A BROADER SPECTRUM OF HABITUS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPOLORATION OF ADOLESCENTS, TECHNOLOGY, AND MEDIA IN THE DOMESTIC FIELD AND THE FIELD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: A Broader Spectrum of Habitus: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Adolescents, Technology and Media in the Domestic Field and the Field of Public Education

The implementation of technology is inherently flawed in the field of public education, affecting the ability to operationalize technology in a way that is effective for teachers and students. This unfortunate predetermination is beholden to social, economic and political issues that are deeply rooted in bureaucracy.

This autoethnographic qualitative communication and media studies study utilizes social field theory and a Bourdieuian framework by exploring adolescent identity, relationships, habitus, cultural capital and interaction with technology in the field of public education and the domestic field through a cultural, political and economic prism.

If we expand the notion of habitus beyond the influence of family and as we get older, school, to include technology and media, we can better understand how to best serve our students. Instead of remaining in the rut of antiquated institutionalized systems and understandings of how things are, we must open up our perceptions, awareness, insight and compassion to include a broader spectrum of habitus. This, in turn, requires a major shift in acknowledging the cultural capital of young people.

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Here's to a revolution. You're all invited.

I dedicate this project to my family: My husband Rosko, my daughter Aylish, my son Quinn, my mother Karen, and my sister Shelley.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the ways that experts and teachers utilize technology in the classroom with their students (at the secondary level), as well as the ways adolescents use technology in the home. I began to focus on this research when I observed a relationship between using technology and consuming media in two social arenas (home and school) and made a direct connection. I further embarked on surveying and researching the different social practices that are implemented and produced, the capital that is created, and the many ways in which individuals navigate differently through them. I was hopeful that looking at the ways in which students and teachers interact with technology and media could provide guidance for educators, parents, administrators and students who face the question of how to best use technology in the classroom and navigate it in the home. I wanted to research whether technology could be used for individualized problem solving, be effective in creating community and collaboration, facilitate learning and critical thinking in ways that link and overlap with those in which students enjoy and consume technology on a personal level. My objective was to establish areas of mutual interest, convergence, and empowerment, creating a foundation of capital that will take advantage of the intersection of mutual goals and cooperative coaction. The goal was to contribute new and significant scholarship to the area of using technology in education effectively, adding value and fulfilling a gap in current media research.

For purposes of this dissertation, I use the cultural concept of the word technology, taken from Schatzberg's 2018 book *Technology: Critical History of a Concept*. As opposed to the instrumental definition, which favors innovation as opposed to use, erases human agency, and treats technologies as objects; the cultural concept of technology highlights human agency, use, creativity and sees technology as value-laden. This definition aligns with my own understanding of the definition of technology.

Inequities in the field of public education are well documented in educational, sociological, psychological, economic, and anthropological research. In particular, these inequities include race, gender, socioeconomic/class status, and disability. My contribution to the existing literature fills a gap by expanding upon the ways we interact, identify, and address inequities through a critical cultural media studies lens, emphasizing the use of technology and consumption of media as a way to consider adolescent identity at school and at home. I explore the dysfunction of the institution of education via antiquated structures, bureaucracy, hierarchy, private interests, and power relations, and how to shift the paradigm of top-down educational practices. Ultimately, I recommend the expansion of the acceptance and recognition of student (and teacher) habitus, which begins in the home and continues to develop in the classroom, and the way that cultural capital functions in modern public schooling.

In the classroom, addressing critical thinking and teaching students to problem-solve with technology is difficult within the structures of our current institution of education, which suffers from tight schedules, lack of funding,

understaffing, a directive to stick to the core curriculum and prepare students for standardized testing. By observing and discussing home usage as well, I wanted to discover a common ground, one that would excite students and teachers, as well as an access point to using technology and media in the classroom in a way that students could relate to and recognize as a familiar process. I was hopeful that, by exploring different fields and the players in them, I might be able to identify how to communicate in new and innovative ways, in order to serve as a launching point for a transfer of skills and capital from one field to another.

Studying the way that adolescents and teachers use technology in the classroom and in the home takes advantage of the current state of many secondary schools in the United States currently benefiting from an increased availability of funding for technology (*Funding Digital Learning*, n.d.). In addition to the process of looking closely at technology and media in education, there are other questions and issues, including corporate involvement and privatization of the public education system, gender, class and access, and the popular cultural narrative regarding the benefits connected to technology in the classroom.

As previously stated, the deployment of technology in the classroom is a well-established topic of study in various disciplines, yet little has been produced from a cultural perspective employing communication and media studies. Various theoretical frameworks in key studies on media in education are focused on teaching students to analyze and deconstruct messaging, and to be active authors of media (R. Hobbs & Jensen, 2013), 'hands on' creative production and critical reflection (Buckingham, 2007), internet safety and privacy (Livingstone, 2006), and

the acquisition of knowledge structures and skills, a cognitive approach (Potter, 2004). Sociological studies emphasize student behavioral issues around screens (S. Y. Yoon et al., 2013), and the idea that technologies carry a political significance which contribute to power struggles (Facer & Selwyn, 2013).

My autoethnographic qualitative communication and media studies approach utilizes social field theory and a Bourdieuian framework by exploring relationships, habitus, cultural capital and interaction with technology in the field of public education and the domestic field through a cultural, political and economic prism. I look at the way students and teachers navigate its use in different social fields, manage widely varied skill sets, and address issues of power, including those related to socioeconomic status and built-in institutional structures which are challenged by introducing technology into the classroom.

I.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BOURDIEU

"The social world is, to a large extent, what the agents make of it, at each moment; but they have no chance of un-making and re-making it except on the basis of realistic knowledge of what it is and what they can do with it from the position they occupy within it." (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 242). In the context of this research, the agents (students, teachers, parents) must be able to identify what their position is within the social world. Due in part to the use of technological devices and digital media, the status quo in the field of public education as well as the domestic field is uprooted. Compared to old technology and media where adults have expertise and skills to pass on, students now possess a completely different (often more skilled and experienced) capability than they are traditionally given credit for. Conversely,

teachers and parents are also faced with a shift in their customary role at the top of the hierarchy, altering the power dynamic. In order to identify the type of action that could be helpful to open up and deconstruct this site of struggle, research needs to be conducted that takes into consideration multifarious perspectives of the fields and their players.

The domestic field refers to both the visible physical home space and the invisible domain that is an extension of the home space, including intersections with other spheres. Students who have access to and confidence with technology in their home (domestic) field bring cultural capital with them into the classroom. This is at odds with social norms (e.g. behavioral expectations, physical arrangements, and hierarchical structures). Those with experience often have a power and confidence around using technology in a way that they do not have with most other academic subjects and educational tools, such as math, language arts and social studies. In the Bourdieuian sense, this is cultural capital.

Bourdieu names three different types of cultural capital: *embodied* ("long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"), *objectified* in the form of cultural goods ("pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc."), and *institutionalized* ("a form of objectification…[which] confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee") (Bourdieu, 1986a). Forms of capital vary. Cultural capital, under certain conditions, can be converted into economic capital (money/financial resources) or social capital (social obligations/connections)" (Bourdieu, 1986a). When I use the term "capital" in this dissertation, I am primarily referring to cultural capital, specifically the cultural

capital that students have around technology and media when they enter the classroom (embodied), the technological equipment as cultural capital itself (objectified), and relations to power, class position and access (institutionalized). This is inclusive of social, political, linguistic, and economic capital. If I am referring to a more specific type of capital, I have identified it as such.

For purposes of this research, the public school field refers to both the visible physical school space and the invisible domain that is an extension of the public school space, including intersections with other fields. Bourdieu claims that the education system, like most institutions, is set up to appear as if it were offering equal opportunities for all students. Once this idea is understood, the notion that appearances are not the same as experienced reality for many makes it difficult to receive information communicated by the institution at face value. The system hides the fact that it teaches and attempts to reproduce what everyone already knows (Bourdieu, 1980). In explaining educational exclusion and differential outcomes, Bourdieu's argues that school excludes certain students because they are not able to recognize that they are being excluded (Pelletier, 2009).

According to Bourdieu, habitus is an individual's disposition structured by background and influencing their decisions. As individuals move between fields, their ability to succeed is determined by the congruence of their habitus and capital with that of the dominant within the field, and their ability to utilize or gain capital in the field. Therefore, habitus is the other pivotal piece of the puzzle in my study.

I.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICAL ECONOMY

As a complimentary and secondary theoretical framework, I examine

institutional and economic structural variables when assessing the way that technology is used by adolescents. The influence of federal regulatory policies and the inundation of privately funded technology in schools as well as its influence over adolescents' private lives is critical to unpacking the complex layers of technology and media usage in America. This approach to analysis is compatible with the study of relationships that students and teachers have with technology, especially in terms of power and action. In order to understand the way that technology is utilized and structured socially, at home and at school, it is important to include political and economic variables: "Political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources" (Mosco, 2009, p. 2).

In the United States, more than ninety percent of students attend public school (Bouchrika, 2020). Simultaneous calls for improved governance, tighter control and more independence, school choice and local needs promote competition. This all needs to be reconciled with the increasing recognition that public school does not offer equitable access to all students (Gradstein et al., 2004). There are multiple perspectives laid out in the political economy of education. Viewing education as a public economic investment to increase human capital is one way that contributes to raising productivity and bolstering a healthy national economy (Best, 2010). Another economic theory is that education acts as a screening device to identify different abilities, a way to signal employers to hire the most skilled workers (Stiglitz, 1975). Education is also viewed as a way to instill

common cultural norms in order to reduce social tensions among groups (Lott, 1990). This creates good citizens (informed, sensible voters), inhibits criminal and antisocial behavior, improves communication, and economic transactions. (Gradstein et al., 2004). Government regulation of content ensures that students are on the receiving end of this social capital.

The neoliberal political movement of the early 1980s, highlighted and precipitated by the 1983 federal report *A Nation at Risk* made a case for pro-market policies in public education. Because of the decentralized nature of public education in the United States, reform on the part of the federal government is extremely limited. This opened the field of public education up to pro-market policies and competition (Verger et al., 2017). Neoliberal capitalism demands new skill sets which have led to "different kinds of demands being placed on education" (Jones, 2019). Communication resources like technology are integral to teaching students these skill sets. "This nurtured a growing dependency on private funds which has led the way for private companies to entrench themselves in public schools… private interest is potentially shaping the public good and private interest ideas of public good may be at odds with public interest ideas" (Mustain, 2014, p.48).

I.3 CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

The existing body of literature concerning the use of technology in schools does not explore the relationship between students' use of and attitudes toward the technology and media in classrooms, and their experience with this technology outside of school. Students who have a relationship with technology and media at home have a high level of comfort and skill. Placing technology designed to be used

by an individual consumer into the classroom without addressing these issues can be a problem. Additionally, students who have not had access to very much technology are at a disadvantage, creating yet another layer of complexity surrounding this topic. Structure, hierarchy, learning styles, socio-economic status, mental health, access, gender and core curriculum are some of the complications which are explored. These factors influence students' experience and how educators approach individuals and groups in general.

I.4 AREAS OF INQUIRY

- What are some ways that adolescents use technology and media in the domestic field and the field of education, and how do these fields overlap?
- How are habitus, fields, and capital taken into consideration when parents and teachers make choices regarding adolescents, technology, and media?
- How do private technology corporations influence the public field of education, students, and teachers?

I.5 REMOTE INSTRUCTION: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

I began writing this dissertation well before the country was forced to shift from in-person school to remote instruction. I finished it right smack in the middle of a pandemic. I have devoted a chapter on this disruption to what has turned out to be a crisis in education. However, because remote instruction is inextricably intertwined with technology, media, and adolescents, I want to acknowledge the climate within the context of my research up front. At the risk of divulging the ending of a riveting story too soon, I think it is of value for the reader to be cognizant of the direct

connection my analysis has to this massive disruption in the two social fields on which I focus: the domestic field and the field of public education.

As you will see, complications that are present in the (twenty-first century) field of public education existed well before administrators, teachers, students and families were forced to engage in remote instruction. It has been a full year since most public school students and teachers were face to face in a classroom. Instead of pivoting to a revised way of teaching remotely, backed up by decades of research and recommendations, most public schools attempted to recreate the in-person experience. This happened for many reasons, including decentralization of the national system of public education, lack of support and/or understanding on the part of many teachers concerning the best way to pivot their approach, restriction of the curriculum, existing policies and laws, and ineffective use of technology. In addition, logistical issues in attempting to get a country of K-12 students online to go to school were, understandably, rife with problems. Even when a new school year began six months into remote instruction, most public schools were still trying to recreate face-to-face instruction online.

But perhaps the biggest obstacle is access. This issue is much bigger than getting equipment into the hands of students and making sure that they have internet access, though these are huge hurdles to navigate and many students have fallen through the cracks because of it.

The larger obstacle is inequity. This presents itself in diverse ways. Inequity is clearly related to socioeconomic status, class, gender, race, and all of the barriers, conditions, and social construction that come with an individual's status. More often

than not, this is reflected in the way students are able to navigate in-person school. Still, for the most part, students are given food, shelter, and attention while they are physically on campus, even if they struggle academically and/or socially.

In addition to social status, it would be an understatement to say that each student learns in a different way than their peers. In my analysis, I find that individual dispositions (habitus) often goes unseen, in particular when a student does not exhibit pre-conceived definitions of a disability or disruptive behavior. For example, students who've struggled silently in school previously may be experiencing difficulties that they cannot overcome online. Perhaps more surprising to the players involved, there are students who excelled academically and socially in person, who are now presenting with new, likely unexpected barriers. Further, aside from homework, the field of public education is designed to be separate from the domestic field. Historically, parents are able to work and complete tasks that require uninterrupted child-free time. This is no longer the case.

Difficulties and setbacks with compulsory remote instruction are not happening because we are experiencing an unprecedented event. They are happening because problems already exist, and they are exacerbated by this disruption. With these issues in mind, I present the complex layers of the institutionalized, bureaucratic field of public education and the ways in which it overlaps with the domestic field in the current climate.

I.5 DISRUPTION PREVIEW

Throughout this dissertation I focus on the concept of disruption in education as pivotal. This happens as insertion of technology into the classroom, as

progressive curriculum, integration and understanding of individual habitus in a new way, acknowledging students' cultural capital around technology and media, redefinition of fields, remote instruction, and finally, the potential for revolution by deconstructing and dismantling the institution of education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1 PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

> Wholly independent of desire or intent every experience lives on in further experiences. Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences (Dewey, 2008, p.13).

The way that mainstream public education is structured is a major shift for a child coming from a domestic field that centers around a familiar space and players and allows them to develop organically. Narratives around the use and consumption of technology claim that it's a largely detrimental feature in the private space of the home, yet beneficial in the public space of the school. Children, however, feel the opposite. John Dewey says we live in a world that is what it is because of previously exiting human activities. We start with the fact of human activity (not exclusive to an individual's body and mind) and are led to ideas, rather than beginning with an idea that then may lead human beings to act a certain way. Such behaviors or *instincts* are general and account for nothing in particular. These strictly organic tendencies are created by a causal force (social) that are hypothetical, and we gain nothing by inserting instincts between structure and act (Dewey, 1967).

Dewey talks about consequences that human acts have on others, causing more actions which lead people to attempt to control and create a specific outcome. Directly engaging in an action (such as interacting with the technology at home) is private, but when consequences affect others (such as inappropriate behavior in

school), it becomes public and thus an effort to regulate such actions is formed (school, state, king, etc.). Private and public is not the same as individual and social.

> Call up in imagination the ordinary schoolroom, its time schedules, schemes of classification, of examination and promotion, of rules of order, and I think you will grasp what is meant by 'pattern of organization'. If then you contrast this scene with what goes on in the family, for example, you will appreciate what is meant by the school being a kind of institution sharply marked off from any other form of social organization…The solution of this problem requires a well thought-out philosophy of the social factors that operate in the constitution of individual experience (Dewey, 2008, p.5).

Dewey's ideas of public and private complement Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, fields, and cultural capital. Instead of looking at habitus, Dewey talks about habit forming emotional and intellectual attitudes, and contributing to the way that individuals respond to social conditions (Dewey, 2008). There are consequences that human acts have on others, causing more actions that lead people to attempt to control and create a specific outcome. This leads to a division between public and private, highlighting the different ways that students experience the domestic field and the field of public education.

Dewey's vision of progressive education is child-centered, constructivist, cooperative, community oriented, hands-on, diverse and critical. Is it possible to create this type of educational structure with technology? Can the technology be used to reinforce critical thinking? Progressive education, such as Dewey describes, is something that is rarely seen in mainstream public schools. Observing the use of

the technology seems like a perfect opportunity to detect and think about ways in which it can be used to do more than supplement curriculum.

II.2 TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technology as a tool has always been central to controlling the flow and reproduction of information. “Over the centuries, each significant shift in educational values, goals or objectives has led to diverse technologies of instruction” (Dewey, 2008). Traditionally, the flow of information in the field of education is in the direction of teacher to student and has the intention of influencing and persuading the receiver, in order to affect the transference of knowledge. This was only possible because of innovations in technology that were considered to be part of an “information crisis” starting with the printing press. The Gutenberg printing press removed control of information from the hands of the Catholic Church, who understood that “something needed to be done to maintain a measure of control” (Saettler, 2004, p. 4).

Technology used for education is often considered to be radical because it shifts the way information and knowledge is disseminated. This includes technologies like bound books, pencil and pen, slate, paper, magic lantern, slide rule, calculator, typewriter, and the photocopier (Postman, 1993, p. 62); all significant tools in forwarding the ability to control flow of knowledge and which had significant impact on public education. “It is clear that education technology is essentially the product of a great historical stream consisting of trial and error, long practice and imitation, and sporadic manifestations of unusual individual creativity and persuasion” (Educatorstechnology, 2014).

Larry Cuban's book, *Teachers and Machines: The Classroom Uses of Technology Since 1920*, (Saettler, 2004, p. 4) draws parallels between the history of communication and the history of education. When film became inexpensive enough to think about using it in schools, education reformers got very excited.

> Edison once said, "Someday our school children will be getting more knowledge from moving pictures than from books and lectures." This statement, while anticipatory, is nonetheless true, for when we follow recent tendencies in education we find that practically all of the older subjects, such as history, geography and science, are being vitalized in the classroom by means of the film and the slide (1986).

Instructional use of film in public schools became a commercial enterprise as early as 1910. When the realization grew that educational films were different in form and objective from theatrical or industrial, public relations, religious or political films, schools became potential markets for projection equipment and for the rental and purchase of films for instructional purposes (Wakefield, 1923, p. 4). After the novelty wore off, film substantially declined, and teachers used it as an occasional supplement to their curriculum. When surveyed, the main reasons for its decline were: lack of equipment, scheduling, information about content, lack of training or knowledge in how to use the equipment, not enough inventory of films, and disinterest (Saettler, 2004, p. 99).

Implementation of technological innovation in the field of public education is widely recognized as flawed. Cuban asserts that nobody asked the teachers, the educators in the classrooms, what they thought about introducing film into the daily

routine of school; intended to increase productivity, it was mandated by policy makers. (1986). This sentiment has been and continues to be echoed by many teacher-supporting experts who advocate for reforming from "the inside out" (1986, p. 54), recognizing and addressing the "technocrat versus teacher" division (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), involving teachers in development (Wolcott, 2003), "inadequate operational specificity," otherwise known as "the implementation problem" (Tyler, 1980), and the disparity between what is publicly announced and what is actually experienced in the classroom (McLaughlin, 2004, p. 178).

These flaws have become inherent in the field of public education, exemplifying some of the many layers that affect the ability to operationalize technology in a way that is effective for teachers and students. This unfortunate predetermination is beholden to social, economic and political issues that are deeply rooted in bureaucracy.

Unlike personalized devices used in modern-day schools like computers and tablets, film, television and radio were referred to as mass media, "an organized means of communicating openly, at a distance, and to many in a short space of time" (Check, 2000). It is with this understanding of mass media that educators received and analyzed film, television, and radio and the way in which they were integrated into their classrooms. The history of radio and education is long and complex. It's more notable use in education was the School of the Air (SOA) movement (McQuail, 2010). Education reformers and supporters (again, not teachers) thought that radio would transform education. Unlike film, radio was regulated by the government. This meant that there was more structure and organization of the implementation

of radio as instructor. Scheduled radio shows that covered a variety of topics were broadcast at specific times, and teachers were told to organize their children to listen at that time for a lesson. With radio, the technology *became* the curriculum, particularly in rural communities (Bianchi, 2008, p. 1), taking it out of the teachers' hands and in their eyes, making their jobs and their lives much more difficult (Bianchi, 2008). Some educators had hopes that radio would be a highly successful teaching device, that perhaps one very entertaining and dazzling teacher could inspire thousands of students who were bored with their current daily classroom options (1986, p. 19).

According to Cuban, complaints by teachers about radio were similar to those about film: lack of equipment (or working equipment), difficulties with scheduling, not enough information for the teachers, poor reception, and programs that are not actually related to the curriculum. Additionally, research gathered by Cuban shows that teachers voiced their strong concerns that film and radio instruction was not as valuable as learning from a teacher (Douglas, 1987). Most educators at the time did not believe that radio in the classroom was a success:

> Perhaps traditional educators have asked too much of radio. No single radio program, in the normal individual's life, can bring formation not achieved by other tools of education. Radio does not possess supernatural capability or magic. It must be recognized that intelligently planned classroom radio programs are more useful in broadening the point-of-view than in inspiring them to master a knowledge by becoming tireless research workers in search of explanations for everything they hear (1986, p. 71).

Major media corporations were criticized for jumping on the educational radio bandwagon as a profit-making venture; Sears and Roebuck Company, ABC, CBS and NBC in particular. Commercial stations tried to help floundering educators by developing programming for classroom listening (Carroll Atkinson, 1945). Bianchi argues that calling SOAs a failed experiment is an unfair judgement; "I argue that these scholars rushed to judgment. They over-emphasized the significance of audience studies and audience size and neglected to define any other criteria for measuring SOA success" (2008). He assesses that music and art programs were extremely successful, and that state-based SOAs were effective in reaching rural students, particularly in curriculum specifically designed for radio, not replicating or competing with live classroom instruction. His final analysis is that the most successful radio programs were those that encouraged teacher and student involvement (Bianchi, 2008).

The introduction of television into education as instructor was even more aggressive. This parallels the excitement about television and its potential in the nation. In addition to education reformers, administrators, researchers and the government, the media became inextricably involved in the promotion of television as the technology that would change everything about the way that children were taught. Some ideas resembled the radio approach; scheduled programs were broadcast and all children in the classroom watched the lesson at the same time. Experiments were created, and at first they seemed to work to educate more children. But over time the students and teachers complained that they had no control over anything (2008).

Unlike film and radio, television was developed in the United States as a government and foundation-based enterprise. Television stations donated their airtime and local public television stations developed programs designed to educate both during school and after hours. Educational programmers believed that television could supplement the teacher shortage caused by the baby boom. Teachers were unimpressed and less than enthusiastic. The teacher's union, the American Federation of Teachers, passed a resolve that television not become a part of the core curriculum (Cuban, 1986).

The next technology to be introduced into the field of public education was the computer in the 1980s (Saettler, 2004). A 1991 meta-analysis covering 254 studies on computer-based instruction from the late sixties to the mid-eighties found varied results, including improved test results, improved attitudes toward computers and reduced time needed for instruction (C. L. C. Kulik & Kulik, 1991). A 1988 report prepared for the U.S. Congress discusses a wide variety of ways that utilizing computers in the classroom can be assessed and approached, through teacher interviews and experiences. The report showed that teachers had varying degrees of buy-in, comfort, skills, access, support, resources, professional development, funding, goals, policy mandates, and student populations. The report defined computers as instructional tools. Requirements for using computers in schools were:

> adequate hardware, appropriate software, related courseware, a knowledgeable and skilled teacher, reasonable mechanisms for assessing learning and practice, technical assistance, and a supportive environment for teachers' professional

> growth and development. All are necessary; no subset is sufficient (Levin & Hines, 2003, p. 265).

Teachers trying to navigate integrating computers into their classrooms faced a variety of issues. Sometimes they were trained but did not have access to hardware, the right hardware, or curriculum materials. Sometimes they had the computer in the classroom but no training. They were often isolated from other teachers and administration, with no clear direction or plan. These problems were sources of frustration and failure to succeed, leading teachers to ask the question, "Technology, for what?" (Wiske, 1988, p. 45).

Computer-based programs, i.e. software, were the focus of early integration of computers into classrooms with the intention of contributing to the improvement of instruction in American schools (J. A. Kulik, 2003). However, software designed for learning was uniquely tied to branded hardware. There were multiple companies selling their computers and software packages to schools. IBM's most successful program was "Writing to Read," a multi-step program in which students rotated between stations working on phonics, typing, following along in audio books, and writing stories (Slavin, 1991). Apple contracted the Minnesota Education Computing Consortium (MECC) to develop a sizable proprietary catalog of educational software, including the iconic "Oregon Trail" game. Steve Jobs created and lobbied for the "Kids Can't Wait" bill and (beginning in his home state of California) was able to initially procure tax breaks for Apple for donating computers to nine thousand California schools (Waters, 2015), with more to follow. The Commodore VIC-20 used cassettes that were sold in six-packs, mostly math games.

Radio shack aggressively promoted a networking system that connected one teacher-controlled computer to up to sixty-three student computers, operating an exclusive, required software catalog (Reed, 2021). Atari also tapped into MECC to develop its "courseware" packages, covering several subject areas including history, language arts, math, music, science, and social studies ("Atari in the Classroom Academic Applications," 1983).

In 1986, Cuban was concerned that if the goal of one-on-one computers were to be achieved, it would have a negative impact on students. Teachers were Cuban's main focus in the debate over technology in education, asserting that teachers are the gatekeepers of technology and history has proven that they can shut it down (or severely diminish its use) time and time again by just closing their doors to it. According to Cuban, reasons for teachers' concern were: 1) accessibility 2) implementation and innovation 3) the setting of the classroom itself 4) the nature of the teaching profession. (1986, p. 90)

Cuban's other observation has to do with the culture of teaching, which includes teachers' personal and social beliefs. This, he says, includes the tried-and-true tools that they use in their rooms to keep order. This culture, in the traditional school setting, is one of power. It keeps the hierarchy in place, which reinforces the structure of the classroom and the entire institution of education, essentially unchanged since the 1900s, when we were preparing students to be workers in the industrial revolution (1986, p. 100). Teacher culture also serves to reproduce the discourse of the field of public education, justifying the way individuals teach. "These preconditions encompass institutional structures including bureaucratic

imperatives, the teachers' problematic and the hidden pedagogy" (Sachs & Smith, 1988, p. 425).

The culture of teaching is closely related to school culture. Students, staff and parents pick up on this culture when they are first introduced to a school (Peterson & Deal, 2009). School culture is the feeling you get when you walk onto a campus. The more time you spend there, the more you understand the beliefs, relationships, written and unwritten rules of that school. This also includes physical and emotional safety of the students, classroom set-up, public space aesthetics, and attitudes on diversity, equity and inclusion. "[It] results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school's particular institutional history" (*School Culture Definition*, 2013).

In his book, *The Children's Machine Age: Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer* (1994), Seymour Papert begins the same way that Cuban concludes. Papert's approach when introducing a new technology into the classroom is to ask how children learn. Though they are asking the same question, Papert and Cuban have very different answers. Papert would say that Cuban's analysis of teachers focuses on the way that students are taught, not the way that they learn. Papert divides the world into two types of people: Schoolers and Yearners. Schoolers are people who are supportive of the institution of education, despite its problems. They acknowledge that education has some problems, namely funding, policies, consistency and quality, but they see no need for revolution in the system. Yearners question everything about education, from the curriculum to the structure to the ultimate question of *why*? Why do we need to do it this way? Why can't we try

something different? Why do you get to decide what is important for me to learn? It is the Yearners who have the most difficulty in school. Papert proposes that the only way to accomplish real learning, in conjunction with technology, is to revolutionize the pedagogy, the dominant paradigm (1994).

Papert uses the example of video gaming to explain how kids learn through passion and self-directed exploration. He calls computers "The Knowledge Machine" and introduces the radical idea that the core classes in American education today are not necessary for every student. "The Knowledge Machine" has the capacity to put children in charge of their learning, which is completely different than the way they learn in school on a daily basis (1994, p. 11).

Papert says that school keeps children in a position where they have to do what is required of them by some authority figure who has decided what knowledge is most important for them to learn. The students, who are being groomed to be good citizens, have to do as they are told, and occupy themselves with tasks that are called work. This work has no value in and of itself, and Yearners learn that very quickly. (Papert, 1994, p. 3).

Papert believes that 1) children can master computers and 2) learning to use computers can affect and influence the way they learn in all other parts of their lives, including (and perhaps especially) school. His fundamental principal of learning is: *take your time.* Explore the nooks and crannies, experiment and fail, collaborate with peers, follow the rabbit hole of a problem until you find out the answer (or at least *an* answer), search for knowledge, find your passion and follow it. Papert claims that one of the underlying problems with school is that we are

focused on teaching and not learning.

In the 2015 book *Never Send a Human to do a Machine's Job: Correcting the Top Five Mistakes in Education Technology* (Zhao et al., 2015), the authors update the status of technology in the classroom and analyze the issues that are faced by students, teachers, administrators, reformers and researchers. First, Zhao et al. say that teachers have the wrong relationship with technology. Drawing from Cuban, Papert and others, Zhao proposes that the metaphor of an ecosystem functions more efficiently and productively than previous models. This ecosystem is one where teachers do a sort of dance with technology, stepping forward in situations where they are most needed, stepping back when technology is better suited for the task, and recognizing the difference. Cuban would argue that teachers feel it is necessary to have a connection with the students at the outset when introducing a new skill or concept, in order to assess where the students are, if they understand, and what is needed to complete the lesson.

Zhao points out that the need to *teach* young people how to use technology is moot. Throughout the development of the computer and the internet, educators have become increasingly concerned and focused on the skills and programs that students need to learn in order to be successful. Zhao says that 1) software and hardware change so rapidly that these particular skills will be outdated before these students have the chance to use them in the workforce and 2) learning to use technology is not something that we need to teach children, because they teach themselves. It is something that they have always used; it is intuitive and seamless, an extension of themselves, but even more importantly, it is fun, entertaining, and

easy (2015, pp. 47–49).

Some of Cuban's research showed that teachers were concerned about the use of technology in education because it was tainted through its association with entertainment. They believed that students wouldn't take it seriously or learn what they needed to if the instruction came in the form of something that they otherwise associated with fun, play and relaxation. Papert would disagree, as does Zhao.

Zhao et al. address the problem of implementation, as demonstrated in Cuban's documentation of the introduction of technology into the classroom throughout history, and Papert's call for new approaches. Computers and the internet are much more complex than any other technologies that have preceded them, yet they are being treated, introduced and implemented in the same way. They are also being used in the same ways as film, radio and television. Some of these ways include: to give the teacher a break, as a reward and punishment, to substitute for an earlier technology such as paper, learning to type, watching videos, and taking tests. Zhao's recommended bottom-up approach is akin to Papert's. It includes personalized learning programs that are developed and devised by students, and guided by teachers. The bottom-up approach has the ability to capitalize on the ways technology can be used in very exciting ways.

The relationship between school and technology needs to be re-imagined. In particular, curriculum, pedagogy and the teacher-machine relationship should be looked at differently and should be driven by the way that children really learn. This can be accomplished by identifying what machines can do, and what humans do best, so that we "never send a human to do a machine's job" (2015, pp. 93–106).

Anti-oppressive education says that a commonsense approach to education (including school activities and culture) contributes to oppression in school as well as society. There are many layers of oppression in the educational system. When applied to this situation, Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire & Macedo, 2000) would assert that the rigid way schools implement the control of technology in the classroom is merely a component in a larger machine, as well as a symptom, of a condition created by the system. Technology usage contributes to conforming, repressing curiosity and the ability to question. These are important elements of critical thinking required to challenge systems of oppression. This may not be oppressive in the way that a struggle for freedom, equality or the fight to survive would be. However, forced conforming contributes to a loss of power individuated or the right to challenge - for fear of punishment. This shuts down the dialogue between teacher and pupil.

Papert and Sherry Turkle (1990) have studied types of pedagogy for using computers in the classroom. They say that computing in the classroom requires validating multiple ways of knowing and thinking. They identify two styles of pedagogy with computers. First, there is the imposed style, which they refer to as concrete. They argue that the using of computers is best suited to epistemological pluralism, yet students say that they feel a pressure to conform to the socially constructed concrete style. Papert and Turkle call for a shift in the computer culture, from the concrete style that makes some students hesitant to join in, to one that welcomes multiple ways of knowing and thinking: an epistemological pluralism.

> We were able to observe people reacting poignantly to what they felt as a pressure to conform to officially imposed style (concrete). Although the computer as an expressive medium supports epistemological pluralism, the computer culture often does not…The revaluation of the concrete will open the computer culture to accepting the computer as an expressive medium that encourages distinctive and varied styles of use. There is every reason to think that this pluralistic computer culture could be more welcoming and nurturing (Turkle & Papert, 1990).

A 2013 study entitled *An Inquiry into How iPads are Used in the Classroom* asserts that technology in education is a "Trojan Horse" for education reform, implying that technology will bring radical changes, questioning the need to create dynamic and informed "webizens" who are able to make critical judgments on information provided by media, books and journals, and questions to policy makers and educational administrators regarding technology as a priority in educational policies. Additionally, the researcher asks: 1) Is the technology designed and useful for education? 2) Can kids' passion when using the technology translate into learning? 3) Why is there an increasing value put on the technology (and not other devices, for instance) for educational purposes? He also discusses the technological enthusiasm surrounding the technology, noting that it took nearly three decades for personal computers to become broadly introduced into the K-12 educational setting and widely used by 91% of American students in these classrooms. Conversely, the iPad has been introduced into K-12 classrooms more widely and speedily than any other previous computing device. It is even predicted that it will soon replace

traditional computers such as desktops and laptops (as well as textbooks) in classrooms. However, although the initial questions are critical and even political, research conclusions are of a more practical nature, including lack of training, administrative expectations, technology influence over student behavior and motivation, inability to measure learning impact, and teacher skepticism (Vu, 2013).

In 2005 Judi Harris published an article about varying definitions of "technology integration." She compares definitions for the concept between two groups; education graduate students (teachers) preparing to work in (or return to) the classroom, and the International Society for Technology in Education, an organization that sets standards used in classrooms. Harris says that the ISTE recommendations for using technology emphasizes using technology as a tool to obtain information, whereas former teachers emphasize how content learning can be assisted with technology as a tool. "The distinction is more than semantic, and its import may well point to one of two primary reasons why many—if not most—large-scale technology integration efforts are perceived to have failed: technocentrism and pedagogical dogmatism (J. Harris, 2005, p. 116)."

She then calls for "standards-based instructional strategies that are appropriately matched to students' learning needs and preferences." This is in contrast to most traditional research focused on finding out how each new technological innovation has affected student learning, not exploring issues in technology that she considers to be more fundamental learning needs and preferences in order to "demonstrate pedagogically appropriate uses of educational technologies." Her suggestion is that research shifts from a "what are the effects of

technology in the classroom" approach to the how and why different approaches with technology can and should be appropriated (2005, p. 117).

Harris points out another problem with most educational technology research which she labels "pedagogical dogmatism." She claims that there are two agendas in the current climate, and educators need to choose how they promote technology. First, for the last two decades there has been a confusion between technology integration and technology as a vehicle for educational reform; i.e., constructivist (meaning or knowledge built and not passively received) vs. reinforcing basic skills (use for research, produce content, etc.) (2005, p. 119). In conclusion, Harris calls for something similar to Papert and Turkle's recommendation with the addition of academic freedom for teachers as well as pluralistic pedagogies for students in order to allow for teachers' academic freedom and personal styles, encompassing differing instructional strategies, and trusting teachers to choose what works best for them and their students (2005, p. 121).

There is a wide variety of educational literature that discusses the perfect fit of constructivist teaching and technology. One such 2003 study, "Constructing on Constructivism: The Role of Technology," breaks this literature into the following categories: technology as a cognitive tool, constructive view of using high-order skills, and the role of the teacher as facilitator. Again, the recommendation is for seeking to understand multiple perspectives of learners through constructivist teaching, which lends itself to the research questions being asked in this dissertation, and an examination of technology usage via social fields by examining the social origins of constructions, processes, artifacts, and contexts (Grant & D,

2003, p. 50).

The conversation about media literacy in education increasingly covers technology as well, often approaching media and technology as seamlessly integrated. Educators appear to have been struggling with the question of the value of teaching media literacy when education existed without it for many years. However, with the proliferation of technology in the classroom today, access to media is nearly unavoidable. Additionally, students are accessing it at home, entering into the classroom with knowledge that comes from a less restrictive situation. Much like the introduction of technology, many teachers resist adding media literacy to an already full-to-bursting curriculum. In his article "Making a Case for Media Literacy in the Classroom," teacher Neil Andersen explains several reasons that there is such a strong need for learning a critical view of media. These include: countering marketing programs, deconstructing stereotypes and misconceptions, cultivating a positive attitude toward learning, ideas and information, analyzing and thinking critically about news, and learning to use media and technology as a tool for life-long learning (N. Anderson, 1992).

Media literacy is not something that is separated from culture. Recognizing multiculturalism and social construction of gender, race and class needs to be addressed in the discussion of media literacy and technology. Resources for teaching media literacy are plentiful, including feminist and queer theories, acknowledgement and discussion of class and socioeconomic inequities, and standpoint epistemologies. Though some teachers view it as an unnecessary burden and extra work, the need to teach media literacy has existed since the introduction

of technology and media into the classroom.

> In the U.S., media literacy education began in the 1970s with an emphasis on protection (from the so-called "bad" media content); most media literacy materials and initiatives were aimed at parents. Since then, there has been a shift toward an emphasis on media literacy as empowerment (stressing critical thinking and production skills); more materials are now aimed at schools and teachers. The empowerment model emphasizes the political, social, and economic implications of media messages and stresses the importance of using media effectively and wisely (Scheibe & Faith Rogow, 1999, p. 3).

Often the discussion of media literacy turns to the concept of digital citizenship. This issue has multiple components, but the most often talked about are internet safety/cyber-bullying and digital responsibility. Students are growing up in a world of instant entertainment and information. Some teachers, especially those who are pro-technology, generally believe that these students may be media savvy, but not media literate. Some studies show that students believe what they find on the internet is true and believable and fail to challenge ideological assumptions seen in anything from fiction to news to advertising. In fact, since 2008 the New Media Consortium has been declaring that the top challenge for 21st century schools is "a growing need for formal instruction in key new skills, including information literacy, visual literacy, and technological literacy" (Baker, 2011, p. 1). Recommendations for the common core curriculum are included in the National Association for Media Literacy Education guide: "Media literacy engages in the thoughtful understanding of all texts in our media environment, including print, visual, audio, interactive, and

digital texts. Media literate students are able to decode and comprehend texts, which allows them to analyze and evaluate texts for credibility, point of view, values, varying interpretation, and the context in which they are made, including institutional and economic contexts" ("MLE & Common Core Standards," 2013). Media literacy is not currently a required standard for the core curriculum. Instead, the NMCE suggests integrating media literacy into language arts core classes.

The idea that new media in schools somehow has direct effects, and even determines the way that individuals act, is a form of contemporary technological determinism. It feels like the most natural thing to do, to boil down the "effects" a medium, practice or technology might have on an individual, or a group of individuals (Hewett et al., 2018). In addition to historical concerns over content, we now worry about psychological and physiological effects on children. This is largely due to the addition of personalized devices and the internet (Drew, 2016).

> In a culture like ours…the medium is the message…the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology (McLuhan, 2003, p. 203).

When Marshall McLuhan introduced the idea that the environment created by technology changes people, it was radical. It was a notion that was, and still is, difficult for many to understand, that all technologies are extensions of the body and act like a nervous system, incapable of disassociating from a transformation of social life (Drew, 2016). Those interpreting media literacy as the need to understand and engage with texts, are missing McLuhan's point. Educators who think this way are

trying to connect what is possible through technology with what they are attempting to accomplish. Both teachers and students often see artifacts as neutral instruments (de Vries, 2017), leaving out the influence of social contexts.

II.3 NEOLIBERALISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

One issue that is cited over and over by teachers, administration and districts for difficulty with technology implementation is lack of funding in America's schools. A look at the neoliberalist turn and how it has affected the American education system helps to give insight into this breakdown of financial support for public education and the gradual privatization of schools. David Harvey defines neoliberalism as "the theory…that individual liberty and freedom are the high point of civilization" and argues that "individual liberty and freedom can best be protected and achieved by an institutional structure…a world in which individual initiative can flourish" (Lilley, 2006).

The neoliberalist movement in the United States, beginning around the time of the election of Ronald Reagan for President, has had a significant impact on the institution of education. The privatization, corporatization, as well as cultural, social and political rhetoric, has gradually altered the path of education from a generous social movement to a shrinking one in need of funding from alternative sources. In contrast to Dewey's philosophy of progressive education, the establishment of *No Child Left Behind* (Boehner, 2002) was part of a neoliberalist turn that laid the groundwork in public schools for the current state of affairs: federal defunding and increasing necessity to rely on private funding, as well as the promotion of efficiency (e.g., standardized testing) and scare tactics promoting moral panic, promoting

reforms as a necessary part of preparing individuals to be a part of the national economy. “Increased efficiency can only be attained, argue neoliberals, if individuals are able to make choices within a market system in which schools compete rather than the current system in which individuals are captive to educational decisions made by educators and government officials” (Hursh, 2007, p. 498).

Papert also addresses this issue when he discusses the Bush regime’s “educational reforms.” In response to poor test scores worldwide, the administration responded by tightening controls on the already regimented educational system. They inserted technology as a solution for this problem, without asking the questions necessary to implement functional programs. This resulted in standardized testing as we know it today, which has many components. In the race to compete and be the best, teachers increased their practice of teaching to the test. They are assessed by the scores of their students – regardless of many other factors including socioeconomic and budget constraints, and funding is tied to the “report cards” of the schools, districts and states. This requirement to conform to the plan has simply served to reiterate the definition of school as a place where narrow skills are learned, and the status quo is maintained. This neoliberalist initiative and its claim of supporting free enterprise and the American way, seems to have wiped out all possibility for the radical shift that Papert, and many other innovators, have called for in schools (Papert, 1994, pp. 209–210).

The driving force behind the development of instructional technology has been entirely driven by private industry. Each ‘revolutionary’ instructional technology came from substantial and well-established corporations (M. Lee & Winzenried,

2009). Once this revolution began, student/computer ratios became a measure of technology readiness. (C. Williams, 2000). There are no concrete statistics revealing the pace at which technology has been unfurled in private schools versus public schools. What is clear is that private schools have more control over their budgets and can customize their curriculum. They ae not funded by government at any level, paid for by tax dollars, nor subject to public school regulations. They set their own criteria. Still, most private schools stay fairly close to federal policies in order to provide education that is equal or better than public school (*Private Schools*, n.d.).

Vincent Mosco defines the political economy of communications as "…the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources" (2009, p. 2).

Given the financial state of the institution of education, technology companies have filled the gap by providing equipment to schools. This places them in a position of power. It also gives them the advantage when it comes to controlling the narrative of their generosity and allows them to introduce their products to up and coming consumers. For example, according to the Apple Education website, "Something magical happens when you put Apple products in your classroom. You can create unique opportunities for personal learning at every level. Lessons become more immersive through the power of touch, motion, and sound. Assignments can be sketched, scored, charted, coded, or performed. And the work your students need to do becomes the work they love to do" (*Apple Education*, n.d.) Options on the website include products, IT and Deployment, Teachers, ConnectED,

and Purchasing and Support. This addresses the issue of how a public sector can justify using technology funded and supported by corporations: Can a consumer device be impartial when used for educational purposes, without commodifying education?

II.4 USING TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA AT HOME

Commodification isn't limited to the field of public education. Those devices they aren't allowed to use at school are less regulated behind closed bedroom doors. A 2014 study finds that students interact in different ways with technology at home and at school. The researchers attempted to achieve a holistic understanding of student technology practices, with the understanding that the way they use technology cannot be separated. Using a Bourdian theoretical framework, the authors find that "Overall, the doxical practices and culture of technology use between school and home fields were generally very different" (Beckman et al., 2014, p. 13). When researchers compared home use to school use, students reported that teachers gave them little personal choice or room for independent or personalized learning. Student accounts lead the researchers to wonder whether the ways that technology are used in the classroom are, "fundamentally different from a printed version of the same task on a piece of paper" (Beckman et al., 2014, p. 13).

Ellen Seiter uses Bourdieu's concepts to discuss whether or not technology has improved education. She addresses some of the same ideas that will be addressed in this dissertation. How have corporate needs surpassed pedagogical goals in public education? How have we set up unrealistic expectations around

technology as a magic bullet for classroom challenges? (2008, p. 28). Seiter explains how Bourdieu's cultural capital can be used in this context, "Students with this advantage (domestic access) become bored and restless in classrooms where their peers are behind and their skills may even exceed those of the teacher. Classroom instruction is poorly suited to bridging that gap" (p. 36). Seiter says that according to Bourdieu, the means of acquisition of cultural capital of digital literacy plays a significant role in the lives of young children and is long lasting, originating in the middle-class home, "taking its place alongside other forms of cultural capital, such as knowledge of music and art" (2008, p. 33). This observation speaks to the comparison between ways that young people use technology in the home and is crucial in understanding how to identify the overlaps of usage in the classroom.

> Academic capital is discussed at length in Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1988):
>
> Academic capital is obtained and maintained by holding a position enabling domination of other positions and their holders…this power over the agencies of preproduction…ensures for its holders a statutory authority…much more linked to hierarchical position than to any extraordinary properties of the work or the person…and who are placed in a relation of wide-ranging and prolonged dependency (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 84).

Academic capital is so entrenched in the field of public education that students have trouble recognizing the possibility that their individual habitus and cultural capital from the domestic field also exist in the classroom. Environmental tension is created by the relation between power and knowledge. Unlike what adolescents experience at home, Bourdieu makes clear that authority and power in the relationship

between teacher and student are not inherent in an individual, but are inherent in the system, constructed over years and years of a hierarchically organized institution.

In 2019, Common Sense Media published a report entitled *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Teens and Tweens*. "This report presents the results of a nationally representative survey of more than 1,600 U.S. 8- to 18-year-olds, about their use of and relationship with media. The survey covers their enjoyment of various types of media activities, how frequently they engage in those activities, and how much time they spend doing so" (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. iv).

The goal of this study was to provide data that could be utilized by "content creators, educators, policy makers, health providers, parents and researchers" (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 1). Common Sense Media has garnered some criticism in recent years for partnerships with cable companies and becoming involved in political legislation (Johnston, 2016). Despite claims that they produce research for academics, Common Sense Media reports are largely cited by journalists, parents and educators, who publish relatively short articles with catchy headlines. Some scientists feel that these types of reports do not provide scientific-based evidence behind recommendations (Pappas, 2020). My own observations regarding the limitations of their research have to do with the narrow categories used to collect and analyze data, which is addressed later in this dissertation. For my purposes, the data in this study provides context on what "norms" and "exceptions" are regarding childrens' use of media in the domestic sphere. The portion of the study that will be highlighted are the self-reported responses given by "teens," defined in the study as

ages 13-18. When referring to this document, the terms “teens” and “adolescents” will be used interchangeably.

According to this report, the most consumed media by teens, using technology available to them at home, is music. Experts agree that listening to music is an excellent mood regulator for adolescents, “I calm down in the evenings, before going to sleep, by listening to music, and at the same time, I think about stuff that has happened during the day because after I’ve thought that through, then, I can get to sleep, that now these are worked out” (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007, p. 99). Music is also considered to be a main influencer in the development of adolescent identity (North & Hargreaves, 1999).

Research conducted in 2010 highlights an important aspect of music in the domestic sphere – listening to “popular” music in the background while studying. Students say that listening to stimulating music while doing boring and tedious school work helps them focus on the academic task. (Adriano & DiPaola, 2010, pp. 17–18). Multiple studies have shown that music has a positive effect on communication, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, concentration, cognitive function, focus and overall promotion of good mental health in adolescents. In a 2018 study, researchers found that joint musical engagement generates a positive association between adolescents and parents. This “joint musical engagement” is associated with strengthening relationships between parents and adolescents including aspects of emotional dialogue, positive interactions, and nonverbal communication (S. D. Wallace & Harwood, 2018, p. 212-214).

Watching online videos ranks second in enjoyment for teenagers in the *Common Sense Media* study (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 21). This research is specifically referring to sites like YouTube, Vine, Vimeo and includes newer apps like TikTok. Teens spend time on YouTube (and other online video platforms) because it offers a wide variety of content. Additionally, online videos create a sense of community. Users can rate (like/dislike), upload content, comment and share (Khan, 2017, p. 236).

In a recent Wall Street Journal video, teens talk about why YouTube is so attractive and admit that they watch it every day, even using it to help them go to sleep, "You could just never get bored of it...I usually go with the algorithm, but not too far, because it usually gets super weird…it just lets you not think about anything for a couple of minutes" (Jargon, 2019). A 2020 study looking at subject matter of videos for teens on YouTube found that the content being accessed by teenagers was predominantly constructive (García Jiménez & Montes Vozmediano, 2020, p. 71).

There is some evidence that, like music, adolescents watch online videos as part of building individuality and self-worth on their way to adulthood, often seeking out video content that discusses how to deal with challenging subjects in their lives (García Jiménez & Montes Vozmediano, 2020, p. 75). Adolescent YouTubers spend a lot of time talking about their own self-identity. A content analysis of videos related to the construction of adolescent identity found the following categories on YouTube: 1) Construction and scenarios of identity, 2) Gender identity and sexual orientation, 3) Vocational identity, 4) Social relationships, 5) Role of YouTubers and

followers (relating personal experiences to the topic being discussed and adding advice or recommendations). Viewers/users form an emotional link with the YouTuber:

> YouTubers acquire a major role by talking about issues that adolescents may not dare to talk about with other people and their personal experiences may heavily influence the decisions of followers and even the process of communicating with their environment (Pérez-Torres et al., 2018, pp. 64–68).

Another popular online video app as of this writing is TikTok. According to their website, "TikTok is the leading destination for short-form mobile video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy" (*TikTok - Make Your Day*, n.d.). TikTok is incredibly popular with teenagers. 41% of their users are between the ages of 16 and 24. "We see the evidence for [using TikTok as entertainment] in the responses TikTok users give for why they enjoy using the service. This trend is often called "passive browsing" (*Is TikTok Setting the Scene for Music on Social Media?*, 2019). As with YouTube and other online video platforms, it's impossible to categorize TikTok in a single category as defined by the Common Sense study. A survey of TikTok "engagers" says that 68% logged in to watch someone else's video, compared to 55% who uploaded a video, with varying percentages on "liking," "following," and "sharing" (*Is TikTok Setting the Scene for Music on Social Media?*, 2019).

Adolescents love TikTok. So, what causes users to spend on average 52 minutes per day on TikTok? Zoe, 16, explains: 'TikTok is popular with teenagers because of how short the videos are. They are quick and don't drag it out too long and keep the viewer's attention. I think it's also popular because a lot of the

people we are watching are similar in age, so it's cool to see someone that we can really relate to' "(Weiss, 2020).

Technological changes have always created challenges for parents. As early as the 1920s, parents were lamenting new technology: the automobile and the telephone created unsurpassed social freedoms for teenagers, and parents didn't know what to do. As the authors of *Middletown* note (Lynd and Lynd), writing in 1929, "the swiftly moving environment and multiplied occasions for contacts outside the home are making it more difficult to secure adherences to established group sanctions," which were understood as the "approved ways of the group" acquired in "a 'good' home." The car and the telephone made parents feel like they were losing control and influence over their children (Dill, 2014). Parents worry about their adolescents' privacy and safety.

There is an overwhelming amount of information "out there" on the internet for parents to keep track of.

> While TikTok videos are mostly harmless, creative fun, there are real concerns about kids using the app…you have to use privacy settings to limit how much information you and your kids are sharing. Kids can post stuff without reviewing or editing it first. There have even been reports of online predators using the app to target younger users. And in 2019, TikTok paid millions to settle with federal regulators who charged it violated childrens' privacy law (Ucciferri, 2020).

85% of parents are concerned about their children's digital privacy (Saeed, 2019). Opinions vary regarding adolescents' skills to control their privacy. Over half of parents of adolescents believed in their childrens' skills managing privacy settings.

Though encouraging, this means that the other half think that their chikdren lack skills to protect themselves online (Livingstone et al., 2018).

Many researchers say that parents worry too much, and maybe about the wrong thing. Claire Fontaine of the Data and Society Institute found that adolescents are concerned and looking for guidance, "Across the board, the young people we spoke to were deeply concerned about privacy and had a great appetite for adult guidance" (2018). The vast majority of parents (approximately 90%) believe that they are capable of guiding, advising and teaching their teen about appropriate online behavior (M. Anderson, 2019).

My 2013 Master's thesis looked at different parental mediation styles and the capacity of parents to practice them:

> *This study highlights the struggles that families face every day. Identifying everyday practices regarding television mediation was one of the specific goals of this study. Results showed that the unpredictability of events and practices of everyday living affect all aspects of family life, including the way that they mediate television. This includes set-up, types of screens used, content choices, hours watched, consistency, and mediation styles.*

Parents also struggle with other aspects of technology in the domestic sphere. One is their own distraction. Parents and caregivers describe their own usage as stress relief and escape of the negative and boring parts of child-rearing. Simultaneously, they also note that technology itself is a source of stress and information overload. Parents get emotionally involved with unpredictable content (Radesky et al., 2016, p. 699).

Concerns come from children as well as adults and have been found to affect relationships, family time, and the ability to give parental attention when needed. Adults are criticized for using phones while driving, failing to follow established family rules, modeling inappropriate behavior for their children, and sharing content about their children on social media without permission. None of these behaviors emerged as concerns about children. Children reported that they believed that their parents should be held to the same rules, and that their autonomy with technology should be respected (Hiniker et al., 2016, p. 1385).

> Social media plays a crucial role in the lives of networked teens. Although the specific technologies change, they collectively provide teens with a space to hang out and connect with friends. Teens' mediated interactions sometimes complement or supplement their face-to-face encounters (boyd, 2014, p. 5).

Ninety percent of teens have used social media (*Facts For Families: Social Media and Teens*, 2018). 41% of teenagers in the Common Sense report say that they like using social media "a lot." Additionally, 63% use it every day, averaging an hour and ten minutes. Girls report enjoying social media significantly more (50% enjoy it "a lot") than boys (32% enjoy it "a lot"). 70% of girls use social media daily, compared to 56% of boys. Girls spend nearly twice as much time per day on social media (Rideout & Robb, 2019, pp. 39–40).

Many American adolescents no longer rely on classrooms, sports or neighborhoods to make friends. In a 2015 report and corresponding curriculum guide from the Anti-defamation League, 57% of teens ages 13 to 17 said they'd made a new friend online. 29% of teens indicated that they'd made more than five

new friends online. “Most of these friendships stay in the digital space; only 20% of all teens have met an online friend in person” (*Teens, Tech, Connect*, 2015, p. 6). Social media is the new normal. Whether they like it or not, almost all adolescents utilize, usually seamlessly, social media as part of their community to develop and maintain friendships.

> Nearly two-thirds of teenagers report that they make new friends through social media, and >90% use social media to connect with existing offline friends every day. Adolescents also report that these media help them understand their friends’ feelings and feel more connected to them. During a developmental stage when peer support and approval is critical, social media support these needs (Uhls et al., 2017, p. S68).

In her 2014 book *It’s Complicated*, dana boyd described social media as having “evolved from being an esoteric jumble of technologies to a set of sites and services that are at the heart of contemporary culture”. boyd defines social media as

> sites and services that emerged during the early 2000s, including social network sites, video sharing sites, blogging and microblogging platforms, and related tools that allow participants to create and share their own content…a cultural mindset that emerged in the mid-2000s as part of the technical and business phenomenon referred to as ‘Web2.0.’ (boyd, 2014, p. 6).

There was a flurry of research done on Web 2.0 that took place in the first fifteen years or so of the 2000s. Much of this research focused on a look back at the emergence of social media and at the relationship between users and their technology or devices used to participate in Web 2.0:

> Web 2.0 is also called the wisdom Web, people-centric Web, participative Web, and read/write Web. Web 2.0 harnesses the Web in a more interactive and collaborative manner, emphasizing peers' social interaction and collective intelligence, and presents new opportunities for leveraging the Web and engaging its users more effectively. Within the last two to three years, Web 2.0…has been forging new applications that were previously unimaginable (Murugesan, 2007, p. 0).

One detail that was particularly interesting to Web 2.0 researchers were the "new" and "innovative" ways that young users were using Web 2.0. This included the ability to create original and personal content, construct and post an original website or webpage, self-expression, connecting, and communicating with others. This makes users feel less passive:

> Key activities include:
>
> - keeping in touch with friends and sharing interests;
> - experimenting with their identity and opinions;
> - having a ''place'' or ''space'' where their parents or carers may not be present; and
> - demonstrating their technical expertise and skill (Chris Atkinson & Newton, 2010, p. 112).

Adolescent experimentation with identity is one of the most profound and complex ways to interact with social media. This was paradoxical. It became both easier for adolescents to play with identity, and harder to leave the past behind (the internet is forever) (Turkle, 2011, p. 169). Crafting online identity is even more complex

because adolescents are also attempting to navigate "community norms" (Lenhart et al., 2011, p. 12).

A 2017 overview of the literature on adolescents and social media found that there were both positive benefits and negative costs associated with online explorations of identity. Positive benefits include increased self-esteem, increased social capital, "safe identity exploration, social support, and more opportunity for self-disclosure." These healthy growth and identity developments lead to higher confidence and less loneliness. The majority of adolescents report that social media positively contributes to their lives. There are, however, some reported negative effects. These include "cyberbullying, depression, social anxiety, and exposure to developmentally inappropriate content" (Uhls et al., 2017, p. S69-S69).

The most prevalent dangers circulated included encounters with pornography, pedophiles, child abusers, stranger danger, grooming, online bullying, sexual harassment, cyber-stalking, hate content, suicide websites, gory and violent websites, and the commercial exploitation of children. "When asking about the harmful effects of exposure to Internet content, one is asking about the effects of any and all kinds of content that the human mind can construct (Millwood Hargrave & Livingstone, 2006, p. 183).

As research about Web 2.0 continued, concern over content deemed dangerous expanded into worry about privacy, lack of critical thinking skills, and risky behavior by adolescents online. This manifests in a heightened trust in the internet resulting in lowered skepticism. This may make them less critical toward marketing,

how their personal information is collected, and lead to higher risks and disclosure of personal information online (Shin & Kang, 2016, p. 116).

Much like the historic negative publicity regarding media effects of radio, film, television, and gaming; negative information regarding influence of internet usage tends to be a more widespread opinion than positive publicity. Concern over the impact of mediated communication content on individuals, groups, and societies is as old as the media forms themselves. Across media and across time, a number of topics have stood as robust areas of concern for scholars, critics, politicians, and the general population: violence; sexual behaviors; frightening media content; gender, racial, and ethnic stereotyping; pornography; and advertising. Other key areas have included political communication and socialization, public communication campaigns, educational media, and marketing communication. Many of these topics have been examined for various media across the decades; for example, violence has been a concern in movies (1930s), television (1970s), rock music (1980s), and video games (2000s) (Neuendorf & Jeffres, 2017, p. p.1, 10).

The popular film *Screenagers* and its and supporting website is a modern-day example of reinforcement of fear-based ideologies about adolescents and the way they use and are affected by all aspects of technology. *Screenagers* is "An award-winning film that probes into the vulnerable corners of family life and depicts messy struggles over social media, video games and academics. The film offers solutions on how we can help our kids navigate the digital world"(*Screenagers Movie | Growing up in the Digital Age*, 2016). In addition to the 2016 film, *Screenagers* has become a movement, supported by a robust website with weekly

articles, a second film, a podcast, press releases, links to over a hundred *Screenager* news stories, a resource page organized by topic, testimonials, instructions on how to book a screening and contact information for inviting the filmmakers to speak at events.

Boyd invokes the academic interpretation of the term *public*, "Publics provide a space and a community for people to gather, connect, and help construct society as we understand it." She argues that social media is a networked public formed around technology, and that adolescents engage with it for connectivity, freedom and mobility, new opportunities to get involved in public life, "this, more than anything else, is what concerns many anxious adults (2014, pp. 9–10).

Among 13 to 18-year-olds, gaming (all types together) count for 22% of screen time (Rideout & Robb, 2019). More than any other media consumed by adolescents, there is a substantial gender gap when it comes to users. Although 20% of girls play computer games and 35% play console games, 41% of teen boys spend over two hours per day gaming (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 36).

In 1976, public concerns about violence in the game "Death Race" (based on the 1975 film) caused the game to be pulled off the shelves. As graphics improved and games became more realistic, controversy grew. In 1997, the first video game lawsuit (eventually dismissed for failing to represent a legally recognizable claim) was filed by parents of three children killed in a high school shooting. Concern over the negative effects of video games on users continued to grow, reaching new heights in 1999 following the Columbine massacre. Governments, from local to federal, quickly began to attempt regulation and bans, despite a 2001 Surgeon

General study finding little if any correlation between media and violence. The debate continues, with studies supporting both sides of the argument, involving parents, lawmakers, doctors, educators, scholars, anti-censorship and free-speech advocates. Dozens of regulating laws have been passed and overturned ("A Timeline of Video Game Controversies," n.d.).

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association decided to include "Internet Gaming Disorder" in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders (DSM):

> The proposed symptoms of internet gaming disorder include:
>
> - Preoccupation with gaming
> - Withdrawal symptoms when gaming is taken away or not possible (sadness, anxiety, irritability)
> - Tolerance, the need to spend more time gaming to satisfy the urge
> - Inability to reduce playing, unsuccessful attempts to quit gaming
> - Giving up other activities, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities due to gaming
> - Continuing to game despite problems
> - Deceiving family members or others about the amount of time spent on gaming
> - The use of gaming to relieve negative moods, such as guilt or hopelessness
> - Risk, having jeopardized or lost a job or relationship due to gaming (*Internet Gaming*, n.d.).

In 2015, The American Psychological Association published a resolution, saying: "many factors are known to be risk factors for increased aggressive behavior,

aggressive cognition and aggressive affect, and reduced prosocial behavior, empathy and moral engagement, and violent video game use is one such risk factor," and that there are many gaps in the knowledge of how negative effects can be mediated (*Resolution on Violent Video Games*, 2015). In 2018, the World Health Organization added "Gaming Disorder" to their International Classification of Diseases (ICD)" (*Inclusion of "Gaming Disorder" in ICD-11*, 2018).

A 2008 qualitative study interviewed boys 12 to 14-years-old about their experiences with video games. Researchers found that boys use games to 1) experience fantasies of power and fame, 2) master what they perceive to be exciting and realistic environments (but distinct from real life), 3) work through angry feelings or relieve stress, 4) as social tools. "Boys did not believe they had been harmed by violent games" (Olson et al., 2008, p. 55). A 2012 qualitative study of adolescents 12 to 16 found that what made video games fun were 1) interesting and realistic storylines, 2) competition, 3) group play, 4) a feeling of mastery 5) challenge, 6) doing things that are impossible in real life and 7) good quality graphics that really made them feel like they were in the game (Simons et al., 2012, p. 60).

Sherry Turkle's 1984 research on video games introduces the idea that players use gaming to somehow meditate, escape or deal with the stress of life. This translates into a type of relaxation, a total focus and concentration. "And yet [they]…like all successful players of video games, describe the sense in which the highest degree of focus and concentration comes from a letting go of both" (Turkle, 2003, p. 34). Additional studies found that gamers develop skills using the code of

the computer graphics, essentially adapting to and processing the visual stimuli of the game, in order to react without thinking (Greenfield, 1996, p. 4). Like any computer code, video games provide instant feedback, "…video games are cultural artifacts that require and develop a particular set of cognitive skills; they are a cultural instrument of cognitive socialization" (Greenfield, 1996, p. 5). "Call it 'muscle memory,' call it 'flow,' call it 'trusting your instincts'" (Turkle, 2003, p. 510).

Gaming is often a social experience for adolescents. "Teens play games in a variety of ways, including with others in person, with others online, and by themselves. Although most teens play games by themselves at least occasionally, just one-quarter (24%) of teens *only* play games alone, and the remaining three-quarters of teens play games with others at least some of the time" (NW et al., 2008). In the same way that adolescents form friendships online using social media, video games that require cooperative play, teamwork, provide direct communication via chat or voice, present a similar opportunity for gamers. A 2016 qualitative study found that four themes emerged to describe the connectedness that male players feel:

- Trust = Time + Voice: When asked what led them to form friendships with other online players or decide to share personal information, participant responses indicated that trusting relationships developed over time, and in tandem with more personal forms of communication, such as voice.
- Complimentary Social Networks: Friendships cultivated via online game play provided a safe space in which to discuss personal information or uncomfortable emotions. These relationships were referred to as being non-judgmental and

removed from whatever crisis was under discussion, and as such, were seen as offering more perspective.

- Behaviour Reveals Mood: When asked if they were able to tell if someone was having a 'bad day', participants reported that a poor mood would be discernable through differences in behaviour – which implies that they had spent time with them and knew what normal behavior was. While voice cues were mentioned, some differences were detected purely from game play.
- Catharsis from Talking and Playing: Regarding how players sought or received social support, responses varied between talking about an issue, and playing - to both avoid thinking about the issue, and potentially shift a bad mood by winning a game" (Vella et al., 2016, pp. 4–5).

A 2020 survey conducted by the gaming industry's Entertainment Software Association claims that 48% of parents imposed rules and restrictions on video game play, while 73% of parents believe that video games are educational (*Entertainment Software Association | News & Resources*, n.d.). However, a 2020 national survey by the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital Evaluation and Research Center reports that 86% of parents agree or strongly agree that teens spend too much time playing video games. According to this survey, 71% of parents think that video games can be good for teens and 44% try to limit the type and content of the games they play. 75% strategize to limit the amount of time their teen spends gaming by encouraging other activities, 54% set time limits, 23% provide incentives and 14% hide gaming equipment (*Game On*, 2020).

The term “problem gaming” refers to behavioral tendencies commonly related to addictive behaviors. An overview of studies on adolescent gaming found that problems with the parent–child relationship were caused by problem gaming (Schneider et al., 2017, p. 329). When types of video game mediation were explored, it was found “that a more interactive, two-way mediation, such as active mediation based on parent–child discourse, would be more effective than a one-way strict restriction on teenagers’ video-gaming” (Choo et al., 2015, p. 1438). Additional research shows that involved parents are more likely to try different types of active mediation, and that restrictive and negative mediation were significantly linked to child delinquency (Martins et al., 2017).

The Common Sense Guide to Media Use by Teens and Tweens defines content creation as 1) creating digital art or graphics (9% enjoy “a lot”), 2) making digital music (5% enjoy “a lot”), 3) coding (3% enjoy “a lot”,) or 4) creating or modifying games (6% enjoy “a lot”). These percentages add up to approximately 12 minutes per day for teens. As the study acknowledges, “Of course, young people may engage in other types of content creation that were not asked about in this survey (which should be captured in the time they spent doing “other” things on their devices); and some readers may feel that other activities such as posting to social media should be counted as content creation” (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 49).

The blurring of lines between the ways that adolescents consume and generate media, and all of the ways they utilize technology in the domestic field, is ubiquitous. This includes observation, participation and information gathering. Teens also learn

to participate and create, contemplate, plan and reflect on information they have acquired.

> In creating practices, teens copied information, modeled their compositions on others to explore personal aesthetics, and composed novel content. While their information practices are presented as a sequence of three they should not be conceived as a step-by-step process; rather they are iterative and embedded in one another (Harlan et al., 2012, p. 572).

Creating original music content can take many forms including spreading music, live performances, and online videos on sites like YouTube (Jiménez et al., 2016, p. 73). Another, more professional site for users to post original music is SoundCloud, a platform that includes the ability to share music, connect directly with artists, receive stats and feedback from the community, and monetize content globally (*SoundCloud – Listen to Free Music and Podcasts on SoundCloud*, n.d.). SoundCloud is an example of the way that music has moved beyond traditional music consumption models. "Private spaces for feedback, tips, tools and samples offer a contextualized view, defining access by linked project, or technical skill level (Chamberlain et al., 2015, p. 1).

A lot of original musical content is also video content. This is in large part due to the fact that the available platforms for sharing are video based. Users will often re-use somebody else's video content to create their own versions (Liikkanen & Salovaara, 2015, p. 109). An exhaustive 2015 study of YouTube identified the following categories of original music video content:

1) User-appropriated videos…retained the original audio content but their video content included user-created elements. Embedded information was commonly observed.
2) Derivative videos… were inspired by the Classic music videos, but they included novel elements in their video, audio, or embedded content. Subsets of this category are:

- Cover versions.
- Dance videos showing dance performances set to the music.
- Parodies…humorous interpretations of the original, classic music videos.
- User-illustrated videos refer to all the videos in which the original audio is retained, but the video has been replaced with an unrelated or only marginally related visual content (Liikkanen & Salovaara, 2015, p. 115).

There are countless ways for adolescents to create and share original videos, with a huge variety of subjects. YouTube and TikTok are among the most popular:

> When asked why they like it, users say they're most interested in seeing other people's creativity, and having the chance to be creative themselves. These creatively-minded motivations rank above social factors such as "I like the community" or "it lets me stay in touch with friends", showing self-expression comes above all else (*Is TikTok Setting the Scene for Music on Social Media?*, 2019).

Teens who will not share personal information with their parents, sometimes record their deepest, darkest thoughts and post them online. Videos on depression, anxiety, sexual identity, and body image are available in abundance in addition to

how-to videos, vlogs, game play, and product reviews. This is how adolescents present themselves to others, "while at the same time constructing their identity (as well as) constructing social realities" (Jiménez et al., 2016, p. 70).

Gamers create their own content too. "A game isn't defined by being fun just as comics aren't defined by being funny. A game is defined as an experience created by rules" (Anthropy, 2012, p. 48). In Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs), gamers choose characters and often thoughtfully compose teams. The characters, the build ("In gaming, BUILD refers to the specific arrangement of items, skills, etc., selected by a player to best equip a character for the tasks expected to be encountered at a certain stage of a game" (*Cyber Definitions*, n.d.); the way they are played and how they interact as a team and reach common goals, provide a curated yet unique user experience (Wolf & Perron, 2014, p. 159).

Sandbox video games like Minecraft are often highly praised by parents and educators. Unlike most video games, there is no inherent goal in the game, "gameplay is open-ended; players are able to roam in the virtual world of this game without a linear goal or task imposed upon them" (Wu, 2016, p. 26). Users decide what they want to build and figure out how to do it, creating their own unique experience. There are obstacles along the way, but ultimately, the player just has to collect enough blocks to build what they want to build and figure out how to do it. In addition to the innovative ways that users play the game, there are countless ways that Minecraft players create content and share it outside of the game for various purposes. Artifacts created by players include art inspired by the game (often shared on fan art sites like Deviant Art), screen-captured images and videos that are

shared to illustrate strategies, carefully edited videos, unedited images that document impressive creations within the game, and add-ons or modifications that can be downloaded by other players for use in their own gameplay (Wu, 2016, pp. 26-31.)

Social simulation games like Animal Crossing and The Sims also allow the player to generate content. Players have a sense of creation and control as they generate their own content (Kim, 2014, p. 357). When there is no pre-programmed narrative, users are motivated to create and co-create.

Streaming gameplay is another way that gamers create original content. This can be done in various ways. Live streamers entertain by personality as well as production value, moderating viewers and actual gameplay. A 2017 study found three ways that users performed:

> assembling technology to produce a professional looking media artifact, acting as a builder and moderator of an online community of regular viewers, and as developing a specific attitude towards gameplay that marks them as a unique and entertaining streamer (Pellicone & Ahn, 2017, p. 4864).

II.5 HOMEWORK

Homework is the one exercise that, by definition, exists both in the field of public education and the domestic field. As early as the nineteenth century, the need and efficacy of homework has been disputed by educators, parents, and students (Gill & Schlossman, 2004). Homework cannot be regulated like work done in the classroom under the supervision of an educator.

> Home settings vary in support, and children also do homework in libraries, sometimes on buses, and in the homes of friends. The dynamics of homework are therefore different from the dynamics of other commonplaces of schooling such as teaching or testing (Corno, 2000, pp. 529–530).

Students from higher socioeconomic households get more support from parents and perform better on tests (but do not necessarily experience improved school performance) when homework is given, amplifying existing inequities (Pressman et al., 2015; Rønning, 2011). The effectiveness and purpose of homework is varied. There is no standardized reason for teachers to give homework. Teachers use it to cover new material, set up a shared experience for the class, cover content that there is not time for in class, provide time for reflection, review and practice. Students are stressed, overcommitted and often do not have the space for concentration (Sallee & Rigler, 2008). Homework negatively impacts students with learning disabilities disproportionately (Bryan et al., 2001), often removes the joy of learning for high achievers, intrudes on family life, (Kohn, 2006) and is only beneficial in upper grades because younger children are learning more important skills when they are not doing their homework (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001).

For teenagers, homework is almost exclusively completed utilizing some type of digital technology, often requiring multiple devices, various software, and internet access. Previous to quarantine and mandated remote instruction, high school homework was already 70% online (Wong, 2018). Various reports have teenagers working on homework every day (59%) using media technologies in the domestic field averaging over three hours on school nights (Raychelle Cassada, 2018), even

though the National Education Association recommendation is ten minutes per night per grade level, maxing out at two hours per day during a student's senior year (Walker, 2015). Teens in the Common Sense Media survey talk about usually multitasking while doing homework. This includes listening to music (47%), texting (24%), and using social media (19%). 60% of teens believe that music helps them while they do homework, but they are less sure when it comes to texting, using social media or having the TV on (Rideout & Robb, 2019, pp. 53–54).

Debates over the efficacy of homework also yield positive results. Studies show that homework improves student achievement (Maltese et al., 2012), reinforces good study habits and life skills (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011), and allows parents to be involved in their child's education (Voorhis, 2004). Many educators and parents make the case that homework is a beneficial way for parents and their kids to spend time together and share each other's day "Many low-income parents value homework as an important connection to the school and the curriculum," making a case for 'quality homework'. This is defined as developmentally appropriate, meaningful, authentic, and relevant in the real-world. "More specifically, homework tasks should make efficient use of student time and have a clear purpose connected to what they are learning" (Bempechat, 2018).

Although there is a growing trend to adopt no homework policies in recent years (Walker, 2019), it is still rare as a public school district-wide policy. 'No homework' policies are found more readily in middle-class areas where parents spend more time in the classroom and feel more entitled and comfortable speaking up (Pinsker, 2019); charter and alternative schools who have more autonomy over curriculum

and are usually filled with students who "choiced in," and as a teacher-led decision in individual classrooms (T. D. Hobbs, 2018). Families deal with homework in different ways, but the fact remains that students in most public schools and their families must somehow manage the homework situation in both the domestic field and the field of public education.

II.6 NEW MEDIA AND CULTURE

In addition to evaluating the history of technology in education, this dissertation is also grounded in the history of new media, and the impact technology has on culture as a whole. In particular it is helpful to survey the way that the relationship between individuals and technology have been categorized and described. Defining new media is complex and can vary depending upon the author, context or usage. However, it is typical for the discussion to lead to a binary division in the way that media has been and is identified in our culture. This binary can be described in a variety of ways, but for purposes of this research it will be divided into technological determinism and social determinism. Scholars discuss these binaries using varying terms. Types of users of technology tend to fall into one category or the other.

In Janet Murray's "Inventing the Medium," she defines new media as "…a single new medium of representation, the digital medium, formed by the braided interplay of technical invention and cultural expression," Murray identifies the binaries as engineer versus humanist. Both are creative problem solvers yet each take a different approach. Humanists are storytellers and theorists. They write about problems by dramatizing "extreme confusion and existential befuddlement,"

expositing on the unknowability of life. Humanists often initially dramatized technology as a machine that can redeem humans through integration. However, in the late 20th Century humanists began to chronicle postmodernism, adding dystopic narratives to the utopian stories. Once again, another shift presented itself upon the mainstreaming and personalization of computers. This discourse is one of knowability and pattern, and became a new root system for the humanists, representing growth and connection, rather than rot and disassembly. Narratives had new platforms like video games, an interactive form of storytelling in which humans could participate, engage, immerse and express themselves. Humanists advocated for open-source software, so that participants could express agency and join in the creative movement. Regardless of what the stories are, humanists' position on the subject of technology is that social interactions and constructs determine individual behavior (2003, pp. 3–4).

Murray contrasts humanists with engineers who use their creativity to solve problems by inventing a systematic solution in the form of a tool or formula. Humanists struggled with postmodernism, "…a sense that everything had been said before and that it was all lies," but engineers looked forward at the possibilities that the computer promised, "…while educational innovators like Alan Kay and Seymour Papert were celebrating the computer as a new and powerful tool for the active construction of meaning, artists and humanists were celebrating deconstruction, finding evidence in high and low culture throughout the world of the inevitable unraveling of meaning…growing increasingly fragmented and distrustful of the constructive imagination." To the engineers, technology is the driving force in the

development of social structures and human behavior.

According to Murray, the coming of the personal computer shifted the discrepancies between the worldviews of the humanists and the engineers. Humanists saw the computer as a new medium of human expression. Grants for collaborations between engineers and humanists helped to bridge the divide, it "…marked a new era in the expressiveness of the medium, by opening up the encyclopedic and spatial properties of the computer to wider communities of practices, communities composed not of programmers, but of artists, writers and educators" (2003, pp. 8–9)

In his article "New Media from Borges to HTML," Lev Manovich identifies two types of texts in new media. The first is theoretical (aligning with humanists) and the second is descriptive (aligning with engineers). Like Murray, he argues that this division has transformed with the arrival of the computer, "…not only have new media technologies…actualized the ideas behind projects by artists, they have also extended them much further than the artists originally imagined" (2003, p. 15).

In 1970, Hans Magnus Enzenberger wrote about the consciousness industry. He described the mass media as a sort of educator, and as a means to perpetuate the dominant paradigm, "With the development of the electronic media, the industry that shapes consciousness has become the pacemaker for the social and economic development of societies in the late industrial age. It infiltrates into all other sectors of production, takes over more and more directional and control functions and determines the standard of the prevailing technology" (2003, p. 261). This manipulation is a political act. New media gives an opportunity to create a more

egalitarian playing field, to do away with educational privileges and cultural monopoly. Access to equipment changes the masses from merely consumers to producers, creating a potential liberation from the tradition of media as an institution.

Raymond Williams describes technology as something that becomes available as an element or medium in a process of change that is in any case occurring or about to occur. It is a symptom of a change, a by-product of a social product and becomes effective when it is used for purposes which are already contained in this known social process. “Then as now there was a major, indeed dominant, area of communication, by word of mouth, within every kind of social group…there were specific institutions of that kind of communication which involves or is predicated on social teaching and control: churches, schools, assemblies and proclamations, direction in place of work.” Williams goes on to say that, as far as the development of a new technology of social communication, it was the press that responded to the crisis within the social, economic and political system (2003). Whether it is because of crisis or as a resistance to expected social norms, there are groups that prioritize social context when approaching the technological world.

Steven Levy discusses Hackers as such a group; as adventurers, visionaries, artists and risk-takers, “the ones who most clearly saw why the computer was a truly revolutionary tool.” Levy also reveals the Hacker ethic: “Access to computers and anything which might teach you something about the way the world works should be unlimited and total” (2010, p. vii). Levy explains that Hackers learn about “taking things apart, seeing how they work, and using this knowledge to create new

and even more interesting things." Additionally, they dislike people and laws who try to prevent them from doing this, or create a physical barrier (2010, p. 24). Learning about technology through free, unrestricted or unlimited access, is an ideal that emerges over and over. The notion of technology as proprietary is constantly challenged.

Historically, institutions have attempted to control technology, to have power over knowledge, labor and revenue, often creating a democratic revolution. On the printing press, Thomas Carlyle writes, "He who first shortened the labor of copyists by device of movable types was disbanding hired armies, and cashiering most kings and senates, and creating a whole new democratic world: he had invented the art of printing" (Carlyle & MacMechan, 1896, p. 3249). The documented narrative of paper machines, the ancestor of the computer, is a mixture of processing power and efficiency, revolution and containment. Processors like the card catalog, the binder, the typewriter and the vertical file, partition knowledge and make it easy to access (Gitelman, 2014; Te Heesen, 2005; Vismann, 2008).

These devices also serve to act as a trainer, a test, a watchdog and a punitive tool. Vannevar Bush blueprinted the futuristic Universal focus lens, Supersecretary, and Memex in order to mechanize, organize and store complex layers of information, using technology to solve problems and freeing up the mind for creativity. When there is a machine that can allow for forgetting the massive amount of data people encounter on a daily basis, they can return to enjoyment, rather than be bogged down by details (Bush, 1945). Bush anticipated the way that technology would develop. He believed that eventually, human senses would be key to using

technology to make lives easier and more efficient, “All our steps in creating or absorbing material of the record proceed through one of the senses – the tactile when we touch keys, the oral when we speak or listen, the visual when we read. Is it not possible that someday the path may be established more directly?” (1945, pp. 46–47).

Well before Vannevar’s devices, the card catalog performed the same primitive function. Referred to as the universal discrete machine, it requires a universal way of functioning. This includes storing, processing and transferring data in systematic ways (Krajewski, 2011, p. 3). The ability to organize massive amounts of information can lead to freedom and innovation. When yearners, hackers, artists, humanists and gamers are faced with this mixture of organized knowledge and access, a creative revolution can occur. When information flows freely, some of the players begin to challenge the institutions in which they reside.

Gabriela Coleman writes of phreaks who hacked into phone systems through the use of audio tones, gaining access to free phone calls. Phreakers figured out how to set up “ ‘party lines’ where they congregated together to chat, gossip, and share technological information” (Coleman, 01, p. 103). Henry Jenkins writes of convergence culture, in which media spectatorship is no longer passive, but becomes participatory. Citizens interact with each other, a process made possible by technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes (Jenkins, 2006b).
Hackers, phreaks and convergence culture are examples of the social deterministic view. In this worldview, the way technology is used cannot be understood without

social context. Complexities of this perspective include modes of production, usage, values, purposes, skills, questions of agency, power and access.

Another group that is sometimes singled out as non-conforming are gamers. Gamers come in all shapes, sizes, colors, genders and ages. It is part of the cultural narrative that gamers are reclusive, lazy, anti-social, and even violent or angry. These concerns have contributed to a large body of literature examining gaming from every angle. One of the most important aspects of gaming is community. Contrary to the popular mythology that playing video games is a solitary experience, many players use gaming experiences to provide a social outlet, facilitate community building, and share interests. Collaboration and social interaction are often part of the game designs, yet when it isn't built into the game the players frequently formulate home-grown creative ways to play together. Game communities are non-monolithic (Kocurek, 2014). The possibilities in online worlds invite different types of individuals, including those with physical constraints, social anxiety and other possible limitations. Access to these spaces contributes a feeling of freedom, a space where players are valued for their brains, gaming skills and creativity, instead of physicality. Game communities meet the social needs of their participants.

Non-gamers are often surprised at the role that ideology plays in video games, "…the particular apparatuses of video games – an important part of popular culture – mediate ideology, whether by default or design" (Hayse, 2014, p. 442). Ideology is usually implicit rather than conscious and conveys the ideological representations of their designers. Collectively, designers represent a multiplicity of perspectives,

demonstrating different ways in which players function within the game. These dimensions generally fall into three types of ideologies: manipulation rules (possibilities for in-game action), goal rules (dictate and reward actions to lead them to win), and meta-rules (allow players to change the rules with mods). These in-game features correlate to components of the natural world, the existing culture, and institutional structures in which players function outside of the gaming world. Because of this, ways that the games are played are embedded both operationally and procedurally. Rhetoric integrated within the games incorporates persuasive arguments about the world and its order. Gamers can gravitate toward what they believe, try out new paradigms or role-play. Some critics say that video games uniquely prepare workers by performing labor for the video game industry, or that they train players for the military (Hayse, 2014). The seemingly endless options gamers experience is exactly the opposite from what they experience in restrictive classroom settings.

In the large body of literature discussing gaming and education, one widely written-about idea is that of implicit or hidden curriculum. This is a set of rules, regulations and a concealed agenda of learning environments (Benson R. Snyder, 1973; Jackson, 1990). Dewey describes this implicit curriculum as a way that students experience collateral learning through the "formation of enduring attitudes, likes and dislikes [which are] fundamentally what counts in the near future" (Dewey, 2008). The implicit curriculum is "learned and reinforced at the tacit level where neither teacher nor students are fully aware of the cultural patterns that are being learned" through classroom assumptions and procedures

(Bowers, 1988, p. 43). The implicit curriculum mediates the propagation of an "operational ideology" (Eisner, 1992). In other words, throughout the history of education, students and teachers have and do experience an unspoken set of rules and expectations in school, from the beginning of their education to the end.

Technological determinists who follow the effects model assume that individuals are incapable of rational thought and are unable to separate the gaming world from reality. Effects critics of gamers claim that users are bringing these behaviors into the classroom. There is a distinction between "*effects* and *meanings.*" Jenkins says that effects are spontaneous, do not require much conscious effort, "are not accessible to self-examination." These acts require interpretation and critical scrutiny (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 20).

Increasingly, gaming experiences are something that many students bring with them into the classroom. Believers in "effects" and "meanings" both talk about games as "teaching machines," but what they mean by learning, education and teaching differs. Believers in effects assume that gamers have lost almost all conscious cognitive activity, even though this model has long been discredited by educators (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 22). The effects model assumes that players are not capable of rational thought.

On the other hand, humanistic researchers make the case that games can be powerful teaching tools. In this framework, playing games requires an active process of interpretation, conscious engagement, and teaches players to "…explore their environment, make connections between distinct developments, form interpretations based on making choices and playing out their consequences, and

map those lessons into their understanding of the real world" (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 24). Because of their gaming experiences, players are pushed to constantly form and test hypotheses about the game world, which pushes them to the outer limits of their abilities. This activity encourages different perspectives and world-views, stimulates reflection about identity, challenges values and teaches goal setting.

In her early writing about arcade games, Sherry Turkle observes how computers hold power over their users.

> The holding power of video games. Their almost hypnotic fascination is computer holding power. The experiences of video game players help us to understand this holding power and something else as well. At the heart of the computer culture is the idea of constructed, 'rule-governed' worlds (2003, p. 67).

These rule-governed worlds create a very special space for users. Playing a video game is not a mindless task. Video games are predictable. They will always react the same way when you are interacting, which creates a special kind of relationship between the player and the game. Skills used for video games are complex and different for every player. Turkle says that by interaction, assimilation structure and strategy, "There is learning how to learn" (2003, p. 501). Over time, this transforms into thinking beyond thinking. By this, Turkle means that once the player has memorized the reaction the program will have, they are able to reach another level of relaxation as well as control. It is in this state, which she describes as meditative, that fusion with the game is achieved, and unique creativity begins to emerge. In describing one interviewee, Turkle says, "His interest in computers started when he began to think about ways to change video games, mostly to make them more

complicated" (2003, p. 504). This fantasy world, where the user can imagine limitless possibilities, is only reached when access is not restricted, regulated, or disparaged for the time spent playing.

Ten years later, Turkle writes about constructing self in virtual realities as a way to use technology for constructive social problem-solving. In her article *Constructions and Reconstructions of Self in Virtual Reality: Playing in the MUDS*, she studies video game players who are using MUD (multi-user dungeon – where the "dungeon" is a virtual room or world located on an actual computer somewhere in the world) games to play out personal psychological and social problems through their avatars. She gives examples of players who have personal issues that they are unable to work out in real life, so turn to MUD games. Though this may appear utopian, this study is a good example of some of the pro-social possibilities that can be experienced through video games and online spaces. Not every child is capable (for a variety of reasons) to join in a game of basketball on the playground, but the possibilities of joining a group of like-minded people in a virtual space can potentially bring a new level of positivity to life (Turkle, 1994).

Turkle's players can lose themselves in the game or work out social, psychological or personal problems and return to their lives outside of the game refreshed and more prepared to face daily challenges. In "A Cyborg Manifesto," (Haraway, 2006)**.** Haraway talks about a similar idea around identity and technology. The cyborg transcends the constructs given to humans, negating the need for gender. She identifies three boundary breakdowns since the 20th Century that have allowed for her hybrid, cyborg myth: the breakdown of boundaries

between human and animal, animal-human and machine, and physical and non-physical. Evolution has blurred the lines between human and animal, 20th Century machines have made ambiguous the lines between natural and artificial; and microelectronics and the political invisibility of cyborgs have confused the lines of physicality.

Haraway calls for a revision of the concept of gender, moving away from Western patriarchal essentialism and toward "the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender", stating that "Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment" (2006, p. 180). Haraway also calls for a reconstruction of identity, no longer dictated by naturalism and taxonomy but instead by affinity, wherein individuals can construct their own groups by choice. In this way, groups may construct a "post-modernist identity out of otherness, difference, and specificity" as a way to counter Western traditions of exclusive identification (Haraway, 2006, p. 296). Despite Haraway's cyborg theory, she remains a humanist. Users of technology who are immersed retain their agency, even while their senses are surrounded by visual illusion, ultimately leading to a different mental state, increasing emotional involvement. Users are engaged, but can still perceive imperfections and remain rooted in the non-virtual world.

II.7 SYNTHESIS

The multidisciplinary nature of this literature review is an attempt to integrate literature linking the field of public education, the domestic field, neoliberalism, political economy, new media and culture; utilizing the common

theme of technology and media. The recurrent idea of yearners and learners (to borrow terminology from Papert), materializes across the literature in these texts. Although the ways that young people experience media and technology evolve daily, it is essential to also examine and analyze the historical context and evolution of media, technology and education through previous work.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

III.1 AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

I spent my first four years in graduate school, with few exceptions, learning to remove myself from my work. This has always felt counter-intuitive, awkward, inaccurate and downright wrong. I got to the end of my ninth year (two doing a Master's and seven working on my PhD) before I stumbled upon autoethnography as a method, as I was trying to finish my dissertation before the seven-year deadline. This may tell you something about its acceptance in academia; (well, at least in my journalism and public relations-heavy media studies program). Traditionally, social science calls for the minimization and containment of self, even "viewing self as a contaminant and attempting to transcend and deny it. Researchers are supposed to put their bias aside and deny their identity. Qualitative scientists are often required to defend their research as valid" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Ways of inquiry that connect with real people, their lives, and their issues are seen as soft and fluffy and, although nice, not valuable in the scientific community. (Wall, 2006, p. 147).

I'd taken multiple classes on feminist methods in the anthropology department (nothing offered in my own department) and fallen in love with the idea of reflexivity. To me, this made the most sense. How could I conduct critical social sciences research without including my own story, my intersectional identities, how and why I came to be an academic at the age of 44, how being a graduate student influenced my own life and *vice versa*, my family, my partner's disability, my kids' education, our financial status, our parenting? "…it is necessary and desirable to

recognize that we are part of what we study, and are affected and shaped by our fieldwork experiences. To deny the self an active and situated place in the field is only fooling ourselves" (P. Atkinson et al., 2003, p. 57).

While taking feminist method class as a Master's student, I wrote a paper using feminist reflexive interview methods on television mediation with my own children. "Many feminist writers now advocate for research that starts with one's own experience (Ellis, 2004). In contrast to the dominant, objective, competitive, logical male point of view, feminist researchers include social life, emphasize empathy and subjectivity, acknowledge the process as personal (Neuman, 1994, p. 72; Wall, 2006, p. 147).

My children came to class with me on presentation day to be involved in the class discussion and were welcomed with open arms by the anthropology professor and students. Later that year, I presented the same paper at the International Association of Media and Communication Researchers conference in Montreal. It was the most successful conference presentation I've ever had. It was genuine and focused, and I was passionate, which clearly came across in my performance. Afterward, I was swarmed by audience members asking for a copy and asking me what my next project was.

> "The last thing I want is for autoethnography to be tamed"…Autoethnography shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning. Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, to act. It needs

> the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate. Intimacy is a way of being, a mode of caring, and it shouldn't be used as a vehicle to produce distanced theorizing. What are we giving to the people with whom we are intimate, if our higher purpose is to use our joint experiences to produce theoretical abstractions published on the pages of scholarly journals" (C. S. Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433)?

In the second year of my PhD, I took a class on technology in the classroom in the department of educational leadership. The final assignment was a project I created with my fourteen-year-old son, a blog on how technology affects relationships and daily life:

> *When he was a toddler he didn't talk much. This is hard to believe because now, given the chance, he never stops. He used sign language for some important needs (more, milk, eat) but was a boy of few spoken words. However, he has always been a social person. When we took him to the park he would boldly walk up to another child or group of kids and say "Friend?" He was never swayed by rejection; he would simply keep trying until he found a willing playmate. This is all I could think of when he told me the real reason he plays video games. As I asked more and more questions about his latest gaming, even he got bored with the answers. We were fairly deep into a discussion about the way the game generates limited different worlds for each level, and I was asking a lot of questions about if you would eventually end up playing virtually the same game over and over again. He finally turned to me and, as if it were*

the most obvious thing in the world, said, "Mom, the REASON I play games is to hang out with my friends."

Bingo.

Once again, he joined me for the presentation, and ended up troubleshooting the presentation technology for the professor in the classroom while he was there (how's that for intersectionality)? I have always thought of these projects as my most successful. I felt the most authentic and satisfied when I was practicing and presenting this research. It quenched my deep need to connect the academy and "real life." It kept my family involved in my research, allowing me to stay as connected to them as possible during the grueling years I was taking graduate classes, reading a thousand pages of theory a week, meeting crazy deadlines, and travelling to conferences.

Given these feelings of success and satisfaction, you'd think that I would have pursued feminist and reflexive methods for my dissertation. Instead, as I finished my coursework and was left to my own devices to write, I lost my recollection of how empowering it felt to conduct research that was personal. While gathering supporting literature on my topic, I encountered only traditional qualitative and quantitative methods. I became convinced that autoethnographic methods were okay to experiment with, but that real research had to be written objectively, in third person, and should exclude all personal experience. Nobody told me that specifically; I didn't really ask. I just gradually drifted back into forcing my prose to be strictly academic. I stalled in my writing, and even though this wasn't the only reason, (sometimes family matters demand your attention and cannot wait), it was

definitely part of it. I struggled with writing in third person while not relying on the passive voice. It was a slog. Ultimately, I knew it wasn't for me: "It is evident that one of the many uses of theory in academic locations is in the production of an intellectual class hierarchy where the only work deemed truly theoretical is work that is highly abstract, jargonistic, difficult to read, and containing obscure references that may not be at all clear or explained" (hooks, 1991).

I'd take breaks from writing this way to create documents that sounded like this one. In my notes, I easily dashed off anecdotes that included my own experiences, trying to work through a theoretical idea, descriptions of my academic and personal journey and how they intersected. Then one day I had an epiphany. Can I write my dissertation this way? Why can't I? It's my work, after all. Is there a name for this? Of course there must be! I knew, of course, that I'd be vulnerable in a new way. Traditional academic writing is carefully coded, composed, reviewed and edited to maintain objectivity, even though we all know that isn't a given.

Enter autoethnography. I spent several days exploring the method, but I knew immediately that this was the answer to my struggles. As it turns out, through no small coincidence I'm sure, my existing Bourdian theoretical framework fits well with autoethnography:

> According to Bourdieu, reflexivity is a methodological approach in which one critically examines one's own position within the field of academic production – not in order to be more objective and less subjective, but rather to understand the false distinction between these two categories. Bourdieu advocated a methodology of "participant objectification" in ethnographic research and

> argued that there is no absolute objectivity or subjectivity (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p. 147).

An essential part of autoethnography is connecting your personal story to wider cultural meanings. Bourdieu defines culture fairly narrowly. In contrast to Williams "culture is ordinary" (1958), Bourdieu's culture is "taste for the most refined objects," "a separate universe," and a "sacred sphere" (1984). This culture reinforces and reproduces the dominant paradigm.

This dissertation, in line with my habitus, is the result of my sudden epiphany, layered on top of nine years of research, parenting, teaching, working and writing. I hope you enjoy reading it. Let go of your pre-conceived notions of what a dissertation looks like, and what the conclusions might be. We are wrong when we believe that theory isn't social practice and lived experience.

> Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen (Metzger, 1992, p. 12).

As I retrieve embodied memories, tell and analyze my stories, I piece together artifacts from my life. Luckily, I rarely get rid of (or delete) anything, including e-mails, texts, old papers, photos, documents, personal blogs, social media posts, journal entries – you name it, I've got it. Introspection can be used as a data source by a social scientist who has lived through an experience. They study themselves as they would any other "n" of 1. "Experimental writing means re-thinking the

condition of representation and therefore [engaging] with figures of subjectivity that do not depend on representation as it has been understood" (Clough, 2000, p. 286; Wall, 2006, p. 148).

In addition to conducting research that is critical, reflexive and collaborative, this study is action-oriented, with a goal of identifying common usages of technology in the home and classroom, how they relate to habitus and create cultural capital. One of my intentions is to produce recommendations on ways in which these common areas of overlap can be capitalized upon for improvement – in the domestic field and the field of public education. Most importantly, I want to help to facilitate an evolved understanding of adolescents' interaction with technology and recommend solutions. Ethnography in general "adopts a complex theoretical orientation toward culture." This cultural field, "in contrast with a relativistic view of cultures as different-but-equal…explicitly assumes that cultures are positioned unequally in power relations. Furthermore, critical ethnography sees descriptions of culture as shaped by the interests of the researcher, the sponsors of the project, the audience, and the dominant communities" (*Qualitative Research- (Critical) Ethnography Guidelines*, n.d.).

Bourdieu says that habitus generates and structures action, both shaping and being shaped by practice within a field (Bourdieu et al., 1992). When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity (C. Ellis et al., 2010, p. 4). By making my own experiences meaningful and focusing on the links to culture, I relate to a wider audience than

more traditional research may reach (something I have been attempting to accomplish since I arrived at graduate school), thus making personal and social awareness and change possible for more people.

Like many researchers who find their way to autoethnography, including Bourdieu, consideration and acknowledgement of our own habitus naturally affects the way we understand subjectivity, "The habitus contains the solution to the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intention" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 62). By combining autoethnography with document analysis, my research is more in line with the way I endeavor to live my life; action-oriented, with authenticity and honesty, "…methods that require the researcher to erase themselves from their research, while appearing objective, might just be lying about their ultimate subjectivity" (Schroeder, 2017, p. 317).

Often, data that is analyzed is something that is generated, either by the researcher during their lab or field work, or at some point in history like photographs or documents. I do have access to some artifacts to support my memories, such as academic papers and e-mails. I have relied on these artifacts to demonstrate my thoughts and position at various parts of my journey through academia, parenting, caregiving and teaching. Yet there are many times where the text needs to be supplemented, or an artifact does not exist. For these examples, I relied on lived memories. Memory has long been a part of ethnography.

> Fieldwork experience is a unique biographical episode which is retroactively transformed by reminiscences of it. Ethnography can be conceptualized in this context as an act of collective memory. The memories collected during fieldwork,

> and reproduced consequently, go beyond a private capacity to remember. The personal experience of autobiographical memory is understood and organized through socially shared resources, such as the culture, language and conventional storied genre. These give shape to what is memorable and provide a more general set of principles for how it is remembered and retold. Memory is dependent upon and mediated by the social world. Moreover, the field and our connections to it are the outcomes of the devices of shared memory and the culturally defined means of framing memory. The accounts of the field are produced, and understood through the interpretive frameworks of memory and reminiscence (Coffey, 1999, p. 110).

These memories, sometimes supplemented by artifacts, are not laid out chronologically, but organically organized by lifetime periods and events, cued by relationships, and goal attainment of knowledge (S. J. Anderson & Conway, 1993). In this way, certain memories are mentioned more than once, either to reiterate a point or to emphasize additional connections to culture. It is my life experience, deep passion and my own consciousness, combined with my long association and expertise within my field of study that makes it possible for me to perceive and record my story and its connection to culture (Mead, 1977), one that is uniquely my own, yet also beneficial to the field.

III.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis is an important part of this research because it provides context, evidence of past events, background information, historical insight, and a way to track change and development. Documentary data provides a valuable

cultural record of the state of technology in history and during the time in which this research is being undertaken. It is my hope that future educators, parents and experts in the field of adolescent media and technology will be able to develop useful perspectives and constructive practices that address issues surrounding adolescent users. Additionally, many documents were reviewed with an eye toward exploring the political economy of the placement of technology by private corporations into the public sector of education. This analysis supplements and works together with autoethnographic narratives to expand the understanding of the complexities of power relations inherent in a relationship that exists between adolescents as well as public education and private corporations.

Document analysis is a secondary method for this dissertation because the documents analyzed often provided insufficient detail because they were not produced by me. In addition, they were biased toward corporate or government policies, authors' opinions or agenda of sponsors, infiltrating and influencing the data in the documents (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). On the other hand, the advantage to document analysis is the stability, lack of obtrusiveness, and reactivity, that is, "they are unaffected by the research process." Concerns that arise related to reflexivity are then countered by adding documents as a secondary method. "As a corollary to being non-reactive, documents are stable. The investigator's presence does not alter what is being studied" (Merriam, 1988). Documents, then, are suitable for repeated reviews (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

I decided that document analysis was the ideal way to supplement my autoethnography, contributing cultural, historical, and political content as well as

context. In order to help frame my research as well as investigate and examine the political economy of private funding for technology in education, several documents were gathered, analyzed and woven into the analysis. On a local level, these documents include the original Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) grant proposal for my son's middle school, the school website, e-mails from educators – both personal and generic, school newsletters, corporate websites, and school district policies on technology in the classroom. On a national scale, I integrated reports and policies produced by the U.S. Department of Education (*U.S. Department of Education*, n.d.) and two reports created by Common Sense Media (*Common Sense*, n.d.), which are all freely available public documents: *The National Education Technology Plan*, *The No Child Left Behind Act*, *The Common Sense Census: Inside the 21st-Century Classroom,* and *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens,*

The National Education Technology Plan (NETP) has been recently changed to update every year, due to the rapidly changing landscape of educational technology. The focus has also changed over the years. For each time the NETP was published (1996, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2016, and 2017), the emphasis was adjusted.

In 1996, the focus was on getting students ready for the 21st Century by teaching students to be literate with technology (Office of Educational Technology, 1996). In 2000, the focus of the NETP was on access for all (Office of Educational Technology, 2000). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act mandated that the NETP be updated within a year:

(a) IN GENERAL —Based on the Nation's progress and an assessment by the Secretary of the continuing and future needs of the Nation's schools in effectively using technology to provide all students the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards, the Secretary shall update and publish, in a form readily accessible to the public, a national long-range technology plan, by not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. (*No Child Left Behind 2001-2002*, 2001)

In 2004, largely due to the mandates in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the narrative of the *NETP* changed to incorporate internet, the law, and using technology to track student achievement and teacher success. The narrative also recognized the skillfulness of students and declared a golden age in American Education (Paige, 2004). In 2010, the *NETP* called for a "revolutionary transformation:"

> The plan recognizes that technology is at the core of virtually every aspect of our daily lives and work, and we must leverage it to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences and content, as well as resources and assessments that measure student achievement in more complete, authentic, and meaningful ways. Technology-based learning and assessment systems will be pivotal in improving student learning and generating data that can be used to continuously improve the education system at all levels. Technology will help us execute collaborative teaching strategies combined with professional learning that better prepare and enhance educators' (Office of Educational Technology, 2010).

The 2016 *NETP* continued the theme of transformation with the support of technology, including a deep dive into systematic changes in learning and teaching. The plan is divided into five sections: Learning, Teaching, Leadership, Assessment and Infrastructure. The updated 2017 version, which is one of the primary documents for this dissertation, is entitled "*Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education."* Updates include technological improvements such as broadband and lower price points, further acknowledgement and examples of students' skills and increasing access of early learners. Otherwise, the reports are much the same. The 2017 *NETP* includes an added section on higher education. Although it is stated in the plan that there is an intention to update it yearly, there is not a more recent version as of this writing in 2021.

Common Sense Media is a non-profit online-based organization founded in 2003. Their website contains easy-to-navigate guides and reviews on film, television, videos, music, video games, social media, books, and apps:

> Since 2003, Common Sense has been the leading source of entertainment and technology recommendations for families and schools. Every day, millions of parents and educators trust Common Sense reviews and advice to help them navigate the digital world with their kids. Together with policymakers, industry leaders, and global media partners, we're building a digital world that works better for all kids, their families, and their communities (*Common Sense*, n.d.).

Common Sense Media has been publishing original research since 2011. Two of their latest reports focus on the players relevant to this research and have been selected for analysis.

The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens (October, 2019), covers "…enjoyment of various types of media activities, how frequently they engage in those activities, and how much time they spend doing so" (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 1). Analysis for this dissertation will primarily focus on the teen (13-18 years old) data, collected via surveys, conducted in two waves between 2015 and 2019. Topics covered include enjoyment of different types of media, frequency of usage, parental regulation, variation by demographics, and the way their practices affect schoolwork. I will focus on the teen portion of this document.

III.3 BOURDIEU, TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA, AND METHODS

Using Bourdieuian methods and theory to study technology and media in education is not a new idea, "the study of technology…is a strategic research site for thinking about the relationships between embodied experience, organized movement and the organization of society (Sterne, 2003a, p. 369). Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, social fields (including the players within those fields) and cultural capital are used in this study to organize and identify social fields and depart from pre-constructed ideas of how technology is usually perceived "the choice of a technological object of study is already itself shaped by a socially organized field of choices" (Sterne, 2003a, p. 368). Bourdieu's reflexive sociology is a unique way to view social-theoretical problems that present difficulty when combining a humanitarian perspective with the notion of technological determinism.

Bourdieu says that we need not divide our conceptual lens to objectivist or subjectivist (Bourdieu, 1990). Objectivists tend to see social things as facts and

subjectivists tend to see the social as merely representative or constructionist. However, the part of his conceptual framework that works for my research is the study of the dialectic between these two sides of the same coin. The important discussion, says Bourdieu, lies in perception (habitus) as well as social structures (fields). Cultural capital helps us to understand how and why the social space is differentiated, and highlights hierarchical systems in a given field (Schultz, 2008, p. 18).

Bourdieu highlights the relations between positions in a field and between fields, making fields the primary object of social analysis, and the intricate, complex and unseen power relations in between, the very elements that are solicited in this dissertation. In moving from an examination of the status of technology in Bourdieu's work through to his broad approach to social practice and his widely cited concept of habitus, it is argued that technologies are crystallizations of socially organized action. As such, they should be considered not as exceptional or special phenomena in a social theory, but rather as very much like other kinds of social practices that recur over time. Ultimately, through the use of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital, we are able to overcome the binary divisions such as technology/society and subject/object that have plagued technology studies (Sterne, 2003b).

According to Bourdieu, an individual's habitus is created through a social process leading to embodied patterns that endure and transfer between contexts. Individuals are guided by habitus when they interact with technology. Preferences become schematic, which organize everyday practices. In this way, because

mediation requires interaction, habitus guides the way users engage with technology. In utilizing Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the methods become more than a way to find answers and resolve a problem; the methods become an additional topic of study. Bourdieu's reflexive sociology is a unique way to view social-theoretical problems that present difficulty when combining a humanitarian perspective with the notion of technological determinism. Arguably, "technology…[can be] a strategic research site for thinking about relationships between embodied experience, organized movement and the organization of society" (2003a, p. 369).

Bourdieuian methods are uniquely suited for seeking data that can otherwise escape notice. In his book *Practical Reason*, Bourdieu explores the idea that a researcher examines material in a different way than usual participants and observers, both within and without, i.e. the "native" and the "foreigner."

> The researcher, both more modest and more ambitious than the collector of curiosities, seeks to apprehend the structures and mechanisms that are overlooked - although for different reasons – by the native and the foreigner alike, such as the principles of construction of social space or the mechanisms of reproduction of that space, and that the researcher seeks to represent in a model aspiring to a *universal validity*. In that way it is possible to register the real differences that separate both structures and dispositions (habitus), the principle of which must be sought not in the peculiarities of some national character- or "soul" - but in the particularities of different collective histories (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 3).

In my research, social structures, related rules, and behavior (including justification thereof), are not accepted "…as autonomous realities endowed with social efficacy, capable of acting as subjects responsible for historic actions or as a power capable of constraining practices" (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 63). Bourdieu rejects this pure structuralist, or objective social science. Neither does Bourdieu embrace subjectivism, "While objectivists cannot identify the real generative principles of human behavior, the subjectivists, by not accounting for social structure, miss it as well (Griller, 1996, p. 4).

For Bourdieu, habitus incorporates the objective and the subjective. Habitus is both a product of social structure, and a manifestation of an individual's position in the social space. Habitus does not produce behavior. Instead, habitus interacts with the many fields individuals encounter every day. This means that social rules and expectations are necessarily interacting at all times. Autoethnography brings the subject forward. It is written reflexively from a situated position. The writer controls the narrative, serving as the protagonist and defining the point of view. "Autoethnography can give an embodied sense of the lived experience of otherness, affect readers, and therefore has the potential of creating an encounter across the great divide between the social positions of individuals who would otherwise never meet" (Tsalach, 2012, p. 79).

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND

IV.1 EDUCATION: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A couple of ideas about early schooling in America are important to note. 1) in

the very early days of American colonization (the 1600s), children were most often taught by their mothers in the home, as the men worked in the fields and towns. Parents believed that it was their duty to teach their children how to be productive members of this new and unique society being established in America. After teaching the alphabet, mothers would give their children a book, usually the bible, because religious education was as critical as learning to farm, cook and participate in community activities. Compulsory education was introduced in the late 1600s, but was not widely enforced for another 200 years. Although detailed evidence of early American education in the home is nearly non-existent, the evolution of early schooling outside the home is extensive, and fairly good data can be extracted and inferred (Cremin, 1970).

2) As America expanded and grew as a nation, a distinct "character" became clear. America was a nation of independence, freedom, entrepreneurs, and liberty:

> Young people in America were expected to make something of themselves, not to prepare themselves to fit into a pre-established hierarchy. Every foreign commentator notes the early training in independence, the remarkable precocity of American youth, their assumption of adult responsibility (Gatto, 2001, p. 37).

It is interesting to note that in this historic climate of free-thinkers, public education was introduced.

Public schools in America are understood by its citizens to be neutral, universal, and provide equal educational access to everyone. "Our mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access" (*Overview and Mission Statement |*

U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Public schools are distinguished from private schools by funding; comprised of federal, state, and district monies. Students are not required to pay tuition to attend. Local districts set their own curricula, funding and employment, following state guidelines. The state also directs and conducts standardized testing. There are federal guidelines on policy, privacy, and civil rights. Federal funding comes in the form of programs, grants and research, and fluctuates from administration to administration, budget to budget. In 2019, 10% of funding for public schools came from the federal government (Jimenez, 2019).

The institution of the modern public school system in America is a product of history, rather than the study of children and how they learn (Gray, 2008). Five major phases of education in America are highlighted: 1) education in the home 2) early compulsory education 3) Horace Mann and the Common School 4) the technological/industrial revolution 4) the modern homeschooling movement 5) federal regulation of public schools.

As noted, in the 1600s many children of colonizers were taught by their parents at home as an extension of Renaissance ideals brought from Europe, uncertainty, and religious freedom (often with the intention of teaching them to read the Bible), though some local schools were available to those who could pay. The New World situation intensified the educational responsibility that families felt. They brought Renaissance traditions to the colonies, but did not have access to institutions (churches, schools, colleges) so felt the burden of familial responsibility for education (Cremin, 1970, p. 124).

In 1642, school became compulsory in Massachusetts, leading the young nation in education reform. Along with compulsory education came enforcement and punishment for parents who did not comply.

> Since many parents and masters neglected the training of their children in learning and employment profitable to the Commonwealth, the Court ordered that the selectmen in every town should thenceforth stand charged with the care of redressing the evil; and to this end they should be clothed with power to take account, from time to time, of all parents and masters, and of their children in respect to calling and employment, and especially in respect to their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country. Fines should be imposed upon all who neglected the training of their children, or refused to render an count to the selectmen when called upon to do so (Hinsdale, 1898, p. 3).

As the 1700s approached, types of schools expanded and varied in objectives, cost and access, "By 1650, schooling as an institution had been firmly transplanted to the North American continent, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm…Nothing is more striking about these institutions than the variety in the modes of their sponsorship and support" (Cremin, 1970, pp. 182–183). The idea of formal education spread as the young country grew, becoming more intertwined with regulation and laws. "Wherever it took root, schooling was viewed as a device for promoting uniformity, and in that sense, the educational revolution was institutionalized in the colonies and put to the purposes of the controlling elements

of society…education became a matter of "public concernment" in the colonies" (Cremin, 1970, pp. 192–193).

Declaring schooling and access inconsistent and inadequate, Horace Mann introduced the Common School Movement in 1837 in his home state of Massachusetts, ensuring that every child could receive a basic education funded by local taxes, "Without undervaluing any other human agency, it may be safely affirmed that the Common School…may be the most effective and benignant of all forces of civilization." (K. Alexander & Alexander, 2004, p. 29)

Mann developed his hugely influential, although at the time controversial, main principles regarding public education and its troubles: (1) citizens cannot maintain both ignorance and freedom; (2) this education should be paid for, controlled and maintained by the public; (3) this education should be provided in schools that embrace children from varying backgrounds; (4) this education must be nonsectarian; (5) this education must be taught using tenets of a free society; and (6) this education must be provided by well-trained, professional teachers (Cremin, 2020). Common School educational reform eventually expanded nation-wide.

The technological/industrial revolution in America changed two significant aspects of life for working people and capitalists who profited from industry. The first change was the massive move from working at home to working in a different location:

> What does technology really do to our lives and well-being? Much of the history of technological revolutions in the past two centuries is written as if the only thing that technology affected was output, productivity, and economic

> welfare…the basic economic production unit and the location where the act of production takes place…determine whether "work" will be carried out in a specialized location and thus whether households and firms will be separate physical entities (Mokyr, 2001, p. 2).

The second, closely related change, was the way that public schools were structured. Prior to the shift to industry, parents were the ones who were invested and interested in forming capital for their children. After factories became common, employers began to take a more active interest in public education. Education moved from technical to social and moral. "Workers who had always spent their working days in a domestic setting, had to be taught to follow orders, to respect the space and property rights of others, be punctual, docile, and sober. The early industrial capitalists spent a great deal of effort and time in the social conditioning of their labor force" (Mokyr, 2001, p. 10). Total enrolment in secondary schools in America increased 70-fold between 1870 and 1950 (Kurian, 2004).

As public schools became compulsory, parents schooled their children at home less. Though the federal government has always desired to stay out of education, laws and rules making school compulsory have been introduced and enforced by the states. Parents who have preferred to homeschool their children for various reasons have had to fight to have the right and have often been subjected to extensive paperwork. Tension between "homeschoolers" and the institution of the public school have been experienced in varying degrees since the early days of the modern homeschool movement, beginning in the 1970s. This movement began when educational reformers began a public argument that schools were focusing on

teaching children to be compliant employees and creating an oppressive environment ("A Brief History of Homeschooling," n.d.).

IV.2 COMMODIFICATION, FUNDING AND POLICIES

Still, the majority of students in the United States attend public schools, as opposed to private schools or homeschooling. In 2019, 56.6 million students attended public schools, 5.8 attended private schools (*Fast Facts: Back to School Statistics (372)*, n.d.) and an estimated 2.5 million students were homeschooled ("Homeschooling," n.d.). The evolution of public schools in the United States is complex. Its history is riddled with opinion, bias and competing ideologies. What isn't in question is the increased codification and homogenization of elementary and secondary public schools. Inevitably, the answer to "poor" student performance is more school regulation via assessment and accountability tied to funding. Although there are relatively few over-arching federal laws, each one is layered and complex. The statutes that apply to public education funding are 1) the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, 2) the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and 3) the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, a reauthorization of the 1965 ESEA (Sofidiya, n.d.).

Federal laws guiding equal rights in education are 1) Brown v. Board of Education of 1954, 2) Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964/1972, 3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and 4) the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Additional institutionalization of public education at the federal level include the establishment of a cabinet-level U.S. Department of Education in 1980, Race to the Top and other initiatives in the American Reinvestment and Recovery

Act of 2009, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative launched by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, also in 2009 (*Education Policy: A Timeline*, 2018).

Although it is helpful to define an organizational structure for public education, the localized and fractured way that schools are organized by district, city, county and state have resulted in a lack of standardized framework. In general, state education departments report to the governor. However, some states have a board of education that oversees the education department. Some states have a superintendent of public education (sometimes elected and sometimes appointed by the governor), and if the chief state school officer is appointed or elected by someone other than the governor, they may have statewide power which could lead in opposition of the governor (*State Education Departments and Boards: State and Local Government on the Net*, 2020). The complicated and decentralized nature of education makes accountability difficult.

> If a chief state school officer is not appointed by a state's governor, it is difficult to know who should be blamed or credited for results–the governor, the legislature, the chief state school officer, the state board of education, the state education department, local school boards, local school superintendents, or some other entity (*State Educational Systems - The Legal Basis for State Control of Education, School Organization Models, The School District Consolidation Movement*, n.d.).

Clearly, regulating education is a tangled web. The federal government, in varying degrees from administration to administration, attempts to only influence

public education in broad strokes and generalized terms. This approach is made more convoluted by the lack of consistent organizational structures across the country. There are approximately 100,000 (*How Many Public Schools Are There in the U.S.?*, n.d.) public schools across the United States. This includes over fifty million students and 13,800 school districts. Additionally, there are at least eight different types of districts, including consolidated, elementary, independent, intermediate, joint, secondary, traditional and unified (*Public School District (United States)*, n.d.). Notwithstanding, since NCLB, regulations, standards, testing, assessments, policies, and the need to control outcomes in public schools are the driving force in obtaining federal funding. This codification of the public school field influences all aspects of education, including operations, student-to-teacher ratios, minutes spent in the classroom, content, pedagogy, documentation, resources, student support, hiring, and over-mandating:

> Federal and state mandates are taking their tolls on school districts across the country. There are so many new requirements each year that schools do not have the time or resources to implement and maintain them all successfully. Most of the mandates are passed with good intentions, but the spacing of these mandates puts schools in a bind. They are often underfunded or unfunded and require a lot of extra time that could be spent in other critical areas. Schools do not have enough time and resources to fulfill many of these new mandates (M. Ed. & B. Ed., n.d.).

The codification of public schools embodies the definition of bureaucracy. Max Weber defined a bureaucracy as an organization that is governed by lines of

authority, works within a defined hierarchical structure, has clear rules and regulations, specifies labor by specialization/technical qualifications, and mandates impersonal interactions between its members. "To this extent increasing bureaucratization is a function of the increasing possession of consumption goods, and of an increasingly sophisticated technique of fashioning external life - a technique which corresponds to the opportunities provided by such wealth" (Weber, 1978, p. 972).

Bourdieu discusses how students' dispositions (habitus) are the basis for the relationship they have with educational bureaucracy. Some students ("from the regions of power nearest the intellectual pole") easily recognize themselves and quickly assimilate. (Bourdieu, 1998b, p. 165). He recommends a "radical break" with hierarchical academic bureaucracy, with the understanding that an academic title/certification/validation (diploma, degree, etc.) is given by a representative of the state,

> acting as an agent of the central bank of symbolic credit [guaranteeing and consecrating] a relationship of conformity between words and things, between discourse and reality…These acts of official recording…are so many bureaucratic manoeuvres that, in a way change nothing, and, in another sense, change everything…with very real consequences (1998b, p. 378).

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

V.1 THE FIELD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The methodological approach of autoethnography means that my life has been my fieldwork. Because it is impossible to return to the original experience, the "writing up" of the data becomes an experimental exercise in authentic representation and engagement with the duality of objectivity and subjectivity, though I've been performing as an expert for years. "Perhaps this presentation can be seen as a performance. The self that appears to others is a performed character, a public self, attending to standardized social obligations while concealing its true desires (Goffman, 1959, cited in Hastrup, 1995; Wall, 2008, p. 42). Therefore, I have prefaced this section with a description of my experience as a public school student, a parent of students in public schools, and an emergent media studies scholar, highlighting the performative of my own practice and relationship with education.

I use autoethnography to intersect with Bourdieuian ideology, providing a theoretical framework to understand adolescent engagement with social fields, in particular the domestic field and the field of public education containing "structured systems of social positions, and individuals [who] enter them with a commitment to the field and the intention of actively pursuing the prizes (capital) that it offers" (Holroyd, 2003, p. 3).

> The value of regarding the social world as a 'multi-dimensional space' (Bourdieu, 1985b) in this way, is that it allows or posits the fact that 'young people have many identities and live within a variety of contexts - all of which contribute to their development of self' (Kivel, 1998 pp. 38)…that relate specifically to the field of school, and to provide an indication as to how this field is structured, and hence experienced, for and by young people…the hierarchy of positions evident

> within the field and the way in which young people are encouraged to 'play the game' through conformity to rules and regulations that direct and control their behaviour…uncover the ways in which students exercise agency in negotiating this complex environment and ultimately find their place within the field…management of young people in school is influenced by the intense regulation of bodies, space, and time…the embodiment of these influences can lead to the development of an appropriate 'school' habitus [and]…an underlying tension between resistance and conformity is seen to frame young people's behaviour in this field (Holroyd, 2003, p. 1).

V.1.1 STUDENT HABITUS: CAREER QUIZ

Bourdieu utilized habitus, a product of the entirety of an individual's social experiences, as a concept that attempts to reconcile the "problematic binary" (Holroyd, 2003, p. 3) between structure and agency (Bourdieu et al., 1992).

One of my earliest experiences with the idea of teaching was the career quiz we took multiple times through my primary school years. Without fail, my results were 1) preschool teacher, 2) zookeeper. Some years zookeeper was first, but the results were always the same. I remember feeling disappointed with the preschool teacher answer. Sometimes I'd take the test again to try to fool it, while still answering honestly, but the results always came out the same. I didn't remember particularly loving preschool nor wanting to be a teacher when I was in it, nor did I have a love for small children (really, that has rung true for the rest of my life; I have only really connected with my own children, my nephew, and perhaps some kids of close friends – teenagers, on the other hand, I love). Also, that's not a very prestigious job,

right? Even as a child, I knew that preschool teachers were not well-respected nor well paid, and definitely held no power nor potential for career growth.

Perhaps zookeeper would be better. I researched zookeeper with visions of being an expert like Joan Embry or spending all day playing (safely) with lions as shown in the film *Born Free* (*Born Free*, 1974), or elephants, maybe even giraffes. But my research showed that 1) there weren't very many jobs for zookeepers, even in San Diego, and 2) zookeepers cleaned up a lot of poop, which sounded a lot like a preschool teacher. Clearly the vocational tests I was taking were placing me solidly in the blue-collar poop-cleaning category. I felt destined to always be in a support role. I internalized that sentiment, unconsciously, yet thoroughly. Habitus derives from these types of perceptions, "particularly during early childhood… [recognition of traits that are] common to members of a social class or status group" (D. Swartz, 1997, p. 104).

When I was in the fifth grade there was a shake-up at my elementary school. Up until that point, I'd been routinely placed in the "gifted" or upper track. All the kids knew there were three groups: 1) dumb kids 2) regular kids 3) smart kids. This is called "tracking." I vaguely remember taking some sort of placement test in first grade that labeled me as "gifted." Looking back, I now realize that for the first through fourth grades, I had the best teachers, enjoyed my classmates and felt challenged and rewarded in my academic pursuits. In fifth grade, a bunch of parents complained to the school that their children, mostly those in the middle track, were not receiving the same level of education as the gifted kids. (It didn't dawn on me why the students' parents in the lowest track didn't complain). Gifted programs

give students access to special curricula and recognize them as "talented," which then create expectations from teachers. Tracking in elementary schools follow students through middle and high schools (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, pp. 590–591).

I don't know what the procedure was, but I know that I was pulled out of the smart kid track and into the regular kid track. I felt humiliated, angry, sad and confused. Also, my parents were in the midst of a painful, scary and contentious divorce. My dad was loathe to relinquish control, my mom was working full time, and my sister was coping by becoming a rebellious (absent) teenager. This meant that our income plummeted, my mom was no-longer the Girl Scout-leading, dinner-making mom that I'd known up until that point, and that I spent many hours at home alone after school while she worked as a full-time secretary. On the other hand, it was such a relief to not be living with my dad on a daily basis that the pain of the divorce was mitigated by my sense of liberation from fear. So, having no energy nor agency to fight it, I accepted my fate in school, adapted to the "regular kid" track, tried to make new friends, dealt with bullying and teasing, and perfected compartmentalizing my life.

> Sometimes students are classified as fast, average, or slow learners and placed…on the basis of their scores on achievement or ability tests…Sometimes students are classified according to what seems most appropriate to their future lives…However it's done, tracking, in essence, is sorting – a sorting of students that has certain predictable characteristics (Oakes, 1985, p. 3).

Daily life was definitely different as a "regular kid." Expectations were lower. The SRA reading cards I'd been working my way through just weren't there in my new classroom. Behavioral issues among my classmates became a daily occurrence, and I got used to being teased for my body and my clothes (perhaps this was also because I was entering early days of puberty). I mourned the loss of the funny, charismatic, sixth grade teacher I'd always thought I'd have. I learned typing, read out loud with the entire class instead of curled up in a quiet corner reading a book of my own choosing, and hid my body as best as I could, trying to avoid sexual harassment from the boys. It was hell, and I guessed I was destined for poop-cleaning after all. I settled into performing as a "regular kid." Don't stick out, don't speak out, don't ask questions, just be.

In the back of my head, I knew the quiz had said I was supposed to be a teacher. I hadn't known many teachers who loved their jobs, loved kids, loved knowledge. Our neighbors across the street were both teachers. The mom taught first grade and the dad taught junior high woodshop. Their daughter was my best friend, so I spent a lot of time there. Neither seemed to particularly enjoy their chosen careers. Both daughters grew up to be teachers too. Neither of them seemed to be passionate either.

I spent all thirteen years of my compulsory education in public schools. I actually graduated from high school with dozens of the same kids I'd known since kindergarten, and hundreds of the same kids I'd known since we all attended the same feeder junior high school. Because my life was so disrupted by divorce, my mom made a choice to keep me in the same schools as the kids I'd been with as long

as I could remember. She did this to maintain consistency, even though it created a lot of difficulty and extra work for her. I don't remember asking for her to do this, but I probably did. Even if I didn't, it doesn't surprise me that she made this sacrifice. It would have been a lot easier for her as a working single mom to send me to the school down the block from the apartment we moved into when we left my dad, and later the house we moved into with my soon-to-be stepdad. We forged paperwork and scraped together rides, and made it work.

As a seventh-grader I was willing to take the city bus to a completely different neighborhood in order to maintain the façade of our middle-class lifestyle. However, I couldn't keep it a secret forever, and once my popular "friends" found out that my parents were divorced and I lived in an adjacent lower-class neighborhood, they abandoned me by accusing me of stealing five dollars from my locker-mate. No joke. This social disaster climaxed when I invited them all to my thirteenth birthday party and literally, none of them showed. In retrospect, this seems like an opportunity to leave that school and start fresh, but it never dawned on me. Even though I could not identify it at the time, my habitus was firmly anchored in dispositions of upper middle-class suburbia, and I was determined to maintain my cultural capital by staying put.

I grew up in a community built in the shadow of the University of California San Diego. When I was 2, my family moved into a house that was brand new, customized only in the small details, but otherwise exactly the same as every fourth house in our suburban tract. Our three community elementary schools were all temporary bungalows until my sixth-grade year when my school was the first to get a brand

new building. The community grew up with us. My junior high and high school experiences were also in new buildings, boasting overhead projectors in every classroom, cassette players with oversized headphones for practicing phonics and "foreign" languages, rolling carts with TV monitors and VCRs that hooked up to pull-down screens, carousel slide projectors, reel to reel film projectors, electric typewriters, microfilm in the libraries, hand-held calculators, then finally computers.

For the most part, it was understood that if you went to school there, you were middle-class, your parents were white collar, and you cared about education. Any outward appearance of deviation invited criticism and ostracization. There was an implicit understanding that we all shared similar habitus, "actors occupying similar social positions tend to share habitus" (Levine-Rasky, 2009, p. 332). Surely, I was not the only one who was pretending. I know for a fact that some of my classmates were also going through domestic upheaval during these years. But even the recognition that there was a need to pretend, and the idea that we possessed the skills to pretend, exhibited our cultural capital in a way that an outsider would not understand, "these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, 'upcoming' future" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53).

Perhaps one of the reasons I am so drawn to Larry Cuban is because I came of age during the early days of computers in schools (1980s). My high school had a lab (formerly a closet) consisting of six or so huge white computers. My recollection is

that the only activity offered was learning to code after school. It didn't seem to be an option for girls, as I remember all of the nerd boys dominating the room. I was extremely intimidated. Additionally, my father is an electrical engineer and like my son, grasps mathematical, spatial, and computational concepts easily. He was a terrible teacher though, and always made me feel stupid. My attempts to get his help with schoolwork always ended with him yelling and me feeling ashamed and in tears. By the time computers came to school, I already had my own dispositions around digital technology, "after years of learning and reinforcement…social prohibitions are transformed into individual dispositions, reactions, and habits…technologies from the most basic – clothing and forks – to the most complex … are deeply tied to techniques of the body, to the ways in which people learn to use and relate to their own bodies" (Sterne, 2003a, p. 380).

My children are now 16 and 18. My 18-year-old has just graduated from a public high school during quarantine, something I never would have imagined. Graduating high school is usually a time that is filled with equal parts excitement and nerves (my daughter coined the apt term "nervous-cited" when she was little). Instead, he had to grapple with trying to decide whether he wants to start his freshman year online from home, go to school and risk being exposed to COVID-19, take a gap year and chance losing the financial aid package he received (and keep working his crappy job that was supposed to be just for the summer), or try dual enrollment by starting at the local community college. None of these options are the one he was so ready for before the world fell apart. This kid worked hard in school, did all the right things, got good grades, took advantage of special programs offered to him, and

knows what he wants to do for a career. Sadly, he missed out on the final quarter of his senior year. His visions of piling his friends in his beat-up Corolla station wagon and heading to the coast or the mountains for a camping trip, weekend-long D & D tournaments, enjoying the fun classes he was finally able to get into, and other high school senior things are gone forever. My heart is broken for him. He is so ready to fly the nest and he's stuck, *we're* stuck, the whole thing is just a mess.

My daughter is a rising senior. If my son is a Corolla: steady, sturdy, low-key, sometimes loud, but mostly under the radar, she's a VW bus: engine in the back, dents on all sides, rusted underneath, equal parts fragile, idiosyncratic and strong-willed. My heart breaks for her too. This is a kid who was unable to make public high school work for her, dropped out and ended up in an online public charter school through default. She (we) struggled through that for a year and a half until we were able to get her into a small private school via a referral process. (This just means that the local school district pays for her tuition). She loves this school; it works for her, and she got exactly five months there before quarantine. Online school just isn't an option for her particular learning style, remote learning PTSD and anxiety, so the remainder of her junior year, I logged her daily activities in a spreadsheet and sent them to her school weekly. Lots and lots of labor for me. And now we know that they'll be doing at least the first quarter online in the fall.

I am a big believer in public schools. I went to public schools and sent my kids to public schools. I didn't send my kids to public schools because I had a great experience as a child. My public school experience was marked by many failed attempts negotiated by parents and educators to improve our education, and some

antiquated policies including corporal punishment (my elementary school principal was missing two fingers and used to spank us in his office – stuff horror movies are made of). I grew up in sunny suburban San Diego in the seventies and eighties. In 1977, courts forced San Diego Unified Schools to integrate twenty-three schools that were found to be segregated by race. Thousands of students were shifted north to schools like mine (Alpert, 2008).

As students, we really didn't have a good understanding of what the big picture was, but we knew that we felt the impact of the court ruling. The students being "bussed in" felt the impact as well, probably more acutely. I can only speak for myself. We did not socialize with each other, and we did not integrate. Our habitus did not match, and we didn't know what to do about it. The teachers and administrators were no help. More reforms and problems were to come that personally affected us all: experimentation with bilingual schools (Rothman, 2016), tanking test scores (*Standardized Educational Test Scores*, 1984), sexual harassment from fellow students as well as teachers (V. E. Lee et al., 1996), debate over prayer in schools (Goodman, 1984), tax-cutting Proposition 13 (Rancano, 2018), and "new *new*" math (Hartnett, 2016). This isn't to say that there were not moments that were exceptional, mostly in the form of personal connections with teachers who took an interest in me, just like my kids would experience thirty years later.

Regardless, or inclusive, of my own experiences, I had faith. I sent my kids to public schools because I wanted them to be exposed to people that weren't like them, to attend schools that are required to accept every child who walks in the door, to support hard-working public school teachers, to experience a public space

that is a building block for their experience in the microcosm of society, and ultimately as a sign of support for my community, the common good, and perhaps most importantly, fighting the systematic inequities that are perpetuated in the institution of public education from within, to live diversity as well as learn about it. Plus, it's all we could afford. Was I naïve? Sure. Did we make a difference by doing our part? I don't know. As I said, my daughter now attends a private school with some of her allotted federal public school dollars going to them as partial tuition. Does this mean that our mission to support public schools failed? I don't think so.

V.1.2 CULTURAL CAPITAL: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

By far, the best experiences my kids had on their own and that we've had as a family in public schools is like my own growing up: connecting with exceptional teachers. Exceptional teachers and staff are everywhere. When my kids started their educational journey at a public charter school in San Diego, nearly every person on staff was amazing, aligned with our values, proactive, respectful and inclusive. At the time, we felt extremely lucky and knew we were privileged to be there. Retrospectively, I don't think we grasped *how* privileged we actually were, or that we were using our cultural capital to find that "perfect school" for our children. In fact, we fought against that narrative mightily by defending the "fairness" of the process. What we knew was that we had, by the skin of our teeth, gotten a spot at one of our top choice charter schools.

> Bourdieu's concepts have been useful in examining how school choice allows the accumulation of cultural (and linguistic) capital that gives advantages to those who have access to privileged institutions. Indeed, his concepts can elucidate the

> importance of parents' cultural capital, which allows them to decode what counts as cultural or linguistic capital that is in flux and contextually specific in a given local or national system of education (E.-S. Yoon, 2020, p. 198).

Once at the charter school, we became highly involved (there was a requirement for families to volunteer for fifty-four hours a year in some way). Although we were not middle-class economically, both my husband and I had been middle-class as children, and we understood how to use it to our advantage:

> Such parents are willing to intervene at school and to compensate at home. While a parent's actual activities and interventions may vary, the unequal distribution of such resources and dispositions results in inequalities for groups. Middle-class parents' work and autonomy supports the networks they develop between each other and with the teachers. Their interests, competence, and confidence are 'aligned' with school (Lareau 1989, 175) and educators reward their deference, trust, and cooperation (Levine-Rasky, 2009, p. 333).

I joined the Parent Student Association and eventually the school's board. We were proud of our equitable lottery process. But what about unseen obstacles? Parents entrenched in their child's education have all kinds of explanations to justify their choices, and we were no exception. Despite our low socioeconomic status, we were able to gain access to a top tier school. There are many families who do not have the same opportunities. There are informal barriers that keep some families from exploring schools that are technically available to them (Lincove, 2018).

Three of the most common barriers were (and still are) the primary reasons touted by critics regarding the fairness of public charter schools. These are 1)

transportation “A family can’t choose a school if their children can’t get there” 2) enrollment “To have the chance to enroll, families must navigate enrollment processes, paperwork, and deadlines for each school to which they want to apply…[requiring] families to visit schools, often during school hours” 3) information “Navigating school choice processes and choosing schools…can be especially difficult for certain groups of families, including those who are new to the area, do not speak English, are not tapped into social networks with rich information about schools, or do not know where to find formal information” (Lincove, 2018).

We knew that we’d have to drive our kids well out of the neighborhood we were living in as there was no district-supported transportation to charter schools. This, at the minimum, was an adjustment we were willing and able to make. Even our back-up school was in my sister’s neighborhood, not ours. We’d been able to make a case for using her address since our son would be going to her house after school. We lived in the unicorn bubble of this amazing school for four years, taking full advantage of the remarkable curriculum, teachers, staff, families and warm fuzzies. We had teacher’s cell phone numbers and could easily text them when we were running late for pick-up. They came to our kids’ birthday parties; we’re still friends with many of these teachers today.

We did experience some discomfort. Although there was some variety in socioeconomic status of attending families, we were definitely on the lower end. The ready expectation that we could automatically contribute twenty bucks to each classroom fund per month was something we had to awkwardly navigate. The

expectation that every adult could drive on field trips and/or assist students directly in the classroom didn't work for my husband, who has a cognitive disability and visual field cut from a head injury. Still, because we have the ability to navigate and explain ourselves, and because I am able to compensate for my husband's deficits, they eventually understood and we felt accepted, once again succeeding in reproducing our systematic cultural capital.

> In education systems in which school choice intensifies the responsibility of parents to individually ensure their children's success by selecting one school over another, Bourdieu's theories are powerful in helping us understand how school choice practices become an integral part of class reproduction (Crozier et al., 2008).

Another reason that we were able to assert our capital as parents comes in the form of whiteness and monolingual status (linguistic capital) in a monolingual school program. The monolingual school is normalized institutionally (Hinton, 2016), ("normal" referring to the conflicting ideas of *majority* and *ideal*) (Quehl, 2011). Bilingual teachers are labeled as inferior (Ruíz, 1984) and bilingualism among students is portrayed as abnormal (Palfreyman, 2012) and something to be cured of (García & Kleifgen, 2010). "Educators accept this policy goal as inevitable, even benevolent" (Hinton, 2016). Bicultural and bilingual parents are directed and forced to conform with practices that perpetuate racialized marginalization (Olivos, 2006). We experienced no such racialization.

Twenty years of re-segregation in American schools is well-documented and includes Latino as well as African-American students.

> When African-American and Latino students are segregated into schools where the majority of students are non-white, they are very likely to find themselves in schools where poverty is concentrated. This is of course not the case with segregated white students, whose majority-white schools almost always enroll high proportions of students from the middle class (Orfield and Yun, 1999).

According to census bureau projections, the United States hit a demographic tipping point in 2020, less than half of the nation's children will be non-Hispanic White (Vespa et al., 2018). "The average Black or Hispanic student attends a school that is less than 30% white, meanwhile the average white student attends a school that is 70% white" (Hansen, 2021). Clearly, the problem of cultural capital regarding race will continue to grow, "the school system implicitly (and explicitly) works to discourage the active, authentic, and meaningful involvement of low-income, bicultural parents and their communities" (Olivios, 2006, p.3).

When we moved to a different state so I could go to grad school (and so that we could afford to live and be near trees), we enrolled in the local neighborhood school, (researched of course, the website looked great and we were too late to choice into any alternative schools that we liked). Everything was different, including the demographics. Whereas San Diego was fifty percent Hispanic, (*Appendix A*, 2018). Oregon was closer to ten percent (Ruffenach et al., 2016). The diversity programming we were used to participating in, and even the understanding that awareness of differences might be important, was conspicuously missing. Although this did not affect us directly, we missed it. But we also had other problems.

The first two teachers my kids were assigned to had no idea how to work with parents who were used to being involved daily in their kids' education, and kids who were used to being given agency and responsibility. We fell back on trusted methods of connection, failing to realize that we were entering into a completely different school culture. We quickly realized that parents were involved in different ways than we were familiar with. There was a strong parent presence that had the principal's ear and influenced the policies and practices of the school behind the scenes. Despite our best efforts, my husband and I were never able to break into that exclusive crowd. We choiced into a different school the following year.

Our children's very early educational experiences and our parenting had already made a huge impact on their habitus. Like me, my husband had a divided childhood. His mother took him on a cross-country open-ended voyage when she divorced his father, leaving his big brother behind. He spent his time moving from one town and school to the next, never making any significant connections, feeling largely unsafe and unsettled. At thirteen, he moved back in with his father and brother in New York City, but within a year or so, his brother went off to college and his dad met his second wife, resulting in a new type of instability and neglect. When we had kids, he was determined to work hard to make our kids feel supported and do anything we could to create a safe, fun, and stable school experience for them. Because of this, our kids felt their cultural capital ("a bearer of cultural capital, a bundle of abilities, knowledge, and attitudes furnished by parents" (Connell et al., 1982, p. 188)) and were confused when we moved to a new environment where the culture of the school treated them as if they had no say.

Techniques we had relied on previously to intervene on behalf of our children, and the skills we had transferred to them, did not have the same impact. Even after we changed schools, we had to actively seek out staff who were willing to work with us on our needs. Our kids were Yearners, and we wanted them to enjoy school. We had to (heartbreakingly) work extensively with our kids to change expectations. It was a harsh awakening, stepping out of our cocooned education dreamland and into a completely different type of school environment. And because we stayed in this school system until my son graduated, we learned over the years to focus on the educators and parents with whom we made personal connections. These special teachers and parents became our lifelines. Again, I tapped into my own cultural capital to establish and nurture these relationships, especially with teachers. Our experience at the cooperative school conditioned me to believe that I could and should be allies, if not friends with my kids' teachers. It takes a village, right? Just like my kids' awakening when we changed schools, I realized that I had to change my approach. I got pretty good at spotting the teachers who would welcome my inquiries, help, presence and expertise. In fact, many teachers were visibly uncomfortable with my desire to be involved, and a lot of them just ignored me. I often found that my way in were field trips, an acceptable way to volunteer. Given my experience at the charter school, I was surprised at how few teachers would accept what I thought of as my support of them – send me to make copies, give me a pile of things to sort, let me help individual students, whatever. As far as I was concerned, the domestic field and the field of public education must inevitably intersect. What I understood was that they were overwhelmed and I was there to

help. But what I failed to grasp were the intricate layers, politics, and regulations they are beholden to, in addition to attempting to educate our children.

> The teachers' position is that, under the cover of a commitment to improving schools, school district and local governments have instead closed neighborhood public schools, opened charter schools, instituted standard curriculums, mandated poorly thought out high-stakes standardized testing, attacked teacher tenure, instituted merit pay instead of annual salary increments, restricted collective bargaining rights, and subjected teachers to questionable and punitive evaluation schemes. The result of years of "reform" has been modest improvement but little progress in national student performance… Eighty-five percent of teachers said they went into the profession because they wanted "to make a difference in children's' lives," beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic…99% of teachers "strongly agreed or agreed" with the statement that "teaching is more than academics; it is also about reinforcing good citizenship, resilience and social skills" (Bruno, 2018).

V.1.3 TEACHER HABITUS: STATUS QUO

How much of the teacher's individual habitus affects the parent-teacher relationship? Do they feel like I'm questioning their expertise or methods? Is it too much work to find something for me to do? Am I too chatty? I am reminded of Larry Cuban's notion about the nature of the teaching profession, "Recruitment and selection…bring into the profession people who tend to reaffirm, rather than

challenge, the role of schools, thereby tipping the balance toward stability rather than change" (Cuban, 1986, p. 59). In the field of public education, teachers who already have certain dispositions for predictability and established routines, experience a reinforcement and intensification of habitus. The tendency toward conservativism in teachers' is but one part of their habitus, as each individual comes to the classroom with many embodied dispositions, "teacher candidates need to become aware of how their own values and beliefs (habitus) shape their practice and influence the experiences of the students they teach" (Dwyer, 2015, p. 103).

I acknowledge that Cuban's impression of the habitus of teachers is more than three decades old. More recent research on teacher habitus recognizes that advancements made in the education of teachers has progressed over time. "For preservice teachers, their primary teaching habitus has been shaped by 12–13 years of schooling where they have been enculturated into what constitutes appropriate ways of being within that context" (Zevenbergen, 2006, p. 617). Although they may learn progressive methods while studying for their teaching degree, student teachers are required to participate in preservice in the classroom with experienced educators. Many student teachers find that the methods they learn under mentor teachers end up superseding the material learned in their degree programs. Teachers often tell their preservice students that things are different in the "real world." In addition to the need to conform, student teachers are also keen to have good practicum results in order to gain employment after graduation, "As such, students learn to take on the dispositions of the field rather than counter positions being developed through on-campus learning" (Zevenbergen, 2006, p. 616). In doing

to, it becomes easier to maintain the habitus and resulting cultural capital of the teachers, and more difficult to change the status quo of the institution of education.

I entered grad school when my kids were in 3rd and 4th grades. Obviously, they know that I value education highly. Because I study media, they are equal parts my test subjects and my teachers. I love technology and have studied children and families' interactions around techia since the day I arrived, nine years ago. Despite, or perhaps because of my own discomfort around technology, I was a film, video, and event producer for twenty years. A huge part of my job was to oversee the procurement, maintenance, usage and update of equipment, technology and software. My biggest client was Microsoft, specifically Microsoft Studios, PC Games, and Xbox. I immersed myself in technology and media until I became an expert. My 2013 Master's thesis was about core family values and television, back when television was still a thing in most homes. Throughout my childrens' education, I've volunteered at their schools, given guest lectures in their classrooms, taught as a visiting artist, helped to form after-school programs, coordinated and supervised student technology teams, and picked as many teacher brains as possible. Teachers are the equivalent of frontline soldiers: in the thick of it, every single day.

What's it like to be a public school teacher? I can only guess, and make assessments based on my experiences and research. As both a public school student and parent, I've had moments of pure joy as well as pure rage when it comes to teachers. It's complicated, I know. I don't want to bash the bad teachers. I don't know their stories. (Admittedly, it's hard to be generously non-judgmental when your kids get hurt and are let down by the adults they trust.) Research shows that

the quality of a teacher has a lasting effect on performance and confidence (S & Rivers, 1996). Whether our experience with a public school teacher was good or bad, or a mix of both, we learned something every time. Here's what I know:

1) Teachers are overworked – there are not enough hours in the day to do a satisfactory job. Teachers seem to react differently to this problem. Some make their school and personal lives one and the same. I saw this with most of the teachers at the cooperative charter school my kids attended. The (non-union) teachers were at school well before the first bell and often into the evening. Many could be found in their classrooms on the weekends. They did home visits for each student before the first day of school, attended students' birthday parties, organized class bonfires, barbeques, and potlucks. They also spent countless hours preparing for and hosting project nights, performances, meetings, and conferences. This was fantastic for the families and the students, but I know that the teachers' personal lives suffered. Once we were in a more traditional school, we had the opposite problem. It was difficult to get one-on-one time with the teachers. When we did, it felt very generic. The issues we brought to the conversation were met with blank stares. We became those nightmare parents who wouldn't just let things be, "let the kids figure it out," allow the neoliberal agenda to unfold and indoctrinate our kids. Teachers ducked behind corners when they saw us coming. It was clear we'd have to adjust.

2) Teachers are teachers for many different reasons. Whether Cuban's claim that teachers are personally conservative or not, from the perspective of a student and a parent, it definitely seems like many public school teachers fall into this general camp. On the "culture of teachers," Cuban says "…teachers are leaders who can and

do create cultures, knowingly and unknowingly, with the aid of students. Consider that teachers create from scratch a culture for learning (or not learning) in their classrooms" (2016).

The "culture of teachers" is important to this research because it highlights the idea that teachers create, recreate and participate in a social structure, "Whether or not teachers overtly identify a particular belief about the nature of that which they teach, they must hold preferences, beliefs and values with respect to what to teach and how to teach it" (Nesbit, 2000, p. 2).

If you research why teachers go into education you'll hear a lot of very inspirational reasons; that teachers want to make a difference in the lives of children, that they want to be that one teacher who helps a student grasp a concept with which they had their own trouble as a child, to give them a chance when nobody else will, to instill skills and benefits that will last a lifetime, and because it's personally rewarding (*Why I Want to Be an Educator*, n.d.).

3) Teachers do not always know when a student is in trouble. This depends on many factors. (See #1 and #2) Again, I hesitate as a parent to judge, but I think it's well-known that there are often issues with school culture.

When my daughter was a new freshman at a neighborhood public school, she struggled to adapt to the culture of her new school. This manifested in extreme behavioral issues at home, but at school she tapped into her long-learned skills of blending into the background, part of her habitus which she of course developed via her parents and early education. Her energy was so consumed with navigating the public education space, her feelings of overwhelm, her desire to fit in, and her

increasing mental health issues, that she was wholly unable to understand or even hear the content of her classes, decipher the academic assignments, or eventually (as things deteriorated), follow simple requests. Still, she is smart, and parlayed her cultural capital to always look like she was paying attention. She did not make a scene nor ever (and this was a pattern throughout her entire educational journey) ask for help. She was literally spending every ounce of her energy trying not to cry. Educational literature focuses on the problem of teacher overwhelm to explain obstacles in identifying and working with diverse learners.

> The excuses for not connecting personally with students are legion—and not without legitimacy. There *are* too many students. The time *is* too short. There *is* only one level of textbook in the class, only one set of standards for all. The room *is* too small. Materials *are* lacking. Kids *don't* come to us knowing how to be independent learners. We were *not* trained or hired to be social workers or psychologists. We *don't* know how to think about cultures different from our own. We *are* already consumed by the job (Tomlinson, 2003).

But there's more. If we look at the field of public education as a location for cultural production (and reproduction) as opposed to an individual problem or difficulty that the student brings with them, we can shift the way we engage with a diverse population. Historically, when a student experiences 'school failure,' we blame them and medicalize the situation (Bathmaker, 2015). This manifests in federal policies under IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Act) (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, 1975). After an evaluation and diagnosis of "a child with a disability" a student may qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) (*Guide to*

the Individualized Education Program, 2019). If a student is not required to receive specialized instruction but still needs accommodations, they may qualify for a 504 (*Protecting Students With Disabilities*, 2020). Following this medical model of disability, educators are tasked with fixing what does not work for students who are unlucky (lucky?) enough to qualify for special services. This, in turn, creates a different reality for them, "differentiated paths characterized by reductionist didactic propositions (i.e., poorer contents) and stigmatizing interactions (Roiné et al., 2018).

Because the medical model of disability is institutionally and legally integrated into school culture, it is also part of teacher habitus. Bourdieu discussion on essentialism indicates a discriminatory potential. The risk becomes attributing to nature, what may actually come from social construction and a student's ability to navigate through the field of public education (Roiné et al., 2018, p. 1175). In other words, we need a shift from a medical model to a social/human rights model, in which, instead of "fixing" the individual, societal barriers are identified and removed, because "both teachers and students internalize these discursive practices which eventually lead to maintaining a certain state that has been created" (Roiné et al., 2018, p. 1182). If we can acknowledge the socially constructed medical model, a shift in approach is possible:

> A person with a disability is able to attend a school, go to work, participate in community activities alongside non-disabled people, perhaps using disability-related accommodations or modifications that make the environment more accessible to them (*Models of Disability*, 2018).

So what do you do when your child doesn't fit into the traditional understanding of 'a child with a disability,' but is still experiencing 'school failure"?

3) Ask for help. My daughter wasn't able to ask for help, but I was. I contacted her teachers, school advisor, counselor, academic support, nurse, and anybody else at the school who would listen. And although everybody was "very nice," they listened to our concerns and made generic recommendations; more often than not we were met with blank stares or mild shrugs. Offers to make accommodations - like allowing her to leave the room without verbal permission, to go to the counselor's office when she needed a break, to ask for clarification – none of these things were possible for my daughter to do, given her extreme social anxiety. Even the stellar academic support person was ultimately unable to help us. She did seem to understand our problems more than anybody else. She even helped us to understand the type of anxiety we were dealing with. She tried and tried to be there for my daughter, yet ultimately, she was spread too thin, working for four different schools, trying to meet everybody's demands, and we could not access her when we needed to. All of these public school employees were firmly entrenched in the medical model of disability, because that's what their habitus supports, and what the institution reproduces.

One accommodation our daughter had developed for herself but did not have support for in school was music. One of the issues with technology that students complain about the most is not being allowed to play their music while studying or test-taking at school (Dolegui, 2013). A 2019 survey of teachers utilizing technology in the classroom does not include any findings about students listening to music in

the classroom, nor is there any mention of music at all, even though it is the way that adolescents use technology the most at home (Vega & Robb, 2019). This indicates that music is not a primary way that teachers consider utilizing technology to benefit their students' learning, even though students utilize it themselves. The only mention of using music with technology in the 2017 Ed Tech Plan is as part of a reward system "used as incentives for youth who met their behavior goals" (Office of Educational Technology, 2017, p. 75). However, research on children and adolescents finding positive results from listening to music for comfort and self-regulation have been conducted on trauma, academic testing (Cabanac et al., 2013), during lectures (Dosseville et al., 2012), students with autism (Pelayo & Sanchez, 2013), spatial task performance (Rauscher et al., 1993), and ADHD (Ramey, 2019). The benefits of listening to music are clear.

The default rule regarding students listening to their own music in the field of public education is a firm "no." Reasons for the "no headphone rule" in public schools are usually cited as poor communication with the wearer, safety, and rudeness (Featherstone, 2019). Some researchers found that listening to music is distracting from school work (Perham & Vizard, 2011). However, many experts as well as students claim that listening to music in school with earbuds or headphones aids in concentration, improves mood, relieves stress, increases creativity (Foran, 2009), tunes out distractions, and even keeps them from talking to their classmates (Rydahl-Kim, 2019). Some teachers have observed this same phenomenon (Barile, n.d.). When it comes to listening to music with headphones in the classroom, cultural capital cannot be easily determined solely based on the type of music itself,

since the only person who can hear it is the student. I am not as interested in whether or not Bourdieu's argument about musical tastes are justifiable today as I am in the way that adolescents utilize music to focus, regulate moods, and cope.

At her mid-term report card, my daughter had multiple Fs. She'd been able to hide from teachers while in class that she was having trouble conforming to the system, yet her grades reflected her difficulties. Her middle-class habitus and cultural capital had been what they saw, not her "invisible" inability to navigate the academic requirements. This was a difficult thing for all of us. We recognized the social construction of grades and discussed it at length. Yet in the eyes of the educational system, she'd failed, and that made her simultaneously desperate and angry. Failing grades was an unfamiliar experience for me, so my husband, who – even before his head injury – wasn't a great student, took the lead on recognizing her feelings. He'd failed before, I hadn't.

So even though she had the privilege of being white and having highly involved parents, we were still unable to get the support we needed, and she dropped out. When I sent the e-mail to her teachers over winter break telling them that she would not return, those that responded were shocked and said that they'd had no idea she was struggling so badly. How could this be? How is it possible for them to have understood the situation so erroneously? I contemplated the cultural acceptability of teachers, who spend hours and hours with our children daily, to be so overworked that they cannot recognize an increasingly acute problem? Do they only have the capacity to offer luke-warm (at best) support, and then not even recognize it? Obviously, this is a problem.

> If teachers have inaccurate perceptions of what students want and need with respect to care, they may expend well-meaning efforts to display care from an adult perspective, but ultimately miss the mark as to what is helpful in the eyes of students (Jeffrey et al., 2013, p. 101).

And if teachers are already overworked and overwhelmed, is it possible to add training to recognize signs of mental health issues to their plate? Is it fair? Teachers want to help but feel like they are not qualified, do not have time, and do not have access to needed resources. "That is, there are too many demands on teachers' time already" (Rothì et al., 2008, p. 1229).

But it really is more than that. If my daughter had exhibited traditional behavioral issues or experienced a pattern of measurable academic "difficulties," things would have been different. If she hadn't had her father, brother, and I helping her at home, advocating for her in school, and passing along our skin color and habitus, she likely would have been labeled as troubled in some way, long ago. And it is exactly in this way, by being labeled as disabled in the school system, that allows students to get services they need. Which is a step that we eventually were able to take.

5) If you've tried your best to work with a teacher or school and are back where you started, seek an alternative situation. As a parent who is also a graduate student with a flexible schedule, ability to research options, and a certain knowledge about rights, policies, laws, and the institution of education, I had the privilege of being able to check out our options. I did make my daughter wait until my school and work schedule eased up a bit, and until after we felt like we had exhausted all

options at her current public school. Over winter break, we looked into online schools. I recognized that she needed a completely different situation, not just a change in schools. Because my husband has a cognitive disability and my time was only sporadically available, parent-led homeschooling wasn't an option. At the time, our district didn't have a remote school, so I found a local (state-wide) online charter school for her to try. It was a band-aid, just to keep us legal, while we dealt with her mental health issues and regrouped. This was our first experience with remote learning. I'll address this subject at length in my section on remote learning and COVID-19.

V.1.4 JUST ONE MORE THING: IPAD POWER

On paper, the seed for this dissertation was planted during an experience I had in my first year as a PhD student. As luck would have it, I have a lot of documentation of this experience in the form of e-mails, notes, excerpts from a grant, a survey taken after the experience and a video produced by the grant-writer. The most detailed artifact I have is a paper I wrote about the experience for a graduate seminar called *Cultural Approaches to Communication: Body, Technology and Culture.* The professor structured his class in an unusual way (allowing me to take some liberty on the final project). He had a list of readings and objectives, including:

- consider the intellectual history of the emergence of contemporary media studies/cultural studies.
- explore the missing spaces of the body (as embodied cognition) and technology (as tool and as mediation)

- reconsider the recursive interplay between aesthetics (defined as experiential and experimental practice), technology (defined as mediation) and society (defined as networks and integrated practices).

He invited the students to make suggestions, to add readings, to request certain topics, to make the class our own. As is the case in any classroom, the students reacted in various ways. To my surprise, most were unhappy with this lack of structure. Like the undergrads I taught, they wanted clear expectations and a strict schedule. They complained and rolled their eyes at his open design, inferring that he was unorganized and addled. He sent us weekly online meditations and random individual e-mails when he ran across something he thought we might like. It was personal, and I loved it. We took turns bringing in snacks (it was an evening class), and he would project a video of a crackling fire on the screen while we discussed the reading for the day. I'm a sucker for atmosphere.

I was ruminating on numerous ideas for my doctoral research, as one does in the early years of a PhD. The experience I'd just finished up had left me with a lot of questions about technology in the classroom, consulting the teachers, technology curriculum, different types of learners, power, nepotism and privilege, corporate sponsorships in public schools, ethical practices of documentation and reporting, and what exactly did we mean by "media literacy"?

The voicemail message was innocent enough: another grad student wondering if I might be interested in an opportunity to work with 4th and 5th graders, teaching them how to use iPads to make videos in the classroom. At the time I had a 4th grader and a 5th grader and taught undergraduates how to create multimedia

projects, among other things. I was qualified for sure, right? How hard could it be? Everybody loves the iPad. At the time I was writing my thesis on how families mediate television programming in the home. This seemed like an interesting opportunity, not one of research but to gain additional teaching experience (one can never have too much of that), make a connection with the school district as a visiting "artist in residence" and establish a relationship with the local arts council. And to get paid? Even a little? Yes, please! (My stipend is but a small pittance and not nearly enough to cover expenses for a family of four, even with student loans.)

After talking on the phone more in detail and hashing out a schedule around our class times and graduate teaching assignments (and for me, drop-off my kids at school), I showed up in a classroom of about 30 kids for the first time on a cold, misty November morning, coffee in hand, to teach "iPad Power." My colleague (let's call her Ginger), had been working in the classroom for several months. She'd started the prior school year and now needed another knowledgeable adult in the room to enhance effectiveness.

Here I was, being offered an opportunity to observe, teach and interact with students as they used media and technology in the classroom. Expectations are a hell of a thing. I tell my kids all the time that low expectations are the key to happiness, and I'm only half joking. My experience working with younger kids and technology was mostly limited to my own offspring. My academic knowledge, I felt, was fairly substantial, given the fact that I had a B.A. in Communication and Film, nearly a Master's in Society and Communication, and was in the midst of conducting research and writing a thesis on the subject of television mediation in the domestic

field. As the use of technology grew more prevalent in public schools and my own children encountered it more often, my academic interests had begun to expand. By the time this opportunity came along, I'd been teaching a series of media skills courses to incoming undergraduate Journalism majors for six quarters in a row. I'd studied media literacy extensively. I was anxious to get out into the field, and thought I had a pretty good idea of what to expect.

Media literacy has been around for a long time. As early as 1917 there have been publications assessing and guiding educators on how to interpret and utilize film for education (Dench, [c1917]). Similarly, literature on radio and television and the history of media literacy as part of the curriculum in public education are considerable (Brown, 2013; Cuban, 1986; Polan, 2007; Tigga, 2009). Still, in the twenty-first century, media literacy is thought of as a modern movement, one that emerged with the introduction of computer technology into education, and that is what I will focus on in this research.

In 1996, the first National Education Technology Plan (NETP) was released entitled *Getting America's Students Ready for the 21st Century: Meeting the Technology Literacy Challenge.* The focus of this seventy-two page report was on "The Technology Literacy Challenge" as a fundamental skill. This challenge:

> requires the fulfillment of four main goals: (1) all teachers in the nation will have the training and support necessary to help students learn to use computers and the information superhighway; (2) all teachers and students will have modern multimedia computers in their classrooms; (3) every classroom will be

connected to the information superhighway; and (4) effective software and on-line learning resources will be an integral part of every school's curriculum.

In 2000, the focus of the NETP was on access for all (Office of Educational Technology, 2000). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act mandated that the NETP be updated within a year:

(b) IN GENERAL.—Based on the Nation's progress and an assessment by the Secretary of the continuing and future needs of the Nation's schools in effectively using technology to provide all students the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards, the Secretary shall update and publish, in a form readily accessible to the public, a national long-range technology plan, by not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (*The No Child Left Behind Act*, 2001).

In 2004, largely due to the mandates in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the narrative of the NETP changed to incorporate the internet, the law, and using technology to track student achievement and teacher success. The narrative also recognized the skillfulness of students and declared a golden age in American Education (Office of Educational Technology, 2004). In 2010, the NETP called for a "revolutionary transformation:"

The plan recognizes that technology is at the core of virtually every aspect of our daily lives and work, and we must leverage it to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences and content, as well as resources and assessments that measure student achievement in more complete, authentic, and meaningful

> ways. Technology-based learning and assessment systems will be pivotal in improving student learning and generating data that can be used to continuously improve the education system at all levels. Technology will help us execute collaborative teaching strategies combined with professional learning that better prepare and enhance educators' competencies and expertise over the course of their careers. To shorten our learning curve, we should look to other kinds of enterprises, such as business and entertainment, that have used technology to improve outcomes while increasing productivity (Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. x).

It was within this cultural climate that I entered into my experience working in a public classroom with students and iPads. The program was created with positive intentions to help harness the power of technology in the classroom, to set up a situation that could be assessed, to demonstrate how technology can be integrated with common core curriculum, to collaborate with teachers, inspire students, and contribute to the advancement of improving outcomes, just as the NETP dictated:

> We want to develop inquisitive, creative, resourceful thinkers; informed citizens; effective problem-solvers; groundbreaking pioneers; and visionary leaders. We want to foster the excellence that flows from the ability to use today's information, tools, and technologies effectively and a commitment to lifelong learning. All these are necessary for Americans to be active, creative, knowledgeable, and ethical participants in our globally networked society (Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. 1).

The program certainly seemed to be following the 2010 NETP assumption that "…we need to focus on extended teams of connected educators with different roles who collaborate within schools and across time and distance and who use technology resources and tools to augment human talent." I was, as one of these educators, unprepared for the realities of working with students, teachers and iPads. Beyond the usual jitters, I didn't realize how unprepared I actually was. I did not train to be a public school teacher so I was unaware of the collective habitus that I would encounter from teachers – mine, theirs and ours.

The principal was quite proud of their status as a "technology school," welcoming us with friendly smiles and full access to their students and resources.

It turned out that it would be a while before I was let in on the intent of the program, and then only in bits and pieces. Most days we were 'flying by the seat of our pants.' We might have a few minutes before or after one of our 40 to 50-minute lessons to grab the teacher and ask what they were working on in science, language arts or social studies that week. We weren't afforded the opportunity to ask what they thought of our instruction. If we were lucky we would get a heads up about an upcoming lesson so that we could semi-plan something for a future exercise.

On a good day, our technology would work, we could show some examples on the screen up front, quickly run through the steps app to complete the project, put a checklist of "to do's" on the board and let the kids get to work. On a bad day, our lesson would be delayed, the teacher would forget we were coming, there would be a fire drill that sent the entire school out onto the blacktop in the middle of our

> *instruction, or there would be a sub who had no idea we existed. Sometimes the teachers couldn't locate the "cow," an unwieldy, awkward, top-heavy cart on too-small wheels that holds all of the iPads, and we'd spend the first part of our allotted time tracking it down and pushing it clumsily across campus to the right room.*

The school district was in dire need of funding for technology in order to keep up with federal mandates, and during our time teaching iPad Power the voters passed a bond measure that would pay for thirty-six (maximum class size) MacBook Airs for every school in the district.

> Before the 2013 bond measure passed last year, the technology in our schools was inventoried. Each item was graded on a scale from A to F, based on speed, processing capability and more. The results weren't pretty: More than 60 percent flunked. "We have heard wonderful stories already about what a difference this new equipment is making in our students' learning environment," … And it's all made possible by the passage of the 2013 school bond measure (*4J Schools Refresh Student Technology*, 2014).

There was a burden on iPad Power to pilot integration of new technology into the classroom, "schools are under pressure from the media, the public at large and from policymakers to ensure that technology is used for teaching and learning, and that students' learning outcomes are enhanced from the considerable magnitude of investment in technology (Lim et al., 2013, p. 61). Additionally, inserting technology into an organized bureaucratic institution causes a specific kind of disruption. The ecosystem of a school requires balance. New innovations can act as invaders from outside. "Whether they can be successfully adopted and become permanently

established depends on their compatibility with the teaching and learning environment and the co-adaptation between the technology and the school as an ecological system" (Lim et al., 2013, p. 62).

Like most well-intentioned programs, this one had appreciable goals. But being a classroom instructor trying to specifically use iPads to teach, gave me an entirely new perspective on what can happen when technology is inserted suddenly into a classroom setting. The idea that we often had little idea of which lesson we'd be walking into speaks to the issues that teachers constantly voice with regard to having control over their day. The expectation that they need to "just add one more thing" to their already full curriculum, standards, and regulations, while dealing with thirty-plus students who all have different needs. Pressure to teach students to perform well in assessments, integrate students with various non-neurotypical issues, instruct too-large class sizes, navigate decreased funding, and a plethora of other variables, contributes to teachers' experiences that there are not enough hours in the school day to accomplish everything they are expected to. A Pew Research survey that came out during my experience teaching with iPads found that:

> teachers say the internet and other digital tools have added new demands to their lives, agreeing with the statement that these tools have a "major impact" by increasing the range of content and skills about which they must be knowledgeable. And 41% report a "major impact" by requiring more work on their part to be an effective teacher (NW et al., 2013).

In retrospect, I have a lot of sympathy for the players involved in this situation. I reflect on my flippant tone in my written description and see naiveté, judgement, and inexperience. I also see that I was inserting myself as a parent, imagining my own kids in these classrooms (who were the same ages as the kids I was teaching), feeling vexed by the impression of chaos, and drawing on my own habitus. I was still adapting to the school culture in this district, comparing teachers and schools to one another, struggling with my own opinions on the use of techia in classrooms, and of course, feeling overwhelmed teaching undergraduates, taking graduate courses and writing my Master's thesis.

I teach my kids to always consider the intersecting identities, pressures people may be under from unseen sources, rules they are following, and habitus of the people they encounter. Looking back on my observations of this experience, I don't believe that I was following my own advice:

> *I also noticed that we had various levels of "buy-in" from the teachers. Some were super-excited to see us show up and had their students focused and ready to go. They kept organized lists, tracking which students were assigned to which iPads and followed along with our lessons so that they could learn not only what we were doing, but also how to support the students and eventually teach the lessons themselves. Eventually these teachers would be prepared with ideas when we arrived or would make suggestions for next time as we packed up to leave.*
>
> *A couple of the teachers were quite enthusiastic but clearly felt like they had no idea how to interact with the technology. They were uncomfortable even touching it, much less creating a project or taking the skills we were trying to teach them to*

come up with their own ideas. They were perfectly happy to let us "do the technology" and thrilled that their kids were having so much fun.

Then there were classrooms we entered where I felt just the opposite. If I didn't see an eye roll, I felt it. Begrudgingly, the teachers quieted their students and retired to the back of the room where they would work on something else or act as disciplinarian when they felt their students were out of line. My colleague's style was pretty loose – sometimes bordering on the chaotic - so when we were in this type of atmosphere I always felt torn, which means the kids likely did as well. Don't get me wrong, not for one hot minute do I think that these teachers were slacking off or taking a break. But there was definitely a chilly mood, one that made me feel like an unwanted intruder. And despite the more controlled behavior, which in many ways made our job easier, nobody had much fun. Still, we forged on.

Upon reflection, I don't think that my observations were necessarily wrong. I just didn't have any idea of the cultural pressure they were dealing with. In 2010, the NETP called for a new model of teaching, in order to shift to teaching that was inclusive of technology. They called this "connected learning."

In connected teaching, classroom educators are fully instrumented, with 24/7 access to data about student learning and analytic tools that help them act on the insights the data provide. They are connected to their students and to professional content, resources, and systems that empower them to create, manage, and assess engaging and relevant learning experiences for students both in and out of school. They also are connected to resources and expertise that improve their own instructional practices, continually add to their

> competencies and expertise, and guide them in becoming facilitators and collaborators in their students' increasingly self-directed learning. Like students in the learning model described earlier, teachers engage in personal learning networks that support their own learning and their ability to serve their students well (Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. 40).

Regardless of my own feelings of how the iPad experience went down, the climate that created this statement is a huge ask for teachers. On top of already feeling overworked and overwhelmed, they were being asked to add technology and media to their world. The accompanying graphic in the report shows a teacher figure in the center holding a device, with lines going outward, connecting them to data, personal learning networks, online courses, tutors, technical assistance providers, content, other teachers, experts, youth development workers, parents and students. At this point in the report, the NETP endorsed the idea of commercial and open source systems that may aid in accomplishing the above ask. A non-existent utopia of integrated technology and education. If I had read this at the time I would have laughed. Based on my adventure trying to teach with iPads, my own kids' wildly disparate experiences from school to school, teacher to teacher, and state to state, I would have thought this was science fiction. 24/7? Did the federal government really want teachers to be connected to students 24/7? Okay, maybe they didn't mean that literally, but the implication is there. Teachers were meant to be responsible for being the center of connectedness between students, parents, administration, data, technological learning tools and media content, so-called experts, and the nebulous "youth development worker."

Policy-makers like to have evidence about what, why and how it works. Goals must be documented, outcomes measured and eventually, policy-makers can identify what to do (Healy, 2006, p. 131). The problem is that, as we have seen, there are countless variables that influence students, teachers, schools, administrators, districts, counties, states and the country as a whole in the field of public education. However, since habitus and capital are intangible and immeasurable (at least directly), policy makers focus on teachers, curriculum, equipment, and facilities. In order to help more students. International policy organization OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) has attempted to quantify capital in order to make more effective recommendations to federal policy makers. Their highest recommendations to "increase student capital" for the United States include: increasing preschool attendance, increasing student-teacher ratio, and increase school autonomy (*Productivity, Human Capital and Educational Policies*, 2019). None of these deficits in the field of public education come as a surprise to its citizens. Yet, here we are, still struggling to meet the needs of our students. We need to widen the debate, examine the nature of learning, and expand the way the structure is organized. Until then, we will continue to insert policy into a structure that does not recognize capital as a significant factor, a fluid characteristic, and a crucial component in effective and compassionate educational practices.

In 2013, schools nationwide were attempting to adhere to the requirements of the 2006 NCLB. In short, these requirements were as follows:

- develop and self-impose challenging academic standards
- annually test students to assess progress toward state standards

- gather and disseminate relevant information
- facilitate progress toward these goals
- only permit "highly qualified" teachers to instruct in subjects they are qualified to teach
- verify qualifications of existing teachers

Also:

- schools must demonstrate adequate yearly progress, or face increasingly onerous sanctions.'
- all students must demonstrate proficiency in various subject areas by 2014 (*The No Child Left Behind Act*, 2001)

In addition to these overarching federal directives, integration of technology in the classroom was also one of the key concepts in the NCLB Act. This included professional development, technology integrated curriculum, improving academic achievement through technology, ensuring that every student is technologically literate by 8th grade "regardless of the student's race, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability," and the need to "encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with teacher training and curriculum development to establish research-based instructional methods that can be widely implemented as best practices by state education agencies and local education agencies" (*Understanding the No Child Left Behind Act: Technology Integration*, 2007).

No pressure or anything.

V.4.1a CORPORATE INTERESTS

Since my experience was with iPads, I'll use them as an example. The story of the iPad is a chicken and egg tale. Apple does not specifically claim that iPads were designed for education. In 2013 there was an extensive "Apple and Education" portion of the Apple website with pages devoted to "Teaching with the iPad," "How to Buy," "Real Stories," "Device Enrollment," "Professional Development and Services," and "Apple Training and Certification" (*Apple Education*, n.d.). However, the development of the iPad specifically describes it as a device created for a single user. Interviews with Apple founder Steve Jobs about the birth of the iPad say that the idea was around before the iPhone and was strictly a "consumer device." When designers realized that they could create a smartphone with the same features, they switched gears and did that first. Jobs' concentration was on the technology of the touchscreen: "I'll tell you a secret. It began with the tablet. I had this idea about having a glass display, a multitouch display you could type on with your fingers. I asked our people about it. And six months later, they came back with this amazing display. And I gave it to one of our really brilliant UI guys. He got scrolling working and some other things, and I thought, "my God, we can build a phone with this!" So we put the tablet aside, and we went to work on the iPhone." (Wrenn, 2012).

The institution of education is increasingly dependent on corporate actors for funding. The neoliberalist approach to education emphasizes individuality, self-meritocracy, and competition. This in in contrast to Mann's school as a common good, focusing instead on education as a "private and individual service commodity" (de Saxe & Favela, 2018, p. 32). Using devices in school that students with a certain background are already familiar with, rewards their cultural capital and reproduces

the middle class, limiting competition and upward economic mobility from other children. "Thus, the introduction of devices to restratify a population enhances the value of the credentials that the new middle class is more likely to accumulate, given the stock of cultural capital it already possesses" (Apple, 2005, p. 276).

Since its 2010 debut, Apple has insisted that iPads are perfect for classroom use. Still, many administrators noted the reason they purchased them (often paid for with federal funding from the competitive grant program "Race to the Top" (*Race to the Top Fund*, 2016) for their schools was the technologically deterministic view that they would get kids more excited about learning, "of all the devices out there, iPads have the most star power with kids" (Hu, 2011). This, however, may not have been true for teachers. In 2013, an iPad cost over $700. None of the teachers I worked with owned one. I didn't either, and had to learn how to use it "on the job." It wasn't necessarily intuitive for me, though I think I caught on fairly quickly because of my familiarity with Apple products and my own habitus around technology. Teachers unfamiliar with such technology, (especially early on) became overwhelmed with the time it takes to become fluent in using iPads, options for apps and ways to integrate them into their day (Cox, 2013).

Researchers sometimes claim that technology in education is a "Trojan Horse" for education reform, implying that technology will bring radical changes, questioning the need to create dynamic and informed "webizens" who are able to make critical judgments on information provided by media, books and journals, and questions to policy makers and educational administrators regarding technology as a priority in educational policies (Vu, 2013). A 2013 iPad study asks: 1) Is the iPad

designed and useful for education? 2) Can kids' passion when using the iPad translate into learning? 3) Why is there an increasing value put on the iPad (and not other devices, for instance) for educational purposes? The study also discussed the technological enthusiasm surrounding the iPad, noting that it took nearly three decades for personal computers to become broadly introduced into the K-12 educational setting and widely used by 91% of American students in these classrooms. Conversely, the iPad was introduced into K-12 classrooms more widely and speedily than any other previous computing device (Vu, 2013). In 2013, Apple's iPad was the fastest growing type of technology in schools.

> an escalating number of schools around the country were replacing desktops and textbooks with iPads, and utilizing this Apple's latest device as an overall learning tool. For example, the New York City public schools spent $1.3 million purchasing more than 2,000 iPads; more than 200 Chicago public schools applied for 23 district-financed iPad grants totaling $450,000; The Virginia Department of Education oversaw a $150,000 iPad initiative which replaced history and Advanced Placement biology textbooks at 11 schools. In addition, the number of approximately 5,400 educational applications designed specifically for the iPad also indicated the pervasiveness of this gadget in education (Vu, 2013, p. 3).

So in this cultural climate, in absolute earnestness, we forged ahead in our mission to assist the administration, teachers, students, university research, local arts council and community members in adhering to and attaining the NCLB regulations.

As we progressed through the school year, we fell into something resembling a routine. We communicated via e-mail and text between our own heavy academic and workloads, planning out our next session the night before. I gathered that we were supposed to be "enhancing" the existing core curriculum. Sometimes we would get to a classroom and there would be a guest reader who was enthusiastically sharing a story aloud. Our hopes of documenting science would be dashed and we whispered in the back of the room – brainstorming a new plan while we watched our time tick away. We'd hastily create a sample, then when it was our turn with the kids we'd quickly break out the iPads and have them use iMotion to show us what they saw in their imaginations when the story was being read aloud. Results varied. We had some phenomenal animated video. We also had some students who refused to participate because they didn't think they could draw. We had kids draw bombs and explosions and use fart sounds as audio tracks. And we had kids trying to hide their screens while they played games.

Some logistical problems surfaced with the iPads that we did not anticipate (but really, did we anticipate any of this?). The iPad is designed to be a single consumer device. We had multiple children sharing one iPad at different times on different days. The iPad is not a traditional computer, so it's not easy to create a folder for each user or some other receptacle for their work that they could easily return to. Video projects are saved into the app. We discussed this with the teachers, the IT person at the school and the principal. We tried to get the kids to use regular naming conventions so that at least we could scroll through the projects and find their names, but there was just too much going on, and they

didn't understand why, which made them not want to do it. So we had projects called "My project" and "Bob" and "Bully" and "Motion" and "Poem" and "Paper" and just about everything else you can think of that a 4th or 5th grader might come up with. This was extremely problematic as we tried to re-visit certain projects. Sometimes we never found them, and all of the work a student had done was gone. This also became a problem when we were trying to show the powers-that-be at the district what the students had learned. It was a cataloging nightmare.

When you're a parent in the thick of it, helping your children to navigate through the field of public education, you're focus is on your kid. I knew that I liked the cooperative low tech school my kids attended for their first few years, and that I struggled with the commercialization and corporatization of childhood and education. When I came to graduate school, I had no idea what the term 'political economy' meant. As I learned, I started to identify some of the things that were most glaring in my own experiences. My first-hand involvement with the iPads seemed to be a perfect example of some of the major issues I was beginning to recognize. Early in my grad school career I wrote a reflective essay on the subject:

Political economists of the media who draw strongly on the idea of the base and superstructure compare corporate media corporations with the ruling class who control material as well as mental production. In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels explain that individuals in the ruling class possess consciousness, rule as thinkers, are idea producers, and regulate the distribution of ideas of their age. The ruling class presents its ideas as universal, the only ideas that are rational, valid, or even possible, eliminating choice for those in the base. Murdock and

Golding summarize the way these concepts manifest in the media in their 1973 article For a Political Economy of Mass Communications, "The mass media impinges on peoples' lives…in providing the facilities with which people occupy a considerable amount of their non-work time they command an increasing proportion of discretionary spending…the media are the major source of information about, and explanations of, social and political processes…therefore play[ing] a key role in determining the forms of consciousness and the modes of expression and action which are made available to people." (3)

Well, there was no doubt that Apple was one of the major media corporations, and in the role of 'ruling class,' had presented its ideas (which in Jobs' mind were equivalent to devices) to the general public, the government and the institution of education, as universal. When a large, private corporation inserts itself into public education, it seems to me a conflict of interest. Vincent Mosco defines the political economy of communications as "…the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2008)." Compare this with the way that Apple framed (in 2013) the place the iPad deserves in educational settings, and the political economy lens is clear: "iPad is transforming the way we teach and learn. Powerful creative tools, interactive textbooks, and a universe of apps and content make for endless learning possibilities. All on a device everyone already loves to use (Apple)."

The students we were working with already had personal embodied experiences with smart phones and iPads. They were used to using them ALONE for entertainment, relaxation, distraction, and fun, NOT school.

Let's take a moment to talk about teams and collaboration. Harmonious teamwork was rare. Most of the time was spent fighting over who got to do the shooting, to hold the sacred iPad. We spent a lot of time mediating and breaking up arguments. Group brainstorming? Ideas rarely meshed, kids did not want to compromise, and there was pouting. We'd come across a former team and realize that they had broken off, retrieved another iPad and were shooting multiple projects. Good times.

When all of the stars aligned and we got to the classroom when they were supposed to be doing a science experiment, we felt like we were handed a perfect plan. We explained to the students that there were different ways to show a science experiment to an audience. You could make a poster, write up the lab notes, make an oral presentation to the class, demonstrate the experiment live or…make a video! We brainstormed with them and came up with the steps you'd need in your video to have it make sense. YAY! Critical thinking! But then they had to DO the experiment as well as document it in the time left. It was a fiasco. Okay, live and learn. We suggested to the teachers that we spend iPad Power time actually documenting the experiment they had already completed previously. Then all they had to do was duplicate it and record it in the way we suggested. Some of them were willing to do that, but others didn't want to spend time duplicating work. They didn't get that we were actually teaching new skills, like how to see the

experiment differently. It was about the new approach, thinking outside the box that they normally use in school.

The kids? Well, that's another story. The kids could not, COULD NOT understand why we were repeating the experiment. We got lots and lots of arguments "We've already DONE this one!" As if we did not understand. They couldn't figure out how to replicate the results. We told them they didn't have to, they just had to act like they were and show the data in their notebooks that they had already gathered. Their minds were blown. How could they do the experiment and record it on video if they didn't actually DO the experiment again? We had them write scripts and showed them why that was better than adlibbing. The teacher listed vocabulary words they had to use in the scripts. We told them to write it as if they were doing the experiment NOW. We tried to show them how they could shoot a particular scene and just use part of it when they edited it – like if the car they built went further than it had last time they just cut it off. "No!" they said, science is supposed to be REAL!

And they were right.

As usual, we had many students who wanted to use the iPads for other things during the time allotted for iPad Power. This had expanded from just games to making their own videos (after all, they had acquired some mad video skills by this time), and exploring the pre-determined choices within the video app (iMovie). Let me explain: on the iPad, iMovie is very limited when it comes to creating a video from scratch. It can be done, but once you get past stringing clips together it is not easy. Cutting clips is done with a swipe of the finger and rarely works properly. It

is nearly impossible to be precise, and very time-consuming to do over and over until you get it right (or close enough). Audio clips cannot be separated from the video clips with which they were recorded. The list of frustrations is a long one.

But here's what became the next biggest problem during iPad Power: there are predetermined "themes" in iMovie. "Neon" was a favorite musical choice for the 4th and 5th graders. You can probably imagine what that sounds like. (Think 80s glam rock.) There are also video themes. These include a travel theme so you can make your own video about your family trip to the Grand Canyon, a sports theme for making an awesome soccer video for grandma, photo album, newscast, comic book…you see the appeal. Possibly the most attractive feature to kids is the movie trailer, which by itself has several themes like Scary, Superhero, Swashbuckler, Romantic, Retro, Narrative, Fairytale, Expedition, and Bollywood. So now, on top of the students trying to sneak off and play games, we had others who ignored our instructions to make a serious video about their science/poem/social studies subject of the day and decided to sneak off and make a horror movie trailer. We usually didn't realize this until we were sharing videos in front of the whole class. They got a huge laugh from the class and we, well, we shrugged. Do we give them kudos for being creative? Do we punish them for not following the rules? Never mind, it's time to clean up.

Bourdieu's assertion that behavior and thinking become guided through a social process, as opposed to an individual one, create patterns that change per situation (home and school, for example), and are also influenced by power relations.

> through the economic and social conditions which they presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions…are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions. Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier (Bourdieu, 1984, 6).

How was the experience I was having with the iPads a demonstration of complex intersecting fields? How did the students' and teachers' habitus influence the situation? What about me and the other grad student? How were we reinforcing, shaping and disrupting the school field? At first, I often felt like it was an exercise in futility. Were we teaching ways to forge new paths or just wasting time? In what seemed at the time like pure luck, we began to see things change:

> *After mixed success with the science kits, we decided to take a little break and re-group over Spring break. The fourth graders were going to be doing something else during our usual iPad Power times so we concentrated on the 5th graders. By this time, we were pretty tuned in to what their abilities were. There was a wide range of social, technical, and academic skills as well as developmental levels. There were some behavioral issues around the iPad, some difficulty working in teams because of inability to share the technology, and some attitudinal problems. Still, overall we knew that these 5th graders, at the end of their elementary school career, were generally able to follow multi-step directions to create a video project. We had buy-in from all of the 5th grade teachers and discussed with each one what they would like to do to use the iPads to supplement their existing course of study for the remainder of the year. One excited teacher suggested that her students*

could write plays about the Revolutionary War and we could help make them into little videos. A second teacher jumped on that bandwagon and the third decided to do videos about bullying and community. This was a subject we had been dabbling in for a few months, mainly due to an incident in this teacher's classroom.

When we came back from break refreshed and eager to begin, the Revolutionary War students were ready to go. They had already written their scripts so that they could perform their plays in front of the class. Each group had a different event; The Ride of Paul Revere, The Boston Tea Party, The Boston Massacre – you get the idea. They performed their plays for us, and we were impressed! However, we quickly realized that we would have to teach them how shooting a video was different than performing a play. We pulled out clips from their favorite TV shows and demonstrated how many shots were in one short scene. Then we started showing more clips, asking them to dissect them. They liked it; it was like a game where they were supposed to count as many cuts as possible. Was that a different angle? Was the camera closer? Was the camera showing a wide shot of the entire scene? Were we watching someone react to what the other person said? How did all of this come together to make sense and not allow the viewer to detect the process? Then we asked them HOW they thought these scenes were shot. They were stumped. It was beyond their abilities to think of how it was to put it all together. It was so seamless to them, they couldn't break it down.

The next session was spent demonstrating how a scene is shot from many angles and distances, then cut together. We used the "You must pay the rent" story (students had a lot of fun coming up with their own versions of this outdated and

sexist story: "You must eat the pie! I can't eat the pie – I'm allergic!") to show them how to shoot a scene, how to shoot each part from different angles, over and over, until we had all of the angles we needed. Then together, in front of the classroom, on the overhead projector, we showed them how to pull the clips together, to make it seamless, to make it look like a scene on TV. They seemed ready.

But when we got to the actual shooting of their Revolutionary War scenes, they still could not understand why we were shooting a scene multiple times. They kept insisting, "We already did that part, this other part is next." We would explain and explain that yes, we did it already but now we needed to shoot it from over the shoulder, or to get a reaction shot, or to get the other person saying his lines. Eventually, (and in the interest of time), we would just make them do the scenes over again, even if they didn't understand, and hoped that we would be able to explain it during the editing process.

We got some exciting footage – especially the Boston Massacre and Paul Revere's Ride, which we were able to shoot outside using trees and boulders and homemade props. With my groups, I held the camera most of the time, moving around to get different angles and directing them to do the scene however many times I needed them to. They had so much fun that they stopped asking me why they had to do it (well okay, they grumbled a little). They also did not have the opportunity or time to play a game or create something different than what the assignment was. They were focused on the task at hand, learning, acting, getting fresh air, and having fun. And I had the iPad.

Then came the magic. The next week we edited the footage with them and it was great to see their eyes light up as their scenes came together. It was during THIS process that they started to grasp the multi-camera shoot, how it worked, and why it was better than a static shot.

It was throughout this final and most successful period that I finally felt like we were teaching them something significant.

V.4.1b SO THIS IS MEDIA LITERACY

The push to teach media literacy has existed since the introduction of technology into the classroom,

> In the U.S., media literacy education began in the 1970s with an emphasis on protection (from the so-called "bad" media content); most media literacy materials and initiatives were aimed at parents. Since then, there has been a shift toward an emphasis on media literacy as empowerment (stressing critical thinking and production skills); more materials are now aimed at schools and teachers. The empowerment model emphasizes the political, social, and economic implications of media messages and stresses the importance of using media effectively and wisely" (Scheibe & Faith Rogow, 1999, p. 3).

By the late nineties, the narrative regarding media literacy in education meant that "technological literacy" needed to be taught in school in order to "navigate through society."

> The Technology Literacy Challenge, envisioning a 21st century where all students are technologically literate, requires the fulfillment of four main goals:(1) all teachers in the nation will have the training and support necessary

> to help students learn to use computers and the information superhighway;(2) all teachers and students will have modern multimedia computers in their classrooms; (3) every classroom will be connected to the information superhighway; and (4) effective software and on-line learning resources will be an integral part of every school's curriculum.

What we were asking, as we wrapped up the grant was, were we successful in teaching media literacy? I went into this experience believing that teaching media literacy was crucial, even if some teachers viewed it (or so it appeared to me at the time) as an unnecessary burden and extra work. Of course, it isn't that simple. Bourdieu's 'Reflexive Sociology' has allowed me to conclude that my own position in the social world during my observations unavoidably influenced my experience and the experiences of those with whom I came into contact. "Social scientists, themselves, are also objects under study in the sense that they are, at the same time, social actors with their own biographies and behaviors; shaped by and participating in the reality of society that is the object of their study (Kenway & McLeod, 2004, p. 324).

I believe that we fulfilled our part of the grant proposal.

> *"Teach narrative structure, storytelling, technical video/audio skills, teamwork, critique skills by using the iPad while incorporating the technology into existing curriculum including science, language arts, writing, art, etc. Teachers also learn skills and will see the value of the technology, eventually adding it to their regular curriculum. (LaneArts, n.d.)"*

I don't know for sure what skills the teachers learned or if they added technology and media literacy to their curriculum. When I was a video producer, one of my supervisors used to say that my projects sometimes seemed like they were never going to come together. It was like the project went into a machine on one end, made grinding noises, spit out smoke, blew bubbles, and came out the other end tied in a perfect bow. That's kind of how I felt when the iPad project was finished. During that slice of time, in the midst of the cultural milieu that was layered with *No Child Left Behind*, the *National Technology Education Plan*, and the trial and error of inserting iPads into the normal course of a 4th or 5th-grader's day, we were doing the best with what we had, as were all of the various players in the field. My one observation about the teachers and school district reflects my earlier observations about the pressures teachers were and are experiencing under the NCLB Act ("It is all around you, it is constant, it never lets up" (*"Shape Up or Ship Out*, n.d.)) and the push toward adding more and more technology into the classroom (remember, teachers are supposed to be connected 24/7). My perception at the time was this:

> *The teachers wanted more concrete lessons and more notice that this type of program was being instituted. The district rep wanted assessment, assessment, assessment. The teachers were unable or unwilling to spend any more of their time filling out forms or writing up their observations.*

Well, obviously.

After this experience, my passion for critical thinking and media literacy was provoked in a whole new way. I was intrigued by the way that technology was being used in the classroom. To me, this looked like a complex network of intersecting

policies, funding, new technology, pressure, excitement, frustration, rules, innovation, and debate. Were we looking at a revolution? A disruption? Or were we just repurposing? Were we just replacing old technology like pencil and paper with new technology like iPads and laptops?

For my Teaching and Professional Life seminar, I wrote a mock syllabus on Media Literacy. Here's the course introduction:

> *The meaning of media literacy is changing before our eyes. This course examines the intersection of media (television, music, film, internet, technology, etc.), audiences and interpretation. We'll examine media through history, culture and power structures. We will study what is being done in schools to teach critical thinking skills. We will explore media literacy through critical thinking (http://bit.ly/1bNO36U) and a constructivist (http://bit.ly/1bEmoVa) approach.*

V.1.5 STEM SCHOOL?

Although I never got to teach that class, I did get to explore some of these ideas with middle schoolers. My son attended a public school that was awarded a nearly $700,000 STEM grant (*Big Grant Boosts STEM Education*, 2014) during his 6th grade year which read in part:

> Students and staff are united in the core principles: learning is important, everyone can learn with effort, and everyone within the community plays an integral role in its success. Students and teachers are all learning simultaneously to build conceptual understandings that keep pace with innovation in the 21st century. Critical thinking is a major part of the curriculum, with essential

> questions about real-life problems guiding the process. Students are supported by a STEM-focused daily Advisory and wraparound services coordinated by staff teams that help them develop and maintain high aspirations for STEM careers (*STEM Grant Application Narrative*, 2014, p. 1).

Backing up a little – after our disappointing experience at the local elementary school, we'd moved our kids to an alternative public school. We had to (again) lottery in and (again) drive our kids to a different neighborhood, but it was a much better fit for us. The focus was on community and family involvement – right up our alley. The school shared a campus with a middle school. Historically, the students from our little elementary school had an alternative track in the middle school. This meant that when they moved into 6th grade, they stayed together as a cohort for their core classes throughout their middle school experience, working with specific teachers, taking field trips that supported the curriculum, and overall continuing to strengthen relationships with their peers. This model was being phased out the year my son began at the middle school, yet he still chose to go to the middle school so that he could be with his friends. It's quite possible that the intention of the administration to turn the middle school into a STEM school had something to do with the phasing out of this alternate track. The timing makes sense. Our tight-knit and highly involved parent group was unable to get a straightforward answer from them. We met regularly, tried to update our mission statement and created a list of the most important aspects of the community-based school that we desperately wanted to maintain for our adolescents. We were shut down by the administration, who seemed as if they never really bought into the concept of the community

elementary school in the first place; they were essentially just sharing a building, and by default, acting as administration over the program. The only thing they told us was that it wasn't fair for there to be a school-within-a-school that excluded students coming in from other elementary schools. Perhaps this was true.

I see their point, especially in retrospect (fiercely fighting – using our capital - for what we believe to be the best education for our kids is all-encompassing and it's hard to see anything else at the time). But I also see this as a missed opportunity for disruption. The alternative elementary school we'd attended had built up a successful child-centered program within a mainstream system (it was located in a campus dominated by a mainstream technology-centered school). Why should this end as they enter adolescence? They'd spent years together learning the way that worked for them, that their parents had supported. Why not be allowed to stay in the same cohort for core classes through middle school? The teachers were already there and had been teaching these cohorts for many years. The administration that made the decision to dissolve the program was specifically focused on the types of (unfair) activities that these cohorts were doing, including extended field trips and projects that directly connected curriculum to the local community, even though the middle school teachers would often say that these cohorts demanded more complex content and required less hand-holding, making for a more fulfilling teaching and learning experience. Our kids were kind to each other, responsible, enjoyed learning, and worked collaboratively. The parents who were trying to keep the program together proposed that we attempt to extend the benefits to the entire

school, but the teachers and the administration firmly believed that it was not possible. Yet, how will things change if we don't try?

> Disruptive education is a slow change towards a more meaningful, flexible system of learning, one in which students are given agency and choice and respect…Disruption in education is about individuals. It is about the crazy teachers who know there must be a better way. It is about those students who love to tinker and challenge and rebel and try and learn beyond the confines of the syllabus. It's about those subversive parents and administrators who support these children and teachers…Schools are not businesses. Classrooms are not startups. Learning is not a commodity. Education is about young people and about doing what is best for them. Education does not need to 'learn' from the latest bit of marketing babble. We do not need to 'disrupt' education by taking on board all of the latest, shiniest toys. We do need to look closely at the true nature of paradigm-shifting revolutions to effect meaningful change (H, 2017).

We weren't told about the grant at the time. I did some digging and found a part of the application. Like the iPad grant I'd been a part of, this one was in line with the national message to integrate technology into all parts of education:

> Content learning is integrated across courses to reflect the natural interconnectedness of skills and concepts in real-world STEM practice, avoiding the artificial isolation of subject areas that occurs in traditional schools. Teachers plan in interdisciplinary teams to identify and develop connected lesson plans, and share authentic projects that support targeted learning outcomes at all grade levels. Teachers use flexible grouping to differentiate based on both

> student area of interest, and learning rate and level. Content integration increases progressively from a student's sixth through eighth grade years to ensure solid foundations and scaffolding (*STEM Grant Application Narrative*, 2014, p. 5).

If incoming parents hadn't heard about the grant on the local public radio (O'Boyle, 2014) or read it on the school district website (*Big Grant Boosts STEM Education*, 2014), we didn't know about the details. The only part that was communicated to us was the addition of 1:1 iPads (one iPad per student) rolling out slowly. I followed the rollout as closely as possible, given my research interests and desire to be an involved parent. The 8th-graders got them first, seven months after the grant was awarded. By this time, I'd noticed that the school's website was sporting the "Apple Distinguished School" logo in the top right-hand corner.

> The Apple Distinguished School program is by invitation only for schools that meet the current program qualifications. Recognition is for three years, with the opportunity to renew during each invitation period. The invitation process begins with an application request from school leadership. Apple reviews all requests to ensure that schools meet the current program qualifications. Qualified schools then receive an invitation to complete the application process.
>
> Qualifications
>
> - Established one-to-one program
> - Innovative use of the Apple platform
> - Faculty proficiency with iPad or Mac
> - Documented results (*Education - Apple Distinguished Schools*, n.d.)

As a parent (and very curious scholar), I had regular conversations with any of my son's teachers who would talk to me. But I was busy with school and it was becoming clear that the 6th graders weren't going to have any access to the iPads during that academic year. In the fall of the next year, I attended the Back to School night and tried to touch base with as many teachers as possible. I then followed up with an e-mail, drawing on the linguistic and academic capital I possess as a PhD student and administrator at the local university, social capital I possess as a parent with a history of volunteering, cultural capital we (including my son) possess as a parent of a student who excels in STEM:

Hello wonderful teachers,

This is Kris, xxx's mom. I touched base with some of you during the back-to-school night and mentioned my upcoming research on iPads in education to some of you as well. I ran across this interesting article with some useful tips and good ideas about introducing the iPads to students. I had the opportunity to work with 4-5 graders at xxx and I would agree with a lot of what is said in this article. Using the video function is particularly easy and engaging (with very specific parameters of course). We used it with great success, especially when the kids were talking about themselves and later on creating narratives. We also found that without naming conventions, finding existing projects was extremely problematic, especially when they ended up having to share iPads, and getting the projects off of the iPad is a whole different problem! The iPad is designed to be for one person. But I digress. I know you all have had a lot of training when it comes to the iPads so I am by no means trying to say you need more or I know any more than you, just sharing.

I am not endorsing any of the apps or platforms in this article. Frankly I am skeptical about a lot of what is out there and I have not yet investigated the ones here. However, I find that overall the tips here are good ones. A lot of the iPad articles I see out there are just selling apps or new platforms without any real substance, there are literally thousands of articles on iPads in education as I'm sure you all know (but very little published research thus far).

I welcome the opportunity to work in your rooms (when I can) with the kids if you would like. I am starting my 2nd year as a PhD student in the Media Studies department at the UO and have been teaching basic journalism (from writing to interview to technology to research to design and more) for 4 years now so I have been able to see what works, and I think much of it applies regardless of the age of the student. Plus I just enjoy hanging out with the kids and supporting you all!

If you prefer not to hear from me, please let me know. Otherwise I may e-mail you periodically with info, research and articles I find exciting and interesting and helpful in regards to introducing and/or working with the iPads and our kids in schools. I feel like collaborating and learning together regarding what works and what doesn't with the iPads is helpful to everybody, but I have no intention of bothering you or sending you stuff you don't want :)

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/the-first-5s-with-ipads-beth-holland

Cheers! Kris Wright

I got exactly one reply:

Thanks Kris!

As per our conversation at Open House, when I get the new STC IPad curriculum, I

will shoot you an email.

Take care

I never heard anything again. It was a little embarrassing to say the least. I asked one of the teachers if they'd received professional development from Apple when they became an Apple Distinguished school and she looked at me blankly. "Do you mean did someone show us how to turn them on and off? Yes. I have no idea if it was Apple." The STEM grant promised extensive innovation, consultation with stakeholders and professional development.

> In the project year, the district will purchase 300 personal learning devices (tablets or laptops) for students to use. Funds have been set aside to implement innovative technology systems. Exciting possibilities are remote labs, cloud-based data sharing, a well-equipped engineering studio, a spherical display system for projecting global/planetary data, a "fly on the wall" video system, and virtual classrooms. During the grant year, the ATA community will engage in a methodical process of stakeholder input, led by the leading technology management company, Presidio, to assess needs for STEM technology and develop a multi-year "road map" (*STEM Grant Application Narrative*, 2014, p. 13)

The Apple education website says:

> The Apple Distinguished School program supports school leaders through leadership events, opportunities to engage with experts, and collaboration with peers who share an interest in innovative learning and teaching (*Education - Apple Distinguished Schools*, n.d.).

Most of my information about using iPads in the middle school classroom came though my son's constant grumbling. He finally got "his iPad" in 7th grade. His biggest complaint was that the rules around the use of it were so restrictive that it became more of a chore to use it than not. It had to be picked up from the COW first thing in the morning, and replaced in the same slot at the end of the day. They weren't given school time to do this so he felt like it was an imposition on his personal before and after school time. Many of his teachers forbid its use in their rooms completely, requiring it to be placed face down on the students' desks. More often than not, it was used as a reward (when you finished your work you might be allowed to play a game) or a punishment (having it taken away for doing something wrong – whether it had to do with the iPad or not).

One of his teachers seemed to be doing her best to integrate the iPad into her Language Arts curriculum. She was using SwipeSpeare in her literature class, an app designed to show the original text on a single screen and reveal "plain and simple English" on the next screen with the swipe of a finger. The point was to make the terminology easy to read and less distracting by not placing them next to each other like on a website or piece of paper. This gives the students a chance to interpret the original text without immediately seeing the modern-day translation (*SwipeSpeare Features*, n.d.). I reached out to her and she was receptive to having me come into her class to help out while they were using the technology. I chose a class that my son was not in (did you know that middle schoolers don't like to have their moms in class with them)? The app was basic. The original Shakespeare text would appear on the screen. The students would swipe to the side to see the text translated into more

modern language that they could understand, “SwipeSpeare puts the words of the Bard into plain and simple English with a Swipe of a finger! SwipeSpeare only shows you the modern text when you want to see it. Simply swipe your finger over the text, and the text will change; swipe it again and it will change back” (*SwipeSpeare Features*, n.d.). My fifty minutes in the 7th grade language arts room didn’t yield a lot of new information. I confirmed a lot of what my son had said. There were several students who’d had their iPads taken away for misuse. The teacher handed them a guide (on paper) with essentially the same information as the app provided in order to complete the assignment (a list of questions about a chapter in *Julius Caesar*). Several of the students went through the assignment very quickly so that they could play games on the iPad. Some “secretly” played games and skipped the assignment completely. What struck me more than anything was the use of “new technology” as a direct substitute for “old technology.” I asked the teacher afterward how she taught Julius Caesar before the iPads were available. She said that she printed it and handed it out. But she said that the students seemed to like using the iPads a little better than plain old paper. She hadn’t noticed any improvement on the content or accuracy of what they turned in.

About a week later, she forwarded an e-mail chain to me. She said “FYI - might be an interesting observation for your paper about the hurdles of iPad use.” It was a series of e-mails between her and the school district’s Instructional Technology and Systems Specialist:

Teacher: Earlier this year you told me about a free app that xxx uses, called "Swipespeare" (see text below). I played around with it a little and really liked it.

It's installed on all of our 7th grade iPads and I have plans to use it as my students examine Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar". The students were very excited when we started using it today.

I will admit I have not poked around on the app much since my first glance. I have just been preparing my teacher content and relying on the app to allow students to swipe between the original Shakespeare and a modern translation. Unfortunately, the free app only allows one to do this for ACT 1 of the play. We need to purchase the play (for $3.99) in order to access the remaining acts.

My principal, xxx, has given me permission to purchase the text but I need your help doing so and then pushing it out to all 7th grade iPads. If I had realized earlier that the app was free but the content wasn't, I would have told you. I expect to need ACT 2 on Monday, how can we obtain the content and put it in student's hands as quickly as possible?

Thanks

She received this reply late the next day:

Specialist: I am working with Swipespeare to purchase this app. Right now it is only available as an in-app purchase which we cannot do in our system. They have an educational app but it is $29.99 for a license or $14.99 when you purchase 20+ licenses. I have been emailing the company back and forth this afternoon asking if we actually have to buy a license per device or if there is some way to get the full Julius Caesar module without going through an in-app purchase.

I didn't want you to think I forgot...just trying to work all the angles to see if we can

get this done. Apparently this product is co-owned by two brothers and I have been working with one of them throughout the afternoon. Hopefully since I am dealing directly with the owner he will come up with a solution for us.

Teacher: I have found a web-based alternative to Swipespeare at http://nfs.sparknotes.com/juliuscaesar/page_8.html

I think it's best to just give up on trying to purchase the content at this point. Thanks anyway.

I asked her if this was common. She said that it had always been extremely time-consuming and difficult to get the district to release funds and approve curriculum content, but that she hadn't seen this situation in that light. She's been tasked by her administration to creatively use the iPad in her curriculum, with very little support or training. She'd had an app recommended to her by a teacher at another school and really liked it. Her principal had the funds (from the STEM grant) to pay for the app, but the district couldn't/wouldn't approve it quickly. She said it was just easier to give up and send the students to a website (which didn't cost anything but did not need to be vetted?); she didn't have time to mess with it. In other words, a full year into the STEM grant, the school was struggling with the most basic execution. This situation is a perfect example of the "Before 3pm" model, which has a curriculum controlled and imposed by administration. The curriculum takes precedence over students' interests, and contains "well-defined learning objectives and standards, reflecting the knowledge and skills that students are supposed to master." This includes technology (Zhao et al., 2015, p. 98).

V.5.1a TECH TEAM

For an example that embodies the "After 3pm" model, I want to tell you about "Tech Team." The alternative elementary school attached to the middle school had a long-standing tradition of an annual "Rainbow Conference."

> The day starts with a performance for the whole school by a local cultural act…The rest of the day is spent in small-group, hands-on classes about preparing food, making music, dancing and making crafts from various cultures. Classes are offered by teachers, parents, community members, and international students from the University of Oregon (*Rainbow Conference*, n.d.).

I recognized an opportunity to retrieve a glimpse of the experiences the elementary cohort would have gotten if their program had continued. I lobbied to bring some of them back to help out at the Rainbow Conference, a special day that the elementary schoolers look forward to every year, a day that is always fun and educational in a constructivist and developmental way. Having participated in helping with technology during my kids' primary years, I hoped to facilitate and organize middle schoolers' who could be my "Tech Team."

Organizing the technology was always a bit of a nightmare for the conference. International students from the University of Oregon would want to use YouTube videos, which the school district's WiFi would not allow. Often presenters would come with a hard drive, thumb drive or their own computer that wouldn't work with the school's technology. We'd try to get all of the content ahead of time, but were reliant on the various participants, and at least half of them would show up day of, with their presentations in hand. It was a lot of trouble-shooting and fast-thinking. There was only one IT guy on campus, and me. So, knowing that my son

had a group of friends who were computer savvy and knew the ins and outs of the conference, I worked with the (technology and media-friendly SwipeSpeare) teacher to gather a small group to be my helpers.

Despite our attempts to be inclusive (to girls in particular), we ended up with a four-person all boy team. I couldn't have been happier with my team. We met once, the day before, to go over the expectations. They came early to set up all of the computers and screens in the rooms, they were all very knowledgeable in the capabilities of the school's technology, they understood the time sensitive nature of the program, they worked cooperatively with each other and the presenters, they were respectful and followed direction well, they were discreet (they had all been given the secret teacher code to bypass the YouTube block), and they all did an amazing job of problem-solving, thinking critically and going with the flow (as a former event producer, I can tell you that this is a difficult skill to teach).

The next year we were all set for another successful Tech Team for the Rainbow Conference. We recruited a few more kids (including a girl!) and had another great event. The Tech Team was so successful that the teacher got permission to start an after school program. Here's the invitation from the brochure sent to parents:

> Every workplace needs a "tech" guy or gal to help things run smoothly. Students who attend this camp will work with (name of guy), the "tech guy" at (name of school) as well as professional "tech" guys and gals from xxx Health Plans. They will learn how to problem-solve common technical issues at school, design a business card that will certify students capable of helping in the event of a tech problem, and develop customer service skills necessary in all workplaces. After

> this training, students will put their tech skills to work by helping in their classes and around the school.

This after school "camp" was in line with the STEM grant:

> Out-of-school time opportunities, for building STEM self-identity. A STEM-focused after school program enables students typically not engaged in STEM – girls, economically disadvantaged students, and students of color – to gain high interest through "free choice learning" opportunities.

My son loved this "After 3pm" school program. I visited the program whenever possible and came a couple of times to talk to them about media literacy, online privacy and digital identity. I found them to be engaged and open. The After 3p.m. program is essentially the opposite of the Before 3p.m. program. The After 3p.m. program gives control back to the students. They are liberated from the strict curriculum they face during school hours, and are encouraged to "pursue their own interests in the technology-empowered learning space" (Zhao et al., 2015, p. 99).

The Tech Team program ran through that year and into the next. They worked closely with the "tech" guy at the school to help set up testing rooms, remove and install software, troubleshoot technology issues, and explore coding. They also participated in a district Digital Learning Day with other schools, showing off their handmade Google Cardboard virtual reality devices (*Google Cardboard – Google VR*, n.d.). I went with them to this event and was very impressed with the students who chose to take part. I have to admit that it was a little heartbreaking. Here was this Title One school ("schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families" (*Title I, Part A Program*, 2018) with their handmade Google

Cardboard devices, strings of hot glue hanging off the seams, sides splitting apart, and outdated smart phones (including mine and the teacher's) that kept freezing the app. We were at the end of the hall in a dark corner, when most of the other schools were in a big bright room with ample signage, slick 3D printers, life-sized functioning robots, corporate coding programs and lots of adult helpers and corporate sponsorship. Our students were awestruck by the technology they saw. Here we were, constantly running the chargers back and forth to keep the phones going and taping the Google Cardboard devices back together. We felt a bit like the little technology school that could. The school administration was nowhere to be found.

After this event, the Tech Team program began to fall apart. The students that came were less interested in being there to learn about technology and more interested in playing games on the computers. My son got frustrated. He said that a lot of the new students spread the word that they could come and play games for a couple of hours after school. The students interested in doing technology projects, reaching a goal as a group, collaborating, and trying new things dwindled. My son ended up dropping the program near the end of his eighth-grade year, as did most of his technology-oriented friends.

V.2 THE DOMESTIC FIELD

Most American adolescents spend their time within, and navigating between, two social fields: the domestic field and the field of public education. "Fields are structured spaces organized around particular types of capital, consisting of dominant and subordinate positions" (Power, 1999, p. 50). The structure of social

fields influence the social actors or players, both consciously and unconsciously. As they navigate their way, individuals become “endowed with the habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the imminent laws of the field, the stakes, and so on” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72). Again, the domestic field refers to both the visible physical home space and the invisible domain that is an extension of the home space, including intersections with other spheres.

Regardless of the demographic details of household members, the structure is hierarchical. The adults (parents, guardians, etc.) possess power and hold the majority of the capital in the microcosm of the domestic field. Additional variables in the structure of the domestic field include gender and generational worldviews.

The domestic field is organized around various types of capital. Economic capital describes control over economic resources. This is clearly seen in the domestic field, as children under 18 are most often reliant on their parents for all needs that can be provided by money. Social capital refers to resources and benefit (actual as well as potential) that are connected to a network of relationships, shared identities, and trust, in and between these ties. Social capital is evident in the domestic field in the way that parents are able and willing to contribute to their children’s network, and in the way that they demonstrate the way the social world functions. Symbolic capital is the form that the other types of capital assume when the arbitrariness of their nature is misrecognized. For example, the "legitimate" form of the family father, mother, and children has symbolic capital out of proportion with its social or economic capital.

Economic capital directly dictates how much cultural capital a parent has and is

able to transmit. Cultural capital refers to the collection of assets and resources acquired by an individual through being part of a social class. In particular, cultural capital in the domestic field is both embodied (one's accent is an example of embodiment of cultural capital) as well as objectified (exemplified by an expensive home, car, electronics or clothes). Cultural capital is transmitted implicitly in the domestic field, "the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment, namely, the domestic transmission of cultural capital…ability or talent is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital…invested by the family" (Bourdieu, 1986b, p. 17).

Although it is important to identify and be aware of these different types of capital, I will be primarily referring to the concept of cultural capital in this study. Many scholars have discussed the idea that the lines between types of capital and have blurred and often overlap; in particular, when it comes to media use and identity (Andersson & Jansson, 1998; James, 2015; Tittenbrun, 2018). The prestigious cultural elite from the 60s and 70s that Bourdieu describes in *Distinction* (1984), has transformed along with technology and globalization.

> among the possessors of cultural capital is possible to discern a new, progressive cultural lifestyle – a lifestyle that combines the use of high culture and popular culture. This lifestyle…partly stands in contradiction to the styles of media use that traditionally has been dominant within cultural status groups…the concept of 'progressive cultural lifestyle' refers to a group of people who possesses larger amounts of cultural capital, but less economic capital. Both groups are blurring the line between high and popular culture, but while this in the former case is

> due to a professional interest, the 'progressive cultural lifestyle' is conditioned by the combination of cultural capital and a general openness towards different kinds of cultural content. Although one of course could argue that also 'the new cultural intermediaries' express a progressive cultural lifestyle, our main point is to make another distinction – a distinction within the group of culturally privileged people (Andersson & Jansson, 1998, p. 63).

Moving forward, I will continue to expand on the idea of this 'general openness' that people have to cultural content, inclusive and exclusive of their economic, educational and symbolic capital. It is also important to distinguish the domestic field as autonomous, according to Bourdieu's field theory, a social sphere that is "relatively independent from the logics of other social spheres or the broader environment" (Buchholz, 2016, p. 2). This does not deny the fact that the domestic field has many outside influences, including commercial and corporate, as I have demonstrated and will continue to discuss. However, relative to the field of public education, the domestic field is not directly beholden to commercial interests in order to maintain structure. Adolescents feel this acutely, especially in contrast to the field of public education.

V.2.1 TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA, AND IDENTITY

One of the reasons I came to graduate school was because I couldn't get my parent friends to talk to me about our kids, technology and media. Well, they'd talk, a little. They'd complain about how bad it was when their kids spent too much time in front of the TV or computer, how hard it was to tear them away, and how guilty they felt about allowing their kids to use it while they completed some necessary

parenting task, including making a meal, working, paying bills, or even just taking a much needed (and always too-short) break.

When they were younger, we 'd regularly talk about the shows they were watching. Occasionally I would veto something I felt they weren't ready for. Gradually, we didn't feel like we needed to do those things anymore. The door was always open for them to come to us with concerns or questions, which they did on occasion. For parents, online videos are yet another way of using technology that they don't fully understand, whether it's the app itself, the content or both. Do they need to be concerned? Is it safe? How much time on watching online videos is too much time? Perhaps more importantly, parents are concerned that adolescents using the internet don't show enough concern, and therefore neglect to take precautions. Though adolescents and parents are in agreement that mediation and guidance are important, the difficulty of this in practice is evident.

By the time my kids were teenagers, they were pretty much autonomous in their media usage and interaction. I would still walk in on my son to see which video games he was involved in and take him up on his offer to teach me how to play (turns out that I find it very stressful and *not* fun to be shot at, whereas he enjoys the strategy, team playing and collaboration). For the most part, adolescents see video game play as positive, though often recognize some of the negative effects as well. Parents also recognize both the positive and negative influences of gaming. Though most parents are not convinced that their adolescents are addicted, the research around problem gaming is helpful to understand the way that familial relationships

affect the situation. I wrote another blog post about my own habitus and our familial relationship with technology and media.

Judge Not

Most of my friends on Facebook are around my age. That would be middle-aged. These are mostly people from high school or college, or parents with kids around the same age I've met through my kids' schools or lessons. A lot of posts pine over the good old days, when we roamed the canyons or woods or fields or climbed trees with abandon. According to social media, we rode our bikes aimlessly for hours after school, every day. We didn't sit still staring at screens. We didn't have cell phones or computers or video games, and life was infinitely better.

I used to feel this way. Or maybe I didn't, but I sure felt like I was supposed to. I'd get caught up in the nostalgia of the golden age of childhood and envision fireflies (absent in my hometown of San Diego) and hide-and-seek until dark (okay this part is true) and a dozen kids riding unbelted up and down the steep hills of my neighborhood in the back of my dad's old Chevy pick-up (also true, but very scary in hindsight). I also remember good old-fashioned incidents like breaking my foot in the spokes of my dad's bike tires while riding on the bar sitting on a pillow, being startled by the "bums" in the canyon as we wandered the trails (or cut through when we weren't supposed to), and being spanked by the school principal with the missing two fingers (seriously, this happened). Oh yes, the good old days.

My parents separated when I was 11. My mom went back to work and I became a latchkey kid. My sister's teenage reaction was to get a job at the local movie theater and spend her free time screeching the Chevy around town, blasting

Jackson Brown with her friends. This left me alone until my mom came home from her job as a secretary. And how did I spend this time? I watched T.V. A ***lot*** *of T.V. Mostly reruns of Gilligan's Island, The Brady Bunch and my favorite, old Shirley Temple movies. My mom didn't want me out wandering the canyons or falling out of trees. When I was 13 I got my own little black and white T.V. in my room. When I was 14 I got the hand-me-down color T.V. and on my 15th birthday, I got my very own princess phone and exclusive number in my room. It was about this time I added a stereo and headphones and started a record collection. I fell in love with David Letterman, The Twilight Zone and the late late movie and began my journey as a bona fide member of the night owl club.*

I don't remember my mom complaining that I spent too much time with all of this technology (15 year-olds are very self-centered so maybe she did). I could hypothesize that she had her own problems to contend with (she did) and that it was nice for her to have some down-time in the evenings (because that's what I need at this point in my life). I know she had her hands full with my sister and she had a new husband. What I clearly remember is that she allowed me the freedom to be myself, to explore, learn, experience and make mistakes. Much of this was done through technology. Technology she didn't have as a kid, but grew to love and understand as an adult. I've never seen her put on a set of headphones, but she can talk on the telephone for hours until this day, and she is definitely a card-carrying fan of the boob tube.

So what's the point in all of this reminiscing? The point is, I want to be more like my mom. I want to give my kids the benefit of the doubt. I want them to learn,

explore, blunder, suffer consequences – and yes, I want them to have a world that is theirs, not mine.

Am I completely comfortable with this? No. Am I afraid? Not any more. In my experience, most teens are pretty savvy about privacy and safety on the internet, especially if their parents talk to them about it. I know my mom would have died of worry if I had told her that we (my friends and I) were shouting our phone number in between rings when we would "call time," which somehow magically worked as a party line in the mid-80s. We'd scratch down the numbers we heard and dial them until we found a boy. We would then meet said boy and his friends at the movies or the beach or the mall. Surely texting people they know and Skyping with their friends while they play video games together has to be safer than that!

So I am rethinking this judging thing. I am not a total convert. But I have shifted my perspective and I can see that it has already made a huge difference. My kids are so much happier that I am listening to their stories about gaming, YouTube and internet life. I don't always get it, but they know they can talk to me without fear of immediate criticism and punishment. Heck, they even get annoyed when I ask too many questions. You know, when you're 12 and 14, you don't want your mom TOO interested in your life. Some things need to stay classified. Like cutting through the canyon, and boys met on party lines.

I followed my daughter's Instagram accounts and checked in every few days. I try to be emotionally in tune with both of my kids. I definitely saw that sometimes my daughter would get upset over something that she experienced through social media. Sometimes I wanted to grab her phone and hide it, or read her messages and

give her advice. But I didn't. She is a very private person and I chose trust over protection. It's what worked for us. I always let her know that she could talk to me about anything. Sometimes she did. The increase in adolescent agency on the internet was and remains extremely scary for many parents, giving rise to the popular and persistent narrative of the internet being an unsafe place for young people.

Once, my son spontaneously texted a joke (like "I can see you" or something like that) to a friend that his mom did not find funny. She called the school police because she felt threatened. He came to me immediately and soon we got a call from the officer, which scared the hell out of my son. He apologized profusely to the family and us, and we had a long, tearful discussion about sending or posting practical jokes, ways that different families interpret or feel about technology and media, and thinking it through before posting or sending anything. He was distraught; he had asked for our help, and he never did anything like this again. We called this a win.

I know that this sounds naïve and idyllic. Perhaps we lucked out with kids that were rule-followers. I'd talk to friends and hear that their kids would steal their credit cards and buy things online, that their behavior would change after playing violent video games, that their kids would sneak screen time when they weren't allowed. I was advised to read my kids' texts frequently, go through their rooms, check their browsing histories and take their phones away before bed. We did none of these things.

Both of my kids and the peers with which they interact are prolific content creators. I have come to understand that the idea of content creation should be broad when judging the way our adolescents interact with technology. Twenty-first century youth are forging brand new paths with innovative tools and technology. This may be thought of as "new media" but is actually an excellent example of history repeating itself:

> We are coming to realize, moreover, that we today are probably living in one of the eras of greatest rapidity of change in the history of human institutions. New tools and techniques are being developed with stupendous celerity, while in the wake of these technical developments increasingly frequent and strong culture waves sweep over us from without, drenching us with the material and non-material habits of other centers. In the face of such a situation it would be a serious defect to omit this developmental aspect from a study of contemporary life (Helen Merrell Lynd, 1929, p. 5).

The above quote is from a 1929 book written by a husband and wife team of sociologists who conducted a case study in Muncie, Indiana, (Helen Merrell Lynd, 1929) in an attempt to study cultural change in a community that was meant to represent an average American city. Appropriation of technology, inventing new ways to use it, embracing and embodying the tools and content, is all a part of the ever-changing culture.

V.2.1a EVERYTHING IS CONTENT CREATION

The research documented in this analysis for music, online viewing, social media, and gaming, indicate that this assertion is a drastic understatement. Original

music content ranges from recording chamber music, to writing original songs, to creating parodies of popular music, to engaging with more professional sites like SoundCloud. The important common thread is that adolescents are creating original musical content to share. Each of these platforms and other social media have different ways of guiding and restricting users. Additionally, users have different goals. These might include sharing with family, gaining followers, learning an instrument, becoming famous, or making money. YouTube has a Creator Academy with courses on how to make great content, produce high quality videos, grow your channel, ways to make money and dozens of supplementary resources (*Creator Academy - YouTube*, n.d.).

Most original songwriting is recorded on video, as are adolescents playing non-original compositions. Another popular genre is the re-mixed music video. Gaming music videos consist of recorded and edited game play set to an original or popular song. Other examples include re-edited TV shows, often with added original content or a music track, and original parodies of music videos.

The importance of creating original musical content aligns with adolescents' feelings about music education in school. In particular, performance skills learned in music programs are gratifying and make students proud. Songwriting and composition classes are especially popular and rewarding (Campbell et al., 2007). During my daughter's most difficult years in school, her school band class, teacher, and peers were her lifeline, a place where she felt unjudged and free to create.

Given the analysis thus far, it could be argued that, aside from direct shares, almost all content on social media is creative and original. By defining creative

content so narrowly, most surveys I found were unable to gather precise data on adolescents and their use of media and technology. Preconceived classifications of technology and media overlap and blur. Depending on the intention, goal, user, location, age or any number of variables (habitus), an adolescent consumer/creator may consider their content to fit into one, more than one, all or none of the categories used by this and other surveys. Adolescents want to be part of the public conversation, to contribute their thoughts, opinions, art, words, and ideas to the cultural ethos, to be *in* public.

> Most are focused on what it means to be a part of a broader social world. They want to connect with and participate in culture, both to develop a sense of self and to feel as though they are a part of society. Some even see publics as an opportunity for activism. These teens are looking to actively participate in public life in order to make the world a better place (boyd, 2014, p. 206).

The definition of original content, or "content creation" plays a part in interpreting whether or not video game users are creating their own original content. As players strategize to include specific people on their team, they are thinking about what their strengths are as people, which characters they are playing and what attributes they have, whether they are risk takers or more cautious, how experienced they are and so on. Raids in particular are for people whose characters have reached a maximum level and can only enhance their characters more by participating in a group raid. The strategy, collaboration, skills and experience involved in this type of group effort requires the ability to think critically and produces a unique experience every time.

Like creative collaborative team efforts in MMOGs, the collection of variables, which game is being played, who is in the live audience, sponsorship, and the way the streamer performs, collectively contribute to the creation of original content, which would not be possible without video games.

These are just a few examples of the diverse ways that video game players can generate original content. It may be argued that these types of creations are not technically original because of limitations such as existing code, re-purposing of non-original content, or merely that they are manipulations, often for personal gain. However, these examples, at the very least, demonstrate that users find clever and artistic ways of generating material and ideas that they can call their own.

V.2.1b MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

Although I'd privately been re-evaluating my feelings on kids and technology in the domestic field for a while, I started to come out of the technology closet in the second year of my doctoral program when I collaborated with my son on a (short-lived, who has time to write extra stuff?) blog for a class:

> *I talk to my son about technology a lot. Like, every day. There are a lot of reasons for this. First and foremost, technology is a huge part of our daily lives. I would say we are a middle-of-the-road tech family (my own description based on what I know about our friends and their kids). In our house, each kid has a computer (my old laptop with a new hard drive for my daughter, who uses it to do homework, watch YouTube videos, watch Netflix, and play video games, and a PC/gaming computer for my son, that he earned over a summer). They also have their own smart phones.*

Second, I am a doctoral student in the Media Studies department of a large university, so you could say…it's what I do. I wrote my Master's thesis about the ways in which families mediate television, especially around core family values and lifestyle. Now that TV is no longer my kids' primary source of screen time, I have shifted my research. In short, I'm focusing on relationships. Anybody who has ever written a dissertation knows that you spend the first year (or two or heaven forbid, more) narrowing your topic down to a doable bite-sized chunk of titillating, important, ground-breaking research (ugh, now I have a stomach ache). This blog is meant to help me with that. I have way too many ideas and interests to include them all in my diss but I can talk about them with you friendly folks, right?

If you had told me 5 years ago if I would be researching and writing about technology I would have laughed in your face. Secretly, I'm a huge technophobe. As a producer, I faked my way through the professional world of film, video and event production by learning basic terminology and functionality of the equipment I was renting and hiring other people to operate (big fat spoiler, this is what producers do). I was really good at it too. I have learned how to do pretty much anything I need to do to troubleshoot computers (or BluRay players or iPads or my old Crackberry) via the internet. I'm a good researcher and when I want to be, I'm patient. Until my son turned about 11, I set up all of the TVs, VHS and then DVD players in our house. I have a good working knowledge of how to hook up pretty much any audio-visual equipment by matching color to color and inputs to outputs. But I have absolutely no idea about coding, computer languages, mechanics, engineering, video equipment, camera settings, or really, even design or editing

programs, even though I taught journalism students how to do the latter for four years solid. I am REALLY good at learning to do the minimum, faking it 'til I make it and finding the absolute best experts to defer to when necessary. I don't feel like that makes me lazy. That's smart, right? I have a LOT going on and I need to figure out how to do it all, one way or another. Like an app. A shortcut to life, a life hack of sorts.

I used to feel like technology was negatively affecting my kids. And because I teach undergrads, I would grumble, "These young people, they just don't understand what it was like before cell phones. They're attached to them, it's crazy! Why can't they just put them down? Why can't they stop checking them every 2 seconds? Kids today!" But I have to admit, I've crossed over to the dark side. Well, not exactly. I've genuinely accepted the fact that technology IS HERE TO STAY. It is so hard to raise kids without it. We used to agonize and fret about how much screen time they had (okay, we still fret about this). It was so stressful and time-consuming. So, gradually, my husband and I decided to embrace, uh…accept, uh…respect the way that technology plays a part in our lives today. We want our kids to keep talking to us, even though our eyes glaze over almost immediately.

So, here we are. I have lots to say and I really hope you have stuff to say too. I really want feedback. I'd like to keep the judgement and attacks out of it. I know that people have very strong feelings about raising kids, and it's hard not to get fired up. Well, fire up! Let's just try to be nice about it, m'kay? Welcome to our blog.

My interest in how families mediated television and film in their homes became the focus of my Master's research. I was interested in creating a tool that parents could

use to measure how their family's core values are reflected in their technology and media choices. During a feminist methods class, I did an experimental mediation exercise with my kids, attempting to create a tool that could measure how well our values as a family are reflected in our choices:

> *As a mom, feminist and media scholar, media literacy is an essential part of my life. Unlike film, television permeates our daily existence. Even with limits (no TV during the school week and limited time on the weekends) our children watch TV several hours per week. In addition to "made-for-children" programming, we have always given them the benefit of the doubt by watching parodies like The Simpsons - together as a family. These programs never fail to stimulate lively conversation. We answer questions to the best of our ability, at a level of maturity that they can understand, always returning to our core values and ideals such as respect, kindness, compassion and critical thinking.*
>
> *This approach, though devised organically by my husband and myself, is one that has been studied and recommended.*
>
> *(Media scholars) suggest a change in the conceptualization that emphasizes social norms in order to positively help children navigate the media world. The shift should be from 'negative restrictive orientation' to 'positive regulation,' defined in terms of goals rather than dangers, part of the current interest in defending public service (and the public good), [and] children's rights to cultural expression and consumer empowerment. (2009, Mendoza, p. 29)*
>
> *As with any parenting technique, it is always difficult to know if our methods are effective. This project, in part, was an attempt to measure how our effort at*

media literacy is working, and if the values that we teach our children about life are indeed guiding the media choices they are making without us. My goal was to develop a method that can be used with other children to measure and improve media literacy in the home. Along the way, I hoped to find out if my own children are thinking critically about the television shows they are watching and what kinds of observations they are formulating about the values and behaviors they are seeing. I wondered if they were comparing those values to their own. Do they even think about values?

This study is a close observational, collaborative, interview experiment I conducted with my kids and our method of television mediation. I chose to use a combination of unstructured and semi-structured feminist interview techniques because I felt it was uniquely suited to this project.

To our family, television mediation is a combination of instilling in our children the ability to make good choices and observing what they watch, while still maintaining our busy lives. It's a lot, and it's hard, but it is of the utmost importance to us as a family, to model and teach smart navigation of our media saturated culture and raise critical thinkers.

We started by talking, weeks ahead of our TV watching session. First I asked them if they wanted to participate in a research project with me. I knew the answer would be a resounding YES! Especially since it had to do with television watching. As a grad student and mother, I live with a constant struggle between my schoolwork, classes, teaching and the time I am able to spend with my kids. I have a lot of evening classes and miss bedtime several days a week, and even when

I am home I am more often than not reading or writing, and not fully available. It is unsatisfying for us all, to say the least. So when the opportunity came up to create a collaborative research project, I jumped at the chance to develop a method around television mediation directly with my own children.

Once the kids agreed, we spent a lot of our time together talking about how we would go about our research. They decided right away that they did not feel comfortable being recorded. I would take notes on my laptop during our "official" interviews. On the other hand, I did not feel comfortable with them reading my notes while I typed them. We came to a compromise, agreeing that they could read the notes when I was finished and also had the right to modify or reject any quotes or ideas that I recorded for use in our presentation or this final paper.

I had the idea to let them each pick a show. We talked about watching them all together or separately – and surprisingly to me, they both wanted to watch with me alone (alone time with mom is very rare). This worked out well for me since I believed that talking alone would likely yield better results: less interruption and no arguments, plus I wouldn't have to divide my attention. They both wanted to know immediately if the show could be one that had already been vetoed by my husband me, or at least one that we hadn't yet "approved," because besides spending time with me, they also wanted to get something out of the experience. I thought this was fair. I also had another thought: This would give me a chance to see what kinds of shows they choose without our intervention. I was hoping that they would be able to articulate why they chose the program, what they thought I

might find problematic, and what kinds of values they thought the show taught to their young audiences.

The mutually beneficial strategy we developed was essential to having a positive experience. I am aware of the power a parent has over a child, no matter how good the relationship. I was interested to see how my children, who have been taught to be respectful yet speak up for themselves, would interact with me in this situation. How much of their desire to please me would influence the answers they gave me? Would my son's contradictive side come out, causing friction and influencing the conversation? Would my daughter's easy-to-tears response emerge if she didn't feel that I understood what she was saying? Though participatory research has less of an emphasis on objectivity, I was still trying to create a neutral environment where everybody felt comfortable and empowered. I wanted their agenda to be as important as mine. Simply put, I wanted them to know their opinion mattered.

I knew that if the kids were motivated by their own agenda, and felt that that there was a true possibility of adding another program onto their "approved" list, their investment would keep them more engaged. In her article (2004) "Participatory Research With Children and Young People: Philosophy, Possibilities and Perils," Jill Clark says,

Issues to consider might be whether they are interested in the research topic and whether it is relevant to their own lives; how will they benefit; how much time they will need to spend; the level of support offered. (p. 7)

Once we established what our mutual benefits and motivations were, the next step was our plan. During a long Mother's Day drive to the Oregon Coast, we hashed out the details on how we could achieve the intended results. We needed to keep it practical by limiting the length of each show, yet still have enough content to discuss, especially if I was going to make a judgment about the fate of their chosen shows (Note: I did reserve the right to NOT be required to make a decision if I thought I needed to observe more content). We decided that a ½ hour show (sans commercials) would work best for our needs. They were thinking hard about their choices, so I planted the seed that I wanted them to also be thinking about the messages, images, behaviors, values – good and bad – that they recall from whatever they had already seen and heard about the shows they were choosing, so that we could include those ideas in our interviews. This prompted a more in-depth conversation about our values as a family, values in our society, what the definition of values is, and how this translates into our daily lives. I knew they would need some time to think about these complex concepts, so we decided to conduct our TV sessions the next weekend. During that week, I took opportunities during relaxed times (meals, walks to school, driving in the car, just before reading time at night,) to remind them to decide on their shows and keep thinking about the values.

I was thinking too. Based upon my personal experience as well as the literature I'd studied, these were the final questions:

1. *What are our values as a family?*
2. *What are some values on programs we watch?*

3. *How are these values the same or different?*
4. *How do the kids think mom and dad feel about shows they see on TV?*
5. *What does mediation of certain programming tell the kids about their parents' endorsement or disapproval of programming? (This seemed like a redundant question to them – answers were short.)*
6. *Are we wrong? (This question popped into my head and was added during the interviews)*

Some of their answers were enlightening; all of them were interesting. Here are a few of my favorites:

My son (9) on our values as a family: "We talk about respect for all people and animals. Love. We don't run over animals. Some people try to ram it, we teach that violence isn't good. And we can have our own interests. Black, white, homeless, we respect them. We may not like the way they are introducing themselves or the way they act. If I don't like them I wait until I am in the car or something to talk about it. We'll have a conversation with related stories…in my experience at school there are so many kids who don't respect, someone called me a gorilla when I was chasing him away because he wouldn't leave us alone. It kind of hurt my feelings. When someone said don't be stupid and then again and I went to him and told him to not say it anymore and he said sorry. He respected that. But now he hates me and he teaches his group of friends to be rude but he can't really teach me to be rude.

My son on if we're wrong? On Fairly Odd Parents there are enemies that try to destroy him and he always gets away. His parents are not the brightest,

they go on vacation and forget to bring him. They scream a lot, there are annoying sounds and noises. I don't think it is a good reason to not let me watch it.

My daughter on our values as a family: Be yourself. If there is someone making fun of you 'cause of you being yourself, don't stop. Just because of one person doesn't mean you have to stop. Don't judge a book by its cover – if you look at someone and they just look weird or something like that, it doesn't mean you shouldn't like them. Always share, because if you don't share something bad can happen like karma. Good or bad, bad is when you do something bad and something bad happens to you and good karma is when you do something good and something good happens to you. I don't like to be with people who do bad things. If that happens, ignore them or find something else to do. If a person wants to be around you, you should let them, don't say go away.

My daughter on if we are wrong: I think you're right about the shows you choose. I would see if a show could have a second chance if I thought you were wrong; you could watch it with us.

Ultimately my intention with this project was to see if the way we'd been mediating and monitoring our kids' use of technology via media consumption was succeeding. To us, that meant trying to figure out if our methods were working, if we could harness those methods and create a tool that was transferable to other families, and also worked over time to help adjust mediation procedures. It was also my first

attempt at making a tangible connection between real world media consumption and academically identified methods.

Overall I am extremely pleased with the results of my study. There are countless parental websites with reviews about television programs. These reviews are personal opinions, and reflect the values of the author. If you are a devout Christian, you might turn to a Christian website for guidance. If you trust your school community, you might turn to parents of classmates for recommendations. But there is never a guarantee that you will agree with what someone else says. Families are all unique and though many share similar values, what these values look like and how they are prioritized are different.

I have conducted in-depth interviews with parents about their mediation. I found that the values most parents are trying to teach their children are comparable. Despite this, television watching habits are widely varied. Many parents allow their children to watch TV so that they can accomplish something like making dinner or doing laundry. Some parents want their own TV downtime so either watch with their children or let them watch in another room. Some households turn the TV on when they wake up in the morning and turn it off when they go to bed at night. Some choose programs carefully, some do not - most fall somewhere in-between. What I have NOT seen in my survey of academic research, guidance online, in print or on television, is a way for parents to measure their child's media literacy. Since television is such a huge part of our popular culture, kids will inevitably have some exposure, even if it is through classmates, neighbors or at Grandma's house.

I think that the method I have developed with my own children in this collaborative and participatory process could be a missing link. Parents who practice media literacy want to know if it is working. Kids want to prove that they can make their own choices. Due to their high level of critical thinking, both of my kids' shows were approved through this process. Parents who are not practicing media literacy may want to know how easy it can be. Studying media literacy and mediation in a university can yield interesting results, but families who are living their lives in the best way they know how are really the ones who need assistance, and they are not going to get it from academic research studies. Studies that get a lot of media attention like the one in 2011, which claimed that fast-paced shows like SpongeBob may affect attention and problem-solving in pre-schoolers, are rarely investigated by parents beyond the article in a popular media outlet, or even just the headline (Rabin, 2011). Yet children watch an average of 28 hours of television per week, which tells me that it isn't going away anytime soon (McDonough, 2009). My method may be a small step in helping parents to stop feeling guilty and turn television viewing into a positive experience.

This project led directly to my Master's thesis.

When looking at the ways that adolescents utilize technology and media in the home, parents are the least concerned about music. Anecdotally, most parents do not complain that their teenagers listening to music is problematic insofar as potential detrimental effects of screen time, interference with family time, and media consumption. In fact, there is evidence proving the opposite. Adolescents, in

particular, use music as an escape, a distraction, a coping mechanism, a mood regulator, an energizer and white noise (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007).

Most parents relate to this. People who have loved music their whole lives bring that into their parenting practices. This is in contrast to the way they feel about the unknown, technology they have not experienced growing up. Similar to adolescents' usage of technology, parents are often wary of the new music they do not understand, but they do understand the generic enjoyment of and attraction to music. According to Bourdieu, musical taste is a primary example of the manifestation of cultural capital. Bourdieu uses it as a marker in *Distinction*:

> nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music. This is of course because, by virtue of the rarity of the conditions for acquiring the corresponding dispositions, there is no more 'classifactory' practice than concert-going or playing a 'noble' instrument (activities which, other things being equal, are less widespread than theatre-going, museum-going or even visits to modern-art galleries). But it is also because the flaunting of 'musical culture' is not a cultural display like others: as regards its social definition, 'musical culture' is something other than a quantity of knowledge and experiences combined with the capacity to talk about them (1984, pp. 18–19).

Since the publication of *Distinction*, there have been many arguments and counter-arguments over whether or not Bourdieu's theory on music is valid (Ashwood & Bell, 2017; Holt, 1997; M. Turner, 2019; Prior, 2013; W. Atkinson, 2011; Yamane, 2014). A recent study shows that 72% of parents polled try to convince their children to enjoy their favorite songs, 89% believe it's important to expose them to a

broad variety of music and 28% play music for their children that they consider to be culturally important (Deezer, 2018).

As previously discussed, my Master's thesis focused on parental mediation in the home:

> *This thesis studies how individual core family values influence choices parents make about television in the home. It is an in-depth look at whether or not the programming and content that parents allow their children to watch actually reflect their values, principles, morals and behavior - the same ones that parents strive to teach their children. In this study, programming and content refer to visual presentations on film or video that are produced for an audience. This is a foundational study that evaluates the practice of mediation, as well as the structure and culture of television in the home, and how parents feel about its influence on their family.*

I hypothesized that I would find strong links between values and choices, (mostly in programming and content) in family media consumption. What I didn't expect was to find that a child's personality (retrospectively I would refer to it, at least in part, as habitus) would have so much influence on the way that parents make media choices.

> *Parents shaped their mediation styles and choices about television in the home largely on a child's personality. This phenomenon was present in every theme and sub-category analyzed. Parents often remarked that their values were also shaped by their individual children, that they had certain expectations but realized after they had a child that they had to adjust their values. When discussing set-up,*

participants often said that they had "the type of child" who wanted to be near them all the time, which would dictate the type of screen they watched or whether they simply joined their parents in watching more mature programming. Personality also influenced lifestyle. They talked about whether their children were social, loved the outdoors, preferred to be alone, or were sensitive or active, which in turn would affect their everyday routines and activities.

Once again, I pull from a doctoral seminar in my first year as a PhD student, Teaching and Professional Life. Our main project was to articulate our intended path. I defended and passed my Master's thesis in August and began my PhD Classes in September. My Master's research was primarily in the domestic field. My research objective was as follows:

My personal journey had led me to the development of my research in audiences, media literacy and mediation. It is equally informed by my professional life, my experience as a parent and my scholarly career as a Master's and PhD student, but the common thread is the conversations I have always engaged in with peers and parents about how media significantly influences, transforms, shapes and touches our lives. Conversely, it is just as important, if not more critical, to discuss and study how media understanding and literacy can impact how we receive media, and how we can effectively emphasize the best way to teach crucial critical thinking skills to children and young adults. The significance of this cannot be emphasized enough, as we are raising and educating media makers and audiences of the future.

Another important aspect of my research is the continued way that content and viewing is changing. Media is on demand, portable and easily available.

Technology is changing at breakneck speed. Content is more extreme, violent and hypersexual than ever before. Simultaneously, it is often carefully constructed to project political correctness and cultural diversity. Viewers find mixed messages. Parents find themselves with complex issues to address, as their lives get busier. Cultural studies of media literacy, mediation and television audiences can be approached from multiple directions and methods. As I continue to explore these practices, I endeavor to focus my research more and more. In my Master's thesis, I looked at core family values and how they influence choices that families make about television in the home. I found that choices are most influenced by a lifestyle continuum defined by everyday occurrences, lifestyle choices (activities, social structures, community and friendships, location), marital status, unavoidable circumstances and child's personality. Core family values are a significant but secondary influence on where a family falls on the lifestyle continuum on any given day. I developed an emergent theory which I continue to revise and amend:

The Lifestyle Continuum Mediation Theory

Prediction of mediation methods cannot be narrowly defined, nor can families or individuals be categorized quantitatively. Mediation methods, styles and choices are most heavily influenced by a lifestyle continuum defined by: everyday occurrences, lifestyle choices (activities, social structures, community and friendships, location), marital status, unavoidable circumstances and child's personality. Core family values are a significant but secondary influence on where a family falls on the lifestyle continuum on any given day.

As I continue to progress in my scholarly career and doctoral studies, I am concentrating on phenomenological research, cultural communication, social psychology, ethnography, public and private spheres, the dynamics of consumption in private spaces, critical thinking in education and taking action as a community. I am exhilarated when I think about how my future research will weave these concepts together.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Though not interchangeable, habitus is inextricably linked to individuality and identity. According to Bourdieu, an individual's habitus is created through a social process leading to embodied patterns that endure and transfer between contexts. The individual dispositions that define habitus are structured by background. These dispositions influence decisions and characteristics, resulting in a mediating effect on achievement and taste, or "manifested preferences". In certain historical and social situations, our habitus allows us to navigate social environments without conscious thought (1984).

VI.1 HABITUS, CULTURAL CAPITAL, AND POWER

Many, perhaps most, strategies in public schools such as tracking, gifted initiatives, and special education programs have good intentions, yet are practiced more out of habit than true support.

> a lot of what we do in schools is done more or less out of habit stemming from tradition in the school's culture. These traditions dictate, for the most part, the ways in which schooling is organized and conducted. Many school practices seem to the *natural* way to conduct schooling, an integral part of the way schools are. As a result, we don't tend to think critically about much of what goes on (Oakes, 1985, p. 5).

In school, students who are highly capable of mainstream schooling (perhaps labeled as gifted or over-achieving) are valued for their ability to successfully navigate the system and recognized as possessing cultural capital. Habitus, as Bourdieu points out, is so ingrained that it is mistaken for natural as opposed to culturally developed (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 56). This can justify the system and reinforce inequity, because it appears that some people are more naturally disposed to easily understand how to act, how to meet expectations, and to please teachers. As an individual moves from the domestic field to the field of public education, their ability to succeed is determined by the congruence of their acquired habitus and capital with that of the dominant within the field, and their ability to utilize or gain capital in the field.

We all have personal experiences, moments we remember that changed our paths in the field of education. I'm given a standardized test at a young age, I score

high enough to be placed into the gifted track; a few years later, a group of upper-middle-class parents tapped into their cultural capital and disrupted the system, at exactly the time when my personal situation (divorce, loss of income, diminished parental support) was changing and my cultural capital was reduced. My kids' first school did not believe in tracking. Instead, they follow a constructivist approach, which includes developmental learning and full integration of ages, skill levels and types of learners, a situation that we (now even more than then) consider to have been extremely privileged. When we moved to a different state and they entered into a traditionally run public school system, the initial evaluation for tracking had been completed, and they were essentially sorted into the middle pathway. Their habitus, curated by their membership in a family that valued learning and adapting to the system, allowed them to blend in, to sometimes flourish, and to "play the game" of being a mostly average, certainly "well-behaved" student. For my son, this lasted throughout his secondary education career. For my daughter, it did not.

Layer upon layer of rules, expectations and power relations, often unseen or acknowledged, are placed upon students in the field of public education. For Bourdieu, habitus incorporates the objective (field) and the subjective (habitus). Habitus is both a product of social structure, and a manifestation of an individual's position in the social space. Habitus does not produce behavior. Instead, habitus interacts with the many fields individuals encounter every day. This means that social rules and expectations are in constant interplay, and the field is placing specific requirements upon the student.

What about students who lack the proper habitus to 'play the game' detect and adhere to expectations? Students without the proper habitus to succeed within the field are anomalous and marked as such. This might include race, gender, socioeconomic status/class, intellectually challenged students and those with behavioral issues. But there are droves of students who lack the ability to function highly in traditional public school, who embody a range of issues that don't easily fit into pre-determined categories.

On the surface, it may appear that the concept of habitus removes an individual's agency because it is defined as replicating and reproducing dispositions. It is therefore easy to relate habitus to students who readily succeed in school. How does habitus relate to non-conforming students? Another way to look at habitus is like a matrix. Imagine that inside every person is an array of pathways that represent choices. Although these choices are still "bound by the framework of opportunities and constraints the person finds himself/herself in, her external circumstances," (Reay, 2004, p. 435) agency remains. Therefore, if a person is unable to reproduce the disposition that public school demands, it is still habitus that is at play, regardless of the reason.

For example, I noted in my observation during the iPad program that it was clear that our presence in the field was a disruption. Here's a secret: I knew a couple of the students in the iPad program. One student had physically bullied my son at a previous school. One had taken a gymnastics class with my daughter. Neither were my favorite people. They did not fit into my "manifested preferences." Both had problems conforming to the rules and assignments. Both appeared attention-

seeking, a trait that I admittedly find irritating. Both caused other students' frustration and slowed their progress. Though I, as a teacher, attempted to remain impartial, how much of my personal previous experience with these kids leaked out? How much of my own habitus influenced our interactions? How did my position of power affect them? Now, imagine your daily life and how many interactions you have as you move through various social fields (home, work, school, etc.). Take into consideration your habitus and comfort level in each field through which you move. It is possible to NOT consider your identity and individuality. Now, remember back to school. Was it easy for you? Was it difficult? How? Why? We are not taught to question the system, we are taught to conform to it. When our habitus makes this difficult, we are likely to struggle, or even fail, and to blame ourselves.

When my daughter dropped out of traditional public school and had been in online public charter school for a year, we were urged by her amazing advisory teacher to revisit the idea of a 504.

> Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment (*Protecting Students With Disabilities*, 2020).

He said that it would make his job of helping her with flexible deadlines (due to crippling anxiety) a lot easier, consequently making our lives a lot easier too. We

had been advised by her previous brick and mortar neighborhood public school that a 504 wouldn't make much of a difference, as they were willing to make accommodations without it. Additionally, our family counselor was extremely hesitant to fill out the paperwork that would recommend needed accommodations. For reasons unfathomable to me, their habitus fought hard against creating a legal document that called for my daughter's need for academic accommodations. From comments like "She'll be fine," and "The world is a tough place, she needs to learn how to figure it out," I suspect that they perceived her ability to blend in, her cultural capital, and thought that she wasn't trying hard enough.

Once again, I spent countless hours coordinating the process; faxing (Really? Do you know how hard it is to find a fax these days?), hand delivering papers, pushing the counselor for a diagnosis (which she had already given verbally to us and was officially recorded in her files), and even scraped together the $150 she insisted on charging us in addition to her regular fee, even though it was a financial hardship for us at the time. Having spent thirty years as a partner to a disabled person, I was familiar with navigating this type of system. Don't take no for an answer, be persistent, escalate if necessary, be nice when appropriate and be a bitch if you have to. It's exhausting, emotional, infuriating, and deeply satisfying when you finally get to your goal. So, even though we possessed little economic capital, we had the cultural capital to pursue the end goal. Her online teacher was right, (for which we are forever grateful), once the 504 was in place, navigating the educational system became much easier. It was the beginning of her healing from the trauma she'd

experienced in public school, and set her on the path to a return to in-person schooling.

VI.2 EXPECTATIONS

One type of coping that students exercise in the field of public education is exhibiting the correct and expected behavior. This behavior is crucial to success in a traditional academic setting. There are implicit expectations that students need to embody the skills and experiences required to navigate and negotiate. Those lacking these skills, for whatever reason, are punished, do not perform well academically, fail at peer relationships, and have strained relationships with their teachers (Lane et al., 2004, p. 105).

These expectations follow students throughout their public school career. As they get older and move up in grades, the pressure becomes more intense, the structure more exacting, and the protocol for behavior more strict. Critical skills rated by teachers include self-direction, self-control, assertion, cooperation, complying with directions, attending to instruction, and easily making transitions (Lane et al., 2006). As examined in my analysis of the field of public education, teachers and administrators are overwhelmed by policies, regulation, funding, standardized testing requirements, often lacking in training, support and professional development.

As it turns out, students are too. Stressors encountered by adolescents in school include "…studying for tests, getting good grades, completing homework and managing time (Suldo et al., 2008, p. 286). Nearly 84% of adolescents say that they use distraction above all other methods (defined as a book, TV or music) as a coping

measure (de Anda et al., 2000, p. 455). In addition to music helping with stress, students say that listening to music while performing an academic task helps with focus and concentration. Researchers recommend that the so-called 'no headphone' rules should be revisited, reexamining policies that forbid the use of personal listening devices in certain classroom situations, and acknowledge that music can help with concentration (Adriano & DiPaola, 2010, p. 19).

Adolescents' use of music as a coping mechanism for stressors at home and school demonstrates more than a simple strategy. Utilizing technology (earbuds/phones and a phone) and music to cope with a variety of issues is a technique that adolescents employ to comply with and fabricate acceptable institutional behavior. The ability to know that tapping into a personalized distraction, rather than having a physical, behavioral response, is the most appropriate way to act, demonstrates embodied cultural capital. If this cultural capital were acknowledged and valued by those in positions of power in the field, it would become institutionalized cultural capital.

The only mention of using music with technology in the 2017 Ed Tech Plan is as part of a reward system "used as incentives for youth who met their behavior goals." Research on children and adolescents finding positive results from listening to music for comfort and self-regulation have been conducted on trauma (Foran, 2009), academic testing (Cabanac et al., 2013), during lectures (Dosseville et al., 2012), students with autism (Pelayo & Sanchez, 2013), spatial task performance (Rauscher et al., 1993), and ADHD (Ramey, 2019). Again: the benefits of listening to music are clear.

VI.2.1 DIGITAL NATIVES

The most striking observation I repeatedly witnessed throughout the years of direct involvement with technology and education was the (usually) unidentified cultural capital held by students around utilizing technology and consuming media. By this, I mean that students (adolescents in particular) come to the field of public education with assets, confidence, and accumulated knowledge that are often not held by those in positions of power, specifically teachers and administrators. The terms "digital native" and "digital immigrant" are terms coined in 2001 by Marc Prensky.

> Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics *before* their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to "serious" work. (Does any of this sound familiar?) (2008).

Though the 2001 terminology is clunky and outdated compared to 2020, the sentiment remains. So called "digital natives" have vastly different habitus, leading to cultural capital that "digital immigrants" (born before 1980) cannot understand. Recommendations for an overhaul of technology and public education has been called for by innovative education experts for decades (Cuban, 1986; Ertmer, 1999; Papert, 1994; Turkle & Papert, 1990; Zhao et al., 2015). As early as 1970, reformists recommended change: "The state of the art in instructional technology is such that many of the tools and techniques needed to effect such change are available and feasible. We can…eliminate the practice of teaching youngsters what they already

know or of teaching them what they are not prepared to learn" (Engler, 1970, p. 381). Here's the rub: we know that what we're doing doesn't work. We've known it for a long time. Whether we have done the research and believe the experts, or have experienced first-hand the failure of insertion of technology into existing structures, rules and curriculum, widespread success is rare.

When Bourdieu was alive, digital media and technology were not a part of the culture. He died when the internet was in its infancy, and the idea of online identities hadn't been conceived. In my analysis, online identities emerged as one of the most widespread use of technology in the domestic field. As we know from the literature, students feel as if they are given little personal choice in school, despite the feeling that they often have more expertise than their teachers. This feeling comes from the fact that an adolescent's identity is inextricably bound to their relationship with technology. Like it or not, teachers and administrators will always be behind students in adoption and understanding of technology. This requires the institution of education to change, a tall order given that for over two hundred years, the field of public education is a massive behemoth that has endured a thick accumulation of overlapping, sometimes conflicting guidelines, policy, regulations, politics, and standards. It's no wonder that innovative approaches are impossible to initiate on a large scale.

We know that adolescents' identities are intertwined with technology in ways that parents and teachers find at best mysterious, and at worst detrimental. Yet most adolescents feel that they have a handle on negative fallout and find technology to be a positive part of their lives (Rideout & Robb, 2019). As seen in my

analysis, adolescents utilize technology for support with mental health, learning about things they're interested in, figuring out how to build, create or make things on their own, and expressing themselves. The platform changes every few years, but the core processes are the same; adolescents use technology for expression, cultural empowerment, and constructing identity. They build and join communities, share and comment, and forge relationships with like-minded people (García Jiménez et al., 2016, p. 64).

In addition to constructing identity, learning and getting support, adolescents actively participate in the social construction of culture. Again, Bourdieu's idea of habitus is that

> through the economic and social conditions which they presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions, of believing in fictions and the realities they simulate, with more or less distance and detachment, are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6).

Like many media studies scholars (García Jiménez et al., 2016; J. Swartz et al., 2019; Núñez-Gómez et al., 2012; Prensky, 2008; Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017), I believe that our interaction with the technology, media and the internet has expanded the way that "possible positions in social space" are "bound up" with dispositions. In other words, the ways that we use, interact with and consume media and technology, whether it's in constructing our own identity, relating to a community, or relating to various "realties and fictions," necessarily influence habitus.

The next question must be, how does this assertion modernize the concept of Bourdieu's habitus? If we expand the notion of habitus beyond the influence of family and as we get older, school, to include technology and media (which in turn includes all of the aforementioned elements that go with it), can we better understand how to best serve our students? Instead of remaining in the rut of antiquated institutionalized systems and understandings of how things are, can we open up our perceptions, awareness, insight and compassion to include **a broader spectrum of habitus**? This, in turn, requires a major shift in acknowledging the cultural capital of young people.

VI.3 POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE HETERONOMOUS FIELD

I have principally been discussing my analysis and findings with a focus on the individual and how their habitus is neglected in the field of public education. However, it is important to note that media is much more complicated than an individual's choices of what to watch, what to buy, and what to create. According to Bourdieu, the social law that applies to all fields of cultural production dictate whether they are autonomous or heteronomous (Bourdieu, 1984). The field of public education is a heteronomous field, "A heteronomous sector is one that is interpenetrated by the commercial field" (V. D. Alexander, 2018, p. 23). The actors in this field are "subordinated to – indeed sometimes working for – economic and political interests" (Mangez & Hilgers, 2012, p. 189). Relationships between actors

in homologous fields are critical to understanding "Bourdieu' hypothesizes that there are structural affinities between individuals or groups occupying homologous positions in different fields. Hence, actors situated in a given position within a given field are likely to be interested by – and close to – actors who occupy a homologous position in another field" (Mangez & Hilgers, 2012, p. 190). This would then dictate that actors in the field of education – administrators in particular – are beholden to commercial interests in order to keep up with the demands of funding, which often translates into purchasing technology for their schools.

Globally, six media corporations and five tech companies control nearly all of media and technology (Lekkas, 2020; Seth, 2020). This means that what we see, the products available to us, what we share and how we share it, are not really as individual as we think they are. Many of the platforms mentioned in this study are owned by corporate giants. YouTube is owned by Google (*YouTube | History, Founders, & Facts*, n.d.), Instagram is owned by Facebook, Twitch (a platform used to stream live gaming) is owned by Amazon, Skype and Minecraft are owned by Microsoft (Seth, 2020), and TikTok is owned by a multibillion dollar Chinese company called ByteDance (Wang, 2020).

Apple, Microsoft and Google, three of the top five tech giants, provide the majority of computers and hand held devices in American public schools, sometimes for free (Premack, 2018). Each have different methods of selling or giving their products to schools, usually accompanied by contracts, software, apps, cloud storage, and the promise of individualized learning for every student (Bernard, 2017).

We must recognize the power of private and commercial domination of technology and media, both in the domestic field and the field of public education.

> The mass media impinges on peoples' lives…in providing the facilities with which people occupy a considerable amount of their non-work time, they command an increasing proportion of discretionary spending…the media are the major source of information about, and explanations of, social and political processes…therefore play[ing] a key role in determining the forms of consciousness and the modes of expression and action which are made available to people (Murdock & Golding, 1973, p. 205).

Once again, teachers on the front line recognize this problem. Big tech and media companies deny that they are looking for sizeable profits by way of education technology. Perhaps the issue isn't only that tech companies think that students will buy their products once exposed daily, but to a greater extent, that they are curating future workers (Klein, 2020).

The idea of audiences as commodities is that the economic success of business relies on the commodification of consumers, audiences and users (Smythe, 1977). For instance, when the notion of audience commodification is applied to social media users, media corporations are commodifying personal data "Web 2.0 surveillance is directed at large user groups who help to hegemonically produce and reproduce surveillance by providing user-generated (self-produced) content. We can therefore characterize Web 2.0 surveillance as mass self-surveillance" (Fuchs, 2012, p. 15).

In addition to creating future consumers and collecting data, the way that technology is utilized in schools trains students to be complacent laborers. The long-awaited 1-1 iPads at my son's school demonstrates this perfectly. Tacit curricula includes disciplinary scare tactics, as well as isolation and social disconnect, "…in each case, technology modulates power differentials between individuals in varied social positions (i.e., students and teachers). (Monahan, 2004, p. 274).

iPads were launched by Apple in 2010. As Steve Jobs stood onstage introducing the iPad to the world, he "described the experience of using it as a 'holding the internet in your hands' ", also revealing that it worked best for content consumption (*IPad | Release Dates, Features, Specs, Rumors*, 2021). The iPad is a handheld device, larger than a phone and smaller than a laptop. It's strictly touch screen, with the exception of the "home button", and the volume and off buttons, almost hidden on each side. The operating system functions much like an iPhone. In 2012, web-browsing, e-mail and social media, followed by games and video watching made up the most common activities of users (Briggs & Fenlon, 2010). In 2013, Apple had sold over 4.5 million iPads to U.S. education institutions (Paczkowski, 2013). Sales peaked in 2014, but has been declining ever since as other companies offer cheaper devices that function similarly. In 2017, Apple was third in the sales of devices to schools, behind Google and Microsoft (Singer, 2017). Statistics on iPad-specific usage in the home by adolescents is unclear, but in 2019, 75% of teens report that there was a tablet available to them in the home, and 35% said that they owned their own tablet (Rideout & Robb, 2019). As of 2019, "approximately a billion people are using 1.4 billion Apple devices" (Cybart, 2019).

VI.3.1 DISCIPLINE, OBSERVATION, ISOLATION, AND DISCONNECT

Disciplinary scare tactics make it clear to students that the equipment is highly valued, perhaps more than the students. Simultaneously, the same equipment, which is intended to help create "digital citizens" and promote individualized learning, is quickly taken away when a rule is broken, even unwittingly.

Isolation and disconnect happens when interaction with the technology fails in some way. This can be the literal failure of the device, which happens all the time (Türel & Johnson, 2012). This can also refer to the reward system that is often used when a student finishes the assignment early and is allowed to play games, or the app that is literally an exact replica of the paper reference that students used last year, or the software is too rudimentary or too complex, or the "checking out" of the overworked teacher when the students are doing an assignment on a device, so that they can catch up on other work or utilize their limited work time some other way. It's no wonder students are unenthusiastic, feel alienated from the teacher and each other, and disconnected from the material.

These examples, and the discussion of oppression above, demonstrate the way that the institution of education teaches students that they are always being observed, and that it is important to be self-disciplined, work alone and follow the rules, perfectly preparing them to be workers in the global economy. The "work of being watched" has consequences for both privacy and labor.

> The power in question is not the static domination of a sovereign Big Brother, but that of a self-stimulating incitement to productivity: the multiplication of desiring subjects and subjects' desires in accordance with the rationalization of

> consumption. In this context, the production of ever more refined and detailed categories of desiring subjectivities serves…as a site for the reiteration of existing conditions and relations of power (Andrejevic, 2002, p. 232).

By the time children are adolescents, they are indoctrinated into a culture of being watched in the domestic field, by their parents, by the "Elf on the Shelf" (C. Wallace, 2016) or Santa Claus, by their teachers, and yes, by technology. Much has been studied and recommended about children and privacy online (Bradbury, 2015; Livingstone, 2019; Livingstone & Haddon, 2009; *Parenting for a Digital Future*, n.d.; *Protecting Your Child's Privacy Online*, 2013; *Your Family Has a Right to Privacy Online | Common Sense Media*, n.d.). Nevertheless, I am always astonished when my incoming freshman students have no understanding of how Big Data (Montgomery et al., 2017) works, how important it is to know about ownership and funding when sourcing your research, about unpaid labor that is being done by them as consumers through a combination of data they inadvertently provide, and by conforming to behaviors expected of them.

VI.3.1a FREE LABOR

Furthermore, there are plenty of examples of actual free labor being done, especially in the domestic field. One such example are game modifications, or "mods." Modders create original content for digital games that already exist. Some mods are unsophisticated and include adding new abilities or objects. Other players experiment with more complicated mods, creating new artwork and stories, and even redesigning the entire game. Sometimes, modified content can be more compelling that the "parent game." It is in this way that mods show their economic

value to game developers and publishers. In return for letting modders use their games, they reserve the right to claim ownership over all modifications. On some level, it's mutually beneficial: modders get a "hobby," developers and publishers get free content. But because it's based on unpaid labor, the relationship is also highly exploitative (Joseph & Williams, n.d.).

As we can see, by the time adolescents are interacting with technology with what they believe to be agency, their habitus is largely formed (Bourdieu, 1984; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017). The physical embodiment (dispositions) of cultural capital comes from our life experiences: parents, socioeconomic status, education, community, and all of the influences that reach us from and through the internet, the use of technological devices, the consumption, and even the production of media. Why then, do we not take adolescent cultural capital into consideration in the field of public education?

VI.4 CALL FOR REVOLUTION

This is going to sound quite radical, but I stand by it: the way to deal with the problems in the field of public education is a full-on revolution. Attempts to modify the current system is failing. Though there are small victories and pockets of success, we won't be able to serve all students unless we dismantle the entire institution. I think Bourdieu would approve, as I am illuminating the need for a rupture by exposing preconstructions, "by real conditions of its realization" (Bourdieu et al., 1992, pp. 251–252). Our common sense has been obscured and replaced by one that is constructed. It's time to deconstruct the system.

VI.4.1 DISRUPTION AND OPPRESSION

Simply put (though none of this is simple), there is a need for disruption in the field of education so that we can integrate, reflect upon and include individual habitus. As discussed, layers of regulations, policy, laws and often well-meaning programs have attempted to disrupt the problematic systemic and oppressive field of education by addressing issues one at a time. The public school system is filled with excellent teachers and administrators, but it is not enough. Students and families with little cultural capital and habitus (for a variety of reasons) that do not easily understand or "play the game" don't stand a chance. The students are oppressed by the teachers, the teachers are oppressed by the administration, the administration is oppressed by the county, state, and federal government.

> This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. Any attempt to "soften" the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this "generosity," which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source (Freire, 1970).

To begin a revolution, we incorporate students' habitus into the institution of education. This also requires recognizing that students have cultural capital that may rival or even eclipse their parents, teachers and administrators. In the domestic field, media, technology and identity are so closely related for most adolescents, I might even argue that they are one and the same.

If we recognize habitus and cultural capital in the field of education, this also means that we can finally move away from pre-determined categories and narrowly defined accommodations. Rather than reinvent the wheel here, I'm going to quote some very well-written and thoroughly thought-out schools that integrate all types of accommodations into their mission:

Example 1)

- To hire as staff only people with the personal level of maturity to support the growth of each student.
- To mutually decide with prospective students if this school is a good match for them, being open to accept and give a chance to students as much as possible.
- To make education an opening-up, not a filling-up; and to take the time to get to know each student and her/his individual learning needs.
- To nourish a community where each person feels accepted and appreciated, and physically and emotionally safe.
- To use dialoguing and problem-solving to deal with any issues that arise in the community.

- To help our students develop an internal sense of responsibility rather than relying on externally imposed controls.
- To assure delight in the ethnic, cultural, and social class diversity among our students and staff, and recognize that every individual experiences the world in a unique way.
- To assure that our educational practices are in harmony with the Earth and with natural processes; to learn about sustaining the intricate, subtle and powerful web of life within and all around ourselves

Example 2) We respect that which makes each child unique and promote the cognitive, imaginative, creative, social, emotional, and physical development of all students. In order to provide high quality educational services, we have built a supportive, empathetic community—a true collaboration where students, parents, and educators take the time to embrace and understand one another. We embrace diversity and honor the unique contributions of each individual. This environment is intended to enhance the joy of learning for all and to inspire discovery, creativity, and a commitment to lifelong education. At San Diego Cooperative Charter all members of the school community work together to promote the success of each student.

Our vision is to cultivate academic greatness through immersive curriculum and educational methods that meet each child' s needs, enable the student to participate collaboratively in their own learning, and make connections between the curriculum and the outside world. We provide students with the academic,

> social and emotional tools to discover their own paths through today' s challenges with compassion, collaborative, creativity, and critical thinking. Knowledge of brain development, multiple intelligences, learning styles, and strategies for differentiation inform instruction in all classes. Service and environmental stewardship are integrated into the curriculum in order to promote a socially conscious student population. Our students are encouraged to explore the world around them with a lens of justice and equality, engaging their whole selves in the challenges and questions of today for a more compassionate and just future (*SDCCS*, n.d.)

VI.4.2 NOT ACCOMMODATIONS, JUST EDUCATION

In fact, I don't even want to use the word accommodations. Why should there be the need to accommodate when the field of public education realizes that consideration of habitus is a primary pathway to success? Can't we just call it education? The irony is that the pioneers of "education for all" began with this intention. The early progressive education movement supported individual and child-centered education, ideals that were embraced by the American public school. Dewey, in particular, viewed organized education as a shift back to the student, to enrich and facilitate growth. "a continuous process of reconstruction of experience…which is always the actual life-experience of some individual" (Dewey, 1967).

I believe that we would be mistaken to perceive the forced remote learning situation as a disconnect from the type of successful, progressive, habitus-based education that I have highlighted here. Identifying each student's needs is even

more important during remote learning than in person, and more difficult. Teachers, who are used to identifying problems by connecting personally with students are struggling to do so online. Worse, many students are not showing up at all. “In one survey of 5,659 educators around the country, 34 percent of respondents said that no more than one in four students were attending their remote classes, and a majority said fewer than half their students were attending (Goodnough, 2020).

As long as remote instruction is dominant in public schools, the consistently successful teacher-student-parent connection is gone. Most schools and educators are applying the same structure, curriculum, rules, and regulations to remote instruction that they did in person. Habitus and cultural capital are shifting. Fields that have always overlapped in a very specific ways are colliding and creating chaos, and it is preventing the type of disruption that we really need.

CHAPTER VII

DISRUPTION

VII.1 REMOTE INSTRUCTION

It’s early 2021 and I cannot close this dissertation without addressing the elephant in the room. The world is struggling with a massive, unexpected, unplanned-for disruption in education because of COVID-19. For years, education technology champions and experts have been promising that technology, if not remote instruction (or some version thereof) is the salvation for the broken,

anachronistic, analog education world. Well, here we are, with a rare opportunity to reboot our system. However, with little exception, schools have attempted to maintain the status quo, to replicate the brick and mortar model, fulfilling the expectations of parents, perpetuating the age-old system, and continuing the attempt to mold students into a neoliberal notion of "good citizens." Instead of treating the disruption as an opportunity, educators are doing what they always do, managing the situation.

VII.1.1 PROBLEMS, PRIVILEGE, AND INEQUITIES

Innovative recommendations run the gamut from redefining school leadership (A. Harris & Jones, 2020), to scrapping core curriculum and standardized testing, (Zhao, 2020) to flexible mastery of learning objectives and recognition of students' ability to engage in self-directed learning (Garcia Mathewson, 2020). Most parents who are trying to navigate remote instruction are struggling with a variety of issues: the kids hate it, it's boring, there are not good instructions, it's laughable, the link is broken, the kids want snacks, it's a nightmare, they have difficulties focusing, the schedule is funky, it's tiring, my kids despise it, we're grieving, we're struggling, the kids are crying/fidgeting/running outside, we're not ok, I don't understand the math, I'm trying to work (*How's Distance Learning Going for You?*, 2020). I realize that some of these might strike us as funny, and parents are definitely using humor as a coping mechanism (Liz O'Leary, 2020), but these are real, gut-wrenching problems. This doesn't include the problems with lack of access to technology and internet. Prior to quarantine, 35% of children 6-17 in households with income

under $30,000 did not have high speed internet at home and a quarter of teens did not have access to a computer or other device (Auxier & Anderson, 2020).

When the nation abruptly went online for instruction in the spring of 2020, nearly all public school districts in the nation were unprepared. Teachers and administrators scrambled to figure out a plan. In the early days of school closures, teachers were sharing information with each other in a variety of ways. I spent a solid amount of time checking out these templates and lists of resources, many of which were posted as unprotected Google docs for anybody to access. Educators were in full panic mode. Google immediately launched a temporary hub for educators to share information (Li, 2020), attempting to quickly get teachers up to speed on needed technology.

While the business and higher ed worlds adopted Zoom for most of their video meetings, many state departments of education (including my state of Oregon) (*Oregon Department of Education : Online Tools for Schools : Standards : State of Oregon*, n.d.) restricted their teachers and students to using (the free service) Google Classroom, in the interest of consistency (most students were already signed up for this free service and were using it to a variety of degrees of success in school) and saving money. Unfortunately, just as iPads were designed for a single user and marketed to schools as an EdTech device, Google Classroom wasn't designed for remote instruction and consequently caused a lot of frustration. Google was providing a tool for teachers while proclaiming neutrality, offering no methodology, best practices or help with "remote education that actually works" (Ainsley Harris, 2020). Teachers caught a lot of the flak from stressed-out parents for the seemingly

absurd situation (Sutton, 2020). On the other hand, many parents who realized for the first time how difficult it is to teach, needed time to work and live their own lives, appreciated their kids' teachers more than they ever had, proclaiming them heroes and suggesting that they get a massive pay raise (Amato, 2020).

The hierarchical and decentralized nature of institutional public education made it difficult to create guidelines on best practices for remote instruction. Although the American government set up a taskforce made up of business owners, economists and political officials to advise on reopening the economy during COVID-19 (Jonathan Lemire et al., 2020), no such requests were made of educators on how to deal with remote instruction. Teachers, administrators, state departments of education, districts and schools were left to figure it out, while navigating unwieldy institutional regulations and compliance with authorities (Sahlberg, 2020, p. 5).

Finding examples of successful transition to online instruction is difficult. Most articles, news stories, memes and social media posts depict parents, students and teachers alike struggling with the transition to remote learning. Problems with inequity in the field of public education have been well-established and clearly laid out in my discussion. Attempts at forced remote instruction have highlighted the issues of classism, racism, gender inequality, and ableism, (Ambrose, 2020); (Rebekah Bastian, 2020).

> Students from privileged backgrounds, supported by their parents and eager and able to learn, could find their way past closed school doors to alternative learning opportunities. But those from disadvantaged backgrounds often remained shut out when their schools shut down. This crisis has exposed the

> many inadequacies and inequities in our education systems – from access to the broadband and computers needed for online education, and the supportive environments needed to focus on learning, up to the misalignment between resources and needs (Schleicher, 2020, p. 4).

For example, pandemic pods are the newest trend for highly educated, economically advantaged parents. Affluent white parents in particular are proposing "pod"-style learning models to augment (or even replace) their remote learning. Some parents share the teaching load, some hire babysitters, tutors, or even professional teachers to instruct all of the students in the pod (Jessica Calarco, 2020).

Like charter and alternative schools, pandemic pods require cultural, economic and social capital that many parents do not possess. Although it is understandable why parents want to engage in small learning communities, they will widen the learning and opportunity gaps. When it became clear that in-person school was unlikely to return in the fall, Facebook groups popped up almost overnight. Within a day, social justice discussions were "tearing the groups apart" and the media had accused rich white parents of screwing over poor parents by hiding away in pods (Belfiore, 2020).

"What would school pods look like for children who live in public housing, for parents who are not able to work from home or who don't have the budget to hire teachers" (Rebekah Bastian, 2020)? To assist in addressing these issues, social justice educators are publishing equity actions for parents during a pandemic. These include encouraging parents to use their capital to contact legislators, keep children enrolled in public schools, support groups already doing this work, invite others to

join them in taking action (E. Turner, 2020). I sympathize with parents who want to create pods. Many parents (including myself) will do anything in their power to give their children the best opportunity in school as possible. It's a sticky situation. My non-neuro-diverse daughter would've been unlikely to thrive in a pod unless (maybe) it was with her best friend and her parents, but even that is unlikely. Students with all types of disabilities are not likely to be invited into pods because of their needs for extra support.

Within months of unexpected remote instruction, some expeditious researchers had already published reports and articles about remote instruction in the spring. One such remote instruction survey of teachers found three emergent themes:

- Student Motivation: Teachers struggle to motivate their students through two layers of computer screens
- Professional Loss and Burnout: As they lost familiar means of teaching, teachers also lost a fundamental sense of their own efficacy and professional identity
- Exacerbated Inequities: This sense of loss grew deeper as teachers witnessed the dramatic intensification of the societal inequities that had always shaped their students' lives (Reich et al., 2020, p. 2).

Another report (Ferdig et al., 2020) says:

> Nationally, schools have tended to assume that technology is the answer to reaching and teaching students amid the Covid-19 crisis, regardless of students' socioeconomic status, culture, home language, and grade level. Equally unexpected, has been the emergent reality that most…teachers…are ill-prepared

> to: (a) proactively manage the transition from face-to-face to online instruction; (b) convert to curricula and instruction technologically suited to that transition; and (c) develop alternate, especially formative assessments for the converted instruction of all students who should be participating.

Regardless of the terminology, parents and educators alike are saying the same thing: remote instruction is exposing the broken field of public education for the fraud that it is. The professional capital built into the "holders of the positions of power" is breaking down. Educators, who entered the system prepared to reproduce it, are dependent on material conditions remaining the same.

> capital breeds capital, and holding positions conferring social influence determines and justifies holding new positions, themselves invested with all the weight of their combined holders (Bourdieu, 1988, pp. 83–85).

Many adolescent students are suffering from lack of social interaction and in-person extracurricular activities, difficulty focusing, lack of structure, too much work at home, too much screen time, boredom, difficulty separating school and home, trouble keeping up, anxiety, depression, confusion, lack of access to teachers, lack of motivation and sadness. Others find that remote instruction is making things easier for them by easing up on the restrictive nature of in-person schooling, including: working at their own pace, getting adequate sleep, and time and energy to explore new topics and interests (Network, 2020). This unplanned break is an opportunity to acknowledge hidden reasons why some students struggle and others succeed. We already know that certain school structures, like strict bell schedules, don't work equally for all kids. Some teachers say that they're inspired to make

permanent changes once they return to in-person instruction (Nora Fleming, 2020). It's a start.

I would argue that forced remote instruction is more akin to homework than live instruction in a classroom. The influence and barriers present in the domestic field that have always made homework an unfair practice are the same uneven strengths and obstacles that have plagued public education from its inception. Instead of recognizing this parallel, most educators are still focusing on remotely reproducing the type of instruction they relied on in a face-to-face environment – whether it was successful or not.

We cannot go back in time to alter the way that everybody reacted. I have included this section on remote instruction because of the inescapable fact that it was a game changer for all of the players involved in education, that it coincides with the conclusion of my dissertation, and is so closely related to my findings. The influence of habitus and cultural capital are drastically compounded when students are removed from the physical location of school and expected to continue to perform while schooling from home. In addition to inequities in technological access, the inequities surround parental support and individual learning styles are magnified and even more difficult to pinpoint, much less remedy, than they would be in person. Like me, lots of innovators and experts are advocating for public schools to take advantage of this disruption by highlighting issues and recommendations that can genuinely support a pivot in the way that education is executed:

- Accelerating education inequality: Education inequality is accelerating in an unprecedented fashion, especially in places where before the pandemic it was already high
- A leapfrog moment: Innovation has suddenly moved from the margins to the center of many education systems, and there is an opportunity to identify new strategies that, if sustained, can help young people get an education that prepares them for our changing times.
- Rising public support: There is newfound public recognition of how essential schools are in society and a window of opportunity to leverage this support for making them stronger
- New education allies: The pandemic has galvanized new actors in the community — from parents to social welfare organizations—to support children's learning like never before (Winthrop, 2020, pp. 4–7).

I have hope that people have hope, and I will continue to work toward a system that integrates habitus and capital of the students into the field of public education.

This global social experiment that came unexpectedly with the COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed another truth we already knew. School systems all over the world are still primarily operating according to the logic of consumption rather than of creation. In other words, students learn, among many other things, that they should go to school to receive information and knowledge taught by their teachers and learn skills based on curriculum plans in which they had very little to say. Students learn to consume knowledge they are taught, follow curricula that is the same for all and accept that the number at the end of

> the term or semester is a valid judgment of their school performance. They learn to be compliant with all of these things at school. The more compliant you are as a student, the better you will do in the end. But when teaching is suddenly disrupted, consumption suffers, and these students are in trouble (Sahlberg, 2020, p. 6).

Once again, the field of education fails most of its students. It's not too late to take advantage of the opportunity for disruption and revolution. Because of this disruption, school will be changed forever. Some students will return to live classes and some will not. The changes in the field of public education have shifted the material and social environment. Habitus, capital and education will not be the same for upcoming generations. "Such objective conditions also durably inculcate dispositions, in line with the objective conditions" (Harker, 1984, p. 120).

The fact that the field of public education is rife with inequities is not in question. To reiterate, my recommendation is to recognize and incorporate habitus into the institution of education. Bourdieu asserts that habitus changes in direction when encountering a new iteration of material conditions, a disruption. Although this change is influenced by the habitus itself, the practice that habitus helps to structure are not fixed. Remote instruction is the new material condition and practice, and whether we acknowledge it or not, both habitus and structure are changing. This goes for the domestic field as well as the field of public education. These fields are intersecting in ways that they never have before. Previously, the only compulsory activity linking the two fields was homework. Now, the entirety of students' and teachers' instruction is integrated. New systems are being created.

> Again, the habitus is constantly being formed in the daily practices of individual subjects (which for Bourdieu are often families) and while it is a structured system of meanings it does not follow any mechanistic formal or 'algebraic' logic. People do not simply reproduce their meaning systems, they also produce and use them (Sulkunen, 1982, p. 109).

On the first day of the school year, I saw a social media post from my local school district: "Got pics? Let's celebrate the first day of school together! Share your return to learning from home photos" (*Eugene School District 4J - Posts | Facebook*, 2020). By the end of the day there were 235 photos in the comments. The vast majority of the photos were posed, either holding up a sign or sitting at a carefully designed learning space ("How to Set Up a Remote Learning Space for Your Kids," 2020). Many of the spaces replicated traditional classrooms with posters, calendars, dry erase and chalk boards, and school supplies, guides (alphabet, shapes, times tables, etc.) on the walls. Atmospheric décor like plants, candles and framed inspirational sayings add to the ambience. Three photos show students pulled up to a TV tray or sprawled out on a cluttered floor.

A whole slew of articles came out in the beginning of the school year from educators talking about some of the things they've seen in their students' homes (including a parent wearing an electronic ankle monitor) (Stanford, 2020). "Parents, please make sure that you have on proper clothing when you are walking behind your child's computer because we've seen them in their drawers, their bras, and everything else" (Nahl, 2020). Teachers are publicly asking parents to wear appropriate clothing, not smoke or drink, or do anything illegal if they are going to

be in the background of their child's Zoom video. Though it is understandable that these types of background behaviors can be problematic, this type of shaming is classist. Class functions as a social category with direct, material consequences in our everyday lives. Despite issues in a physical classroom, there exists an element of equalization in that all children sit in the same seats, use the same technology and collectively experience the same environment (albeit filtered through individual habitus). This is not the case when students are at home.

Americans like to believe that there is no classism in our country. Our national message declares that those who work hard enough can make it to the top.

> Few people stop to think that in a class-free society there would be no top. While it has always been obvious that some folks have more money than other folks, class difference and classism are rarely overtly apparent, or they are not acknowledged when present. The evils of racism and, much later, sexism, were easier to identify and challenge than the evils of classism. We live in a society where the poor have no public voice (hooks, 2000, p. 5).

We all know what the narrative and stereotypes of low and working class looks like. It's been portrayed in the media, largely for comic effect, for generations. When poor and working class people are visible, they are almost always represented negatively (dysfunctional relationships, promiscuous, ineffective parents, engaged in crime, drug use, alcoholism, unemployed, etc.) (Bullock et al., 2001). This is yet another barrier for students struggling with remote learning, an additional layer creating an obstacle. Yet unlike barriers that schools are attempting to navigate by providing devices and internet, this one is a systematic problem. Teachers who want the best

for their students are pointing out the very thing that makes underprivileged kids feel like they are treated differently is being played out publicly, because shaming people in our culture for their habitus and lack of cultural capital is normal. "Objectively and subjectively aesthetic stances adopted in matters like cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one's position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 57).

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Technology is ubiquitous and bleeds into every social field. This is true for adolescents more than any other group of people. Because of this, adolescents possess a vast quantity of cultural capital. Their relationship with technology is unique. Adolescents are hovering between childhood and adulthood, exploring their identity, friendships, and developing an understanding of their place in the world. They are figuring out how to cope, solve problems, and are testing boundaries. All of this happens by way of their individual habitus.

It would seem that adolescence is a perfect time to integrate technology into the classroom via curriculum, structure and organizing, and to expand critical thinking skills. Technology offers many opportunities to creatively problem solve and work cooperatively. Students enjoy it and spend countless hours in the domestic field using it. Unfortunately, the field of public education is too weighed down with antiquated rules, expectations, hierarchy, standardized testing, and lack of proper funding to take advantage of the cultural capital that the students have to offer.

One of the ways that the field of public education attempts to survive financially is through partnerships with private corporations, who often provide equipment. But regrettably, relationships with corporate entities frequently reinforce the problems that already exist. Layers of bureaucracy and policy, coupled with restrictions imposed by privatization and power relations around resources make the field of public education a complex web to navigate for all players. Students may not be able to recognize this complexity, but they know that the way they are asked to utilize technology at school doesn't work for them. They know that their place in the hierarchy is at the bottom. This is in sharp contrast to the confidence and enjoyment they experience around technology in the domestic field. There they feel powerful, self-assured and secure, both in the physical and online space.

Many early educators were innovative, developmental and progressive, focusing on the individual child, social relations, and actions that have effects on others. Technology in education controls the flow and reproduction of information. This has

traditionally been from the teacher to student, strengthened by technology. What we think of as technology in the classroom today began with film, radio and television. Reformers had high hopes, but teachers recognized the implementation of these types of technologies as flawed, because, in addition to the inevitable problems with corporate relationships and equipment failure, technology largely removed the human element from the teacher-student relationship. Technology and media have always had a complicated association with school and teacher culture, because it disrupts the tried-and-true way that schools and teachers use to keep order.

When computers entered mainstream culture, many educational innovators studied the best ways to use them in the classroom and made recommendations. Ideally these include untimed exploration, collaboration with peers, finding and pursuing passion, adapting implementation (not replicating implementation efforts of old technologies), constantly changing strategies as technology and skills evolve, encouraging instead of repressing curiosity, and most of all, truly individuating learning. The narrative that technology in education is reformative and will bring radical change is not possible, unless educators truly recognize that it is being utilized in a way which is proven to be effective. This includes redefining the definition of media literacy to encompass the way that technology and media affect our lives, signifying that individuals are both affected by and have an effect upon culture.

The neoliberalist turn in the United Stated has had a profound effect on the field of public education. Gradually, the institution of education turned away from early

socialistic, progressive ideas to focus on the widely accepted notion that all individuals are equally exposed to opportunities and are able to make choices that will lead to success. Neoliberalist policies and mandates changed the direction to one of standardized testing in the guise of reform. The federal initiative *No Child Left Behind* solidified the plan and gave it teeth, backed by the federal government. The floodgates were opened to private enterprise, and innovative ideas about how to use technology in the classroom were wiped out. In the domestic field, adolescents use technology in an independent and personalized way. This sets up a framework to acquire cultural capital. Students interact with technology and media in many ways. The most common ways are music, online viewing, video gaming, content creation, and homework.

Adolescents spend more time using technology for music than any other media. They listen while multi-tasking, in particular while studying and trying to focus on specific tasks. Parents generally support using technology for music, unless it disrupts family time and communication. Many parents enjoy sharing their own taste in music with their kids, and find that their family benefits from listening together and sharing favorites with each other.

Most parents have much less experience with online viewing, and even when they partake, they do it in a different way than adolescents. As with music, adolescents consume online viewing to explore self-identity, laugh, cry, learn, and escape. Parents worry about adolescents' privacy, but most of them are good at practicing safety. They are usually more technologically savvy than the adults in their lives. Indeed, it would be more beneficial to concentrate on guidance, advice

and trying to understand their interests than limiting, restricting and punishing them, because parents don't have a complete grasp of how and why their kids are spending so much time with and/or on their devices. Adolescents also often point out that their parents spend a lot of time on their own devices, text while driving, use their phones at the dinner table and generally ignore the rules they set out for their family.

More than half of teens surveyed say that they use social media to make friends and maintain friendships. By following their friends' social media, they feel connected to them and feel as if they understand their state of mind during a period in their lives when peer support is critical. Having a platform to keep in touch, share, experiment, learn, test technical skills, and be free from parents' watchful eyes, explains why social media is the primary way that adolescents learn to navigate culture and norms. Parents are legitimately concerned about cyberbullying, pornography, identity theft, sexual harassment and grooming online. There is a lot of fear-based advice out there, and some parents react by severely restricting their adolescents' usage. This is not new. These types of concerns have been around since mediated communication content was invented. Experts with a more positive lens profess that social media is merely a new way for adolescents to participate in public life.

Adolescents say that they spend a little more than a fifth of their time gaming. The parental concern over negative effects is strong. This includes an official mental health disorder and commonly known risk factors. Adolescents rarely feel that the effects are as bad as their parents say, and most often describe positive outcomes

such as creativity, collaboration, friendship, teamwork, stress relief, satisfaction in mastering skills, facing new challenges, relaxation and achieving a meditative state. Nevertheless, most parents of gamers feel that their kids spend way too much time playing games and are perpetually looking for ways to restrict them.

Content creation spans all types of technology. It is defined in many different ways, but I define it as any type of original content shared online, whether it is a revision of someone else's material or wholly original. This can include music, video (or a combination of both), audio, visual representation like digital art and photography, coding, game creation and modification, streaming gameplay or any other of the many ways that adolescents create content.

Homework is the one activity that, by definition, crosses over from the field of public education to the domestic field. Nearly sixty percent of adolescents say that they work on homework every day. Increasingly, homework is completed using a digital device and the internet.

Technology in education is a microcosm of technology in culture as a whole. Historically, technology is described as having two lenses in western culture. These binaries are often referred to as technological determinism (represented by engineers who use systematic solutions to solve problems) and social determinism (represented by humanists who use technology to create art and weave theoretical solutions into stories). Both technological and social determinists believe that new media creates an egalitarian society with no educational privilege, the possibility for revolution and potential disruption, even if they come at the ideology from differing perspectives.

There are of course, countless ways to approach the study of technology and adolescents. My approach is personal because my research is inextricably tied to my family life. Autoethnographic artifacts play a critical role in this dissertation. Excerpts from multiple academic papers written over the last nine years map my story. Also included are personal communications with educators, local documents that support my family's experiences and federal policies that have shaped the climate and culture in the field of public education. Through reflection, collaboration, and past action, I tell a story that is acutely personal, yet applies to broadly experienced interactions with culture. My methods are adapted from Bourdieu, who spent the majority of his academic life reflecting on his experienced life as it intersected with culture, then applying his findings to the world at large. Primarily, I have employed Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, fields and cultural capital. My own "practice within a field" became part of my cultural identity, as well as representations of my habitus. My participation in culture also represents my cultural identity, thus blurring the lines between having influence upon culture and being influenced by culture. In large part, I chose this method so that I might reach readers who are not part of higher education, so that I could tackle the idea of subjectivity and honesty head on.

My authoethnographic narratives are supplemented by document analysis. The primary reason for this is context, clarification on power relations, and evidence of overarching rules, regulations and policy in education. Although documents are far from objective, they are "unaffected by the research process." This is handy when personal documents are highly distinctive and agenda-driven, full of expectations

and social interaction. When combined with a static text, the interaction creates a more complete picture.

In addition to documents, I have also provided context by summarizing the history of public education in the United States. The establishment of America as a nation with an independent, entrepreneurial "character" set the tone for the way the institution of education still operates today. This ideal is supported (or perhaps created) by the progressive, individualized environment found in early American education. Ironically, it is also supported by the neoliberalist agenda laid out in federal educational policies between the early eighties and early 2000s, which "reformed" education to focus on student test scores, thus changing the emphasis on individualization in school.

Students understand from a very young age that they are expected to behave in a specific way, their habitus is passed along from their parents and reinforced by education. I experienced this, you experienced this, my kids experienced and your kids do too. Those of us who have cultural capital utilize it to our advantage. Students understand that there is a system in the field of public education. They are placed on a path early on and it is difficult to break out of that path. Parents grow up and replicate the pattern that they experienced, or they try to break it. Most likely, they do a little of both. I did. I learned about the school system(s) as I went along and I made choices that I thought were best. The number one thing I learned was that each and every child has different needs and individual ways of understanding and learning. My own two children were vastly different from each other. Each of them exhibited bits of me and my husband, but mostly their learning behaviors

were uniquely their own. As they grew older, their habitus became more apparent. My son was able to adapt to mainstream school, my daughter was not.

Exceptional teachers were the highlight of our public school experiences. Whether we were at an alternative public school or a more traditional public school, teachers were the key to a happy, mediocre, or miserable experience. We recognize our privilege in having choices, regardless of how difficult and complicated the process may have been. I know that for the vast majority of families, attending the local public school is the only option, whether by choice or not. I.e., there are barriers to school choice.

Teachers also face barriers. I am not a public school teacher, so all of my experience has been as a student, a parent, a volunteer and an academic. It is clear that teachers are overwhelmed, overworked and underpaid. They are beholden to rules and regulations, curriculum requirements, both visible and invisible, and their own performance is connected with the test scores of their students, school, district, county and state. They have very little control over the big decisions regarding their work life.

Parents want what's best for their children. Some are able to fight for their kids' needs, are able and willing to advocate for a teacher change or move to another school. Some parents do not feel that this is or should be necessary, and some don't have the time, skills or resources to take action. Within this climate, there is decidedly no level playing field. The habitus that students exhibit is a reflection of their class and upbringing. The cultural capital that they possess is tied to the assets, resources, and education of their parents and their educational experiences.

For my own children, I had the opportunity to give them as much support as possible throughout their journeys in the field of public education. I was able to do this, though it took a significant toll on my own educational journey through grad school. That's not to say that I devoted myself to them over my studies. What I am saying is that my family is my priority; I love them more than anything else in my life. They needed my support to navigate compulsory education, and I gave it to them to the best of my ability. My capacity to do this was informed by my habitus and cultural capital; numerous events, academic experiences, personal studies, research and a passion for education. As I labored, wrote, read, parented, advocated, cried, screamed, taught and learned my way through my life, I was exposed to beautiful and devastating truths. I saw first-hand how supportive teachers could be. I also saw the devastation a teachers' soul-crushing words and actions could have on a fragile student. I learned about policy and procedures, how most of them are well-intentioned but often have (mostly) unintended, damaging consequences. And I learned to ask for help, sometimes from a most unlikely source.

Technology plays a central role in my story. As a scholar of media and an early adopter of technology, it was inevitable that it would play such a large role in my life as a parent. I struggled with my own mediation methods, but always focused on teaching critical thinking about content, commercialization, and corporate influence, all the while balancing quality family time. I explored sources of support for advice, but mostly I talked to my kids (ad nauseum) about their own feelings, desires and thoughts. I tried to play video games, I brought my kids to grad school, I talked to

their friends and I slowly "allowed" them the agency to build their own capital, apart from me.

Did we do our children a disservice in raising them to question those in authority who did support them? Did we doom them to a life of misery in the field of public education by encouraging joy in education, cooperation, collaboration and responsibility? To be sure, it was not our intention to condemn them to a life of discomfort and sometimes outright suffering in school. It is by way of their experiences and those of other students and families in my purview that I observe the considerable cultural capital that most adolescents have around technology, both in the domestic field and the field of education.

Layered on top of this unrecognized cultural capital is habitus. Some students' habitus determine that they will be able to 'play the game' of mainstream school. They are considered capable and successful; academically, socially or both. Other students' habitus, which function perfectly well in the domestic field, do not translate well in school. This might be due to class and cultural capital passed on from their parents, but it also may be due to learning disabilities, mental illness, or any number of non-neurotypical and/or non-conforming situations, dispositions that contribute to habitus as much as parents. If a student's habitus somehow prevents them from conforming to school expectations, which becomes more intense as students move up in grades in the way that the field of public education requires them, then the system needs to change.

Some of the policies initiated by the federal government (E.G., Individual Learning Plan (IEP) and 504) were (and are) good faith attempts to rectify problems

that exist in public education; to assist in removal of barriers to being able to 'play the game,' to exhibit the correct and expected behavior. Ironically, significant cultural capital is required to set up and connect with one of these programs. If a student's parents or caregivers are unable or unwilling to dedicate significant time and energy to this process, it's highly unlikely to happen. Additionally, as noted earlier, teachers and support staff are overwhelmed, overworked, and unable to keep up with the added work that these programs require. This is a singular example of one of the many barriers faced by students (and teachers) in the field of public education.

Technology is often promoted as the solution to individualized learning, yet it has not been successful on a wide scale. Students, however, are not consulted about their own use of technology for coping, learning, cooperation, collaboration or creativity. Strategies like listening to music are rarely welcome in the classroom. Cultural capital around technology is unidentified, ignored and dismissed. Adolescents' identities are wrapped up in technology in a way that the vast majority of parents and teachers do not grasp. In fact, they find it unsettling, and tend to dismiss, restrict and deny its legitimacy. Their relationship with technology influences their own habitus. We need to open up our understanding, perceptions, insight and compassion to include a broader spectrum of habitus.

It's also important to remember that these issues exist in the context of Big Tech and its influence over both the field of education and the domestic field. Equipment and devices, claimed by private corporations to be designed for education, become enculturated into the school system. These same devices are used at home for

entertainment. Labor is being performed by teachers, students, parents. This also becomes part of habitus, especially for adolescents.

Given my research on the pertinent literature, history of the field of public education, analysis of the use of technology in the field of public education and the domestic field, my findings and discussion of the analysis, my conclusion is that a full-on revolution is desperately urgent. The accumulated density and oppression in the institution of education prevents this change from materializing in the classroom. The misunderstanding that parents have with respect to their adolescents' use of technology impedes change in the domestic field.

But I believe that change in both of these fields is possible.

The answer is a shift in perspective. We need to let go of what we believe to be our absolute knowledge regarding our childrens' relationship with and use of technology. We need to listen, observe, and truly give them credit for the cultural capitol they possess around technology. We need to understand the habitus that all players bring to the field and how they interact with each other. There are multifarious examples of ways to begin this process, from early American progressive educators to innovators throughout the history of education.

I believe that we were presented with an opportunity to affect change in the field of education and the domestic field when the vast majority of the nation's public schools shifted to online instruction in March of 2020, due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is not surprising that the potential revolution did not happen. Given the broken system that educators and students navigate daily, combined with this unprecedented worldwide event and a lack of guidance from the

federal government, states, educators, students and parents were left scrambling to figure it out. Unfortunately, most schools attempted to replicate in-person learning instead of heeding the advice of experts in the field of remote instruction, who have been calling for a dramatic shift in education and technology for fifty years. This is unfortunate but understandable, since teachers and students are habituated to reproduce the institutional conditions that need to be replicated in order for the institution to be preserved. Nothing seems to have changed since teachers complained about radio broadcasts replacing teachers: lack of equipment (or working equipment), difficulties with scheduling, not enough information for the teachers, poor reception, and content that is irrelevant (1986, p. 71).

> Every institutionalized educational system owes the specific characteristics of its structure and functioning to the fact that, by the means proper to the institution, it has to produce and reproduce the institutional conditions whose existence and persistence (self-reproduction of the system) are necessary both to the exercise of its essential function of inculcation and to the fulfilment of its function of reproducing a cultural arbitrary which it does not produce (cultural reproduction), the reproduction of which contributes to the reproduction of the relations between groups or classes (social reproduction) (Bourdieu et al., 1990, p. 54).

VIII.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are educators, parents and students who enjoy the approach to a broader spectrum of habitus. I have encountered this perspective in my educational journey. Sometimes it's a moment, sometimes a conversation, sometimes a class, a year, a

school or a teacher. My own advisors were open enough to trust me in my autoethnographic method for this research, even though they were not familiar nor experienced with it; that is a radical moment which allowed me to write this document and finish my doctoral journey. The consistent thread I've identified in this dissertation is a recognition of individual habitus and cultural capital.

We should seek out, highlight, and share radical success stories, big and small. How are educators working against their own institutionalized habitus and incorporating individual student habitus and student cultural capital into their pedagogy, while still maintaining a sense of community and support? How can successful practices of acknowledging a broader spectrum of habitus be identified, recorded, and duplicated? On a bigger scale, how do we change the institution itself? For one, consulting teachers, parents and students on educational policies seems like a doable first step. As I've established, educators are overworked, overwhelmed, and stressed out. I recommend that districts create positions for intermediaries, liaisons between families and teachers, and between teachers and administrators. The primary goal would be to place an expert in the field of public education and the domestic field to mediate, listen, and make recommendations for all of the players involved.

In the domestic field my experience with my own children, discussions with peers, and becoming a researcher, have helped me to create tools that can continue to be developed and revised. Adapting my method of measuring values and utilization of technology and media can be adapted for future qualitative research in the domestic field as well as the field of public education. Specifically, talking to

adolescents about the way they engage with technology, and creating metrics that can be adapted and modified are way to advance this research. These tools can produce results that can then be practically applied, and modified again, and again, and again.

Once again, I am confronted with the disconnect between academic theory and practice. Applying Bourdieuian analysis to educational environments has been criticized as 'removed from everyday reality', depressing, unrealistic and even too idealistic (Gunter et al., 2014). I believe that the enactment of theory in practice not only can but *must* be implemented on a larger scale than what is currently being undertaken in private, alternative, and charter schools. Recognizing student cultural capital is not enough. According to Freire, acknowledgement of inequities directly with students, encourages critical reflection of their own oppression and translates to action (1970). Students must be involved in the practice of change, building up non-dominant students' capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Disrupting the hierarchy and sharing power with the students is key. How do we do this? Policies and methods in the field of public education have focused on the deficits in students' habitus and capital. However, I propose that changing aspects of the field itself is necessary.

> A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the

> competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in their field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu, 2010).

If education is going to be the great equalizer that Horace Mann (Mann, 1845) believed it could be, we need to shift the dominant paradigm in the field of public education from one of teacher as active supreme expert and student as passive recipient of knowledge. This requires an institution-wide and bureaucratic social critique as well as a wide sharing and openness to understanding isolated successes when students are given responsibility, agency, invitation to collaborate, and flexibility. Given the built-in teacher habitus, a shift beginning with teachers is a good place to start. Because the field of public education is a heteronomous field, tackling the economic and political constraints will take a social justice revolution at a federal level.

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