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Exploring Repurposing Across Contexts: How Adolescents' New Literacies Practices Can Inform Understandings about Writing-Related Transfer

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EXPLORING REPURPOSING ACROSS CONTEXTS: HOW ADOLESCENTS’ NEW LITERACIES PRACTICES CAN INFORM UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT WRITING-RELATED TRANSFER

by

CYNTHIA MITCHELL
B.A. Flagler College, 2005
M.A. University of Central Florida, 2008

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Texts and Technology in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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Major Professor: Elizabeth Wardle
ABSTRACT

This project examines how middle school students engage in new literacies practices and how they repurpose across contexts. With the use of screencast software and interviews, this project analyzes six case study participants’ new literacies practices and the way they use and change ideas and strategies across physical and digital contexts.

Drawing from transfer methodology, this project looks at how broadening conceptions of transfer and contexts to include repurposing increases the possibilities for finding transfer in literacies practices. Applying new literacies theory, this project explores how literacies practices that are chronologically and ontologically new (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006) are often repurposed across contexts. In addition, employing rhetorical invention and arrangement theories, this project examines how contemporary invention is repurposing and how arrangement aids in meaning making in new literacies practices. It also explores concerns over increased repurposing across collapsed contexts for literacies.
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CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When I first heard the term transfer used to describe the application of learning in a different context, I knew it was what I had been looking for. I sat in the office of one of my graduate professors saying that I was really fascinated by how much writing a particular student had been doing on a fan fiction website and wondered whether she used any of that in class. She said I was talking about transfer. The fact that I had never heard the term before that moment is worth noting. I have been a secondary English teacher in public schools for eleven years and this school year, 2015-2016, marks the first time my district has mentioned “transfer” in professional development. While transfer is arguably the purpose of education, the term had remained mostly absent at the secondary level.

But, it was what I had been reflecting on for years. Every time I received a list from our community college listing the grammar and writing concepts freshmen “didn’t know,” I wondered why they weren’t transferring their grammar and writing knowledge. Every time I used a similar note-taking strategy to my students’ English teachers from the year before and they couldn’t remember how to do it, I wondered why they weren’t transferring this strategy. And every time they struggled with writing a research paper, which I knew they had been doing for years, I wondered why they weren’t transferring their genre knowledge. Then, of course, there was that big question:
why weren’t they transferring everything I taught them to the big standardized tests? I had been wondering these things for years without having the framework to speak about them.

Therefore when I was made aware of the term “transfer,” I knew it was what I was drawn to study for my doctoral work. However, when I started work on this dissertation, I did so knowing that I was working with concepts and frameworks with a rich, layered history that I would have to work with anew. I mused to myself on several occasions as I read about research on students struggling with writing and transfer how I had chosen to read about myself, a novice to this field. But that is probably why composition research fascinates so many of us: we are all writers and we understand the researched value of reflection and metacognition. It is with that in mind that I start this literature review. First I will discuss transfer research, namely its history and terms. Then, I will discuss new literacies theory, which has framed my transfer study.

Defining “Transfer”

_A Historical Look_

Writing-related transfer researchers have argued that defining transfer is necessary to studies of transfer because of the contentious nature of the term and the way the use of the term effects results in studies of transfer (Beach, 2003; Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Moore, 2012; Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Tumoi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003; Wardle 2007, 2012). While I framed my study
under the term repurposing, a more contemporary conception of transfer, this term comes from a rich tradition of transfer studies.

While transfer is commonly defined as “the ability to extend what has been learned in one context to new contexts” (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 51) this definition has evolved from the first understandings in 1901. Beginning with Thorndike and Woodworth (1901), educational transfer research was conducted in a laboratory setting as a narrowly defined, quantitative study. In their study, “The Influence of Improvement in One Mental Function Upon the Efficiency of Other Functions,” they tested their subjects to establish a baseline. They then taught them a specific skill, an understanding of the Latin language, and tested them to see if that skill transferred to other situations. What they found was that transfer only occurs when there is a mental correlation between two functions. In other words, skills were transferred to identical situations, but skills were rarely transferred between different situations in their experiment. Their study showed that Latin does not improve overall thinking and reasoning in a laboratory study. As a result of this study and other classical transfer studies, transfer theory in the early 1900s focused on specific behaviors being taught in specific sequences (Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003, p. 20). The research led to the idea that transfer is only possible if students are taught a specific set of skills and tested in a specific means.

Thorndike and Woodworth’s (1901) conception of transfer was what Perkins and Salomon would later call “low-road” transfer: “the automatic triggering of well-practiced routines in circumstances where there is considerable perceptual similarity to the original learning context” (p. 25). Later, in 1939, Judd questioned Thorndike’s studies because he questioned whether this was the only possibility for transfer. Judd argued, “broad transfer occurs when the same general strategy or principle that was previously learned in task A is also required in learning or performing task B”
Judd’s experiments showed that if students were taught to reflect and look for opportunities to transfer between different, though similar, contexts, they were more likely to transfer particular general skills. He argued that transfer could occur if students were taught general principles that they could later use in similar school contexts.

While Judd moved beyond the idea of an “automatic triggering of well-practiced routines,” his work focused on transfer of a particular set of general principles that were proposed to be transferrable between similar contexts. In the late 1900s, however, cognitive views of transfer held that schemas were the key to understanding transfer between similar contexts. Schemas are patterns of thought that help our brain determine relationships between ideas. As such, cognitive studies of transfer focused on metacognition as fundamental to transfer: “In the metacognitive transfer view, successful transfer occurs when the problem solver is able to recognize the requirements of the new problem, select previously learned specific and general skills that apply to new problems” (Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003, p. 22). Cognitive conceptions of transfer require the learner to be actively engaged in the transfer of skills. In other words, the learner must be aware of the need for transfer and able to choose the correct skills in a new situation. This is what Perkins & Salomon (1988) defined as “high-road” transfer: “deliberate mindful abstraction of skill or knowledge from one context to another” (p. 25).

However, in the 1980s, Lave argued that even “high-road” transfer through metacognition is too narrow of a lens for transfer. He contended that the “cognitive view represents the static quality of transfer in experimental practice: it is treated as a process of taking a given item and applying it somewhere else (Lave 1988: 37)” (as cited in Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003, p. 25). His situated view of transfer proposed that transfer is not the application of a skill from one context to the next, but rather “patterns of participatory processes across situations” (p. 25). The situated view of
transfer focused on contexts and participation across contexts as the means for transfer. Lave & Wenger argued, “learning must be understood with respect to a practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations—both within the community and with the world at large” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 114). Therefore, they focused on apprenticeship, for example, as a way of allowing learners to participate in the processes they need to transfer.

Similarly, the sociocultural conception of transfer focused on the contexts for transfer. Beach argued that traditional conceptions of transfer focused too much on the individual. He asserted that the relationship between social organizations, individuals, and situations is where transfer takes place (Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003, p. 27). In Beach’s reconceptualization, transfer is “movement across the boundaries of activity contexts. It is not only knowledge that moves – the entire human being moves” (Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom, 2003, p. 28). Therefore, transfer research should not only be focusing on the knowledge that moves across contexts. Transfer research should look at the relationships between activity systems and the role of the individuals in those systems.

This evolution of transfer studies represents only some of the views and types of studies undertaken in about a century of transfer research. As Tuomi-Grohn & Engestrom (2003) argued, “Every conceptualization of transfer reflects its own time and concept of learning related to it” (p. 33). They argued that different conceptualization of transfer are needed for different studies and for real-world application (p. 35).
The Problem with the Term “Transfer”

When looking at the history of transfer research, we also find much conversation about the use of the term “transfer.” It has been argued that use of the term “transfer” is both inappropriate and harmful to the writing-related transfer community (Beach, 2003; Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Nowacek, 2011; Smit, 2004; Wardle 2007, 2012).

According to Beach (2003), the term “transfer” should be changed because contemporary understandings of learning have changed. He argued that the term “transfer” focuses on moving particular concepts or skills from one context to the other, whereas contemporary understandings of learning have moved beyond this idea of learning. For example, he wrote, “Fast food work is considered in the school-to-work movement only as an example of what school-to-work should not be: preparation for low knowledge, low skill, low wage employment” (Beach, 2003, p. 54). He posited that the term “transfer” represents the same ideas as fast food employment. In other words, the term transfer focuses only on low knowledge and skills being moved between contexts.

Similarly, Hager & Hodkinson (2009) argued that “transfer” as a metaphor for learning brings to mind the idea of the learner transferring “stuff” or products from one context to another. This metaphor, they argued, is reliant on an old understanding of learning: what is learned is separate from the learner, learning means moving a product from one place to another, and learning is separate from its context (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, p.622-623). As Wardle (2007) wrote, “we know the phenomenon is messier than the transportation model suggested by the word ‘transfer’” (p. 2).
It has been argued that using the term “transfer” limits the possibilities for findings in research studies. As Wardle (2007) wrote, “focusing on a limited search for ‘skills’ is the reason we do not recognize more evidence of ‘transfer’; we are looking for apples when those apples are now part of an apple pie” (p. 69). In other words, use of the word “transfer” has long limited findings of transfer and, thus, limited our understandings of what transfer can be. As Wardle (2007) argued, “The continued use of the word ‘transfer’ limits our ability to think more fully about this phenomenon and what it means” (p. 2). As such, alternative terms are needed to better portray how transfer actually happens.

Alternatives to “Transfer”

The contentious and reflective nature of writing-related transfer research has left a legacy layered with alternative terms for looking at transfer and possibilities for what future research could show with a set of appropriate terms for the study of transfer. Some of these terms include, but are not limited to, “boundary-crossing,” “consequential transitions,” and “repurposing.”

“Boundary-crossing” is one alternative lens for looking at the transfer of learning that has been used recently in writing-related transfer studies. Tuomi-Grohn, Engestrom & Young (2003) wrote, “Boundary-crossing is a broad and little studied category of cognitive processes. Classic studies of innovation and creative thinking emphasize the potential embedded in transporting ideas, concepts, and instruments from seemingly unrelated domains into the domain of focal inquiry” (p. 4). This term has been used to frame contemporary studies of writing-related transfer. For
example, Wenger (1998) studied learning as a process of social participation using the term “boundary-crossing.” His results led to the concept of “boundary encounters:” particular events in which connections are made. Similarly, Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) described participants as “boundary crossers” and “boundary guarders” in their study of how first-year composition (FYC) students use prior genre knowledge. The “boundary crossers” were those who could successfully use genre knowledge by compartmentalizing it, whereas the “boundary guarders” were those who unsuccessfully attempted to transfer whole genres. A student who was able to use the skills of online research taught in an English class in a Biology paper, who also understood that the research paper genre was different for a Science class, would be a boundary crosser. The student who transferred the research paper genre unsuccessfully into Biology class and received a poor grade as a result would be a boundary guarder.

Another alternative way of looking at transfer is “consequential transition.” Beach (2003) introduced this term as an alternative way of looking at this phenomenon: “Transition, then, is the concept we use to understand how knowledge is generalized, or propagated, across social space and time. A transition is consequential when it is consciously reflected on, struggled with, and shifts the individual’s sense of self or social position” (p. 42). He focused on moments when the learner takes on a new identity, i.e. an apprentice sees himself as the skilled worker he has been training to be.

Alternative terms for transfer are not exclusive; they are often combined to better explain this complicated phenomenon. For example, Hager & Hodkinson (2009) adopted both of the above terms in their inclusive definition of transfer. They wrote, “Our argument, then, is that we should cease thinking and writing about ‘learning transfer’ and think instead of learning as becoming within a transitional process of boundary crossing” (p. 635). This exemplifies the ways in which terms for transfer do not necessarily exclude each other. Instead, the terms for transfer within the
writing-related transfer community build on the tradition of transfer studies. They are often used in combination to better portray the complicated phenomenon of transfer.

The term “repurposing” also seeks to expand the possibilities for transfer. Wardle (2012) argued for using the term “creative repurposing for expansive learning” or “repurposing.” Repurposing emphasizes the use and change of knowledge and skills when applied in multiple contexts (Prior & Shipka, 2003). Roozen (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014), for instance, has used this term to find evidence of transfer between academic and social contexts over time in his case studies. His work used the term “repurposing’ to trace trajectories of literate activities longitudinally in his case studies. For example, he studied a participant, Kate’s, fan fiction and English studies over a period of two years and showed “the trajectory of linkages between fan fiction and English studies, paying particular attention to the repurposing of literate practices across these activities, the synergies and tensions that texture such interactions” (Roozen, 2009a, p.136). Kate had developed her literate identity as a fan fiction writer and this had led her into studying English at the graduate level. In addition, Wardle (2012) has used this term to examine dispositions that encourage repurposing and those that do not.

**Contemporary Writing-Related Transfer Research Methods**

In the same way that conceptualizations of learning and transfer, as well as the terms used to describe transfer, have evolved over time, so have research methods. With the changes in conceptions of transfer, methodology has changed to match the theory. This pattern of change in
transfer research is also apparent in writing studies. While classical conceptualizations of transfer led to experimental methods in laboratories, contemporary conceptions of writing-related transfer have led to a mix of qualitative methods. Much recent work on writing-related transfer focuses on academic contexts with student and teacher participants. This is indicative of a larger change from a focus on skills to a focus on people. Naturally, a focus on people leads researchers to qualitative methods, which better portray detailed portraits of participants.

Moore’s (2012) recent “map” of writing-related transfer studies listed the following contemporary research methods: surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations, and think-aloud protocols. Her map shows the ways in which recent transfer research is focused on a variety of qualitative research methods. The writing-related transfer community, and the writing studies community as a whole, seeks to maintain self-reflective and replicable methods. To this aim, the field shares methods and methodologies in an effort to maintain reflexive and ethical research. Beaufort (1999, 2007), in particular, clearly included her methodology in her appendices. For example, in College Writing and Beyond, she described in detail her case study methods. She argued, “Interviews, while extremely important and relied on heavily here, cannot tell the whole story. Seeing the subject ‘in action’—either by field observation or by interviews with others in the field of action—allows critical elements of triangulation” (Beaufort, 2007, 215). In this study she collected data from six different sources: interviews with her participant, writing samples, sources used in writing assignments, comments on papers, expert comments on writing, and observations of the courses (p. 216).

Similarly, Nowacek (2011) explicitly described her methods in her introduction to Agents of Integration. She wrote, “I spent a semester working closely with the three professors and eighteen students enrolled in the interdisciplinary humanities seminar” (p. 3). Her goal was to provide a
“thick synchronous slice of student life” (p. 3). Therefore, she collected data from interviews, focus groups, recordings of class discussion, student papers, comments on papers, student notebooks, and her field notes. Both Beaufort (1999, 2007) and Nowacek (2011) exemplify the ways in which contemporary writing-related transfer research uses a variety of qualitative methods together to capture the rich possibilities for contemporary understandings of transfer. Similarly, I used a mix of qualitative methods in my study, a topic I will take up in more depth in the next chapter.

**Impediments to Transfer**

Despite broadened understandings of transfer and how to study it, contemporary research continues to find numerous impediments to writing-related transfer. These include, but are not limited to, the interaction between novices and experts, genre knowledge, and dispositions. These impediments are particularly pronounced during transitional times, including FYC, an area often studied in transfer research (Moore, 2012). Transitional times are particularly difficult because students must learn to adapt to new environments quickly and effectively.

Transfer can be difficult because individuals often need to draw on what they know in an entirely new context; in other words, they need to draw on prior knowledge in a setting where they are novices (Beaufort, 1999; The Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, 2000; Foertsch, 1995; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). For instance, the Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice (2000) found that the cognitive load novices face when approached with a new task prevents them from being able to transfer knowledge and skills because the demand is too
high. Similarly, Foertsch (1995) argued that novices cannot see the similarities between tasks through the details of the differences. Also, novices do not have enough experiences to draw on. On the other hand, experts have a variety of past experiences they can draw on and they are better able to see the "structural relations" between problems (Foertsch, 1995, p. 372). Similarly, Beaufort (1999) argued that literature on expertise finds that experts have "rich, deep, context-specific knowledge" and "mental schema" in order to gain understanding when given a new problem (p. 17). Conversely, novices do not have these important transfer-enabling heuristics.

The distinction between novices and experts is important when looking at the transfer of writing-related knowledge in academic contexts not only because students have a difficult time transferring learning as novices, but also because their teachers are often experienced experts in their fields. To put it another way, not only do students have little experience to draw on and cannot see past detailed differences in new tasks, they are interacting with teachers who do not notice the differences in assignments that their students have trouble seeing past. Ultimately, as experts, teachers have a difficult time seeing what is impeding a student from transferring learning because their expert knowledge is tacit. They do not explain everything a novice might need because it is implied.

One of the places where the interaction between students and teachers is particularly complicated is in the use of prior genre knowledge because many teachers use the same genre name but mean a different type of writing (Beaufort, 2007; Carroll, 2002; Devitt, 2007; Nowacek 2011). For instance, the genres “essay” and “research paper” are used throughout high school and college classes in a myriad of disciplines, but teachers typically are looking for something different in each discipline. For this reason, research on writing-related knowledge has found instances of what they call negative transfer of prior genre knowledge. For example, Beaufort’s (2007) participant learned
to write essays in FYC that were expository and exploratory in nature. However, when he transferred this prior genre knowledge to his history class essays, he was criticized for not supporting his opinion and needing to be more focused and linear. Both classes asked for essays, but each professor was looking for a different type of writing.

The term “negative transfer” has been called into question by more recent research on writing-related transfer, however. In particular, Nowacek (2011) has argued that the epiphany of transferring writing-related knowledge can be positive even if a student’s grade suffers. In other words, the excitement of seeing connections between different writing assignments is positive for the student, despite professors’ perceptions. This distinction is important for several reasons, including the significance it places on what professors are willing to accept within the confines of an assignment.

In other words, teachers often invite transfer by using the same genre names, but are disappointed when students transfer prior genre knowledge because it is not what they actually have in mind. To take a case in point, Nowacek (2011) described a history professor’s “medieval diary” assignment in which the professor meant for students to describe details of historical significance. He gave an assignment sheet and provided models. Yet, he was disappointed when some students did not include important historical details in their diary assignment, but rather focused on their character’s feelings. In other words, he did not value the prior knowledge they transferred from the diary genre. Similarly, Devitt (2007) described a biology teacher’s frustration at her students’ perceived inability to write a research paper. The idea is that even if they learned how to write a research paper in FYC, the situated nature of the genre would be far removed from that of biology class. Whether or not they were transferring prior genre knowledge from FYC, it is unlikely that it
would be perceived as “positive transfer” in biology class because the biology discipline encourages a different kind of research than what is typically done within the confines of FYC.

Some researchers have recently suggested that writing-related transfer is further complicated by student dispositions (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Wardle, 2012; Wells, 2012). As Perkins et al. (2000) wrote, “Definitively, dispositions concern not what abilities people have, but how people are disposed to use those abilities” (p. 269). Dispositions help determine whether or not a person is inclined to use their learning in a new context. Therefore, dispositions are at the heart of whether or not an individual will transfer learning. Research suggests that certain people are disposed to the transfer of learning while others are disposed to have difficulty with transfer because of the dispositions with which they enter new contexts. For example, Perkins et al. (2000) used Elliot and Dweck’s work as one example of how cognitive engagement determines dispositions. Elliot and Dweck (1988) argued that a person’s perception of how intelligence functions affects their ability to solve novel tasks. They defined two different dispositions: entity learners and incremental learners (p. 285). Entity learners believe that intelligence is stable and invariable. In contrast, incremental learners believe intelligence is learnable. Though not a study focused on transfer, Elliot and Dweck’s findings suggested that incremental learners are more likely to apply strategies they have used before to novel problems. Incidentally, they are more likely to transfer learning because they are more open to the possibility of doing so.

Research also suggests that dispositions are affected by social contexts (Wardle, 2012; Wells, 2012). For instance, Perkins et al. (2000) asserted, “In the case of an incremental view of intelligence, findings indicate that a positively reinforcing environment that includes a focus on learning goals and support for risk-taking can enhance an incremental attitude” (p. 286). Similarly, Wardle (2012) used Bourdieu’s work on habitus to suggest that an educational system focused on
standardized testing encourages more “answer-getting” dispositions as opposed to “problem-exploring” dispositions. Moreover students exhibiting “answer-getting” dispositions, like entity learners, are less likely to transfer learning because they are not open to the possibility of multiple options which allow them to repurpose between contexts. Therefore, the habitus of the secondary public education system is likely hindering the types of dispositions that most effectively are disposed to transfer learning.

Although research has found that the transfer of writing-related knowledge is difficult, there is evidence of students who are able to transfer writing-related knowledge. Students are more likely to transfer writing-related knowledge when they have dispositions that encourage transfer, when they accept their role as novices, and when professors are mindful of the genres they assign.

These themes are present throughout research on writing-related transfer. Underlying each is the conclusion that the transfer of writing-related knowledge in difficult situations is facilitated by mindfulness of the process of using prior knowledge by both students and professors. Student dispositions that encourage this sort of mindfulness aid in the transfer of writing-related knowledge (Perkins et al., 2000; Wardle, 2012; Wells, 2012). Similarly, students who accept their role as novices are able to compartmentalize prior genre knowledge and use it in new contexts effectively (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). Moreover, professors who are mindful of the genres they choose and who teach genre awareness encourage the appropriate use of prior genre knowledge by their students (Devitt, 2007; Nowacek, 2011). Each one of these arguments is based on the idea that understanding how to learn and how to transfer learning, through metacognition and reflection, encourages transfer because being more mindful of learning opens up the possibility for transfer (Beaufort, 2007; Rounsaville et al., 2008; Yancey, 1998). Finally, some researchers have suggested
that pedagogies that focus on transfer can most effectively facilitate transfer (Smit, 2004; Driscoll, 2009).

**Writing, Literacies, and Transfer**

As Brent (2011) argued, “transfer theory tells us that transfer is fraught, elusive, difficult to measure, and by no means automatic. But it also assures us that it happens, and indeed happens often, given the right conditions and a sufficiently expanded notion of what it means to transfer learning across wide spaces” (p. 409). Transfer research in the composition community has long focused not only on a limited definition of transfer but also on a limited definition of writing. Beyond expanding our definitions of transfer, another way to expand our notion of what it means to transfer is by expanding our notion of writing to include other literacies practices. In other words, if the term “transfer” limits the results because the metaphor of transfer limits the possibilities for studying this phenomenon, then it could be possible that limiting transfer research to “writing” has had similar effects on the research landscape.

Composition research has frequently suggested that non-academic and academic writing are incompatible. Much research on transfer and writing ignores non-academic writing, focusing solely on academic writing (Beaufort, 2007; Carroll, 2002; Haas, 1994; McCarthy, 1987; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). And yet, studies that do include non-academic writing often place it in contrast to academic writing (Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Courage, 1993; Herrington & Curtis, 2000). As Roozen (2009a) wrote, “All told, self-sponsored private writing has largely been understood as
largely at odds with undergraduates’ academic activities – a form of writing that rests on the wrong side of dichotomies that dominate how we understand and imagine the literate landscape” (p. 545). Yet, some research in the area of digital writing suggests that non-academic writing is on the “right” side of the dichotomy. Some digital writing research tells the story of non-academic literate development that is proliferating despite the tyrannical influence of the classroom (Black, 2008; Gee, 2007; Hellekson & Busse, 2001; Jenkins, 2004; Lankshear & Knobel 2006). This is particularly evident in Jenkins’ (2004) work. He argued, for instance, “smart kids have long known not to let schooling get in the way of their education” (para. 3); “They can’t wait for the school bell to ring so they can focus on their writing” (para. 14). He asserted that fan fiction provides an avenue for students to practice the “right” kind of writing, the kind they get excited about. In his characterizations, he continues the tradition of setting non-academic and academic writing in opposition.

However, recent case study research conducted by Roozen (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014) has begun to tell a different story of literate development. Rather than placing academic and non-academic literacy practices at opposite ends of a dichotomy, Roozen traces participants’ trajectories of literacy practices across contexts and over time. He also expands the notion of what it means to practice literacy by expanding his study beyond “writing.” For example, in “Tracing Trajectories,” he argued, “the writer’s developing disciplinary writing process as a graduate student in English literature is mediated by practices she repurposed from previous engagements with keeping a prayer journal as a member of a church youth group and generating visual designs for an undergraduate graphic arts class” (Roozen, 2010, p. 318). Rather than placing her literacy practices into opposing categories, he traces how she repurposed multiple literacy practices in a new context. This is important because, in this tracing, Roozen has found much more evidence of repurposing
across contexts. In other words, by considering all literacy practices as literacy practices, whether the context be academic or not and whether they be writing or not, his study design resulted in more findings of the ways students repurpose across contexts.

To look at it another way, we see that “writing” has long dominated the transfer research community, whereas contemporary students are engaging in practices more multiple than simply writing. As Alvermann (2008) argued, “adolescent literacy is linked to social practices that involve reading and writing as well as other modes of communication (e.g., still and moving images, sound, embodied performance) in which young people engage” (p. 8). Studying today’s teenagers requires a different lens that can provide further possibilities for finding transfer in a study.

New Literacies

One lens that is particularly helpful for looking at literacies today is New Literacies. The term “new literacies” comes from a tradition that is rich and complex, much like the term “transfer.” Since the 1970s, literacy has been the focus of educational policy and practice (Gee, 2007; Cope & Kalantis, 2000; Lanksher & Knobel, 2006). The change from an emphasis on “reading” to an emphasis on “literacy” in the 1970s represented a change from a focus on the “psychological” to a focus on the “sociocultural” (Lankser & Knobel, 2006, p. 12-13).

Gee’s (2007) discussion of Discourses is helpful in thinking about literacy as a sociocultural phenomenon. As Lankshear & Knobel (2006) wrote, “Discourses are socially recognized ways of using language (reading, writing, speaking, listening), gestures and other semiotics (images, sounds,
graphics, signs, codes), as well as ways of thinking, believing, feeling, valuing, acting/doing and interacting in relation to people and things” (p. 3). Being in a Discourse means that one is recognized as being a particular role within the social group. In order to play this role, one must use literacy practices within that social context.

Playing a social role and using literacy practices in a social context is dependent on creating texts within that social situation. As Lankshear & Knobel (2006) argued, “Literacies call us to generate and communicate meanings and to invite others to make meaning from our texts in turn” (p. 4). These texts can be “almost anything” as long as they are in “a form that allows them to be retrieved, worked with, and made available independently of the physical presence of another person” (p. 5). When we add the computer to this discussion of texts, we see the possibilities for what is “new” in “new literacies.”

For instance, fan art on a Facebook news feed can be considered a text because participation with this text includes distinct roles in a social community on the Internet. It is also a text that communicates a meaning and can be retrieved by another person. This exemplifies the “new” in New Literacies because it represents the ways in which literacy today is chronologically and ontologically new (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). It is both of new technical “stuff” and ethos “stuff.” It is more “participatory,” “collaborative,” and “distributed” than traditional literacies (p. 9). While composition research is naturally focused on writing, some recent research has shown that moving beyond the written text to the ways texts are functioning can lead to important findings (Sternglass, 1997; Carroll, 2002; Beaufort, 1999, 2007; Dias et al., 1999; Lunsford et al., 2005). For instance, the Stanford Study of Writing has led researchers to “see a potentially close relationship between performance and current college literacies” (Lunsford et al., 2005, p. 226). If researchers
expand beyond writing to what is new in new literacies, they can potentially see even more powerful relationships between texts and the ways they are functioning in students’ lives.

I have chosen to focus on the term “new literacies” in my research for the same reason Kist (2005) did in his study. He asserted, “I came to this line of research because of my interest in these new literacies” (p. 13). While the term “multiliteracies” focuses on the multiplicity of literacies, I am more interested in focusing my research and the educational implications on what is new about these literacies, as opposed to what is multiple. As Kist (2005) wrote, a study of new literacies means looking at “new technologies and their dizzying interactivity and nonlinearity” (p. 7). It focuses on what is changing about literacies and how the conception of literacies changes the way we view the practices we engage in.

Research in new literacies, multiliteracies, and other lens for looking at literacies in the age of the computer has found reading and writing is proliferating on the computer and that it is changing how literacies function as a result (i.e., Cope & Kalantis, 2000; Gee, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Williams, 2009; Vie, 2008). For example, Williams’ (2009) study of popular culture found that “writing and reading happens outside of school yet touches on how students engage with issues of authorship, genre, audience, emotion, evidence, and other key rhetorical concepts” (p. 2). Similarly, Vie (2008) argued, “traditional classroom power differentials easily break down in convergent spaces that allow for and encourage individual participation” (p. 19).

Considering literacies under the New Literacies lens is important to transfer research because it is a way we can expand our idea of what is being transferred, allow for the multiple new ways in which adolescents are engaging in literacies on the Internet, and inform our teaching of the students who currently reside in our classrooms and lead rich literate lives beyond them.
Invention, Arrangement, and New Literacies

New understandings of literacies practices also lead to new understandings about invention in these practices. Rhetorical invention is another concept that had been expanded due to the possibilities inherent in new literacies. Looking at current conceptions of invention and new literacies require a brief historical look at the concept of invention. As Simonson (2014) wrote, "examining the concept of rhetorical invention potentially opens out toward the totality of rhetorical theory and practice and their articulations with larger patterns of thought and activity at a particular juncture in history. My scope is obviously more limited" (p. 300). While he provides an even more comprehensive map of invention theories over time, I will discuss a historical look at the evolving concepts of invention and how it applies to new literacies practices. I will also discuss how arrangement can be considered a part of invention in new literacies practices.

Modern theories of invention look at the historical conceptions of invention in Latin and Greek rhetoric and how modern theories have reflected and changed these ideals over time (Delagrange, 2011; Garrett et al., 2012; Miller, 2000; Simonson, 2014). For instance, Miller (2000) argued that modern interest in invention led to the “attribution of epistemic or generative powers to invention” (p. 130). The attribution of these powers led rhetoricians to focus on the difference between invention and discovery, a distinction not made in Latin or Greek rhetoric. Starting in the late-1960s, the Greek and Latin notion of “invention” began to be considered as “two senses: that of coming upon what already exists (discovery) and that of contriving something that never existed
before (invention)” (Miller, 2000, 130). The distinct sense of “invention” as opposed to “discovery” involved what was distinctly new. However, rhetoric continued to focus on stock situations and arguments. In other words, it focused on “discovery.”

However, recently some rhetoricians argue that the contemporary conception of invention should once again be inclusive of both invention and discovery (Delagrange, 2011; Garrett et al., 2012; Miller, 2000; Simonson, 2014). As Miller (2000) argued, “To be rhetorically useful, then, as well as comprehensible, novelty must be situated. Rather than offering the radically new, it must occupy the border between the known and the unknown” (p. 141). In other words, invention cannot be divided into the new and the preexisting. Rhetoric functions in “a world in which what the hunter finds is never completely unexpected but may often be startling and surprising – and may be put to novel uses” (Miller, 2000, p. 143). I would argue that digital technology has made the need for this definition of invention even more essential to our understanding of how invention functions in current rhetorical situations. The boundaries between the new and the preexisting are continuously blurred in digital spaces.

Similarly, Garrett et al.'s (2012) "Re-Inventing Invention: A Performance in Three Acts" argued that invention is juxtaposition. They wrote, "Composing is a process of making connections, rearranging materials (words, images, concepts) in unexpected ways." Thus, creativity in composition does not suddenly appear to a writer in a new way. Rather, writers take various disparate materials and "experiment with combining and re-arranging these materials in novel ways." In other words, invention can be considered “invention,” “discovery,” and “repurposing” because it is the use and change of materials. By including both invention and discovery in the conception of invention, rhetoricians recognize the use and change of materials for invention. Digital composition and new literacies practices make this process of invention and repurposing more fluid and implicit,
as we will see with the participants of this study. Nevertheless it is important to discuss the connection between current conceptions of rhetorical invention and repurposing because the understandings about them are very similar in nature. It is as if contemporary rhetorical invention has become an act of repurposing.

Likewise, it is useful to consider modern theories on arrangement and its relationship to invention. As Delagrange (2011) wrote:

Traditionally, the canons of rhetoric --- invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery --- together provide a framework for the generative process by which a rhetor shapes spoken or written discourse. Briefly, invention is the discovery of the content of a discourse, and arrangement is the art of selecting and ordering that content. (p. 109)

The act of arrangement has become an integral part of invention in new literacies practices because of the visual nature of digital spaces. As can be seen with new literacies practices, "digitally mediated manipulation and linking can become a practice, a habit of mind and eye, that leads to an ethical framing of rhetorical conviction and/or action by both the writer/designer and the reader/viewer" (Delagrange, 2011, 108). Therefore, working with expanded understandings of repurposing and new literacies warrants expanded understandings of invention and arrangement. Broadening the possibilities for how each of these frameworks functions in new literacies practices, and how arrangement shapes repurposing and invention, we can begin to study the new literacies and repurposing of current secondary students more comprehensively.
CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODS

Methods for Studying the Repurposing of New Literacies

Study Framework

Contemporary theories of repurposing and new literacies guide this study of adolescents’ new literacies practices. Considering “transfer” from the lens of “repurposing” requires researchers to adopt methods that can account for the complexity of this term (Prior & Shipka, 2003; Roozen, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014; Wardle 2012). Since looking at transfer and literacies from a social perspective presents a layered, complex landscape, researchers need a rich set of qualitative practices to gather the entire picture.

The value of qualitative methods is in their ability to capture meaning making within social contexts (Rossman & Rollis, 1998; Taylor & Bogdan, 2003). This is accomplished through a variety of principles key to qualitative research. One principle of qualitative methods is that qualitative methods focus on “understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it” (Taylor & Bogdan, 2003, p. 7). Another aspect of qualitative research is that “researchers value the messiness of the lived world” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 9). This leads researchers to study participants within the contexts they actually work in. When Kist (2005) argued, “literacy is no longer seen as situated only in cognition... Literacy is deeply enmeshed in the culture, history, and everyday discourses of people’s lives... To look at literacy out of these contexts
is to miss most (if not all) of what is happening” (p. 6), he is arguing for the necessity of qualitative methods in studies like this one. Studying literacies calls for qualitative methods that can show the rich details of literate contexts. In addition, studying new literacies adds a new context, the computer, which necessitates a new way of studying literacies. Furthermore, studying the “repurposing” of “new literacies” means focusing on the messy, social nature of actual practices and possibilities for transfer.

As an example, Kist (2005) argued that Barton & Hamilton’s *Local Literacies* exemplifies the power of qualitative research to show the contexts of how texts can be used (p. 7). He uses their research as a starting place to develop his methodology. The goal of his study was to portray “the work of classroom teachers and students (with their permission) who attempt to weave new literacies into everyday life in their classrooms” (Kist, 2005, p. 13). To accomplish this goal, he detailed 6 case studies of classrooms throughout the US and Canada. He used interviews, observation, and digital artifact collection to develop his picture of new literacies in school. Kist’s (2005) study continues the trend in composition research of focusing on academic contexts.

My study will help fill the gap noted by Moore (2012):

Existing studies primarily focus on academic contexts, overlooking students’ many non-academic activity systems. How do complementary, parallel, and intersecting activity systems impact students’ shifts among concurrent activity systems…? Do students have access to other tools acquired in other activity systems that faculty should encourage students to access to facilitate transfer in the academic activity system?

A new methodology for studying middle school students’ new literacies practices across contexts can be theorized by combining the work of writing-related transfer researchers and new literacies researchers, in an effort to address this gap. This methodology would expand the possibilities for studying transfer between contexts by using “repurposing” and “new literacies” as its frame.
In order to create a portrait of repurposing and new literacies practices, qualitative methods are employed as elements in individual case studies. The various qualitative methods include interviews (in particular, stimulated-recall interviews), video screen capture of digital spaces, photographs taken by the researcher, and images provided from study participants. Middle school students who are engaging in a variety of new literacies practices across physical and digital contexts are studied in an effort to reveal pedagogical implications of how to encourage transfer across contexts. I chose to study middle school students out of curiosity and convenience, as I had been teaching middle school Language Arts for ten years. However, middle school students are also poised to reveal important findings for educators because they are in the middle of their public school career. They help us understand where their education (both academic and non-academic) has been and what their experiences with education may be in the future. Middle school students can teach us a lot about what to expect from students as they prepare to enter college.

As such, the research question can be articulated as follows: Among middle school students who are engaging in rich literate lives, how are new literacies practices repurposed across contexts?

In terms of contexts for new literacies practices, I defined “contexts” as where the practices took place. Therefore, the contexts could have been a physical device (i.e. computer, cell phone, notecard, journal), as well as a digital platform (i.e. particular website). When I looked for repurposing between contexts, I looked for skills, strategies, and ideas that were used and changed across the digital and physical places where their practices took place.

In this chapter, I will discuss the qualitative research methods used to study this phenomenon, including the selection of study participants, data collection, data analysis, and the limitations of the research.
Study Participants

Recruiting Participants

In February of 2015, I began recruiting participants for the study. In order to recruit participants, I developed a survey based on the 2010 WIDE (Writing in Digital Environments) survey with the addition of specific new literacies practices (Grabill et al., 2010) (see Appendix A). While the original WIDE survey included 30 different writing types, I wanted to add as many specific new literacies practices as possible because the practices are context-dependent. For example, the survey read “I am looking for participants for my study who do a lot of the following things” and included literacies such as blogging, commenting on Instagram, Fan fiction, and Minecraft.

The survey was given to students at DeLaura Middle School in Satellite Beach, Florida, through their Language Arts classes. DeLaura Middle School is a high-achieving school. It has consistently been ranked in the top 50 middle schools in the state of Florida according to standardized tests, and some years has been in the top ten. While it is a regular middle school, it is located in a Florida beach town in a county that follows the Space Coast. The socio-economic status is above average. I had been teaching at DeLaura Middle School as a Language Arts teacher for ten years.

For this purpose, I surveyed all students whom I did not teach. I chose to study students whom I did not teach so there would be no ethical concern over this study positively or negatively
affecting their grades. In addition, I did not want my knowledge of their academic writing to influence my perception of their literate practices. Students surveyed included seventh and eighth graders, ranging in ages between 12-15 years old. I received more than 220 completed surveys.

To determine participants from the surveys, I looked through the individual responses and tallied the number of boxes checked. I pursued participants who had checked more than ten literacies practices and/or who had written in noteworthy additions in the “Other” box. Also, in an effort to expand the possibilities for repurposing, I was looking for participants who potentially repurposed often. I posited that the more various their practices were, the more likely they were to be using their knowledge and skills across contexts. This way, I looked for participants who engaged in a variety of new literacies practices or were deeply entrenched in particular new literacies practices that would be worth detailing.

I contacted 19 students based on their survey results and asked them to meet with me to discuss the study (see Appendix B). I also sent flyers and offered cookies to meet me in the morning in the media center. Through these efforts, I was able to speak with 12 students whom I had surveyed. I also offered them the possibility of suggesting friends who might be interested. This led me to four more potential participants. I aimed to find between 7-10 participants who agreed to be in the study so that I could reveal a rich, detailed portrait of their new literacies practices, while having enough participants to show the various kinds of new literacies practices. Originally, I was also hoping to have a few male participants, as some of those who indicated participating in a variety of practices were male. However, only females met to discuss the study with me.

While the lack of male participants is a limitation to the study, it is not uncommon for new literacies case study work (i.e. Black, 2008). Fan fiction, in particular, is dominated by female writers
(Black, 2008; Hellekson & Busse, 2006; Jamison, 2013). In this case, I believe I did not have any male participants because as middle school students, they did not want to be known as someone who was meeting a teacher to talk about their literate practices. In the anonymity of a survey, they were willing to admit to their practices. However, they did not want to be represented as an individual who would meet with a teacher to discuss the study.

Participants Profiles

Of the six case study participants I will detail in the later chapters, here are brief profiles. These profiles include information provided to me through the survey of their practices and the initial interviews. In addition, I have included a profile picture of each participant to help guide the reading. In all but one case, the participants created and provided the profile pictures themselves. I will discuss how they created the pictures and any other important information to their profile as participants.

Amber

Figure 1: Amber Profile Picture
Amber Profile Picture depicted in Figure 1. Amber was 14 years old, identified as “mixed race,” and had marked weekly participation in 14 literacies practices. She also wrote in “Tumblr,” “Netflix,” and “Polyvore.” Her mother was stationed at the Air Force Base a few miles away. As a result, she had grown up in many different places, her favorite of which was Germany. She was in all honors classes as well as theater and chorus. She also loved to play the ukulele for fun. She created her profile picture using an app called FaceQ. She told me she wanted it to be waving because she likes to wave at me in the hallways between classes.

Anastasia

Figure 2: Anastasia Profile Picture

Anastasia Profile Picture depicted in Figure 2. Anastasia was 13-years-old, Caucasian, and had marked weekly participation in 14 literacies practices. She also wrote in “Sims 4,” “Tumblr,” “Editing things,” and “Write stories/story ideas.” She struggled with standardized tests, although her grades were strong. As a result, she took English Honors and History Honors, despite also taking Intensive Reading and Intensive Math. These classes were required electives for her because she failed the FCAT Reading and Math. She created her profile picture on the PixPlay app on her iPad.
Ashlee Profile Picture depicted in Figure 3. Ashlee was 14-years-old, Hispanic, and had marked weekly participation in 15 literacies practices. She had underlined “Blogging,” “Tweet,” and “Wattpad.” She joined the study through Anastasia’s invitation. She was originally from Columbia. She spoke both English and Spanish at home and her social media news feeds were also in both languages. Her father died in the first few weeks of the study, but she was very interested in continuing. She lived with her step-mother when she returned from the funeral in New York, but then moved to New York at the end of the school year to be with her mother. She sent me a photo of herself and I edited it for her using the iPhone app, Ultrapop.

Becca

Figure 4: Becca Profile Picture
Becca Profile Picture depicted in Figure 4. Becca was 13-years-old, Caucasian, and had marked weekly participation in 15 literacies practices. She took all honors classes. Her elective was chorus. She frequented the media center every morning and at lunch. I created her profile picture using the only photo I had of her on the iPhone app, Ultrapop.

Michelle

Figure 5: Michelle Profile Picture

Michelle Profile Picture depicted in Figure 5. Michelle was 14-years-old, Caucasian, and had marked weekly participation in 11 literacies practices. She joined the study through Anastasia’s invitation. She took History class online because she was a year ahead in History. In seventh grade, she had taken an eighth grade History face-to-face class. So, in eighth grade, she took her ninth grade US History class on Florida Virtual School. She also had an Etsy store and loved to draw. She hand-drew her profile picture in her journal and sent me a picture from her phone.
Lauren

Lauren Profile Picture depicted in Figure 6. Lauren was 13-years-old, Caucasian, and had marked weekly participation in 6 literacies practices. She also wrote in “Drawing/fan art.” She took the Intensive Reading class due to FCAT scores from the year before. She had a step-sister who was in the same grade as her. She liked to draw herself and her friends so she wanted to use a picture she had already drawn of herself for her profile picture.

Meeting with Participants

In March of 2015, after receiving signed IRB forms (see Appendix C) from their parents, I began meeting with ten eighth grade girls. The first step in working with the study participants was determining the best time for them to meet: before school, at lunch, or after school. I also asked them their preferred method of being contacted. They all preferred text message, except two participants, who preferred email. We also agreed upon pseudonyms, some of which I created and others they chose.
I stopped meeting with one of the sets of three participants after our second interview, as their literacies practices were not particularly rich or new. They brought me diaries from fourth grade or notes they had written in their iPhones. These practices did not seem consistent or sustained enough to warrant studying. An additional participant decided to drop the study because she felt uncomfortable sharing her writing ideas with other people, something she had not done before. She was very interested in talking with me about her writing, but did not want to share her journals or written texts.

I met at least every other week with the remaining six participants. I met with Becca and Amber in the mornings in the media center because they were often there anyways. I met with them together, as well as separately. I met with Ashlee, Anastasia, and Michelle together, or as a combination of two, during lunch in my classroom. Occasionally, I met with Anastasia alone because Ashlee and Michelle were absent to school fairly often. And, I met with Lauren in the mornings in my classroom.

The method of having participants suggest friends became very important. Many of the participants preferred to meet together as a group when they were interviewed and their conversations were more nuanced than when I interviewed them individually. Also, because I was studying literacies as social practices, having part of their social community of creators in the room with them led to a better picture of the contexts for literacies. In addition, Ashlee and Anastasia were co-authoring a book on Wattpad with a third friend at a different school. Therefore, meeting together to discuss their book proved particularly valuable.
Data Collection

I began collecting data by interviewing participants about the literacies practices they had checked off on their surveys. We discussed what they could bring to the next interview in terms of a literacy product and I set them up with a Screencast-o-matic account (http://www.screencast-o-matic.com). Screencast-o-matic is a website that allows users to record their screen as they work on their computer. While there are other options for similar websites available, I chose this one because it did not require participants to download a program on their computer. All they had to do was log onto the website and they could record from any computer they were on. This became useful, as many of my participants wrote at home, as well as the media center and friends’ houses. Therefore, they were able to record anywhere they worked.

Throughout March to May, they used this website to record their screen. In this way, they were able to capture the activity of their practices, to supplement their products. In other words, “video screen capture …made visible phenomena that might otherwise have gone unnoticed in digital writing” (Geisler & Slattery, 2007, p. 187) and other new literacies practices. The participants maintained their own accounts and uploaded their recordings to their account at their discretion. Occasionally, I reminded some participants to add additional screencasts; however, most of the time, after the initial recording, most participants completed the next ones on their own without reminders. Their recordings were usually the impetus for our meetings. They would either text me and tell me in person that they had done a recording. In addition, I checked every other night to see
if they had completed a recording. I asked for follow-up interviews as close to the recordings as possible.

I watched the recordings prior to our interviews and took notes. When we met, I used these notes as we watched the recording together. We discussed their practices while watching the practices on the screen. Geisler & Slattery (2007) described this as a “stimulated-recall interview” (p. 198). Stimulated-recall interviews gave me the opportunity to check my impression of their practices against their own. They also gave me the opportunity to literally point to moments of their practices and ask them about what they were doing. And, I was able to ask them about the intentions and purposes behind their practices (Geisler & Slattery, 2007).

I recorded all of the interviews with my iPhone using the DropVox app. DropVox is an app that records sounds. Like screencast websites, there are many options of similar apps for iPhone. However, I used Dropvox because it allows me to record interviews with the push of a button and then upon pushing the button to end the recording, it automatically uploads the interview to my Dropbox account. It organizes the interviews by date and time within a folder on Dropbox. In addition, recording with an iPhone was particularly successful because having an iPhone on a table is non-intrusive. There were many moments when I wondered if the participants remembered they were being recorded. And there are many moments when they confirmed they had forgotten as I picked up the phone to stop the recording.
Data Analysis

The six participants provided 15 screencasts ranging between seven and fifteen minutes long, 27 interviews ranging between twelve and forty-four minutes long, and 37 images and photographs. I transcribed the interviews myself and then organized the data in Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti proved particularly useful because it allowed me to input and code text, images, and video using the same tools. There were a few themes that had emerged throughout the research, such as repurposing of characters and musical moods, so I started by coding for pre-existing and emergent themes. I also coded “in-vivo” when possible. I preferred to use their actual words if possible so I could better capture what their literacies practices looked and sounded like. As new codes and themes emerged, I returned to the beginning and coded a second time. In the end, I had 193 codes, which were represented in 1320 places in the text, images, and videos. See Figure 7.

I coded for contexts, as well as practices. Therefore, many of the codes I used were spaces in which the participants were working (i.e. Tumblr, Wattpad, Google) and participle verbs (i.e. Writing, Naming, Editing). What this allowed me to do was look at the intersection of practices and contexts in Atlas.ti using the Code Cooccurrence Table. For example, I could choose particular practices, such as “Commenting” and “Writing.” I could then see where these occurred in the different contexts coded for. See Figure 8. In this way, I could show places where practices were being repurposed across contexts. Other themes emerged that became important, such as the discussion of “Characters” and “Music,” so I coded for those as well.
Figure 7: Codes by order of occurrence
Chiseri-Strater argued that in her ethnographic research, “a major goal of the research process is self-reflexivity – what we learn about the self as a result of the study of the ‘other’” (pg. 119). She asserted that the researcher must be explicit in understanding and describing her positionality throughout the qualitative research process. With that in mind, I positioned myself as a teacher who had not instructed the participants of the research. This was important to me as ethically I wanted it to be clear that no academic rewards or risks were attached to participation in the research process. In addition, I wanted the participants to view me as someone they could speak freely with. Moreover, I positioned myself as an outsider to most of their practices. Prior to the
research, I had never seen Wattpad, Tumblr, Polyvore, or Spotify. I wanted the participants to feel they were the authority on these platforms and that I were the novice.

I was also positioned as a female with all female participants. Since the fan practices most of the girls participated in were fairly gendered (in fact, they often used the term “fan girling” to describe their enthusiasm over fandoms), my position as a woman aided the comfort with which they shared their practices. Additionally, as a 30-year-old, I was younger than most of their teachers and they attributed my age to my interest in digital practices. I also shared with them my love of writing poetry online as a teenager, further establishing my interest in their practices. I, therefore, positioned myself as someone connected to their practices by gender and interest, but outside of their practices as a novice to the platforms.

Role of Participants

The participants played an integral role in the data collection. In the initial interviews, we discussed the practices they had marked or written in on their surveys. I explained what I was looking for and then the participants chose what they wanted to record as their practices. I took notes and sat with them while we discussed their screen capture data, and the interviews were often led by what they wanted me to notice in their activities. Thus, they were responsible for the practices discussed here, as well as the ways in which they are described. Additionally, the participants created their profile pictures after we had finished with data collection and they often sent me images or writing outside of the data we initially agreed to collect. In addition, they
answered my questions through text message over the summer and helped me with the explanations of the platforms.

_Implications of the Research_

I recognize that the study participants are not average teenagers. I attended a chorus concert one night in which almost all of them performed various solos and one played a ukulele. In other words, they are not typical. Nonetheless, I know this study would look different had I looked at a representative sample of eighth grade girls, rather than those who I found by asking for participants who engage in a myriad of new literacies practices every week. I was looking for participants who repurposed across their literate practices and not necessarily ones who could be generalized to eighth grade girls as a whole.

In addition, like many other studies of its kind, my study includes only females. The results could have been different had I been able to recruit male participants for the study. While no male participants chose to meet with me, there were many potential male participants who marked practicing more than 10 literacies practices in a week on their survey.
CHAPTER THREE: PLATFORMS FOR NEW LITERACIES

Before we can look at the new literacies practices that these participants engaged in regularly, we must first understand the platforms that encouraged their practices. While not the original focus of this study, it quickly became apparent that the platforms for new literacies were integral to the practices of the participants. Many of the features used by participants are not possible in other spaces. In other words, participants would not be able to engage in certain practices in any other space.

In addition, since digital environments encourage evolution and change, these platforms may not be familiar to those who do not engage with them as part of their social community. As a secondary teacher, I can remember the first time my students laughed when I asked if they had an email address. Email was antiquated, according to them, years ago. In the last two years, they have laughed when I have mentioned posting to Facebook. Facebook, too, has been replaced by other platforms. And while these two platforms, in particular, continue to be used frequently by my social community, they were not a topic of interviews or screencasts in this study. Rather, the platforms that the participants used regularly and that I will discuss in this chapter are Polyvore, Tumblr, Wattpad, Spotify / YouTube (for music). In later chapters, I will discuss the how and why of these platforms, but for this chapter I will focus on what the platforms are and what the participants used them for. For each section, I will include images of the site logo and a “profile pic” of each participant who used the site so as to visually orient readers to the platforms and participants who frequented them. I will use these logos and images in the subsequent chapters to guide the reading of these visual spaces.
Polyvore

Table 1: Polyvore & Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform: Polyvore</th>
<th>Participant: Amber</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Polyvore Homepage
http://www.polyvore.com/

Polyvore is a fashion social media platform that Amber used often to create fashion collages (see Table 1 for platform and participant). Polyvore calls itself "the world's largest style community with over 20 million unique monthly visitors." They track and publish data on their visitors to encourage use by commercial brands. See Figure 10.

On Polyvore users have a news feed, like other social media platforms, where they are shown a selection of fashion items. There are three options of news feeds: All, Following, and Just For You. For example, Figure 11 is an image from the app version on my personal account. Changing the feed to “Following” will show the work of those who a user follows on the site. Changing the feed to “Just for You” will adjust the news feed according to a user’s "likes."
Figure 9: Polyvore Infographic

Source: Polyvore About Page

http://www.polyvore.com/cgi/about
Beyond the list of items on a news feed, Polyvore allows users to place items "liked" or searched for on a collage. That function can be accomplished by clicking the “Create” button in the above example. Users can "like" an item by clicking on the heart icon. This action places the item in the user's "items." This feature was used by Amber frequently to find items as she created her
fashion collages. She also found items by using the magnifying glass icon to search for particular pieces she wanted to include. Figure 12 shows a screenshot of her working on a collage while on a computer.

In this moment, she had searched for the phrase “black lace flats.” The collages Amber and other users create are similar to those that can be found in fashion magazines. They include clothing, accessories (particularly phone cases), and other items, such as art, coffee, and fruit. They typically include a title and other text, such as in Figure 13.
These collages show up on user's feeds in the same way that individual items do. Users are given about 50 new items daily according to their likes. In addition, all of the items are linked to the shopping pages they are originally from. They list the price and location of the item. Within a collage, the entire collection of prices and stores are listed at the bottom, as in Figure 14. Amber
used this website to create collages for herself and her friends, as well as cosplays of cartoon characters. “Cosplays” are costume-plays. This means that people dress up as characters as well as act like them.

Figure 13: Example of Amber’s Polyvore collage with prices
### Tumblr

**Table 2: Tumblr & Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform: Tumblr</th>
<th>Participants: Amber, Anastasia, Ashlee, Becca, Michelle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Tumblr homepage [https://www.tumblr.com/](https://www.tumblr.com/)

Every one of my participants, except Lauren, used Tumblr on a regular basis and spoke about their use often (see Table 2 for platform and participants). Tumblr boasts 261.2 million blogs and 123 billion posts. According to Tumblr, "Tumblr lets you effortlessly share anything." Their definition of anything includes "text, photos, quotes, links, music, and videos from your browser, phone, desktop, email or where you happen to be." In other words, it is a sharing site. Whereas social media sites like Facebook allow you to share these same things, the purpose of Facebook is to
connect people. Facebook’s users are focused on profiles and "friends"; Tumblr’s users are focused on the act of sharing content.

Tumblr was frequently the source and impetus for writing. The participants’ explanation of what Tumblr is, though, was a bit nebulous. Becca described it as “the ocean because it takes up 75% of the Earth.” She also said, “It's big, it's blue, and the deeper you get, the scarier it gets.” Beyond that, they could not tell me exactly what it was. But, every one of the participants did describe it as a scary place. Yet, this was the place they frequently returned to share and absorb content, much of which was the source of their writing.

Sharing content on Tumblr can be done in two ways: liking and reblogging. Liking involves clicking a heart icon, whereas reblogging involves an icon with two arrows, as in the bottom right corner of Figure 15. The act of reblogging places the content on a user's blog for others to see.
It is important to note Tumblr's use of the word "blog." Blogs on Tumblr are the equivalent of a profile and news feed on other sites. For example, Figure 16 is what Ashlee’s Tumblr blog looks like. While I am unaware of when or how Tumblr started using the word "blog" this way, it became clear as I worked with my participants that the word "blog" functioned as a different genre than what I knew to be a “blog.” Any use of the word "blog" by my participants referred to this kind of Tumblr page.
In addition, all the participants, except Lauren, spoke of using the word "tumblr" to enhance Google image searches. For example, Michelle searched for "writing prompts tumblr" when she was looking for ideas. See Figure 17 for a screenshot of her search. They told me the reason they did this was twofold: to enhance Google image searches and to improve Tumblr searches. In other words, they believed that using the word "tumblr" within a Google image search would yield better results; in addition, searching through Google yielded more results than searching in Tumblr. They said that searching in Tumblr was difficult because if the user did not include the word in the hashtags, it would not show up in the results.
Figure 16: Michelle’s Google search for “tumblr writing prompts”
Amber, Anastasia, Ashlee, and Michelle used Wattpad to read and write fan fiction and poetry (see Table 3 for platform and participants). This is also where I read their writing throughout the study. According to Wattpad, it is a "place to discover and share stories: a social platform that connects people through worlds." Wattpad has 40 million "wattpadders" and 100 million stories. These stories are mostly fan fiction, poetry, and fiction. Users can "vote," similar to liking on other platforms, for books and individual chapters. The votes determine annual awards called "Wattys" for the "most-loved" stories.
Wattpad allows readers to comment on the home page, as well as every paragraph in a novel. For example, one of Ashlee and Anastasia’s favorite books on Wattpad was *Psychotic* by weyhey_harry. This popular One Direction fan fiction novel has more than 876,000 comments and several paragraphs in the first few chapters have a couple thousand comments attached to them. According to Anastasia, in those paragraphs the author “probably said something that revealed something.” For example, on the fourth page of chapter one in Psychotic, the character Kelsey reveals an important plot point when she says, “Well have you heard on the news how there was that guy who skinned three women?” This paragraph had 3307 comments as of November 1, 2015. See Figure 18. Anastasia reads all of the comments as she reads the text of the book. She warned me that they were “pretty dirty” and advised me not to read them myself. However, she reads all the comments, “Because they are funny. These people are funny. Our fandom is funny.” For example, readers on Wattpad are known to comment on the asterisks or “squiggles” used to designate a break in a chapter:

Anastasia: Well, people will be like these are mine. I name him squishy.  
Ashlee: It is a squishy. You have returned.  
Anastasia: I name this one Luke, Callum, and Michael. (members of 5SOS)

However, beyond humor, the comments on Wattpad are “a way to interact” since “most fans don't live in the same place,” according to Anastasia.
Another important aspect of Wattpad is the way in which "anyone can read or write on any device: phone, tablet, or computer." For example, Figure 19 is a screenshot from my iPhone of Anastasia and Ashlee's collective fan fiction novel. The functions on the Wattpad app are the same.
as those on a Kindle or other e-reader. Users can click on the sides of the pages to turn forward or backward as they read on the Wattpad app.

Chapter 3

*Jade's POV*

I swiped the mascara onto each eyelash, filling them with volume and blinking a few times. I looked at my finished figure in the mirror.

I was so over the crying, so done with locking myself in and moping about on how alone I was. Tonight I was going to go out, get drunk for the first time in a long time, jump, dance, scream, and have fun. This house was suffocating me with its ghostly lights,

12 pages left

They can see how many pages are left in the chapter as well as how many times it has been viewed, voted on, and commented on. For example, Anastasia and Ashlee’s third chapter above had
been viewed 73 times, voted on 3 times, and commented on 11 times. In addition, users can set up notifications for each time a user updates a book with a new chapter. Immediately upon clicking the "publish" button, followers can be notified and can read user’s works in a strikingly similar interface to professional e-books. When users first set up a Wattpad account, they are asked a series of questions about what Wattpad books they might want to read. The site gives users options of cover art and blurbs from work on Wattpad. From there, Wattpad makes recommendations and place books on a user's bookshelf. For example, Figure 20 shows my Wattpad bookshelf. In Figure 20, the top six books are *Psychotic*, which I mentioned previously, and five books by Ashlee, Anastasia, and Michelle. The bottom three books are ones that were added to my shelf based on my initial account set-up and interests. The blue bars indicate where in the book I last left off. When I return to a book, it starts on the last page I viewed.

Michelle, Ashlee, and Anastasia usually composed their work in Microsoft Word before copying and pasting the work into Wattpad because Wattpad does not have a very effective spelling and grammar check. That being said, convention errors are frequent in their work and most of the work on Wattpad. Like other sites focused on fan fiction, users are much more likely to criticize poor characterizations than spelling or grammar. While the convention errors in their work are likely to upset the audience I am writing for or their teachers, they are simply not a concern for the audience that these participants write for.
Figure 19: Example of Wattpad bookshelf
Music Sites: Spotify & YouTube

Table 4: Music Sites & Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms: Spotify, YouTube</th>
<th>Participants: Amber, Anastasia, Ashlee, Becca, Michelle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: YouTube homepage  
[https://www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Source: Spotify homepage  
[https://www.spotify.com/us/](https://www.spotify.com/us/)

Almost every time the participants write, draw, or create fashion collages, they listen to music either on Spotify or YouTube (see Table 4 for platforms and participants). Assuming most people's familiarity with YouTube, I will simply mention that the participants used YouTube as a way of looking up particular songs to play while they engaged in new literacies practices. Sometimes, they listened to YouTube videos of songs by choosing them one by one and other times they use pre-existing playlists of particular bands.
Spotify, on the other hand, is likely to be less familiar. Ashlee and Anastasia started using this site because they liked Pandora but wanted to be able to choose their own songs. For example, Figure 21 shows Anastasia’s playlists and individual songs.

According to Spotify, "With Spotify, it's easy to find the right music for every moment." This sentiment mirrored what the participants used Spotify and YouTube music for: to capture the moment they were trying to create in their work.
CHAPTER FOUR: HOW EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS ENGAGE IN NEW LITERACIES PRACTICES: REPURPOSING, FAN FICTION, AND MULTIMEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

Each of the study participants engaged in a variety of new literacies practices. These practices were integrated across contexts, both physical (i.e., cell phone to computer) and digital (i.e., website to website). Their practices were new in that they could not have been possible with traditional literate contexts, and digital tools and conceptions were intertwined in their activities. Whereas the previous chapter focused on what platforms the participants used and what they did in these spaces, this chapter will focus on how they engaged with new literacies in these spaces. As mentioned in the last chapter, I will use the logos from the sites as well as the participants’ profile pictures to help give visual clues to guide the reading.

In this chapter, I will describe two participants’ literate lives and the practices they frequently engaged in to better understand how eighth grade girls participate in new literacies. This chapter will focus on Anastasia and Ashlee’s fan fiction and how they repurposed across contexts in their new literacies practices. It is important to discuss these two participants together because they wrote on Wattpad under the same profile and usually met with Michelle and I during lunch. I will start by discussing the background of the participants briefly. Then, I will discuss how they engaged with new literacies and how they repurposed in their fan fiction practices.

Table 5: Anastasia & Ashlee’s Platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms: Tumblr, Wattpad</th>
<th>Participants: Anastasia, Ashlee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Tumblr Logo]</td>
<td>![Wattpad Logo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Anastasia's Profile]</td>
<td>![Ashlee's Profile]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anastasia was a 13-year-old girl with a small frame and an enthusiastic attitude. Her size was a frequent topic of jokes and bickering amongst her friends, Michelle and Ashlee. Less humorous was the fact that she was not in her preferred elective class, Creative Writing, because she had to take an Intensive Reading class. This class was required for her because she had failed the Reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) the year before.

Ashlee and Michelle were in Creative Writing class together, though much of their literate activities were outside of this academic setting. Ashlee was 14-years-old and bilingual. She was originally from Columbia. During the course of the research her father passed away and, as a result,
she moved to New York immediately after the last week of school. However, despite Anastasia’s struggles in school and Ashlee’s unfortunate life events, they often read and wrote fan fiction on their own time from home, as well as from school on their cell phones. In fact, Ashlee wrote a chapter of their novel while she was away for her father’s funeral.

The main platforms for their practices were Wattpad and Tumblr (see Table 5 for platforms and participants). Anastasia also created book cover art and book trailers (like movie trailers for books) with the Phonto, Pic Collage, and the iMovie apps on her iPad and iPhone. Phonto is used to place text on pictures. Pic Collage is used to create a montage of photos. iMovie creates videos from still and moving images.

Most of Anastasia and Ashlee’s self-sponsored reading and writing on Wattpad and Tumblr focuses on the fandom they consider themselves a part of. A fandom can be described as a “grouping of enthusiasts” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 1). Anastasia, Ashlee, and a third friend who worked collaboratively on their fan fiction novel on Wattpad were certainly enthusiastic about their fandom. They described their fandom as a combination of three bands: 5SOS (5 Seconds of Summer), One Direction, and Little Mix. This fandom was reflected in their Tumblr feeds, text messages, Wattpad reading and writing, and lunchtime conversations, which were all filled with images, video, and discussions of these band members.

To be certain, the exigence for their self-sponsored reading and writing practices is the fandom. Ashlee and Anastasia spoke about their favorite bands incessantly, often laughing about the latest news on the band's social lives or sharing gifs with each other on Tumblr. Gifs are images that are often animated. The ones Anastasia and Ashlee shared tended to be simple movements a band member makes, such as the adjustment of a microphone stand or flip of a long bang, which plays in repetition. For example, this YouTube video is a compilation of Harry Styles, a member of
One Direction, gifs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X-Df1VCxEE. These are the types of gifs they were often drawn to share with each other.

Their immersion in the fandom is also reflected in their Wattpad profile, which they shared with each other and a girl from another school. From this profile, the three young women drafted and published chapters of their collective fan fiction novel, Delusional. This fan fiction novel was a prime example of how Anastasia and Ashlee repurpose ideas and strategies across contexts.

Fan Fiction, Repurposing, and Collapsed Contexts

Fan fiction is, in essence, repurposing. As Jamison (2013) wrote, “fanfiction asserts the rights of storytellers to take possession of characters and settings from other people’s narratives and tell their own tales about them – to expand and build upon the original, and, when they deem it necessary, to tweak it and optimize it for their own purposes” (p. xii). In other words, fan fiction writers use the works of other creators and change them for their own purposes. Jamison uses the examples of Wide Sargasso Sea and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead to argue that this conception is not new. Authors have been borrowing and changing each other’s works for a long time. However, digital tools add to the authority and distribution of fan fiction from authors who are not traditionally published (Black, 2008; Hellekson & Busse, 2006; Jamison, 2013; Jenkins 2004).

Certainly this is the case with Psychotic. This Wattpad fan fiction novel has been viewed 67 million times and counting since its completion in August 2015. It starts with this author’s note: “A.N. hiii I know this fanfiction will seem a lot like the show american horror story asylum at first
because I did get most of my inspiration from there…but please keep reading past the first few chapters because i really worked hard on this and I promise it only grows into its own story from here and is a lot different from ahs (:).” While the “about” page for this user only says “i love harry styles” and the user’s Twitter and Instagram usernames, it is fair to assume that this person is not a published author. It is also important to note how this author forefronts her repurposing. Rather than start with the narrative, she begins with this note that acknowledges how she used and changed the TV series, American Horror Story: Asylum. Of course, one of biggest changes she made, which she does not acknowledge in her initial author’s note, was in placing the character Harry Styles, a member of the band One Direction, in the 1960s insane asylum setting.

Anastasia and Ashlee repurposed many ideas and the setting from Psychotic in their fan fiction novel, Delusional. While Anastasia and Ashlee described their fan fiction novel as "never been done before" because it included all of the band members from their three favorite bands meeting together in one place, they also recognized that they “borrowed” the setting from Psychotic. Their novel takes place in an insane asylum, as well. However, they did choose to change the time period and focus on the present rather than the past.

Beyond the setting, they also borrowed the idea of multiple narrators from Psychotic. This is clearly repurposing, because they strategically both use and change the ways in which the author of Psychotic wrote her novel. While Psychotic switches between three narrators, their novel has a different narrator for each of the first seven chapters. While they liked that Psychotic used multiple narrators because the readers could sympathize with each one individually, they recognized that they wanted that same sympathy for all of the characters in the setting of their story. They did not want the reader to focus on just one (or three in the case of Psychotic) narrators. They wanted to give each character his or her own chapter to allow readers to identify with each character. In this way, they
both used what they thought was effective in *Psychotic* while changing it to fit their desires for their own book, *Delusional*.

Their repurposing goes beyond the texts on Wattpad. Fan fiction based on real-life people involves active participation from fan fiction authors because these people exist in other contexts, and fan fiction authors are expected to take those other contexts into consideration when writing about them. In other words, fan fiction authors are expected to “follow” the current events in their real-life characters’ lives. The members of the bands who were Anastasia and Ashlee’s characters comprised most of their Tumblr feed. So, when they moved from the context of drafting a novel on Wattpad’s site and then clicked on a different context, Tumblr, they saw images, current events, and comments about the real-life people they were writing about. Naturally, they repurposed the images and events they saw on their Tumblr feed into their writing.

One of the most important aspects of fan fiction is that characters stay true to what the community understands about them. While the conventions of formal English are not much of a concern on Wattpad, poor characterization is a common criticism. And the characterization in a fan fiction novel based on a band like One Direction is partially based on the author knowing what is going on in the real-life current events of the characters she is writing about. In other words, the author of a One Direction fan fiction is expected to repurpose from the band’s real life, or at least the version of it they share on Tumblr and other similar platforms.

Yet, it was not just the writing on Wattpad and the lives of the band members that Anastasia and Ashlee drew on to write *Delusional*. They also repurposed settings and plot from their own lives. For example, Ashlee wrote a chapter about a New York subway station while she was in New York at her father’s funeral. In what became chapter 6 of their novel, she writes, “Living in a city known for its population, getting around always worked like breathing… No one ever asked themselves
where the trains sleep.” She told me that this question kept coming up as she rode on the subway, so it just had to be included in their novel. This setting did not work for what they had written so far, so she included it as a flashback. It added a layer of complication to the plot and character she was writing about because he sees someone step off and get hit by a subway car, but the authors chose to adjust to this change in their original plan for the novel. In fact, while the three authors had an initial plan for the next chapters, current events in the characters’ lives or in their own lives often changed the rising action of their book. The only part they were certain about was the climax and resolution of the novel. They were fluid about how to get there. Throughout the couple months I spent with them, they shifted the order of the chapters around four times. While they also originally assigned particular authors to each chapter that tended to change throughout the process as well.

Originally, Anastasia was responsible for working on chapter 6 from Louis Tomlinson’s point of view. This chapter later became the seventh one instead. Louis Tomlinson was one of her two favorite members of One Direction and, as such, he frequently showed up on her Tumblr feed. She used her knowledge of his personal history and attractive appearance to write the chapter from his point of view. This chapter focused on his entrance into the asylum and included sensory details she repurposed from Language Arts class. For example, she described the scent of the "Meyer lemon trees" and the look of the windowless room with "cream colored walls." She also employed italics for emphasis and character’s thoughts. This skill she learned from Wattpad, both within other authors' writing and on the site's information about how to write well.

Yet another way in which Anastasia and Ashlee repurposed in their fan fiction was through the “cast” of their novel on Wattpad. The cast on Wattpad is basically the same idea as what one would see in a movie, but for a book. In fan fiction on Wattpad, most characters are cast as
themselves. So, for example Harry Styles or Louis Tomlinson, members of One Direction, were cast as themselves; they “played” themselves in the novel. However, fan fiction authors sometimes include characters who are played by particular actors. For example, Figure 21 shows part of their 18-character cast from *Delusional*. When Anastasia decided to cast Emma Watson as Sam Cooke in their novel, she was doing so both to create a "good" character and to create a specific image in the reader's mind if they had seen *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. In this case, she was also drawing on that movie character and actress' personality. This was another aspect of the book they worked on as they drafted their novel and, therefore, it changed often.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jade Thirlwall as Herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesy Nelson as Herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh-Anne Pinnock as Herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Sheeran as Himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mykelti Williamson as Lester John Winchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Palvin as Chelsea Foy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Watson as Sam Cooke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Example of Wattpad Cast of Characters
Fan Fiction, Music, and Repurposing

Table 6: Anastasia & Ashlee’s Music Platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms: Spotify, YouTube</th>
<th>Participants: Anastasia, Ashlee</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Finally, Anastasia and Ashlee also repurposed from the music they were listening to. In fact, every time they drafted they listened to music. Anastasia usually used Spotify playlists and Ashlee usually chose songs individually on YouTube (see Table 6 for platforms and participants). They often played particular music to match the mood of their writing. For example, when Anastasia listened to a playlist that included “Midnight City” by M83, “Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites” by Skrillex, and “Madhouse” by Little Mix, she did so to match the “creepy” mood in the chapter she was creating.

However, Ashlee also used the context of the music in the writing itself. While she drafted her writing, she frequently changed tabs between Wattpad, Tumblr, and YouTube. As she scrolls,
likes, and reblogs on Tumblr, she sings along to the music playing on YouTube. At one particular moment of repurposing, she returned to Wattpad where she stopped singing and, as “Photograph” by Ed Sheeran played, she typed: "My eyes peeled open to the sound of the distinct soft sound of an acoustic guitar sending melodic messages through the doors” (See Media 1.) While her various practices of interacting with her Tumblr feed and listening and singing along to music seem like they are distractions to her writing, they are as integral to her literacies practices as the writing itself. Everything she works with contributes to the other.
Clearly, Anastasia and Ashlee repurpose from a variety of contexts to write their fan fiction novel on Wattpad. Fan fiction, by definition, is repurposing, but their repurposing goes beyond the text of their fan fiction and even beyond the characters they have repurposed from the fandom. In their novel, they used and changed what they saw on Wattpad, Tumblr, in the classroom, in the movies, in real life, and in the music they listened to. To them, the contexts that have long plagued transfer and the study of transfer have completely collapsed. In the digital space of Wattpad, any context they encountered was available for them to draw on. As Williams (2009) found when he studied popular culture and reading and writing online, the “skills and practices students are developing…move fluidly online and off” (p. 3). They also move between webpages and devices in ways that were impossible and un-thinkable before these spaces were invented. This can also be seen in the multimedia Anastasia created to represent their literacies practices.

**Repurposing and Multimedia Representation of Literacies**

As a final example of how Anastasia repurposes in her fan fiction practices, the following visual representations of her fan fiction practices use images, text, and video from a variety of contexts to represent their narratives visually. Anastasia frequently used apps on her iPad to create cover art for her books on Wattpad, as well as those of her friends. Specifically, she used the Phonto app to add text and the Pic Collage app to join images together. For example, Figure 23 shows the cover she created for their collective novel with these two apps.
This cover includes a picture of every member of the three bands they are writing about, the title (a topic of constant conflict), an interesting "teaser," and their collective username. The arrangement of these images serves a rhetorical purpose in emphasizing the importance of the characters’ images and their juxtaposition in the novel together.
As another example, Figure 24 shows four images of the evolution of a cover Anastasia created for Ashlee's single-authored fan fiction.

Anastasia started with an image from Tumblr, added the title, username, and a barcode with Phonto, then the definition found on Tumblr, and finally a filter in Pic Collage. This cover includes an additional element important to their literate activities: a definition. These authors frequently consulted Google for definitions and images attached to words like "hiraeth," which they saw on
their Tumblr feed. These words and searches act as a method for invention, a topic I will discuss in a later chapter.

Similar to her cover art, Anastasia used the iMovie app to create what she called “edits.” Edits are videos she created on the iMovie app that include a combination of images and video from Tumblr and Google images. Edits are often short; however, Anastasia created a much longer book trailer for Delusional (See Media 2).
Similar to the cover art for *Delusional*, Anastasia includes all of the characters from the fan fiction, as well as their names. The trailer includes still images, clips from videos, and text, as well as the song “Recovery” by James Arthur. Particularly interesting is the witty beginning with one band member as the lion in the iconic Metro Goldwyn Mayer clip. This starts a trend throughout the trailer of the combination of old film with current band member footage. These clips are combined with questions and suspenseful suggestions of the plot.

Like her textual repurposing, her visual representations of *Delusional* cross multiple contexts without an awareness of the existence of different contexts. Whereas transfer research has long been concerned with genres, skills, and strategies not being transferred between disparate contexts, Anastasia’s book trailer exemplifies how every context she encountered was open for her to use in her creative pursuits. If she encountered a powerful song, image, video, or genre (trailer), she was able to use and change it to fit her own new literacies practices. It does not matter that the image was from Tumblr, the music from YouTube, the video sent through text message, and the genre seen on her television, all of these contexts are available for her to repurpose in her new literacies practices.

**Conclusion**

Anastasia and Ashlee’s fan fiction practices show that adolescents are capable of vast repurposing between contexts. In writing their novel, they drew on and changed what they experienced on Wattpad, Tumblr, YouTube, Spotify, in the classroom, and outside of the classroom. They repurposed characters, settings, ideas, and skills, such as sensory imagery. Fan fiction
practices encourage repurposing as essential to the genre. In addition, digital contexts encourage repurposing across collapsed contexts for literacies. They also empowered Anastasia to create multimedia representations of their written works. These multimedia representations further encourage repurposing in their strategic use and change of images, text, and music.
CHAPTER FIVE: HOW EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS ENGAGE IN NEW LITERACIES PRACTICES: REPURPOSING, FAN ART AND MUSIC, AND FASHION COLLAGES

In the last chapter, I established how fan fiction is essentially repurposing by definition. I described how Ashlee and Anastasia repurposed across various disparate media and contexts in their writing and in the visual representations of their writing. In this chapter, I will move from the written text and focus on the texts of fan art drawings and Polyvore fashion collages. Though visual in nature, these texts communicate meanings in a form outside the presence of the creator. They, like Ashlee and Anastasia’s fan fiction practices, use and change ideas and skills from a variety of contexts. Their composition tells a story about what is important in their visual mediums.

I will be focusing on two participants: Lauren and Amber. Lauren drew characters from her favorite cartoon series based on fan art she saw on Google images. In addition, Lauren crafted screencast videos for this research by using a montage of webcam footage and Microsoft Word screencasts to tell the story of her process. Her screencast videos themselves are important texts to discuss in terms of repurposing. The other participant, Amber, created fashion collages on Polyvore. She also repurposed in her musical practices. The processes these participants engaged in to create visual texts reveal additional ways in which eighth grade girls repurpose in their new literacies practices.
How Lauren Engages in New Literacies Practices: Fan Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform: Google images</th>
<th>Participant: Lauren</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Google Logo" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Lauren's Art" /></td>
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**Fan Art, Steven Universe, and Repurposing**

Lauren (platform and participant shown in Table 7) identified herself as a "fan artist" and was quick to correct anyone who called the members of her community anything different. She and her friends are fans of cartoons, in particular *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time*, though support of *Adventure Time* is waning. Nonetheless, her lunchtime conversations with her friends involved the latest episode of these shows and postulations on what is to come in the cartoon series. In addition, she loved to draw, so becoming a fan artist was a natural transition for her.

Her practices are interesting because she chose to draw fan art from what she found using Google images; however, she did not share that art with anyone other than her friends, who loved
the shows, and her family, who did not. On the surface, showing her friends something she drew with colored pencils and Sharpies over lunch seems like a traditional mode of adolescent artistic expression. Yet, the fact that she drew fan art based on what she found on Google images makes her practices “new” because her drawing process was embedded with digital contexts and ways of thinking. In addition, her artistic repurposing was similar to what we saw in Ashlee and Anastasia’s fan fiction practices and multimedia representations.

To better understand Lauren’s practices, it is important to understand the nature of the cartoons she and her friends are drawn to. Both of the shows air on Cartoon Network in an evening weekly time slot. Thus, Lauren and her friends were ready to watch and discuss the latest episode the next day at school. *Adventure Time* is about a human named Finn and a magical dog named Jake who live in the post-apocalyptic Land of Ooo. The other characters on the show include a vampire and the Ice King. The show began as a short that went viral and then was picked up for a series by Cartoon Network. The series is known to be inspired by the game *Dungeons & Dragons*. It is hand-drawn through traditional storyboarding.

While she was working on Adventure Time, an animator named Rebecca Sugar created her series, *Steven Universe*. In fact, in 2013, it became the first Cartoon Network series to be created by a woman. It is about a boy, Steven, who lives with three magical aliens who possess gems in their abdomens. They protect and defend the world from the other aliens. This series has received critical acclaim and been nominated for an Emmy award. It is also hand-drawn through traditional storyboarding.

Also important to note is that Rebecca Sugar is believed by the fan community to encourage viewers to draw her characters. When Lauren used Google images to look for *Steven Universe* characters, she found fan art, as well as the characters from different angles as in Figure 25.
Notice that while this image says, “The material is in the property of Cartoon Network Studios, Inc. and is intended for internal use only” in very small print at the bottom, this image is open to fans who search for this character on Google images. Lauren believes this is because the creator of the series wants fans to create their own art.

This character is one that Lauren had drawn because Garnet was most of her friends’ favorite character. In Figure 26, we can see how Lauren drew Garnet similarly to the original. The biggest change she made was in adding and emphasizing Garnet’s gauntlets, which are her weapons.
This character, Garnet, is important to the fandom because she is a fusion. What this means is that she is a combination of two characters, Ruby and Sapphire. Another participant, Amber, showed me this YouTube video was when I asked why Garnet was so important to their community: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5D8tfDB72k. In it, the two female characters,
Ruby and Sapphire, embrace to become a new character, Garnet. This character represents the acceptance of homosexuals to this fan community because she is the affectionate combination of two female characters. As such, she is a particularly important focus of their fandom. She also represents yet another way in which repurposing is encouraged within this cartoon series. When these girls watch a series that is hand-drawn, with images freely and abundantly available online, and with characters who combine to create a new character, it is no wonder that they feel encouraged and empowered to use and change this particular cartoon series.

Lauren’s Fan Art Practices and Repurposing

Lauren’s practices include image searching and hand drawing. When Lauren is bored and feels like drawing a character from her favorite series, she starts in Google images. She types in the name of the character and the phrase "fan art." She finds the images she wants to use and saves them on her phone. While much of the fan art found online is digitally drawn, Lauren prefers to draw by hand. She uses a variety of tools (colored pencils, Sharpies, markers, etc.) to get the colors just right. If the colors are different than the original in the fan art, she does not believe it is valid work.

However, beyond colors, she appreciates when fans change aspects of the characters. Creating fan art represents repurposing in similar ways to the repurposing of fan fiction. Fan artists use the characters they love and change them in novel ways. From there, other fan artists draw on the changes made within the community and continue to repurpose the changes for their own art.
For example, Figure 27 shows a screenshot from her screencast where she wanted to show me her process.

While the color blue is different in the original and the fan art, she did like the fact that this artist had kept the green color of the original backpack. She was also quick to point out the importance the fan art places on the weapon and the character’s hair and eyes. She also wanted to use the way the fan art combined the white hood into his shirt to create a hoodie. Lauren and I agreed that the original character is much simpler than the fan art. She told me, “People take things simple and make them complicated,” and that is what she liked about this picture.

Her version of Finn repurposed what she called the more “complicated” style and some of the aspects, like the hoodie and hair, of the fan art she was drawn to. See Figure 28.
This picture was hand-drawn on something she had lying around the house. She said, “That one was just a doodle I was doing on an index card. A really old index card. The corners were ripped. I just picked up an index card and just start doing it.” She was not concerned about the
paper she drew on. Anything worked for her when she felt like drawing. While she did have a
folder to keep the art she was proud of, the surface on which she drew was not a concern.

While her mode of drawing seems traditional, her process and repurposing practices represent what
is new in her literacies practices. She did not simply watch and draw a cartoon series. Rather, she
referenced the plethora of fan art available to her on Google images. She used these images to fuel
her artistic repurposing.

Yet, unlike most of my other participants, Lauren was not active in the online community of
fans. She occasionally visited Facebook, the only social media her mother allowed her to have. But,
she very rarely posted her pictures. The rare instances when she did post her pictures, she said the
only comment she would receive would be encouragement from her mother. Therefore, I
wondered why she would choose to draw her favorite cartoon characters if she did not intend to
share them online. Her response was that she was bored and liked to draw. What is interesting,
though, are the choices she makes in topics and styles. Rather than doodling her surroundings, she
chose to look up her favorite characters on Google images and then repurpose the styles she saw.
Her artistic experiences show that, as Williams’ (2009) writes, “students’ experiences with popular
culture should not be dismissed or disdained when we think about their literacy practices… students
ideas about literacy… are shaped in no small part by the popular culture in which they have such
long and varied experiences” (p. 4). She identifies herself as a fan artist, even if she is not actively
adding her work to that community. She did respond very positively to the attention I gave her
work. After working with me, she was considering posting her art more often. Nonetheless, her
literacy practices are certainly shaped by these experiences in popular, fan culture. This can also be
seen as she crafted her screencasts as a participant in this research.
Lauren’s Screencasts: Representations of Her Process

Unlike the other participants, Lauren did not just record her screen to show me her fan art practices (See Media 3). Instead, she put together video from her webcam in addition to the screencast of her working in Word and Google images. Each one of her screencasts were crafted and edited in a way that expressed her intended message. She would show me the hand-drawn image as she held it up to the webcam. Then, she would switch to the screencast of her working in Word and Google images to find fan art she borrowed styles and ideas from. As she worked in Word, copying and pasting images, she would type notes to me about the decisions she was making. For example, in Media 3 she was showing me how she was inspired to draw the Finn image discussed earlier.

Lauren repurposed different digital contexts to tell the “story” of her process, as well as convey her reflective message. She wrote, “I always like to look at the original character/object before I rely too much on myself or the art I found. In my picture I also included my own style and inputs with hints of the other views of other fans.” Here, she recognized how she used and changed both the original characters and the fan art she found. Her experiences with Steven Universe and fan art helped guide her work as she created videos for this research. As an artist, fan art had taught her to borrow heavily from different contexts and piece together what she found. This was reflected as she worked on her screencast videos, as well.
Media 3: Example of Lauren’s screencast

Table 8: Amber’s Platform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform: Polyvore</th>
<th>Participant: Amber</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Polyvore Logo" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Amber's Avatar" /></td>
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Repurposing and Polyvore

Unlike Lauren, Amber was very active in the online community. The site she spent incredible amounts of time on was Polyvore (see Table 8 for platform and participant). On this site, she actively participated in fashion designing because that was her goal for a future career. She said that the fashion collages on Polyvore are very similar to those in magazine so she is practicing the skills she will need in the future. She also actively kept track of the amount of users who had viewed and liked her sets, or what I will call “fashion collages.” She often updated me on how many more followers or likes she had earned since the last time I saw her. The goal was to continue to have her work seen and appreciated. Amber created collages on Polyvore often so that other users would see
her presence on their news feed more often. In fact, in some weeks during the research, Amber created multiple collages.

Polyvore is a space that encourages repurposing because it empowers users to collect images of items and then create their own collages with them. Users are given a blank collage space with which they can drag liked items or search for additional items. In addition, the news feed encourages repurposing by showing users other collages based on recent likes. For example, when I “liked” a particular orange phone case, Polyvore suggested “New looks.” Those looks included another phone case in a similar shade, a necklace in the same shade, and a collage that used the item I had liked. See Figure 29. Therefore, by encouraging users to view similar items and see how they can be used in different arrangements, Polyvore encourages users to try their own combinations. In fact, throughout this research, Polyvore was the one website that I felt the need to try out myself. The draw of creating ones own combination of liked items is very strong within the confines of this digital space.
Figure 28: Example of Polyvore Repurposing color
When Amber created fashion collages, she used her liked items and searched for others. She also used texts and, sometimes, input from her friends as they sat next to her. For example, in her collage “Black vs. Cream,” she had a friend sit next to her and tell her some items to search for. In this collage, Amber used text artistically through her use of fonts. She chose a font for the word black that she felt was “sassy” and a font for the word “cream” that she felt looked “fancy” like the cream shirt she had chosen. See Figure 30.
This screenshot shows the font choices Polyvore allows for. When she clicks on the font, a text box opens in the middle of the page that reads “I LOVE POLYVORE” from which she changed the words to “Black.” Important to note is how she repurposed the style and adjectives she attached to the fashion item with the font she chose.

In addition, the collages Amber created did not just represent outfits. They represented bands, books/movies, and cartoon cosplays. For example, Figure 31 shows a collage she created for the band Panic at the Disco.

![Figure 30: Example of Polyvore collage for band](image)

She rotated some images, despite the words and numbers that made it clear they were not the correct side up. Despite the fact that she often chose images with text over those without, the texts acted as images in the same way that graphics did. Symmetry was very important as she created her
collages. Even if it meant the picture had to be rotated, she chose symmetry over the original orientation of a picture.

Amber also took the repurposing on Polyvore a step further when she used images from a different digital context, Tumblr. For example, she created a collage titled “Hipster Divergent.” See Figure 36. *Divergent* is a popular young adult science fiction series that has recently become a series of movies as well. While the top left shirt and the bottom right jeans in her collage are fairly typical items for Polyvore collages, the rest is a combination of images from the *Divergent* books and movies.

Under this collage, Amber had added the caption, “I don't even know why i did this. I think there is something wrong with me,” in response to the quote she used in the top middle: “Good night/ Sleep tight/ Don't let Peter stab you/ In the eye with a butter knife.” This quote is not from the book nor is it originally from Polyvore, but she saved it and imported it from Tumblr. Similarly, the quote “i’ll love you… FOURever” is not from the books or movies, but from Tumblr. It represents repurposing in its use of the character’s name Four in the quote. Therefore, even within the space of Polyvore, which encourages users to repurpose its items, Amber has taken this collage a step further and added her own images from another context. These images she used to represent a favorite book and movie series.
She also created cosplay collages. Cosplays are “costume plays” in which teenage and adult fans dress as their favorite characters and act like them. For example, Amber created a cosplay for the character “Connie” from Steven Universe. See Figure 33.
While cosplays are not seen often on Polyvore, Amber repurposed this genre of fashion from fan activities. She started with a picture of Connie and then searched for the individual items, such as a “mint bow” and “tan beach hat.” Like Lauren, she was very careful to achieve the correct colors from the original character. However, while she tried to keep her items as close to the picture as possible, the liberty in cosplay is clearly in the person who will be playing the role. Amber’s typical look is far from what Connie wears or looks like, but the enjoyment of cosplay is in seeing how similar one can become to his or her favorite character. Like fan fiction, the fandom expects those who cosplay to be knowledgeable of what a character may do or say. This act of repurposing uses someone’s knowledge of a character’s appearance and dress and puts it in the context of real life. Like other fan activities, cosplay moves between contexts without regard to them being separate. However, Amber takes this a step further when she moves this fan activity to Polyvore, a space
where cosplay is only occasionally seen. She shows that “online technologies have transformed the era of mass popular culture into one of participatory culture where the boundaries have been blurred between media and between producer and audience” (Williams, 2009, p. 6)

Repurposing and Fan Music

In addition to fashion collages, Amber was passionate about playing music. In fact, Amber was rarely without her ukulele. This instrument she named and carried with her often. It was part of who she was. As such, it was also one of the contexts across which she repurposed. Though music may not be a literacies practice, the way in which Amber searched for and viewed different fan music was through YouTube tutorial videos. These videos came to reveal another way in which Amber and other fans repurpose: through the use and change of songs from the series.

For example, the song “Stronger Than You” which was written by Rebecca Sugar and sung by the character Garnet can be found in a variety of renditions on YouTube. After searching for this song on YouTube, Amber listened to it in many different ways while she created her Steven Universe fashion collage cosplays. None of the renditions were original from the show. While creating the Connie cosplay, she listened to a simple piano tutorial that might show someone how to play the song on the piano (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eYCwO5ea20), an a capella version (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiTNoZuav2s), a rap version (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk_xSogm8qQ), and a ukulele version (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW GhizDV9BM). The rap version ends with an interesting
appeal to the audience: “I want to hear from you. I want you to create your own verse and record it and upload it as a response. So I have included the instrumental… and whether you have a studio mic like this one or just a webcam, I want to hear what you’ve got.” Once again, this fan community encourages each other to use and change their creative works no matter what contexts they are communicating from or what practice they are repurposing.

In fact, even the lyrics of the song focus on the strength of combining elements in new ways: “You're not gonna stop what we've made together. / We are gonna stay like this forever. / If you break us apart we'll just come back newer.” These lyrics are, in a sense, an anthem to these digital spaces. Whether in fan art, fashion collages, or fan music YouTube videos, there is no stopping the repurposing. Fandoms have taken full advantage of the digital spaces that they inhabit. One of those advantages is in the ability to draw on, combine, and modify ideas and images across contexts without regard to the idea that there may be contexts that cannot be repurposed between.

Conclusion

As Amber and Lauren’s practices show, fan art, fan music, and fashion collages represent new literacies practices’ ability to be repurposed across contexts. In her fan art Google searching and drawing, Lauren shows how even on traditional platforms, such as old notecards with Sharpie markers, repurposing is an integral part of her new literacies practices due to the influence of digital contexts. Likewise, Amber’s fashion collages draw on and change a variety of images, genres, and characters from other contexts to inform her practices. In these artistic literacies practices, repurposing is a central part of meaning-making.
CHAPTER SIX: HOW EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS ENGAGE IN NEW LITERACIES PRACTICES: INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT & REPURPOSING

Much like theories on transfer and literacy, theories on invention are historically rich and varied. However, unlike transfer and literacy theory, invention theory was not an original focus of this study. Rather, it became important as the data emerged. As I worked with my participants and asked them to record their screen, many of them recorded what could be considered “invention” and “arrangement” practices, as opposed to “composing” or “editing,” practices. The participants revealed to me the importance they placed on invention and arrangement as part of their literacies practices.

These “invention” and “arrangement” practices were an integral part of their new literacies practices and were “new” because they could not have been possible without digital technology. In addition, their invention practices exemplify the modern conception of invention as including both invention (creating the new) and discovery (finding what already exists) (Miller, 2000). Using what is new and what is preexisting is at the heart of repurposing in these new literacies practices.

Furthermore, the arrangement of what is discovered and invented played a pivotal role in how the participants engaged in new literacies practices. The act of selecting and assembling what was discovered in their invention practices was an important part of their meaning-making (Delagrange, 2011). This can be seen as they selected fonts, searched for images, and created work on Etsy. Theories of invention and arrangement frame this discussion of Michelle and Becca’s invention as they engage in their new literacies practices. In this chapter, I will discuss Michelle and
Becca’s new literacies practices and how they complement modern rhetorical conceptions of invention and arrangement.

How Michelle Engages in New Literacies Practices: Tumblr, Etsy, and Poetry Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform: Tumblr, Etsy, Spotify</th>
<th>Participant: Michelle</th>
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<tr>
<td>![Tumblr Logo]</td>
<td>![Michelle's Portrait]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Etsy Logo]</td>
<td>![Spotify Logo]</td>
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Michelle's new literacies practices were multiple and varied, and included realistic fiction written for Creative Writing class, poetry written in the bath, and an Etsy store for hand-drawn shoes (see Table 9 for platforms and participant). The ways in which she engaged with invention and arrangement in these practices revealed the ways in which she repurposed across contexts.
The importance Michelle placed on invention as part of her new literacies practices was the reason I began considering invention theory as important to this study. When I first started meeting with her, I explained I was looking for her to use Screencastomatic.com to record her screen as she wrote on her computer. Shortly after that, she turned in her first recording. Michelle’s first screen recording had been named “searchingforideasongoogle.” And it was, in essence, about fifteen minutes of her searching in Google images. The fact that searching on Google was something she considered to be a new literacies practice to include in this study is important because it reveals that, to her, searching for ideas on Google was an integral part of her literacies practices. As Garett et al. (2012) argued, invention is composing in her practices because it involves a process of rearranging materials she finds in novel ways.

Her invention practices included both the discovery of existing ideas and the invention of new ideas. For example, when Michelle needed to write something for her Creative Writing class, she opened the assignment in Edmodo.com first. Edmodo is a free online classroom interface that resembles Facebook. After looking at the assignment in Edmodo, she moved directly into Google to search for ideas. This is important because the digital platform of this assignment encouraged Michelle to use other digital contexts as invention tools. Because the assignment drop box was found online, she was encouraged to repurpose from other digital contexts, such as Google images and Spotify.

When she needed to invent a topic for a particular open-ended Creative Writing class assignment, she started in Google where she searched for “tumblr writing prompts.” Michelle told me that it is difficult to search in Tumblr (platform depicted in *Error! Reference source not found.*) because it is only possible to search by hashtag and if someone has not included a word in his or her hashtags, she cannot find what she is looking for. However, Google will search the words
in the item, not just the hashtags. Important to note here is how she has strategically repurposed in an effort to retrieve the most successful search. In this moment of repurposing, she used the context of another website, Tumblr, to enhance her invention practices. Michelle, as well as Ashlee, Anastasia, and Amber, believed that including the word “tumblr” in their searches made them “better.”

When Michelle searched for “tumblr writing prompts,” the results revealed a variety of images with texts. The way in which these “writing prompts” are arranged is important. For example, Figure 34 shows a writing prompt from Tumblr which Michelle found in her search. It includes two images and written text arranged in a particular fashion common to the images she sees in her results.
This prompt encourages writers to repurpose from different contexts, as they would have to use and change what they knew about people, as well as their experience with days of the week. In addition, the arrangement of the images encourages writers to think about unique types of people. The fact that the images are on top of the words suggests that writers should think about these images and their connotations before even considering the written prompt. As Delagrange (2011) argued, the digital arrangement of this image frames the rhetorical purpose. By digitally linking images and text, this writing prompt encourages repurposing as composition.

Another invention practice Michelle engaged in was searching for phrases she found or related to the images she was seeing. As she clicked on and read images that seem interesting, she
used the words and phrases she found as inspiration for new searches. These were often not simply
words she found, but rather phrases she repurposed from the text and images. For example, she
searched for the phrase “tumblr wildly hallucinating” after looking at the image in Figure 35. Here
she chose to use the word “hallucinating” but change the other word to “wildly” in her search. In
this digital invention practice, she took what she found, which was an image and text that had been
arranged in a particular way, and then used and changed the image and text she was seeing to
attempt to further discover what she would like to write about.

The definitions of words were another place that she drew inspiration from in her invention
practices. During her search, she looked up the definition of the words “wall” and “nefelibata.”
Searching for the definition of the word “wall” is interesting because it is a word she obviously
already knows the meaning of. However, she chose to look up the definition of the word “wall” in
an effort to discover ideas to write about that topic. On the other hand, she searched for
“nefelibata” because she saw it in her Google search for writing prompts. Nefelibata, defined in her
search as “one who lives in the clouds of their own imagination,” was a word she had also seen on
Tumblr before. She used these words and their definitions to find ideas for what she wanted to
write for her Creative Writing assignment, which was open-ended and digital in nature. Therefore,
this assignment encouraged her invention and repurposing practices, arranged in a particular way to
further encourage her use and change of the ideas she found online. In this way, Michelle’s search
for writing prompts on Google images revealed the ways in which her invention practices were
situated in the “border between the known and the unknown” (Miller, 2000, p. 141).
This juxtaposition of different contexts and ideas can also be seen in a more traditional literacy
practice she engaged in during the study, writing poetry in a journal. One evening during the study,
Michelle took a bath, put on Spotify to a “romantic” station, and decided she needed to write. The
poem she wrote under this context drew on this sensory experience: "A storm brews there,/
unrelentless, waves kissing your shore... I'll thunder around until every drop/ of your bloody light/
has been drowned out/ by my flooded kiss." See Figure 36. Here she used the contexts of the
music and bath to make connections in her poetry.
timeywimeyteapot:

have you ever thought about how weird sleeping is like we basically dress ourselves in special sleeping clothes and lay on special sleeping mats then spend the next few hours completely comatose all the while hallucinating vividly

Figure 34: Example of image from Michelle's search
Likewise, she juxtaposed her love of drawing and certain fandoms to invent a business on Etsy selling hand-drawn shoes. See Figure 37.
These shoes she decided to start selling over Spring Break because she was bored and her friends were out of town. She had an old pair of shoes she had drawn Harry Potter characters and scenes on. Therefore, she decided to post these shoes for $10 and start selling personalized hand-drawn Harry Potter shoes. She sold two pairs the first week alone. She purchased the shoes at Walmart for $5 and then drew the characters herself with Sharpies. She wanted to spray them to keep the color better, but it made the shoes too stiff. This is clearly a new literacies practice because it is made of new “stuff” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). While drawing book characters on an old pair of shoes is not totally uncommon for a teenager, the act of creating a store to sell them and share them
as part of the Harry Potter fandom places the activity in a community and makes the shoes available as a text.

Her representation of the characters suggests something particular about what she values from the book series and its movies. For example, her pictures tended to show the more intense scenes in the book, including the villains and fight scenes. This also reveals the importance of arrangement in her practices. The placement of the images on the shoes frames her meaning-making. In addition, the availability of a space like Etsy encouraged her to invent herself as an entrepreneur. It was only a matter of a few clicks before she was able to have a site to sell her creations. Moreover, her decision to invent this particular literacies practice shows how her invention practices are situated in the known and unknown. After all, she did not know anyone who sold Harry Potter shoes. But, she knew she could draw, loved Harry Potter, and had a pair of shoes she had drawn on. With the help of a cell phone camera and an Internet connection, her love of drawing and an old pair of shoes was repurposed into a business. This business epitomizes the power of new literacies practices in their ability to encourage the new and discovered in invention practices and rhetorically frame meaning making in their digitally mediated arrangement.

This business also emphasizes the tension between fan activities, intellectual property, and copyright infringement. As Potts argued, “Because of the numerous methods for distributing, making, and producing content, these networked actors are no longer bound by traditional means of sharing and delivering content.” Michelle’s ability to draw images on shoes, take a picture, and post them on the Internet showed how easily she crossed contexts in her literacies practices. Furthermore, the fact that she was drawing these images from scenes in the Harry Potter series and then selling them showed her lack of concern for intellectual property and copyright infringement despite the clear violation.
The community of Etsy is not completely unaware of this issue. For example, on May 18, 2014, a user named Whitney Hitt asked in the community forum, “So, have been searching for ways to keep my fandom jewelry in my shop, but not violate copyrights and trademarks. What can I do?!?” (https://www.etsy.com/teams/7718/questions/discuss/14552307/). She had created owl pendants inspired by the Harry Potter series and wanted to be able to sell them on Etsy. Between more than fifteen separate users, they decided that while she could create owl pendants inspired by Harry Potter because they used the books only as inspiration, she could not sell them with the Harry Potter name. They also shared a useful website for considering fan art and copyright:

According to Bailey (2010), while fan fiction and fan art violates copyright rules, most authors and fans have a “symbiotic relationship” based on underlying rules. These rules focus on fans’ inability to make money or publish the fan art or fan fiction they create without permission from the original author. Therefore, selling fan art on Etsy is a violation of both written and implicit rules in the fan community. In addition, Bailey (2010) also acknowledged that fan activities’ copyright infringement is determined on a case-by-case basis and generally J.K. Rowling has encouraged digital fan creations from her work, as long as they do not profit the fan who creates them.

The issues with intellectual property and copyright infringement in fan activities are overshowed by the collapsed contexts that adolescents move between in their new literacies practices. Copyright infringement is certainly a concern that adolescents are not likely to not recognize. While it is unlikely J.K. Rowling will take action against Michelle’s Etsy activities, they show how the distributed nature of digital contexts encourage repurposing in ways that may not legal or ethical.
How Becca Engages in New Literacies Practices: Science Fiction Writing

Becca (profile picture depicted in Figure 4) was writing a novel, which she did not share with anyone. She allowed me to watch her compose in screencasts, but she would not allow me to read her novel in its entirety. This was because when Becca grows up, she wanted to be an author, though she thought it is too expensive. This she believed because of the book *Dying to Meet You*, where the author spent $300,000 to get his book published. However, this desire still kept her from posting her work to the Internet, just in case she had the possibility for publication. Her choices in her novel revealed ways in which she repurposed across contexts in her life as she invented new scenes in her book and the ways in which she made meaning through the arrangement on the page, in particular with fonts and the use of parentheses.

The book she was working on is what she called, “Just future, scifi, I guess, because it is not really dystopian. It is kind of like a regular community that just happens to have these people that are different.” This idea she repurposed from her favorite series, the Legend series by Marie Lu. Becca loved to read series books, in particular the Legend series and the Percy Jackson series. While she identified the Legend series as dystopian, she identified the Percy Jackson series as fan fiction.
The Percy Jackson series is a traditionally-published series identified as fantasy-adventure by the publisher, Scholastic. However, her assertion about it being fan fiction is fairly accurate. This series is about a demigod, Percy, whose father is Poseidon. Throughout the series he encounters the Greek gods and myths in the present setting and in novel ways. In essence, it could be considered a Greek myths fan fiction series.

Her work, though, she called science fiction. And while this was a different genre than the Legend series, she borrowed other elements from this series as she wrote. For example, her novel was told in “split narration.” She had two main characters and each chapter was told from the others’ point of view. How she arranged the chapters for her characters is important because like the Legend series, she used two different fonts to designate the two different characters. While she recognized they may not be the exact same fonts, she tried as much as possible to match the two fonts she used to those in the Legend series. In the same way as her favorite series, she used these fonts to reflect the characters’ classes:

Becca: Day’s font… It looks like Chelsea's, like Calibri. It is just kind of more plain. Whereas June's, I am using Times New Roman, for Brandon, which looks like June's font.
Cynthia: So if Calibri is plain, how would you describe Times New Roman?
Becca: Fancier. Like a little more proper. Because like June and Brandon are kind of more high living, whereas I wanted to class Chelsea in the lower class because she is up there but in a lower class than Brandon, because he is both in the military and a president's son. And like Day is in the lower class. He is like poor. He is homeless.

Day and June were the main characters in the Legend series, whereas Chelsea and Brandon were the main characters of her novel. She connected her characters’ fonts to those of her favorite series’ characters not by gender (Day is a male), but by class. In contemporary science fiction this is a fairly commonplace characterization of different groups of people. As such, she decided to attach the “plain” Calibri to her lesser class character and “more proper” Times New Roman to her upper class
character, like the characters in the Legend series. Here she has repurposed the use of different fonts as a way of rhetorical arrangement and meaning making in her composition.

While Michelle spent a lot of time searching for ideas as her invention practice, Becca drafted very quickly because she spent time inventing throughout her daily practices before she sat down to write. She said:

Becca: I do a lot of thinking. I am always thinking out scenes, later in the book, or for a different book in the series and I am just always thinking about it and applying it to my schoolwork sometimes so that helps me concentrate sometimes.

Cynthia: All right. Explain what you mean by that: applying it to your schoolwork.

Becca: Ok, sometimes, like let’s say I am doing math. If the problem is too boring for me I kind of turn it into the different characters and what they are doing.

Becca not only thought about her characters and upcoming scenes in the book but also used them throughout her daily life to help her “concentrate.” If she was bored, she used her characters as both an escape and a way to keep her interest on the work at hand. She also placed her characters in real life situations she had to work through and thought about how they might respond. She used and changed her real life situations and social interactions into new ideas in her novel. In this way, the repurposing of her characters into her real life situations acted as a form of invention.

There was no boundary between herself, her characters, and her potential readers. As she wrote, she often spoke directly to the reader. For example, she often used parentheses as asides to the reader (see Figure 38). She said, “I guess I just feel like the narration is really addressing the reader. It is not addressing anyone else because it is in their mind, telling the story.” In other words, she lived with her characters in her head, using them in situations throughout her day. Therefore, she expected the same from her readers as they read. Reading and writing were not passive experiences for her; they were active participation.
This is important because it shows how the border between contexts was blurred in her invention practices. To her, composition was a matter of “making connections” (Garrett et al., 2012). And she used the arrangement of the page and parentheses to emphasize these connections.

**Conclusion**

As we can see by Michelle’s invention practices on Google images and Etsy, as well as Becca’s invention practices in her science fiction novel and characters, their new literacies practices uphold the idea that invention is both discovery of what exists and the creation of something new. Both participants repurposed widely from their real lives and digital practices as they invented themselves as writers and artists, even when it violate copyright and intellectual property rules. Moreover, their digitally mediated arrangement practices guided their rhetorical choices and added a layer of meaning to their products. This repurposing was practiced widely and implicitly in their
practices, and was greatly encouraged by the technology they used to invent, arrange, and create.

While this repurposing was beneficial and exciting to their self-sponsored practices, that was not always the case in all of their practices. In the next chapter, I will discuss the issues with this kind of repurposing in academic settings.
The new literacies practices I have described in the previous chapters transcended contexts and allowed for and encouraged repurposing across them. Traditionally, transfer research has found that disparate contexts hindered the transfer of skills and strategies except in the ideal situations with the ideal strategies, ideal teachers, and ideal student dispositions. However, this concern for contexts seems moot in the case studies I have described. These eighth grade girls’ fan fiction, fan art, fashion collages, poetry, Etsy stores, and science fiction novels were invented, arranged, drafted, and published in ways that transcended the contexts they moved between. Each time these girls worked they drew on any context available to them, both digital and real-life. These contexts included platforms for new literacies, in particular Tumblr, Wattpad, Polyvore, and music sites, as well as more traditional contexts, such as in a hand-written journal. Like Nowacek’s participants, the participants in this study “described to me a real excitement and satisfaction that came with making connections… They spoke with pride and sometimes frustration about these moments when things seemed to be coming together” (27). On many occasions, the study participants described their moments of repurposing “as revelation, as the ‘a-ha!’ moment” (Nowacek, 2011, 27).

Yet, while these case studies add to our understanding of how they joyfully repurposed in new literacies practices, the repurposing was complex and not consistently positive. In the midst of the array of ways in which these girls repurposed across contexts, there were some difficulties with the repurposing they were practicing. That is not to say that that it was necessarily “negative
“transfer” (Perkins & Solomon, 1988). I am hesitant, as Nowacek is, to call these moments “negative transfer.” In many cases where these girls may have received a lower grade on an assignment or been reprimanded for plagiarism, they still felt accomplished in their repurposing. To be clear, their literacy ideologies were different than those of the teachers in their academic classes, including Creative Writing class. In addition, their collaborative authorship caused tension between themselves. This caused a conflict when they composed under the same username on Wattpad and repurposed standard English conventions errors into their writing in the classroom.

That being said, the difficulties they faced with their new literacies’ repurposing fall into two main categories: authorship complications and a lack of concern for Standard English conventions. These difficulties are aided by gatekeeping in academic contexts in the way of strict consequences for plagiarism and red ink on essays. However, they are also aided by confusion about authorship roles and lack of motivation by the participants. In this chapter, I will describe these issues in turn and give examples from particular participants in an effort to capture a better-developed portrait of the participants’ new literacies practices and the socially situated nature of their repurposing.
Authorship Complications: Ownership of Ideas, Writing, and Real-life Relationships

As we have seen with Ashlee and Anastasia’s collaborative fan fiction novel in chapter four, authorship in new literacies is often shared. In their case, they shared account information and wrote their novel, *Delusional*, under the same profile with a third friend. Nonetheless, there were constant verbal battles in my classroom over who deserved credit for certain ideas and pieces of writing. In addition, the most vocal of the group, Ashlee, claimed credit for more of their shared work. As Diakopoulos (2005) asked, “When everyone is mixing ideas and media, who is the author or creator of the final product?” (p. 1). And while he also asked, “Will we *care* who the author is in the future?” my participants did seem to care greatly who was credited as the author of their work, despite their collaborative authorship.

This questioning of authorship has been long theorized in the literature (Barthes, 1967; Bolter, 2001; Foucault, 1969; Landow, 2006; Ong, 1982). In the 1960s, Barthes (1967) called for the “Death of the Author” and Foucault (1969) asked “What is an Author?” While Barthes (1967) argued “the birth of the author must be ransomed by the death of the Author” (p. 6) and Foucault (1969) asked “what does it matter who is speaking,” the “author function” as Foucault (1989) called it never disappeared. Instead, digital technology has troubled the author function in a way that leads to confusion. As Vandendorpe (2009) wrote, “The once clear-cut distinction between author and reader is dissolving into a continuum” (p. 155). Certainly, the messiness of authorship became unmanageable for these collaborative authors.

For example, while they shared an account to write under, they were supposed to be signing off for their chapters:
Anastasia: We all sign off on our chapters, as in who wrote it, so it's like hi, Ana here, blah blah blah blah, and that stuff.
Ashlee: Like I put a little squiggly and whatever that is called. I don't know the name for it. And I put Ash so we all have little nicknames.

And this is the case for the chapters Ashlee wrote. She includes an author’s note in each chapter like this one, for example: “[guys I worked hella hard on this chapter, and its currently my birthday :))) (feb 19) so please Vote, Comment, Share :) all the love Xx~Ash]” However, the other two authors do not include author’s notes even though Anastasia indicated doing so. In reading their collective novel as a whole, it would appear to any Wattpad reader that there is one author, Ashlee.

This tension between shared authorship and individual credit was common as they discussed where ideas and future plot events came from, as well. For example, this exchange shows how they often moved from arguments over who wrote certain parts into arguments over who came up with certain ideas:

Anastasia: I did it. I wrote the Louie chapter.
Ashlee: No you didn't I was in the room and you never wrote the Louie chapter when I was in the room.
Anastasia: It was at your house. I was on the computer.
Ashlee: I am going to go off on a limb here and I am going to take my chapters of the story.
Michelle: Oh yeah, I was there. They were all writing it and I was sitting in the corner.
Ashlee: Stop because I actually made Lynn up.
Anastasia: No.
Ashlee: Because I said, we need more people of color in the book. I said that. I remember saying that.
Anastasia: What? When?
Ashlee: Yes I said that because mostly everyone in the book is white. I remember saying that.

Arguments like these with Anastasia and Ashlee discussing who remembered saying what as they invented ideas for their novel were a constant source of tension. Michelle (profile picture depicted in Figure 5) remarked to me, “That's why I am so glad I am not part of this book. Because all they
do is argue about it.” And this was true as much of their interviews became arguments over who was responsible for the invention of ideas and characters, and drafting of chapters.

In addition, these arguments over ownership of ideas were often carried over into real life. Like the contexts they drew on and changed as they drafted their novel, they did not just argue over their writing and its content but also the content of their real-life relationships. It was not uncommon for them to switch conversations in the middle of an argument about an idea and start one over who introduced certain friends to each other. For example, this conversation happened less than a minute after the one above:

Ashlee: When we argue about who did who...that is when it gets...It is all about the credits.
Michelle: You have never seen her as mad as when I say that she wasn't the reason why you, me and [friend] met.
Ana: But you weren't. Other than [friend].
Michelle: I was in the same class as her.
Ashlee: Were you guys as friends as you are now? I don't think so.
Michelle: We were in band together already.
Ashlee: But you never hung out until she came over to my house.
Cynthia: So this is like authorship of the characters vs. authorship of the friendships? I own that friendship? She wants to own that friendship?

Anastasia: She wants everything.
Ashlee: You guys make me sound so mean.

This fight for credit for friendships and authorship of writing and ideas shows the tension in collaborative literacies practices that frequently repurpose between contexts. Here, these three friends have carried over an argument about their fan fiction novel into an argument about who aided a strong friendship. Like their textual and strategic repurposing in their writing, this argument seemed to transcend contexts. However, it also brought to light the difficulty of this level of
repurposing and collaborative authorship when a particular individual wants to fight for credit for her work.

Likewise, another authorship issue comes into play when we look at this kind of collaboration and repurposing in an academic setting. Arguments for credit amongst friends become higher-stakes issues when we move this tension into a setting where there is “zero tolerance for plagiarism” and grades are attached to writing. According to the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA, 2003), “In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” In a digital setting such as the platforms I have described, this kind of plagiarism was rampant. When these participants knowingly drew on and changed ideas in the contexts they encountered, it is hard to not consider everything they practiced as falling under the WPA’s definition of plagiarism. As Rife & DeVoss (2012) argued, “If plagiarism is defined as the ‘unethical’ taking of some else’s words, texts, or ideas without giving proper credit, in digital spaces, ‘plagiarism’ is commonplace” (pg. 81). The participants were in many cases taking the ideas of other’s and passing them off as their own without crediting the sources. Clearly, traditional ideas of plagiarism do not work in these situations. Different contexts understand plagiarism differently and traditional notions are not capacious enough for a space like Wattpad.

However, Ride & Devoss asserted, “policies assume that the concept of plagiarism applies in blanket form across all writing contexts and regardless of any given writing purpose or tool used” (pg. 89). This could be seen in the participants’ Creative Writing class. When they used their online writing in the classroom, they were often met with accusations of plagiarism. Even within a Creative Writing elective class, there were questions of authorship and plagiarism when Ashlee and Michelle used their work on Wattpad as class assignments. Moving between the context of Wattpad and a
Creative Writing classroom causes a particular issue because while standard notions of plagiarism apply in the classroom, writing that has been taken from Wattpad and used in the classroom can cause confusion for students and teachers. Ashlee described showing her profile to her teacher to prove that the work was hers, and the teacher using that as further evidence that she must have taken it from the Internet and not drafted it herself. The professional look of Wattpad that is so appealing to users was a sign to Ashlee’s teacher that the work must not be Ashlee’s.

Furthermore, the Creative Writing teacher also used a plagiarism detection website and this caused further tension over authorship. The rhetoric community has recently voiced concern over plagiarism detection software and its use in the writing classroom (see, for example, Howard & Watson (2010), Vie (2013) or Wexler (2015)). Their concerns include plagiarism software growing an academic “culture of suspicion” (Wexler, 2015, para. 9) and “complicate[d] understandings of plagiarism, source use, and academic integrity” that software cannot account for (Vie, 2013). The issue at stake here is part of the later. For example, the Creative Writing teacher showed the movie, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and asked the students to write their own “unfortunate event.” However, when she checked the students’ work on a plagiarism detecting website, most of their work showed as more than 50% plagiarized. She called parents and took disciplinary measures on the worst “offenders” in the class. In this situation, the teacher used plagiarism software for an assignment in which she encouraged the students to repurpose because she asked the students to use and change the concept of a movie they watched in class. Then, she found “plagiarism” in their papers when they essentially were true to the assignment and used the work they were asked to model. She did what Howard & Watson (2010) described as typical of teachers who use of the term “plagiarism:” she used it to “accuse and punish the guilty” (p. 64).
In addition to complications over authorship, the high level of repurposing in new literacies practices is problematic when students become accustomed to seeing and making Standard English conventions errors and they are not motivated to fix errors even when they recognize them. It is not uncommon to hear a teacher or parent complain about students’ lack of grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and other Standard English conventions. This has been a concern for a long time in education. And this research shows that it may continue to become a worse problem in students who are engaging in the level of new literacies repurposing described in the previous chapters because they often know the rules but are not motivated to use them in their own writing, and because they see errors frequently and are more likely to repurpose them.

While correctly writing dialogue or descriptions of characters is of primary importance on Wattpad, Standard English conventions errors are often not concerns. For example, Ashlee frequently misspells the word “minutes” as “minuets” in her writing. While she purposefully drafts her writing in Microsoft Word because it has better spelling and grammar check, this mistake is something Word does not catch. When asked about this spelling mistake, she will admit to knowing that she does it incorrectly. But that clearly does not motivate her to make the fix before she publishes her work on Wattpad because this spelling mistake is frequently found in her published writing. In fact, she did not change it after I made a comment to her about it in person, either. The motivation for writing in Wattpad is fueled by views, votes, and comments. The way to get those is
through publishing chapters frequently. Therefore, there is little motivation to follow conventions beyond what Microsoft Word may change for these authors.

Likewise, she often does not capitalize the pronoun I in the middle of a sentence. Once again, she knows the conventional rule and does not follow it. She says, “I keep things in drafts and then they go in and like capitalize the Is because I don't capitalize the Is.” In other words, she relies on her co-authors to make the revision for her. However, they do not consistently do so, as many of Ashlee’s chapters in their collective novel include this convention error. Here, again, the motivation to follow Standard English conventions is little because Ashlee has other authors to make the change (or not) for her. It appears that many of the new literacies practices that encourage repurposing tend to discourage a concern for standard conventions in writing.

All in all, like Williams’ (2009) participants, the participants in this study showed me their work “with pride and pleasure” (p. 187). However, their work often had Standard English convention errors and underlying authorship arguments. In essence, “Audience, authorial position, evidence, style, genre and other rhetorical concepts are no less important when writing online than they were ten, twenty, or a hundred years ago.” (Williams, 2009, p. 198). And these rhetorical concepts are even more pivotal to understand explicitly in environments where contexts have been collapsed, questions over authorship and plagiarism are far more complex, and Standard English convention errors are rampant.
CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Anastasia:  Do you know what a ship is?
Cynthia:  No.
(laughing)
Cynthia:  So, it's relationships?
Michelle:  Yeah.
Anastasia:  Ok, so yeah. It is like somebody is not in a relationship.
Michelle:  But, you want them to be in a relationship so you ship them together.
Anastasia:  Bring them together. And they have a ship name and it's like their two names together.
Michelle:  Yeah and if something happens in real life, they call it cannon.
Cynthia:  Ok, so that takes place on Tumblr?
Anastasia:  Well, everywhere.
Michelle:  Yeah, like we do it in real life.

This conversation illustrates the frequency and fluidity with which the case study participants repurposed new literacies practices across contexts. As I often found in my interviews, practices I assumed took place in particular contexts, i.e. Tumblr, often were repurposed into multiple disparate contexts. As Anastasia says, they repurposed “everywhere.” The example in this conversation of “shipping,” or imagining two people as being in a relationship, occurred between fictional characters, band members, and fellow classmates. “Shipping” illustrates how new literacies allow for repurposing across contexts (i.e. characters from novels, band members, and real people) and it also emphasizes the fact that new literacies practices recognize and celebrate repurposing. As these girls use the characters and people they know to create new relationships, they go so far as to combine their names. For example, a frequent “ship” they discussed was “Larry:” Louie and Harry from One Direction (See Media 4). In other words, new literacies practices not only allow for repurposing, they strategically encourage the use and change of characters across contexts explicitly by combining them semantically. The concept of “shipping” and this particular conversation is just one of many examples of how characters, ideas, and practices are repurposed across contexts.
I set out in this research to learn about how middle school students may be repurposing in literacies practices that were definitively and ontologically new (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007, 2013). My research question was as follows: **Among middle school students who are engaging in rich literate lives, how are new literacies practices repurposed across contexts?**

What I found is that the case study participants repurposed frequently across physical and digital contexts as they engaged in new literacies practices. These new literacies practices included fan fiction, fan art, fan music, hand-drawn shoes, fashion collages, science fiction, and poetry. The
repurposing in these practices included the repurposing of ideas, characters, genres, sensory details, images, musical melodies, artistic styles, colors, Standard English conventions errors, and authorship concerns. The evidence leads me to believe that we need a better understanding of what constitutes “repurposing” and “contexts” in contemporary transfer methodology and theory, and a better understanding of what constitutes “literacy” in the academic curriculum.

In the previous chapters, I looked at how each of the six participants engaged in new literacies practices and how they repurposed knowledge and ideas across contexts. In particular, I looked at how repurposing, or “re-use and transformation of some text/semiotic object” (Prior & Shipka, 2003, p. 17), was central to their invention and arrangement practices. I also discussed concerns with increased levels of repurposing in new literacies practices. Here, I will summarize the study results, focusing on how the participants repurposed in their fan activities and in their invention practices. I will then suggest how we should think differently about studying transfer and repurposing in light of new literacies, as well as what this study of new literacies suggests about how we should talk about literacies practices in the secondary classroom.
How Middle School Girls Repurpose and Invent in Fan Activities

Fan Activities and Repurposing

In her book *Fic: Why Fanfiction is Taking Over the World*, Jamison (2013) wrote, “fanfiction asserts the rights of storytellers to take possession of characters and settings from other people’s narratives and … to tweak it and optimize it for their own purposes” (p. xii). Moreover, repurposing is the use and change of ideas and knowledge (Prior & Shipka, 2003; Roozen, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014; Wardle, 2012). In other words, fan fiction is, by definition, repurposing. As Ashlee and Anastasia took characters from the bands they were avid fans of and put them into settings similar to those of other fan fiction novels they had read on Wattpad, they were using and changing what they encountered in real life and in other fan activities. Similarly, as Amber developed cosplays (or costume plays) for the Steven Universe characters she was a fan of, she used and changed Polyvore fashion items and the image of the character as she arranged fashion pieces she could wear to represent that character in her real life. Likewise, as Lauren used and changed the styles of other fan artists on Google image searches, she repurposed their artistic ideas into her drawings. Finally, as Michelle drew images on cotton shoes with Sharpies, she used and changed the scenes from Harry Potter she felt best represented that series.

These case study participants’ practices suggest that fan fiction and fan art, as examples of new literacies practices, not only include significant repurposing, but they also encourage repurposing as central to their practice. In initially looking for evidence of repurposing in new
literacies practices, I was expecting to see similar impediments that had been found in more traditional studies of academic writing-related transfer, such as genres (Beaufort, 2007; Carroll, 2002; Devitt, 2007; Nowacek 2011). However, the fact that fan literacies activities rely so heavily on repurposing as a practice encouraged repurposing between genres and contexts in a way that was not impeded by genre names or how they functioned differently in different contexts.

In addition, new literacies practices encourage adolescents to rely on the community and Google searches for answers to any impediments they may find. For example, in the case of the practices I began the chapter with, Anastasia said she inferred the meaning of “shipping” and “cannon” through working in the Wattpad community. However, Michelle said she had looked the words up on Google and read the urbandictionary.com meaning before she used the terms herself. Either way, both participants came to use these terms across the digital and real life contexts they encountered, unimpeded by whether they had read the denotative meaning on a website or whether they had learned the terms in fan activities contexts.

The evidence suggests that adolescents are repurposing frequently in new literacies practices because digital contexts encourage repurposing. Since new literacies are made of new technical “stuff” and new ethical “stuff” (Lankshear & Knobel 2007), this “new stuff” is encouraging repurposing in its technical tools and in its new way of practicing literacies. In other words, new literacies encourage repurposing because they give adolescents new tools for repurposing that did not exist before, such as the platforms for new literacies discussed in chapter three. They also encourage a new way of thinking about and making meaning in new literacies, which repurposing is a central part of. This can also been seen in a particular rhetorical move in literacies practices, the invention of “new” ideas.
Invention and Repurposing

Some current theories of rhetoric posit that invention is the juxtaposition of the discovered pre-existing and the newly invented (Miller, 2000). As Miller (2000) argued, contemporary invention includes both “coming upon what already exists (discovery) and that of contriving something that never existed before (invention)” (p. 130). She argued, “Novelty must be situated. Rather than offering the radically new, it must occupy the border between the known and unknown” (p. 141). Likewise, Garret et al. (2012) argued, “Composing is a process of making connections, rearranging materials (words, images, concepts) in unexpected ways.” Essentially, contemporary conceptions of invention consider rhetorical invention as “repurposing.” While this connection has not been made before in transfer theory or rhetorical theory, it is important to note the connection between these disparate strands of theory. The term “repurposing” in transfer theory emphasizes making connections and applying and changing ideas and strategies across contexts in the same way that rhetorical invention theory does.

Moreover, this connection can be seen in this study. For example, as Ashlee visited her family in New York, she used the subway train and combined it with a character’s backstory in her chapter of Delusional. Likewise, as Michelle searched for ideas on Google images for a Creative Writing assignment, she used and changed the words and images she was seeing as she conducted further searches. Similarly, Lauren used Google image searches of fan art to invent her own repurposed style of characters. Each of these participants used repurposing as invention in their new literacies practices by juxtaposing the discovered pre-existing and the newly invented (Miller, 2000). This juxtaposition uses and changes the discovered and the invented and arranges them as a
method of invention and meaning making. Particularly within Google image searching practices, the arrangement of the words, images, and invented ideas are rhetorically significant. These practices suggest that our theory needs to be expanded to encompass the centrality of repurposing in new literacies practices. Not only is repurposing surely occurring in new literacies practices, including invention practices, it also is rhetorically significant and fundamental to meaning making in these practices.

Implications for Writing-Related Transfer Theory and Methodology

Writing-Related Transfer Research and Contexts

When approaching this study, I looked at two dominant “stories” of self-sponsored writing: the story told by academic writing studies and the story told by fan fiction studies. As Roozen (2009) wrote, “All told, self-sponsored private writing has largely been understood as largely at odds with undergraduates’ academic activities – a form of writing that rests on the wrong side of dichotomies that dominate how we understand and imagine the literate landscape” (p. 545). And, on the other hand, Jenkins (2004) wrote, “smart kids have long known not to let schooling get in the way of their education” (para. 3); “They can’t wait for the school bell to ring so they can focus on their writing” (para. 14). I posit that while these stories have been challenged by more recent studies (i.e. Roozen, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014; Williams, 2009), they represent common
conceptions that have guided writing-related research studies. Studies focused on academic contexts have long indicated the positive attributes of academic writing, while emphasizing the negative attributes of private writing (Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Courage, 1993; Herrington & Curtis, 2000); while, at the same time, studies focused on non-academic writing have indicated the positive attributes of self-sponsored writing, while emphasizing the dominance and negative attributes of academic writing (Black, 2008; Gee, 2007; Hellekson & Busse, 2001; Jenkins, 2004; Lankshear & Knobel 2006). These conceptions seem to be guided by the focus of the researchers. In general, if the researchers focused on academic contexts, they found academic writing to be the “right” kind of writing; if they focused on non-academic contexts, they found self-sponsored writing to be the “right” kind of writing. I propose that the reason for this is the researchers’ focus on “contexts.”

Relating this more closely to transfer research, a historical look at transfer research reveals three main concepts of transfer that have guided writing-related transfer studies: tasks, individuals, and contexts (Wardle, 2007). Within the “context conceptions,” there are three focuses: situated, sociocultural, and activity-based (Wardle, 2007). As a result of the evolution of writing-related transfer methodology, much of the recent writing-related transfer research has focused on the contexts for learning. As Wardle (2007) argued, “Given our field’s interest over the past decade in context, community, and activity, I suggest we would be remiss to focus solely on task- or individual-based conceptions of transfer” (p. 69). While this is certainly true, focusing on contexts presents new problems, as highlighted in this study because it is difficult to define contexts in new literacies practices and the act of defining contexts may be leading to reduced findings of repurposing in studies.

Traditionally, contexts in writing-related transfer research have been defined by physical locations. Moore’s (2012) map of transfer research lists the “Contexts of Writing-Related Transfer
Studies” in terms of where in the United States and other countries they were performed, as well as at what kinds of universities they took place. She wrote, “Most writing-related transfer studies have been conducted in the Midwest United States, often at research intensive institutions or mid-size schools with a heavy emphasis on science and technology” (Moore, 2012). However, while context has been understood as different physical places, this study suggests that a physical location may not be the “context” of a new literacies study.

For this research, I administered surveys at DeLaura Middle School in Satellite Beach, FL, yet that was not actually the context where the work took place. In addition, while I originally was concerned that the participants may be moving between cell phones and multiple computers, those devices were not the context of the study either. I had considered filming the participants as they worked in these physical, technological contexts. Yet, the context of the devices was not a significant factor in their literacies practices. Instead, the context for this research became the digital platforms where they performed their new literacies practices. For example, the context for Amber’s fashion collages was Polyvore. However, she created collages from the school’s media center computers, her cell phone, and her home computer. I would not have seen this without a web-based screencasting tool. In other words, the screencast website was robust enough to allow for the collapsed contexts that ended up framing this study because it was web-based and, therefore, matched the platforms for the participants’ new literacies practices.

This study suggests that when studying transfer in new literacies practices, we cannot consider contexts as discreet platforms. With significant repurposing across digital contexts, we must be open to what “contexts” the participants are actually working in. By using a web-based screencast website and allowing participants to choose what practices they feel represent their literacies, we can better portray what new literacies actually look like to adolescents, as well as gather
an idea of the vast repurposing they are engaging in. Because new literacies practices move fluidly between the contexts researchers normally consider to be contexts, much of the repurposing will remain lost in traditional methods of studying the “contexts” of writing-related transfer. Instead, we must be using tools that match the practices participants are engaging in. If we are studying web-based practices, we must be using tools that can allow for digital movement between contexts.

The Term “Repurposing”

Use of the term “repurposing” allowed me to see evidence of vast ways in which the case study participants borrowed and altered ideas and skills across contexts. However, the term “repurposing” became difficult to navigate as the data emerged. This term has been used to describe the application and transformation of knowledge and skills when applied in multiple contexts (Prior & Shipka, 2003). It has been used, in particular, by Roozen (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2014) to study how case study participants use and change ideas and strategies across academic and non-academic contexts in his longitudinal studies. In my study, the use and change of knowledge and skills happened frequently in the participants’ new literacies practices. However, it would have been useful to have a more categorical set of definitions for repurposing than one broad definition in order to better interpret what was happening.

Throughout the study, I ran into questions of what is not repurposing. For example, when Ashlee and Anastasia argue over authorship of chapters and then over friendships, is this repurposing of an argument over authorship or should it be defined differently? With a necessarily
broad conception of contexts, and a broadened term for transfer, it became difficult to navigate what was repurposing and what did not count as repurposing. Roozen (2012) wrote, “researchers need to follow participants’ mappings of relevant activities, regardless of how different they seem or how distant they are temporally” (347). While this is true and leads to a vast list of ways in which literacies practices are repurposed, a more categorical definition of what constitutes repurposing is needed to provide a more navigable framework in future new literacies repurposing studies. This could better support researchers in building frameworks for how to speak about repurposing in the classroom.

Nowacek (2013) argued that “transfer” is most useful as a broad term or “tent” under which we can include a variety of more specific ways in which students “make connections.” These terms could include repurposing, remix, bricollage, application, generalization, and other ways of talking about the transfer of knowledge and skills. These terms focus on how students transfer knowledge. Focusing additionally on what students are repurposing could help categorize the complicated process of repurposing because what they are repurposing effects what the repurposing looks like. In this study, participants repurposed under these categories: character repurposing, genre repurposing, linguistic repurposing, skills repurposing, and stylistic repurposing. Considering each one of these categories separately and tracing the repurposing categorically could help further portray the process these students used when repurposing in their practices.
Implications for Future Research

This study suggests the importance of using web-based screen cast software and stimulated-recall interviews in transfer research of digital practices. Web-based tools matched the participants’ practices in that they could be used on any device the participants chose to work on. Likewise, using Atlas.ti and the cooccurrence chart was useful because Atlas.ti allowed for text, images, and video to be coded equally and then allowed me to find the intersection of platforms and practices. This helped answer the important transfer question: how do you know it is repurposing? Future research in digital practices should be mindful of using tools that match the practices studied. In other words, a study of web-based practices should use web-based tools. Likewise, a study of texts that includes written text, images, and videos should be able to include all texts equally when coding.

One main limitation to my research was the lack of male participants. While I could not convince any boys to participate in the research, I feel this was a result of my choice to study participants I did not teach. It is more likely that male participants identified by a teacher-researcher would be more likely to agree to a similar study. Certainly including male participants in a similar study would yield useful results.

Finally, conducting a similar study with students who do not lead rich literate lives would be valuable. Clearly, these participants spent a lot of time and effort on their practices. It would be interesting to see if students who have different interests but write digitally for academic purposes tend to repurpose as often.
Implications for How We Talk About Literacies in Public Secondary Schools

Additionally, this study suggests how we should be talking about literacies in the secondary classroom. As Ridolfo and DeVoss argued (2009), “Students are writing. A lot. They’re sharing. A lot. They’re circulating texts. A lot and across multiple spaces… And this isn’t the sort of writing we’re asking them to do.” In fact, for the purpose of this research, I focused on the “new” in literacies in an effort to better understand what is not currently a part of my Florida State Standards curriculum and my understanding as a public school secondary teacher. As Williams (2009) asserted, “I see young people growing up reading and writing in collaborative, online environments, negotiating multiple media and screens, and I realize that there are unending opportunities to learn from my students and for all of us to rethink how we communicate in words, images, and sounds” (p. 199). It seems that no matter how much I think I know about my students’ reading and writing, there are constantly new ways in which they are engaging in these literacies aided by digital technology. Therefore, I chose to focus on the “new” in an effort to better understand the literacies practices my students were engaging in that were not normally a part of my English classroom.

That is not to say that the Florida Department of Education does not attempt to at least include digital technology in its standards and assessments. The latest adopted Florida State Standards try to address the burgeoning digital world by categorizing them into Language, Reading for Informational Text, Reading for Literature, Speaking and Listening, and Writing (CPALMS, 2016). Within these categories, there are standards that specifically address technology. For example, a writing standard for grade 9 and 10 English classes is: “LAFS.910.W.2.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking
advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically” (CPALMS, 2016). Moreover, the latest Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) includes “technology-enhanced items,” which “may include multimedia elements such as audio clips, slideshows, or animations” (FLDOE, 2015). However, despite this, the definition of literacy that guides classroom instruction is rather narrow. In other words, technology and the Internet are treated as an addition to reading and writing instruction, not an integral part of the process.

For example, January 25-29, 2016, marked the State of Florida’s annual Celebrate Literacy week, with the theme “Literacy Changes Our World.” In my high school, this meant having students read quietly from a printed book or printed textbook for 20 minutes on Wednesday in all English classes to go towards the state’s “Million Minute Read.” Other schools in Brevard County had other activities such as “Read My Shirt Day” where students wore shirts with written text for others to read and read-alouds from the administrators shown on the school announcements (FLDOE, 2016). This narrow definition of literacy is seemingly unrelated to the theme, “Literacy Changes Our World.” In addition, it highlights the disconnect between the literacy practices my case study participants gladly engaged in on their own and those they are asked to complete in academic settings.

As I have begun speaking to colleagues about my research and how it has affected the way I look at literacy and “the writing process” in my classroom, I find the same kind of contrast between teachers and students that Williams (2009) described: “When I talk with students and observe their online literacy practices involving popular culture, I see confidence, pleasure, curiosity, and creative and critical thinking. When I mention what I have seen to teachers, the response is disdain, alarm, or at best, discouragement” (p. 187). As I spoke with another teacher about the work my students were doing on their laptops recently, she remarked that I had better not let my administration see
what they were doing with school technology. In many ways, my work with new literacies makes me feel the way the teacher participants who implement new literacies in Kist’s (2005) study do: “they frequently feel isolated and set apart from the mainstream of their own school cultures” (p. 17).

However, the evidence from these six case study participants suggests that we are doing our students a disservice, and even harm, by not discussing self-sponsored literacies practices in the classroom because students are likely repurposing from them in both academically successfully and academically harmful ways. In addition, there are many rhetorical frameworks, in particular invention and arrangement, at play in new literacies that will effect how students engage in all rhetorical situations (Williams, 2009). In other words, the new literacies practices described in the previous chapters have led to “new” ways of thinking about how to invent ideas for writing (i.e. Google searches) and how to arrange texts (i.e. choice of fonts).

If we desire secondary students to stop carrying over spelling mistakes into their academic writing or not taking the ideas of someone else without crediting their sources, they are going to need help understanding that there are different contexts and conventional standards associated with them. A concept like plagiarism is much more effective as an explicit lesson than as a misunderstood punishment (Vie, 2013). Using an example like fan fiction to discuss what plagiarism is in a non-academic context would be a powerful and important lesson for students. At this point, my students could teach me more about what is acceptable in that platform than I could attempt to understand. Digital technology will continue to grow and teachers will continue to be forced to learn from their students what new literacies look like. And if we, as teachers, learn this lesson from our students, we will be much better prepared to teach them about different conventional standards and contexts.
This study shows that secondary students are far less hindered in their repurposing across contexts. Therefore, teachers will need to help make them aware of the existence of different contexts for literacies practices. Doing so would support students in making explicit, academically appropriate choices as they repurpose across contexts. For years, metacognition and reflection have been the cornerstones of effective writing instruction and transfer (i.e., Yancey, 1998; Beaufort, 2007; Rounsaville et al., 2008; Yancey, Robertson & Taczak, 2014). This study shows that teaching students to be self-aware of the practices they are engaging in and repurposing will only become more important as digital technology grows and as more students become involved in the kinds of practices and repurposing in this study. An effective way of supporting students in the awareness of their digital practices could be in the use of screen casting websites. The participants in this research certainly became much more aware of their repurposing as they watched their practices along with me.

**Suggestions for Educators**

Based on these case study participants, I suggest the following strategies for supporting an awareness of new literacies practices in the classroom:

1. Use surveys at the beginning of the school year to understand students’ practices outside of the classroom and be careful how you word those surveys. Include as many specific contexts as you can think of and allow students to write in others. Talk to students about
the spaces they are engaging in and allow them to tell you about the ones you have never heard of.

2. Allow students time to reflect on writing assignments before they begin drafting. Ask students what they think they are being asked to accomplish and why. Ask students how assignments relate to work they have done in other contexts and how it is different. Discuss what they should and should not repurpose into the assignment. Be explicit.

3. Discuss plagiarism and work on creating a working definition together. Use current examples of new literacies practices, such as fan fiction on Wattpad and fan art on Etsy, to discuss intellectual property and copyright infringement. Discuss current events, such as Taylor Swift’s recent cease and desist attempts (http://time.com/3698790/why-taylor-swift-is-goint-to-war-with-twee-retailer-etsy/). Explain to students why it is important to cite before teaching citation practices.

4. Discuss why it is important to follow Standard English conventions before instruction in conventions.

5. Use screen cast websites to support reflection. Have students record their screen as they draft and edit. Ask them to reflect on their recorded process. Have them work together and watch each other’s screen casts. Include this as part of a reflection on a writing portfolio.

6. Adopt a broader definition of literacy. Use a time like Literacy Week to work together to define what literacy is for that particular year. Empower students to teach you what kinds of texts they are writing throughout a given week.
Concluding Remarks

This study necessitated a rethinking of my own literacies practices as I drafted this dissertation. What I had once considered a distraction to my writing process and something to be avoided, such as searching for writing memes and posting them to my social media, I began to consider as a part of my broader literacies practice. Similarly, the repurposing I did not explicitly notice before became apparent as I wrote this chapter. The use and change of the feedback my dissertation director gave me both in person, through e-mail, and in the comments on my Word document I recognized as repurposing. Likewise, as I looked at published research conclusions (i.e. Carroll, 2002; Nowacek, 2011) for models of final chapters, I noticed the way I used and changed their rhetorical moves in my own writing.

We do not write in a vacuum. As we invent, draft, and engage in other literacies practices, we repurpose. It is exceedingly difficult to point to every moment where we use and change the ideas, strategies, and skills that we have acquired across literacies contexts. However, researched mapping of repurposing will help us understand how to talk about repurposing in the classroom in a way that is useful to current students and teachers. As the literacies practices we all engage in become entrenched in digital platforms they will involve significant repurposing. We need to think differently about what repurposing entails and how it functions in literacies practices in order to effectively teach the students sitting in middle and high school classrooms today. This, in turn, will help complicate the true messy nature of what composition can be and will help students enter college classrooms ready for authentic encounters with all kinds of literacies.
APPENDIX A: SURVEY FOR SELECTING PARTICIPANTS
Survey Instrument for Selecting Participants

Adapted from the *WIDE* survey (Grabill et al., 2012)

Name:

Grade Level:

Age:

I am looking for participants for my study who do a lot of the following things.

Which of these do you do at least once a week? Check all that apply.

- Essay
- Texting or other short comment, such as Snapchat
- Letter
- Poetry
- Play
- Journal or diary
- Web site
- Fiction (short story, novel)
- Journalism (newsletter, yearbook, etc.)
- E-mail
- Blogging
- Status message update (Facebook, etc.)
- Tweet
- Instant message
- Chat room
- Comment on status message or picture (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Fan fiction
- Wiki
- List (written or electronic, planner, assignments, groceries, etc.)
- Class notes (Cornell, outline, etc.)
- Notes to friends
- Memes
- Flip books
- YouTube videos
- Wattpad
- Minecraft
- Other (list as many as you can think of):
APPENDIX B: LETTER FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPANTS
Hey!

You probably don't know this, but I have been trying to chat with you this week. Unfortunately, it hasn't happened yet 😞.

If you can recall, you filled out a survey for me and I loved your answers. I would love it if you would be a participant in my research.

Let me tell you a little bit about me. When I was your age, I was really into a poetry forum where I would post my work online and build friendships with some other middle school students who loved what I wrote. It was basically what I spent all night doing. So, that is one of the reasons I am really interested in researching the way you all write; I loved to write when I was in middle school.

The other reason I want to pursue this research is because I want to find ways that I as a teacher can bridge the gap between home and school reading and writing. I wish they didn't seem so far apart. Maybe there are more similarities than we all think. 😊

Anyways, I would love it if you would participate in the research. I am including a couple consent forms. I would only need one from you with a parent's signature for you to participate. But, the reason I included extra for you is that you might have a friend who also loves doing the reading and writing practices you do but I haven't identified yet. You are welcome to share this letter and a consent form with any seventh or eighth grade students who would like to participate in something like this.

Oh and one more thing! When we meet to do the interviews, we can meet individually or we can meet together in small groups. And when you film your screen using the screencast website, you get to decide when it starts and ends. You will never have to share anything you don't want to.

So, if you are interested, I just need a signed parent consent form so we can work together. You can bring it by my room, 225, or drop it off at the front office for me.

If you or a friend have any questions or want to talk more about this, you are free to call or text me at 321-514-3146.

Also my Instagram profile is cynthiamitchell or you can email me at mitchell.cynthia@brevardschools.org or cynthiausannmitchell@gmail.com.

Also, I am going to start meeting with some students on Monday at either 8:45 am or 4:15 pm in the media center or during first lunch in my room, 225. You are welcome to join us! (with a signed permission slip 😊)

Let me know if I can support your decision to participate in any way!

Thanks,

[Signature]

Mrs. Mitchell
EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: How Middle School Students Repurpose New Literacies Practices Across Contexts

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Mitchell
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Wardle

How to Return this Consent Form: You are provided with two copies of this consent form. If you give consent for your child to participate in the research, please sign one copy and return it to Mrs. Mitchell and keep the other copy for your records.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe how middle school students are using digital writing and other practices across contexts. The study will be going from March to May. The results may help teachers better understand how students are working in digital environments and help teachers develop better practices to teach today’s middle school students. The results may not directly affect your child today, but may benefit other students. Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary and is confidential.

The participating students will engage in their normal literacy practices. With your permission, we will be using a tool called ScreenCast-o-matic to record their screen while they work on writing and other digital literacy practices. This is a web-based site and does not require anything to be installed on your computer. I will also be collecting work from your child, which will be photocopied and returned, if needed. I will ask questions about the work that will help me understand the process your child took to create it. Unless you or your child indicate that a particular conversation, answer, event, or document be “off the record,” I will proceed as though I may record your child’s words and interactions. I will use pseudonyms and eliminate identifying details from the data to make sure the data remains confidential. All the collected data will be stored under a username and password only your child and I know. The account will be deactivated after a year and all data will be destroyed.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you can reach Cynthia Mitchell, doctoral candidate, Texts and Technology, at 321-514-3146 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Wardle, Department of Writing and Rhetoric, 407-823-5416.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

I have read the procedure described above and I voluntarily agree to allow my child, ________________________, to participate in Mrs. Mitchell’s study.

Parent/Guardian ___________________________ Date ___________________
APPENDIX D: IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS PERMISSION LETTER
Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000051, IRB00001138

To: Cynthia S. Mitchell

Date: January 23, 2015

Dear Researcher:

On 01/23/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

- **Type of Review:** Exempt Determination
- **Project Title:** How Middle School Students Repurpose New Literacies Practices
- **Investigator:** Cynthia S Mitchell
- **IRB Number:** SBE-15-10928
- **Funding Agency:** N/A
- **Grant Title:** N/A
- **Research ID:** N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

[Signature]

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 01/23/2015 10:20:45 AM EST

IRB Coordinator
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