

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH PODCASTS AS A SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT IN A CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY FRAMEWORK

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Introduction:

Based on the current impact of internet connectivity and media texts established through Web 2.0, there is a need for substantiated critical media literacy practices in American classrooms.

In this ongoing study, high-school students will analyze a Web 2.0 technology and media text (podcasts) using a critical media literacy framework (Kellner & Share, 2019).

- How do students perceive the use of podcasts in the classroom compared to other media texts?
- How do students respond to podcasts when analyzed through a critical media literacy framework?

Study Objective/Aim/Contribution:

- Explore students' perceptions of podcasts in the classroom (as compared to other media texts) when used as supplementary text.
- Explore students' experiences of podcasts when analyzed through a critical media literacy framework.

Methods

This 10-week action research study is currently being implemented in a high-school-level Intro to Social Justice course (n=eight 16-18-year-olds) that is currently being taught on Zoom because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Students participate weekly in a podcast-based lesson activity, using student- selected podcasts related to the current classroom topic of study.

The overall educational outcome of this activity is for students to supplement class content with a podcast that provides an additional, and possibly different narrative to the topic at hand.

I have and will continue to collect data using the following methods:

- Pre-Questionnaire/Post-Questionnaire: consists of yes/no questions, close-ended Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions.
- Semi-structured interviews: The interviews will occur twice over the course of the study- three weeks in and at the end of the study.
- Student artifacts: The students will also be completing podcast analysis forms following each podcast assignment.

Preliminary Results:

Using an inductive approach to data analysis I am reducing the amount of narrative data using first-cycle coding methods, specifically In Vivo coding and analytic memos. As I continue my data analysis, I will use second-cycle coding, specifically pattern coding to reduce my first-cycle coding into smaller categories and more meaningful themes.

In my ongoing analysis of student data, a prominent theme has been the role of podcasts in promoting multiple perspectives and counter-narratives in the classroom. Specifically, students have noted that podcasts provide them insight into people and stories that are different than themselves, and as a result they have heard stories of people from different parts of the country as well as narratives that are typically not addressed by mainstream media or typical classroom materials.

My continued analysis of student feedback is also aligning with an important component of critical media literacy pedagogy in which existing media can be used to teach about diversity, explore multiculturalism and provide a platform for voices from marginalized groups (Kellner & Share, 2005; Kellner & Share, 2019).

Conclusion

Critical media literacy expands many of the traditions of critical literacy to popular culture, media, and technology, emphasizing the use of a critical lens to identify, navigate, and question the dominant ideologies prevalent in our society. There is a need for substantiated critical media literacy practices in the classroom (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Kellner & Share, 2007b; McLeod & Vasinda, 2008), and a need for more data to support the effectiveness of podcasts as an educational tool (Putman & Kingsley; 2009).

Podcasts have the potential to serve as an existing media that, when used within a critical literacy framework, empower students to invite and interrogate multiple perspectives and challenge mainstream narratives. Additionally, by approaching the podcasts from a critical media literacy stance, the podcasts are not simply sources of information in which students search for correct answers, but discourses that provide a new way of understanding different perspectives, cultures, and groups, even if it is a world of which they are not apart.

Acknowledgements/ About the Author

Anne Gill is a doctoral candidate in Literacy at St. John's University. Her research interests include critical literacy, critical media literacy, and instructional methods focused on the incorporation of media texts into the classroom. Gill's previous degrees are in History, Special Education, and Educational Leadership, and she is currently in her tenth-year of teaching.