Making, Remaking, and Reimagining the Everyday: Play, Creativity, and Popular Media

Karen E. Wohlwend

INTRODUCTION

This chapter challenges commonplace conceptions of children's play as innocent amusement, creativity as talent, and popular media as harmful and inappropriate for children. Following the multimodal turn (Siegel 2006) in New Literacy Studies (Street 1995; Gee 1996), play and creativity are redefined.

- Play is a literacy of possibilities (Wohlwend 2008), that is, as a set of imaginative practices that change the meanings of ordinary artifacts and alter opportunities for social participation.
- Creativity is redefined as collective social imagination that enables new possibilities by interrogating the unremarkable and reimagining multiple alternatives to expected practices (Medina and Wohlwend 2014).

Through these redefinitions, popular media take on new significance as well. Media flows into every aspect of children's daily lives through franchises of commercial products, or *transmedia*, that include clothing, household goods, school supplies, films, video games, and toys (Jenkins et al. 2006; Herr-Stephenson et al. 2013). These immersive flows of transmedia circulate a range of identity-shaping messages through characters and film narratives, but also through product advertising, brand affiliation, and peer likes and dislikes (Pugh 2009; Wohlwend 2012). In this way, we are born into 'regimes of consumption' (Cook 2008) where it is impossible to opt out into a commercial-free existence or to insulate children from media influences. However, these goals could be misguided. Transmedia texts provide "big worlds" with rich literary resources such as engrossing narratives and memorable characters for "thick play", that is, repeated intensive and extensive playing and replaying that develops deeper literary understanding (Mackey 2009). Further, thick play can enable critique. As children play with popular toys and games, they can not only animate but also challenge and remake stereotypes as they improvise and revise their favorite princesses, superheroes, monsters, and so on (Wohlwend 2009).

Through play, children regularly make new meanings as they invent characters and actions ("Pretend I'm Superman and I can fly") or remake meanings of objects by substituting new uses ("This [fork] is a wrench. I'm fixing the sink"). Additionally, play is more than a childhood pastime or developmentally appropriate teaching tool but a powerful social practice that shapes players' immediate worlds. Children at play pretend in order to participate within imagined communities, "communities to which they hope to belong" (Kendrick 2005: 9). Play performances of popular media characters allow children to try on pretend identities and mediate imagined worlds but it is important to recognize that such pretense has real effects on friendships and participation in peer cultures (Wohlwend 2011).

The notion of productive consumption (de Certeau 1984) recognizes the spontaneous creativity in children's remakings and playful twists of commercial media. Consumers exercise creativity when they take up products but improvise their own strategic uses and timely combinations in everyday remakings of the most ordinary household goods. In this way, creativity is made up of small situated acts of improvised consumption of commonplace products in homes, schools, and communities--but that are simultaneously part of global mediascapes (Appadurai 1996). For example, children playfully invent new meanings for a Batman beach towel to transform it to a superhero's cape and then to mermaid's hair in a matter of moments—a shift that also transforms the collective play scenario from a battle against villains to a shipwreck rescue. Critical sociocultural perspectives (Lewis et al. 2007) interpret creativity not a personality trait that is out of the ordinary and found in gifted individuals, but as collaborative cultural production (see Sefton-Green 2000). We produce culture when we imagine with others, as we create and agree upon shared ideas of what it means to be and belong in a particular location or to a particular group. Cultures are sustained by shared, automatic, embodied routines we carry out every day, what Bourdieu (1977) described as habitus, a self-perpetuating and engrained set of dispositions and practices that tends to reproduce hierarchical relationships of class, gender, and ethnicity.

Three characteristics of play are considered here in examining its potential for creative cultural production:

1) Play narratives are embodied and enacted rather than read, written, or fixed in print. The embodied nature of play supports children by providing multiple modes for quickly and clearly expressing their co-constructed stories to one another through their movements, props, voices, and sound effects.

2) Player roles and actions are continually negotiated and improvised collaboratively among players to maintain the pretense (Sawyer 2003). Players also negotiate as they collaborate within a shared imaginary text. Maintaining play while trying on alternate identities or changing the meanings of everyday artifacts often requires children to stop and explain what they mean, prompting them to switch roles, add characters or props, or twist the storyline as they try to come to agreement. Collaborative interpretation of play scripts produces the need to work out and makes visible who can play tacitly-expected roles and how familiar elements can be changed.

3) Contexts—such as play scenarios—are relocated into an immediate space (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Through shared pretense, players agree to bring in a new imaginary context, a *collaborative cultural imaginary* (Medina and Wohlwend 2014). Through relocation, children must "make do" within the constraints of the classroom and reimagine together what seems possible as they come up with pretend alternatives and imagined worlds that better fit their purposes.

Creativity is the result of imagining otherwise, that is, expanding the embodied cultural practices of here-and-now worlds, by improvising to "make do" with the available resources, by negotiating to reimagine constraints into possibilities, and by remaking to transform immediate contexts into alternatives. Play is a *tactic* (Wohlwend 2011) that manipulates the limits in here-and-now places to enact alternate identities while remaining in the same physical place. When a scene or character or line of dialogue from a popular *Star Wars, Harry Potter,* or *Disney Princess* film is appropriated in children's play scripts, it signals a set of roles, rules, and

relationships for children to take up in shared pretense. In short, they must agree how to pretend that their classroom is a spaceship, a school for wizards, or a fairy tale castle, or another imaginary place as reality is recontextualized into a collectively-maintained fantasy world. Recontextualization opens an opportunity for critique by making the backgrounded assumptions ("only girls can be princesses"; "only boys can be superheroes") visible and available for renegotiation among all players.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Early perspectives on play from developmental and constructivist perspectives emphasized its facility for helping young children develop perspective-taking as a means to further cognitive development or social skills. Play provides a unique opportunity to free the child from the constraints of concrete perception but also operates as a meaning-making practice (Vygotsky 1978 [1935]). Imaginary play allows children to detach the "real" meanings from objects and actions and allow a "piece of wood to become a doll" (p. 97). Vygotsky viewed pretense that reassigns meanings to bodies, actions, and objects as an important developmental precursor of literacies that manipulate print symbols to stand for speech.

Linguistic anthropological perspectives more fully explain the transformative power of play and its central role in the creative cultural production of pretend worlds. Bateson (1955/1972) looked beyond materials and actors to consider the double meanings of play language and action that creates and maintains a pretend space. That is, play language communicates an unfolding script of what happens next and who does what but also establishes and maintains a context--a pretend space wherein all the players' actions and language are read as make-believe and "not real". In this vein, classroom studies of preschool play discourse have shown that young children easily navigate this complexity as they weave in and out of pretense to cooperate (Corsaro 2003) and improvise (Sawyer 1997) and successfully maintain a storyline and a context in order to keep the play going.

Anthropological studies of the collaborative nature of pretend play offers a way of understanding cultural aspects of children's vividly-imagined play worlds. Holland and colleagues (1998) theorized that people collectively imagine play worlds into being. Such play worlds are distilled from reality, producing a simplified place and characters and a set of agreed-upon conditions that players agree to enact "as if" the pretense were real. In children's "as if" play worlds, pretense is openly negotiated, anchored by toys and artifacts that act as pivots between the here-and-now context and the pretend context. Popular media toys come "pre-loaded" with well-known narratives and characters in fantasy worlds that many children recognize; thus they provide particularly potent meaning anchors for collaborative play. It is important to recognize that playing in these make-believe worlds can have real impact on children's social participation and identities in local cultures. "People have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and to become active in and passionate about them. People's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these "as if" worlds (p. 49).

Finally, an expansive and critical orientation in New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Gee 1996; Street 1995) enables redefinition of play as a literacy and a tactic (Wohlwend 2011) and redefinition of creativity as cultural production (Sefton-Green 2000). NLS research recognizes a range of semiotic and social practice as literacies for remaking the meanings of ordinary surroundings as well as a view of creativity as diverse ways of "doing and being" (Gee 1996) that imagine and

uphold cultural worlds (Pahl 2007; Sefton-Green 2000). Research from this perspective situates play, creativity and media in a dense tangle of discourses of gender, consumerism, and childhood, evident in studies of media and gender: children's gender play (Blaise 2005; Thorne 1993), toys as material culture (Goldstein et al. 2005; Jenkins 1998; Seiter 1993), and children's media (Buckingham 1996; Hilton 1996; Marsh 2005; Tobin, 2000).

CRITICAL ISSUES AND TOPICS

Play offers a productive opportunity for critical engagement, an embodied form of critical literacy (Docktor et al. 2010; Wohlwend and Lewis 2010), by switching the context. Recontextualization replaces a limiting context with restrictive practices and power relations with a context with desired identities and actions. Children's play is increasingly situated in commercial spheres designed to support profit motives rather than educational goals. In addition to popular media, new ways for children to play together are emerging through online video games, apps, and virtual worlds. This is not to say that children have no opportunity for agency; children also play and consume products to further their own goals in childhood cultures (Saltmarsh 2009). However, Cook (2008) makes a distinction between two consumer choices offered to children: transitive and intransitive. Transitive choices allow children to alter the designs or uses of products in ways that move beyond the boundaries of the play space. Intransitive choices offer the appearance of choice, such as selecting among pre-set conversational phrases or choosing among a range of arcade games to earn tokens within an online game (Wohlwend and Kargin 2013). Such choices are surface level selections that have little impact on children's social worlds.

In modern childhoods, it might seem that children's selections are limited to choosing a franchise to decorate their toothbrushes, yogurt, sneakers, mobile phones, and video games. However, these products ground an extensive web of consumer and play practices that connect children's daily living practices to a cohesive narrative that invites children to live in-character:

> Users of toys, new media, and digital texts want a storyline, ideally one that they recognize and appreciate; they need ways to communicate with people; and, they need to have multiple technologies converge into one object (e.g., a phone that is also an mp3 player and a camera). Consumer learning begins from what people do with things. (Rowsell 2011: 249)

In this way, popular media go beyond merely entertaining children or decorating everyday objects. Instead, media play is a key site of identification that links children to markets through powerful emotional and social bonds (Pugh 2009; Seiter 1993; Marsh 2005). These bonds are fostered by the marketing strategies of global corporations in order to build demand and strengthen consumer loyalty.

When children identify with media characters, they also take up this intertwined set of identity expectations, power relations, familiar storylines, and marketing messages (Wohlwend 2012). During play, character identity texts suggest particular actions in relation to other players' identities (Holland et al. 1998) and imply supporting or oppositional positions for other children (e.g., actor/audience, hero/villain, victim/rescuer). As children play with—and live in—pervasive commercial franchises, they also consume the stereotypical identities associated with their

favorite characters video games, toys, and media, whether princesses or superheroes (Marshall and Sensoy 2011).

Beyond problematic stereotypes and restrictive roles, popular media and digital games are sometimes viewed as overly confining with little room for creativity, suggesting that children merely imitate the pre-existing storylines and parrot familiar dialog rather than inventing original stories. By contrast, research on children's writing (Dyson 2003; Willett 2001) and digital literacies in participatory cultures (Jenkins et al. 2006) suggests that elaboration and remixing occurs through shared play:

> Another area of concern for many educators and parents is that popular culture texts restrict children's creativity, as children are perceived to take on popular culture roles and act out the roles and dialogue that they are given. While knowing that basic elements of popular culture characters and plot can limit children's play to the use of prescribed characters, stereotypes of 'good' and 'bad', and set plots, it can also promote creativity. A shared frame of reference has been found to enable children to be creative, add contextual details and elaborate on plots (Sefton-Green and Parker 2000). (Jenkins et al. 2006: 302-303)

How might repetitive play of familiar media narratives inspire critique as well as creativity? Rather than stunting storytelling, some literacy researchers argue that repetitive playing of media narratives builds children's collective knowledge and shared literacy resources, thickening into cumulative stories and enabling critical revision over multiple replayings (Mackey 2009; Wohlwend 2009). Pennycook (2007) argues that such repetition actually constitutes production, a post-structuralist take on creativity that is based on the subtle transformations in recycling and remixing texts and relocalizing contexts.

CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH

Literacy studies from critical sociocultural perspectives recognize that play can prompt problematic consumption as well as creative cultural production. The studies in this section document how play in immersive everyday interactions with popular media can help children collaborate to embody, negotiate, and improvise their favorite media in ways that reshape the surrounding childhood cultures.

Making sense and making selves

Recent literacy studies focus on play as embodied ways of producing and wielding texts. In this view, play is a set of social practices through which children use their bodies, toys, props, and drawings to enact, represent, and participate in cultural practices (Ghiso 2011; Siegel et al. 2008; Wohlwend 2008). Embodiment in play blurs sensemaking and self-making, allowing children to imagine themselves in fantasy worlds scaled to child-sized life experiences, feelings, and wishes. Boldt (2009) analyzed how a six-year-old's playful writing explored feelings and fears within the emotional safety of play, using pretense to tame the basilisk, a giant serpent in a Harry Potter film:

> …The ability to playfully and creatively use objects to shape the outcome of their play gives children confidence in their ability to shape their emotional

experiences with the world and the outcomes of their actions in the world (Boldt, 2009, p. 12).

Children's play involves emotional investments (Jones and Shackelford 2013) and attachments to characters that children enact with franchised products from breakfast to bedtime, supported by parents (Marsh 2005). Barbie, Bratz, or American Girl exemplify a "market child" that invites children to identify with and embody characters by using branded merchandise (Sekeres 2009).

In digital spaces, embodied play with popular media spans here-and-now computer handling, on-screen actions, and interactions with faraway co-players across global networks. Creative cultural production occurs as children make and remake digital selves for these layered spaces where physical bodies are replaced by child-designed avatars in online games such as Mario Brothers and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin (Black and Reich 2012; Marsh 2011). Digital literacies include ways of coordinating bodies and avatars through moving, talking, reading, and being as they navigate and point to digital selves on-screen, "Do you see me? I'm right there!" in the layered spaces of online gaming (Wohlwend et al. 2011). Husbye (2013) found that children working together as digital filmmakers skillfully combined elements of transmedia narratives with modal qualities of media production to achieve an intended cinematic effect and meaning.

Remaking places and replaying texts

Pahl (2007) provides a way to interpret creativity as an assemblage of "socially situated traces of practice, that is, as evidence of what kinds of practices informed that text" (p. 86). Every play event blurs the lines between imagined and real contexts and draws in multiple social, cultural, and material histories associated with the imagined place. The blurring of real and imagined places enables creative remixing of histories with possibilities so that a play theme gathers meanings across these spaces. Further, this recontextualization thickens play over time when children pretend the same narrative through repeated replayings. For example, Collier (2013) analyzed a young boy's enactment of his favorite professional wrestler, showing how his pretend play and invented props constituted a creative relocalization that brought the world of professional wrestling into the child's home and how his repetitive enactments produced a creative remixing.

> From a structuralist–humanist perspective, mimicry or copying is denigrated and creativity is seen as original and the result of individual production. Pennycook (2010) uses the term relocalization to describe a creative process that acknowledges repetition as production. Texts and textmaking practices are transformed as they are reused and relocalized. I posit that this recycling or relocalization is a form of creativity or play. (Collier 2013: 3)

These relocations involved enacting and narrating pretend wrestling matches with miniature wrestlers and Pokémon action figures, video-editing a wrestling movie from videotaped research sessions, and playing a video game, Wrestlemania. Through repeated enactments of his favorite professional wrestler, he "relocalized wrestler", using play to tactically move media texts from television to video to video games that offered opportunities to gain more control and display his expertise in performances at home and school, to deflect serious topics, and to make schoolwork more enjoyable.

Reimagining play worlds

Mackey's (2009) notion of "big worlds" examines the creative potential of layered media contexts where commercial books, games, and television build narratives over time through series or sequels and across space through transmediation (Siegel, 1995) from films or video games into websites, toys, collectibles, and consumer goods. The big worlds in children's media are expanded even further through "thick play" that encourages "repeating, extending, and embellishing contact with that imaginative world" (p. 93).   Similarly, research on participatory literacies show how meanings are creatively remixed and collaboratively produced through play in digital cultures. In fanfiction, memes, and online video games, "participation is a creative act where signs are not merely consumed but rather reworked, recontextualized, and then redistributed (Steinkuehler, Black, and Clinton 2005: 99). Improvisation is at the heart of playful remixing and repurposing of media, as children negotiate their individual interpretations of the narratives they all know and incorporate their favorite bits as "textual toys" to recruit other players or make play scenarios more credible or appealing to peers (Dyson 2003). Collaborative improvisations result in creative cultural production when children agree to challenge normative expectations by changing the characters or conditions of pretense in order to include friends, to allow more equitable distribution of play materials, or to enable actions that disrupt unspoken and unexamined ways of doing things. In my research on Disney Princess play, boys improvised to convince peers to allow them to take up princess roles as Snow White, Jasmine, or Ariel the Little Mermaid (Wohlwend 2012). In Medina's dramatic inquiry with elementary students in Puerto Rico, young students' performances of familiar telenovelas improvised and ruptured the popular Latino soap operas as children drew upon their lived experiences to work through their ideas about gender and domestic violence (Medina and Wohlwend 2014).

MAIN RESEARCH METHODS FOR STUDYING PLAY

To analyze children's play and creativity as social practices and cultural production, it is necessary to use ethnographic research approaches which are designed for cultural study. To consider all the aspects that affect children's meaning-making and participation, activity theory (Leont'ev, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978 [1935]) focuses ethnographic methods of observing and recording play to attend to the relationships among artifacts, tools, rules, and roles within a cultural context. Whatever the cultural context-- at home, in classrooms, or online--children's practices for playing and collaborating make up commonplace and taken-for-granted ways of doing childhood. This means that researchers must carefully examine the discursive assumptions behind everyday play activity in order to find its cultural value and ideological effects. In critical sociocultural literacy research (Lewis et al. 2007), several methods of discourse analysis combine ethnographic methods, critical analysis, and activity theory framing.

Mediated discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis are described here:

- Mediated discourse analysis (Scollon 2001) examines play as an embodied way of making texts with other players in real and imagined contexts, drawing on activity theory and sociological practice theory. Through play, children learn not only how to express embodied meanings, but also how to enact the valued practices of the surrounding culture through informal apprenticeships in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). A goal of mediated discourse analysis of children's play is to discover how play actions enact and produce valued ways of belonging in the community. These social practices

become tacitly recognized as the accepted ways of doing things in the habitus (Bourdieu 1977) of a particular community. Another goal of mediated discourse analysis is to locate those social practices such as play with potential to change the collective histories of a group.

- Critical discourse analysis (Gee 1999) uncovers the discourses that circulate gendered identity texts and disparate power relations in children's commercialized play worlds and imaginary scenarios. Critical discourse analysis examines language in children's play patterns and interactions for links to global discourses which justify the dominant, tacitly agreed-upon ways of "doing gender" and childhood during everyday play. Discourses overlap and conflict as each constructs and explains a particular vision of childhood, legitimating some identities over others.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Given problematic aspects of thick play in big worlds (Mackey 2009), children need opportunities to explore how narratives connect across films, toys, and other media forms and to critically examine the deep layers in these narratives, what Jenkins (2009) calls the spreadability and drillability of transmedia storytelling. The U.S. Department of Education recently recognized the learning potential of transmedia, identifying the following benefits to early childhood education:

> • It presents children with multiple entry points to learning. Children can start learning via any one of the individual media, but when these media are interconnected, children will be motivated to explore even more;
> • It enables educators to use individual media for the functions for which they are best suited. For example, games are particularly good problem-solving environments that encourage children to try difficult things without fear of failure; they are not as good as video, however, at presenting more linear and orderly information; and
> • The rich, fictional worlds of transmedia tend to create a greater level of social interaction that can inspire children to create their own stories and media (U.S. Department of Education website, 2011)

Children's interactions with transmedia are neither simple nor innocent, situated in dense webs of toys, play narratives, peer groups, and social relationships. As children play a story together and imagine play worlds, they also include and exclude friends in their social circles (Dyson 1997, 2003; Marsh 1999; Wohlwend 2011). The studies presented here demonstrate that children also use pretense to collectively reproduce, challenge, disrupt, or reimagine the prevailing ways of doing things.

Performance pedagogies such as *dramatic inquiry* (Edmiston 2008; Medina and Costa 2010; Medina and Perry 2013) show promise for critically engaging the social issues in transmedia, importantly, in ways that matter to children. *Literacy playshop* (Wohlwend et al. 2013), a play-based approach to critical engagement, focuses on facilitating children's productive consumption of transmedia narratives by supporting children in four domains--play, storying, collaboration, and media production. Through literacy playshops, teachers design guided engagements and opportunities for exploration to encourage young children to play and story together with favorite popular media toys, digital cameras, child-made props, and invented sets as they create

their own films. Teachers engage these productions as facilitators who provision the environment or as co-players who help open new roles or directions for the emerging play narrative, key in fostering inclusive play practices as well as critical improvisations that rupture normative stereotypes. Clearly literacy education must expand to include media education in ways that recognize and incorporate children's abilities to navigate sophisticated media texts that are mobile, accessible, replayable, resourceful, and social (Herr-Stephenson et al. 2013).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR LITERACY STUDIES

The extensive reach of popular transmedia and the meteoric rise in children's use of apps and mobile devices around the world (Burnett 2010; Hill 2010; Shuler 2007, 2009; Yamada-Rice 2011) requires urgent attention to and robust research on played texts in these immersive commercial environments. Mackey and Shane (2013) argue the need for critical multimodal literacies pointing out that "many children learn their most potent lessons about interpretation in the branded fiction space" (p. 22). Furthermore, these lessons occur in complex transmedia franchises that blurs consumption and production, global and local, and agency and structure, and home, school, and communities (Pahl and Burnett 2013). The global reach of flows of transmedia suggests the need for international perspectives on children's play around the world as well as a need for nuanced research approaches equipped to track the interactions of people, goods, and texts across vast networks. For example, Nichols and Rainbird (2013) trouble the notion of a dominant binary between home and school spaces, instead studying children's play in converged spaces of engagement such as malls, libraries, and churches, using geosemiotics (Scollon and Scollon 2003) to understand how materials and meanings aggregate as spaces. This direction provides ways to look at transmedia as spatializing and spaces themselves as always/already relocalizing with rich potential for creative critical cultural production. The focus on materiality in this post-structural work provides a generative lens for examining play and creativity in the neither-here-nor-there-but-everywhere aspects globalized children's cultures around the world, as in studies of children's improvisational remakings and remixings of media during play in Australia (Carrington and Dowdall 2013), Finland (Rautio and Winston 2013), Hong Kong (Tam 2013), or Taiwan (Hadley and Nenga 2004).

The repositioning of play and creativity as active and critical cultural production poses a number of challenges and questions: How to effectively involve children and youth in critically engaging their favorite media texts that are so immersive and embodied? What literacy learning happens when children collaborate to produce played texts with these everyday texts? What creative cultural production happens when children imagine and play together in physical and digital spaces? What inequities arise from children's disparate access to collaborative play and cutting-edge technologies in their homes, schools, and communities? In commercial or institutional contexts, who is allowed to imagine otherwise through opportunities to play together and who is blocked by price constraints, mandated schedules, or protectionist firewalls? How can critical approaches help children problematize stereotypes or resist consumerist messages while respecting children's emotional attachments and valuing children's diverse literacy resources? These questions suggest the rich possibilities and immediate need for nuanced literacy studies that look beyond critical deconstruction of problematic media content to examine the potential and hazards of everyday play as a social practice and creativity as cultural production.

RELATED TOPICS

Children's Media and Popular Culture, Drama and Filmmaking, Digital Storytelling, Children's Peer Culture, Consumer Culture

FURTHER READING

Herr-Stephenson, B., Alper, M., Reilly, E., and Jenkins, H. (2013) *T is for transmedia: Learning through transmedia play*, Los Angeles and New York USC Annenberg Innovation Lab and The Joan Ganz Cooney Center. Retrieved from http://www.annenberglab.com/viewresearch/46.

Marsh, J. (2010) *Childhood, culture and creativity: a literature review*, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Creativity, Culture and Education.

Medina, C. L., and Wohlwend, K. E. (2014) *Literacy, play, and globalization: Converging imaginaries in children's critical and cultural performances*, New York: Routledge.

Willet, R., Robinson, M., and Marsh, J. (Eds.). (2008) *Play, creativity, and digital cultures*. New York: Routledge.

Wohlwend, K. E., Buchholz, B. A., Wessel-Powell, C., Coggin, L. S., and Husbye, N. E. (2013) *Literacy playshop: Playing with new literacies and popular media in the early childhood classroom,* New York: Teachers College Press.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bateson, G. (1955/1972) 'A theory of play and fantasy', in G. Bateson (ed) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, San Francisco: Chandler.

Bauman, R., and Briggs, C. L. (1990) Poetics and performance as critical perspective on language and social life, *Annual Reviews of Anthropology,* 19: 59-88.

Black, R. W., and Reich, S. M. (2012) 'Culture and community in a virtual world for young children', jn C. A. Steinkuehler, K. Squire and S. Barab (eds), *Games, learning, and society: Learning and meaning in the digital age,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Blaise, M. (2005) *Playing it straight: Uncovering gender discourses in the early childhood classroom*, New York: Routledge.

Boldt, G. M. (2009) Kyle and the basilisk: Understanding children's writing as play, *Language Arts,* 87(1): 9-17.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buckingham, D. (1996) *Moving images: Understanding children's emotional responses to television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Burnett, C. (2010) Technology and literacy in early childhood educational settings: A review of research, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy,* 10(3): 247-270.

Carrington, V., and Dowdall, C. (2013) '"This is a job for a hazmat guy!": Global media cultures and children's everyday lives', in K. Hall, T. Cremin, B. Comber and L. C. Moll (eds) *International handbook of research on children's literacy, learning, and culture*, Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Collier, D. R. (2013) Relocalizing wrestler: performing texts across time and space, *Language and Education*, [ahead of print].

Cook, D. T. (2008) The missing child in consumption theory, *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 8(2): 219–243.

Corsaro, W. A. (2003) We're friends right? Inside kids' culture, Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

de Certeau, M. (1984) *The practice of everyday life* (Trans. S. Rendall), Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Docktor, J., Haug, D., and Lewis, C. (2010) Redefining rigor: Critical engagement, digital media, and the new English/language arts, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy,* 53(6): 418–420.

Dyson, A. H. (1997) *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, A. H. (2003) *The brothers and sisters learn to write: Popular literacies in childhood and school cultures*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Edmiston, B. W. (2008) *Forming ethical identities in early childhood play*, London: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (1996) *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (2nd ed.), London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Gee, J. P. (1999) *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*, London: Routledge.

Ghiso, M. P. (2011) Playing with/through non-fiction texts: Young children authoring their relationships with history, Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 11(4): 26-51. doi: 10.1177/1468798411430093

Goldstein, J., Buckingham, D., and Brougère, G. (2005) *Toys, games and media*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hadley, K. G., and Nenga, S. K. (2004) From Snow White to Digimon: Using popular media to confront Confucian values in Taiwanese peer cultures, *Childhood, 11*(4), 515–536.

Herr-Stephenson, B., Alper, M., Reilly, E., and Jenkins, H. (2013) *T is for transmedia: Learning through transmedia play*, Los Angeles and New York USC Annenberg Innovation Lab and The Joan Ganz Cooney Center. Retrieved from http://www.annenberglab.com/viewresearch/46

Hill, S. (2010) The millennium generation: Teacher-researchers exploring new forms of literacy, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy,* 10(3): 314-340.

Hilton, M. (Ed.). (1996).*Potent fictions: Children's literacy and the challenge of popular culture*, London: Routledge.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., and Cain, C. (1998) *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Husbye, N. E. (2013) *Of movies and multimodality: Film design and modal complexity as literacy practices in the elementary classroom,* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University Bloomington, IN.

Jenkins, H. (Ed.). (1998) *The children's culture reader*, New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins, H. (2009) "The revenge of the origami unicorn: Seven principles of transmedia storytelling (Well, two actually. Five more on Friday)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* [blog]. http://henryjenkins.org/2009/12/the_revenge_of_the_origami_uni.html.

Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Clinton, K., Robison, A. J., and Weigel, M. (2006) *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st Century*, Chicago: The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Jones, S., and Shackelford, S. (2013) 'Emotional investments and crises of truth: Gender, class, and literacies', in K. Hall, T. Cremin, B. Comber and L. C. Moll (eds) *International handbook of research on children's literacy, learning, and culture*, Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Kendrick, M. (2005) Playing house: A 'sideways' glance at literacy and identity in early childhood, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy,* 5(1): 1-28.

Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leont'ev, A. N. (1977) *Activity and consciousness, philosophy in the USSR, problems of dialectical materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Lewis, C., Enciso, P., and Moje, E. B. (2007) *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mackey, M. (2009) 'Exciting yet safe: The appeal of thick play and big worlds', in R. Willett, M. Robinson and J. Marsh (eds) *Play, creativity, and digital cultures*, London: Routledge.

Mackey, M., and Shane, M. (2013) 'Critical multimodal literacies: Synergistic options and opportunities', in K. Hall, T. Cremin, B. Comber and L. C. Moll (eds) *International handbook of research on children's literacy, learning, and culture*, Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Marsh, J. (1999) Batman and Batwoman go to school: Popular culture in the literacy curriculum. *International Journal of Early Years Education,* 7(2): 117-131.

Marsh, J. (2005) 'Ritual, performance, and identity construction: Young children's engagement with popular cultural and media texts', in J. Marsh (ed) *Popular culture, new media and digital literacy in early childhood,* New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Marsh, J. (2011) Young children's literacy practices in a virtual world: Establishing an online 'interaction order', *Reading Research Quarterly,* 46(2): 101-118.

Marshall, E., and Sensoy, Ö. (Eds.). (2011) *Rethinking popular culture and media*, Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Medina, C. L., and Costa, M. d. R. (2010) Collaborative voices exploring culturally and socially responsive literacies, *Language Arts*, 87(4): 263-276.

Medina, C. L. and Perry, M. (2013) 'Texts, affects, and relations in cultural performance: An embodied analysis of dramatic inquiry', in P. Albers, T. Holbrook, and A. Seely Flint (eds) New methods in literacy research, New York: Routledge.

Medina, C. L., and Wohlwend, K. E. (2014) *Literacy, play, and globalization: Converging imaginaries in children's critical and cultural performances*, New York: Routledge.

Nichols, S. and Rainbird, S. (2013) The mall, the library and the church: Inquiring into the resourcing of early learning through new spaces and networks*, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 26(2): 198-215.

Pahl, K. (2007) Creativity in events and practices: a lens for understanding children's multimodal texts, *Literacy,* 41(2): 86-92.

Pahl, K., and Burnett, C. (2013) 'Literacies in homes and communities', in K. Hall, T. Cremin, B. Comber and L. C. Moll (eds) *International handbook of research on children's literacy, learning, and culture*, Oxford, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Pennycook, A. (2007) 'The rotation gets thick. The constraints get thin': Creativity, recontextualization and difference, *Applied Linguistics* 28(4): 579–596.

Pennycook, A. (2010) *Language as a local practice*, London: Routledge.

Pugh, A. J. (2009) *Longing and belonging: Parents, children, and consumer culture*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rautio, P., and Winston, J. (2013) Things and children in play–improvisation with language and matter, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, (ahead-of-print), 1-12.

Rowsell, J. (2011) Consumers as learners/learners as consumers, *National Society for the Study of Education,* 110(1): 244–262.

Saltmarsh, S. (2009) Becoming economic subjects: agency, consumption and popular culture in early childhood, *Discourse,* 30(1): 47-59.

Sawyer, R. K. (1997) *Pretend play as improvisation: Conversation in the preschool classroom*, Norwood, NJ: Erlbaum.

Sawyer, R. K. (2003) 'Levels of analysis in pretend play discourse: Metacommunication in conversational routines' in D. E. Lytle (ed) *Play and educational theory and practice*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

Scollon, R. (2001) *Mediated discourse: The nexus of practice,* London: Routledge.

Scollon, R., and Scollon, S. W. (2003) *Discourses in place,* New York: Routledge.

Sefton-Green, J. (2000) 'From creativity to cultural production: Shared perspectives', in J. Sefton-Green and R. Sinker (eds) *Evaluating creativity: Making and learning by young people*, London: Routledge.

Sefton-Green, J., and Parker, D. (2000) *Edit: Play: How children use edutainment software to tell stories*, London: British Film institute.

Seiter, E. (1993) *Sold separately: Children and parents in consumer culture*, Piscataway, NJ Rutgers University Press.

Sekeres, D. C. (2009) The market child and branded fiction: A synergism of children's literature, consumer culture, and new literacies, *Reading Research Quarterly,* 44(4): 399-414.

Shuler, C. (2007) D is for digital: An analysis of the children's interactive media environment with a focus on mass marketed products that promote learning, *Advancing children's learning in a digital age*, New York: Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Street Workshop.

Shuler, C. (2009) *Pockets of potential: Using mobile technologies to promote children's learning*, New York: The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop.

Siegel, M. (1995) More than words: The generative power of transmediation for learning, *Canadian Journal of Education,* 20: 455-475.

Siegel, M. (2006) Rereading the signs: Multimodal transformations in the field of literacy research, *Language Arts,* 84(1): 65-77.

Siegel, M., Kontovourki, S., Schmier, S., and Enriquez, G. (2008) Literacy in motion: A case study of a shape-shifting kindergartener, *Language Arts,* 86(2): 89-98.

Steinkuehler, C. A., Black, R. W., and Clinton, K. A. (2005) Researching literacy as tool, place, and way of being, *Reading Research Quarterly,* 40(1): 90-110.

Street, B. V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literary development*, Singapore: Pearson Education Asia.

Tam, P. C. (2013) Children's bricolage under the gaze of teachers in sociodramatic play, *Childhood,* 20(2): 244-259.

Thorne, B. (1993) *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Tobin, J. (2000) *"Good guys don't wear hats": Children's talk about the media*, New York: Teachers College Press.

United States Department of Education. (2011) *Why use transmedia in early learning?* Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/oii-news/why-use-transmedia-early-learning

Vygotsky, L. (1978 [1935]) *Mind in society* (Trans. A. Luria, M. Lopez-Morillas and M. Cole), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (2004 [1930]) 'Imagination and creativity in childhood,' (Trans. F. Smolucha), *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology.* 42(1): 7 –97.

Willett, R. J. (2001) *Children's use of popular media in their creative writing,* unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London, London.

Wohlwend, K. E. (2008) Play as a literacy of possibilities: Expanding meanings in practices, materials, and spaces, *Language Arts,* 86(2): 127-136.

Wohlwend, K. E. (2009) Damsels in discourse: Girls consuming and producing gendered identity texts through Disney Princess play, *Reading Research Quarterly,* 44(1): 57-83. doi: DOI: 10.1598/RRQ.44.1.3

Wohlwend, K. E. (2011) *Playing their way into literacies: Reading, writing, and belonging in the early childhood classroom*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Wohlwend, K. E. (2012) The boys who would be princesses: Playing with gender identity intertexts in Disney Princess transmedia, *Gender and Education,* 24(6): 593-610. doi: 10.1080/09540253.2012.674495

Wohlwend, K. E., Buchholz, B. A., Wessel-Powell, C., Coggin, L. S., and Husbye, N. E. (2013) *Literacy playshop: Playing with new literacies and popular media in the early childhood classroom*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Wohlwend, K. E., and Lewis, C. (2010) 'Critical literacy, critical engagement, and digital technology: Convergence and embodiment in glocal spheres', in D. Lapp and D. Fisher (eds) *Handbook of Research on Teaching English Language Arts* (3rd ed), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wohlwend, K. E., Vander Zanden, S., Husbye, N. E., and Kuby, C. R. (2011) Navigating discourses in place in the world of Webkinz, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy,* 11(2): 141-163.

Yamada-Rice, D. (2010) Beyond words: An enquiry into children's home visual communication practices, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy,* 10(3): 341-363

Karen E. Wohlwend is Associate Professor of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. She studies play as a literacy and a tactic to critically engage young children's play with toys, filmmaking, and digital technologies in online and classroom spaces.