start school. They learn about these lessons about power from everyday life” (Comber, 2001, p. 5). The tenet of critical literacy that brings forward the idea that texts are not neutral, for they carry particular views and ideologies (Larson & Marsh, 2005; Vasquez, 2010), assists with the children’s discovery of what their favorite books, TV shows or school materials tell them in addition to a story. As Comber notes that children are already aware and are able to identify when a situation is fair or unfair, they apply this understanding to their school work and to their work in their communities.

Reading what is left out. The children’s recognition of the missing continent is an example of these early analytic skills at play. How a teacher takes up such observations is where the critical curriculum begins. The children’s reading of the Clustr map is an example of children reading with a critical eye. The discussion and exploration of “missing Antarctica” demonstrates how the children were reading what was on the page, but also what was not on the page. They were developing the awareness that there is more to their texts than what is displayed on the page.

The concern of leaving out Antarctica began with the children’s view of an inaccurate map that only contained 6 out of the 7 continents. Through further discussion,

the issue became the view of how the map was excluding a group of people, which makes the question one of a greater social issue of leaving out the people of Antarctica. In this sense, the children saw the creators of the map as only viewing certain parts of the world as important enough to be represented on the map.

For the children, the ramification of the incomplete map meant that people, such as Vivian, would ultimately only get to know and recognize the listeners or potential listeners of some parts of the world: the parts of the world that the creator of the map deemed important. Though the children did not further explore why the creators of the Clustr map did not include Antarctica, the critical reading of the map heightened their awareness that creators or composers of texts can leave out groups of people unintentionally or intentionally. From the children's work of recognizing that Antarctica was missing and that they brought it to the attention of others, they learned that they have a responsibility to take up such exclusions or inclusions in texts. This responsibility is to themselves and to other readers that texts can be flawed and that texts can be questioned.

Understanding what is represented. As the children applied their knowledge of the continents of the world with their reading of the Clustr map, they again carried authentic and purposeful reasons for the identifying countries and continents. With each check for where the dots were on the map, the children learned about the location of countries and continents relevant to where they lived. They made comparisons of how people so far away (ex. Australia) could hear their voices through the Internet, and then wondered if people could hear them in Iceland because there were no "dots" there.

Understanding The Perspective Of Others

Within a critical literacy curriculum, the traditional curriculum still exists, but it is built upon through varying questions and experiences brought up by the teacher and the students. The teacher's role becomes one that assists children in developing "a meta-awareness and a meta-language for what they can already do and to assist them in applying these resources to the texts and situations of school life" (Comber, 2001, p. 8). By working with the curriculum and the children's questions and experiences with everyday life situations, the teacher's role also involves mediating discussions in order for the children to learn and understand how to work collectively to solve problems or to critically consider perspectives other than their own. The children's lives and concerns become central within a critical literacy classroom. As children take on such complex social issues and work together to understand them, they also begin to understand each other's differences. By beginning with themselves and what makes them unique individuals, they carry such understanding into their communities and everyday lives. What makes this work critical is how they work to make changes or address situations that they deem "unfair" as demonstrated in the previous examples. On the receiving side of their work are people and communities who agree with their sentiments, but who also may not agree.

Throughout the children's work to address differences and inequities, they are also learning how to understand the perspective of others. Text production and design also provide experiences for the children to understand the power and privilege that they experience or reinforce with their actions. This tenet of critical literacy brings together

the implicit and explicit critical work as the children bring forward and make visible the power issues embedded in texts and society.

Class meetings. The decision making process for the podcast was often central to the class meetings. As the children decided on the order of the various segments of the show and what topics to address each week, there were negotiations among the children. Their negotiations were as difficult as not being able to agree on what topic would be best for their show to easier negotiations such as the need for the joke section to follow the serious opening segment of the show in order to “give their audience a break.” At the core of such conversations was the language and words the children used to express their agreement, disagreement and suggestions.

Though not formally addressed by the data represented in the previous chapter, such class meetings were the base for the work of the children. Prior to the podcast, the class worked on how to talk with each other. They learned how they could phrase their opinions without implying that another person’s opinion was wrong. Such phrasing included, “I disagree with what _____ said because...” (Bomer & Bomer, 2000). Through continual work with how to talk with each other, the children developed a discourse that grounded the class. Their discussions considered the idea that they would not always agree, and that was “okay.” The children developed an awareness for others’ opinions and positions, which assisted with how they listened to others, but also how when they thought something was “unfair” they thought about how to help or act on it.

Difficult conversations. The children agreed that their podcast topics were sometimes very serious. The shows’ topics often came from class meeting topics that the children struggled with or where many strong opinions were expressed. Although class

meetings followed a structure that considered and invited all opinions on various topics, sometimes the conversations became personal. As the children considered ideas of how animals at the zoo were in cages, for an example, some children thought about how they had a dog at home that was in a crate. Other children saw this as keeping a dog in a cage and some children thought this was mean. The children then labeled the child's family that kept their dog in a crate as "mean." Through further conversations the children worked through their differences of how to keep animals safe, but because of how important this topic was to the class, it was very important for the children to use the topic for the show. The bigger question and work was put into the idea of zoos and how those animals were kept in cages.

Peter's work to start the Jokey, Joke, Joke section of the show was part of his awareness that the classroom atmosphere was becoming too serious or too emotional, so there needed to be some "relief." As topics for the shows took on issues such as Global warming, animals in cages, and pollution, Peter wanted people to think about these complex matters, think about what they could do to help with such matters, and then relax. His efforts were not to take away from the seriousness of the issues, but rather to let listeners know that they (the podcasters) understood that these topics were difficult.

How would you feel? The children further developed their sense of empathy as they considered what it would be like to be left out or excluded. They all agreed that it made them sad when they were left out of games or were told they could not be with certain friends. The idea of how sad other people must feel when their language was left out or their country or continent was left off of a map are examples of when they felt like they "understood" how sad those people must feel. Again, this refers back to the ideas of

Comber and how children at a young age already have ideas of fair and unfair, and in this example the understanding of what it is like to be “left out” as well.

For Subrina, she saw the podcast being only in English as a place where many listeners would be left out, including her family. For her, that made her “sad” because she wanted her mother to hear her hard work on the podcast and for her mother to understand the messages she shared. By Subrina bringing the language issue to the class’ attention, she raised the awareness that other families would be excluded due to language as well. She voiced her thoughts and followed through on their importance, which was what brought about the need for the podcast to be in the two languages used most in the class.

In the case of “missing Antarctica,” the children found it difficult to understand why the creator of the map would leave off a whole country or continent. Throughout the children’s school year it was integral to class conversations to locate someone’s home country on our classroom map or to show the class the countries where children visited on vacations. For the class, there were moments of panic and sadness when they thought their countries were not on the maps we looked at, so for a country to be left out was very serious for them. Leaving out Antarctica meant that those people did not count and as one child noted it meant those people did not “exist.” The children, again, believed this was unfair and that it was sad for the group of people to be excluded.

Recommendations for Future Research

The limitation of this study is that it focuses on one group of children in one classroom. Nevertheless the study contributes to the field of critical literacy and technology by describing and offering a demonstration of the literacies produced, in a

classroom for young children, while podcasting from a critical literacy perspective. While other studies exist that explore the use of new technology in the classroom (Evans, 2006; Marsh, 2006) there are very few accounts that do so from a critical literacy perspective (Marsh, 2006). There is a definite need for further research.

In the future I see three areas that I feel are in need of further examination; further studies, in other settings, on the literacies produced through technology like podcasting, continued research on the use of podcasting and critical literacy with English language learners, and exploration of podcasting in other areas of the curriculum such as Mathematics or Science.

Implications and Conclusions

Children in today's classrooms are exposed to a wide range of texts. Such literacy experiences require a range of strategies for meaning making and understanding. This implies that teachers need to adjust literacy instruction not only to build on and develop these literacy skills, but also to understand how to work with a wide variety of text. Carrington (2005) describes today's society as text-rich with new communication technologies and new texts and literacy practices that are changing the way young children see themselves and the world. As such children are no longer passive and unworldly with their learning of literacy and new technologies, but are active participants in their learning (Vasquez, 2010). Carrington (2008) asserts, "For literacy education to make a real difference in the lives and futures of the young people who move in and out of complex social fields and who are growing up in a post-traditional risk society, it is

necessary to acknowledge that childhood is not what it used to be and that curricula, school hierarchies and classrooms cannot, therefore, continue to be what they used to be” (p.164). At the same time, such changes in literacy education involving new technologies also implicates the need for further professional development with technology for teachers as well as encouragement to explore technology with the students during the school day.

Through this study I hope to have provided an example of what curricula in the 21st century should be, by describing and offering a demonstration of the critical literacies produced, in a classroom for young children, while podcasting. In doing so I hope this study offers a demonstration of possibilities for what a curriculum might look like that makes a difference in the lives of young people.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Dear Families,

I am co-authoring or authoring possible, articles, chapters, and books on literacy and I would be honored if you would allow me to use artifacts of your child's learning as well as photos of your child in these publications. All names of the children will be changed.

Included are two copies of this letter. Please keep one for your records and sign and return one copy to:

Carol Felderman

Bailey's Elementary School

Thank you for your agreement to this request.

Sincerely,

I, _____ consent to have my child's photographs and work (writings and drawings) used in publications on literacy authored or co-authored by Carol Felderman and published by a reputable publisher of educational texts.

I, _____ consent to have my child's work used in publications on literacy authored or co-authored by Carol Felderman and published by a reputable publisher of educational texts. I do NOT want my child's photograph to appear in such texts.

Child's name: _____

Address: _____

Parent/ guardians's signature: _____

Date signed: _____

APPENDIX B

Update Letter to Families

March 12, 2007

Dear Families,

After 100% Kids Show #3, I continue to be extremely proud of the students and their creativity and hard work. I did not know we had so many extremely talented reporters, artists, musicians, joke tellers and researchers in the class. The one part I did know is about their concern for their families, fairness and awareness about the future of the world. They are using all of their many talents to raise awareness for people throughout the world to make it a better place as their songs say.

Their work provides all of them for a place to write scripts and practice reading scripts with feeling and a serious point to get out to an audience. This is part of why I am seeing amazing growth in both areas of their work. They also use critical reading and writing questions as they address their audience in their scripts and have learned to truly look at not only problems that may come up in our classroom or school, but also in larger communities throughout the world.

Again, I am very proud of our "world changers" and hope you enjoy this week's show!
www.bazmakaz.com/100kids/

All my best,

Carol

APPENDIX C

Research Timeline

Negotiating Critical Literacies in a Second Grade Classroom Timeline

Date	Work Done	Data Produced
September 2006	<p>Meetings and discussion regarding possible ways of creating spaces for critical literacy in a second grade classroom.</p> <p>Getting to know the students and what literacies they bring to the classroom.</p> <p>Creating an audit trail as a visual representation of learning and thinking.</p>	<p>Journal Entries</p> <p>Artifacts of Student Learning</p> <p>Audit Trail</p>
October 2006	<p>Negotiating a curriculum at the intersection of Critical Literacy and the Arts</p> <p>Compiling a reading list including, Larson and Marsh, Kress and Van Leeuwen...</p>	<p>Journal Entries</p> <p>Artifacts of Student Learning</p> <p>Audit Trail</p>
November 2006	<p>Re-framing the critical literacy work to include the use of new information technologies based on the children's interest in internet searches, e-mail, audio taping themselves, listening to other kids on podcasts and becoming interested in podcasting themselves.</p>	<p>Journal Entries</p> <p>Blog Posts and Comments</p> <p>Artifacts of Student Learning</p> <p>Audit Trail</p> <p>Written narratives of life in the classroom</p>
December 2006	<p>Expanding our reading list to include resources on technology</p>	

	<p>and new literacies.</p> <p>Conference proposal writing – NCTE.</p> <p>Working on the IRB forms.</p>	
January 2007	<p>Discussion re podcasting with the 2nd graders based on observations of their interest in technology and new literacies.</p> <p>Re-framing our work at the intersection of Critical Literacy and New Literacies/New Information Communication Technologies</p> <p>Continuing to expand our reading list to read further about new literacies including work by Lankshear and Knobel.</p> <p>Discussion of publication ideas and other venues for presenting research.</p>	<p>Journal Entries</p> <p>Blog Posts and Comments</p> <p>Artifacts of Student Learning</p> <p>Audit Trail</p> <p>Written narratives of life in the classroom</p>
February 2007	<p>Beginning work on Podcasting and weekly visits with Vivian.</p> <p>Continuing development of the audit trail as a representation of learning and thinking.</p>	<p>Journal Entries</p> <p>Blog Posts</p> <p>Podcasts</p> <p>Artifacts of Student Learning</p> <p>Audit Trail</p> <p>Written narratives of life in the classroom</p>
March 2007	<p>Ongoing discussion regarding publication venues.</p>	<p>Written narratives of life in the classroom</p>

	Begin weekly (?) recordings of podcast shows	
April 2007	Continue podcast show production Reflections/ class critique	Anecdotal notes Collection of show scripts Personal journals Lessons/ integration line up with standards
May 2007	Continue podcast show production Reflections –where do we go from here?	Anecdotal notes Collection of show scripts Personal journals Lessons/ integration line up with standards
June 2007	Wrap up of podcast –class reflections	Begin write ups of children Personal reflections –where to go from here?

APPENDIX D

Data Collection

Source	Date	Topic	Description	Amount
Journal	9-Jan	Read aloud	Text comparison	2 pp
31 total entries	4-Jan	Read aloud	reflection of lesson	3 pp
	10-Jan	Read aloud, Songs, BA, Class Meeting, Zoo	Reflection/ Status of Class	2pp
	12-Jan	Read aloud, discussion, frustrations	Bad lesson, Card making	1 page
	5-Feb	Class Meeting	MY agenda, class conversation, Fundraising, Podcast start	3 pp
	8-Feb	Plans	Podcast	1 page
	13-Feb	Reading Lesson	Podcast, decisions	2 pp
	16-Feb	Teacher	New Literacies, Snow day catch up	2 pp
	23-Feb	Show Construction	Podcast Show #1	6 pp
	1-Mar	Class Meeting	Reflection of podcast	2 pp
	2-Mar	Writing	Sequence, retell, Show #2	2 pp
	4-Mar	Fundraising, Show construction	BA, Podcast show #2	3pp
	7-Mar	Class Meeting	Podcast shows 2 & 3, new student	8pp
	11-Mar	Student	Narrative	2 pp
	15-Mar	Computer Lab	Listening to podcast show #3	2pp
	21-Mar	Writing	Podcast #4	2 pp
	24-Mar	Reading, Student	Podcast scripts	2 pp
	31-Mar	Class Meeting	Podcast mini show	2 pp
	8-Apr	Teacher	Plans/ ideas/ last 9 weeks of school	2 pp
	9-Apr	Class Meeting	Zoo	2pp
	12-Apr	Class Debate	Animals in cages	2 pp
19-Apr	Fieldtrip	Zoo	4 pp	
27-Apr	Reading	Earth Day magazine/podcast	3 pp	
29-Apr	Show Construction	Podcast show #7	3 pp	

8-May	Fieldtrip	BA	2 pp
16-May	Teacher	Reflections BA, Podcast, Class Meetings	2pp
19-May	Teacher	Reflection Podcast	2 pp
23-May	EOY Assessments	Reflection	2 pp
4-Jun	Show Construction	Podcast last show, discussion	2 pp
12-Jun	Show Construction	Podcast last show	2pp
14-Jun	Teacher	EOY reflection	3pp

Student Work

	Writing Plan	BA project	3 samples
	Suggestion Note	Podcast	1
21-Mar	Reflections	Podcast	12
15-Jun	Writing Samples	EOY -Rock ritual	15 + teacher
9-Apr	Email	To Zoo from Sofia	

Podcast Show Scripts

Show #1	New Show	rough drafts, final copies
Show #2	BA	rough drafts, final copies
Show #3	Zoo Changes	rough drafts, final copies
Show #4	Friends	rough drafts, final copies
Show #5	Global Warming	rough drafts, final copies
Show #6		
Show #7	Earth Day	rough drafts, final copies
Show #8		
Show #9		
Show #10		

Audio
Recording
s

www.clippodcast.com/100kids/

Podcast Shows 1-10

(1-3/5-11/24)	TYs in home language (10)		
(12/24)	Podcast Reflection	Kelly	8s
(13/24)	Podcast Reflection	Bobby	24s
(4/24)	Book Recommendation	Ben	6s
(15/24)	Class Discussion	Teacher facilitator -What to do in 4th Q?	20m+
(16/24)	Student-teacher interaction	Noisey --hard to understand	3m
(17/24)	Class Discussion	Pets, Cages, Noad's Story	20m +
(18/24)	Class Meeting	Unsuccessful? BA Fundraising - Aarushi	20m +
(19/24)	Podcast Reflections/advice	Ryan	0-47s
		Emma --podcast map	48-1m29s
		Aarushi	1m30s-2m10s
		Joanna (?)	2m11s-2m47s
		Cindy	2m48s-3m12s
		Kelly	3m13s-3m25s
		?	3m26s-3m44s
		?	3m45s-3m47s
		Cindy	3m58s-4m11s
(20/24)	Podcast How-To	Subrina	1m19s
(21/24)	Podcast Reflection	Martha	1m46s
(22/24)	Podcast Reflections	Yashaswi	38s

			Edwin G. + Teacher	39s-1m56s
(23/24)	Podcast Reflections		Edwin C. + Teacher	2m11s
(24/24)	Podcast Reflections		Noad	39s
Blog	w/Vivian Vasquez			