Media as Nexus of Pedagogies:
Remaking Identities in *What Not to Wear*

Karen E. Wohlwend

Carmen L. Medina

Indiana University

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Contact Information:

Karen Wohlwend, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Literacy, Culture, and Language Education
School of Education
Indiana University
3042 Wright Education Building
Bloomington, IN 47405
(812) 856-8275
kwohlwen@indiana.edu

Carmen L. Medina, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor
Literacy, Culture and Language Education
School of Education
Indiana University
cmedina@indiana.edu

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Abstract

In this conceptual piece, we examine media as a nexus of a traditional schooling pedagogy and performance pedagogy to make visible how their overlapping elements produce media's pervasive educative force but also to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of using media in educational contexts. This analysis examines a fashion makeover television program--*What Not to Wear*--as an embodied lesson that produces identity revision but also disjunctures and slippages that enable critical responses and productive remakings. WNTW is a dramatization of remediation of one woman's (portrayed) lived practices and clothing choices which are read on her body as personal expression of fashion trends. These globalized lessons with body texts require new ways of reading and responding that allow learners/viewers to see the power relations that construct particular identity performances as errors and cultural practices and ethnicities as unacceptable. Two scenes from the WNTW program illustrate

1) how the symbolic and material violence in identity revision in school structured pedagogy was exaggerated and made visible through combination with embodying and dramatizing performance pedagogy

2) how performance pedagogy reacted to school-like remedial and disciplinary practices and prompted improvisation, fluidity, and playful proliferation of identities as critical productive response

Since the New London Group published *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* (1996), literacy researchers have examined the ways that popular media permeates modern life, including the spaces where we read, write, teach, and learn. Through global networks and round-the-clock broadcasting, media reaches audiences around the world through popular television programs, films, video games, consumer products, and advertising (Appadurai, 1996; Maira & Soep, 2005; Rantane, 2004). In response to the pervasive presence of media texts, teachers are urged to enliven school literacy curricula by making room for and making use of students' popular media knowledge and passions. We advocate for curricula that fuses new literacies, popular media, and critical perspectives (Millard, 2003), but we often find ourselves teaching with and against media in complicated ways.

Whether or not teachers intentionally incorporate television and film texts into curricula, we argue that popular media is already there, an omnipresent pedagogy that powerfully shapes who we can be and how we can act within classrooms and communities (Author 1, 2009; Author 2, 2001, in press). Popular media texts that excite students' interest also circulate idealized expectations, exaggerated gender models, and problematic racial and ethnic representations. For example, popular media messages affect girls' self-image with implications for their academic trajectories and future lives (Mazzarella & Pecora, 2002).

> Issues of identity and body image are foregrounded in such a way that a girl's identity is intricately linked to her physical appearance and compliant behavior. Mainstream culture, found in messages in school as well as out-of-school contexts, "instructs" girls on the "approved" ways to become women. Pipher (1994) referred to a "girl-poisoning culture" (p. 20) and demonstrated that girls seem to lose themselves in adolescence, and they know it. (Sanford, 2005, p. 305)

Others have argued that media acts as a cultural pedagogy that masks its individuating and regulating gaze as well as its ability to deflect attention from itself (Kellner & Share, 2005).

Often, "it is women's bodies that are the problem rather than the institutionalized scripts through which girls are socialized into gendered identities." (Marshall & Sensoy, 2009, pp. 160).

We argue that one among the many ways popular media works as a powerful pedagogy relates to the emerging spaces constructed between performance practices and more traditional views of pedagogy. These intersections are evident in popular "lifestyle television" programming (Hollows, 2000) where actors and audiences engage in the process of educating and being educated on particular lifestyles that are meant to develop ideal identities. "Lifestyle programming in all its forms operates on [an] assumption--that all goods (clothes, kitchens, and backyards) function as signs of identity--they tell others who we are (or rather who we want to be)" (Palmer, 2004, p. 178).

In this conceptual piece, we work around the question: How does popular media function as a pedagogy situated in the nexus of educative and dramatized practices? We look closely at one lifestyle television program, *What Not to Wear* (WNTW)[1], to tease out its pedagogical elements and the disjunctures and slippages that enable critical response and remakings. WNTW is a fashion makeover, a highly popular self- and home-improvement genre of television shows, evident in cable programming filled with similar shows such as *10 Years Younger, Trading Spaces, Save My Bath, Rate this Space,* and *Date My House*. Self- and home-improvement are the goals of makeover television. In the case of WNTW, participants learn to dress more fashionably through intensive lessons in clothing selection, hair styling, and cosmetics application. Each WNTW episode follows a predictable before-and-after sequence as "fashion

[1] *What Not to Wear* is a reality show that originated in the UK; the scenes featured here are excerpted from the US version which airs on The Learning Channel cable network.

experts" critique and correct the "style" of a surprised subject, usually a woman, who has been identified as a "fashion disaster" by her relatives and friends (WNTW web page, 2009).

We see potential in this nexus of pedagogies as a contested and transformative space dense with opportunities for individuals to improvise and productively use power. We analyze excerpts from one WNTW episode to explore how a fashion makeover functions 1) as a school-like lesson that reinscribes a mainstream set of fashion norms for gender and ethnicity performances and 2) as a playful, dramatized performance with pedagogical elements that challenge identity erasure and proliferate available ways of being.

Nexus of Pedagogies

Identity performances, including those scrutinized and remade in WNTW episodes, are situated in *nexus of practice* (Scollon, 2001), networks of implicit, valued practices and expectations that mark membership. In WNTW, the formulaic scenes and repetitive practices center on correcting the participant's use of key fashion practices (wearing particular combinations of clothing articles, selecting event-appropriate outfits) in order to inscribe the identity *worst dressed*. During each episode, normally tacit practices are foregrounded for the individual (and viewers) and explicitly taught in ways that make visible the range of acceptable and unacceptable identity performances.

We examine how this fashion makeover program teaches participants and viewers to value dominant gender and ethnicity performances through negative fashion readings of (primarily) women's bodies. We argue that the WNTW operates through media pedagogies on two levels:

1. Media as School Pedagogy: The makeover genre circulates a foregrounded self-improvement pedagogy that mimics elements of traditional schooling to educate

> viewers about better ways of living with newer possessions. For example, as self-improvement pedagogy, this "how-to" television genre simulates remedial teaching with individualized prescription and correction. Each television episode acts as a lesson that teaches viewers to improve their lifestyle practices through demonstrations of new ways of decorating homes, cooking meals, or dressing bodies.

2. Media as Performance Pedagogy: A makeover program is circulated through a backgrounded performance pedagogy that produces dramatized examples and counter-examples of cultural values. At the level of performance pedagogy, each episode is a production, a how-to dramatization that shows viewers how to perform a credible identity as a sexualized subject who fully participates in postfeminist consumer culture.

In WNTW, both pedagogies emphasize female consumers' obligation to "stay current" by wearing new styles that require the latest mainstream-sanctioned products and necessitate purchases of up-to-date consumer goods and services.

> ...a sizable proportion of lifestyle television is devoted to the stigmatization of those who are laggardly or recalcitrant in their fulfillment of this duty and, through a combination of public shaming and financial incentives, to inducing them to become fully participant, consuming subjects in the neoliberal economy. (Roberts, 2007, p. 228)

In each WNTW episode, a sequence of critiques and demonstrations teaches the targeted person— "contributor"—who has been identified as a "walking fashion disaster" to purchase and coordinate articles of clothing in acceptable combinations. Each contributor is transformed over the course of one episode as she trades in her old wardrobe for a $5000 shopping trip. The show follows a formulaic progression of scenes: initial confrontation, explicit instruction in proper dressing, independent and guided shopping practice, hair and makeup demonstrations, and final product/performance evaluation by experts. The key scenes and repetitive practices center on correcting the subject's purported misuse of key backgrounded practices and preferences for objects of distaste (e.g., clothes, shoes, makeup outside current fashion trends). These practices

are foregrounded in the show and explicitly taught in ways that revise novices' identity performances according to postfeminist fashion rules and cultural models.

Nexus analysis sifts data to identify the key players, scenes, valued practices, and transformative events in makeover programs to understand how practices and pedagogies mesh to teach preferred identity performances or *lifestyles*. Through a funnel design, nexus analysis filters data to locate particular events in which combinations of key practices transform identities. Within these events, interaction (physical actions as well as language) is microanalyzed for immediate transformational effects but also for links to global systems and discourses. The most significant and engrained nexuses circulate power, recruit members, and enforce identity-building activity (Gee, 1999), in this case correcting the ways that errant members (the worst dressed) choose and use cultural artifacts (clothing) in order to instruct female viewers how to construct selves with fashion. In this conceptual piece, we do not attempt a full nexus analysis but merely suggest the explanatory potential of nexus analysis for understanding complicated and contradictory media messages. (For a step by step description of nexus analysis of situated learning and discourses in *What Not to Wear*, see Author 1, in press).

Media, like all forms of performance including play, almost always involves representations and transformations of identity. The makeover genre makes this explicit in its demand for identity revision according to a set of stated and unstated norms; in this case, fashion norms in a complicated mix of discourses about femininity:

> "…it might be argued that a makeover paradigm constitutes postfeminist media culture. This requires people (predominantly women) to believe, first that they or their life is lacking or flawed in some way; second, that it is amenable to reinvention or transformation by following the advice of relationship, design, or lifestyle experts and practicing appropriately modified consumption habits. Not only is this the implicit message of many magazines, talk shows and other media

> content, but it is the explicit focus of the "makeover takeover" (Hollows, 2000) that dominates contemporary television." (Gill, 2007, p. 156)

Women are the target audience for makeover television; the genre circulates a discourse of postfeminism which constructs women as empowered, sexualized subjects who consume fashion and transform their bodies in order to please themselves, not men (Gill, 2007). How does *What Not to Wear* teach audiences who they should be and what displays of body count as appropriate performances necessary for belonging in an imagined community of fashionable women?

School Literacy Pedagogy

New Literacy Studies (Street, 1995; Gee, 1996) analyze the intersections of identity, body, schooling, and media, challenging the notion of a value-neutral and skill-oriented view of literacy education and recognizing literacy and education as sets of socioculturally-situated practices that are ideological, identity-building, and power-laden For example, even young children learn to manage their bodies at school in ways that comply with the teacher's expectations for proper literacy performances: to sit up straight, hold a pencil with three fingers, or print on a lined sheet of paper. In this way, school literacy pedagogy inscribes expectations for particular combinations of language and actions with materials onto bodies of young literacy learners (Luke, 1992). However, school literacy pedagogy masks its use of power through an autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1995), which constructs learning and teaching as sequences of objective school tasks through which children demonstrate skill competency or display content knowledge (Bloome, Katz, Wilson-Keenan, & Solsken, 2000; Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979; Street & Street, 1991). In a prescription and correction model of school literacy, learners are expected to follow teacher directions during discrete direct instruction lessons and complete school tasks in conventionally accurate ways. Such lessons follow formulaic designs (Hunter, 1982):

1. objectives
2. standards
3. anticipatory set
4. teaching (input, modeling, check for understanding)
5. guided practice/monitoring/reteaching
6. closure
7. independent practice

In such lessons, school pedagogy requires teachers to deliver content, model skills, provide guided practice which is carefully monitored for deficits which are remediated through reteaching. This approach enables testing and ranking of students according to the degree to which their skill performances adhere to mainstream norms. Media makeovers mimic this entrenched school pedagogy that promotes uniform application of content, consistent with a skills mastery discourse (Ivanič, 2004) that circulates through government mandates for accountability and standardization (NCLB, 2002).

Performance Pedagogy

A significant element of popular media relates to how it works as performance pedagogy (Conquergood,1998; Garoian, 1999; Pineau, 2002). Performance arts and pedagogies intersect to "represent an expanded, heterogeneous field of cultural work within which the body performs various aspects of production, socially and historically constructed behaviors that are learned and reproduced" (Garoian, 1999, p.8). Performance pedagogy provides a view of identity in contemporary media that contest more traditional views of production and identity representations as finalized, rehearsed, and fixed. It emphasizes the flux of productivity as well as its product. As feminist performance theorist Diamond suggests, performance is always "a doing and a thing done" where

> "even its dazzling physical immediacy, drifts between present and past, presence and absence, consciousness and memory. Every performance, if it is intelligible as such, embeds features of previous performances: gender conventions, racial

> histories, aesthetic traditions,--political and cultural pressures, that are consciously and unconsciously acknowledged" (p. 1)

A view of media as performance pedagogy helps us understand how embodying particular identities works at the core of the production of a television show and how identities are produced, re-produced, resisted, and transformed as people "learn" new cultural practices. In media makeovers, performance actors and audiences are engaged in "improvisational encounters" where the production of identity is embedded in complex dynamics "playing" multiple positionings that are simultaneously situated between the real, the fictional, and the social. These positionings are in many instances in tension resulting in hybrid spaces where actual and projected identities are perceived in relation to people ways of living and participating in communities including racial, ethnic and gender positionings.

Embodiment—"the body' social text" (Diamond, 1996, p. 4)--and the reinscription of bodies are also at the core of how makeover television works, particularly shows like *What Not to Wear*. Notions of embodiment constitute key elements of how performance pedagogies are understood particularly the work of feminist poststructuralist (Grosz, 1994; St. Pierre, 2000; Pillow, 2003; Davies, 2002) and feminist performance theories (Pineau, 2002; Phelan, 1992; Diamond, 1996; Patraka, 1999; Garoian, 1999). Somerville (2004) suggests that "the body can intervene in discourse just as discourse can intervene into the body" (p. 51). In this dynamic, bodies are perceived as texts that simultaneously are inscribed and that inscribe social discourses. The conceptualization of what embodiment has to offer is not understood just in material and biological terms but in more expansive ways to consider the body as a site of social, political and cultural inscription. In our view of the role of performance and embodiment in *What Not to Wear* is perceived as a productive tension between how bodies are disciplined (Foucault, 1995) and the forms of resistance that are made visible by the participants in the show.

Based on the above framework we identified two elements that are helpful here in looking at popular media as performance pedagogy:

1. Embodied texts - bodies write and are written through cultural symbols and practices
2. Productivity of improvisations vs. production of dramatic events- In improvisation, identities are fluid and dynamic and not rehearsed and fixed

Teaching Identity in the Nexus of School and Performance Pedagogies

We examine media as a nexus of a traditional schooling pedagogy and performance pedagogy to make visible how combined pedagogies produce media's pervasive educative force but also to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of using media in educational contexts. Table 2 represents our analysis of *What Not to Wear* within the nexus of pedagogies. In this article, we analyze excerpts from one episode to understand how the "trash can scene" used school pedagogy elements to discipline and inscribe embodied texts and how performance pedagogy amplified resistant performances.

Table 2. Comparison of Practices in School and Performance Pedagogies in WNTW Scenes

Bold font indicates the scenes analyzed in this article

WNTW Scene	**School Pedagogy: Practices in a lesson**	**Performance Pedagogy: Practices in improvisation**	**Nexus:**
Critique Scenes: Secret Video, **Trash Can,** Mirror scenes	• Establish need • State objectives	• Contested space • Resistant performance	• Discipline in assessment of needs • Inscribing texts through projected identities

Rules & Models: Fashion rules presented on mannequins	• Model skill or concept: presenting standards, teaching modeling	• Imagined final product • Projected dominant identities	• Production of (possible) embodied texts through modeling
Shopping Trip 1, solo with critique at close of day	• Independent practice • Check for understanding	• Producing • Rehearsing	• Attempting and assimilating the given embodied text
Shopping Trip 2, with "surprise" appearance by hosts and guided shopping	• Guided practice • Monitoring • Assessment & feedback • Reteaching through guided practice	• Proliferating identities through improvisation creative generation of embodied texts	• Imposing, improvising, and appropriating identities in between present and past, presence and absence, consciousness and memory
Final Reveal: Homecoming	• Closure & final evaluation	• Performing in the lines	• Mastering skills and disciplined bodies. • Display of emergent embodied texts

Educating Cristina, the "Most Difficult Contributor"

To understand how the show teaches identity performances in complicated ways, we examine excerpts from an episode featuring a Puerto Rican drama teacher, described by one of the hosts as the "most difficult contributor ever" to appear on the show. The aim of WNTW is to explicitly teach the contributor, or featured participant, to identify valued ways of dressing to fit the postfeminist ideal of a successful, modern woman. But what do participants actually contribute? Ostensibly their wardrobes, but in effect, contributors submit their bodies and identity performances for reading and correction.

Trash Can Scene: Constructing Need, Performing Resistance, and Disciplining Cristina

Cristina: That is a great piece.

Stacey grimaces and tosses the lace top into trash can.

Cristina: You know, I want to jump in there [points to the trash can.] I need a therapist.

Both hosts place hands on hips and Clinton rolls his eyes.

Stacey, "This is the therapy, baby. Get used to it."

Cristina: Help! [She shakes bar of clothes rack as if shaking the bars of a cage.]

Stacey: Oh, yeah. Help is right. Help.[Stacey continues to rummage through the clothing on rack.] Help! Help us! [Mocking Cristina]

Cristina: No puedo, no puedo, no puedo.

Clinton shuts his eyes while Stacey gasps and opens mouth in exaggerated shock and surprise at Cristina's shift to Spanish

Cristina continues in Spanish, using Spanish to express emotion and shut out hosts. As Cristina speaks, she gestures to her breasts: They're not happy.

Stacey: Oi.

Clinton: I don't know what she said but she [changes pitch to enact a whining childish voice] sounded mad.

Stacey echoes Clinton's enactment [also assumes a crying tone] I kno:w.

Cristina: That's Cristina [gesturing to clothes in trash can] that you're throwing out. I have nothing left [gestures to torso in circular motion]

Cristina: [switching to a calm voice and composed stance, clasping hands] You know what? I think you guys should go, you did a great job, thank you, and I'll take care of this [Cristina firmly grasps the trash can with the overflowing pile of clothes]

Clinton: Oh thanks. You're excusing us? You're the boss?

Cristina: Well, no. I just don't want you guys to work any harder.

Stacy, points with entire arm: You know what? You. Out. Go shopping.

Clinton: Yeah. Out. Go shopping. Bye.

Stacey: Remember, the rules.

Cristina grasps the sides of the trash can mounded over with her clothes and begins dragging it out of the studio, clothes spilling out along the way.

Clinton, shouting: Cristina! We're going to call the authorities.

Cristina screams as Stacey tips over the trash can, dumps the clothes on the floor. Stacey strikes bodybuilder pose.

Clinton [to Cristina]: Look what you've done. You've made a mess.

Cristina: oh-uh-uh-uh-uh [exaggerated sobbing sounds] You've destroyed me. You've destroyed me. It's over. [drops article of clothing] You know what. I have no soul. Cristina? That's Cristina for you [indicating discarded clothing]. This? [indicating body] I have no idea who this is.

WNTW makes the boundaries of a fashionable lifestyle explicit through negative examples that point out individual fashion blunders. What "we" hate is made explicit through individuated exemplars and their articles of clothing become markers that reinforce the

boundaries (Wilk, 2000). In this way, WNTW polices the border of fashionable dressing. Attractiveness is the overriding criterion as hosts ignore or ridicule contributors' reasons for keeping articles of clothing that don't follow the rules: a treasured sweater from a loved one, a pair of practical shoes for work, a cheaper dress that fits a family's economic realities, or objects that are physically or emotionally comforting. Ethnicity is never addressed or acknowledged as a valid concern on the program. However, Woodward (2007) found that clothing choices not only represent but construct identities, producing daily anxieties about appearing " not me" while working through

> the contradictions and ambivalences which are core to women's clothing choices. Irrespective of women's social positioning or background, the pivotal dynamic which underpins how women choose what to wear is between clothing that is 'easy' and 'safe', and clothing that allows women to transform themselves. (p. 340).

In this early scene in the episode, Cristina resists the hosts' trashing of her wardrobe, explicitly framing the critique as erasure. She describes the identity work as an assault, "You've destroyed me. It's over. You know what, I have no soul," inscribing her body as a text to respond to the symbolic violence in the somewhat physical confrontation. Cristina's attempts to reclaim her wardrobe demonstrate her resistance to trashing her identity, which she will eventually call "the old Cristina." Her actions can be read as moves to leave an unbearable situation in order to escape identity erasure and while the host's violent reactions can be read as countermoves to block her escape. Cristina is valuable as the object of the show; she serves as a bad example, an unfashionable subject. This video clip reveals the violence in identity revision in structured pedagogy of schooling. The interaction indexes corporal punishment in the physical restraint and

the host/teacher's demonstration of power as she tips over the trash can and blames the contributor/student for making a mess. Because the media scene occurs in a drama/schooling nexus, the symbolic and material violence to identities in structured pedagogy is exaggerated and made visible through the combination of the embodying and dramatizing pedagogy of dramatic performance.

We also see productivity in this scene as Cristina improvises and performs in and out of several identities. We see her drawing upon cultural repertoires (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003) of teaching, drama and ethnicities to perform resistance through fluid moment-to-moment changes in roles as Cristina as defiant Latina, Cristina as teacher in charge, and Cristina as considerate and compliant contributor.

Playing Past Compliance/Resistance

Second Shopping Trip Scene: Reteaching Skills, Improvising Roles, and Proliferating Identities

Cristina: So you see, Clinton? Low-cut, see-through, hmmmm. [holds black dress up and sways as she sings] "you say good-bye, I say hello" [waits for response from hosts] Aghuh.

Hosts look at each other and roll their eyes

Cristina: [holding up second dress] This is something I would wear…right before I jumped off a bridge. And you can see me going "Aaaaaahhhh" [waving her arm to indicate slow motion falling] and you can see the dress going [whistles and billows out dress to simulate falling]

Hosts burst out laughing and continue to struggle to resume their mock severity as Cristina picks out a third dress, exclaiming: Ooooh.

Clinton: Why don't you show us some things that follow the rules that we showed you?

Cristina: I don't remember the rules. I was too traumatized.

Cristina chooses a fourth dress and holds up the dress with hanger behind her neck.

Clinton: The only way you're walking out with that in your hands is stepping over my lifeless body.

Cristina removes dress from her neck: Guys, you have to have a little room to be crazy. I mean everything is not like [holds dress stiffly in front of her and marches in small circle]

Clinton: You've got more than a little room. Our body parts don't talk to us…or at least not that we're willing to admit.

Cristina: You need to be in tune with your body.

Both hosts burst out laughing and Cristina scolds: Look at you, having a great time at my expense, huh.

Stacey: Absolutely not at your expense, Cristina. [Laughing and smirking]
Cristina: I'll try on what you suggested [walks off stiffly with arms extended out in front of her]

In this scene, we see elements of school pedagogy as Cristina as the "off-task" student, playing the clown, thwarting the teachers when she should be applying previous lessons to her remedial practice. However, in this instance, Cristina foregrounds the stage and uses the tool of improvisation in performance pedagogy to morph rapidly through roles, seductive temptress who sings to Clinton, suicidal fashion victim who jumps off a bridge, traumatized student who can't remember the "rules", and the robotic soldier who complies with orders. In response, the hosts use the stage to mock Cristina's performances and her admonition to be "in tune with your body" by joking about how she talks for and with her body ("they are unhappy"). Of course, performance pedagogy provides deniability for these jabs as it's just a performance, all for the entertainment of viewers at home.

Makeovers as Embodied, Dramatized, and Globalized Lessons

It is important to remember that Cristina is not the only one who learns. In this article, we take a step back to critically read this WNTW episode as disciplinary lesson that instructs distant viewers how to consume and which goods are necessary for desirable identity performances of mainstream femininity. Drama is a spatialized and spatializing literacy that allows Cristina's embodied lesson to reach wide audiences with viewers as remote learners and the studio as an imagined classroom. Each distant learner is tacitly invited to view herself along with the foregrounded subject(for studies on media audience and reception see Hall, 1992; Lull, 1990 & Morley, 1986). Viewers also learn to contribute; they read their own bodies and they revise their own identity performances to comply with the self-help advice and to participate in the discourses of postfeminism. This goal is apparent in Cristina's episode as she talks about her

successful search for an idealized, essentialized, and unified identity, an improved self through the fashion makeover: “Not only did I find Cristina, but I found a new Cristina.”

The show’s pedagogy teaches viewers to critique others as well as themselves. Fans can demonstrate their ability to recognize others who do not know “what not to wear” through the device of peer nominations. On the program website, viewers are invited to nominate friends and family members as future participants. The nomination also establishes the nominator as a fashion-wise member of an imagined community of stylish women. As fans watch WNTW’s cautionary tales, they learn to apply the lessons to read bodies and revise identity performances:

- to read their bodies and clothing practices as lacking (need)
- to monitor their own fashion errors, as well as others (surveillance)
- to recognize, value, and seek out expert advice for identity revision (compliance)
- to take up new fashion practices that circulate an imperative to consume (regeneration)

A further step back reveals that the show’s intensive critique and insistence on compliance with beauty ideals reiterates, week after week, that women and girls must attend to physical presentation of self through proper bodily displays.

Thus, this television makeover program operates as an embodied lesson on (at least) two planes. First, the program is a dramatization that represents one woman’s (portrayal of) lived practices and clothing choices which are read on her body as personal expression of fashion trends. Second, each videotaped episode in the reality program is a globalized lesson, situated in the nexus of discourses about gender, ethnicity, and consumerism that shape viewer identities. These media lessons with body texts require new ways of reading and responding that allow

learners to see the power relations in the construction of identity performances as errors and cultural practices as unacceptable.

Performance as Productive Critical Response to School Pedagogy

This examination of a media makeover demonstrates, perhaps not surprisingly, that media is not innocent; it circulates and legitimates powerful discourses and dominant cultural models, in this instance those associated with school pedagogy. However, the juxtaposition with performance pedagogy provides opportunities for microtactics (Foucault, 1978). On first reading, we saw reproduction of stereotypical roles along with Cristina's resistance. But when we looked more closely, we saw agency and productivity in the fluidity of her playful proliferation of identities. Reading Cristina's response as resistance or rupture is too narrow, too unidirectional, relying on dualistic notions of power and identity. Rather, we see her dramatized critique as divergent tangles of multiple, complicated, and complicating performances. As educators, we need critical readings and responses that deconstruct and disrupt, yet embrace media texts and provide multiple paths in, out, and around its powerful discourses. Performance pedagogy provides improvisational space that brings implicit discourses up to the surface, making the tacit visible and accessible for deconstruction. We see media as the site of many overlapping nexus that can integrate or clash. As Baker and Green suggest, we might "turn this "frame clash" into what Agar (1994) calls a "rich point," a point where cultural patterns, practices, and knowledge become visible…" (Baker & Green, 2007, p. 194).

Implications: Teaching With and Against Media

Of course, each episode is an explicitly dramatized staged performance and not an accurate representation of lived experience. And contrary to the "happy ending" constructed in each episode, we don't know if contributors' lives are enhanced, harmed, or unchanged by their

participation in the show. However, these concerns are largely beside the point. The relationship between staging the performance of everyday life and the everyday life serving as a staged performance is a provocative element of new media as viewers engaged in the consumption of these shows. In WNTW, the real learners are television viewers who learn to avoid fashion errors through teaching that corrects by ridiculing and amplifying errors so consumers can see what NOT to do. This makeover exemplifies how media nexus brings together the immersive and transformative power of dramatized texts and pervasive schooling of selves through media. This suggests that rather than treating media as a textual object for critical literacy, we should be treating media as a competing pedagogy. When we teach with media, we're inviting a powerful, very effective teacher into our classrooms. We will require more than the traditional tools of critical literacy, of literature discussion that deconstructs, responds, and sometimes redesigns. We will need a performative pedagogy that lets us try on uncomfortable identities, look critically at ourselves clothed in roles we hate, and play our way out of trouble.

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