

CMS.998/CMS.600: New Media Literacies
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Lecture Notes

Session 3, 2/14/07

- Last week:
 - We discussed the white paper
 - Performance, appropriation, simulation vs. play

- Readings for today
 - Renee Hobbes chapter: “The Seven Great Debates In the Media Literacy Movement”
 - Progressive versions of media literacy being taught in high schools
 - Hobbes is the big expert on this in high schools
 - Student discussion: What do you think?
 - Students don’t recall these things being taught at their high schools
 - It doesn’t seem like this is actually being taught there today
 - How should we respond to the fact that writing as it is published on MySpace and similar forums is very different from writing essays as it is taught in high schools?
 - Teachers need to shift to using more dialogue in class
 - Is writing as it appears on MySpace actually that different from “traditional” writing in high schools? Essay writing as it’s taught in high schools often produces pretty awful formulaic writing.
 - Just because things have changed doesn’t mean that there isn’t still a continuity of form
 - Why are these things being taught in English classes? High school classes are more accustomed to teaching critical thought about media that already exists, while high school art and music classes are generally just about production, not criticism.
 - One student volunteers the fact that she did get new media education in her art classes in high school, so they were teaching that at the time. They only taught it from the point of view of producing these media forms though, and didn’t look at it in terms of consuming them.
 - Teaching with the dialogic method is very important in all these issues
 - Engaged dialogue
 - Authentic questions
 - What does Hobbes mean by this?
 - If you’re regurgitating information that the teacher already knows, then the teacher is using inauthentic questions
 - Hobbes found that more learning took place in settings where the teacher was asking authentic questions

- The teacher has to give up her/his authority in a certain way – which is a big deal
- Students become less timid in these settings with authentic questions. They become more willing to bring their own experience into the classroom.
- How do you manage the quality of the literature that you're bringing into the classroom once you're asking these authentic questions
- There's a certain moralistic attitude that goes on in media literacy
- The older, more traditional concept of writing and media is limiting in some way
- It's also important to look at the economic issues involved. The fact that systems behind these media are so often owned by just a few white men at the top is conservative in its own way, like the traditional white male canon is conservative as well.
- Teaching about new media originally emerged in English classes as cautionary – teachers brought new media into the classroom in the hope that it would lead students to understand how high culture literature was superior to these newer, more pop culture forms
- It seems like Renee Hobbs is setting up artificial binary oppositions in her article with the “Vote no, vote yes” segment. We'd rather reject a lot of her questions.
- Is Hobbs being a little bit cynical and tongue-in-cheek with these questions?
- The didactic approach present in the way this article is written seems emblematic of the problems with teaching in America. We're not letting readers and students alike draw their own conclusions.
- We shouldn't ignore “great” literature – that canon of writing has value of its own.
- Keep in mind that these teachers are doing their best. Teachers don't have the luxury of thinking about these things in the way we're considering them in this classroom. The bottom line is that teachers have to take a stance and pick something, practically, in the classroom.
- There are resources for teaching canonical texts, whereas the resources aren't nearly as canonical or easy to use for new media, because they're not canonical, and there's more to create for yourself if you decide to teach them
- “Media content,” “media literacy,” and media are three different content. There are graduate programs in all three.
- How do we define media?
- Costume play is an example of collective literacy that is developing around new media in high school students interested in anime. A lot of them have actually taught themselves fluent Japanese.

- Kids are already very savvy and cynical about the nature of advertising, branding, and pop culture
- YouTube video clip discussion
 - Book technology: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX0-nqRmtos>
 - 24 aqua team hunger force:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWUaQVZHzyI>
 - “I have a YouTube Dream”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Jc6BLappEI>
 - Web 2.0 valentine:
<http://www.campaignmonitor.com/gallery/AUE6XI6FZKI%3D/view.aspx>