EDC&I 505: Everyday Technologies in Youth Culture

Mondays 4:30 to 6:50 Winter 2005 Miller 320

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Computer technologies have continued to make significant inroads into the inner workings of society. This very much holds true for youth as well. As computer technology becomes increasingly embedded in everyday niches, it is common for children to interact with dozens of digital devices throughout a typical day, and many spend hour-upon-hour learning about and manipulating computer devices such as laptop computers, handheld computers, game consoles, cell phones, pagers, and audio players. We actually know surprisingly little about how this increasingly rich technology infrastructure is influencing the development of children in terms of how they interact with others, how they seek out information and construct understandings of the world, how it shapes who they become and the communities they join, or how they accomplish novel and everyday activities with the use of technology.

The seminar has a dual focus on understanding the technological fluencies that kids are developing with new technologies as well as how digital technologies, electronic gadgets, and interactive media are influencing children's learning and development. This seminar will investigate how toddlers, children, and adolescents use digital technologies in their everyday lives—in and out of school—and how they understand the technology and its possible uses. To great educational effect, we have devoted research energy to understanding how children develop conceptual knowledge about the natural world through their everyday and educational experiences with natural phenomena and processes. Corresponding pedagogical theories have stressed the importance of understanding and building upon student's prior knowledge and experience. In a parallel manner, children develop technological skills, concepts, fluencies, and practices through their everyday and formal experiences with computational devices. We will attempt to identify or construct theoretical knowledge about how technological fluencies develop in order to inform the design of learning environments for children as well as to educate future teacher practitioners and educational designers about the technological fluencies of children. Also, we will try to understand the broad implications of technology on the lives of children. This will involve exploring such issues as:

- What are the cultural worlds that children are creating online?
- How are digital technologies changing the social practices of children?
- How does electronic gaming shape individual development (including prosocial, aggressive, or intellectual capacities)?
- How are mobile technologies being woven into the cultural worlds of teens and different societies of the world?
- How do children construct and play with their identities online?
- Should the practices surrounding digital technologies be considered new foundational literacies?
- How are network technologies changing family structures, activities, and relationships?
- What are the enduring equity issues surrounding the use of new technologies?

At a time of rapid infusion of digital devices and information technologies into society, we need to systematically understand how it is influencing the social, linguistic, emotional and cognitive development of our children. Toddlers are growing up playing with electronic pets and games, "hand-me-down" handhelds, and diverse ecologies of online information. Kid's television shows regularly include characters that make regular use of digital devices and information technologies in their episodic depiction of life in society. Older children carry around multiple digital devices and often spend hours using them for social interaction, entertainment, digital design and creation, and inquiry. We need to better understand how their technological knowledge develops and is marshaled in the everyday experiences of children in order to better support their learning and development. This survey course attempts to paint some of landscape and allow each participant to specialize in one or more areas related to the themes of the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Class Discussions. All class members are expected to actively participate in the discussions each week. This is crucial for a graduate seminar of this size and purpose.

2. Regular Posting to the Course Web Log (or "blog"). All students will be asked to regularly post to a blog that has been set up for this course—a kind of distributed publishing system where we can all post short articles in a central place. The blog is intended to be an information funnel for our activities this quarter. Members of the class will use this site to share resources and collectively explore issues over the course of the quarter. (Of course, the blog will also be open more generally to folks interested in the issues of the class.) Individuals will sign up for a day of the week to make a small number of contributions to the blog (as will be discussed at the first class). These postings might be descriptions and pointers to relevant resources online, summaries and critiques of relevant articles, reactions to the readings, or personal musings related to the themes of the course. The URL for the course blog is:

   http://faculty.washington.edu/pbell/blog/kidtech/

3. Naturalistic Observations (3 over the course of the quarter)
   This quarter we will develop an understanding of how kids and young adults are using technology in the details of their everyday activity as well as understand how it might be influencing their learning and development. One strategy we will employ to do this involves systematic observation of children's activities in naturalistic contexts (which includes online spaces). You will generate fieldnotes based on each observation and will be asked to post a brief report — with perhaps some excerpts of activity or dialogue — to the course blog. Please title your blog observation entries "Field Observation: <description>." This will count as one of your postings for that week. (I recommend that you try to spend some time observing each week, but you will only be responsible for three reports.)

   You should just try and find contexts where children or young adults are using digital technologies in their activities. Allow your personal interests and the viability of particular sites shape your selections. You might observe the activities of an after-school computer club, a computer lab, an online community, a videogame parlor, or home setting. You can also elect to coordinate your observations with your final course paper as an empirical research project (described below).

4. Research Paper (15-20 pages, double-spaced [with the exception of the op-ed piece])
   The primary assignment for this course is a research paper that can take one of three forms:
   1. *Mini empirical research paper*—this should include a description of the motivation for the study, a targeted literature review that situates the study, presentation of data and associated analyses, and discussion of conclusions and implications. Your paper can build directly upon your naturalistic observations (e.g., all three observations might be of the same context).
   2. *Review or review/design article*—this should take the form of a comprehensive review article or you may elect to craft a composite review / design paper that includes educational design scenarios derived from the substance of your review.
   3. *Research proposal or book prospectus*—this should map out a new line of research or take the form of a detailed prospectus for a new book related to the themes of the course.
   4. *Opinion-Editorial*—this should be a strong argument about some issue directly related to the course. Crafting an op-ed piece that is accessible, tightly-written, and compelling will take significant effort. Select a target publication (e.g., NY Times) and carefully craft an op-ed piece according to their guidelines (typically 600-1200 jargon-free words). If you elect to write an op-ed piece, you must turn in a draft by the end of Week 7.

5. Class Presentation
   We will spend time in the last two class sessions (March 7th and 14th) having a "seminar conference" in which you will give a 12-minute oral presentation of your work. The oral presentation of research results is an invaluable skill that you will use throughout your professional life as an educator / researcher. It is best to start practicing early and often, and it often doesn't receive adequate attention in graduate school. (As proof, just drop into a random session at AERA, APA or other major professional conference!)

GRADING POLICY

I expect all assignments to be completed in a timely fashion. All written work will be held to high standards and should conform to rules of proper grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling. Because of time pressures, *late papers will not be accepted unless prior written confirmation has been given by one of the instructors.* Please double-space all written work and use a 12-pt. font. APA format should be used for references. Assignments will be weighed according to this scheme:

Class Participation & Blog Participation	20%
Naturalistic Observations (3)	20%
Project Presentation	10%
Research Paper	50%

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Supplemental readings are available on every course topic. If you are interested in delving more deeply in any area, please let me know.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS & MILESTONES

Week 1, January 3 **Course introduction and overview**

This session will provide an introduction to the purposes, themes, and activities of this course.

Week 2, January 10 **An overview of technology within youth culture**

➟ **Spend time browsing the old course blog (http://faculty.washington.edu/pbell/kidtech).**

Background: Turkle, S. (1999). What are we thinking about when we are thinking about computers? In M. Biagioli (Ed.), *The Science Studies Reader* (pp. 543-552). New York and London: Routledge.

Wartella, E., O'Keefe, B., & Scantlin, R. M. (2000). *Growing up with interactive media: What we know and what we don't about the impact of new media on children—Executive Summary* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Markle Foundation.

Subrahmanyam, K., Greenfield, P., Kraut, R., & Gross, E. (2001). The impact of computer use on children's and adolescents' development. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 22*, 7-30.

Nespor, J. (1997). Intersections of kids, signs, and popular culture, *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies, and signs in the educational process* (pp. 162-195). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Week 3, January 17 **HOLIDAY—Language socialization amongst peers, families, and strangers**
NO CLASS THIS WEEK, BUT READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES

➟ **First observation report is due. It should be posted to the course blog by this date.**

Background: Kyratzis, A. (2004). Talk and interaction among children and the co-construction of peer groups and peer culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 33*, 625-649.

Lareau, A. (2003). Developing a child: Alexander Williams, Language as a conduit for social life: Harold McAllister, *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life* (pp. 107-160). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cook, S. E. (2004). New technologies and language change: Toward an anthropology of linguistic frontiers. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 33*, 103-115.

Week 4, January 24 **The linguistic frontier of chat in youth culture**

Background: Schegloff, E. & Sacks, H. (1973). Opening up closings. *Semiotica*, 8:289-327.

Greenfield, P., & Subrahmanyam, K. (2003). Online discourse in a teen chatroom: New codes and new modes of coherence in a visual medium. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 24*, 713-738.

Schönfeldt, J., & Golato, A. (2003). Repair in chats: A conversation analytic approach. *Research on language and social interaction, 36*(3), 241-284.

Week 5, January 31 Mobiles and sociality

Ito, M. (2004). *Personal portable pedestrian: Lessons from Japanese mobile phone use.* Paper presented at the Mobile Communication and Social Change: The 2004 International Conference on Mobile Communication, Seoul, Korea.

Green, N. (2002). On the move: Technology, mobility, and the mediation of social time and space. *The information society, 18*, 281-292.

(There is likely to be a third paper that will be announced in class. I'm still looking for a strong empirical piece that depicts kid's learning with the instrumental use of cell phones.)

Week 6, February 7 Families, technology & equity

➟ **Second observation report is due. It should be posted to the course blog by this date.**

Background: Christensen, P., James, A., & Jenks, C. (2000). Home and movement: Children constructing 'family time'. In S. L. Holloway & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning* (pp. 139-155). London and New York: Routledge.

Holloway, S. L., & Valentine, G. (2003). Life around the screen: The place of the ICT in the 'family' home, *Cyberkids: Children in the information age* (pp. 99-126). London: Routledge Falmer.

Sanger, J., Willson, J., Davies, B., & Whittaker, R. (1997). His and hers: Screen-based technology and gender issues, *Young children, videos and computer games: Issues for teachers and parents* (pp. 131-151). London: Falmer Press.

Week 7, February 14 The cybercultures of children

Background: Wilson, S. M., & Petersen, L. C. (2002). The anthropology of online communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 31*, 449-467.

Valentine, G., Holloway, S. L., & Bingham, N. (2000). Tranforming cyberspace: Children's interventions in the new public sphere. In S. L. Holloway & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning* (pp. 156-173). London and New York: Routledge.

And select one of the following…

Clark, L. S. (1998). Dating on the net: Teens and the rise of "pure" relationships. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Cybersociety 2.0* (pp. 159-183). London: Sage Publications.

Egan, J. (2000, December 10). Lone gay teen seeking same: How Jeffrey found friendship, sex, heartache / and himself / online. *New York Times Magazine*. Accessed online on 27 March 2003: http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/20001210mag-online.html

Week 8, February 21 **New technological literacies / frameworks for understanding the effects of gaming**
NO CLASS THIS WEEK, BUT READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES

diSessa, A. (2000). Computational media and new literacies — The very idea, *Changing minds: Computers, learning, and literacy* (pp. 1-28). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Gee, J. P. (2003). Semiotic domains: Is playing video games a "waste of time"?, *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy* (pp. 13-50). New York: Palgrave.

Greenfield, P. (1994). Video games as cultural artifacts. *Journal of applied developmental psychology, 15*, 3-12.

Week 9, February 28 **Studies of computer gaming**

➟ **Third observation report is due. It should be posted to the course blog by this date.**

Sanger, J., Willson, J., Davies, B., & Whittaker, R. (1997). Keeping IT in the family: Computer games and families, *Young children, videos and computer games: Issues for teachers and parents* (pp. 63-96). London: Falmer Press.

Ito, M. (1997). *Kids and simulation games: Subject formation through human-machine interaction.* Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S).

Squire, K.D. (in press). Civilization III as a world history sandbox. To appear in *Civilization and its discontents. Virtual history. Real fantasies.* Milan, Italy. Ludilogica Press.

Week 10, March 7 **Teen's social practices with text messaging**

Grinter, R. E., & Eldridge, M. (2001). y do tngrs luv 2 txt msg? In W. Prinz & M. Jarke & Y. Rogers & K. Schmidt & V. Wulf (Eds.), *Proceedings of the seventh European conference on computer-supported cooperative work (ECSCW '01), Bonn, Germany* (pp. 219-238). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Thurlow, C. & Brown, A. (2003). Generation Txt? The sociolinguistics of young people's text-messaging. *Discourse Analysis Online*, 1(1).

Kasesniemi, E., & Rautiainen, P. (2002). Mobile culture of children and teenagers in Finland. In J. E. Katz & M. Aakhus (Eds.), *Perpetual contact: Mobile communication, private talk, public performance* (pp. 170-192). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

➟ **Final course paper is due in my box in Miller 312 by 4pm on Friday, March 9th.**

Week 11, March 14 **Course Presentations (Exam Week)**

Each student will be asked to make a professional presentation summarizing their class project. We will start presentations during our Week 10 meeting and finish them during this session.