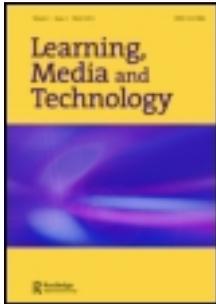


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Valuing production values: a ‘do it yourself’ media production club

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In this paper, we identify how and why digital media production can contribute to the active participation of children in education and also consider how much of the existing work in this area is framed as a ‘miraculous’ answer to educational challenges without critical interrogation of either the process or product. To begin, we identify some of the prominent research and issues that have emerged from work of this kind and discuss the barriers to accessing equitable education in relation to new media production projects with kids. We discuss the changing state of knowledge production and communication in a new media world and address the place of literacy in this changing educational context. Following this, we present one example of a media production club and the way we look at this work to value students’ productions in a way that differs from other research of this kind.

Keywords: digital media and learning; multimodal literacies; media ecology; DIY; institutional structures

1. Introduction and background

This work builds on community-based extracurricular media production programs widely documented by scholars and practitioners as beneficial to children and young people, particularly for those living in low socio-economic conditions and facing forms of marginalization within and from outside their communities. Ito et al. (2010), Jenkins (2006), Jenkins et al. (2009), Lankshear and Knobel (2008), Buckingham (2003, 2008), Pepler and Kafai (2007) and others have demonstrated in various ways how student participation in media production can support specific curricular requirements, as well as improve understanding of digital and traditional literacy, critical analysis of popular media, and analyses of issues such as race, identity, gender and power dynamics. Multimodal scholars and visual media researchers have also emphasized the different ways in which learners can encode and (re)produce knowledge relevant to their own lives through media production (Karlsson 2001; Kress 2010; Luke 2003; Marquez-Zenkov 2007). As an example, Goldman and Booker (2008)

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demonstrate how film production and multimedia communication allowed one group of teenagers to address difficult topics about their experiences of marginality, including discrimination by age ('adultism'), being a student drop-out, and issues around community governance. Together, the existing research in this field supports the notion that engaging young people in media production practices, both in and out of schools, is essential to their development as individuals and active members of today's media-rich society. The totality of this work has demonstrated benefits to school-aged learners in particular and yet, there remain notable gaps in research and practice that are worthy of attention.

In 'Challenges of Participatory Culture', Jenkins et al. (2009) outline these issues, presenting them as barriers to equitable and educationally productive engagement in media production practices. In his paper, Jenkins discusses the reality of limited access to technology, and inadequate training and supervision for developing technological skills, in some communities. Jenkins also addresses challenges with regard to young people understanding how media influence them, and in terms of who is responsible for ensuring young people are active, media literate participants in all sectors of public and private life. Jenkins et al. (2009) suggest that institutions, especially public ones like schools and libraries, can and should help address these barriers and limitations to engaging students in participatory culture. According to Garcia and Morrell (2013), understanding how to implement participatory media practices in education requires a critical and reflexive approach that is socio-culturally situated and combats dominant ideological structures. However, as noted by Jenson, Taylor, and Fisher (2010), these institutions are extremely slow to change.

In the case of school-based media research projects specifically, who then is responsible for ensuring that the school environment as a whole supports the needs of students to produce good quality, critical media? Ito et al. (2010) suggest that, 'what is lacking in the literature overall and in the USA in particular, is an understanding of how new media practices are embedded in a broader social and cultural ecology' (4). Media ecologies, according to Horst, Herr-Stephenson, and Robinson (2010), refer to factors such as rules and regulations of an institution and local home or school environment that set the socio-cultural context for learning through media. Low-income urban communities in Canada face similar challenges in education as in the USA, including the limited time available to teachers, disassociation between teachers and students and/or the community, and the effects of poverty on students' ability to learn. While creative and visual research and interventionist methods have been noted as positive interruptions to sometimes chaotic school settings in low-income communities, media production projects are not conducted outside of this scope of social and cultural conditions. Projects intended to 'empower' students should critically consider the power structures affecting the broader ecology of the school and visual data must be approached with caution to circumvent the construction of absolutist, one dimensional, out-of-context 'truths' based on collected images (Piper and Frankham 2007).

This paper examines the educational opportunities and limitations in the media ecology of a school located in a low-income area of Toronto, Canada, discussing how students learn with digital media by participating in a ‘Do-It-Yourself’ (DIY) convergent media culture. Our focus includes the relationship between the institutional structure of the school, the shifting priorities and specific challenges of the different clubs we piloted at the school, and what (if any) agency students are able to assert in their projects. We highlight the importance of what students learn outside of their experience of ‘formal’ curriculum, in relation to their position in the larger socio-cultural setting, and draw attention to the limitations of looking only at what students produce rather than how they came to create those productions.

This work is situated within a multimodal literacies framework that recognizes the visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and tactile communicational modes, in addition to written and oral forms, through which learning can take place (Cope and Kalantzis 2009; Kress 2010; NLG 1996). Jewitt (2009) ascribes the twenty-first-century turn to multimodality to postmodern influences: the increasing democratization of knowledge in the networked society has challenged modern configurations of truth and authority, querying both who ‘owns’ knowledge and who creates it. Though these changes have been propelled by the proliferation of computer-based and screen-based technologies, what these technologies have brought about is a new understanding of what it means to know, including how it means to know multimodally. To understand the media production work of our participants, we looked for the multidimensional and multimodal ways that students presented their knowledge and how we as researchers can then interpret those portrayals.

This project makes multimodal learning opportunities available to an otherwise disenfranchised and largely at-risk school population in an effort to both skill up students who are very far from Prensky’s (2001) widely hailed claims for the ‘digitally native’ and to see what they might have to tell us about their lives and communities. This paper considers some of the forces at play in student productions, focusing on how the school as an institution with an ecology affects student production and on the limitations of using externally provided technology, all of which circles back to issues of social and economic power within a low-income community, and between students, teachers and researchers. The significant time and effort required of supervising adults to facilitate this opportunity is also discussed.

2. Context and methods

In this project, we considered the need to bridge the problematic divides between schools and communities in low-income areas (James 2004; Marshall and Toohey 2010). From 2008 to 2012, we ran lunchtime and after-school media production programs focused on exploring community and school issues that were of interest to students. *Castleguard News Network (CNN)*

was run as an extracurricular program for several reasons. We saw this work as connecting with media production projects with marginalized communities that have demonstrated that naming and recording social problems contributes to the development of youths' confidence and legitimates their voices in the school and community (Goldman and Booker 2008), as well as projects that examine students' acquisition of literacy skills (traditional and digital) through participating in after-school programs (Cole 2006; Hull and Schultz 2001). The program operated in various but very similar formats over four years, which was documented through 1500 hours of video, weekly and bi-weekly *fieldnotes* and hours of informal interviews with students and teachers, which offer a deep understanding of this particular school and context. We have engaged in various forms of both traditional research practices and audio–video documentation of students at-work, as well as students' final productions. Our analysis thus accounts for the multilayered ways in which knowledge is produced and portrayed. By examining student actions both behind the scenes as well as 'on camera', we are able to consider how the socio-cultural environment shapes the outcomes of their productions. To understand how technological developments impact knowledge production, and why this matters for education, we look at the affordances of new technologies and also identify how their usage is situated within social power relations. These relations, we argue, can be exposed through a nuanced analysis of audio–video and traditional research methods that together highlight the shortcomings in what can be 'known' from student produced media, otherwise considered as stand-alone pieces or something to be consumed by the larger research community.

For the purposes of this paper, our discussion will focus on the *CNN* segment of the project (2009–2011) – which included up to 22 male and female participants aged 11–13. *CNN* and its members were supported by the efforts of the teacher-librarian, who was viewed as the school's educational technology expert and wanted to create an empowering, student-directed space for media education. This is important to note as the school's overall lack of technology was compounded by teachers' lack of confidence about how to use the technologies that *were* available, meaning that in the context of their in-school use, students only engaged with technology *if* their teacher had some skill and interest in this area. In order to support the work of students in this under-resourced school, at any one time, two researchers were present, with up to four during periods of heavy production.¹

Building on students' always changing interests, and the need for a structured but fast-moving format to keep students involved, in year two we restructured the club as a school 'news network' whereby students could select topics of their choice on a bi-weekly basis and record short news broadcast segments, including conducting background research and interviews. News topics were driven entirely by student interest and, reflect what they felt was important to investigate, such as why Grade 7 students do not get recess, why gum chewing is not allowed, why there is no senior boys soccer team, why a

much coveted field trip was canceled, and so on. *CNN* broadcasts were made publically available via a web-streaming broadcast channel, causing participants to take ownership over and pride in their work. They carefully selected audio tracks, scrutinized spelling, *and significantly*, took efforts to ensure that they produced good-quality video. *CNN* members were very critical of one another if they had shaky video or poor audio, and would sometimes redo segments to produce better work. *CNN* produced over 25 short segments and two 15-minute news reports, covering topics such as bullying, discrimination, abuse, pollution, school policies and events, and local leisure activities.

The research methods for this project included: a questionnaire about students' technology use, onsite weekly observations and *fieldnotes*, video and audio recorded data of meetings, 15 semi-structured group 'exit interviews' with students as they finished their projects and 2 interviews with school staff. In total, and over the course of the 3 years of the project over 50 students participated in the 4 years of the project. These methods are well-suited for qualitative and ethnographic projects where researchers are collecting data in the 'everyday contexts' of participants' lives (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Pink 2007). For the purposes of this paper, we primarily focus on describing a few specific examples of unseen happenings of production from the *CNN* broadcasts. We describe several projects that could be considered both 'failures' from the standpoint of being unfinished, and 'successes' with regard to what students' learned, to uncover the ways in which some of these students moved from 'production to critique' and learned from their 'failed' efforts. Our intent here is to explore the ways in which media-based projects are able to 'give voice' to students within broader school contexts.

3. A 'difficult' school and community

In this section, we detail the school and community context in more depth to provide a fuller description of the lived, everyday realities of the participants and *importantly* the work that they produced within that context. Castleguard Public School looks like any other struggling school: there are frequent announcements and school-wide interventions concerning bullying, a strict recess policy insists that all students are out of the building, there are few extra-curricular programs, and a closed-circuit system monitors the actions of everyone in the school. Within this context we saw a very diverse group of students who had to juggle family responsibilities to attend our club, and our weekly discussions with students revealed the larger struggles that our participants faced daily. Many of these students lived in the housing complex located across the street affirming the inseparability of their in- and out-of-school lives. In November 2009, for example, *CNN* members engaged in a group brainstorming session to identify possible topics to cover. Researcher *fieldnotes* (November 5, 2009) indicate this complex and concerning everyday reality:

Mr. G gathered [the students] around the white board where he had written the word ‘CASTLEGUARD’ in the middle with the title ‘Things I Love’ on one side and ‘Things I would like to change’ on the other. The first comment [from a student] for ‘what I love about Castleguard’ was that ‘there are some nights without gunshots’.

The conversation continued and the students listed positive qualities such as friendly neighbours, close to school, community centres and parks.

When we went to the other side of the board the comments were again quite jarring – from gunshots, to domestic violence, suicide, racism, alcoholism, gangs and more.

Mr. G asked the kids who had actually heard a real gunshot, out of interest, and to our surprise most of the students had heard real gunshots. Muniza commented that she was no longer afraid of the gunshots, presumably because she has heard them so often.

From this brainstorming session, it became clear that even though these students were 11–13 years old, they had already been exposed to serious forms of violence and criminality. When participants decided to produce a video on suicide, they specifically addressed how racism and parental abuse can leave young people (specifically girls) with nowhere to turn. These examples demonstrate what kinds of social issues occupied the minds of *CNN* participants, and the very real need for some kind of outlet to discuss these difficulties and sometimes dangerous issues.

What is important to consider about the context of these students’ lives in relation to the media they came to produce is the degree to which young people in this community already experience generalized forms of subjugation. These offenses are perpetuated by consequence of living in a neighborhood where physical and psychological harm impose serious but often intangible social constraints on students. Power relations determine whose voices are heard, and for young people in our study, they are excluded from most of the decision-making processes that pertain to them and are subject to adult authority. Moreover, these students live in a neighborhood whose positive attributes are rarely celebrated or recognized citywide. Creating a space within the school for students to talk about these issues is necessary for understanding how schools can better serve and support their students. The examples we provide in this paper address the ways in which social constraints in the form of school-based power relations, among other factors also based in issues of hierarchy and power (e.g., availability of human and technological resources for this community), impact the ability of students to have a ‘real’ voice within this complex environment.

4. Valuing production values: the *CNN*

In this section, we detail the different kinds of projects produced in *CNN*. News stories that only required student participation demonstrated how youth with

little media production experience can learn technical skills in a short period of time. A few of these projects were, however, lost due to the challenges of striking a balance between student interests, the availability of teachers and administrators for interviews, the technology available, and the production schedule. In this section, we highlight the interplay between failed efforts to cover certain kinds of stories, and both the technical and value-laden learning students experience throughout these attempted productions.

One example of students learning through ‘failures’ is evidenced by one group who created a broadcast about a book fair, following an attempt to cover a more contentious story about teacher hypocrisy with regards to school rules. Students in this group had been working on a segment about the school’s rule on chewing gum and arranged an interview with a teacher who they claimed had, in a very specific example, been chewing gum in class. During the interview, the teacher denied having ever broken this school-wide rule. Clearly frustrated by this perceived roadblock, the students adopted a more ‘hard-hitting’ interrogation style with the teacher, leading to a rather long interview. The teacher-librarian supervising the club was informed of the direction this interview was taking and suggested we let it play out, trusting that the teacher involved was capable of managing the situation. When the students presented ‘evidence’ to the teacher (a survey they had circulated amongst classmates) he responded to the accusation by saying, ‘You know how it is in class, you all team up and will say anything’ (*Fieldnotes*, April 6, 2010). Although the experience modeled what surely happens in professional journalism when two parties are at odds about the truth of a matter, and it provided students with an important lesson about how to conduct professional interviews, the teacher left without fully addressing all of the students’ concerns. In the end, the teacher left the students feeling discouraged about pursuing this topic in addition to being convinced that the teacher could deny his gum chewing *because he was a teacher*. While this proved to be an excellent technical learning opportunity in that the students had to take the footage and edit it into a much shorter, fair representation of what was said, it also presented a larger power dynamic at play: how seriously were students’ voices being heard and what would be the implications of this dynamic for students’ interest in addressing similar issues in future? Did *CNN really* give students a means of dealing with the systematic inequities of everyday schooling or did it simply serve to remind them of their ‘lesser’ position and inability, one that even when given the ‘voice of the people’ (so to speak) was unable to shake the reality of the power dynamics between students and teachers in this school?

After struggling to edit the interview, the students encountered technical difficulties with their computer and eventually lost all of their footage. The following week, they started fresh and completed a broadcast about the book fair in three hours, suggesting that although the gum-chewing story was never aired, the students had learned the skills needed to produce a broadcast very quickly. They did not, however, choose another contentious issue to report

on and instead produced the more playful, low-stakes broadcast about the book fair. This move away from addressing political issues within the school to documenting a benign event is significant and troubling in terms of students' future interest in challenging perceived social injustices. In this example, the students learned the value and potential impact of their observations and opinions outside of their classroom, which was little to none.

In another example, a group of students wanted to produce a news segment on why school administrators had decided to cancel the Grade 7 morning recess break. *Fieldnotes* from April 27, 2010 reveal this complex ecology:

Helena was talking to Ms. D who was telling her that if she was going to inquire about why grade 7s didn't have recess she would have to think about how/where the lost class time would be made up. Ms. D left and another teacher came in and said that if [the students] wanted to prove a point to Ms. V (the principal) they needed to go on the Internet and pull files about how physical activity was important for students. I sat down with the students and Helena and Heather were talking about how unfair it is that grade 6s have recess and they don't because their workload is not that different, because they are human beings and need fresh air, and because they can't focus/work when they are cooped up inside all day. I said those were great points and they just needed to decide on some questions they could ask each other so that they could talk about them in an interview-style news segment.

Ms. D had a clear angle here and was not listening to Helena but basically telling her why her point was invalid [in that] she should look at the factor of time. After Ms. D left Helena commented that she thought the time could be made up and it would still be worth it to take the extra break, but that Ms. D didn't give her a chance to explain that.

In this example, Helena perceived the situation as one where her voice was not being heard: the dismissive tone Ms. D took with the students overpowered the more supportive approach the other teacher had offered. And while producing a news broadcast about the issue is precisely the kind of avenue through which students could then share their opinions, it proved impossible to interview the principal on this topic. This too greatly deflated student enthusiasm: they perceived the involvement of the principal as essential to tackling important issues in a way that might result in changes to school policy. This group did nonetheless attempt to film a segment on the playground voicing their own opinions; however, internal disagreements about how to proceed without that pivotal interview meant the broadcast was not completed.

In a third example, a different group also wanted to interview the principal about the newly imposed \$1 fee to participate in 'casual days'.² Although the fee was for fundraising purposes, three students had strong opinions about the ethics of this decision. The students attempted to arrange interviews with administrators and teachers at lunch or after-school, when they had access to the filming equipment. The teacher-librarian had also agreed to supervise

interviews outside of club time but such arrangements were difficult for all parties to schedule. After weeks of trying to arrange interviews unsuccessfully, and unsatisfied with discussing the topic amongst themselves, the group decided to move on to cover another story.

These three examples demonstrate how the structure of schooling, namely the power dynamics that circulate there, imposed on and very greatly impacted the kinds of stories that participants were able to tell. While the school supported *CNN* by giving us permission to conduct our research, there was little participation by the school and administrators in the project. At various times throughout the year, meetings or other programs booked in the library interfered with our work plan and students were asked to be quiet or work elsewhere, despite the already limited workspace and time. This again contributed to an environment of subjugation where even in a school that is meant to serve them, students' interests and needs are secondary to others (adults). In an effort to ensure our continued presence in the school, we were unwilling to challenge these decisions or make further requests for participation from teachers and administrators. The sense was that so long as we were not interfering with the school's day-to-day happenings we were welcome, but overstepping boundaries might compromise the continuation of *CNN*. While we recognize that the school works with limited resources and in difficult conditions to implement order in a diverse and dynamic environment, this does not soften the negative impact these efforts had on *CNN* participants, and perhaps non-participants in comparable ways. We are not suggesting that 'the school' is to blame for these inequities. Rather, it is our intention to demonstrate how the school too is embedded in and contributes to relations of power that affect the very students they are working so hard to serve. Teachers too are subject to and participate in ongoing social inequities that continue to position them in ways that limit their ability to empower students.

Returning to the idea of multimodal literacies through which learners encode and engage with knowledge differently through digital media, and considering our aforementioned claim that the increasing democratization of knowledge in a networked society has challenged modern configurations of truth and authority, what happens when information produced digitally by students is mediated by authority figures, escaping challenges to the existing hierarchy? In the three examples discussed in this paper, problems with the computers and in-group disagreements also contributed to the incompleteness of projects: how did the feelings of frustration and helplessness experienced by students unable to ask the questions they wanted to the authorities 'that mattered' contribute to their group dynamic and efforts to complete those productions? During the editing process for the gum-chewing broadcast, the previously excited student was now apathetic about (and perhaps resistant to) the work:

Muniza came out and said she needed help. She had deleted pretty much everything. I'm not sure how. I mean, I know how but I'm not sure how she could keep

hitting the delete button and not notice that she was erasing everything until too late. We did a lot of ‘control Z-ing’ until we brought it back up but then it was too long again and we had to go back to cutting...and then [she] would get back to work with a really sulken energy...[later on] Muniza had pretty much finished and the computer crashed without the work having been saved, so she lost it all...(*Fieldnotes*, April 15, 2010)

In each of the examples presented, the inability of the students to challenge authority combined with technological challenges, (de)motivation to try and instability within groups contributed to either the success or failure of each project. If newer or faster technology had been available for use at all times, not only when the researchers or teacher-librarian were present, it is possible that this might have changed what students could have produced. This also points to a question of institutional privileging and structure across the education system, with some schools having greater access to better technology than others. Schools in low-income communities are typically not well-equipped with new technology and often depend on the resources of outside community groups or researchers to support extracurricular programming like *CNN*.

However, it is important to recognize that technology alone would not have given these students the opportunity to challenge authority in ways they had hoped – Neuman and Celano (2006) and Horst, Herr-Stephenson, and Robinson (2010) have made independent claims for the necessity of supporting resources around new technology to offer learners the greatest opportunity to engage with and succeed in media education and/or media production. Adult support provided was not enough to meet the varied demands of the many students involved in *CNN*. Some students required more attention than others and oftentimes there were students who demanded the full attention of one or more adults for an entire session. In addition, researchers/educators are busy organizing each session, checking on equipment and troubleshooting, and offering conceptual and technical support during production. The amount of scaffolding students needed to complete a production required a monumental amount of researchers’ time (money) and in these kinds of projects, DIY is translated into a kind of PIY (Pay for It Yourself). In other words, there is an enormous amount of resources brought to these sites (e.g., technologies, but especially adult intervention), which are sometimes un(der)reported (see, for example, Marshall and Toohey 2010). By moving from, in this case DIY to PIY, we simply want to signal the fact that all too often these kinds of interventions result in adults and researchers finishing projects, or at the very least cleaning them up so they are viewable by a wider audience. PIY, coupled with, in our case, the voices of disenfranchised youth being marginalized *further* through existing hierarchical structures, bureaucratic road-blocks and systemic inequities embedded in the school, make this type of work extremely demanding. It is our hope that in doing so the benefits to students greatly exceed the challenges they (and we) face along the way.

While it is clear in our experience that some of these stated ‘failures’ in production enabled students to practice the skills they needed to be successful in their subsequent broadcasts, there remains room for discussion about the underlying dynamics of power between students, researchers and administrators, the systems we all work within, and the nature of those relationships as they relate to the content addressed in students’ news broadcasts. In addition to sharing the successes and challenges of this project, we also hope this paper will offer those students whose projects never came to light a small voice representing their valued concerns.

5. DIY + : continuing productions

We have argued that producing multimedia projects with students requires careful consideration for the dynamics at play in any institution and among people supporting the project, and ultimately takes an enormous amount of time and effort on the part of everyone involved. We contend that it is the collaborative effort of members of the school-community that allow students to thrive in these projects, in that their ability to tackle important yet contentious topics requires more than technical know-how. Sometimes, student productions from projects with similar research goals are used as shining examples of the power of new media in the hands of youth, and in some cases we certainly do see great successes. What is *not* reported on is the labor and support that producing those examples entails, why some productions ‘failed’, or the tacit but key factor that researchers scaffold students’ productions and have to learn to do so within the existing culture of the school. In addition, some student productions face extra barriers (such as not being able to secure interviews), leading to certain topics being altogether abandoned mid-production regardless of their importance or interest to students. What we have attempted to do here is document not only what worked, but what did not work, as well as tell, in no uncertain terms, the realities of how we as researchers and the involvement of teachers and administrators shaped the outcome of students’ projects.

We support the efforts of media educators and researchers, however, this paper is a corrective to the ongoing and persistent discourse that positions educational researchers and their new media tools as ‘miracle workers’ that allow students to leap over digital and socio-economic divides (see de Castell, Bryson and Jenson 2002). Media production is labor and resource intensive (DIY=PIY) and there are ongoing difficulties that are not reported on. In particular, students will encounter boundaries based on the structures in place by the institutions involved in the programs. In addition, it is important to draw attention to how much was learned by and about students in the process of media production, compared to what would be a relatively minor, arguably superficial, and certainly misleading kind of knowledge or information based on the style and content of their productions alone. Here, again we emphasize how the school setting and power dynamics that circulate there inform what can ever be produced. This is not to

suggest, again, that school administrators and teachers intentionally deny students the opportunity to explore contentious issues. In our continuing experience, however, these kinds of media interventionist projects necessarily involve more stumbling blocks than leaps, and demand work that is messy, not miraculous. In both global and local contexts, as media production continues to occur in marginalized communities to ‘empower’ *them* and inform *us*, researchers and practitioners should take care to consider the multitude of factors impacting not only what participants are able to produce, but also what we as researchers and practitioners can possibly ‘know’ from this work.

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Notes

1. Special thanks to Samantha Moser, Masters of Education graduate at York University, who was an incredible asset to our team. Moser’s work as a research assistant on-site during the first year of production and coding of audio–video recordings have been invaluable contributions to this project.
2. This is a school that follows a dress code.

Notes on contributors

Jennifer Jenson is Professor of Pedagogy and Technology in the Faculty of Education. Her research and publication includes work on gender and technologies, gender and digital gameplay, players and identities in MMOGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Games) like World of Warcraft, Eve Online, and Rift, technology and education, and technology policies and policy practices in K-12 education in Canada. In addition, working with a team of people at York, Simon Fraser University and Seneca College, she has designed and developed several educationally focused digital games, including a Baroque music game for Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in Toronto.

Negin Dahya is a senior doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at York University. Her research explores postcolonial feminist theory in relation to digital media and learning with girls in low-income schools. Dahya’s work examines how girls perceive and portray their local school and community through media production and how engagement with different types of technology affects what students say and do. In addition, Dahya is involved in the design and development of blended online/onsite university programs for refugees living in the Dadaab refugee camps, with a further interest on how ICT usage in education affects the experiences of girls and women in this context.

Stephanie Fisher is a PhD student in York University’s Faculty of Education and holds a Master’s from the same institution. Over the past four years she has worked with

Dr Jennifer Jenson (York) and Dr Suzanne de Castell (UOIT), running several school-based video games clubs to examine the relationship between gender and play – specifically what, how and under what conditions do girls/women play games.

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