



Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

Volume 49
Issue 3 June/July 2009

Article 4

6-2009

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Recommended Citation

Brown, R. (2009). What Does TV Viewing Have to do with Internet Reading?: Readers, Television ‘Texts’, and Intertextual Links to Companion Websites. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 49 (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol49/iss3/4

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What Does TV Viewing Have to do with Internet Reading?: Readers, Television 'Texts', and Intertextual Links to Companion Websites

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Abstract

A growing number of television programs direct their viewers to access an Internet website for further information on a presented topic. The explicit link between television programs and companion Internet websites, both of which communicate information through multiple modes, can be considered a form of intertextuality. Do college students actually avail themselves of TV-Internet connections? Do they believe that this type of intertextuality influences their reading practices? This article reports research on these questions and then explores the implications of TV-Internet intertextuality for literacy and pedagogy.

Intertextuality occurs when actual or implied connections are made between and across texts (Chandler, 2003). These associations fall along a continuum of links intentionally inserted by the author and those constructed independently by the text's reader (New London Group, 1996). In recent years, a new form of intertextuality has appeared, one in which a television show not only includes a variety of multimedia elements but also references a website linked to its programming. For example, in a C-Span program called *Washington Journal*, a newscaster reads aloud a portion of a printed article, highlighted in yellow. This is followed by video footage, an interview excerpt, and conversations with individuals who call in comments. The remainder of the program threads images, print, sounds, and speech

into a seamless whole (an example of a multimodal text; New London Group, 1996). Then, the program encourages the audience to access a secondary text, a companion webpage on the Internet, where they can locate further information on presented topics.

This type of TV-Internet intertextuality derives from pervasive and accelerating changes in new information and communication technologies. From *Oprah* to *Masterpiece Theater*, television programs explicitly and increasingly reference websites that link to their programming.

What Does This Out-of-School Web-Based Intertextuality Have to do With Literacy Learning?

The rapid rate of technological change is generating a host of new literacy practices (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Particularly outside of school, students of all ages explore a wide array of popular culture media and new information and communication technologies. For example, adolescents and adults surf the web at home, contribute to fan-fiction websites, submit to on-line magazines, read and write in digital microworlds, and chat during instant-messaging (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Dudfield, 1999; Guzzetti, Campbell, Duke, & Irving, 2003; Lewis & Fabos, 2005).

The multimedia and digital texts students experience regularly outside of academic settings communicate information via multiple channels or modes including sound, images, and video streaming as well as conventional print. These hybrid, multimodal texts require the use of additional literacies to decipher their meaning. Yet, conventional print still reigns supreme in today's classrooms (Hobbs & Frost, 2003; King & O'Brien, 2002). As such, there is a mismatch between students' out-of-school and in-school literacy practices at all levels of education (Hagood, Stevens, & Reinking, 2002). To counter this situation and to prepare students to be active participants in our technologically rich world, they need more ongoing and explicit instruction in multiple literacies (Leu et al., 2004; New London Group, 1996).

To provide such instruction, educators need to attend more closely to new literacy practices, such as those afforded by the Internet. There is no question that Internet usage is on the rise; in 2000, 66.9% of Americans of all ages who participated in a large-scale, national survey reported accessing the Internet an average of 10.25 hours per week (UCLA Center for Communication Policy, 2000). In comparison, in the fifth year of the survey, 78.6 of respondents claimed they

accessed the Internet an average of 13.3 hours per week (Center for the Digital Future, 2005).

What does the increasing availability of the World Wide Web mean for instruction in academic settings? Many of those who research new literacy practices maintain that students need further instruction in comprehending and using information contained in nonprint media (Coiro, 2003; Leu, et al., 2004). They also suggest that students learn to evaluate the quality of information available on webpages and to critique the hidden biases and stereotypes within them (Eagleton & Dobler, 2006; Henry, 2006). Furthermore, they stress the importance of teaching the dynamic interplay of multiple representational forms within a single text, such as when print, visuals, audio, and video elements work together to communicate meaning. However, just as importantly, classroom teachers can explore the notion of intertextuality. That is, teachers can focus on the inserted or implied connections among multimodal texts that cut across varied media.

The widespread use of the Internet suggests that readers form explicit intertextual connections between printed text and Internet content. Moreover, the ever-increasing availability and use of the Internet at home sets the stage for other types of intertextual crossovers, such as when links are made between TV shows and Internet webpages. These associations have probably come about because of the rapid rise in TV websites as in 1995, fewer than 100 television stations had companion Internet websites (Bates, Chambers, Emery, Jones, McClug, & Park, 1997) and by 2003, this number had swelled to over a thousand (Always, n.d.).

This growth in TV websites, along with frequent exhortations for viewers to visit these sites, prompted this study of television-Internet intertextuality. This article begins with a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings for this work then reports research that explored whether college students actually made intertextual connections between TV and the Internet and whether that type of intertextuality impacted their professed reading practices. The article concludes by considering the potential implications of the research.

Theoretical Context for this Research

The term “intertextuality” is not new; theorists, educators, and researchers from varied disciplines, including literary theory and media studies, have explored the construct for years (Allen, 2000; Shuart-Faris & Bloome, 2004). At its most basic, intertextuality refers to the act of understanding a text in relation to at least

one other broadly defined textual source (Chandler, 2003). While some discuss intertextuality from the perspective of the writer (e.g., how a writer references one text in another), others focus more on the role of the reader (e.g. how a reader constructs meaning by associating something in the new text to something similar in a known text).

This construct has evolved over time. Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993), for example, summarize the multiple ways the term has been used in the past:

Intertextuality has been located primarily in literary texts, in the readers of literary texts, in language, in the cognitive-linguistic strategies that readers and writers employ, and in the educational environments in which students read and write...[and as] a social construction, located in the social interactions that people have with each other. (p. 308)

The term “intertextuality” was introduced by the literary theorist Julia Kristeva in *Word, Dialogue, and the Novel* (1986), where she discussed the interdependent connections that exist between a primary text and the reader, and the primary text and other texts that comprise our literary legacy. Kristeva (1986) believed that every text is a reworking of previous texts. That is, no text can ever be unique, nor can it be truly original (Barthes, 1977). Rather, Kristeva (1986) claims every text is inherently intertextual, an “absorption and transformation of another” (p. 37). Moreover, she broke with past notions that meaning resides in the text to be extracted by the reader. Instead, she attributed importance to the active role of the reader in constructing text meaning (Kristeva, 1986). This notion is familiar to literacy educators since it also figures significantly in Louise Rosenblatt’s (1978) work. Rosenblatt explains how the squiggles on the page remain dormant until the reader enlivens them during reading. This process of bringing words to life occurs when readers link their knowledge of past events and texts to their interpretation of present texts (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Some contemporary literary theorists expand past notions of intertextuality when they discuss newer digital varieties, such as hypertext, which is the text type associated with Internet webpages that enables readers to connect non linearly and expediently to other multimodal sites when they click on embedded links (Bolter, 1992; Schmar-Dobler, 2003). Thus, hypertexts, such as Internet webpages, are thought to explode traditional conceptions of a text and are perceived by some to be quintessentially intertextual (Landow, 1992). For example, readers can link to other texts (e.g. definition boxes, annotations, images, video, snippets of sound) within the body of

the primary document. Or, they can make explicit intertextual connections as they move from one hypertext to another on the World Wide Web.

Although literary theorists and educational researchers have long reckoned with intertextuality, they are not the only ones who have adopted the construct. The next section explores how those in media studies also take up the notion.

Media Studies and Intertextuality

Intertextuality continues to receive considerable attention in its own right within media studies (Chandler, 2003). Within the field, intertextuality tends to be dually defined as on the one hand, it refers to allusions that media authors intentionally embed in their media texts for stylistic and other purposes; on the other, it relates to the unconscious way that audiences bring meaning to a specific media text by considering it in relation to others that have preceded it (Ott & Walter, 2000).

If one thinks of a TV show as a visual medium to be “read,” then intertextuality describes how one program can be interpreted relative to others. According to Agger (1999),

Intertextuality can be discussed on many different levels. The choice of a specific title, a certain kind of music, or a particular way of moving a camera in TV fiction all provide examples of intertextuality when analyzed closely and with an eye to the relevant relations. Genre, cultural traditions, and national and international relations constitute a broader notion of intertextuality, which is practically indispensable in the interpretation of works’ significant relational features and the traditions to which they belong. (¶15)

Fiske (1989) extends Kristeva’s (1986) work on intertextuality. Similar to Kristeva, he sees intertextuality as the interpretive process through which a viewer applies prior knowledge to make sense of a particular TV text. Fiske (1989) also accepts Kristeva’s notion that all symbol systems contain traces of previous texts. This intertextual interweaving of voices, conventions, codes, ideas and other texts occurs whether information is encoded in print or some other signifying medium.

Unquestionably, literary and media studies provide helpful theories in illuminating various notions of intertextuality. However, multiliteracies theory provides a unifying frame for understanding intertextuality in relation to television programs, Internet hypertext, and other multimodal, multimedia texts that occur in off- and on-line formats.

Multiliteracies Perspective and Intertextuality

Multiliteracies theorists hold that literacy practices are in rapid flux (New London Group, 1996). For one, innovative information and communications technologies are prompting new literacy practices. Second, individuals, more than ever, encounter diverse cultural and linguistic texts as a function of increased globalization and technological advances (New London Group, 1996). From a multiliteracies perspective, these societal and technological changes demand a new pedagogy (Luke, 2003; New London Group, 1996). A multiliteracy pedagogy, in part, provides explicit instruction, as well as a common language, for learning about linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal ways for communicating and constructing meaning (e.g. designs). Moreover, students learn to reflect critically about how these modes operate in various social contexts for diverse purposes (New London Group, 1996). This perspective also forefronts the concept of intertextuality. According to a multiliteracies framework, intertextuality describes the way readers construct meaning of multimodal, multimedia texts when they draw upon their knowledge of different genres, language conventions, and socially, culturally, and historically situated meanings (New London Group, 1996).

In summary, theoretical precedents exist for studying intertextuality within the traditions of both literary theory and media studies. In recent times, a multiliteracies perspective serves as an effective means for grounding work on intertextuality and the framework provides an explanation for how engagement with innovative technologies engenders new literacy practices. Furthermore, proponents of this framework argue that educators and researchers need to become aware of the implication of these new practices for pedagogy.

Informed by a multiliteracies perspective, this research studies a new literacy practice, the intertextual links college students make or fail to make when they view TV programs and then access companion websites. Moreover, like Mackey (2003), this research considers the implications of cross-media intertextuality and its impact on literacy practices:

Just as we need to take a broad view of the complex context in which texts are supplied to their users, similarly, it is essential to take account of changing practices among these users of text. For example, many people's viewing behaviors (going to a movie, switching on the television) are now hugely enlarged to include an enormous amount of reading and writing (checking out Internet sites, signing onto a chat room), all directly related to the viewed texts. (p. 405)

This exploratory work is focused on three broad questions:

1. Do students actually access TV program websites after being directed to do so during television viewing?
2. Do students make connections between TV programs and associated websites for specific reasons?
3. Do students believe that making intertextual TV-Internet connections impacts their reading?

Description of the Study

Participants were undergraduate and graduate students who attended a private university in the northeastern United States. Four hundred and thirty-eight (438) students agreed to participate. Of the total, 378 were undergraduates and 60 were graduate students, with the majority of all students falling between the ages of 17-22 (371) and 23-35 (54). The participants were enrolled in either the School of Education or the Media Studies program in the School of Public Communication. These schools were chosen intentionally because, in light of intertextuality's long history with education-related and media studies, it was hoped that students in these schools might be more inclined to complete the survey, given a suspected interest in the topic. Despite the fact that these students might be more familiar with the concept, the word "intertextuality" was not used explicitly in the survey just in case respondents were unfamiliar with the term.

It was necessary to design a survey since no measure of TV-Internet intertextuality existed. The overall survey reflected a multiliteracies perspective; the questions were constructed based on the belief that literacy practices might be changed (or, in the case of this study, be *perceived* as changed) as a result of engagement with television websites. Although theory informed item writing, the construction of the survey drew on the researcher's informal discussions with students regarding their use of television websites as well. These discussions helped to identify possible reasons for why students might (or might not) access television websites.

Based on these sources, a five page, 24-item survey consisting of three parts was created. In Part I (12 items), students were asked to provide information about themselves and their use of technology. All of these items were close-ended, requiring individuals to select from provided alternatives (Example: Do you own a computer with access to the Internet? Yes No). In Part II (11 items), respondents

were asked to describe their purposes for linking to a TV website during or after watching a TV program. This section consisted of seven close-ended items (Example: How much time, ON AVERAGE, did you spend reading/seeking information on a TV website after viewing the show that referred you to that site? Less than 15 minutes 16-30 minutes 30- 60 minutes More than an hour). This part also included three multi-part items which asked students to check off all provided options that applied, and one open-ended item that asked for examples of TV website viewing. In Part III, students responded to one multi-part item to identify reasons why they never accessed a TV website.

Professors in the Schools of Education and Media Studies were contacted asking for volunteers and those who agreed to participate distributed the surveys in class. Participation was totally voluntary and students who agreed to participate completed their surveys anonymously.

Results of the Study

To analyze the data, totals were calculated for each survey item and then converted to percentages. Although ownership patterns were high for both TV and computer, more students owned computers (99% of total respondents) than televisions (89%). Virtually all students accessed the Internet both from school (99%) and from home (97%), with the vast majority (85%) spending more than 7 hours per week on the Internet. In comparison, 44% of the students viewed television more than 7 hours per week. Thus, students tended to spend more time reading on the Internet than watching television (see Table 1).

The percentages presented in the results section do not necessarily sum to 100% because students could check off more than one response for some items and they sometimes opted to leave items blank. The findings were organized relative to the three research questions established at the outset of the study. These were: 1) Do students make TV-Internet connections?; 2) Do students make these intertextual connections for specific reasons?; and 3) Do students believe that this form of intertextuality impacts their reading practices?

Table 1. *Patterns of Usage*

	Totals	Percentage
Ownership and Access Patterns		
Students who own a television	390/438	89%
Hours viewing		
Less than 7 hours	222/438	51%
Between 7 and 15 hours	141/438	32%
More than 15 hours	51/438	12%
Students who own a computer	433/438	99%
Access to Internet		
From home	425/438	97%
From school	435/438	99%
Hours using Internet		
Less than 7 hours	67/438	15%
Between 7 and 15 hours	180/438	41%
More than 15 hours	191/438	44%
Frequency of TV-Internet Access		
Students who accessed companion TV website	243/438	55%
Access frequency		
Few times a year	178/243	73%
Few times a month	40/243	17%
Few times a week	11/243	5%
Everyday	2/243	1%
Impact of TV-Internet Access		
Time spent reading when companion TV website is accessed		
Up to 30 minutes	219/243	90%
More than 30 minutes	20/243	8%
Additional time reading when other, related website(s) is accessed		
Up to 30 minutes	205/243	84%
More than 30 minutes	29/243	12%
Additional time accessing other sources		
Never accessed related book	91/243	37%
Seldom accessed related book	96/243	40%
Sometimes or often accessed related book	45/243	19%
Never accessed related printed source	41/243	17%
Seldom accessed related book	95/243	39%
Sometimes or often accessed related printed source	98/243	40%
Students electing to return to site		
At some future point	207/243	85%
Bookmarking site	113/243	47%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because of items left blank by students or because of responses from separate survey items arranged together in the table for ease of comparison.

Frequency of TV-Internet Access

When respondents were asked if they accessed a website after seeing its address embedded in a television show, 55% of the 438 students ($N=243$) said that

they had made such TV-Internet connections within the past year. Of those who linked to a TV website, 73% (178/243) said they connected a few times a year, 17% (40/243) a few times a month, and only 5% (11/243) a few times a week. In comparison, 45% of all 438 ($N=195$) respondents said they had never accessed a television website after being directly referred to it during or after watching a television program. Forty-four percent of the non-accessing students claimed that they did not make TV-Internet linkages because they never thought to make such a connection. Another key reason for not accessing companion TV websites related to having insufficient time due to work or other pressing obligations (41%; $N=80$).

Time constraints could impact accessing TV websites in several ways. For one, participants ordinarily might have linked to TV websites given more time and secondly, study participants might have preferred to reserve their limited time for accessing the Internet for purposes other than linking to companion TV websites. Finally, according to the Center for the Digital Future Report (2005), television viewing apparently declines as Internet usage increases. Paralleling the report's results, participants in this study spent more time reading on the Internet than watching TV (see Table 1). It is therefore possible that less time watching television meant fewer opportunities for viewing programs that contained embedded intertextual links.

When asked in an open-ended item to explain why they did not link to the Internet, a sizeable number of non-accessing students wrote in a response. Most of these students expressed no interest in connecting to TV websites after an explicit referral. A few mentioned that they had "better things to do" or considered such connections a "waste of time." Others felt that TV programming sufficiently provided all the information that they needed. Several students claimed that they were "too lazy" to follow through on a connection. Finally, a number wrote that they believed the information provided on these sites to be "useless garbage" because the providers used them to sell ads, to promote their own programming, or to bias readers. This stance indicates critical multiliteracies awareness on the part of at least some students, who recognize that technology is never value-free; they elected to resist what they perceived as negative messages in companion TV websites (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000).

Thus, a sizeable group never looked up TV websites because of lack of motivation or constraints due to work. Also, many of these readers never considered logging onto a website after being encouraged to do so. However, more than half the sample (55%; 243/438) did look up a television website after an explicit reference to it during television viewing. The next section explores what happened to those students who did, in fact, make intertextual connections.

Reasons for TV-Internet Access

Students who accessed companion TV websites said they did so for a variety of reasons (See Figure 1). They most frequently went online to entertain themselves (83%) and to obtain information about a news event (81%). These results coincide with University of Southern California’s national study of Internet usage; their top ten online activities reflect accessing the Internet for both information-seeking and entertainment purposes (Center for the Digital Future, 2005).

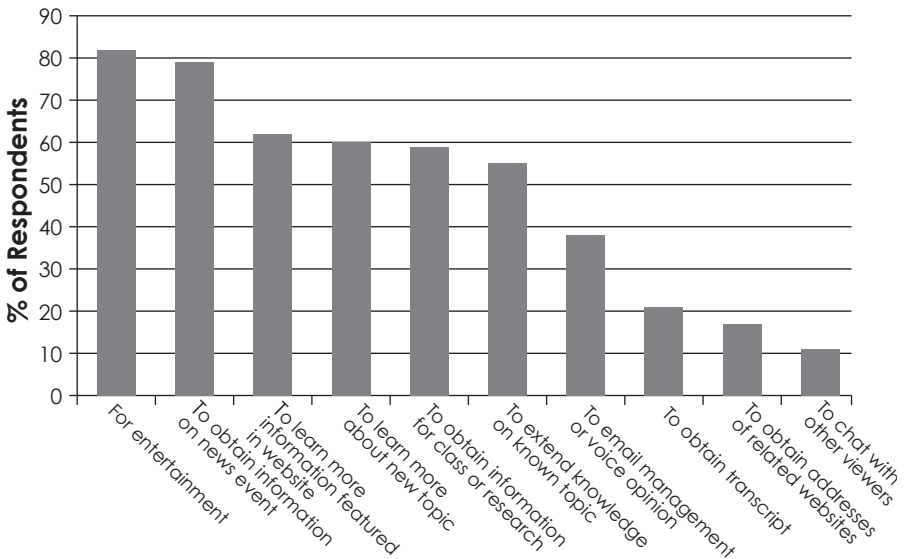


Figure 1. Reasons for Accessing Television Website (N=243)

Several students wrote in additional reasons for accessing TV-websites after explicit referrals with responses ranging from general activities such as watching clips of shows, getting more information on a reported story, or catching up on missed programs to more specific purposes, such as voting or obtaining house floor plans. As one individual wrote, a primary inducement to connect to these sites was the ability to “satisfy curiosity” and to provide information access that was “so easy.”

Impact of TV-Internet Access

Most readers claimed that once they went online, they took time to learn more about a topic. For example, the majority of respondents who access TV websites (90% of 243 students) claimed they spent up to 30 minutes reading or seeking information once they made the initial TV-Internet connection. In addition, 96%

of accessing students said they subsequently linked to *additional* websites to learn more about a topic that was first introduced by the companion TV website, with 84% of these students reading up to 30 minutes per topic.

When asked whether accessing students ever sought follow-up information from books on a topic initially covered in a TV website, a large majority of these participants (77% of the 55% who accessed the related television website) responded that they seldom or never followed up using books. However, a greater number of respondents (79% of the accessing 55%) at least occasionally sought additional information from other print resources (e.g., journals, magazines or newspapers) on a topic initially brought to their attention by a TV website. Eight-five percent said they independently returned to a TV website after their first contact, with 47% bookmarking the website. These survey items suggest that students, curious to obtain further information on a topic first presented on a television program, are more likely to read about it on the Internet than in a printed text. This occurrence may be due in part to what Luke (1997) refers to as “space-time compression” (¶ 1). That means that students no longer are restricted by traditional time and space constraints, such as having to go to a library during specific hours to obtain additional materials. This ease of access fosters intertextuality.

In addition, students who accessed companion TV websites were asked whether they believed that their reading’ practices had changed relative to their use of television websites. They were asked to complete the following survey question by checking all of the responses that they believed applied to them (221 of 243 students completed the question).

What changes, if any, have you noted in your reading habits as a result of your use of television websites? Check all that apply.

- I now spend more time reading on-line and less time reading printed materials. (40%)
- I read as many print sources as before (books, magazines, journal articles, etc.) but now I supplement this with additional reading on the Internet. (31%)
- I think I read more for entertainment purposes than I did before. (38%)
- I think I read more for informational or research purposes than I did before. (39%)
- I think there are no changes in my reading habits. (15%)

Overall, most students who said they did connect to television websites believed that changes occurred in their breadth and depth of reading. Even when questioning

the reliability of self-reported data in that stated beliefs may not parallel actual behaviors, the fact that a total of 85% of accessing students said they noted changes in reading practices suggests that this type of intertextuality merits further study.

What do These Results Tell us About TV-Internet Intertextuality?

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (2007) recently released its latest report, which summarized research findings on American reading trends from 40 sources. According to this report, teenagers and young adults are reading less frequently, are less inclined to read, and are comprehending less effectively. Of marked concern is the following conclusion: “both reading ability and the habit of regular reading have greatly declined among college graduates” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, p. 3). Among other items, cited evidence in support of this claim include the following: a) 65% of college freshmen never or sporadically read for fun; b) reading, when it occurs, vies with other media; and c) youth and young adults ages 15 to 24 spend almost 42% of their weekday leisure time on watching television (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007).

Yet, is the situation as bleak as depicted for adolescents and college students? Perhaps not, if one understands that young adults’ engagement with digital texts helps to broaden the notion of reading. For example, a decline in the reading of printed texts may actually mean that students of all ages are reallocating some of their discretionary time for recreational and other reading online. Thus, as multimodal and multimedia texts increasingly share the stage with traditional print, those of us in literacy studies need to better understand how engagement with the new technologies impacts the way we and our students read and how it causes us to rethink our definition of reading (Leu et al., 2004). If, as it is argued, long-term participation in the new technologies transforms us (Reinking, 1998), it is not improbable that individuals who make TV-Internet intertextual connections perceive a change in their reading practices, as suggested by this study.

Some hints of changes appeared in the results. More than half the students claimed they, at least periodically, connected to TV websites after an explicit TV referral. Although the vast majority of students stated they only logged onto these TV websites a few times a year, almost a quarter of them connected at least a few times a month. This number may seem low relative to the entire sample. However, the reduced number may be due, in part, to respondents’ busy schedules. Moreover, the results imply that those who infrequently or never accessed companion TV websites

may not have been sufficiently motivated to make regular connections. However, this figure does not take into account individuals who access TV websites on their own, without explicit television referrals. Moreover, many television shows do not post an explicit website address for viewers. Thus these results may underestimate the actual number of connections students voluntarily make on their own – or would make, if explicit referrals to companion websites appeared more frequently.

That said, most students who made intertextual connections thought that their reading practices changed in response to Internet reading. They claimed they changed in their breadth of reading; they examined the same amount of printed text as before but now supplemented this activity with hypertext reading. Students also indicated that their depth of reading changed; they sometimes pursued a topic initially introduced on a website by reading more about it in additional websites, magazines, newspapers, and less so in books. In fact, only 15% maintained that their reading habits did not change as a result of intertextual linkages between TV and companion websites.

Also, TV-Internet connections occasion more expansive thinking about explicit intertextuality. First, TV shows often reference companion websites by explicitly attaching an Internet address to a TV program to induce intertextual linking. In effect, the included website address scaffolds viewers to make intertextual links. Consequently, the association between TV show and Internet website becomes highly visible. Second, viewers/readers make conscious choices about which intertextual links to pursue. Consciously chosen intertextual connections work in tandem with the implicit ones that individuals make when they interpret text relative to conventions, genres, social codes and practices, styles, voices, and other texts previously experienced and internalized. Thus, as Kristeva (1986) noted, readers play an active, and in fact, interactive role when constructing the meaning (and structure) of an Internet text by selecting links of interest in a preferred sequence. Third, explicit intertextuality occurs within companion TV websites, as in other online hypertexts, when authors intentionally and explicitly incorporate links to encourage intertextual connections both within and across texts. The explicit interweaving of texts on the part of media authors comes quite close to embodying Kristeva's (1986) idea that any single text represents the absorption and transformation of other texts.

In addition to enlarging the concept of explicit intertextuality, TV-Internet associations make us think more about the directionality of connections. That is, in the past, intertextuality typically meant applying *prior* knowledge to new texts. With TV-Internet intertextuality, viewers make intertextual connections to Internet

texts not yet encountered. That is not to say that a viewer might not pick up a related book from the library at some point later in time. For example, students in this study stated that they did obtain books or other printed material on a related topic from time to time. However, the ease of linking to other resources on the World Wide Web facilitates forward intertextuality.

What are the Implications of this Out-of-School Practice for Pedagogy?

Respondents in this study included individuals enrolled in teacher preparation programs who eventually will work closely with students who engage in new literacy practices outside of school. To be prepared for this challenge, future teachers, as well as practicing teachers of adolescents and college students, can benefit from learning more about how to explicitly instruct their students to construct meaning from multimodal, multimedia sources and to reflect critically on the social practices and contexts associated with them (New London Group, 1996). Also, teachers need to become aware of their own literacy practices related to various media and digital texts in order to serve as effective models and to engage in authentic conversations with students (Hagood, 2003). Just as importantly, they need to learn that providing such instruction does not mean providing an occasional mini-lesson on multimodality. A better approach entails planning and blending multiliteracies instruction into teaching and course design in such a way that it parallels the integrated use and production of these texts in our daily lives.

Moreover, in preparation for such instruction, pre-service teachers could benefit from learning more about intertextuality. Instruction could include teaching students about media authors' intentional insertion of intertextual references and readers' implicit use of prior knowledge (e.g., different genres, language conventions, and social codes) across diverse text types. Instruction could also address explicit, intertextual connections across media and texts not yet read. For, if we agree with one aspect of Luke's (2000) pedagogical view, teaching intertextuality is becoming increasingly important in our multimedia, multimodal world:

Today, the expert is the one who sees and seeks the connection among related pieces of information. Hence, electronic reading and writing, a sense of intertextual connectivity, relational knowledge and, thinking laterally across associations are fundamental to ... information sourcing. (p. 73)

Conclusion

Without question, more work is needed to better understand how intertextuality varies given differences in age, class, ethnic backgrounds, and gender. Future investigations could include analysis of individuals' actual practices, and not just their professed beliefs. Of great value, too, would be an in-depth analysis of the types of intertextual connections readers make when obtaining additional texts both on and off the computer after they follow up television viewing with a related website.

Although this line of research is still evolving, it brings to light yet another literacy practice linked to the new information and communication technologies. This work also encourages educators and researchers to think more broadly about the nature of intertextuality and its relationship to the rich array of multimodal, multimedia texts that readers now experience every day.



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Author Note

This research was supported by a grant from the Center for the Study of Popular Television at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University.

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