Chapter 1
Popular Media and Grade 6–12 Literacy:
A Review of Practitioner Literature

Kelli Bippert

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5077-4886

Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, USA

ABSTRACT

Adolescents in the 21st century engage with popular media in a variety of ways. Adolescent students' interactions with video games, videos, social media, and other forms of popular media have become a growing topic of study among academics interested in popular media's role in in-school literacies. To complicate matters, secondary classroom teachers continue to grapple with state and national standards that address traditional reading and writing skills. This systematic literature review focuses on what articles from practitioner journals reveal about adolescent participation in popular media, and how media skills are addressed. The analysis provided here is based on a random sample of 35 articles focusing on popular media and in-school literacies.

INTRODUCTION

"Miss, I loved your class. It's the only one I remember from middle school."

This comment came from a former student of a 7th grade English language arts teacher. Her student, Raymond (pseudonym), approached her while attending a high school football game. His remark on how memorable her class had been made her reflect on the particular academic year he was her student. She referred to it as the year she "went rogue."

In many states, seventh grade is a year when students take the state mandated writing assessment. The teacher reflected on how she and her colleagues often found themselves using materials and curriculum that focused on highly structured, skills-based reading and writing instruction. Opportunities

for authentic reading and writing, along with allowing students choice in writing topics and content, became a yearly challenge.

The year that Raymond was in this teacher's class, however, was the year she decided to integrate popular media into her reading and writing instruction. She utilized short video clips from *SpongeBob Square Pants* and *Phineas and Ferb* to develop student understanding of plot and literary elements. Her students were also encouraged to use their experiences with popular culture and media as mentor texts in their creative narrative writing. Her students were intrinsically motivated each day to engage in reading and writing task. They would excitedly sit with friends to begin working on their newest drafts. This was the year this teacher discovered how using popular media could transform her teaching and her students' learning.

Adolescents in the twenty-first century engage with popular media in a variety of ways. Their interactions with video games, online videos, social media, and other forms of popular media has become a growing topic of study among academics interested in popular media's role in in-school literacies (Petrone, 2013). To complicate matters, secondary classroom teachers often focus on state and national standards that fail to address diverse student needs, cultures, and lived experiences (Brandt, 200; Zoch, 2017). The analysis presented here explores articles from practitioner journals and what they reveal about the use of popular media and its relation to secondary student literacy.

NEW LITERACIES

In recent years, there has been a closer relationship between what is perceived as traditional literacy, the reading and writing of written texts, and the interactions that individuals have with digital media, video games, and other forms of popular media and technologies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2013). As people interact with these new technologies, which continue to evolve, individuals act not only as the consumers but also the producers of these new texts. Therefore the concept "new literacies" was created to allow people to focus less on the technology and more on the development of skills and abilities related to how we communicate and interact with our world (Buckingham, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2013). The new literacies focus on how individuals communicate, often through the use of digital technologies (New London Group, 1996).

The multicultural nature of the world students find themselves in creates new challenges. Students encounter increasingly high numbers of media texts, often of the digital variety, making use of various modes of representation. Education needs to draw on the experiences that many students have outside of the classroom, to help them better contextualize learning and language, and increase their abilities to be effective communicators and creators of knowledge through writing in this culturally diverse world (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; Leu et al., 2017; Wagner, 2016). Multiliteracies take into consideration the varieties of languages that exists in both private and public domains (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; McGrail, E. & Behizadeh, N., 2017). The various forms of communication and information now make use of numerous languages and dialects, and an individual's ability to make meaning from these messages relies on his or her ability to cross into the cultures addressed in and through these messages (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000).

For students, new specialized language is learned best when students are given opportunities to experience numerous meaningful situations with language (Esteban-Guiltart, Serra, & Villa, 2017; Gee, 2000). Technical academic language is often seen as a cornerstone of traditional in-school learning

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/popular-media-and-grade-6-12-literacy/268209

Related Content

The Evolving Discourse of the Digital Divide: The Internet, Black Identity, and the Evolving Discourse of the Digital Divide
Lynette Kvasnyand Kayla D. Hales (2013). *Digital Literacy: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1350-1366).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/evolving-discourse-digital-divide/68512

Moving From Postmodernism to Metamodernism
 (2020). *Metamodernism and Changing Literacy: Emerging Research and Opportunities (pp. 133-156).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/moving-from-postmodernism-to-metamodernism/253746

The "Beaver" International Competition and the Development of Digital Competences in Italian Pupils
Antonio Cartelli (2012). *International Journal of Digital Literacy and Digital Competence (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/beaver-international-competition-development-digital/67531

Authentic and Situated Learning with the Use of an Adaptive Search Engine and a QR-Code in Mobile Mode
Orlando De Pietro (2013). *International Journal of Digital Literacy and Digital Competence (pp. 19-30).*
www.irma-international.org/article/authentic-and-situated-learning-with-the-use-of-an-adaptive-search-engine-and-a-qr-code-in-mobile-mode/96953

Ethical Use in the Teaching of ICT and Initial Teacher Training: A Preliminary Study on the Descriptors of the Observational Tools
Antonella Nuzzaci (2016). *International Journal of Digital Literacy and Digital Competence (pp. 17-36).*
www.irma-international.org/article/ethical-use-in-the-teaching-of-ict-and-initial-teacher-training/178546