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Within, without, and amidst: A review of literacy educators' perceptions of participatory media technologies

William Terrell Wright

University of Georgia, USA

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Corresponding Author:
William Terrell Wright
wrightwilliam33@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

With strict no-cell phone policies in classrooms becoming commonplace, national and international electioneering campaigns eroding trust in social media platforms, and content posted years prior affecting students' acceptance into the colleges of their choice, it is little wonder that educators often think twice about bringing participatory technologies into their instruction. This literature review seeks to address how literacy educators reckon with the risks and potentials of these participatory technologies in the midst of our current sociopolitical climate, through an examination of an array of factors and influences that shape and give rise to educators' understandings of participatory technologies' place in 21st-century education. The hope is that doing so will help delineate a clearer problem space for future investigation into the relationships between teacher perceptions, participatory technologies, and educational transformation.

Keywords: *literacy, participatory technologies, teacher perceptions*.

INTRODUCTION

With strict no-cell phone policies in classrooms becoming commonplace, national and international electioneering campaigns eroding trust in social media platforms, and content posted years prior affecting students' acceptance into the college of their choice, it is little wonder that educators often think twice about bringing participatory technologies into their instruction (Farkas, 2012; Hegarty, 2015; Howell et al., 2016).

While the capacities of new media have led to a seemingly overwhelming decentralization of information and expression (Dahlgren, 2013; Siapera, 2017), literacy educators continue to think through how best, and even whether, to make use of these unpredictable technological capacities in the fraught context of our so-called "post-truth" era (Goering & Thomas, 2018) or "era of outrage" (Middaugh, 2019).

This literature review seeks to address how literacy educators reckon with the risks and potentials of these participatory technologies in the midst of our current sociopolitical climate: that is, toward the end of the first quarter of the 21st century in the contexts of standardization, neoliberalism, fan culture, "fake news," infomania, etc.

Considerations as to how English Language Arts (ELA) teachers perceive and incorporate these capabilities into their pedagogies, if at all, have yet to be addressed adequately in the literature at large (Ajayi, 2013).

A synthesis of themes from scholarship, exploring literacy educators' impressions of the participatory elements of new media, highlights concerns that range from the ceding of expertise to a desire to avoid unpredictability and the possibility of transgression. Other literacy educators, however, extoll the powerful latitude of embracing forms of new media in the classroom, of inviting students to produce and participate on digital platforms that they have, as yet, been unable to experiment with in institutional spaces. Still other scholars address the complexity of engaging with these technologies and discuss issues of circulation and suppression within broader discourses of education.

The author contends that future inquiry needs to build on recent attempts to construct sustainable models for engagement with participatory technologies in educational spaces, models that account for and are considerate toward those most affected: teachers and students.

Cartography of terms

Given the ever-burgeoning nature of the subject of this literature review, it will first be worthwhile to provide a brief cartography of terms. Recent signifiers such as "new" and "participatory" have been increasingly used alongside more established, though oftentimes no less hazy concepts such as "media literacy" and "critical media literacy." A brief overview of these constellating ideas will thus be provided in order to situate and further interrogate their relationships to one another.

In the past twenty years, both multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996) and new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) have advocated for the expansion of literacy education to include digital technologies. While multiliteracies pedagogy highlights the ways in which technology affords various new modes of consumption, production, and even understanding of texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), new literacies are most commonly interpreted as practices that have "arisen *in relationship* [emphasis added] with [these] new technologies" (p. 37). These new technologies are often referred to as new media: in short, technology that "provides more opportunities for deliberation, discussion, sharing, equity, and participation" than traditional forms of media, "thus aiding democratic processes…[and] creat[ing] free communication that is less susceptible to censorship and has a higher reach" (Tugtekin & Koc, 2019, p. 2). More concretely, new literacies encompass competencies ranging from crowd-sourcing information and determining social influence to navigating social networks. In other words, learning to maneuver through and determine the influence, legitimacy, and interactive tendencies of various new media technologies and their impact on personal, social, and political relationships through such means as "the Internet, video, websites, social network media, iPhone, and iPad" falls comfortably within the purview of new literacies (Ajayi, 2013, p. 173).

Meanwhile, the term "critical media literacy" has been equally, if not more, difficult to define (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). Ranging from the ability to successfully navigate the many pleasures and pitfalls derived from mass media and popular culture to selectively choosing, reflecting upon, and producing one's own multimedia texts, critical media literacy has been a somewhat slippery concept at best and a misappropriated one at worst.

More than a decade ago, seeking to combat this ambiguity, Kellner and Share (2007) put forth a definition of critical media literacy that, by their reckoning, subsumed and went beyond standard approaches to teaching critical media literacy at the time. These approaches included protecting people from the dangers of mass media, encouraging creative self-expression through developing an aesthetic appreciation for different forms of media, and broadening the definition of literacy to include informational and technical literacy. Where these approaches fell short, according to Kellner and Share, is that they failed to constitute "a critique of mainstream approaches to literacy and a political project for democratic social change" (p. 61).

Kellner and Share went on to suggest that critical media literacy was still in its "infancy" and had not been taken up by mainstream literacy educators because there were no firmly rooted traditions or procedures that could contend with the pressures of standardized high-stakes testing (the U.S. federal No Child Left Behind Act, which required states to establish skills assessments, greatly expanding the amount of testing required of K-12 students, was introduced in 2001). With little support from policy-makers and administrators and a general dearth of media education courses being taught in teacher education programs across the country, Kellner and Share called for a shift in the landscape of how educators teach, frame, and support the integration of critical media literacy in 21st-century classrooms. Years later, however, we are still attending to the conditions of possibility that might bring about this change. While critical media literacy may well be part of the "adventure in the grand social cause of radical democracy" (p. 68), I conclude, at the end of this review, that such shifts will not occur unless educators contend more seriously with the complicated discursive forces that affect the way teachers and policy-makers conceive of and experience the potential of these emergent digital realms.

More recently, Thomas (2018) wrote that "to embrace teaching critical media literacy (in conjunction with critical pedagogy and critical literacy) is [to disrupt] the traditional norm that educators remain apolitical" (p. 8). Though apolitical education is, of course, impossible, this sentiment nevertheless prevails as a common default stance toward pedagogy that has historically resulted in normalized indifference and a reification of the status quo. Meanwhile, work has been done to define the characteristics of new media literacy and to develop an analytical framework for systematic investigation (Chen et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2013). In the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election especially, the field of critical media literacy must undertake a heightened interrogation of new media technologies and acknowledge their capacities to warp, suppress, and mobilize civic participation.

So, in order to resist stitching these many, often overlapping concepts together into an altogether unwieldy term (such as new critical participatory media literacy), I will instead describe the specific form of encounter this literature review seeks to examine. At their core, the included articles each address the ways in which practicing or pre-service literacy educators engage, or do not engage, with these new and emerging participatory technologies in their classrooms. Formulated as a question, I ask how, and to what extent, has academic literature focused on literacy educators' perceptions of the participatory capacities of new media technologies? Whether broader discourses surrounding the political and highly polarized nature of the mediasphere have shaped and affected those perceptions, whether there is room for such technologies in school(ing) as it is traditionally conceived, and to what extent there are genuine concerns to reckon with before integrating such tools into instruction are all considered prismatically through this single band of inquiry. What such a framing represents is a parsing and bringing together again of the affective forces that shape and give rise to educators' understandings of participatory technologies' place in 21st-century education. The hope is that doing so will help delineate a clearer problem space for future investigation into the relationships between teacher perceptions, participatory technologies, and educational transformation.

METHODS

For this review, I examined peer-reviewed articles with a primary focus on P-12 education. While including research from around the world, the scholarship reviewed is nevertheless limited to articles published in the English language. The project began in the Fall of 2019 and concluded in the Spring of 2020. As the phenomenon of inquiry is new and fast-changing, included articles are necessarily bound to the last 18 years (2001 to 2019). Given that general research on literacy teachers' integration of technology is often hampered by (1) integration being studied across curricular areas, (2) a lack of distinction between shallow and deeper forms of curricular engagement, or (3) an intensive focus on exemplar teachers (Hutchison & Reinking, 2011), it became imperative to conduct my

search in such a way that both accounted for and minimized the possibility of conceptual or disciplinary ambiguity. I therefore limited my initial searches to Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Education Research Complete via EBSCO, two databases which represent significant archives of educational research.

In order to get at the particular phenomenon I was after, I used a series of terms more or less interchangeably due to their conceptual linkages to one another: specifically, new media, new literacies, new media literacies, media literacy, critical media literacy, and participatory media. All, I felt, had an important degree of overlap with regards to the specific technological capacity I was after. I wanted to combine this participatory element of new media literacies with teachers' perceptions. To do so, I established second and third sets of criteria – teacher* perception* or belief* or attitude*, *alongside* challenge* or barrier* or obstacle* or issue* or concern* or tension* – operator combinations which allowed me to account for the various ways these encounters might be characterized. I also experimented with other terms such as "courage," "transgression," and "haphazard" in attempts to narrow my searches, although these usually yielded little to no results.

With successful searches, I began a distillatory effort by first scanning the titles and then the abstracts of the articles for explicit mentions of (1) participatory elements of new media literacy and (2) teacher'(s) perception(s) of related tension. I pooled together relevant hits into a folder and cross-checked their reference lists for additional titles that appeared pertinent. I subjected these titles to the same procedure as before, iteratively working and reworking my list, until I had a collection of 23 articles that spoke meaningfully in some way about my phenomenon of inquiry. Although there are considerable bodies of research around new media literacy and teachers' integration of technology in general, scholarly attention to the specific aporetic concerns that teachers continue to experience with regards to the power of participatory technologies appears to be surprisingly limited.

FINDINGS

Broad themes from the reviewed articles were derived through a process of constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that resulted in the following three thematically-derived sections. The first section discusses articles that examine various educator dispositions and how they relate to teachers' perceptions of new media technologies. This approach constitutes an "inside → outside" perspective that takes as its primary mode of inquiry the question of how teachers' values, beliefs, and attitudes affect their interpretation of the various technologies available to them. The second section explores some of the perceived dangers of engaging students through participatory online spaces, particularly cyberviolence, sexism, online abuse, outrage language, and concerns of credibility. Such an approach, by contrast, constitutes an "outside to inside" approach that examines how external influences shape the internal opinions of educators deciding whether or not to engage with the power, possibility, and potential dangers that new media technologies bring about. Finally, the third section considers the institutional pressures affecting whether and how teachers implement certain types of technology. Such pressures include the disparities between standardized testing and networked literacy practices, as well as fear of offending parents and/or attracting negative attention from administrators. This last approach examines the intermediary space between the inside and the outside, the directionless cultural milieu that serves as a backdrop for educators considering whether or not to engage with the participatory potentials of new media in their classrooms.

Beliefs and dispositions

Offering a foundational conceptualization of the importance of educator's pedagogical beliefs, Ertmer (2005) explored the still relatively low adoption of high-level technology amongst educators. Diving, herself, into the literature on how pedagogical beliefs shape educators' integration of technology into their classrooms, she equated high-level technology use with a constructivist, student-centered approach. Such a shift, she suggested, required a patient and subtle overhaul wherein teachers learned to become more comfortable adapting their instruction to new forms of expertise. Her review of the literature regarding the definition of teacher beliefs and their connections to practice involved differentiating beliefs from knowledge, acknowledging their joint complexity, and considering how beliefs are formed in the first place – and, through this, potentially changed. Advocating for increased technological integration, Ertmer finally asserts that it "is impossible to overestimate the influence of teachers' beliefs" (p. 36). This conclusion is further supported by more recent literature, such as Ertmer et al.'s (2012)

study of K-12 teachers' views toward the use of media in their teaching, which found that educators' beliefs influenced their instructional integration of technology to a far greater degree than peripheral factors such as the culture of a school or the perceived needs of students.

Hutchison & Reinking (2011) zeroed in, specifically, on literacy teachers' perceptions of integrating information communication technologies (ICTs) into literacy instruction through a national survey of 1,441 literacy teachers in the United States. The survey "provide[d] data concerning the types and levels of reported availability and use of ICTs, beliefs about the importance of integrating ICTs into literacy instruction, and perceived obstacles to doing so" (p. 312). The authors' analysis of the data included descriptive statistics, an exploratory factor analysis, and a path analysis testing a hypothesized relation between teachers' perceived importance of technology and reported levels of integration. Results revealed relatively low levels of curricular integration, consistent perceptions about obstacles to integration, and technological rather than curricular definitions of ICTs and of integration. The path analysis suggested several characteristics and influences associated with higher levels of integration and use, most notably a desire for administrative support in the form of advocacy and professional development.

That same year, Cullen and Greene (2011) set out to understand what most affected preservice teachers' intention to integrate technology in their future teaching. They also hoped, in the same breath, to determine whether the reported outcomes would be consistent with predictions of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which both propose necessary constructs to predict behavioral outcomes. Using survey data from a convenience sample of 114 preservice teachers from six sections of a required undergraduate technology integration course, they found that the single best predictor of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was positive attitudes toward technology use; whereas for amotivation, the best predictors were negative attitudes toward technology use and negative social norms. Data was elicited using Likert-type items that hit upon preservice teachers' perceived behavioral control, attitudes toward technology use, perceived social norms, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. The authors later admit, however, that there may be significant overlap in the factors that they examine. They also note that preservice teachers' intent to integrate technology would not necessarily translate into future action, concluding that "new instruments are needed to better understand the complex influences that define whether new educators will choose to use technology in their teaching" (p. 43).

One such instrument was Al-Hazza and Lucking's (2012) scale designed to illuminate particular constructs related to preservice teachers' views on multiliteracies. Composed of 27-item Likert-scale items and distributed to 192 graduate and undergraduate prospective teachers enrolled in teacher education courses, the survey found that female participants had more positive views of the emergence of newer technologies and their impact on issues surrounding New Literacies and "felt equally competent in their skills in technology as their male counterparts" (p. 68). The authors also found that "the more texting and emailing the students did the more inclined they were to hold positive views of the potential of technology" (p. 40), framing it as a "disquieting implication… that some heavy technology using habits such as texting may be related to the holding of rather rosy views of what technology can deliver in education" (p. 40). While their points are well taken, the authors' mild surprise regarding the fact that female students felt just as competent using technology as males, coupled with their use of words such as "youngsters" and "tomfoolery" throughout their study, seems to indicate a set of rather predetermined – if not outright problematic – assumptions toward technology and its prevalence amongst younger generations. This suggests that there may well be interesting tensions to attend to as younger generations of educators begin to tip the scales toward those who have grown up under the internet's influence, and that it may perhaps, at times, be incumbent on researchers to differentiate between these potentially-varying generational perspectives.

There are, of course, international perspectives to consider as well. Hobbs and Tuzel (2017) discussed results of nearly 2,820 Turkish educators from a Digital Learning Horoscope, a 48-item Likert scale instrument used to measure teachers' perception of the value and relevance of six conceptual themes, namely: attitudes toward technology tools, genres and formats; message content and quality; community connectedness; texts and audiences; media systems; and learner-centered focus. Although encompassing educators from a variety of disciplines, disaggregated results showed that Turkish English Language Arts (ELA) teachers are motivated by two distinctively different motivations:

> Some [ELA teachers] are Demystifiers who "pull back the curtain" to help students see how all forms of information and

> knowledge are constructed, emphasizing the practice of critical thinking, helping students ask good "how" and "why" questions. [Others] are Tastemakers – teachers who want to broaden their students' horizons, helping them to have exposure to a wide variety of texts, ideas, people and experiences that deepen their understanding of history, art, the sciences and society. (p. 19)

The authors go on to suggest that a lack of reflection about the purpose and aims of using technology may be hindering the impact of Turkey's digital integration programs. The authors emphasize this point by citing Pouzevara et al (2014):

> [...] if a teacher, school, district or country does not know whether they want to leverage ICT [i.e., Information and Communication Technology] for assessment, student engagement, dropout-reduction, multimedia teaching support, classroom management, access to research, or many of the other potential uses, they will most likely not succeed in any of them (p. 11).

While the authors acknowledged that "teachers' motivations… always exist in a dynamic cultural, historical and situational context" (p. 20), it is easy to identify marked parallels between the perceptions of these Turkish educators toward technology integration and the broader, international community of teachers. Kopcha's (2012) findings, for instance, were consistent with Hobbs and Tuzel's report in determining that teachers perceived a lack of vision and access to technology to be the most notable barriers they experienced integrating technology into their teaching. Stolle (2008), analyzing how 16 high school teachers shared stories relating to the intersections of literacy and technology, found that many of them felt constrained by "tensions relating to access, knowledge, fear, and benefits" (p. 65). Finally, Petko (2012), in a study of teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their use of new media, found that educators were more likely to use instructional technologies in their classrooms if they perceived themselves to be competent users of those technologies (i.e., as potential Demystifiers and Tastemakers).

As seems to be a rule with technology, change comes fast. Techno-utopian visions of what the internet would enable humankind to become have widely devolved into frustration and mistrust over the course of a few decades. Meanwhile, new dynamics have developed in the cultural sphere wherein youth, who often are positioned and, indeed, perceive themselves to be comparative technological experts in comparison to their adult counterparts, also play significant demystifying and taste-making roles. The above articles lay important groundwork for the need to better account for these complex feelings that teachers have toward the participatory technologies now proliferating within the digital landscape. And yet given the influence of negative social norms, the desire for administrative support that largely remains absent, variations in motivation, and a general confusion as to the ultimate purposes technology serves within educational contexts, one cannot help but wonder whether, or to what extent, today's largely wary sentiments toward technology prevent educators from choosing to engage with these tools in sustained, guided, and multi-dimensional ways. How the conversations surrounding these technologies produce such an array of wary sentiments is taken up in the next section.

Perceived dangers

Whether individual educators take them up explicitly or not, participatory technologies have already altered the tenor of traditional coursework. Francke and Sundin (2012), for instance, explored Swedish secondary teachers' and school librarians' conceptions of credibility toward participatory media through an analysis of focus group conversations that centered around crowd-sourced information sites such as Wikipedia. Though frequently describing Wikipedia as a representative example, no clear or operational definition of participatory media is provided, lending credence to the suggestion of terminological slippage I spoke to in my methods section. The article considers at length whether and to what extent credibility is established through institutional processes of peer-review and the cultivation of expertise or the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices with the power to edit and adapt information more or less instantaneously, representing a pivotal argumentative crux that is acutely foreboding of many of today's disputes regarding facts and who determines them.

Drawing attention to a largely un-vetted digital landscape where the darker impulses of human nature remain unchecked, Nagle (2018) calls for teacher educators to reckon more thoroughly with teachers' experiences of cyber-violence and the lack of diverse representation online. She asserts that in order to better understand the experience of all those who engage and navigate within social media spaces, educators must "consider all facets of interaction online, and the implications to those witnessing inappropriate content" (p. 89). Moreover, she states, "if some teachers are not using these spaces, why not?" (p. 88). After a thorough review of the literature regarding the way Twitter has

been taken up by (mostly White) educators, she observes that it has become "an apolitical space for teachers where real debate is muted and what is left is what the social media sites are inherently designed for – conviviality" (p. 93). She argues that "to stay in these spaces in this way is to inhabit a space devoid of the abuse witnessed and experienced by others outside of that community, and one that is at risk of understanding itself as a cyberutopia" (p. 93). Preservice teachers must therefore be made fully aware of how such platforms can become vehicles for hate speech and misogyny so that they may learn "to interrogate the ethical implications of putting students into these spaces—and explore how to respond in critical ways to this issue with their students" (p. 90). Not to do so, she argues, is to risk the normalization of online discourses that continue "to perpetuate the exclusion and marginalization of Black women, Indigenous Peoples, People of Colour, and those in LGBTQ communities" (pp. 92-93). In particular, she argues, "These conversations need to happen within teacher education, specifically within the discipline of multiliteracies and new literacies, where digital literacies are a priority and frequently discussed in cyberutopian ways" (pp. 90-91).

In contrast to the excluding "conviviality" discussed by Nagle, Middaugh (2019) explores youth civic engagement through the lens of "outrage language", which she defines as "language that evokes strong emotional responses (e.g., fear, anger, disgust)" (p. 17). Considerations of how teachers should go about integrating youths' online engagement quickly becomes complex amid rising concerns over "fake news" and the increased polarization of political discourse. As Middaugh points out, "The same tools and practices that have enabled Black Lives Matter activists and Parkland shooting survivors to push their messages to the forefront of public attention have also been used to spread misinformation or inflame intergroup hostility" (p. 17). Drawing on insights from three recent studies which she herself helped to conduct, Middaugh discusses the prevalence of outrage language accessed through participatory forms of media, the difficulty of reconciling factuality with the heightened emotional resonance such language provokes – resonances which youth (and adults, for that matter) are disproportionately drawn to – and the potential of developing online counterpublics to model and foster productive online discourse. She twice points out, however, that all of the studies she discusses took place before the 2016 presidential election, which, to her, marks a cultural turning point in the prevalence of outrage language in online discourse.

It is important to note, however, that educators' wariness toward the internet is not new. Karchmer (2001) explored the perceptions of 13 K-12 teachers who were among the first to attempt to make consistent use of the Internet in their instruction and discovered that they experienced safety concerns, a general lack of time in the curriculum, and trouble finding grade level-appropriate content to be among the most prevalent constraints they faced. While Chromebooks and internet-based research projects have since become normal in U.S. classrooms, concerns over credibility, social exclusion, and outrage language brought to the fore by today's participatory technologies have warned many literacy educators away from engaging with these technologies in any sort of explicit or systematic way. The negative sentiments behind many of these concerns circulate rapidly – often, ironically enough, by way of the very same digital technologies that the educators decry. These concerns then reinforce beliefs which, in turn, affect the ways future concerns are perceived, contributing toward the reification of the various institutional pressures discussed in the following section.

Institutional pressures

In their feature, "Can Public Education Coexist with Participatory Culture?," Losh & Jenkins (2012) unpack some of the primary institutional challenges that students and teachers face when attempting to incorporate new media into secondary school coursework. As with many of the studies in this literature review, they note that "a growing body of research…is finding that online communities have become powerful sites of informal learning and operate according to principles very different from those mandated by our current era of high-stakes testing" (p. 18). It is more than simply a matter of misalignment, however, as the authors also draw attention to the fact that many schools block access to some of the key platforms where participatory culture takes place – Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, etc. – namely because doing so is the "surest and simplest way of avoiding potential litigation" (p. 20). Administrators, for instance, "worry about costly lawsuits involving privacy or harassment, and school boards dread hearing from offended parents who object to sexually explicit or religiously divisive content" (p. 20). In contrast to

existing policies that often assume "too proactively" that students will take up participatory technologies in haphazard or transgressive ways, the authors argue that policies should instead position teachers as "infomediaries" who model ways students might act ethically and responsibly online. The problem is that such institutional discourses of "appropriateness" often lead to harmful divides between what students learn in classrooms and the competencies, perspectives, and passions they will encounter and need to cultivate beyond classroom walls. The authors write that

> Each time a teacher tells students that what they care about most, what makes them curious and passionate outside of school, does not belong in the classroom, that teacher also delivers another message: What teachers care about and what is mandated by educational standards have little or nothing to do with learners' activities once the school bell rings. (p. 19).

With an unshakable sense that they are both under surveillance and under pressure to teach to a test, it is little wonder that educators often feel their own teaching instincts to be stymied and undervalued, which then, of course, does little to nurture and model for youth the very same sense of fulfillment that makes intellectual pursuits meaningful in the first place.

Hobbs (2019) probes this very tension through a discussion of four veteran teachers' definitions and experiences of transgression. Transgression is not operationalized as a general term so much as wielded as a conceptual lightning rod to examine tensions between empowerment and accountability in media-related coursework. In synthesizing themes, Hobbs recognizes creative freedom – "the means by which students experience true authorship" – and creative control – "the mechanism by which educators design learning experiences to meet specific outcomes or educational goals" – to be on a continuum requiring careful balance, which can help to negotiate power relations in the classroom (p. 213). Hobbs insists to readers that they need not fear student transgression, and instead positions what could be considered by many to be inappropriate as an empowering teaching move, writing that students who are invited to engage in potentially-transgressive critical commentaries "provide considerable opportunities for authentic learning and personal growth. When it is feared, it inevitably reflects particular ideas about professionalization, job security and the power of social norms" (p. 214).

These discursive formations are necessarily reflected in the financial realities and curricular mandates of schools. Eliciting responses both to a five-point Likert-type attitudinal scale and to open-ended questions on perceptions of new media's integration into instruction, Ajayi (2013) found that ELA teachers perceive new media technologies to be crucially important to students' learning and social lives. These same teachers, however, felt that they lacked access to even basic technologies – mobile devices, curiously, are not mentioned – and received minimal support integrating forms of new media into their instruction. Ajayi concludes that a heightened emphasis on building sustainable infrastructures for incorporating new media into classrooms is needed, and that this will necessarily entail "coordinated and concerted efforts from [various] stakeholders, including school districts, communities, and state/federal departments of education" (p. 183). While likely true, such an acknowledgement is awkward given the previously discussed institutionally-derived barriers obstructing the perceived ease and permissive latitude of new media integration.

Finally, in what was perhaps the most notable instance of researchers structuring their analysis around practitioners' verbatim thoughts on the topic, Zoch et al. (2017) examined how in-service teachers enrolled in a graduate level course that focused on new literacies began to integrate new technology into their teaching. While some of the teachers enrolled in the course "took risks and were creative about making time to integrate technology" (p. 34), others, such as Skylar, "believed the administration in her school was not supportive of her teaching with technology and she worried that an administrator would walk in and 'catch her' doing something that was not explicitly stated in… the Common Core State Standards" (p. 37). Conversely, Samira, a first-grade teacher, "found that 'letting go a little' was a way to navigate time and management issues," discovering that when she permitted students to engage with "technology without strict guidance… they were much more capable than she previously thought" (p. 37). The primary tension, however, in authentically engaging students with these "21st century literacies" within layered regimes of accountability, can perhaps best be summarized by Brittany, a secondary school ELA teacher, who shared that she has "not seen or heard of a high-stakes test that measures the proficiency of friending, sharing photos, tagging, liking a comment, sending messages/gifts, or any other social aspect of network awareness" (p. 40).

How teachers experience and wind up navigating these competing demands has implications for researchers seeking to combine dispositional investigations with understandings of the contextual

challenges that teachers face. Apprehensive "what if?" mentalities, cursory feelings toward technological transgressions (should they occur), lack of infrastructure, and perceived misalignment with governmentally prescribed benchmarks each contribute in their own, connected ways to a social and political climate that appears largely unwelcoming toward the prospect of new media integration in educational contexts.

Limitations

Although this literature review represents the author's attempt to establish a foothold for future investigation into the ways literacy educators perceive and make use of the participatory technologies described, a number of limitations must nevertheless be identified. For one, reviewed studies were limited to those written in English. The globalizing effects of participatory technologies will increasingly require that scholars stay up-to-date with accounts and perspectives from educators around the world. Coalitions around these issues must be built and maintained in order to keep future inquiry, itself, from remaining fractured and impartial.

Another limitation is the author's attempted analytical focus on ELA instruction. Broader insights would undoubtedly be gleaned if more general pedagogical or even sociological scholarship were considered. Secondary school disciplines such as science, social studies, art, and psychology all readily contend, implicitly or explicitly, with topics related to fact-seeking, digital citizenship, and civic discourse. De-compartmentalizing the ways in which we consider and incorporate new media technologies in classrooms will help provide more nuanced, responsible, and proactive ways to account for their effects and assist educators everywhere in learning to leverage their potential in ways that promote the values of equity, inclusion, empathy, and democracy.

Finally, as indicated throughout this review, the specific ways in which these technologies (and the concepts surrounding them) are framed and taken up are in a state of near-constant flux. Headlines abound each week with reports of technologically-enabled uprisings, uproar against Silicon-Valley tech giants, or the next world-changing innovation, which, for various reasons, we should either celebrate or be frightened of. It is therefore impossible to predict what directions these wheeling influences may take. All that can be said with any degree of certainty is that the technologies described will continue to play an important role in both the development of young people and the world at large.

CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusion to be drawn from the reviewed research is that teachers' views on participatory technologies operate within a complex arrangement of personal inclinations, public anxieties, and assimilative formations. These three thematic strands have yet to be considered in light of one another within the body of scholarship on this topic until this point.

While calls to contend with larger discursive forces can often feel vague and somewhat futile, the included articles also suggest the beginnings of encouraging shifts—whether it be strategies for developing more nuanced conceptions of credibility, accounts of receptivity and experimentation, or declarations of the powers of self-expression, direct engagement, and counterpublics to enable the suppressed and excluded margins of social networks to be heard and reckoned with in new and profound ways. In the end, appraisals of one's self in relation to the dangers, potentials, and relevancy of these technologies all seem to boil down to larger conversations regarding one's perceptions of the purposes of school(ing) itself. That is, to what extent are we preparing students to thoughtfully engage with the world's dynamic challenges – those we, ourselves, have yet to fully comprehend – while continuing attempts to pass down a specific set of knowledge and skills that we believe to be beneficial?

The experience of being both "within and against" a system that one feels critically toward and constituent of is a position that many, if not most, critical educators occupy. Paulus and Roberts (2018) discuss, through an analysis of the narratives of Go Fund Me pages, how various participatory media technologies can "emerge as forms of resistance" (p. 65). The authors assert that "all participatory media offers alternative space for telling stories (themselves the tactics of ordinary people) and reaching audiences outside of the regulatory impenetrability of institutions" (p. 65). At the same time, however, the authors point out that many of these participatory platforms "necessarily have regulations and procedures of their own, thus creating an institutional structure" (p. 65). To disrupt this dynamic, content creators on these participatory mediascapes assume "vernacular authority" – made possible by the platform, but also in resistance to it – that "emerges

when an individual makes appeals that rely on trust specifically because they are not institutional" (Howard, 2013, p. 81). It is in the spirit of this vernacular authority that stakeholders who are convinced of the importance of engaging with participatory media in educational contexts must work closely with one another, and with practitioners especially, in order to help support and develop specific new media and critical media literacy strategies that are both practical and digestible to an as yet unconvinced educational establishment.

In many ways, the question of whether educators should attempt to incorporate participatory media technologies into their curriculum is also akin to long-running debates regarding the strategic use of popular culture in classrooms (Alvermann, 2012; Duncan-Andrade, 2004). Both are seen as either game-changing or potentially troublesome. Morrell (2002) directly states, in fact, that, "Popular culture [and one might well say participatory technologies] can help students deconstruct dominant narratives and contend with oppressive practices in hopes of achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society" (p. 72). At the same time, to complicate the situation further, it is important to keep in mind that "Youth culture needs to be tapped, not co-opted" (Alvermann, 2012, p. 225), and that, when it comes to online mass media, "It is adolescents who curate, reinforce, and contribute most to these digital spaces and teachers may need to capitulate to the idea that they do not necessarily have the responsibility to teach them about their own worlds" (Fassbender, 2017, p. 266).

Similar territorializing concerns, ironically enough, might also be applied to researchers themselves, who often have a tendency to speak in well-meaning ways on behalf of practicing teachers who know best the daily realities of modern schooling. Strangely, whether through a flaw in the author's search process or a lack of continuity between research and practice more generally, or both, there seems to be very little evidence in the literature that would point to a more active role for teachers in figuring out this participatory climate for themselves – for example, in ways that might spark taking action on their own behalf. And yet some educators' experiences, such as Robinson's (2018) anecdotal account regarding students' creation of multimodal video documentaries, display a great deal of innovation and self-efficacy. As articles such as these are not necessarily couched in terms of new media technologies or participatory cultures, it is unlikely that they would show up consistently in search results based on the keyword combinations employed here, much less garner the citational authority to be steadily accounted for by educational researchers.

This misalignment points to several things. One, scholars, in future research, must contend more faithfully to the experiences of those most affected – in this case teachers, but also students, as well. Two, researchers must undertake local and broadscale discourse analyses examining the specific power relations inhibiting the experimental and exploratory independence of teachers' integration of technology. Third, those conducting research on this topic must also critique and interrogate, constantly, how the participatory technologies they are plugged into homogenize and reinforce perspectives from popularly-cited work; keywords, after all, are not so much different from hashtags in that both limit the scope of what is read and discussed. And finally, we must all recognize the ways in which participatory technologies continue to shirk organized efforts to define them and account fully for their influence. Back in 2008, Stanford professor Howard Rheingold wrote that:

> Participatory media literacy is an active response to the as-yet-unsettled battles over political and economic power in the emerging mediasphere, and to the possibility that today's young people could have a say in shaping part of the world they will live in—or might be locked out of that possibility. The struggle for participatory media literacy in schools must be seen in the context of these broader societal conflicts. (p. 100)

It seems such sentiments ring more true each day. Right now, this very second, participatory technologies are being used in countless complex and momentous ways that are frequently inspiring and too often harmful. Whether it be fueling protests, influencing elections, uniting companions, or simply broadening and narrowing perspectives, participatory technologies are indeed powerful and come with requisite responsibilities that educative systems – or banded individuals working within them, at the very least – must help assume.

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