

**CENTERING GIRLS' (MEDIA-MAKING) STORIES:
A PANDEMIC EXPLORATION OF VIDEO STORYTELLERS AND THEIR
PRACTICES, PERSONAS, AND PROJECTS**

TATYANA ZOFIA TERZOPOULOS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN EDUCATION
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

July 2022

© Tatyana Zofia Terzopoulos, 2022

Abstract

This interdisciplinary, feminist-informed research explores racialized tween and teen girls' video-based storytelling and considers how extracurricular programs can support this interest. It draws from youth media cultures and media education scholarship, including research that focuses on community-based youth documentary media-making initiatives and work that centres girls'—especially racialized and marginalized girls'—lived experiences more broadly and their media-making activities more specifically. This research was motivated by the prevailing lack of diverse representation in key creative and leadership roles in media industries, my lived experiences as a female-identifying media professional, and the paucity of insights into the media education and media-making experiences of Canadian youth.

My inquiry was underpinned by feminist theory, public pedagogy, and feminist media. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, I designed and facilitated a virtual digital storytelling program in Spring 2021 of the pandemic; four ethnoracially-diverse and marginalized girl-identifying youth from Toronto participated in both the program and research study. Research methods included interviews, vlogs, participant-created media, observational footage, and researcher notes. Analysis involved immersing myself in each participant's data to holistically consider the creative, technical, and social dimensions of her video-storytelling; I also coded interviews and vlogs to identify themes that united the participants. Inspired by Lange's (2014) exploration of youth technical identities and Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1983) narrative portraiture methodology, I crafted a video-storytelling “persona” for each participant, weaving in her own words and media project images. Next, I note the broader significance of relationships and connection as well as video storytelling-specific peer and mentor support for participants. I then discuss their video-

making in relation to postfeminist-influenced and video-based social media ecologies and girls' informal, self-directed media education.

This research honours participants' stories and critically reflects upon the wide-ranging nature of their video-storytelling experiences and approaches. It also offers initial recommendations for girl-centered programs that emphasize community, support skills development, and provide safer spaces for their media-making and learning. I advocate for girl-specific media-making communities of practice—particularly for marginalized girls—as necessary interventions in evolving media industries and culture to more fully include, support, reflect, and represent diverse populations of girls and women and their stories.

Acknowledgements

My PhD experience has been indelibly marked by the guidance and care of a handful of incredible individuals. It has also been shaped by many others who have touched my life and work in more brief yet still significant ways. As a first-generation graduate student, I have often reflected upon how the opportunity to pursue this path—let alone complete it—would not have been possible without the gracious, collective support I received.

To my supervisor Dr. Jen Jenson: despite many shifts in both of our lives, I am indebted to you for committing to guiding me for the duration of my graduate studies. You've been an advocate, confidante, and voice of reason for seven years and counting, and I cannot sufficiently thank you for your patience and the space you have always made for my endless questions and musings as well as many moments of doubt. Your dedication to advancing the voices of women and women-focused issues in academia and in tech continues to deeply inspire and motivate my own work. To my committee members, Dr. Chloë Brushwood Rose and Dr. Natalia Balyasnikova: your guidance and care combined with our fruitful conversations have enriched my scholarship and have helped me to feel a sense of connection to a larger scholarly community. This has been especially invaluable during these past few years—thank you. To my examiners Dr. Cher Hill and Dr. Celia Haig Brown: I appreciate you engaging so deeply with my research. I continue to reflect on the exciting perspectives and dimensions that you have introduced and prompted me to consider. I thank the entire oral exam committee for the dynamic conversations that emerged and, despite us being physically apart, I could not have envisioned a more gratifying and validating conclusion to a challenging research and dissertation writing journey.

To my parents and sister: thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my passions and explore my curiosities about life and the world. Through each of you, I have learned how to set goals and work hard to achieve them, to be resilient, to live my life with integrity, and to always help others where I can along the way. Mom and Dad: I am forever grateful that you instilled such a love of learning in us. I could not have achieved this milestone without you and our deep conversations over the last few years, Mamusia. Thank you for your unwavering support and for investing so deeply in this experience with me. Inga: you have always been a phone call away and have a way of putting things into perspective that I value so much. To Mateo and Ella: you inspire the work I do in ways that I hope to show you as you both grow up.

Lisa: our friendship is the greatest of gifts. Your passion for educating and honouring children through media and the care you show the people in your life continue to inspire me. Thank you for reminding me of the bigger picture, my greater mission, and the parts of myself I don't always see or honour. Shereen: you're a kindred spirit. Through you, I'm reminded of the power of engaging authentically and sharing our truth with others, whether it's one-on-one or through the media we will ultimately make. Thank you for our many soul-nurturing chats and for being such an advocate of my work.

Dr. Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof: you have both inspired and supported my academic endeavours more than I can fully convey or truly thank you for. Dr. Jacqui Gingras: under your mentorship, I discovered a passion for teaching that significantly impacted the trajectory of my life in incredible ways. Tiffany: thank you for helping me learn how to care for my soul. Our conversations have both grounded and challenged me and how I came to connect with you is a testament to the magic of the universe. Dr. Cindy Carter: your warm messages have always arrived at moments when I needed them the most. Dr. Roy: thank you for your immense wisdom

and consistent guidance for so many years. Karen: you were a major support during an especially difficult time and always had such great insights to offer. Daniel: I am grateful for our discussions about the industry and life in general and to you for cheering me on over the years. Dr. Cristyne Hebert and Dr. Kate Tilleczeck: each of you has played an important role in how I approach my academic endeavours and I thank you for the support. There are so many other colleagues, especially in the ComCult program at Toronto Metropolitan University, the faculty of Education at York University, Branksome Hall, and those I've met at conferences, research sites, and other events along the way. Our encounters and interactions have all contributed to my learning and growth in some way. To the media industry colleagues I've had the privilege of connecting and working with over the years: through our shared experiences, I've developed a clearer sense of who I am as a storyteller and a renewed motivation for the kind of stories that I want to support and put out into the world. I also thank my new colleagues in the RTA School of Media at Toronto Metropolitan University for welcoming me into your dynamic community, and especially to Dr. Kathleen Pirrie Adams and Dr. Alex Bal for your mentorship as I undertook an exciting new chapter in my career while completing this dissertation.

To the wonderful participants and staff from the organization that made my dissertation research possible: thank you for supporting my goals and making the Spring of 2021 such a memorable and powerful experience. Finally, to the many artists and academics, and other inspirational women who have come before me and those who will come after, as well as anyone committed to feminist praxis and/or working towards a more equitable world: I am profoundly moved by how each effort, initiative, project, and story creates a ripple and move us in the direction of a world where every human—especially every child, irrespective of how they identify—feels seen, valued, and cared for. I offer this work as my way of contributing to this movement and I am both honoured and grateful to be in community with you.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures.....	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Why Me? – Personal Motivations and my Media Making (and Researching) Story	5
A (First-Generation) Canadian Girl and her Childhood Media Memories	6
Graduate School and Media Industry Reflections	11
Research Goals and Questions	14
Why Extracurricular-Situated Video Storytelling Programming for Tween and Teen Girls?..	15
Intervention Work and Addressing Inequities in the Canadian Media Industry	19
Conducting Research and Producing a Dissertation in Unprecedented Times: A Pandemic and Personal Note	22
Dissertation Overview	25
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework.....	31
Introduction: The “Project” of Feminism	31
Feminist Perspectives	32
Feminist Media	37
Public Pedagogy	39
Conclusion	42
Chapter Three: Literature Review – Part One: Youth Learning About and Making Media.....	43
Introduction.....	43
Media Education Curriculum	44
Community and Extracurricular Youth Media Programs.....	48
Participatory Video/Media and Digital Storytelling	49
The Documentary/Non-Fiction Media Genre	51
Learning about Media in Schools and Extra-curricular Programs: Canadian Perspectives and Considerations.....	54
Youth Digital Media Cultures and Informal Learning.....	57

Modes/Genres of Participation, Technical Identities and Mediated Dispositions	58
Digital Inequities and Connected Learning	63
Conclusion	67
Chapter Four: Literature Review – Part Two: Girls’ Studies, Girls’ Media Cultures, and Girls’ Media Making.....	69
Introduction.....	69
Girlhood/ Girls’ Studies	70
Girls’ Media Studies	75
Girls’ Media Making and Video Storytelling	79
Conclusion	85
Chapter Five: Research Study Design Context and Considerations.....	87
Introduction.....	87
Summary of Research Project	88
Evolving Recruitment and Research Design Plans: Pivoting in a Pandemic	88
Research/Field Site	92
Research Participants.....	93
Ethical Considerations.....	98
Program/Intervention Design	102
A Note about Video Making and Storytelling During a Pandemic.....	109
Chapter Six: Methodology, Data Collection/Generation, and Overview of Analysis Process.....	111
Introduction.....	111
A Qualitative, Multi-Methodology Approach.....	112
Data Collection/Generation Methods.....	114
Entrance Questionnaire.....	114
Vlogs/Video Diaries and Video Project Artifacts.....	116
Observational Footage (documentation of the research site, participants, and activities) and Researcher Reflections.....	117
The “Exit” Interview.....	118
Summary of Data Collected.....	120
Data Analysis part 1: Coding	120
Narrative Portraiture and Writing Feminist Research.....	123
Data Analysis part 2: A “Holistic” Approach and Crafting Video-storytelling “Personas” ...	125

A Note about Analyzing Multimedia Data	127
Chapter Seven: Alexia’s Story	130
Portrait	130
Video-Storytelling Persona.....	133
YouTube Influencer/Vlogger Culture Focused	133
Video Editing-Inclined.....	143
Sharing her Life and (Ethnoracial) Stories	145
Chapter Eight: Ziggy’s Story.....	153
Portrait	153
Video-Storytelling Persona.....	156
TikTok and Transitions-Centric Approach.....	156
From Social (Media) “Play” to Skills-Focused Solo Storytelling	163
Chapter Nine: Fernanda’s Story	172
Portrait	173
Video-Storytelling Persona.....	176
Performance-Focused Creator	176
A Visual “Eye” but Video Editing-Resistant.....	181
Chapter Ten: Jeannie’s Story	193
Portrait	193
Video-Storytelling Persona.....	196
Illustrator and Graphic Novel-Motivated Approach.....	196
Video Editing Enthusiast	203
Chapter Eleven: Discussion	212
Introduction.....	212
Uniting the Participants and Considering Common Themes.....	213
Significance of Relationships and a Sense of Connection in Girl-Specific Programs	213
The Significance of Peer and Adult Video-Making Support/Feedback	217
Girls’ Video Making and Learning in a Video-based Social Media Ecology	224
The Influence of Post-Feminism.....	225
Informal Learning, Public Pedagogy, and Video-Based Social Media	230

Meeting (Marginalized) Girls Where They Are: Considerations for Extracurricular Video Storytelling Programming.....	234
Program Environments, Programming Formats, and Social Capital.....	234
Mobile Technology and Video-Making Project Design.....	238
Additional Considerations for Marginalized and Racialized Girls’ Video Making	241
Chapter Twelve: Conclusion.....	248
Reflections on... Feminist media storytelling.....	250
Reflections on... Youth digital storytelling and healing amidst a pandemic	252
Reflections on... Amplifying Girls’ Media-Making Programs/Interventions and Research ..	256
Final Words: “Goodness” and Messages to the Participants	257
References.....	261
Appendix A: Participant “Entrance” Questionnaire	292
Appendix B: Instructions for Participant Vlogs	293
Appendix C: Exit Interview/Post-Video Storytelling Program Guiding Questions for Participants.....	294
Appendix D: Audio Poem Activity Instructions and Brainstorming/Writing Template ...	297

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Program agreements/etiquette Padlet document co-constructed with participants.	100
Figure 2:	Zoom screenshot from the first “informational” program session.	108
Figure 3:	Data Collection Methods, Sources, and Contributors	115
Figure 4:	A screenshot from the first clip of Alexia’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video showing her waking up and the title of the video.	135
Figure 5:	A screenshot showing an alarm clock from Alexia’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video.	136
Figure 6:	A screenshot from Alexia’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video that shows “who’s behind the camera.”	137
Figure 7:	Screenshot of a WeVideo stock footage clip that Alexia used in her “Where I Am From” video to illustrate where her parents come from.	148
Figure 8:	A family photo that Alexia includes in her “Where I Am From” video.	148
Figure 9:	A screenshot from the first clip and title of Alexia’s Profile Story video.	149
Figure 10:	A screenshot from Ziggy’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video where she shows her watch to the camera.	158
Figure 11:	Screenshots from a sequence of quick screen-based clips from Ziggy’s Silent Story/Day in my Life video that illustrate her day online.	159
Figure 12:	Screenshots from Ziggy’s plate-spinning transition in her Silent Story/Day In My Life video.	162
Figure 13:	B-Roll (still images) from Ziggy’s “Where I Am From” video that illustrate her heritage and beliefs and accompany her voice reading her poem.	167
Figure 14:	B-Roll (still images) from Ziggy’s “Where I Am From” video that illustrate her heritage and beliefs and accompany her voice reading her poem.	168
Figure 15:	Screenshots of the cupcake baking B-Roll Ziggy provides for her partner Jeannie to edit with for her Profile Story video.	170
Figure 16:	A screenshot from Fernanda’s Profile Story video showing her interview.	177
Figure 17:	Screenshots from Fernanda’s Profile Story video showing B-Roll of her performing with a group that accompanies her interview audio.	178

Figure 18:	Screenshots illustrating the variety of angles and elements Fernanda includes in her Silent Story/Day In My Life video.	183
Figure 19:	Screenshots from several ‘screen-focused’ sequences in Fernanda’s Silent Story/Day in my Life video.	184
Figure 20:	Screenshots of Fernanda’s dynamic and well composed (full-screen, landscape-oriented video footage) B-Roll for her Profile Story video.	187
Figure 21:	Screenshots of B-Roll (Tik-Tok-style) footage from Fernanda’s Profile Story video.	188
Figure 22:	Examples of still image B-Roll, captured in ‘portrait-orientation,’ in Fernanda’s Profile Story video.	189
Figure 23:	Screenshots from Jeannie’s text/graphics-based “teaser-trailer” video.	198
Figure 24:	Example of a B-Roll still image that Jeannie provides for her Profile Story video: an image that she created with digital illustration software.	200
Figure 25:	Screenshots of “raw footage” B-Roll that Jeannie provides for her Profile Story video: clips from a video of her drawing.	201
Figure 26:	Screenshot from Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video that scrolls through a fictional story that she is writing as it appears on her computer screen.	202
Figure 27:	A screenshot from the first clip of Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring a dimly-lit shot of her cat on her bed.	204
Figure 28:	A screenshot from Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring a locked-off close-up shot on a Nintendo Switch with Animal Crossing on it and a hand touching a button.	204
Figure 29:	A screenshot from the final part of Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring an animated title card that reads: “The End.”	205
Figure 30:	Screenshots of baking B-Roll that Ziggy provides for Jeannie and that Jeannie uses to edit Ziggy’s Profile Story video.	207

Chapter One: Introduction

At the heart of this research is the tween or teen girl¹ who is interested in media storytelling and who is also likely already making some form of media content. During this phase of her life, she is navigating developmental changes as well as discovering and negotiating her sense of identity, place in the world, and relationship to others. Like many generations of girls before her, media permeate her life and play a key role in her socialization, shaping her experiences and perspectives. Unlike previous generations, the roles of media in her life are far more complex in this digital and social media-saturated age where audiences have shifted from purely passive media consumers to more engaged media participants. It is also increasingly likely, as consumer mobile technology continues to evolve, that this tween or teen girl has access not only to a vast range of media to consume but also to the tools with which to create her own content. Yet, despite this unprecedented access to media content and technology, research that explores a girl's relationships with media and the meaning she makes of various content, formats, and platforms continues to be limited. Furthermore, insights into how she does (or does not) engage in digital media storytelling—including how she develops her creative and technical skills and encounters opportunities to be supported in the art and craft of video production— is practically non-existent.

Among the limited research that focus on youth relationships with and perspectives on media in Canadian contexts are studies conducted by André Caron and colleagues out of the Centre for Youth and Media Studies (Caron et al., 2012) as well as the Shaw Rocket Fund (2010,

¹ Throughout this dissertation, the term “girl” assumes a non-essentialist view of gender and rather acknowledges gender as performative and fluid beyond a male/female binary. Thus, girl encompasses any young person who identifies as cisgender, transitioning, transgender, or another gender diverse identity.

2015; Woodgate & Kleeman, 2021).² Their reports note that television content continues to be the dominant source of media for Canadian children and youth (ages 2-16), although listening to music and playing video games follow close behind (Media Technology Monitor, 2020). Broadly speaking, such studies have offered valuable insights into children and youth media audiences in relation to the professional production of children's and youth media content. Little if any attention has been paid to understanding amateur youth media production by and for Canadian youth. Further, scholarship concerned with young people and media—regardless of whether it is academic or industry-driven or whether it focuses on Global North or South contexts—has tended not to take gender identity into account.³ An exception is the Pew Internet Research Group's longitudinal research on young people in the U.S. and media trends where the analysis compares for gender as well as for race and other demographic variables (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Lenhart et al., 2015; Madden et al., 2013). One example of Pew's findings suggests that an American girl is more likely to engage with social media platforms that focus on visual storytelling such as Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and the now defunct Vine app than her male-identifying peer (Lenhart et al., 2015). In Canada, Media Technology Monitor has been gathering survey-based, statistical data on the media engagement of audiences under 18 in more recent years; a recent report indicates that Canadian girls aged 7-17 are more likely than boys to create their own social media content (Media Technology Monitor, 2021). However, quantitative, survey-based data offers limited perspective on the much larger and more nuanced story of young people's media relationships and experiences. This includes limited insight into

² As Chapter 4 will discuss in more detail, there is limited research on a global scale that focus on girls; I draw from Canadian data and scholarship where possible to contextualize the fieldwork that I undertook which is situated in Canada—Toronto more specifically.

³ See Chapter 4 for an expanded review of the literature.

how they came to take making their own media content and the supports—or lack thereof—they encountered along the way.

French philosopher and feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1989) drew attention to society's privileging of male perspectives, resulting in the "otherness" or marginalization of women, positioned as the "second sex." As the Patriarchy persists, it is unsurprising yet troubling to note the relative lack of research and scholarship that focuses on girls' experiences, let alone explores the experiences of diverse populations of girls. It has the detrimental effect of continuing to render girls as less important members of society. The lack of research and scholarship is further mirrored by the lack of attention paid to woman- and girl-centric stories in mainstream North American mass media programming (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2019; Women in View, 2019). Media's female underrepresentation is far from a new concern, yet US-based Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media remains relatively alone in its mission that centres around the societal impact of media portrayals of girls and women. The organization reports girls' increased motivation to pursue careers or activities in historically male-dominated fields after seeing female role models on screen taking up these careers or activities (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2018, 2019); it has also been at the forefront of research and advocacy around the lack of gender parity in mainstream film and television, with several Canadian-based organizations following suit to acknowledge a similar problem. Studies produced by these organizations note that women in leadership positions in the media can further motivate the production of more women-centric stories (Duopoly, 2017; Smith et al., 2014). Further, as is also the case with academic scholarship and research, media content that does not strive to thoroughly represent humanity's multitude of identities and experiences assists in maintaining prevailing narratives around dominant (read: White male) and marginalized (read: everyone else) members in society. It appears the tides are shifting with

increased conversation and advocacy in favour of a media landscape, both on screen and behind-the-scenes, that is more representative of diversity. Yet, there is still a long way to go in achieving any true semblance of equity.

Before proceeding, it is helpful to explain what I mean when I refer to *media*. Prominent Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964) defined media as technologies which mediate our communication and, through their forms and structures, affect how we perceive and understand the world. In this dissertation, media encompasses the technology (i.e., tools and devices such as televisions and smartphones to create and access content as well as platforms, such as scripted television drama series or TikTok posts) and the types of content that are broadcast by these tools, devices, applications, and platforms (i.e., genres such as sitcoms or short Instagram video stories). Where applicable, I delineate when I am specifically referring to media *technology/tools/platforms* or media *content*. To offer further context and definitions, the current media landscape is comprised of *broadcast*—also referred to as *conventional* or *legacy*—media such as television, film, radio, and print, all of which have migrated to digital platforms including streaming video services, and *new* or *participatory* media that emphasize the social (sharing, communicating, as well as creation) aspects of web-based platforms and mobile apps. The latter represent a shift from the traditional “top-down” and “one-to-many” model of production to a model of production that increasingly includes “bottom-up” and “user-generated” experiences.

An overall sense of the wider media ecology of this current moment and a consideration of the collective significance of the issues discussed in this chapter are what inspired this research study. This project aims to produce much-needed scholarship about the tween and teen girl and her particular interest in and engagement with video-based storytelling. It also responds to calls

from scholars to broaden the range of methodological approaches used to explore media-focused research on girls (Keller et al., 2015). In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss how this project is also motivated by my experiences and reflections as a woman, a television production professional with a career that spans close to two decades, and a feminist-oriented, interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersections of media, youth, and education. In the proceeding narrative-style section, I share and reflect upon a selection of significant childhood and adulthood experiences and how they have shaped both my media production journey and his current research. I then make a case for why I anchored this study around an extracurricular and girl-specific video storytelling program or intervention.^{4 5} I conclude the chapter by presenting my research questions and overarching research goals and outlining the organization of this dissertation.

Why Me? – Personal Motivations and my Media Making (and Researching) Story

Media storytellers can often point to pieces of art or media as well as artists or creators that have influenced their own work in some notable way. In some cases, encounters with a specific piece of art or media content may have sparked one's initial interest in pursuing a media storytelling path. In other cases, experiencing a particular piece of art or media content may have played a much larger role in shaping one's creative identity and practice. At various points in the

⁴ I alternate between the terms “program” and “intervention” in relation to the girls’ video-making sessions depending on the focus of my discussion: “intervention” points to the sessions with regards to the larger research project design and my feminist-oriented goals of exploring and seeking solutions to the issues driving this study. I use the term “program” when I am speaking specifically about the design/content of and experiences within the sessions themselves.

⁵ Sharing these insights in this first chapter reflects my effort, as a feminist researcher, to exercise reflexivity and to acknowledge that my positionality is central to shaping my research agenda. Positionality further comes into play with regards to how I engaged in research and approached analysis and present findings, to be discussed later on in this dissertation (Kirsch 1999; Peake 2017).

process of conducting my research and writing this dissertation, I found myself turning inwards and reflecting upon my own path. This reflection included identifying pivotal in my tween and teen years that I now recognize as having greatly contributed to the media storyteller I would ultimately become and the path my life would take. These moments, I reflected, were in part shaped by the dominant media at the time as well as what media I had access to in my home, school, and social environments. But I also considered how these moments were created and/or influenced by my socioeconomic status, ethnocultural heritage, and other identity markers. I now share some of my lived experiences and reflections for several reasons. First, they align with the spirit of feminist research, which includes acknowledging that the researcher is part of an ongoing movement of discovery and understanding (Kelly, Burton, and Regan, 1994).⁶ Second, my own story serves to further contextualize my curiosity about the topic of girls and video storytelling and my research approach, including how I present the stories of my research participants. Finally, it is my hope that sharing my selected “media memories” will help to illustrate my growing awareness of how my media storytelling path was not simply the product of my creative skills and determination as I had previously thought. In fact, a serendipitous combination of variables, circumstances, and individuals were responsible for setting the scene for a love of stories and later a video-based storytelling career.

A (First-Generation) Canadian Girl and her Childhood Media Memories

As a child, my mother read *to* and *with* me and my younger sister... a lot. It was common for her to pick up new children’s books during errand runs and I fondly remember many a cold Toronto winter Saturday spent browsing the aisles of the bookstore at the mall. Our numerous bookshelves at home were brimming with a mix of inspirational- and moral-type stories about

⁶ I offer a more detailed discussion of feminist research approaches in Chapters 4 and 5.

conquering adversity and striving to be a good human, fantastical European fairy tales, and factual or learning-based material and workbooks. Our family and home environment were rather unique as each of my parents had immigrated to Canada in early adulthood, had different cultural heritages, and spoke different first languages. Both my parents had also arrived in Canada with limited knowledge of and a concerted desire to learn English; as a result, we spoke English exclusively at home. My parents did their best to indulge my seemingly boundless curiosity as a child. In our home, print was privileged over any other type of media. And so, we read. It is not surprising that, as I entered the tween years, my preferred sources of media content were novels and the odd comic book. I became a voracious reader of mostly teen and adult fantasy and horror fare and would fill spiral-bound notebook upon notebook with hand-scrawled stories of my own, inspired by these genres.

As I navigated pre-adolescence in the early 1990s, I also read teen magazines and my TV-watching was almost exclusively comprised of children's educational content on TVO and CBC. The teen years were filled with American teen TV dramas and sitcoms. Growing up as a female-identifying teen in the 90s would take considerable space to unpack but briefly, it was a time marked by the hyper-objectification of teenage girls and women via fashion magazines, and the glamourization of rich, White, Southern California lifestyles and body ideals that morphed from waif-heroin-chic to Baywatch-bombshell seemingly overnight. I don't recall seeing girl characters in popular media that I could really identify with, though sometimes their stories reflected my experiences. And although I consumed a range of media content from childhood through to adolescence, I set my sights on becoming a novelist.

In Grade 7, I put my hands on a video camera for the first time: it was a consumer-grade VHS camcorder that my middle-of-the-road—socioeconomically-speaking—public middle

school had purchased. Although camcorders were also being marketed to families as a way of creating home movies at this time, I do not recall encountering camcorders in the homes of my friends who were mainly from working-class families. Whether public schools were widely buying this technology in these years, I can't be sure as many middle school memories are now fuzzy. I do remember first noticing these cameras within the mobile production studio set up in our middle school library, where students could participate in broadcasting school announcements. I was too intimidated to join this group. However, having video cameras in the school also meant that we could create video projects in our language arts classes. I recall working with a small group of classmates to conceptualize and produce a short parody commercial of an iconic Heinz ketchup commercial that both acknowledged and challenged the era's obsession with beautiful, White models.⁷ Soon after this assignment, I started borrowing the video camera after-school so that I could experiment with filming techniques and create video sequences for fun. Serendipitous access to video technology during these years sparked a new direction for my storytelling passion.

In high school, I was eager to further explore my creativity. I enjoyed traditional visual arts and music but found these classes challenging, in part stemming from limited previous opportunities to develop my skills in these areas. However, I found much joy in writing and media arts courses. Through various class assignments, I explored media content that resonated deeply with me. *Clueless* and *Thelma and Louise* were especially influential films: I remember being intrigued that the former was a rare example of a popular film directed by a woman and the latter featured two strong female leads and explored powerful themes around female

⁷ Our video spoofed this '90s Heinz ketchup commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6l2GUvBdWo>. This type of parody activity is still used in language arts classes and curriculum units focusing on media and media literacy, such as this lesson from the Media Smarts organization: https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/lesson-plan/Lesson_Marketing_to_Teens_Parody_Ads.pdf

independence and friendship, honouring one's truth, and pushing back against the system. There was no explicit discussion of feminism in any of my high-school classes and yet I found myself returning time and time again to examples of women-centric and female-driven films. I also discovered that my high school happened to have a space that was mostly frequented by male computer and technology "geek" and "nerd"-types and was always open late. My interest was in using the one computer in the school that had a *Video Toaster* editing system. Though I did not feel like a true member of this community, I was exhilarated by the creative storytelling opportunities afforded by the blossoming video technology at the time and spent many evenings there, editing various video projects. I press pause on my media memories here to reflect on the fact that, in all of my dabbling with video storytelling in middle school and high school, I don't recall having much in the way of mentorship or educator support where my directing and camera operation skills were concerned. Perhaps this contributed to my growing focus on and self-directed learning about creative writing? My high school was also renowned for its math and science programs, which meant all other subjects were not as robustly supported. My immigrant parents encouraged me to keep up with my writing but were also concerned that a career in media would be especially challenging for me without any "connections" in that industry or social, cultural, and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) more generally. All of these factors combined represented considerable obstacles for a video-production-interested girl. Yet, there is one more youth media memory that ultimately set me on a media production career trajectory despite these obstacles. In my second-last year of high school, I happened to be in the career counselling office and noticed a flyer for a multi-day experience run by CBC News Toronto where a small number of students would be invited into the program via an essay-writing competition. I applied and was among a small group of students across the city who were invited to the CBC studios to work with broadcast journalist mentors to produce a human-interest video

segment. What is strange is that I can neither remember the story that we produced and the VHS copy of the project has long since disappeared. What I can recall quite vividly is what the experience of working with a small, like-minded team had felt like: we were united by a common goal of capturing a true story and engaging with the perspectives of those impacted by it. It was also incredible to have my media storytelling potential recognized and supported by actual media professionals. It was exhilarating! The experience also saw two of my interests—writing and video-making—converge to reveal a potential career path in broadcast journalism. It inspired me to apply for a co-op placement at the Toronto-based multicultural TV station CFMT (now OMNI) where I subsequently gained incredible experience in all areas of production in what was a very nurturing, community-oriented environment. Soon after, I went on to successfully apply to a highly competitive media production undergraduate program which marked the beginning of the next chapter of my media storytelling journey.

Once again, it has been eye-opening to reflect upon these collective media memories and how they contributed to my pursuit of a career in media storytelling. Access to opportunities, learning, and equipment certainly all played a role. But I also found myself considering the ways in which I may *not have been* supported with my interest and the subsequent impact. For example, I'm struck by the strong interest and potential I demonstrated around directing and camera operating and video-editing early on in my life. It leads me to wonder if, in the absence of sufficient supports and guidance in these areas, I may have ended up “defaulting” to an aspect of media storytelling that I could nurture mostly on my own: creative writing. To be clear, I have had a fulfilling career and writing is still very much a core passion. However, it is interesting to consider, especially given the prevailing lack of women directors and cinematographer/camera operators in the media industry, why I might *not* have continued to explore such key creative and technical roles and skills. Reflecting upon my own story has further fuelled my curiosity about

the stories of the current generation of girls who take up video storytelling. I also wonder how many girls currently have the necessary access, opportunities, and supports to fully engage in video-making, including the technical aspects, and to grow as media storytellers.

Graduate School and Media Industry Reflections

It wasn't until graduate school that I began to examine my childhood as well as my adult life, the latter of which centred around a 17+ year career in media production. I put a temporary pause on this career and began an interdisciplinary Master's program in 2015 with a specific desire to look at new directions in children's media—a niche area I had specialized in that I had observed to be rapidly changing. Venturing down the self-reflection rabbit hole, I developed a sense for the first time of just what a climb I had been faced with to establish myself in my chosen field. Grad school also helped me to understand that I was a first-generation Canadian girl growing up without the requisite high socioeconomic status—and subsequent lack of social and cultural capital—that would have facilitated a far more certain and supported path to success in the media industry.⁸ *Nevertheless, she persisted.* Encountering research on the media industry's insidious and prevailing gender bias, as well as being formally introduced to feminist theory, represented a turning point. I began to look back at my roller-coaster of a career with a newfound awareness of the deeply broken institution fraught with inequity and myriad other issues that I had been navigating for many years. Feminist thought was not something I recall formally learning about, save for a women's lit course in undergrad circa 1999. Angela McRobbie's *The Aftermath of Feminism* (2009) helped me begin to unpack my resistance to being labelled a feminist for so many years, and how this is the result of the post-feminist

⁸ In graduate school, I encountered Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital (social, cultural, economic, and symbolic) for the first time. This scholarship, along with other key critical theory and concepts relating to media and society, helped me to reconcile my experiences navigating society more broadly and my professional field more specifically... and explain why the media industry was dominated by affluent White men.

discourse circulating in contemporary society. Also impactful were Laura Mulvey's (1975) essay positing that a male gaze is embedded in mainstream film aesthetics and Donna Allen and Dana Densmore's (1977) manifesto that called for a radical and feminist philosophy of communication that emphasized political equality, kindness, gentleness, and a respect for all.

What is most significant for me in this moment is that, after almost two decades navigating a problematic industry, I now have the critical and feminist theoretical tools with which to examine my experiences and the industry. My story as a woman-identifying freelance creator, producer, director, and writer in Canadian media suddenly feels simultaneously typical and atypical. I worked predominately in the children's and youth television production, and I now have a sense that part of the reason it took me many years to recognize the extent of the gender inequities in the industry is that I did not really see it: children's and youth programming seemed to have proportionately more women represented in contrast with general-audience TV production and the feature film industry. I perhaps also didn't have any explicit sense that my gender posed any barriers in those years, perhaps resulting from the fact that, by securing regular and meaningful work, I had "broken in" and achieved "success." Unfortunately, I encountered sexism and misogyny on an ongoing basis, which was generally overlooked as simply a part of the climate. I also recall that when I would try to indulge my curiosity around technical components of production, I would often receive push-back from male crew members about handling equipment and a resistance to or a flat-out ignoring of my questions. I further did not necessarily recognize how myself and other woman-identifying colleagues were contributing to the problem around the culture of the industry: feminist scholars opened my eyes to the ongoing "professional violence" that women commit against each other by subscribing to the belief that in order to get ahead, we must adopt what are considered to be male values such as suspicious, defensive, and competitive behaviour (hooks, 1984/2015). While I do not aim to diminish issues

around exclusion of BIPOC, queer, and other marginalized groups from the industry, as someone who identifies as a woman and has spent close to 20 years spent in this industry in key TV creative storytelling roles, I am especially attuned to issues pertaining to gender and women. Further, as a White cisgender woman, I have only experienced discrimination on the basis of my gender identity—in addition to my sociocultural status, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Finally, it is worth noting that I graduated from a university media production program in the early 2000s, as the industry was amidst a monumental transition from analogue to digital technology. I mention this because I had somehow assumed that, as technology was evolving and particularly as equipment was becoming far lighter and more user-friendly, the tides would naturally shift in terms of opportunities for women both behind and on screen. In actuality, being in the thick of production did not allow me to see the forest for the trees nor did it allow me to recognize how naïve this assumption was. The other epiphany borne out of my reflections relates to the slow drain of motivation and creative confidence I experienced in the latter half of my career, and how I had long-considered the vast majority of my career successes and failures to be indicative of how hard I worked and how creative/talented I was. I was entirely unaware of how many of my experiences and perspectives were and are the product of living in this period in time and impacted by neoliberalism and capitalism, and of the impact of gender inequity on society more broadly and on the roles of women in media more specifically. After almost two decades navigating an industry rife with misogyny and simultaneously striving to be a leader that people (read: mostly male crews) could get along with, I am both reassured and agitated by my deepening understanding of systems of oppression and how seemingly far we are from truly addressing them. I also now have a sense of how the overall culture of the media industry, which trickled down to day-to-day practices and norms, bumped up against my values. Yet, in spite of the challenges, my media-making path has been proudly marked by efforts, if often subtle, to

bring stories and perspectives representative of a diverse Canadian society, and highlighting the stories of girls and women, in the content I produced. That, however, is a topic for a different piece of writing and another time.

Research Goals and Questions

The overarching goal of this project is to bring the experiences of girls who engage in digital video storytelling and/or identify as video-makers to the forefront, through girl-focused and girl-engaged research.⁹ An additional goal involves exploring how extracurricular opportunities can be developed to effectively support diverse populations of girls in exploring media storytelling. This goal can be supported in part, I posit, through designing, facilitating, and reflecting upon pilot programs in order to call attention to and make a case for increased opportunities of this nature. In both instances, there is a case to be made for documenting the journeys of girls who express an interest in the art and craft of media storytelling, as well as considering what might be done to help them, which must involve working with and listening to girls. This serves the additional purpose of beginning to shape our understandings of where the obstacles and barriers lie, as well as where there is opportunity to reach and engage girls that represent a wider range of identities and communities.

This research project was guided by the following questions:

- What are the experiences of tween and teen girls who engage in video-making as an extracurricular interest?

⁹ I am heavily influenced by my own career and legacy of film and television production models whereby the art and craft of video storytelling follows certain conventions and involves a collaborative process. In my efforts to support girls' media making, I strive for a balance between acknowledging this industry model/process with the considerable influence of solo-creative "vlogger" or "influencer" culture and social sharing video-based platforms such as YouTube on young people's understandings of media storytelling (Terzopoulos, 2017).

- What approaches do they take to creating video-based content and what informs/influences their approach?

This feminist-informed, qualitative study utilizes an arts-based case study design, centred around the media-making stories and experiences of a small group of girls in Toronto who participated in a brief, virtual, and extracurricular video storytelling program. I designed and facilitated the program with a focus on the lives/true stories of tween and teen girls. I endeavoured to cultivate a participatory and inclusive space that supported participants' approaches to and interests in video-making and included opportunities for collaboration. As I've discussed, my motivations and goals for this research are heavily bound up in my lived experiences, the design and approach aligned with many of my core values and my desire to engage in work that strives for change.¹⁰

Why Extracurricular-Situated Video Storytelling Programming for Tween and Teen Girls?

My rationale for focusing on the experiences of tween and teen girls emerges from US-based psychologists' insights and Canadian government census data that note the significant developments girls experience in pre-adolescence through to their adolescent years. This research observes girls as experiencing a loss of connection to self and a loss of voice amidst an increased desire for connection and the importance of relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Damour, 2016; Deak, 2010, Gilligan, 1982). Related to this, research suggests that by Grade 6 girls in Canada demonstrate lower levels of self-confidence relative to boys; these levels

¹⁰ In the remainder of this chapter, I offer a brief rationale as to why I am focusing my efforts on fieldwork with pre-adolescent and adolescent girls, why this research involves an 'intervention' via creating and facilitating a video-making program, and why it was important to offer this intervention in an extracurricular setting. Chapter 3 will offer a more in-depth overview of the wider areas that situate this project as well as a review of the relevant literature that informed it.

continue to decline for girls over time, with only 18% of girls in Grade 10 reporting high levels of self-confidence and the most notable drop taking place between Grades 7 and 8 (Government of Canada, 2011).¹¹ A small number of program reviews by and about girl-focused organizations further support my rationale for facilitating a girl-specific and extracurricular program. The Canadian Women's Foundation, a public organization focused on empowering women and girls has run a grant program for girl-focused programming called the Girls' Fund since 2006. Its reporting on organizations that have received funding support has considered the relationship between girl-specific programs and girls' well-being including resiliency. The reports also noted evidence that such programs contribute to girls' development of confidence, critical thinking skills, and connectedness (2014; 2019). A report prepared by the Girls Action Foundation in 2015 reviewed eleven different girls-focused programs across Canada as well as related scholarly articles with similar findings. The report notes how such opportunities can support girls' development of strengths-based skills such as resilience, connectedness, critical thinking, and communication, which can in turn assist them in navigating life's challenges. In surveys and focus groups, girls in the US noted that girl-specific spaces enable conversations about issues that they might not necessarily talk about with boys present; girls feel more inclined to try out new activities, citing less worry about failing and reduced pressures around their appearance or actions, in girl-specific spaces (Girl Scout Research Institute, 2003). These issues may include discussion as to what determines girls' social position and how the media constructs messages (Girls Action Foundation, 2015; see also Currie et al., 2006; Lamb & Brown, 2007; Zurbriggen et al., 2007). Smaller, gender-specific groups can be ideal in allowing for a greater degree of trust

¹¹ I further discuss scholarship around girls' development and confidence in the literature review chapter.

and confidentiality, which contributes to girls' sense of safety (Girl Scout Research Institute, 2003; Williams & Ferber, 2008).

Programs and interventions focusing on girls' video-making bring additional considerations into the mix. As mentioned earlier, girls tend to gravitate towards visual forms of media creation (Lenhart et al., 2015; Media Technology Monitor, 2021). Research that examines technology and media making in school contexts suggests that opportunities and the quality of this education are hardly universal: there is no guarantee that girls will learn about video-making via curriculum.¹² Scholars have observed a gender bias at play in learning involving technology in co-educational settings, where boys generally dominate, and educators tend to encourage boys' use of technology. This research also notes that girls report struggles with confidence issues, including when boys challenge their technical expertise (Fisher & Jenson, 2017; Jenson et al., 2003; Jenson & de Castell, 2010; Margolis & Fisher, 2003). Filmmaking-specific activities from the school-aged years through to post-secondary education are fraught with the same bias, with scholars further noting the gendering of certain filmmaking roles and the "masculinization" of camera operator or director (Citron et al., 1978; Citron & Seiter, 1981; Kearney, 2006). As a result, girls are often relegated to organizational tasks in media production group projects in mixed-gender contexts (Buckingham, et al., 1995; Stack, 2009). Several decades ago, two female film production faculty members at Northwestern University reflected on their teaching experiences and noted:

three power hierarchies [that] affect women's situation in filmmaking classes: male dominance, whether from the teacher or other students; the teacher's position of authority

¹² See Chapter 3 for further discussion.

over the student; and the power of technology—knowledge about which has traditionally been accessible only to men. (Citron & Seiter, 1981, p. 61)

These scholars found some success in addressing this issue by creating same-sex groups in production labs. There is therefore a strong case to be made for creating media production spaces just for girls to “inspire teenage girls to explore the power behind the camera as early as middle school. By the time they are ready to navigate film departments and professional work environments, they will have acquired enough fluency in the language of the craft to gain credibility” (Sweeney, 2005, p. 38).

Further, scholarship looking at extracurricular youth media-making spaces and experiences notes how such programs are much-needed paths for youth content creation, that both reflect their interests and perspectives and support their technical, creative, and entrepreneurial skills development (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016; Chavez & Soep, 2010). Access to extracurricular, creative-focused programming for Canadian children and teens is virtually undocumented: a single report commissioned by People for Education notes that this type of programming can widely vary (Upitis, 2014). One scholar has pointed to the lack and urgent need of investment and cultural organization frameworks to effectively support youth arts-based programming in Canada (Campbell, 2013, 2019). Yet, there doesn’t appear to be any further evidence of efforts to map the various youth-focused video storytelling programs, let alone ones that specifically cater to girls, in this country. In my efforts to grasp an overall sense of what opportunities do exist, there appears to be a smattering of smaller programs, often run through non-profit arts-oriented organizations, which serve local communities, including a handful of

programs in the Greater Toronto Area.¹³ I also discovered that the CBC News workshop that I participated in during high-school only ran a few cycles before it was abruptly cancelled. A long-running youth-focused documentary filmmaking initiative offered by the Hot Docs organization met a similar fate and was cancelled due to funding issues a few years ago (L. Sparks, personal communication, August 30, 2019). Although students in Canada have provincially mandated media education, which can include video production experiences, there do not currently appear to be any long-running and wide-reaching community-based youth media production programs. These research findings introduce the rationale for girls-only, extracurricular spaces through which participants can be supported in exploring the art and craft of video storytelling critically, creatively, and collaboratively.¹⁴

Intervention Work and Addressing Inequities in the Canadian Media Industry

The secondary goal for this project is born out of a social justice agenda, emerging from and seeking solutions for the lack of diversity in the Canadian media and the paucity of women in key creative and decision-making. We are 15 or so years into era marked by a plethora of streaming platforms in what has been called a new golden age of content. This is due to the fact that social media tools have facilitated “bottom up” content production in a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) or networked culture (Castells, 2009) in addition to the legacy “top down” professional media industry model. Yet, despite an increase in platforms and tools with which to create content, and a commitment by various media organizations to improve representation on screen and behind-the-scenes, change would not seem to be occurring fast enough, if at all:

¹³ See the Youth Digital Media Ecologies in Canada database (last updated in 2017): <http://ydme.ca/toronto-list-of-organizations/index.html>

¹⁴ I further expand upon the function and value of extracurricular media production programming in Chapter 3. This includes a more robust discussion of community-based youth media programming and media-focused interventions.

research indicates that there are ongoing gender imbalances in key creative and decision-making roles in media (Lauzen, 2021; Women in View, 2019). Even after major film festivals signed a pledge to push for more visibility for female directors and transparency about gender parity efforts a few years ago, the Cannes film festival announced only 3 of the 18 feature films competing in the main competition in 2022 were directed by women (Eller, 2022). In Canada, people working behind-the-scenes continue to lag behind in terms of representing our country's diverse populations and their experiences, which points to the need for intersectional strategies (Women in View, 2021). I suggest that there is a dire need for first-hand insights in order to uncover and understand these various issues more deeply. This includes, as Alison Harvey (2019) calls attention to, the issues that are created by an emphasis on individualism and meritocracy in the creative and cultural industries. Harvey draws on the work of Rosalind Gill (2014) and Elissa Shevinsky (2015) to note how this focus can perpetuate deeper gender inequality "by shutting down the ability to speak about and engage in action to change these norms," and even result in women feeling as though they have no choice but to "lean out of" unhealthy environments (Harvey, 2019, p. 140).

Thus far, intervention efforts to address the lack of gender parity problem have focused on support for women entering into the industry or seeking to advance into more senior media positions. Although mapping all of such programs and incentives currently offered in Canada is beyond the scope of this project, women can be supported through training and mentorship programs and bursaries/internships, as well as incentives offered by National Film Board, Telefilm, and the Canada Media Fund (CMF) (Telefilm Canada, 2019; Women in View, 2019). The CMF, for example, has made it a requirement for broadcasters to hire a requisite number of women in key creative positions, offer job placement incentives for women directors, and increase the number of projects led by women (Women in View, 2019). However, considering

examples from my own story, as well as insights from the previous section, there is a case to be made for earlier interventions in support of girls' media production and video storytelling interests (Kearney 2008; Sweeney, 2005). These types of programs can encourage more girl-identifying youth to get involved in video storytelling in the first place, whether it is cultivating an interest as a middle-schooler, entering a media production program at the post-secondary level, or even potentially focusing entirely on cultivating her skills and creating content independently. This is what drives my interest in intervention-type work, including the video storytelling program central to this research study, and further informs my desire to reflect on future directions in both research and intervention work of this nature. At the same time, it is important to note that I do not suggest such programs can directly address all the systemic inequities in media production roles and programs or create equitable access to arts-based programming. However, I hold the belief that creating opportunities and communities through which girls can develop strong storytelling skills and explore media storytelling paths will contribute, even if only by a ripple, in strengthening a sense of community and support networks for girl and women media storytellers, and potentially amplify their (media) voices.

I look at the current user-generated media content landscape with a critical eye but also with a sense of hope: after all, these are communication tools and storytelling formats that my generation and generations of girls and women before me did not have such easy access to. Certainly, I do not wish to suggest that I take a purely celebratory view of social media. However, having reviewed the research on media education curriculum (when it includes production) and engaging in this work with youth myself, I am motivated by the opportunities now available for anyone to create on their own terms, and for content to reach other like-

minded/identifying folk with whom it resonates.¹⁵ I also witness an opportunity for budding media storytellers to experiment and cultivate their storytelling skills in an invaluable, low-stakes way (especially if they can choose whom they share it with), especially when contrasted to the layers of bureaucracy and often seemingly endless cooks-in-the-kitchen involved in any professional media program. These observations and musings further fuel my motivations to undertake research in this area. I wish to conclude this section with a few excerpts from a *manifesta* for feminist media criticism by Mary Celeste Kearney (2012), whose work has motivated and informed my own path considerably:

Because we understand the power of media as tools for documenting lives, expressing creativity, exploring identity, and building community, and we want all people to have equal access to those tools and those powers.

Because we are committed to supporting feminist, queer, and anti-racist media producers and know that doing so is integral to changing our society for the better.

Because so many girls, parents, and teachers the world over don't see media production as a worthwhile profession for women, and males continue to dominate both production programs and the media industries at all levels.¹⁶

Conducting Research and Producing a Dissertation in Unprecedented Times: A Pandemic and Personal Note

The experiences of conducting this research and writing this dissertation have been immeasurably impacted by the CoVid-19 pandemic. Throughout this process, I've developed an

¹⁵ See Chapter 3 for further discussion regarding how children and youth can learn about media.

¹⁶ See the full *manifesta* at <https://blog.commart.wisc.edu/2012/12/11/feminist-media-criticism-is-part-2/>

overarching sense of how the pandemic—as well as myriad other developments, shifts, and tensions in my own life—have shaped this work. I have also long been intrigued by the affective/emotional and relational aspects of our lived experiences as well as how these dimensions influence the projects we produce. This prompts me to offer some brief, additional context.

I defended my dissertation research proposal in 2019, after more than five years as a full-time graduate student and a major life shift where I temporarily stepped away from a media career to pursue a Master's and PhD consecutively. One of the ongoing challenges of entering into academia after a lengthy professional career has been reconciling my established identity and confidence as a media storyteller with my emerging academic identity and the learning curve of new scholarly pursuits. My academic identity has also centred around a desire to conduct interdisciplinary and practice-based research. Given my interest in both media and education, I found myself necessarily tasked with orienting myself in these two distinct areas as well as looking for points where they intersect. Although both of my graduate degrees are interdisciplinary, the doctoral program is situated in a faculty of education. My coursework, as well as research and TA-ships, certainly shaped my thinking and how I entered into this research. Yet, I found myself “defaulting” at times along the way to media theory and practice. This is perhaps to be expected, given that this area aligns more closely with the professional field I had spent close to two decades in and that felt most familiar.

Given previous professional and research experiences, I was also aware of the labour-intensive nature of practice-based research. The added context of the emerging pandemic rendered this type of research next to impossible; I consistently struggled to reconcile my academic goals and the abrupt shift of my everyday life with the magnitude of this

unprecedented health crisis and suffering of so many around the world.¹⁷ I will discuss this research stage in more detail in a later chapter, however, the loss of momentum due to many constraints had a definite impact on my morale. It also made finally securing participants and engaging with them even more gratifying. Making this study happen was a tumultuous and emotional experience.

More recently, after completing my fieldwork for this research, I was fortunate to begin a tenure-track professorial position in media production. I subsequently found myself focusing more and more on media theory and a media studies lens and they wove their way into all aspects of my scholarly life. Planning curriculum and interacting with students and faculty also added a new dimension to how I was thinking about my research, including how I ultimately approached my data analysis and the focus of my discussion. It further played a role in my desire to honour the stories of the participants and how I present them. Additionally, I found that I was increasingly reflecting upon the journeys of young video-makers and how to better support them. This advocacy piece was a part of my initial research goals but grew in significance as I continued to encounter evidence of inequities and lack of diverse representation in the media industry.

It has been perplexing to consider how this dissertation is an artifact of an unprecedented time. It has been further perplexing to recognize how the work, including aspects such as how it is structured and written, reflect a challenging journey to conduct research under exceptional circumstances and my own evolving thinking and experiences during this time. Whether viewed

¹⁷ The term “unprecedented” felt like the defining adjective for the pandemic as it was popping up in media reporting constantly.

as a benefit or a consequence, this is a significant added dimension and layer of story coexists and intermingles with the main story that this dissertation tells.

Land Acknowledgement

“The truth about stories is that’s all we are.”

- Thomas King

This research project was conducted virtually with both the participants and the researcher situated in the area known as Tkaronto. This place where I live and call my home is colonized land and the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Seneca, and the Huron-Wendat peoples. The nature of my research topic has prompted me to reflect on how Indigenous peoples were the first storytellers of this land, preserving and passing on their culture and beliefs for generations through oral storytelling. Stories, regardless of the medium through which they are told, hold immense power. As Indigenous author Thomas King (2003) notes, stories shape how we see and understand ourselves and our world. I ask you to consider, as I have throughout the process of producing this research, who in our society is granted the privilege (and the platform) to tell their stories and who is not. The participants in this study represent members of society whose stories are relatively ignored: as young people, as girl-identifying folks, and as racialized individuals. I acknowledge their contributions and appreciate them for sharing their stories with me and allowing me to share their stories in this dissertation.

Dissertation Overview

This chapter has provided both the context and significance of my research project, including how my own experiences have motivated the focus and approach to this topic. I have further outlined the importance of examining the experiences of girls interested and engaged in

video making as well as the particular relevance of extracurricular, girls-only, and documentary storytelling-focused programming or interventions. Unfortunately, insights into the experiences of girl-identifying video storytellers are incredibly limited, as is information on what programs are available to support them, let alone who these programs actually reach. This sets up why I have focused this research on a brief video-making program/intervention that I designed and offered to a small group of girl-identifying participants in Toronto, Canada.

In the next chapter, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of this research: first and foremost, my research is informed by the wider project of feminism and further considers key ideas associated with post-structuralist, Science and Technologies Studies/post-humanist and intersectional feminist perspectives. Concurrently, it acknowledges the overall influence of post-feminism on contemporary feminist scholarship, including research that focuses on girls' lives and their relationships with media. I also note the influence of feminist media/feminist media pedagogy and public pedagogy on my work. These perspectives and the key ideas emerging from them informed the overall focus, approach, and design of my research, including my approach to presenting and discussing findings.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this study, Chapters 3 and 4 focus on reviewing relevant literature in the areas of media studies, education/pedagogy, and girls' studies/girlhood studies. In Chapter 3, I present an overview of key theory and concepts pertaining to media education. I begin by discussing media education in school-based contexts, tracing the evolution of media literacy curriculum and scholarship, and highlighting key developments around critical literacy and making media. Next, I discuss extracurricular programs as a source of media education for youth, noting the particular relevance of the documentary media genre and the concepts of participatory video and digital storytelling for both youth-engaged media-making

and research. I then turn to scholarship that focuses on informal youth digital (learning) cultures. I note how research in this area aims to better understand youth media-making practices with an eye on how these practices can inform more relevant and equitable curricula and support for young people's development of requisite literacies in a digital age. In this section, I introduce several ideas that directly inspired and supported my research: a consideration of young people's technical identities and mediated dispositions (Lange, 2014), genres/modes of participation (Ito et al., 2009), and the tenets of a connected learning framework (Ito et al., 2012). Finally, I contextualize media education and media-making experiences in relation to opportunities for tweens and teen girls living in Canada. I note the pressing need for research that maps such opportunities and that examines inequities surrounding accessibility and participation in curriculum-based and extracurricular media-making programs. This discussion supports the secondary aim of my research: to reflect on how to better support and advocate for more girls' video storytelling opportunities, including in Toronto.

Chapter 4 turns its attention to girls. I begin with a general overview of the scholarship within the domain of girlhood/girls' studies and note key areas of focus and developments, including the move to trouble normative conceptions of girlhood. This section introduces several concepts and concerns that are also taken up in scholarship focused on girls' media studies/cultures and research that hones in on girls' media making and video storytelling. I present my review of girlhood/girls' studies, girls' media studies/cultures, and girls and video-making as three separate sections to emphasize the relative "newness" of girlhood studies as a scholarly area and to draw attention to the considerably limited scholarship on my specific research topic. The chapter also highlights scholars who call for broadening the range of research methods used in girls' media studies, the importance of engaging girls as research collaborators, and the need for research that explores girls "making stuff." I also note the paucity scholarship

that focuses on marginalized populations and discuss examples of emerging research on Black girlhoods and other racialized groups and that applies intersectional approaches to research and analysis about girl-specific topics. As I did in Chapter 3, I then turn to consider research in Canadian contexts, which is relatively non-existent. I conclude the chapter by underscoring the need for research that focuses on girls' media-making and research *with* and not just *about* girls. I suggest that uncovering complex, nuanced, and situated insights will not only bring inequities to light, but will lay the groundwork for advocacy efforts, including much-needed media-making programs and opportunities specifically for tween and teen girls.

Chapter 5 focuses on the design of the study. I begin by noting that this research centered around a brief, girl-specific, extracurricular video storytelling program/intervention that ran virtually over four weeks in Spring, 2021. I then share insights into how the emerging pandemic impacted the research design—including a necessary shift to a virtual context—and new considerations and challenges I encountered with regards to recruitment and designing the program. of the emerging pandemic on this process. I proceed to outline the research site and research participants: a Toronto-based non-profit organization focusing on girls' empowerment and four girl-identifying youth, ranging in age from 11-17, all of whom were members of marginalized and/or racialized groups. Next, I reflect on my positionality in relation to the marginalized tween and teen research participants and segue into a discussion of ethical considerations specific to working with youth populations. Finally, I describe the overall design of the video storytelling program/intervention—including adaptations I made to support working with racialized and marginalized youth—as well as give an overview of the media-making activities we explored. I conclude the chapter with a note that considers the role of video making and storytelling during a pandemic.

In Chapter 6, I focus on my research methodology and discuss the approaches I took to collect/generate and analyze the data. I discuss why I opted to apply a qualitative case study methodology, supported by arts-based research methodology. Next, I provide an overview of as well as rationale for the data collection/generation methods I used; this included participant- and researcher-generated as well as multimodal data sources. After summarizing the data that I collected, I move into a discussion of my initial data analysis approach which involved coding interviews and vlogs and looking for common themes and points of departure amongst the participants. This process proved useful in supporting my secondary research goal but prompted me to evolve my approach to better address my primary research goal and research questions around better understanding and communicating participants' video-storytelling journeys. In an effort to chronicle and be transparent about my journey as a researcher, I note how encountering narrative portraiture methodology helped to inform an additional approach to reviewing the data and also inspired how I planned to present my research findings. I describe how this new process focused on reviewing each participant's collective data and crafting a "video-storytelling persona," inspired by several concepts and pieces of scholarship around youth digital cultures, including Lange's (2014) notions of technical identity and mediated dispositions. The personas are based on two-to-three key themes that I gleaned from each participant's data; each one aims to encapsulate her video-making experiences and approaches—in the specific context of our time together and the data that I collected/generated—and explores her creative and technical skills and specific aspects of video-storytelling interest as well as what informs or inspires both her process and the content that she makes. I conclude this chapter by noting that I will also engage in a discussion that brings all participants' data and experiences together in Chapter 11.

Chapters 7-10 report on the data by describing the video-making experiences and approaches of each of the four research participants. Each chapter begins with a brief biography

and overall summary of the participant's experience in the program—her “portrait,” followed by her “video-storytelling persona,” and concludes with a “snapshot” summary. In a narrative style, I weave in excerpts of her data and perspectives along with screenshots from her various media creations. Returning to the secondary goal of this study around designing and advocating for girl-focused video-making programs, Chapter 11 brings the participants together by way of several notable themes across their data. It explores their collective experience in relation to key ideas emerging from feminist theory, principles of feminist media, public pedagogy, and scholarship at the intersection of youth media cultures and learning. It further considers the broader media environment or ecology for this current generation of tweens and teens and reflects on how programs can be designed to support diverse populations of girls.

The final chapter offers additional reflections on feminist video-making for girls as well as on role of digital storytelling for youth in the context of the pandemic. It also emphasizes the case for girl-specific media-making programs/interventions as well as research that focuses on and centres girls' experiences. In the spirit of hope during this incredibly complicated and difficult time in our history, I conclude the dissertation with individual messages to each of the four participants.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Introduction: The “Project” of Feminism

This is an inherently feminist research project. I set out with the overarching goal of challenging a male-dominated view of media culture via girl-specific, extracurricular video-making programming. In so doing, I join a small group of scholars who have focused on girls and video-making and have utilized ethnographic research methods (Bloustien, 2003; Brushwood Rose, 2009; Dahya & King, 2018; Jackson, 2018; Kearney, 2006, 2018; Lange, 2014; McPherson, 2019). My work represents a concerted effort to not only emphasize the stories and experiences of girls who are engaging in video storytelling but to reflect upon how to design and deliver opportunities for diverse populations. Such opportunities can support girls in cultivating their media storytelling confidence and style/approach within a supportive community. I begin this chapter by defining feminism. I describe how I took up this work in response to calls from feminist scholars to acknowledge the undervalued contributions and perspectives of women in relation to the historical privileging of male thought and experiences or “androcentric bias” (Hesse-Biber, 2012), with an emphasis on transformative practice and activism (hooks, 1994). I then discuss key ideas put forth by post-structuralist, science and technology studies (“STS”)/post-humanist, and intersectional feminists that are particularly relevant to a research project that straddles media, education, and girl’s studies, and involves a media-making intervention for and research with girl-identifying participants from marginalized communities. I also discuss the overall influence of post-feminist perspectives on contemporary research about girls. I further draw from research and key ideas in the areas of feminist media and feminist media pedagogies. Finally, given the extracurricular-based learning format of the program, its media-making focus, and the fact that I was working with girls in a technology and media saturated age, I discuss how public pedagogy informs this work.

Feminist Perspectives

Feminism is a movement that resists and aims to eliminate sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. As an emerging feminist scholar and researcher, it is important that I begin by acknowledging that feminist theory is actually comprised of many different perspectives, each branch having defining foci and points of congruence with as well as of points of departure from other branches. Scholars have further noted the challenges of engaging in feminist work, in part because of prevailing debates regarding theory, forms of activism, and the movement's relationship to sexuality, class, race, and colonialism (Lumby, 2013). This prompts me to provide an overview of some of the key ideas brought forth by feminist scholars that are important to acknowledge given the nature of my research topic, whilst also acknowledging that what I offer in this chapter is far from an exhaustive examination. This section further aims to orient both myself and the current generation of tween and teen girls I research here in relation to the wider project of feminism: Engaging in feminist research and working with girls demands an awareness of the “murky brew of feminism, anti-feminism and postfeminism” that marks this moment in history (Jackson, 2018, p. 33).

As Angela McRobbie (2009) explains, post-feminism is necessary to acknowledge popular culture's undoing of feminism “while simultaneously appearing to be engaging in a well-informed and even well-intended response to feminism” (p. 11). Popular feminism emerged during the first wave of feminism in the 60s and 70s through the circulation and commodification of predominately White-centric concerns in popular culture (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Additionally, Cynthia Carter, Linda Steiner, and Lisa McLaughlin (2014) point to how evidence of the overall progress towards gender equality and public shifts in perceptions around gender roles in the Global North contributes to a sense of, as McRobbie (2009) puts it, feminism

as having been “taken into account” and no longer needed. In their consideration of postfeminism in the context of field of gender and organization studies, Patricia Lewis, Yvonne Benschop, and Ruth Simpson draw on ideas presented by Rosalind Gill (2007), Stephanie Genz and Benjamin Brabon (2009), and Lewis (2014), and note that postfeminism:

signals three significant moves within feminism: first a shift away from a concentration on equality to a consideration of difference manifest in an active engagement with multiplicity, heterogeneity and variety. Second, there is a change in how ‘woman’ as the subject of feminism is conceptualised and third, there is an ability to contemplate feminism’s location in relation to other political and philosophical movements focused on change. In ‘post-ing’ postfeminism by aligning it with other ‘posts’, this version of postfeminism presents itself as a type of feminist perspective which connects with existing feminist approaches. (Lewis et al., 2017, p. 214)

In framing this discussion with regards to the girl participants with whom I engage in my research, it is important to note that contemporary popular feminism represents a further commodification of the movement that involves placing the onus on the individual as responsible for her own happy life and success exemplified by the “girl power” motto (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg, 2020) and arguably the “girl boss” persona as well. This perspective stands in stark opposition to Sara Ahmed’s (2010) notion of the “feminist killjoy” represented by an emerging postfeminism. Further, contemporary feminist scholarship has shifted away from structuralism’s use of binary, hierarchical oppositions to understand products and towards critical, poststructural analysis that examines both the product and the complex systems (and accompanying biases) involved in its creation, including power dynamics, and notions of language, discourse, identity, and the self (Gill, 2007; Rottenberg, 2014). Although not all feminist scholars consider

themselves to be post-structuralists, it has been argued that they are united by a commitment to a move away from “universalizing and homogenizing accounts of how power, sex, and gender operate” (Lumby, 2013, p. 603); this is a key idea advanced by Judith Butler (1990). Post-structuralist feminist scholars consider notions of identity and the self as well as power dynamics, often drawing from Foucault’s (1979) notion of power as negotiated rather than fixed, subject to myriad variables, and always constituted through and embedded in forms of knowledge or discourse (Burman, 2017; Lumby, 2013).

As this project involves girls’ use of technological tools to create videos, contributions from feminist STS and posthuman scholars are also relevant. Predating the birth of digital media, Donna Haraway developed the notion of situated knowledge, and proposed that “the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a resource, never finally as a slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of ‘objective’ knowledge” (1988, p. 592). Leah Lievrouw (2006) points to the social shaping of technology and the role of “human choices and action in technological change” as opposed to taking the view that technology is “politically and ethically neutral, an independent force with its own inevitable logic and motives, or as a mysterious black box that cannot be analysed socially” (p. 248). The works of Haraway and of Judy Wajcman also demonstrate how technology is gendered and how gender and technology shape one another (Haraway, 2006; Wajcman, 1991, 2007). Wajcman (1991, 2007) further argues that technology consists of cultural products that are historically constituted by certain types of knowledge, social practices, and other forms of representations. Technologies, Wajcman posits, are designed as intrinsically gendered as a result of the choices, values, and priorities of the individuals involved in creating them, and therefore reflect a male bias. Scholars have shown how gender is mediated by a given platform’s software architecture (De Ridder, 2013), which can be demonstrated by something as seemingly

innocuous as a drop-down choice menu to indicate one's gender and having "male" set as the default option (Stanfill, 2014). As Grosz notes, feminist scholars who research technology should remain "critical of an apparently phallic drive to plug things, make connections, link with things" (1993, p. 167). Scholars also note how gender bias is evident in mixed-gender technology-focused curricular and extracurricular settings (Fisher & Jenson, 2017; Jenson et al., 2003; Jenson & de Castell, 2010), including examples of girls stepping back to allow boys to lead while they instead are relegated to organizational tasks (Buckingham et al., 1995; Stack, 2009). My own career experiences echo scholarship that points to how key creative roles like director or camera operator or director are masculinized and dominated by men (Citron et al., 1978; Kearney, 2006).

Intersectionality is an important consideration for a contemporary feminist researcher and even more so when engaging with racialized and/or marginalized populations of girls and/or women. In response to the emphasis on White, middle-class women's views in earlier "waves" of feminism, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 2011) coined the term to draw attention to the complicated intersections that influence a person's experiencing of institutional discrimination. By viewing race and gender as parallel and not intersecting, Crenshaw (1989) posits that we can only have a partial perspective and particularly for those who face multiple layers of marginalization, such as women of colour: "If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them" (p. 149). Additionally, she notes that intersectionality is important in that it complicates not only our understandings of women's experiences but also our ability to discern causes and work towards solutions. Intersectionality highlights how contemporary feminist movements have been built around the issues of White, middle-class women and can neither account for nor represent the

diverse range of experiences and practices of women of colour. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) explains that:

[t]he fluidity that accompanies intersectionality does not mean that groups themselves disappear, to be replaced instead by decontextualized, unique individuals whose personal complexity makes group-based identities and politics that emerge from group constructions impossible. Instead, the fluidity of boundaries operates as a new lens that potentially deepens understanding of how the actual mechanisms of institutional power can change dramatically even while they reproduce long-standing group inequalities of race, class, and gender. (p. 68)

Fluidity also describes how one engages in this type of feminist inquiry. Kathy Davis (2008) notes that intersectionality does not operate as a “normative straitjacket” with a fixed set of protocols, but rather, through its ambiguity, offers much to guide an “innovative, explorative, and accountable feminist research practice” (p. 79). Intersectionality assists scholarship in moving beyond individual or group experiences and towards examining how structures of domination intersect, such as racism and heteropatriarchy (Molina-Guzman & Cacho, 2011). Put another way, intersectionality is “a theoretical lens that problematizes identification as emerging from multiple axes of categorization that coexist and co-construct identity” (Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2013, p. 633). Postcolonial feminist scholars also consider intersectionality and recognize that a single category of woman cannot encompass the entire diversity of women’s experiences (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 1990; McClintock, 1995; Mohanty, 1988).

I proceed with these ideas and perspectives in mind, while at the same time keeping in mind bell hooks’ (2015) caution with regards to dividing feminism through a focus on difference: hooks notes that this can break up the “sisterhood” and risks diminishing any

collective strength of a “female consciousness,” which would ultimately result in strengthening the larger oppressive structure that supports the Patriarchy.

Feminist Media

This research project considers not only the processes of girls’ video-making and how they learn and develop their approaches and skills, but also the products they create. It also focuses on an intervention-style media-making experience for girls, with an eye on advocacy around advancing girls in media production. As such, my inquiry and the design of the video-making sessions, including facilitation approach, are influenced by myriad feminist media studies scholars, several of whom engage in work that unites pedagogy with media studies. Feminist media scholars have been influenced by cultural studies as well as post-structuralism in the last two decades (Lotz, 2001). As Alison Harvey (2019) notes, like traditional media studies critique, feminist media critique can focus one or more of the following: analysis of media texts, exploration of the people and cultures of media production, and action-oriented interventions in and through the media. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a feminist lens assumes that “our social realities are shaped by our experiences and contexts within an unequal system of power based on gender and other axes of oppression” (p. 34). Feminist approaches to media studies are influenced by critical race theory and queer theory as well as “postcolonial critique and poststructural theories of identity, wherein gender and other subject positions are understood to be contingent on social norms and cultural institutions in specific contexts” (p. 33).

Lauren Berliner and Ron Krabill’s edited volume *Feminist Interventions in Participatory Media* (2018) is a significant piece of scholarship that intersects media and pedagogy: it explores how feminist pedagogical approaches can be applied to participatory media activities. The editors discuss the evolution of media towards more participatory technology and platforms. This

parallels the broader goal of feminist media pedagogies to decentre traditional media production practices, which are the product of privileging certain voices and operating within structures/institutions shaped by hierarchies and driven by a neoliberal agenda. They further posit that participatory media as an approach has been consistently useful in “disrupting notions of a singular expertise in media power, an explicitly feminist concern” (p. 5). In this volume, Kathleen Woodward’s (2018) chapter analyzes three female-driven digital media in order to highlight that they are all animated by several key feminist principals and goals: 1) pursuit of social justice; 2) theoretical commitment to intersectionality; 3) dedication to reciprocal rather than non-hierarchical relationships in teaching, scholarship, and the arts; and 4) creation of spaces for multivocal, dialogical expressions that are heard by others. She suggests that face-to-face interaction to generate intimacy and a “low-tech” nature are also key components. Feminist pedagogy, she writes, considers embodiment, both on the individual and the social levels, as well as emotions and feelings as sources of understanding as well as strength. This connects with her discussion of a collaborative, multigenerational artistic Women Who Rock project, where she uses the concept of *convivencia*, or “affective spirit of community,” to describe the spirit of “binding women to each other through the co-creative, intellectual, pedagogical and social spaces” (2015, p.78). Aligning with many of these ideas is jesikah maria ross’s (2018) chapter exploring how feminist pedagogy can be woven into design thinking (DT) in community public radio storytelling projects, to highlight “learning from lived experience, embracing multiple perspectives, group process, distributed knowledge, reciprocity,” and to create a more meaningful experience for all participants (p. 50).

My project finds much in the way of common framing and goals with the above projects. Additionally, through working with girls living in a participatory culture and engaging with social media, it aligns with feminist media pedagogies’ rejection of success on the basis of likes

or re-tweets, and instead “centers on the impact of media on the world that it wishes to change, for the better” (Eaton, 2010, as cited in Berliner & Krabill, 2018, p. 7). Situated in an extracurricular context that is voluntary and focused on a common interest in video making, my project is further motivated by Berliner and Krabill’s belief that participatory media initiatives are most effective when they engage with “localized or small-scale publics, wherein communities of practice can develop distributed forms of mentoring and knowledge-sharing” (p. 6). This bears resemblance to Low, Brushwood Rose, and Salvio’s (2017) exploration of community media pedagogies via participatory media and their discussion of the counterhegemonic potential of the notion of the “commons” as a “framework for reimagining public education by strengthening the capacities of communities and their ties to schooling rather than emphasizing the belief in individual achievement fostered by capitalism” (p.10).

Public Pedagogy

This project specifically and intentionally focuses on a girls’ video storytelling and making intervention in an extracurricular context and is interested in how girls learn and approach media making. Part of exploring participants’ experiences with media making, as well as their media-making personas and skillsets and how they develop them, involves a consideration of both what they already knew about regarding media storytelling as well as the learning they experienced through the program. As such, there was an inherent pedagogical dimension to this work. “Pedagogy refers to the cultural-specific ways of organizing formal teaching and learning in institutions including schools” (Luke, 1996, p. 132); from this definition, public pedagogy can be understood as evolving out of educational and curriculum studies, and into the “spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning” that lie outside of the aforementioned, formalized contexts (Sandlin et al., 2010). In 1979, Postman called attention to the struggle between the “first

curriculum” of the mass media and the “second curriculum” of schools, and by the turn of the 21st century, children’s culture scholars were claiming that corporate produced children’s culture had replaced classroom instruction as “the producer of the central curriculum of childhood” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004, p. 11). Scholars increasingly acknowledge that “schools are not the sole sites of teaching, learning, or curricula,” nor are they necessarily always the most influential (Sandlin et al., 2010, p. 2) and especially in a network society (Castells, 2000). Public pedagogy is influenced by both curriculum theory and cultural studies, and, in the latter case, scholarship that draws from Antonio Gramsci (1971) who called for analysis that considers how the pedagogical aspects of public and popular culture either reproduce or challenge hegemonic structures (Gramsci, et. al., 1971; Sandlin et al., 2010). Henry Giroux (2004) is often credited with advancing critical and counterhegemonic explorations of popular culture through a view of pedagogy as “not simply about the social construction of knowledge, values, and experiences; it is also a performative practice embodied in the lived interactions among educators, audiences, texts, and institutional formations” (p. 61).

Public pedagogy scholars have examined sites of learning which include mass media and popular culture such as television (Giroux, 2000; Wright, 2010), museums, galleries, the Internet and social media, and even parks (Giroux, 2004; Kincheloe, 2002; Sandlin et al., 2008). Public pedagogy, as Sandlin et al. (2010) argue, is especially relevant as the ground of contemporary education shifts at a time when the lines between private and public spheres become increasingly blurred. Indeed, the pedagogical impact of media technology and content has long been a consideration for scholars working at the intersections of media studies and education.

Connections between public pedagogy and feminist scholarship are evident as well. Carmen Luke (1994, 1996) is attributed with making the earliest references to public pedagogy

in North American scholarship through her efforts to present everyday life as comprised of pedagogical activities. As part of the broader feminist project of recognizing the sociohistorical contributions of women, Luke's edited volume *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life* (1996) included chapters that included scholarship on women's friendships and parenting, and which also addressed how gendered identities are constructed and circulated through various everyday sites and activities of life, and how individuals negotiate these identities. Around the same time, several curriculum theorists such as Jeanne Brady (2006) and Audrey Dentith (1999) who engaged with public pedagogy noted that they were operating within a feminist politics that they described as a "curricular practice oriented toward subverting dominant ideologies" (Sandlin et al., 2011). Focusing on discourses circulated by the media, Dentith and Brady (1999) suggested that media could also help produce collective identities for women and other marginalized groups oriented toward social justice activism. These ideas align with the tenets of a feminist pedagogy that emphasizes empowerment, community, and leadership (Shrewsbury, 1997) and aims to "construct pedagogical encounters characterized by cooperation, sharing, nurturing, giving voice to the silenced" (Luke, 1996, p. 6). Among their recommendations for future directions in public pedagogy scholarship, Sandlin and colleagues note a need for researchers to "situate themselves within the tenuous border spaces between understanding and overwriting the individuals and events with whom or with which they produce meaning" through feminist, critical, postcolonial, queer, and literary frames (p. 362).

Embarking upon research with girls in this current moment, exploring their relationships with and approaches to making media, and framing both the research project and girls' media-making program as "interventions" can all be said to align with the goals and concerns of public pedagogy and especially with feminist perspectives and goals. Further, my inquiry takes pedagogical considerations of digital and social media into account, including how participants'

learning about media making is inextricably linked to the increased prevalence of media in their lives, their consumption of content, use of technological tools, and in some cases their seeking out learning resources on digital platforms to further their interest.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the overarching feminist and public pedagogy framing of my research. I discussed key developments, ideas, and areas of concern emerging from post-feminist, intersectional feminist, post-structuralist, and STS/post-humanist feminist scholarship that are particularly relevant to a contemporary, fieldwork-based study that aims to centre the experiences of its girl-identifying participants. I also considered how girl-specific media-making programs or interventions can contribute to change (i.e., broader shifts towards more girls and women taking up media storytelling). With the goal of understanding girls' media-making experiences prior to and through the intervention and research study, as well as how they learn about and engage in video-based storytelling, I also discussed how this work intersects media studies and education studies and draws from feminist perspectives of media studies and feminist media pedagogy. I then presented an overview of public pedagogy, calling attention to synergies with feminist thought, and the significance of media as a site of socialization and learning for contemporary youth. The proceeding chapter is the first of two that focus on reviewing relevant literature that situates my research project.

Chapter Three: Literature Review – Part One: Youth Learning About and Making Media

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the key discussions and notable concepts that pertain to young people and media education. I organize the discussion around the three main ways in which young people can learn about—which may or may not include opportunities to make—media: in-school/curriculum-based contexts, extracurricular and community-based contexts, and informal contexts. The in-school context discussion focuses on the evolution of media education. The section that discusses community-based media-making programs for youth includes reference to the particular relevance of the documentary or non-fiction genre for youth content production. I also note points of congruence with research methods and practices known as participatory media and digital storytelling. Moving into scholarship that examines media engagement in informal contexts, I explore significant conversations and ideas to have emerged from the early years of social media, onwards. As my project is concerned with how girls explore digital video storytelling and their media-making identities and skills, I note applicable concepts emerging from scholars who research at the intersection of youth culture, learning, and digital media, including technical identities (Lange, 2014) and modes or genres of participation (Ito et al., 2009/2019). This includes the prevailing issue of digital inequities around technology and scholarship that presents possible ways forward, including the development of a connected learning framework (Ito et al., 2012). Before concluding this chapter, I contextualize youth media education and media-making experiences in relation to a young person living in Canada more broadly, or Toronto more specifically. I conclude the chapter by noting the overall dearth of research into the media-making lives of tweens and teens, including Canadian-specific contexts. I further note the problem of having virtually no data around young people's

experiences of learning, either formally or informally, about the creative and technical aspects of media production, which hinders any effort to proceed with strategies to increase opportunities.

Media Education Curriculum

School-aged children are increasingly accessing information digitally, and potentially creating and sharing content on social media platforms, which continues to fuel curriculum development and research around media education as well as information/digital/ media literacy skills development. This has resulted in the integration of media education or media literacy into school curricula in countries around the world, including Canada.

Media education or media literacy curriculum emerged out of the tradition of effects-based research in media studies, which itself developed out of conversations in the early years of broadcast media, especially television, around the impact of media on society. A foundational text that defined early media education is Len Masterman's "Teaching the Media" (1985), which took on a "protectionist" approach, as Masterman refers to the mass media as a disease with real potential to "corrupt" audiences, especially children. In the 1980s there was a worldwide movement, albeit mainly outside of the United States, towards media education, including efforts shepherded by the British Film Institute and UNESCO (Kubey, 2003). A White paper prepared by the German Commission for UNESCO in 1982 had a visibly protectionist undertone, expressing concern that children's television viewing hours were exceeding the time they spend in school, while also calling for a need to equip students with a "critical understanding of the phenomena of communication" by focusing on literacy through the symbolic systems of images, words, and sounds (as cited in Kubey, p. 352). Canada, a country looked to as a leader in the development and adoption of media education, introduced media education into secondary schools in the 1980s and 1990s via a curriculum that drew considerably from Masterman's work

(Pungente, 1989). Broadly speaking, media education or media literacy curriculum has traditionally focused on three points of analysis: production, textual or material form, and audience (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012).

In the years that followed and as the media became more a presence in society, scholars began to advocate for a media *education* rather than a media *panic* approach and to strive for a balance between protectionist and more celebratory stances around empowerment and innovation (Buckingham 2003, 2019; Buckingham & Strandgaard Jensen, 2012; Share, 2009). However, media education continues to be oriented predominately around teaching students how to analyze or deconstruct media texts to reveal how their messages are constructed, information is represented, and content is shaped to suit audiences (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Share, 2009). In response to the critical turn in media studies and educational spheres, scholars have made a case for a critical media literacy (Buckingham, 2003, 2008; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Kellner & Share, 2005, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008) that considers the roles of ideology, power, and pleasure, through examining “the production, institutions and political economy that motivate and structure the media industries as corporate profit-seeking businesses” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 65). There has also been a growing push to incorporate production and making activities into media literacy education (Jenkins, 2006; Share, 2009) with scholars suggesting that media literacy develops through the process of making or “encoding” in addition to analyzing or “decoding” (Hall, 1980/2012). As part of critical media literacy curriculum, content can be analyzed to reveal dominant norms and assumptions, which can then prompt students to challenge these norms and assumptions (Kellner & Share, 2007). Proponents of critical media literacy point to the potential, particularly with the emergence of new media technologies, for students to create alternative media messages. Drawing from Paolo Freire’s (1996/2000) liberation pedagogy, Share (2009) notes that “as students create their own media, they have the

opportunity to disrupt adult authorial power and position themselves as the creators of new media messages in their own voices and from their own perspectives” (p. 24).

Meanwhile, the lines between consumption and production continue to blur with evolving technologies and platforms in a digital and social-networking-driven era. Scholars from both the educational and media studies realms have examined these shifts, as well as the shifting role of audiences—especially those comprised of young people—from passive consumers to active creators. Henry Jenkins (2006, 2009), building from his scholarship focusing on fan cultures, coined the terms “convergence culture” and “participatory culture” to describe shifting societal relationships with media and the evolution of technology. Lankshear and Knobel (2010) have also argued that for adolescents there is no longer a clear distinction between their media consumption and production, referencing Axel Bruns’ (2007) term “produser” which is a melding of the *producer* with the *user*. Amidst conversations around the evolving role of education in the early years of social media, Jenkins and a team of scholars prepared a White paper entitled *Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century* in 2009. The paper takes the position that media education must not be positioned as optional—a perspective shared by children’s culture and education scholar David Buckingham (2019) in *The Media Education Manifesto*. Jenkins et al. make a case for how media education will not only prepare young people for adult life and careers but can support their current engagement with digital and social media platforms, and guide them towards critical, ethical, and responsible participation in public life; this would include supporting young people in viewing themselves as cultural producers. Their work is informed by earlier work from the New London Group around a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Briefly, this pedagogy advocates for the expansion of the traditional scope of literacy to include digital tools (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kress, 2010), and to evolve how composition is taught so that it no longer becomes solely about the message itself but about the

ability to “sift through a range of different possible modes of expression and determine which is most effective in reaching their audience and communicating their message, and to grasp which techniques work best in conveying information through this channel” (Kress, 2003, as cited in Jenkins, 2009, p. 47). The New London Group further posited that the aim of pedagogy should be to “develop an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities” (Cazen et al., 1996, p. 72). In their framework, Jenkins and colleagues suggest that media education should begin with core or traditional literacy skills, which focus on reading and writing of print-based texts, while including support for students’ technical, research, and critical analysis skills. Additionally, they propose a list of key social skills or cultural competencies that will support young people in a participatory culture: play, simulation, performance, appropriation, multi-tasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, and negotiation (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 259).

As per the literature discussed thus far, it would appear that the prevailing function of media creation in media education/media literacy curricula continues to be to support students’ understanding of how media operate and communicate, as opposed to encouraging creative exploration while cultivating production and storytelling skills. Meanwhile, it is virtually impossible for curricula to keep pace with a rapidly evolving society and our shifting media engagement practices. More recent scholarship suggests that whereas delineating between production and consumption practices may have been appropriate in a pre-digital age, media education curriculum should evolve to be more relevant and reflective of youth practices, where “digital participation often involves simultaneous consumption, production and sharing of content, and is performative, improvisational, social, emotional and interactional” (Dezuanni, 2018, p. 237). Further, media literacy and media arts education have traditionally reflected

distinct curriculum strands. Whereas the former, as discussed, emphasizes socially conscious analysis and/or alternative media production, the latter focuses on vocational skills training and creative yet individualistic self-expression (Kellner, 1998; Share, 2009). This is indeed the case in Canadian schools.

Community and Extracurricular Youth Media Programs

Community-based youth media production programs can be said to unite the historically divergent foci of media arts education and media literacy education by combining creative and vocational skills training with self-expression and collaborative production. There is often an emphasis placed on documentary/true life storytelling, which aligns with alternative and community-based media models (Atton, 2002; Kozolanka et al., 2012) that strive for democratic communication (Williams, 1980) through engaging community members in producing knowledge relevant to their own lives (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009; Karlsson, 2001; Marquez-Zenkov, 2007). The United States has a strong legacy in this space, demonstrated by prominent, comparatively well-funded, and long-running programs such as Youth Radio, the Educational Video Center, and PBS Student Reporting Labs, which are further supported by a considerable body of scholarship. This scholarship highlights how such spaces provide an important supplement to curriculum around digital learning and can have transformative potential for youth participants and marginalized populations in particular, who might not otherwise have access to such opportunities to learn (Chavez & Soep, 2005; Fleetwood, 2005; Goodman, 2003, 2008). Youth media facilitators speak of this type of program's potential to function as an "intergenerational learning tool linked to social justice pedagogies" (Chavez & Soep, 2005, p. 410) and how media production offers a place for youth voices that are often ignored by the mainstream media, while promoting authorial and entrepreneurial practices for youth participants (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016; Chavez & Soep, 2005). Scholarship further explores how

involvement with these types of programs shape educational possibilities and become “conduits and means of connection between both people and the social situations they contend with” (Vasudevan & Riina-Ferrie, 2019, p. 1570). Afterschool clubs led by interested educators and sometimes supported by researcher-practitioners are also important; researchers emphasize that often the additional labour and materials they bring into these spaces play a significant role in the running of these resource-heavy programs (Dahya & King, 2018; Jenson et al., 2014). The body of literature that looks at US-based youth media programs not only offers important research insights but provides the added benefit of amplifying the work of these organizations. For the purposes of this study, I am able to draw from this US-based scholarship as well as my professional media background to frame and design both the study and the media-making program/intervention.

Participatory Video/Media and Digital Storytelling

The aforementioned programs engage with participatory video/media processes. These terms are often used to describe media production for individual, group, and community education and development and especially for marginalized populations, including youth (Low et al., 2017). Parallels have been drawn between participatory video/media and video activism, community-access television and school-based vocational media programs (Milne et al., 2012; Low et al., 2012). For the most part, these types of programs align with Freire’s (1968/2018) critical pedagogies in their efforts to liberate oppressed communities. Scholars have traced the legacy of participatory video, noting the significance of a 1967 Canadian filmmaking project in which participants were engaged in “horizontal dialogue” through recording interviews. This came to be known as the “Fogo Process” in honour of the study’s location of Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada (Crocker, 2003; Low et al., 2012). The project informed the now

established research methodology often utilized in community-based participatory research projects.¹⁸

An approach related to participatory video, and often included under the broader umbrella of participatory media, is “digital storytelling.” Technically, the term can refer to any type of digital media-based storytelling, however in academic and community-based contexts it most often connects with a specific model/process of video narrative developed by the Story Center organization (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009; Lambert, 2013). Like participatory video, digital storytelling includes skills training around media production for participants. Whereas a participatory video process has tended towards an experience involving community members and researchers working alongside each other to produce a collaborative project, the digital storytelling model involves group-oriented story workshopping and skills training but appears to focus on a mainly independent production process where individual participants work on their own stories. There is also a commonly-utilized format for digital stories created through the program: a short (several minutes long) first-person video story that is a type of slideshow of still and/or moving images along with the participant’s voice-over/narration and a music soundtrack (Lambert, 2012). Although this can be considered a very introductory and highly formulaic model for video storytelling, simplifying and streamlining the media production process allows such programs to be taken up in a wide variety of contexts that do not require facilitation by individuals with an extensive media production background, nor access to sophisticated, professional equipment. Furthermore, as demonstrated by examples of projects created in such programs, participants are able to explore a wide range of themes and creative approaches within

¹⁸ Although this research project does not fully utilize a participatory video methodology, nor is this literature review concerned with research design, it is worth noting how the origins and focus of this methodology align with and/or compliment the format/design/goals of community-based media programs, including striving for “real, positive change in the communities or with the subjects being studied” (Low et al., 2012, p. 53).

these parameters. The experience offers participants an opportunity to explore their creativity and express themselves, among other perceived benefits (Burgess, 2006).

Finally, with the advent of smartphone and tablet technology, a form of digital storytelling or participatory video mobile filmmaking has emerged which is sometimes referred to as *cellphilms*—a term coined by Johnathan Dockney and Keyan Tomaselli in 2009. Because of the relative familiarity youth have with mobile technology and platforms, cellphilms represent a growing area of youth-centred media production interventions (Altenberg et al., 2018; Berry & Schleser, 2014; Burkholder, 2016; Watson et al., 2016). Despite its relevance and significance, research that examines this type of programming in Canadian contexts is limited. As Bronwyn Low, Paula Salvio and Chloë Brushwood Rose note, all of whom research and practice in this area, literature tends towards program evaluation reports. They call for more scholarship to better understand the teaching and learning that happens in these contexts, and a “need for more theoretically informed analyses of what participatory media projects allow people to express, understand, and do differently than with previous communication and storytelling media” (Low et al., 2017, p. 2).

The Documentary/Non-Fiction Media Genre

Participatory video/media, digital storytelling, and even cellphilms tend to focus on the documentary or non-fiction genre. Examples include the aforementioned Fogo Island project, which is often referenced as a key project in the development of the documentary filmmaking genre. It involved a series of short films created in collaboration with residents to tell stories about the ten isolated communities on the Island (Corneil, 2012). Similarly, the StoryCenter digital storytelling model represents a simplified or pared down process (and product) that focuses on telling true stories and exploring issues. With regards to the significance of this type

of storytelling for youth, it is useful to look to scholarship that focuses on participatory and visual research methods in youth-focused research. These research methods frame young people as active participants and knowledge producers in their social worlds, asking them to document and communicate their lives and perspectives through different forms of media, which can include video (Porter et al., 2020; Prosser & Burke, 2008; Stack, 2009). What is further relevant to this current discussion is how research tools that focus on the visual are especially helpful in exploring perspectives from diverse populations of youth, as they can be more accessible than approaches that require access to traditional (written and even oral) literacies (Carter & Ford 2013; Gubrium et al., 2015; Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012; Low et al., 2012; Mitchell & Sommer 2016; Theron et al., 2010). These methods further shift video technology away from being “an extension of adult gaze” towards creating and conveying “what children want to communicate in the manner they wish to communicate” (Prosser & Burke, 2008, p. 412). There are myriad terms that refer to participant-centered research methods that use digital media storytelling and often in youth-specific contexts, including: participatory filmmaking (Blum-Ross, 2013; Lunch & Lunch 2006; Shaw & Robertson, 1997; White, 2003), collaborative documentary (Coffman, 2009), co-creative media (Spurgeon, 2013, 2015), collaborative media making (Vasudevan & Riina-Ferrie, 2019), and community-based media (Low et al., 2017). At their core, all of these approaches involve engaging participants in media-based storytelling on topics of significance to their lives and scaffolding their learning/supporting training as needed to utilize these tools and communicate their ideas more effectively.

A specific focus on the documentary genre adds another layer of significance to this research. It is not purely coincidence or convenience that drives a focus on non-fiction/documentary storytelling in youth media-making programs: among other findings, scholars have noted how these programs offer opportunities to produce knowledge relevant to

participants' own lives (Karlsson, 2001; Kress, 2010; Luke, 2003; Marquez-Zenkov, 2007). This aligns with research that points to how children's and youth media content, more broadly speaking, aims to reflect the unique experiences of young people who are 'othered' in relation to adults (Campbell, 2013; Jenkins, 1998). Factual or non-fiction programming serves an additional function in positioning young people as important and participating members of society. This type of content offers youth a voice as well as opportunities to participate in conversations about civic and social issues (Carter, 2007; Carter & Messenger Davies, 2010; Nikken & Walma van der Molen, 2007).

Drawing from my own professional training and production experiences, documentary or non-fiction storytelling is an ideal genre to focus on when introducing tweens and teens to the art and craft of media storytelling. I suggest that, comparatively speaking, fictional storytelling necessarily involves many more considerations and components. Without extensive scripts, actors, set design, costumes, and rehearsals (and so on), the emphasis is instead placed on the most important element, which is a strong story. Furthermore, the various stages of planning/pre-production, production, and post-production/editing are streamlined and simplified. What is most likely lost in the individual-focused digital storytelling model is what I would argue to be some of the real magic of media production, and of the art of documentary storytelling specifically, which is a sense of collaborative improvisation. Scholars have noted the wide-ranging learning that comes from collaborative documentary filmmaking projects (Blum-Ross, 2013) which I have similarly experienced through professional projects that have involved youth participants. To elaborate on this a bit further, I have worked with hundreds of children and youth participants/interviewees/subjects over years of producing and directing within the very specific niche of youth documentary-style content. In the majority of cases, we were comprised of a small team of adults who were there to produce a story rather than teach youth participants about

media production. Nevertheless, it was intuitive and relatively easy for me to encourage and support a participant's curiosities and contributions pertaining to the content and process within our intimate, small-team, and field (as opposed to studio-based) production context. Upon reflection, these types of scenarios facilitate a unique experience of collaboration and allow for a modicum of improvisation, in a way that huge studio-based productions involving massive production teams, sets, approved scripts and plans, actors, major recording set-ups, etc. simply cannot. Although I've worked in both environments, there is a flow state (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990) that I've often encountered in these smaller, documentary-style contexts. It is an exhilarating experience that I sometimes wish I could ensure every potential young filmmaker experiences early on in their exploration of this art and craft. While it is important to note that these were professional contexts and my observations and perceptions of youth participants' experiences with documentary components appear to echo what youth media program facilitators and scholars describe in their experiences with documentary storytelling in community contexts.

Learning about Media in Schools and Extra-curricular Programs: Canadian Perspectives and Considerations

I wish to briefly contextualize the media education and video-making discussion thus far in relation to a tween or teen girl living in Toronto, which arguably can mirror the experiences and context of a girl living elsewhere in this country. In Canada, curriculum is provincially-mandated and the importance of media literacy is reflected in mandated strands in Language Arts at both the primary and secondary school level. What this means is that there is an expectation that a student will have myriad encounters with media education as a young child or tween, which may include some opportunities to make their own content. Media education in this country continues to focus on interpreting, deciphering, and understanding media content (and systems). Despite this, although scholarship points to the increasingly blurred lines between media consumption

and creation, grade school and middle school students are not guaranteed experiences around the art and craft of media storytelling, including through video. Curriculum in Ontario has also seen the introduction of media and digital literacy considerations in many subjects, including health and physical education. This might lead one to assume that young people will have sufficient opportunities to learn about media and develop necessary literacies. In reality, students' experiences with in-class activities focused on media production (as part of media literacy or integrated into other curriculum strands) can vary greatly. This is because these experiences are contingent upon school-based access to technology, in addition to teachers' broad-ranging interests in and confidence around using and teaching about technology. Both of these variables have considerable impact on media making in school contexts (Hebert et al., 2019; Jenson et al., 2014; Kopcha, 2012).

Once she enters high school, a teen or tween can opt to enroll in media arts or communications technology courses with the assumption that they will encounter technologically-confident and experienced teachers. Given that Canadian children and youth are actively participating in digital media cultures at earlier and earlier ages, it would seem as though secondary school might be a rather late stage to introduce a young person to formal media production education and experiences. I posit that without a thorough and supported introduction to creative media-making processes in their tween years, many young people may not develop the confidence or curiosity in these areas, and subsequently not even consider let alone actually enroll in media arts classes in secondary school. However, there is no data or research currently available that examines the demographics of Canadian high school students enrolled in media arts and communications technology courses, or their previous experiences that support their interest in media storytelling. Although this is beyond the scope of my study, this gap warrants consideration, especially in better understanding how to support a more diverse media

storytelling landscape in this country.

As demonstrated through the literature presented thus far, community-based youth media production programs can offer significant, impactful, and unique learning experiences for youth participants. In Canada, there are locally-based non-profit organizations that offer media-based programming for youth with a number of programs established in recent years that focus on providing opportunities for marginalized communities. It is worth noting that there does not currently appear to be a comparable Canadian organization that focuses on providing girl-specific and feminist-focused programming akin to Seattle-based Reel Grrls. As mentioned in the introduction, there also does not appear to be any data available on Canadian youth enrollment in media-making-specific programming, or on how many communities have access to such programs. As a result, it is not possible to get a sense of how, where, and why Canadian children and teens take up video storytelling as a dedicated interest, what their experiences are like, and where the barriers and inequities exist, such as access for different communities and populations, as well as the quality of programming. There is therefore a need to develop research in this area in order to address how to better reach and support future generations of the media storytellers who represent the diverse communities that comprise this country.

In spite of the demonstrated value and significance of documentary/non-fiction content that captures the diverse, real-life experiences and interests of tween and teens, there has been a continued decline in the production of this type of content from the 1990s onwards (Caron et al., 2009; Shaw Rocket Fund, 2010). This is in spite of Canada's legacy of producing children-specific media content with the overarching aim of presenting stories intended to speak to and represent children's lives and interests. This has included news and documentary, as well as other informational and educational programs, which have predominately fallen within the

domain of public media broadcasters who are mandated to represent the perspectives of a diverse Canadian society (Carter, 2007; Government of Canada, 1991). Only very recently have TVOntario and CBC begun to produce current affairs-style content *for*, but notably not truly *with*, children again, and are endeavouring to meet them on digital platforms (Writers Guild of Canada, 2012). Former president and CEO of the CBC Herbert Lacroix acknowledges that an entire generation of Canadians have no relationship with or connection to the national public broadcaster, which in part has motivated new efforts to produce youth news content (H. Lacroix, personal communication, December 6, 2016). These are positive developments to be sure and highlight a rekindled effort to present true stories with, for, and about Canadian youth populations. Yet there is still a case to be made for focusing on supporting youth-generated content, rather than adult-generated content for youth, in order to contribute to a more robust and diverse media storytelling content landscape for youth audiences.

Youth Digital Media Cultures and Informal Learning

Regardless of whether or not a tween or teen living in Toronto or elsewhere around the world enrolls in a media-making program and receives formal and/or more structured experience and instruction, they can and most likely are making some form of media, including communicating stories through video, either independently or with peers. School and community-based programs remain for the most part the only way to get experience with professional grade equipment and software. However, rapidly-advancing consumer technology and digital and social media platforms from the 2000s onwards have opened up the realm of digital media storytelling for youth. New media represent digital, interactive, hypertextual, virtual, networked, and simulated media technology and platforms as part of a participatory culture. As a result, scholars working at the intersection of media and/or cultural studies and education have sought not only to explore new media cultures in terms of how youth participate

and engage with them, but also to consider how research into these cultures can translate into approaches to education about and with technology that is more relevant to their current lives and future paths. This included a series of studies around youth, learning, and digital culture funded by the MacArthur Foundation in the US, launched in 2006. It aimed to better understand the shifts happening for young people's learning, socializing, and participation in civic life. Henry Jenkins and colleagues' focus on media education, discussed earlier in this chapter, was part of this initiative, as was Patricia Lange's (2014) look at youth participation on YouTube, and Mizuko Ito and colleagues' "Digital Youth," a multi-year empirical and ethnographic study which explored emerging youth media practices via social, technical, and cultural patterns.

Modes/Genres of Participation, Technical Identities and Mediated Dispositions

Stemming from their study, Ito et al.'s *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* (2009/2019) focuses on youth engagement with new media in what Jenkins (2006) has referred to as a participatory media culture and Ito (2009/2019) has described with regards to "hypersociality." They proposed three categories to situate different levels of engagement with new media as a whole: "hanging out," which describes activities and spaces where youth gather mainly to socialize; "messaging around," which involves the use of digital technologies to "engage in self-directed exploration and creation;" and "geeking out," which describe activities that are more structured and focused on digital skill development (Horst et al., 2019, p. 32). They also noted a distinction between friendship-driven and interest-driven genres of participation, the former including activities that allow youth to connect with friends on MySpace and online messaging, and the latter focusing more on "mobilizing and geeking out in fandoms, gaming, and online creative communities" (Ito & Horst, 2019, p. xvi). The research team opted to employ what they called a genre analysis approach that expanded existing media ecology frameworks that have tended towards producing "taxonomies of media engagement that generally are

structured by the type of media platform, frequency of media use, or structural categories such as gender, age, or socioeconomic status” (Horst et al., 2019, p. 36). Instead, a genre analysis approach considers the “varying levels of technology- and media-related expertise, interest, and motivation” of different youth at different times (p. 36). Their analysis also shifted the focus towards modes of participation with media rather than categories of individuals, took the view of social, cultural, and media engagement as interrelated and interdependent categories, and assumed that individuals have evolving or fluid media identities that are context and situation dependent. Furthermore, Ito and colleagues note that to understand such forms of group practice and identity, studies should take an individual’s media engagement into account alongside a consideration of the properties of the social and cultural groups within which they belong.

In a chapter of the aforementioned book, Patricia Lange and Mimi Ito (2008/2019) present case studies of youth creative production which include digital music, online social network page creation, and videomaking. Their discussion draws from the work of Marsha Kinder, Anne Haas Dyson and Ellen Seiter, who highlighted the “socially embedded and relational dimensions of creative production” (p. 248). Across examples of what they describe as commonplace or everyday media production and that which approaches more dedicated and technically-skilled endeavours, they indicate how both in-school and extracurricular programming can serve as catalysts for youth to develop both skills and identities as media producers and when engaging in more complex forms of creative media storytelling. At the same time, they note that it remains difficult to define the boundary between *casual* and *serious* media production:

Although friendship-driven and hanging out genres of participation are generally associated with more casual forms of media creation, they can transition quickly to messing around and geeking out. Conversely, the relationships that youth foster in interest-

driven creative production can become a source of new friendship and collegiality that is an alternative to the kinds of friendships and status regimes that youth must inhabit at school. (p. 290)

Ito and colleagues (2019) also draw from sociocultural as well as psychological perspectives to understand how youth develop interests and actively continue to pursue them and posit that an interest is deepened via an internal developmental process as well as an external one involving relational, cultural, and practical connections. They reference Flavio Azevedo's (2011, 2013) view of interest development occurring via an interaction between individual preferences and "lines of practice – the ways in which interests are sustained over time through joint activities" (p. 18) and research that notes how the development of scientific interests was impacted more by the following factors than formal instruction: familial support (Crowley et al., 2015; Crowley & Jacobs, 2002), the availability of shared activities (Azevedo, 2011, 2013), and strong relationships with teachers and mentors (Maltese & Tai, 2010).

My research considers these conversations and findings, including paying attention to how participants demonstrate expertise, interest, and motivation as per Ito et al.'s genre of participation approach. Given that my work is oriented around a temporary intervention with girls who have not made media together previously, it aims to observe their experiences and hopefully encourage messing around and geeking out modes of participation. Further, my work draws from yet distinguishes itself from research that looks at youth engagement across multiple forms of digital and social media, and across different spaces, such as Ito et al.'s work as well as more recent edited volumes by Jo Ellen Fisherkeller and Kathleen Tyner (2011) and Korina Jocson (2018).

I am situating my work amidst the significantly limited area of scholarship around youth media making via video-based forms and/or platforms. I will discuss girl-specific and video-focused research in the section part of this chapter, which includes a chapter from Lange's book *Kids on YouTube* (2014) which draws from a two-year digital ethnographic study she conducted one year after the platform launched. The book focuses on "personally expressive media" defined as "any mediated artifact or set of media that enables a creator to communicate aspects of the self," which can include personal, artistic, political, or other content of interest (p. 16). Lange distinguishes the interactive and experiential character of videos on the platform as distinct from the memory-aid function of home videos, but her work purposely did not assign any other criteria to what participants were producing. The goal was to reveal different levels of intensity in media making as well as examine informal learning practices. Of particular significance to my work is Lange's use of the term "mediated dispositions" to describe the preferred types of media, communicative channels, and devices people use to communicate (p. 20) and her interest in the interplay between a media maker's mediated disposition, their self-perception, and their technical identity. Lange also develops a rubric called "performing technical affiliation" which draws from Goffman's (1959) performative lens and refers to the display, via words and actions, of "specific beliefs, values, or practices that are associated with particular techno-cultural groups" (p. 21). Similar to what Ito and colleagues proposed about expanding approaches to the study of media, Lange's work examines not only the media texts created but the behind-the-scenes activities, as well as the influence and ecology of the media platform involved. As Lange is examining the online and offline activities involved in creating and uploading video content to the YouTube platform, this rubric is less applicable to my work focusing almost exclusively on the process of video content production. Where there is synergy is with Lange's comment on the value of considering technical identities or affiliation in research

about children's media engagement. While she cites the research that points to male technology dominance in co-ed settings, she wants to emphasize that it is useful to consider technical identities or affiliation not only in relation to other identity variables such as gender, but as distinct considerations as well.

As I worked with and observed a group of girl-identifying youth in my study, gender certainly informed my motivations, and analysis to some extent. However, given that we were working in a girls-only context, I focused more on what the data revealed about each participant's media-making identity. Among the findings is a more complex understanding of the digital divide that disadvantages youth beyond the basis of gender, ethnicity, and class, that includes "mediated dispositions, technical identity performance, concerns of public monitoring, and the dynamics of media peer groups that will likely continue to influence how intensively kids gravitated towards making personally expressive media" (p. 218). Finally, Lange indicates that "peer-based, video making dynamics may require interventions when learning gaps surface," such as via curriculum or extracurricular programs, that the importance of emotional support should not be overlooked, and that "future interventions may be necessary to encourage skill development in areas in which a video maker is not inspired to strive for mastery" (p. 218).

It is worth reiterating that, in spite of the prevalence of media in young people's lives, research into how youth get their start in and develop as video storytellers is relatively limited: Lange's work stands relatively alone in this space. Certainly, much more research in this area is needed to build a more robust understanding of not only who is creating youth media content, but who gets to create it and why.

Digital Inequities and Connected Learning

Myriad scholars have acknowledged the “digital divide” marked by unequal levels of skill, and wide-ranging access to opportunities around technology. Even as youth increasingly engage in digital and social media creation and sharing activities, there a definite participation gap (Jenkins et al., 2009) persists. Jennifer Jenson, Negin Dahya, and Stephanie Fisher (2014), Ito and Lange (2009/2019), Jocson (2018), as well as many others note that social and technical resources are crucial in order for youth to successfully take up media production and are far from guaranteed for different populations of youth. In 2013, Mizuko Ito, Kris Gutierrez, Sonia Livingstone, Bill Penuel, Jean Rhodes, Katie Salen, Juliet Schor, Julian Sefton-Green, and S. Craig Watkins as well as other contributors aimed to address the gap between in-school and extracurricular learning contexts, and the role of cultural and social capital. This team developed the term “connected learning” to describe how socially embedded, interest-driven opportunities offer the best potential for learning and engagement. Put another way, connected learning happens when someone is able to pursue a given interest with support from peers and/or adults, and make connections to their academic and/or career plans or become more civically engaged. Ito et al.’s connected learning framework is a robust document that aligns with sociocultural learning theory and encompasses several broader buckets: crucial learning contexts, core properties of connected learning experiences, intentional design principles, and opportunities amplified by new media. Ito et al. (2012) note that a connected learning experience results when the three key contexts for learning that youth have traditionally experienced separately are effectively brought together: academic subjects, personal interests, and peer culture. For the learning experience to be effective it will involve a shared purpose, a focus on production, and an openly-networked infrastructure. A shared purpose is self-explanatory and considers the interests of students in a more democratic approach to learning. A production focus means experiencing a

form of professional practice that connects to skills or experiences they might encounter in a future career. An openly networked infrastructure refers to “online platforms and digital tools [that] can make learning resources abundant, accessible, and visible across all learner settings” (p. 74). The design principles that they present are as follows: participation that is open to all, the belief that learning happens by doing, and the recognition that challenge is constant, and everything is interconnected. Finally, in a networked era, new media create opportunities in the following ways: 1) fostering engagement and self-expression; 2) increasing accessibility to knowledge and learning experiences; and 3) expanding social supports for interests and expanding diversity and building capacity. (p.82). Ultimately, connected learning can be considered a model for social change via an equity-based model by “embracing the cultural identities of diverse young people, meeting them where they are in their communities of interest, and building points of connection and translation to opportunity in schools, employment, and civic and political institutions” (Ito et al., 2019, p. 3). In more recent research, Ito and her team (2019) emphasize that although connected learning is not intended to be purely a pedagogical approach, it aligns with experiential and constructionist (learning-by-doing) approaches (Papert, 1993) often referred to as project-based learning and inquiry-based learning, as well as culturally relevant approaches (González et al., 2005; Gutiérrez & Rogof, 2003) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1968/2018).

Another important consideration is the role of adults in these types of learning experiences. In her evaluation of adults who facilitate youth digital media programs in the US and the UK, Alicia Blum-Ross (2015) presented three categories to describe approaches to working with participants: guides, collaborators, and mentors. Ito and colleagues use Dilan Mahendran’s term of “co-conspirator” to describe how youth program leaders do not mimic traditional teachers in the sense that while they are viewed as authority figures who assess students’ competence, they

are seen more as adults who participate in shared interests with youth. They also refer to Vivian Chávez and Elisabeth Soep (2005), who describe successful community-based adult-youth collaborations as a “pedagogy of collegiality.” Relatedly, Megan Finn (2019) presents the concept of a “techne-mentor” as a non-permanent role whereby someone aides “an individual or group with adopting or supporting some aspect of technology use in a specific context” (p. 59). In the conclusion of their White paper, Ito et al. make a case for further research and attention to local youth media programs, especially in supporting youth who may have limited or no access to digital production tools. Part of their goal for developing a framework included helping to enhance learning experiences for all youth in a digital age. This is especially important as most young people tend to hang out with friends via technology whereas the more affluent youth populations are the ones geeking out and developing technological expertise in curricular as well as extracurricular contexts (Neuman & Celano, 2012). Via examples of youth media making across content area classrooms, career and technical education, literary and media arts organizations, community television stations, and post-secondary institutions, Jocson (2018) has demonstrated that media making “has become a palpable platform for rendering experiences often steeped in the margins” (p. 3). Ito and colleagues’ most recent book, borne out of their “Leveling Up” (2019) project, focuses on a social change agenda because of research that continues to reveal that “even when they are deployed in free and open online settings, we find that new educational technologies tend to amplify existing inequity; the most highly educated are the most likely to adopt these new open-education opportunities” (Carfagna, 2014; Hansen & Reich, 2015; Reich & Ito, 2017, as cited in Ito et al., 2019, p. 5). By emphasizing design and advocacy via what can be gleaned from fieldwork and case studies of youth-centered online environments, Ito and colleagues emphasize that it is access to social and cultural capital, not access to technology, that will increase opportunities and create more equitable educational

futures. They further appeal to scholars working in this area to move beyond critique and towards proposing solutions in an effort to “realiz[e] a world where all young people are able to fully engage in learning and opportunities tied to their interest and passions” (p. 4). This is where I take up my research with a focus on intervention work.

It has been close to several decades since scholars began examining education in relation to young people’s understandings of and engagement with new media technologies and noting “the fundamental inequalities in young people’s access to new media technologies and the opportunities for participation they represent (what we call the *participation gap*)” (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 12). In 2022, there continues to be relatively scant statistical/demographic data let alone scholarship that more deeply explores the media content that Canadian tweens and teens are creating. Often cited research comes from US-based Pew Research Center, which continues to have young people’s relationships with social media and technology as one of their research areas of focus. Nevertheless, their research tends towards demographics around ‘use’ of specific platforms and access to devices. The Common Sense Media organization in the US produced a report in 2019 based on a survey of over 1,600 US children ages 8–18, indicating that only 3% of teens’ and 2% of tweens’ total screen time is dedicated to creating their own content (Rideout & Robb, 2019, p. 6). This is a follow-up to their 2015 study, which they noted was among the first national-level surveys that consider the “functional purposes for which multi-use digital devices are being used, including consumption, communication, and content creation” (p. 6). The study also notes that there are significant gaps in terms of access to a laptop at home between low-income families (<\$35,000/year) versus high-income families (\$100,000+) and 1 in 10 low-income teens has only dial-up Internet at home, which none of the higher-income youth reported. Media Technology Monitor has taken up similar work in Canada in recent years to begin providing similar, bigger-picture insights. However, insights into who, where, and how tweens

and teens in Canada learn about and are supported in their exploration of media creation are also needed. Once again, there is limited evidence as to if and how a Canadian student will be introduced to making media in primary or middle school or in community-based contexts, and even less on whether they are sufficiently supported in their curiosities around media—and specifically video—production. This is important to highlight if only to emphasize the complexity around projects such as the one I’m undertaking, which aims in some way to encourage and make space for more diversity in media production and in particular youth who wish to take up video storytelling.

One additional consideration worth noting is how scholars have problematized neoliberal framing of media production in terms of entrepreneurship and future-focused narratives (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016). They have also suggested that it is far more important for media production to allow youth to share stories and “engage with the rich complexities of the present” (Facer, 2019, p. 3). Further, although there is often an emphasis placed on youth voice and agency and the democratization of process in youth media production, scholars caution about conflating youth participation with empowerment, as there is limited examination of the actual challenges of moving from empowerment as an abstract discourse to practical outcomes (Blum-Ross, 2017). These critiques informed my intervention design, including its intentional framing as a “club” or “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) rather than a formal training program.

Conclusion

This chapter was the first of two literature review chapters. It began with an overview of media education in formal and/or structured contexts: school-based curriculum and community-based organization programming. The school-based curriculum discussion also traced the

evolution of media literacy curriculum towards the inclusion of media production activities, and the community-based organization programming discussion involved noting a connection with democratic, equitable, and participatory video/media and digital storytelling processes and ideologies. I also noted the particular relevance or significance of the documentary or non-fiction genre of media with regards to youth storytelling content and initiatives. Next, I offered context in the way of what we know about youth media education and media-making learning opportunities in Canada, signalling that these opportunities for youth are far from guaranteed or equitable. This further points to the need for more research that can inform how to better support youth—and especially girls—in this country with their media-storytelling endeavours. The discussion then moved into scholarship and ideas emerging out of informal learning research at the intersection of youth cultures, education, and digital media. This includes the concepts of modes/genres of participation, technical identities, and mediated dispositions. This section considers the participation gap or “digital divide,” and how, as both current and future generations of youth continue to experience increasingly media-saturated media lives, the digital divide between highly media literate and competent youth and those who are neither stands to grow even wider. Solutions are vital, and I reference how tenets of connected learning reflect one potential way forward. The next chapter turns its attention to the girl as a subject of research and as a video storyteller, beginning with a more macro consideration of the area known as girlhood or girls’ studies, and moving towards the specific niche topic of girls as media makers and video storytellers.

Chapter Four: Literature Review – Part Two: Girls’ Studies, Girls’ Media Cultures, and Girls’ Media Making

Introduction

This chapter further situates my study by identifying relevant literature and ideas in what can be considered a niche area of research: girls’ experiences with and engagement in media making/video-based storytelling. To contextualize this topic, I begin with an overview of the wider, interdisciplinary field of girlhood studies or girls’ studies as well as the more focused area of girls’ media cultures. My review of girls’ media making and video-based storytelling involves highlighting the work of a relatively small group of scholars that has significantly influenced my own research. The overall discussion includes pointing to how scholarship about girls has evolved towards troubling normative conceptions of girlhood, highlighting the value of broadening the range of research methods used in girls’ media studies, and of engaging girls as research collaborators, bringing increased attention to girls “making stuff,” and engaging in intersectional analyses. I further draw attention to the overall limited focus on girl-identifying youth as research subjects and girl-identifying youth-related topics, and to the limited consideration of gender as an analytic lens in research that explores youth culture more broadly and youth engagement with media more specifically.¹⁹ Research about the experiences of marginalized girls as well as girls in Canadian contexts is also severely lacking. This is problematic for anyone working in a capacity oriented towards social-justice and seeking to centre the often-ignored voices and perspectives of youth, while striving to support more equitable experiences for them. In noting these gaps, I position my project as one researcher’s effort to contribute to both much-needed research and intervention work around girls and video

¹⁹ Recognizing that while gender is performative and fluid, female-identifying or presenting individuals have historically been positioned as subordinate to or “othered” in relation to male-identifying individuals in a patriarchal society.

storytelling. Critical analysis and contextualization of these practices are also necessary in order to acknowledge and uncover complex, nuanced, and situated insights.

Girlhood/ Girls' Studies

Girlhood studies or girls' studies can be considered an area of research that is still very much in its infancy. Establishing the first journal dedicated to the field in 2008, Claudia Mitchell and colleagues were responding to the emergence of a distinct area that combined advocacy work and interdisciplinary research from fields spanning communication studies, development studies, literary studies, and calls for increased inclusion of girls' perspectives in research. Also in 2008, Catherine Driscoll's book *Girls, Girl Culture and Girl Studies* presented a history of the field with a specific emphasis on Western/Global North contexts. While the aforementioned journal editors reference the significant impact of Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan on the "new feminist order of girlhood" in the 1990s, scholars also note the significance of Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber in the 1970s and their projects that analyzed youth cultures in relation to sex and gender (Kearney, 2006). In their book *Seven Going on Seventeen: Tween Studies in the Culture of Girlhood* (2007), Claudia Mitchell and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh emphasized how research and scholarship around girls' cultures is positioned as unimportant. More than a decade later, girls' studies scholars point to how girls continue to be positioned as marginalized or at a "double disadvantage" based on age and sex/gender and complicated by additional intersections of oppression (Cann et al., 2018).

Girls' studies, "like its predecessors women's studies and gender studies," it is an area of study that emerged out of a prevailing White academy that has benefited from colonialism and White supremacy (Maart, 2016, as cited in Cann et al., 2018, p. ix). It has also disproportionately focused on the experiences of White girls (Cann et al., 2018) and on Western/Global North

feminist perspectives which do not necessarily reflect or address “the lives of girls and young women of colour in and outside of First World contexts” (Griffin, 2004, p. 30). Emerging scholarship focuses on the experiences of Indigenous girls (de Finney, 2014) and South Asian girls (Rajiva, 2006, 2009), including a discussion of the fractured sense of self that “arises from negotiating contradictory discourses on ideal girlhood that emanate from families/communities, the dominant peer culture, mainstream culture, and even South Asian youth culture” (Rajiva, 2009, p. 78). There is also a growing emphasis on centering Black girls and girlhoods which includes distinct diasporic communities within this community (Griffin, 2004; Halliday, 2019; Jesus, 2019; McPherson, 2019). Scholars further make a case for the need to include Global South perspectives amidst the prevalence of those representative of Black girlhoods of the Global North, and for the need to challenge post-colonial and imperialist knowledge production practices in order to produce more nuanced understandings (Halliday, 2019; Katshunga, 2019). Although Black feminist theory can be useful in terms of understanding the oppression faced by Black girls and women, scholars point to the “adultification” of Black childhood and how Black girls are not granted the state of innocence afforded to White girls (Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Ferguson, 2002; Epstein et al., 2017; Sharpe 2016; Smith, 2019). Kisha McPherson (2019) draws from bell hooks (1994) to call attention to how Black women and girls are either not represented in media or society or are positioned in stereotypical ways: “although Black girls’ voices and experiences are not often contextualized or considered within scholarship, various aspects of their culture and identity are commonly commodified within popular culture” (p. 240). Claudine Taaffe (2019) highlights the importance of working with Black girls, positioning them as experts on their own lives, in order to produce much needed and long overdue counternarratives to prevailing stereotypes. Similar to the issues plaguing the wider field of girl studies, theories of Black girlhood typically exclude queer, lesbian, bisexual and trans women (Katshunga, 2019).

Among the topics Black girlhood studies scholars have examined are: experiences of alienation felt by Black girls as a result of society's Eurocentric beauty standards (Banks, 2005, as cited in Brown, 2019); exploring the impacts of increased discrimination and the role of self-care for Black girls who face higher levels of stress in relation to White girls (Kaltfleiter & Alexander, 2019); and the application of hip-hop feminist scholarship on research and intervention work with Black girl communities (Lewis, 2019).

In their introduction to the Special Issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, which reflects on key ideas from the inaugural International Girls Studies Association Conference in 2016, Cann, Godfrey, and Warner (2018) note the need to broaden the field by moving beyond research that focuses on heterosexual, Anglophone, and cis-gender girlhoods. This includes calling for feminist scholars to actively pursue inclusivity “as a political and ethical practice,” including work around transgirlhood and queer girlhood (p. xii.). Cann et al. also acknowledge the scant research that takes class into account, especially with a focus on working class girls, with one rationale for this being that the dominant focus on neoliberal subjectivities in girls' studies scholarship has rendered class subjectivities invisible (Cann, 2016). Finally, they note that there is much work to be done around exploring disabled girlhood/non-able-bodied girlhood. The 2018 issue of *Girlhood Studies* subsequently reflected an effort to support explorations in these areas as well as work that highlights the importance of historicizing girlhood, recording girls' cultures and the role of the archive, and documenting girls' online experiences—including in relation to citizenship and political activism.

Given that girls are disadvantaged based on their age, it is helpful to note that there has been a prevailing tension between two overarching framings of childhood: one that views the child as *becoming*, and the other that views the child as *being*. The former (vis-à-vis

developmental psychology) positions the child as ignorant, immature, and in need of adult mediation through education and socialization (Burman, 2017) while the latter (vis-à-vis sociology, childhood studies, and post-structuralism) views the child as a whole and complex being, actively engaged in negotiating identity (Jenkins, 1998; Prout, 2008). My research aligns with scholars who consider the child as whole being and acknowledges the girl as an active agent in shaping, sharing, and transforming her own life. It further acknowledges that contemporary girls are engaged in—as all humans are—what Giddens (1992) describes as the never-ending “project of the self.” Giddens posits that this process of identity formation involving much resistance and negotiation is driven by a complex, intertextual, and reflexive environment cultivated by the modern media in a neoliberal system. Scholarship problematizes this notion of agency, including how, for girls, it is often wrapped up in the sexualization and commercialization of girlhood, including consumerist practices and making choices in what they buy and the media they consume (Bhana, 2005; Harris, 2005; McRobbie, 1991).

Further, developmental scholars working mainly in US contexts including Gilligan (1982, 1995), Brown and Gilligan (1992), Deak (2010), and Damour (2016), have examined the particular challenges girls face in contemporary society, such as observing a loss of voice and connection to self. Their desire for connection and the importance of their relationships increases significantly as they transition into adolescence (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Concurrently, there is evidence that young women either silence themselves in order to blend in or are silenced in relationships, do not voice concerns or feelings in order to avoid disagreements, and can demonstrate dissociative or repressive behaviour as a result (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). What is described as a “crisis of connection” is articulated as “girls’ struggle to hold on to their voices and to stay in genuine relationships with themselves and others in the face of pressure to not know and not speak leads some girls to risk the open trouble and disruption of political resistance

and other to move their strong feelings and thoughts underground” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 14). Research in other Global North contexts such as Sweden indicate that teenage girls are aware of the gender order that exists in society (Einberg et al., 2015). While girls are questioning gender unfairness, they can find it difficult to defend themselves against it, especially in school settings (Connell, 2003, as cited in Einberg et al., 2015). All of these findings speak to the importance of supporting girls through the especially turbulent pre-adolescent years.

Finally, with any emerging area of research, and especially with one that is interdisciplinary, there is much opportunity to explore and experiment with incorporating methodologies that may have traditionally been used in any given discipline, and even to blend multiple methodologies. A notable example of innovative research, particularly at the time, was Bloustien’s (2003) use of video making as a participatory visual research method with high school girls in Australia. Bloustien’s interest was in examining methods that went beyond participant observation in an effort to probe into adolescent female culture more deeply. This generated a reflexive approach that greatly informed her project as an attempt to create a dialogue between researcher and participants. Part of her process involved a video-diary format for participants to encourage this self-reflexivity. Her approach allowed her to observe “public performances and private selves” (p. 9). Much of the current emphasis in girlhood and childhood studies’ methodological approaches is on acknowledging power imbalances, employing practices that encourage researcher reflexivity, and methods that strive to have child participants speak for themselves. It is noteworthy that Bloustien was addressing these methodological and ethical issues in the early 2000s, and that no apparent comparable study focusing on girls has been conducted since. Bloustien was specifically interested in the process in addition to the product and she suggests that the camera is a means to view the media maker’s discovery process and how “understanding and knowledge are negotiated and realized as part of everyday transactions

in the world” (p. 39). She did not approach working with the girls as a formal instructor teaching students how to follow established norms for documentary filmmaking, but worked instead in “an experimental, open-ended manner” (p. 40). Her interest was in how the recording process would “blur the lines between representation and what is being represented between the signifier and the signified” (p. 31). Bloustien further explored an area that has been vastly popular amongst girlhood studies, which is the effect of popular culture on self-identity and girls’ productions. Bloustien organized the girls’ stylistic/conceptual approaches into three categories: the “fly on the wall,” borrowing from a popular term used to describe a cinema vérité style of storytelling, the “ask me a question,” similar to a traditional sit-down interview, and a combination of the two. In a contribution to an anthology on participatory video, Bloustien (2012) reflects on her project and suggests the camera was also useful in highlighting the gap between what her participants would say in certain contexts and what they felt and did. While my methodological approaches will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter, it is important for me to note Bloustien’s larger influence on my research.

Girls’ Media Studies

Girls’ media studies is an interdisciplinary area of research with roots in the theories, methods and values associated with cultural studies, which approaches popular culture as a site of overlapping struggles over power, pleasure, identity, and community (Kearney, 2011). Scholarship has most often centred on media content or “texts” (images/stories) which are created in different forms or formats (film, TV, video games, magazines, etc.) for girl audiences to consume (Kearney 2006, 2011). Kearney further notes that scholarship on girls’ media draws from women’s and gender studies and tends to incorporate poststructuralist feminist epistemologies that consider gender as a social construction, and that apply intersectionality towards an understanding of gender and other identities as “constituted by multiple,

interdependent and unisolatable [sic] modes of being” (Kearney, 2011, p. 3). A key sub-area of research on girls and media has analysed girlhood in relation to neoliberalism, including the advertising industry’s role in defining the tween girl as a specific demographic (Cook, 2008; Coulter, 2014; Kline, 1993; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2005; Seiter, 1993). In 2006, Kearney critiqued her colleagues by calling attention to the overemphasis of research on girls as spectators and consumers and for taking the neoliberal structures within which girls engage with media as a given, and for further perpetuating the limiting discourses which do not consider girls’ increasingly complex relationships with media and technology outside of consumer culture and their roles as consumers. The field has since expanded into the following sub-categories or areas of scholarship: 1) how media texts about girls construct discourses of girlhood; 2) how girls use and respond to media as an *audience* or *users*; and 3) the production of girls’ media (Kearney, 2018). To give a sense of the breadth of inquiry, research encompasses: explorations of media in relation to how girls’ form subjectivity (Ringrose, 2013); post-structural analyses of girls’ identity formation (Willett, 2008); examination of specific media platforms such as YouTube and how they engage girl vloggers in the labour of self-branding (Banet-Weiser, 2011), as well as their contradictory uses for women’s and girls’ empowerment and simultaneous oppression (Todd & McDermott, 2016); and specific practices such as *sexting* as a form of media production (Hasinoff, 2013). Further studies have examined online video creation with dolls as a demonstration of the intertextuality of tween girl culture (Johnston, 2018), girls’ critical media literacy development through the creation of zines (Moscowitz & Carpenter, 2014), and how girls become civically engaged through student journalism (Bobkowski & Belmas, 2017; Bobkowski et al., 2015). Although there is a body of research into girls’ use of media as sites of resistance (Currie et al., 2009; Kearney, 2006, 2007, 2011; Kelly & Pomerantz, 2009; Ringrose & Renold, 2013), and a growth in interest around girls as media producers, Kearney (2018) notes

that the bulk of research within girls' media studies to date is concerned with mainstream commercial media culture.

Among efforts to evolve the area, scholars have called for a shift towards privileging girls' personal accounts of their interactions with media culture by listening to "the voices of girls themselves instead of relying on adult academicians' deconstruction of media content" (Mazzarella & Pecora, 2007, p. 112). This aligns with calls for research to provide opportunities for girls to serve as collaborators in research, as "[i]nterviewing girls and collaborating with girls on research projects are both beneficial for scholars who wish to know more about the politics and practices of girls who grew up in a cultural context that is different from their own" (Keller et al., 2015). Kearney (2006) further notes that films girls create, in research contexts or otherwise, should not be considered an authentic record but as a careful staging as well as a monitoring of the self. She also examines the editing process and reveals interesting insights into how many of the girls' projects involved "playing" with—challenging or providing alternatives to—their perceptions of an ideal female body.

In a neoliberal and postfeminist age, scholars have also cautioned against framing youth—particularly girl-identifying youth—engagement, with participatory media as entirely celebratory or as a kind of victory. As Marnina Gonick (2007) suggests, it is important to complicate the notion of voice as well as efforts to encourage girls to claim their voice "at a time when the incitement to speak is one of the means by which neo-liberal subjectivities are produced and regulated" (p. 433). She utilizes the metaphoric code of "Girl Number 20" which Judith Williamson (1981, 1982) first used to refer to a girl student, during their class on representation of women in the media. While examining romance comics in this course, the boys mocked the content and the girls remained silent, which Gonick explains:

Williamson understands the silence of the girls as an effect of the ways in which their self-image is bound up in the very things that are under attack. The complicated knot to be struggled with here is having students' grasp the ideological relation between texts and their own experience, on the one hand. And on the other, having students critically engage with representations of femininity in the popular media without also reinforcing the disparaging view of girls and women who read, view, and find pleasure in these narratives and images. (2007, p. 434)

Williamson's larger concern is that Girl Number 20 not only looks like the heroines frequently found in romance comics but also opts to stay silent when female students in the class are given the opportunity to discuss the tensions involved in critical readings of media texts students enjoy outside of class. Gonick further acknowledges the tension that educators grapple with in wanting to engage girls in critical conversations around their gendered subjectification by the media. Her work serves as an important reminder to researchers working with girls and exploring notions of voice.

Scholars are also encouraging an evolution of the field by suggesting that we challenge the normative constructions of girlhood through queer theories and/or through exploring boys' relationships to girls' media culture (Driver, 2007; Kearney, 2018). Unsurprisingly, just as the area of girlhood studies is limited in its application of intersectionality and consideration of a variety of girlhoods, girls' media studies has also mainly focused on Western, White, middle-class populations (Moscowitz & Carpenter, 2014; White, 2008). Research in this area includes the media consumption practices of low-income Latina youth (Vargas, 2009) and Mexican-American youth (Mayer, 2003). However, scholarship that focuses on non-White girlhoods and media is emerging. Among this work is Kisha McPherson's (2019) examination of Black female

spectatorship, drawing from hooks' (1992) case for the power that lies in looking and how the "oppositional gaze" represents an opportunity for Black girls and women to resist media representations through the act of looking and/or the act of rejecting. Her work identifies the role of safe spaces for Black girls that offer a context for understanding oppression and power, as well as places to collect their knowledge. As a growing area of research, Keller et al. (2015) note that girls' media studies would benefit from broadening the range of research methods used and from an increased inclusion of girls as collaborators or co-researchers.

Girls' Media Making and Video Storytelling

Honing in on the specific area of girls and media making, the research becomes even more scant. Several edited volumes unite research produced over the last decade pertaining to youth media production, including video making, in both local and global contexts (Ares, 2010; Fisherkeller, 2011). Notably though, none of these have used gender as an analytical lens nor have they examined girl-specific experiences with media content production. Another such volume (Ito et al., 2009) includes several short vignettes featuring girls' experiences engaging with digital media, including video production for YouTube, producing rap music, and writing fan fiction. It is worth noting that terminology is not universal, and research involving video making may refer to this activity as *filmmaking* or *digital media production* or *digital storytelling*—the latter term borne out of a specific model of video narrative coined by the Story Center organization (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009; Lambert, 2013). When considering the myriad terms in play, research on girls' media making in North American contexts includes examples from the previous section on girl's media cultures, which involve media making for social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, and other more alternative processes and products such as zine creation (Banet-Weiser, 2011; Hasinoff, 2013; Johnston, 2018; Moscovitz & Carpenter, 2014). These projects support the value of girls-only spaces where participants can

explore media storytelling critically, creatively, and collaboratively. Recalling the research by girlhood scholars around girls' development and diminished confidence as they enter into pre-adolescence, research further suggests that self-expressive media creation can be developmentally beneficial for girls (Blair et al., 2010; Kearney, 2006; Moscovitz & Carpenter, 2014) and that media making led by female mentors can contribute to an engaged female citizenship (Caron, 2011). Scholars also note that extracurricular programs in particular are useful as they can offer greater freedom than endeavouring to fit activities into already packed curriculum and have the potential to create more authentic relationships between facilitators and girl participants (Moscovitz & Carpenter, 2014).

Female youth who are marginalized based on their racial, ethnic, class, or sexual identity are the ones who may most substantially experience the self-esteem boost that can be gained from engaging in media production (Kearney, 2006). A key scholar in the girls' video making space, and whose work has heavily influenced my own research, is Mary Celeste Kearney. Her 2006 book *Girls Make Media* repositioned girls away from discourses of consumption by examining a rich legacy in North America of girls' creation and production of various forms of media (including video). She notes how, throughout history, girls have been restrained from full creative freedom and their making has been controlled or viewed as having lesser value relative to boys:

American girls have long been involved in creative activities that, though often invisible to others, link them directly to the realm of cultural production. From preindustrial times until well into the early twentieth century, most girls' forms of cultural production, like those of the majority of women, were domestic in nature, largely as a result of the hegemony of

patriarchal ideologies and social structures that relied on females' exclusion from the public sphere. (p. 24)

Kearney's (2006) monograph offers a history of girls' media production: from letter writing in Victorian times, to their use of Kodak's amateur, portable "Brownie" cameras in the early 1900s, to movie star fan club newsletters in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, into contemporary video production influenced by the 1990s video activism and the RiotGrrrl movement, which incorporated feminist politics with punk culture and evolved beyond its initial roots in music culture to include independent or "do it yourself" ("DIY") artmaking and activism. Her following statement inspires and supports the direction of my project:

When girls invest in the role of media producer, stereotypical notions of girlhood and girls' culture are altered radically, and so is the popular understanding of media production, an activity historically constructed as adult- and male-dominated. Indeed, the development of a highly culturally productive generation of female youth suggests that something very profound has changed in the structures of media culture. (p. 12)

Patricia Lange, whose *Kids on YouTube* (2015) was discussed in part one of this literature review, focuses Chapter 3 of the book on girl YouTube content creators. In fact, Lange references Bloustein's (2003) call for research that explores the "lived reality" of media creators beyond the analysis of specific genres or individual texts/media creations. This should involve "girls' experiences, including social interactions that help negotiate technologized identities that emerge through sharing and producing media" (p. 66). The chapter in Lange's book features interviews with 15 girls ages 12-19 who are mainly US-based, with some international participants, and she notes that 10 of them identify as White, three as Asian, one as African American, and one participant's racial identity is undetermined. Lange's analysis includes a

consideration of “the technical as relational,” and aims to make a case for more research that considers not only how media helps girls to resist “notions of traditional identity variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, and class” but also their technical affiliations as “variables in their own right” (pp. 64-66). Examining the notion of a “geek identity” in relation to technical skills and affiliation, Lange cites a Canadian study of tween and teen girls where some girls embraced and actively cultivated a geek identity (Currie et al., 2006). One of Lange’s participants refers to herself as an “editor by trade,” which Lange demonstrates goes beyond self-identity and reveals itself in the techniques she applies to her video editing work. She further uses the concept of a “warm expert” (Bakardjieva, 2005) to describe how at different points in girls’ media making, they might access different individuals who were both accessible and familiar to them as well as more knowledgeable in a specific skill or process (or, in some cases, who introduced them to YouTube, as several participants’ family members did). Interestingly, more often than not the participants articulated that they were the expert in their household or peer group and/or sought out learning on their own via tutorial videos, etc. Finally, Lange emphasizes the value of the girls’ narratives and what they revealed in terms of how they “perform affiliations to particular technologies, media, and related cultural values” (p. 73).

In the introduction to an edited volume on girls and media, Kearney (2011) suggests that research on girls’ media making continues to be limited in its consideration of how girls use and produce subcultural and anti-corporate media, “which is important in challenging the prevailing perception that girls’ media culture is always already mainstream and commercial” (p. 11). She contributes a chapter to the second volume of this anthology *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls Culture* (2018), that focuses on the experiences of aspiring female filmmakers enrolled in US undergraduate filmmaking programs. Among her findings, most of the girls took up filmmaking between the ages of 10–16 and the majority of participants cited

movie watching as a main family leisure activity, as well as having a parent who owned a video camera but did not necessarily have a career in filmmaking. Notably, half of these girls also had participated in a formal filmmaking program or course as teenagers, and many had parents who were supportive of their interests. Kearney further notes that “the majority of students constructed their early filmmaking as a fun pastime rather than a serious undertaking, and several described it as ‘dabbling’” (p. 218). Her chapter concludes with recommendations to increase girls’ pursuit of filmmaking as a career and tackle the significant industry lack of gender parity, including launching more media production workshops for female youth, in part to assist them in developing confidence around their filmmaking skills. Another of Kearney’s important recommendations is to honour girls’ informal video-making practices via smartphones. Kearney and her work over the years validate many of the ideas that inspired and motivated me, and the approaches I took in designing this project. Early on in my doctoral studies, the *Girlhood Studies* journal announced its first call for submissions on a special issue relating to “girls making stuff,” to examine how these activities can reveal “a powerful image of liminal creativity” as well as point to the value of how “explorations emphasize the importance of girls’ voices and art actions as they construct and share their experiences and their own understanding of girlhood” (Beavis et al., 2018). A shift is finally taking place, and it is a most interesting time to be engaging in research on the topic of girls’ media making.

Following from limited research that considers intersectionality and explores the experiences of diverse populations of girls in girlhood and girls’ (media) culture studies, there is minimal research in either Global North or South contexts that looks at marginalized girls’ experiences, and equally minimal research focusing on girls’ participation in video making. Dahya and King (2018) examine the mobile video storytelling practices of girls of colour participating in a series of girl-specific workshops with non-profit organization Reel Grrls. They

call attention to the politics of power embedded and enacted on these girl participants. Although many of these girls indicated that they consumed a lot of online video content, few had ever created it. The fact that they demonstrated confidence to create media didn't necessarily translate into a desire to express their voice by sharing their creations publicly. Other international research includes Pike's (2019) exploration of the documentary media making of Arab girls in Qatar.

Limited Canadian research includes Brushwood Rose's (2009) work engaging in community-based digital storytelling with marginalized girls, and the "impossibility" of girls telling their whole stories when "we participate in and are shaped by stories we may not yet be aware of" (p. 214). Other research in a Canadian context is Dahya's (2014, 2017) feminist ethnographic work exploring the media production processes of Muslim girls and other girls of colour within a larger co-ed program at a middle school. Her work builds on critical approaches to digital media research and suggests that insights into girls' media making are limited without careful detailing of the context of production, including all social and material factors. My previous research (2017) represented a first step towards contributing to girls' focused scholarship and an initial foray into conducting research around girls' experiences with video production in a curricular context. As an arts-based qualitative study, it explored the opportunities and challenges around designing media education curriculum in a digital age and considered how girls learn and make media through a focus on creative non-fiction content. It also revealed the limitations of working on media production in a classroom setting.²⁰ At the same time, it involved mainly White girls of high socioeconomic status and I did not take intersectionality nor any feminist theory explicitly into account. Indeed, there is much work to be

²⁰ These limitations informed my interest in exploring media production in extracurricular contexts, as discussed in Chapter 3.

done to capture the legacy as well as the current culture of girls' video-specific storytelling and production in a Canadian context, including how experiences are similar and/or differ across diverse populations. This current research project represents my continued effort to centre the experiences of girls in order to better understand and support their video-making efforts.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a literature review to support my research focus on the tween or teen girl as a video-based storyteller. It comprised an overview of the broader, interdisciplinary area referred to as girlhood studies or girl studies as well as the sub-area of girls' media cultures, before zooming into the scant yet impactful scholarship that explores girls and media making, especially girls' video making. I noted the prevailing theme across all of these areas, the latter two sub-areas more specifically, which is an overall paucity of research. Even more scant are the experiences of marginalized girls and of girls in Canadian contexts, which is where I take up my current research. I further noted that an intersectional lens is important to any work that engages with diverse populations of youth, which is often the case in a city like Toronto where I undertook my research. I also align myself with Lange (2014) who makes a case for considering girls' technical identity/affiliations as important variables in their own right, and not just in relation to wider scholarship focused on gendered relationships with technology. As I will discuss in a later chapter, this latter perspective supports my approach of presenting my data through descriptive chapters that include a video-storytelling identity or persona I developed for each participant.

The following chapter is the first of two chapters that describe and discuss my research design. It focuses on recruitment and other considerations that came into play as a result of the

pandemic, which necessitated a shift from an in-person extracurricular program for girls to a virtual one.

Chapter Five: Research Study Design Context and Considerations

Introduction

The process of completing a dissertation has been described as messy, iterative, and discursive (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), and social sciences research as unpredictable (Carey, 2009). This was indeed the case with this research with the pandemic impacting every stage and piece in some way. This chapter tells the story of designing and conducting a case study during an especially challenging time and also reflects my effort to make explicit, as per a reflexive feminist research practice, how the research process was constituted (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). I begin by summarizing the “case” that the study focused on which was a small group of girl participants within a girl-specific video storytelling program that I both designed and facilitated. Next, I expand upon the process of pivoting from in-person to virtual fieldwork, including the recruitment process and the participants that ultimately joined me in both my research and the video storytelling program. This prompts a reflection regarding my positionality as a White adult researcher working with racialized and marginalized girls and also considerations relating to my dual role of program/intervention facilitator and researcher. I segue into other ethical considerations that factored into conducting work with racialized youth. Finally, I summarize the considerations that informed my approach to designing the video storytelling intervention and approach to facilitation. I expand upon this process, including the video-based projects and activities we explored, in the hopes that such information may support researchers or practitioners in shaping related future intervention work, programs, and case study research.

Summary of Research Project

This research project centres on a small group of tween and teen girl participants, exploring their experiences with video making more broadly and their particular experiences participating in a girl-specific video storytelling program, as well as their approaches to making video content and what they learned about it. I designed and delivered this brief, virtual, and extracurricular video storytelling intervention which comprised eight 1-1.5-hour sessions and ran over four weeks in the Spring of 2021. The sessions ran over Zoom with resources and any content referenced posted on both private Padlet pages and a private Microsoft Teams account created for this project. This last platform was also used for its chat functionality, for when participants asked questions or for me to provide updates or reminders, for example. Further details on the content, structure and other considerations involved in designing and facilitating the sessions will be discussed later in this chapter.

Evolving Recruitment and Research Design Plans: Pivoting in a Pandemic

This research experience has been an exercise in managing expectations. It illustrates the tensions, possibilities, and compromises between the study that one imagines and the study that is actually realized. The emergence of an international health crisis was one overarching, extenuating circumstance that has continued to impact this project from the time I submitted my initial post-proposal defense ethics application through to the writing of this dissertation. In spirit, the research questions, methodology and theoretical underpinnings that I proposed pre-pandemic have found their way into the revised project; however, my work evolved and adapted in myriad, necessary ways. For example, the project I originally envisioned saw me organically integrating myself into an existing afterschool media making club, or offering such a space myself, and in either case take place over a considerable period of time, of at least a few months.

This scenario would have allowed me to embed myself deeply in the field site, and to really study the culture and forge organic relationships with youth research participants. I was also very aware of the problematic legacy of research wherein researchers have “catapulted” into a community and prioritized gleaning data that served their own agendas over any commitment to working in partnership with participants, and any effort to give back to their communities. Even with my efforts to avoid the above scenarios, I ended up securing a field site with a very short window of opportunity to conduct the research and was faced with the very real risk of becoming a tokenistic project.

In February 2020, I was in the final stages of confirming a research site at a Toronto-based school and set to begin recruitment. After some unforeseen delays with a back-logged university ethics approval process, I was officially granted approval to proceed with my study in the second last week of March. This happened just as news outlets began reporting about a deadly new virus that was spreading rapidly across the globe. In what seemed like a heartbeat, Toronto, like so many other places in Canada and around the world, went into lockdown. Students were in the middle of the school year when the stay-at-home orders were put into place, and schools, including my anticipated research site, went into full-on emergency remote instruction mode. With the school’s priorities having abruptly shifted and the fact that the video storytelling program/intervention was designed to be an in-person experience, my research ground to a halt. I was well-versed in contingency planning from my many years spent in media production, but this was a curveball that even my troubleshooting instincts were not prepared for. It was initially a mental struggle to reconcile that I might no longer be able to continue with my research plans at all. It is important to note that at this stage, the general public was far from having a sense of the magnitude of the crisis, with some speculating that this might be a temporary emergency and that life might be back to normal in a matter of a few weeks. This prediction proved way off. I

now offer a summary of my some of the new considerations and efforts I had to undertake to conduct this study virtually.

Re-imagining my project as a virtual study involved considerable delays, in part because the university research ethics department was in the midst of necessarily revising protocols and policies around virtual research with human participants, including ethical concerns around various third-party meeting platforms and software. I was also initially less enthusiastic about delivering the video storytelling program remotely—remote instruction and video-conferencing for any reason were relatively non-existent in my life prior to the pandemic. The emphasis on the relational component in community-based programs as well as the literature and my experiences of engaging as a facilitator, as well as the delicate power dynamics one navigates in working with youth, were all challenges I was well aware of. However, virtual gatherings and any experience performing virtual facilitation were entirely unfamiliar to me. A large part of the spring was dedicated to extensively exploring software tools, attending virtual events, and hosting a few myself. After some research into different tools, I opted to focus on synchronous sessions using a web conferencing tool, Zoom (at the time, a platform I had never previously used!), and also to use Microsoft Teams for communication outside of sessions, and as a hub of sorts for other information as Microsoft products were authorized by the university.

The importance of cultivating relationships for research partnerships cannot be overstated and, given all that was happening with abrupt shifts to hybrid and/or virtual learning during the pandemic and my interest in offering extracurricular programming, it became prohibitive for me to attempt to forge new connections with schools. This introduced a new major concern: recruiting participants virtually and from scratch. Initially having a school as a research site offered the benefit of educators or other school personnel who could advocate for the project or

further contextualize and frame it for the students. It also meant having the ability to hold in-person informational sessions, where I could talk for ten minutes to a group of students and have their mostly undivided attention, as well as the opportunity to answer questions and of course allow them to see who I am and what my personality was like. Now, informational flyers and posts became a fundamental tool: they needed to be designed in a clear but engaging way while accurately illustrating the essence of the project. I also had to create these documents in a way that would appeal to both parents and youth, based on the available social media spaces I could post in. I struggled with how to explain the project: it was a research study with a media-making program embedded in it and I didn't want that to be confusing. I toyed with using the word "club" and then opted to incorporate "meetup group" to account for the fact that this was intended to be extracurricular and not heavily structured (considering also that the term *meet* was increasingly associated with virtual events through the platforms such as meetup.com as well as Google Meet). I tried to think about what youth would most be seeking during this strange and difficult time, and the value of keywords such as "creative" and "together." It was also important to note the language around gender, and how, after discussions with my committee members, there was a need to shift from "female" to "girl-identifying" language, while not wanting to exclude youth who might identify as non-binary, gender-fluid, or gender non-conforming. I revised later versions of my recruitment documents to include non-binary as well as girl-identifying youth. I further expanded my inclusion criteria to include girls 12-17 to open up the potential pool and put more importance on an interest in video making vs. their age or developmental stage. I also applied for ethics approval and was granted permission to include a small honorarium to thank participants for their participation. I ultimately created close to two dozen versions of my recruitment documents.

By the end of the summer of 2020, I had directly contacted 23 organizations that were either youth-focused, offered extracurricular programming for youth, focused on girls' and women's issues, or involved in community-based media production. On top of this I reached out to a dozen or so colleagues and friends with connections to youth. I shared posts via LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. I cannot quantify the reach of all of my social media posts or those that several friends and organizations had kindly re-shared with their communities, although my two Twitter posts reached 720 and 410 people, 13 and 15 of whom interacted with the content respectively. I would continue to seek out participants in the months that followed and, with all of the challenges both children and their parents were experiencing with the emergency move to remote learning, I was unable to gather enough participants who were available for the same block of time until the following year.

Research/Field Site

In early Spring of 2021, one of the organizations I had contacted the previous fall followed up with me to express an interest in having me run a video-making program/intervention. This organization, which I refer to as “the Centre,” focuses on empowering underprivileged and/or racialized girl-identifying youth. It offers a variety of no-cost, hour-long afterschool programs as well as mentorship and other resources. Given the structural barriers and systems of oppression that close off opportunities in the media industry to those without sufficient social, cultural, and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986)—and that my larger goal was to support diversity amongst the future generation of media makers—this was an exciting development! The school research site I was close to securing pre-pandemic was comprised of students of high socioeconomic status and a community that skewed White (whose parents could conceivably afford to pay for their extracurricular interests, including enrolling in

media-making programming). I anticipated that the Centre's girl-identifying member base would encompass more ethnoracial diversity. I was also enthusiastic about offering digital storytelling to participants who might otherwise not have access to such programming (a silver lining to having the original site fall through). Over several conversations with the Executive Director and the Program Coordinator, I explained my research parameters, recruitment needs and shared an informational letter as well as a link to updated information about the study on my website. I explained that as a solo researcher-facilitator, I could support a maximum of nine participants but would require a minimum of four participants who consented, along with their parents' approval, to participate in the research.

Research Participants

After a short recruitment phase, ten girls—ranging in age from 11 to 17—signed up via the organization's website (selecting our digital storytelling program out of the activity offerings for the Spring term). A staff member contacted the parents of children who signed up to explain how this program was different from the other offerings, as the website did not indicate that this was part of a research study and passed along the consent/assent forms. This also involved confirming that each participant would have access to a smartphone with video capability, access to a computer to do video-editing (with cloud software I would provide), and WIFI access to attend Zoom sessions. I recognized that to create a truly equitable experience, I should have been able to provide devices to any interested students, but in this enforced virtual context, these were the necessary compromises. Fortunately, all participants indicated they had access to these resources. Over the next few weeks, both the organization staff and I gathered these forms, but also had to chase after forms for several participants. For perspective, on the first day of the program, I still did not have confirmed participants with all the paperwork signed, and so I

turned the session into an informational one about the study. The number of participants who stayed enrolled in the program, and had also consented/assented to participating in the research study, fluctuated:

- Out of the 10 girls who registered for the program, 8-9 girls (ranging in age from 11-17) came to the first session. Several girls joined in late. When it became clear that many participants were unclear as to the expectations and how this was also a research study, the session necessarily became an informational session.
- 3 girls stopped joining after sessions 2-3 (one contacted the Centre to say they wouldn't be continuing, one disappeared despite efforts to communicate with parents who said she would continue to attend, and a third emailed me close to the end of the program to say thank you but she wouldn't be continuing).
- From the start, 1 girl (11 years-old) would join the sessions but seemed to struggle to participate and understand and complete the activities. After the session, I contacted her parent to discuss what was required for the program, and the girl indicated that she would be able to continue. However, she was not able to keep up. After chatting with her one-on-one after another of the sessions, and based on what her parent had said, I recognized that she was looking for community and activities. She also indicated that she was happy just to observe and still feel a part of the group, and so that is how we proceeded for the remainder of the program.

The research participants comprised a group of four and, with a couple of exceptions, they attended all sessions, participated with enthusiasm and effort, and completed all of the video activities and research components. Although they gave permission for their names to be used in research, I opted to use pseudonyms in this study: Ziggy (11 years old and of Afro-Caribbean—

St. Lucian and Creole—heritage), Jeanette—Jeannie for short (12 years old and of Jamaican heritage as well as a Christian and Native-spirited background), Fernanda (14 years old and of Indian/South Asian heritage), and Alexia (17 years old and of Filipino heritage). All participants identified as girls. All appeared to be—given that they access free programming through the Centre—of lower socioeconomic status. And all were members of racialized populations, which I only became aware of in the first session of our program.

It is important to note that when I set out to recruit participants, my only inclusion criteria were that they needed to identify as girls or non-binary, fall into the tween or teen-age group, have a strong interest in video making, or have had previous experience making videos. I had anticipated that in a diverse city like Toronto, the participants would represent BIPOC communities, which I welcomed but which was not a pre-condition for participating. Although intersectionality was part of the theoretical framework informing this study, I entered into this research more interested in the wider identity marker of “girl-identifying tween or teen” and I did not explicitly design this study to focus on racialized girls. Reflexivity is widely accepted as a principle of feminist research practice: it supports the notion that knowledge is shaped by the specific contexts and/or circumstances in which it is situated and involves critical reflection on the part of the researcher. I note that having a group of racialized girl research participants brought important new considerations into the mix pertaining both to the design of both the video storytelling program and the research study, which I will expand upon later in this chapter. It also amplified the importance of striving to make power and the exercise of power explicit as well as to consider how my social background, location, and assumptions—or “positionality”—influenced the research process (Clarke et al., 2017; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012; Pillow, 2003; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

Positioning Myself in the Research

Reflexivity is an important consideration in research and even more so given the power imbalance that exists when working with youth participants. Hesse-Biber and Leckenby (2004) note that:

Feminist researchers are continually and cyclically interrogating their locations as both researcher and as feminist. They engage the boundaries of their multiple identities and multiple research aims through conscientious reflection. This engagement with their identities and roles impacts the earliest stages of research design. (p. 211)

In an effort to reveal the person driving this study and her motivations for exploring girls' video storytelling, I shared and reflected on select childhood and adult experiences in the first chapter of this dissertation. It is also important to acknowledge the additional power dynamics at work during the research process and a consideration of my positionality in relation to the marginalized and racialized status of the research participants.

As a self-identified creative and introverted person, it has been a journey unto itself to design research that aligns with who I am, the things matter to me, and how I want to connect with others and be of service. It has prompted me to consider the ways in which I approach my work with children and youth filtered through the lens of my own childhood. I was a sensitive and thoughtful child who preferred to express myself in writing and engage with people one-on-one. Looking back, I have a sense that I rarely if ever experienced these qualities being celebrated in the world, including the media, around me. Then, there was the added layer of having parents of different cultural backgrounds—my mother is of Polish descent and my father is Pontic Greek and grew up in areas that are today known as Georgia and Kazakhstan and with ancestry that stretches across what is modern-day Turkey. My parents' different cultural

backgrounds made life especially challenging in a time when communities of immigrants gathered according to a shared heritage; they faced cultural discrimination for many years and additional struggles to navigate this new country without social and economic capital. I attended schools with mainly White students with middle to high socioeconomic status as well as ethnoracially diverse students who could be considered low to middle class. As a result, I found myself identifying with each group in different ways while not quite ever fitting into either. Over the years, my friends reflected a variety of racial and ethnocultural backgrounds yet I found I had much more in common with first-generation Canadian as well as BIPOC kids versus White classmates who were second-generation or beyond and who were often far more wealthy. A common microaggression that I continue to experience to this day was having my first and last names mispronounced or even mocked—sometimes folks being apologetic about it and other times, unapologetically blaming my name for having too many syllables. I shared this experience with multisyllabic-named classmates and later colleagues of Filipino, Indian, and other ethnoracial heritage. For these and other reasons, I continue to consider my mixed cultural heritage as an important piece of my identity.

It is without a doubt that these collective experiences have also explicitly motivated my media work and efforts to honour the stories of individuals, especially children, that reflect the incredible diversity of humankind. I entered into this research with a similar intention, supported by my substantial experience working with children and youth throughout my media production years. In that profession, I came to view my relative sensitivity and interest in hearing people's stories to be assets: both child and adult participants alike over the years have communicated to me that I put them at ease and created an enjoyable and respectful environment and experience for them during the production process. I also set out to conduct this research in hopes that I would be able to cultivate a similar environment. One thread that weaves through the media

storytelling and scholarly research parts of my life is a deep curiosity about humans and their life experiences, and a desire to leverage the power of storytelling to foster connection and build understanding. These reasons further contributed to why I designed this project with an eye on participatory research methods, and with the desire to work hard to cultivate a safe, creative, and community-oriented space for participants. Furthermore, while I in no way aim to suggest that I can understand the world as seen through the eyes of a racialized person, experiencing other forms of marginalization or discrimination as a child has cultivated a sensitivity in me towards exclusionary practices and inequity. I also have come to acknowledge that feeling “othered” at times throughout my life created a false sense of kinship with racialized peers: this includes when conversations turn to childhood experiences growing up with less social and cultural (and economic) capital in relation to many of my White peers. As a result, I knew I would need to regularly remind myself throughout this study that my White skin has afforded me a layer of privilege that shields me from the systemic oppression and everyday struggles faced by marginalized populations. From a research design standpoint, this emphasized the importance of participatory, feminist, and arts-based methods and of making a conscious effort to read their data through an intersectional lens.

Ethical Considerations

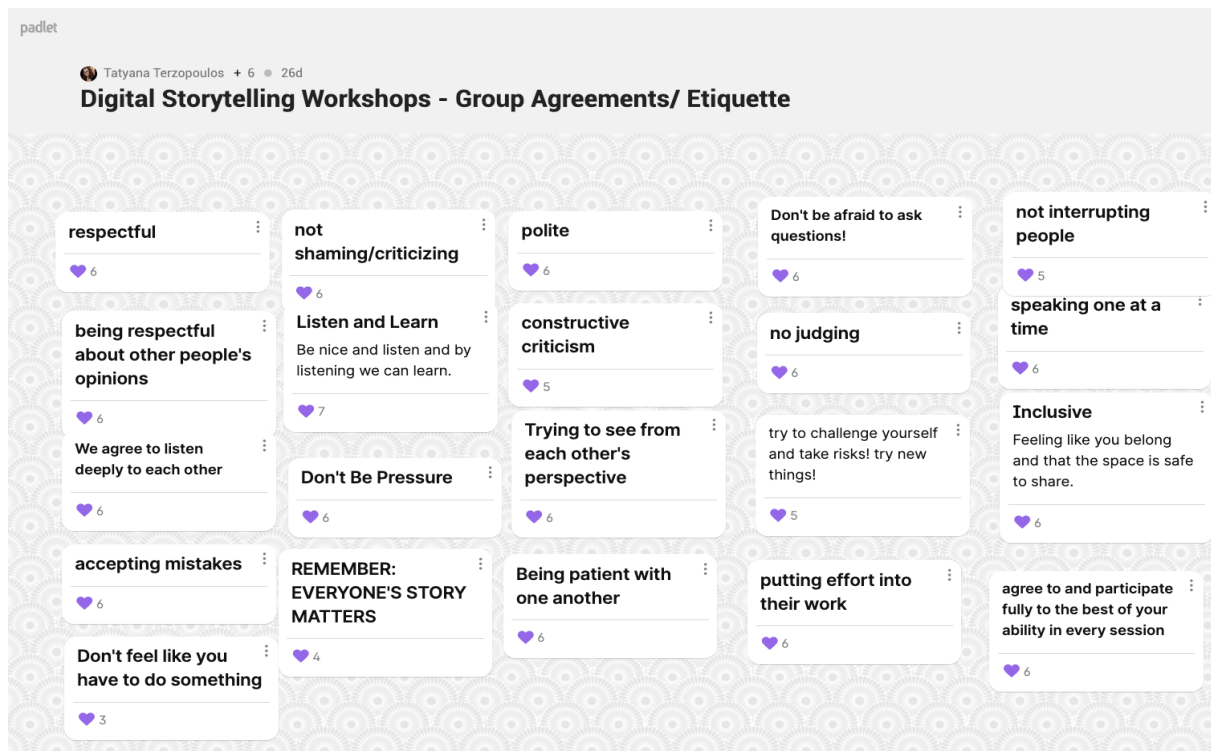
Working with youth involved a rigorous ethics review process. This research study, including several amendments to it, was approved by York University’s Ethics Board, as noted by approval certificate #STU 2020-029. Informational letters sent to parents included consent and assent letters indicating that the digital storytelling program was part of a PhD dissertation and what their commitment would be, while clearly indicating that participants could withdraw from the study at any time. In order to facilitate video-sharing between the participants and me, I created password-protected Google Drive folders for each participant via my university Google

account. Each time content was posted by a participant, I would proceed to transfer it to an encrypted hard drive that only I have access to; this information will be stored and destroyed five years after the completion of this study. The same security protocols will be applied to video interviews and video recordings of fieldwork. All of the participants' parents gave consent and the participants assented to having their real names and their images appear in my research. Although their images do appear in figures throughout in this dissertation, I opted to use pseudonyms to further protect a population that is considered vulnerable.

The very first Zoom meeting necessarily became an informational session for the participants while also giving me the opportunity to gauge more about their interest in this project, and their skill levels and experiences around video making. I spoke to them about what it meant to be a research participant as well as a co-researcher, and about my hope that they would record a vlog, agree to an interview/end-of-program conversation, and allow me to include and discuss their media projects in my dissertation. Drawing from the ladder of citizen participation model developed by Sherry Arnstein (1969) and expanded by Roger Hart (1992), my aim was to move away from non-participation and tokenistic participation and towards more of the partnership approach that is central to youth participatory and youth-engaged research methodologies. In an effort to balance some of the power dynamics between us, we co-constructed a program agreements/etiquette document in real time, using the Padlet web-based tool (see Figure 1):

Figure 1

Program agreements/etiquette Padlet document co-constructed with participants.



As previously discussed in Chapter 3, another important consideration is the role of adults in these types of learning experiences. With the tight timeframe, I entered into this study intending to position myself as much as possible as what Blum-Ross (2015) referred to as a “guide” rather than a collaborator or mentor. At the same time, I was very conscious of my outsider status as well as the limited time I had to cultivate the kinds of organic and authentic relationships that have always been important components of my work. I clearly understood that many of these students had been sitting in their homes looking at their teachers through a computer monitor for months. This made it less surprising that they approached our Zoom format as well as their interactions with me, especially in the first few weeks, with a sense of formality culturally expected from youth dealing with adult authority figures. I picked up on this formality and it was a source of frustration for me: creating the best possible environment for

community and collaboration that moved away from the more formal nature of school-based learning had been a key goal from the beginning. Within the limited timeframe and virtual context I worked, putting the ideas around community-based youth media programs and the role of adults that I had explored in my literature review—including striving for a “pedagogy of collegiality” (Chavez & Soep, 2005), positioning myself as a “co-conspirator” (Mahendran 2009, as cited in Ito et al., 2009), as well as a “collaborator” (Blum-Ross, 2015)—were no longer realistic goals. I decided the best way to minimize at least some of the formality was to prioritize opportunities for participants to connect, including in breakout rooms, and share their knowledge with each other over any instruction I would give. Again, I took my direction from much of Ito and colleagues’ work around youth digital media cultures and the tenets of connected learning (Ito et al., 2009, 2012).

We also had another person in attendance for all of our sessions, whose presence and support within this study cannot be understated. It was the Centre’s policy to always have a staff member present for sessions, and, after discussion with the staff, they agreed to assign the same person to all of the digital storytelling sessions. This 20-something-year old woman was invaluable in cultivating as safe and as comfortable a space as possible, as she was familiar to many of the participants. She also helped with my data collection by assisting in recording some of the breakout rooms. I discovered that, behind-the-scenes, she would sometimes be contacting participants if they were late to join our Zoom sessions and learned that it was a common practice across the organization to provide gentle reminders or check-ins with its members, during this challenging time. Through my interactions with this young woman, I was afforded some insight into how unique this organization was, as well as the importance of what it offered to its girl members in the way of leadership, community, and care. Adding to this, I discovered

that many of the girls recognized each other's faces from other program Zoom sessions, as it was common for members of the Centre to join multiple programs in each programming cycle.

Program/Intervention Design

The research site/organization agreed to two 1-1.5-hour sessions per week over four weeks for a total of eight sessions. I designed the experience around mobile-filmmaking or “cellphilms” (Dockney & Tomaselli, 2009; MacEntee et al., 2016; Mitchell & De Lange, 2012) to focus on cultivating storytelling skills and media production techniques while using equipment they were already familiar with. Videos produced in the intervention/program were made using participants' smartphones, and in most cases edited on laptops/desktops. While my initial plan was to bring in some higher quality/newer smartphones to work with to ensure consistent quality and equal access across participants, as well as laptops with Adobe Premiere software for editing, the virtual context made this impossible. Instead, a requirement for participation became having access to a smartphone. Participants used their own smartphones for filming as well as editing, although they were encouraged to and supported in their use of WeVideo—a collaborative, web-based video-editing software that I had generously been given a trial educator license for. This particular editing tool appealed to me for this project as it: 1) allowed participants to share content with each other for group projects; 2) allowed multiple people to be in the same project while working at the same time; and 3) it allowed me to put comments and suggestions directly onto their editing timeline. Not all participants ended up using WeVideo, and many edited with different mobile-based apps such as KineMaster, which I will discuss in more detail in the data reporting chapters.

As per ideas presented in the first chapter of the literature review, I had initially planned to emulate more of a community-based youth media approach rather than a formal media-

making curriculum. Once again, it was necessary that I evolve my approach as a result of both the pandemic and the field site organization's request for a brief, skills-based program. As a result, I evolved my plans to represent more of a balance between the above two approaches. The program involved an emphasis on the creative skills, slightly more than the technical skills of video storytelling, while still supporting tenets of feminist media pedagogy. This involved a balanced a top-down delivery of information while encouraging a space where participants' existing knowledge and expertise were shared and applied, low-tech filmmaking tools, and framing some activities around video-based social media platforms, namely YouTube and TikTok, and their aesthetics and trends. This approach was further supported by the participatory-skewing practices I often favoured in my media production career, where I aimed to prioritize participants' own explorations and experimentations and support their self-directed efforts over teaching (e.g., video storytelling aesthetics and techniques). Once again, drawing from scholars' observations of informal youth digital media cultures and the role of community and relationships, I planned for a mix of in-session activities that focused on relationship-building. I also introduced multiple video projects for participants to complete outside of the sessions with an emphasis on exploring creative visual storytelling techniques.

Reflexivity involves critical reflection and introspection with regards to how research process may need to be adapted to suite new information about participants (Kirsch, 1999); this was indeed the case for me with regards to modifying what I could in terms of the video storytelling program in the incredibly tight window between securing participants and beginning the study. As a White woman, I did not set out to work exclusively with racialized girls nor would I have done so without extensive consideration at the research design stage in conjunction with ongoing collaboration and consultation with non-White identifying co-researchers and co-

program/intervention facilitators.²¹ I admit that I was at times troubled and frustrated by the fact that I was a non-racialized person conducting this research. I was especially concerned about causing any potential harm to this particular group of research participants resulting from any unconscious racial bias that I might hold. I had some foundational knowledge of anti-oppressive, democratic, culturally-responsive and relevant pedagogies via my graduate studies within a faculty of education. Kirsch (1999) notes that moments of doubt and discomfort can encourage reflexivity:

It is, however, important that I note that as a relative newcomer to teaching as well as community facilitation, I had only very recently experienced opportunities to learn about these pedagogies or translate them into practice. Thus, I entered into this research with an overall emphasis on care and on creating as equitable, inclusive, and safe an experience as possible. For me, this involved practicing kindness and respect as always, but placing an even greater emphasis on active and deep listening practices and trying to honour their perspectives as much as possible. It was important that I consider how I could ensure that I incorporated tenets of anti-racist pedagogies (Baker-Bell, 2020; Chavez, 2021), social justice pedagogy as discussed by Learning for Justice (learningforjustice.org), and culturally responsive pedagogy and reflective teaching (El Ashmawi et al., 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995) into both the intervention design and my facilitation approach. This was far from the ideal scenario, in which research and intervention design are carefully planned as decolonizing projects, with the needs and identities of racialized and marginalized communities front and centre. In the short

²¹ I was also brought back to the critical awareness that I began to develop as a graduate student in reflecting upon my media production career. During that time, I recall entering into spaces with an interest in listening and also encouraging participants to feel like collaborators in the process where possible; what I came to recognize is that these “good intentions” didn’t necessarily mean that I was not at times complicit in harm to racialized or marginalized groups on a micro level, as a part of an institution fraught with systemic racism and other forms of oppression that permeated all parts of the industry.

timeframe between securing participants and beginning the intervention, I strove instead to create as safe and inclusive an environment as possible, in which participants could feel comfortable sharing and focus on video-making projects where they had free reign over what parts of themselves and their lives they explored. During the brief instruction portions of the sessions, I made a conscious effort to bring in examples of content that reflected diversity as well as featured racialized youth, as examples to illustrate techniques and inspire participants' work. As I will discuss further in the next chapter, having a small group of participants with wildly different interests and skill levels regarding video-production required me to adjust some of the program content as we moved along. It was more important to create space for participants to explore video storytelling at their own pace and comfort level. A smaller group, thankfully, also allowed me to support and encourage each participant more directly.

Time was carved out in the sessions to allow for sharing of and discussion about the videos participants created, if they wished. In the interest of maintaining an alignment with the feminist theory and public pedagogy-informed theoretical framework of this study, the overarching theme for the video tasks we explored in the media-making intervention was "life as a girl." I encouraged participants to think about who they are and the stories that capture the different aspects of their identity and experiences, as well as their interests. At the same time, I note that we did not explicitly discuss race nor position it as a focus for any of our activities.

The video projects included:

- 1) a "Silent Story/Day In My Life" video: a 30-60 second video collage that focused on working with different camera angles, framing, and movement and to be created without dialogue (music and other sounds were exceptions);

- 2) an audio poem entitled “Where I Am From,”²² where participants added personal details to a writing template and proceeded to record their voice reciting the poem;²³
- 3) a 2-3-minute Profile Story video of a fellow participant, focusing on an interview and incorporating B-roll footage to support the focus of the story.

I designed these to be somewhat scaffolded, focusing on different components of digital storytelling and increasing in complexity. In all cases, I created an information sheet for the task and posted it on our Padlet space along with any supporting guides or links to examples. While I had initially envisioned more group-work projects, upon noting that skill and commitment levels varied considerably across all participants, I adapted the plans to include only one partner-based project at the end. I also anticipated that if there were too many challenges for participants in collaborating on this last project, they could instead work independently and opt to add visuals to their audio poem.

Sessions took place over Zoom for 1-1.5 hours after school on Thursdays and Fridays (see Figure 2). I would always stay to answer questions or support participants who needed or wanted it, which resulted in an additional 0.5-1.5 hours of time spent online on several occasions. Most sessions began with a short ice-breaker activity with participants organized into pairs in breakout rooms and given a few minutes to connect and respond to one of two question prompts, drawing inspiration from the virtual events I had attended. This was inspired by the virtual experiences I

²² This project draws from George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From” poem: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>. The poem has been used in poetry-writing classes in the US and beyond and is successful in part because lesson plans are built around a template, while allowing for students’ unique histories and interests to come to the fore (Montgomery & Jetter, 2016).

²³ The audio-based project we engaged in in our program drew from an activity guide prepared by the University of Minnesota’s Center for Educational Innovation: https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I_Am_From_Faculty_Guide.pdf and was further inspired by StoryCenter’s digital storytelling model (Lambert, 2013).

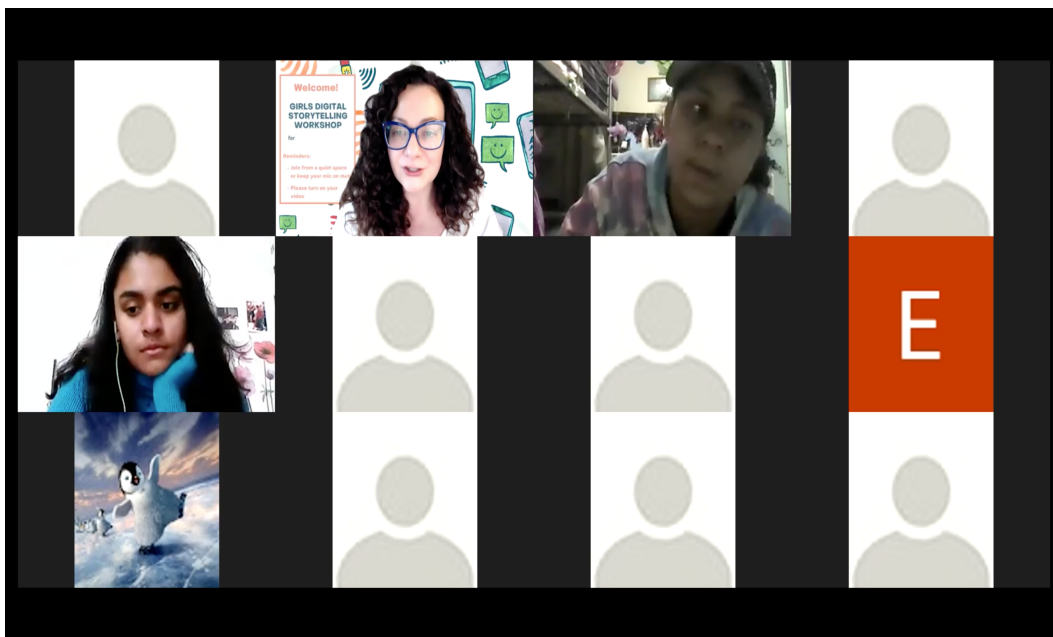
described earlier in this section as well as suggestions from *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* (2021) by Felicia Rose Chavez. In the book, the author recommends shifting the power dynamic by sitting in a circle. While I could not emulate a true circle in Zoom, I could use its functionality to recreate smaller, more intimate spaces for the youth to speak to each other within. Next, we would go through a short lesson and/or discuss how a video-making task had gone and watch or listen to their creations together, to give and receive feedback. In the instances where I was providing information, I tried to include examples of stories that represented marginalized groups and non-dominant perspectives. The feedback sometimes happened in the main room and sometimes in breakout rooms. For example, in the case of the audio poem, I had participants only share their work in breakout rooms in an effort to acknowledge and respect the highly personal nature of the work and in hopes that this might encourage them to discuss more openly than they might have in the main room. In feedback sessions, I always put the focus on the girls, endeavouring to draw out the girls' feedback of each other's work before offering my own thoughts. Sometimes, I reserved my feedback entirely but always offered something for the participants to consider through audio-recorded messages that I posted privately via Microsoft Teams. The audio-recordings were an attempt to speak more conversationally and differentiate my thoughts and interactions from the types of written feedback they might receive in a more formal schooling context from their teachers.

Topics we covered in the sessions included: how to define a digital story; the different components of a video (images/visuals, sound/audio, story/script, and editing); the difference between fiction and non-fiction content; lighting, camera angles and movement; the definitions and functions of A-Roll and B-Roll; the three stages/phases of digital storytelling; planning documents; and interview skills. Striving to make the sessions as dynamic as possible—as well as keeping in mind that many of these participants were already spending large portions of their

day staring at their screens for virtual school—I integrated multimodal tools such as Google Slides, Padlet, and Mentimeter. I planned to use Teams to post supporting documents such as activity instructions and session slides, but also to have a place where I could message participants via a chat interface rather than an email one. I later shifted to post all supporting documents and information on Padlet after testing it out with participants and noting that they appeared to prefer it. Padlet also appealed to my own desire for an aesthetic visual tool that gave my eyes and mind a break from other text-focused platforms. I would continue to use Teams for the chat function and note that I had a sense that participants did feel free to use it to communicate with me, although one or two of the older students would still default to emailing me.

Figure 2

Zoom screenshot from the first “informational” program session.



A Note about Video Making and Storytelling During a Pandemic

The evolving pandemic had a definite impact on my research design. Beginning the intervention and fieldwork during a time when the Greater Toronto Area was in the middle of stay-at-home protocols, I carefully considered the therapeutic component of art making and media making in community contexts. Patricia Leavy notes how arts-based researchers have followed in the footsteps of creative arts therapists to explore goals such as “meaning-making, empowerment, identity exploration, emotional expression, multisensory communication, consciousness-raising, healing, self-reflection and personal growth, relational connections, intersubjectivity, and expressive power” (G. Chilton, personal communication as cited in Leavy, 2015). Creative arts therapy is “a hybrid discipline, primarily grounded in the fields of the arts and psychology” which “assumes that the arts have unique healing capabilities and draws directly on visual art, drama, dance, music, poetry, and literature as well as integrated arts approaches” (Leavy, 2015, p. 28). Cathy A. Malchiodi (2005), a key scholar in this area, outlines the following elements and characteristics of creative arts therapies: self-expression, active participation, imagination (as a healing agent), and mind–body connection. This aligns with what Joe Lambert (2013) has said with regards to the digital storytelling model employed at the Center for Digital Storytelling/StoryCenter:

we do not pretend to have license to function as therapeutic facilitators. The material that explains and markets our work does not suggest that this environment should be formally approached as a healing process. But it would be inconceivable, incomprehensible, and irresponsible if we did not recognize the emotional and spiritual consequence of this work.
(p. 83)

While I am in no way conflating the girls' media-making program/intervention I facilitated with professional therapy, I was inspired by the above quote to focus on not only designing storytelling activities but on cultivating a supportive environment with the potential to offer some reprieve from the trauma of the ongoing pandemic. I further considered Treffey-Goatley and colleagues' (2017) suggestion of a conscious, ethical effort, when applying participatory visual methods like digital storytelling and cellphilms, to go beyond ensuring that the experience "does not harm" the participants, and instead to emphasize a process that is rewarding and/or beneficial to them (Bush, 2010; Murove, 2009; Theron et al., 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter offered insights into my positionality as a researcher, discussed the recruitment and research design process, including how it evolved because of the pandemic, and offered additional information regarding research site, participants, and ethical considerations. It also outlined the evolving design of the media-making program/intervention and video storytelling activities. In the next chapter, I discuss my research methodology as well as my approach to data collection/generation and the evolving nature of my process of analysis.

Chapter Six: Methodology, Data Collection/Generation, and Overview of Analysis Process

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the qualitative case study methodology, supported by elements of arts-based research, that I applied to this study and how it further aligned with the feminist-informed nature of my inquiry. I then outline my data generation/collection methods which involved multiple forms of multimodal data as well as both participant- and researcher-generated sources; I refer to Appendices A-C where I provide the questions used in the questionnaire, the guiding questions/instructions for the vlogs, and the guiding questions for the semi-structured interview. I then offer a summary of the data I took forward into the analysis stage. Next, I describe the evolution of my approach to data analysis. This discussion encompasses my initial coding process and introduces narrative portraiture methodology, which both supported my primary research aim and inspired my subsequent approach to analyzing as well as presenting research findings.

Before proceeding, I wish to note how my worldview and the feminist nature of this project influenced the overall research design, as “feminists tend to view research in holistic terms” (Maynard, 2004, p. 131). As a researcher, I am most aligned with a view of reality as socially constructed, and that multiple realities exist for different people (Grbich, 2013; Merrigan et al., 2012) while also recognizing versions of reality are based on social positioning and therefore require a critique of power, privilege, and oppression. This critique includes addressing power dynamics in researcher-participant relationships, or what are referred to as constructivist and transformational (Cresswell, 2013), or interpretive and critical (Merriam, 1998) paradigms respectively. A social constructionist paradigm in research focuses on an “examination of the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences in the worlds in which they live”

(Grbich, 2012, p. 7) and relies both on the participants' views of the situation being studied, and how researchers' backgrounds contribute to their interpretation of the research (Cresswell, 2009). These perspectives unite at a pluralist view of knowledge, which aligns well with a qualitative methodology (Grbich, 2012). Girlhood and girls' media culture/studies scholars have called for an expansion of the range of methodologies being used to study *for* and *with* girls; these include the application of ethnographic approaches and feminist criticism, and an overall move to amplify the voices and perspectives of girls themselves (Hains, 2012; Kearney, 2011; Keller et al., 2015). This study thus aimed to respond to these calls through an effort to centre participants' voices, and by focusing on, as feminist researchers often strive to do, participants' meanings and interpretations, which in return enable them to "see the social world through their participants' eyes" (Maynard, 2004, p. 133). While there is much debate amongst feminist researchers with regards to methodology, there appears to be a general acceptance by many as to the particular suitability of qualitative forms of research (Maynard, 2004).

A Qualitative, Multi-Methodology Approach

A qualitative approach is well suited to a project which intersects the social sciences and the arts/media, as well as one that aims to produce a holistic account of the research topic (Creswell, 2009; Grbich, 2012). A hallmark of qualitative research is the open-ended research question which can be exploratory as well as descriptive (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The open-ended nature of my questions signalled my intention to both explore and describe participants' experiences with and approaches to video making. This project further meets Creswell's (2013) criteria of a qualitative method of inquiry: the researcher (I) was a key instrument; the project involved multiple sources of data; I aimed to undertake an inductive method of analysis; I was interested in participants' meanings; I applied a theoretical lens

through which to view the study; and my form of inquiry was interpretive, recognizing that interpretations cannot be separated from my background and prior understandings (p. 39).

Case studies are particularly useful for research that asks how, what, or why questions (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Stake (1995) notes that there is a “palette of methods” to select from in case study research and that qualitative case studies often draw from “naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods” (p. xi). Stake’s word choice of palette resonates with the arts-based nature of my research, and I suggest it reflects an image of the researcher as an artist or creative practitioner. My primary focus involved illustrating girls’ experiences of and approaches to video making, further positioning this project as a “descriptive” case study (Baxter & Jack, 2015; see also Yin, 2014). I also aimed to consider what I discovered about this small group of participants’ video-making experiences and approaches in relation to the development of girls’ video-making programs, positioning this as an “instrumental” case study (Baxter & Jack, 2015; see also Stake, 1995).

My inquiry into girls’ video making further comprised both observing and examining their processes, and my research questions were framed and phrased to imply an emphasis on description, exploration, and discovery; this is how Patricia Leavy (2015) situates arts-based research (ABR). ABR does not offer a “prescriptive set of methods for generating and representing empirical materials”, but rather represents an “umbrella term” for different methodologies that align with a “constructivist, emotive, empiricist research aesthetic” (Finlay, 2008, p. 79). Recalling the overarching feminist framing of this project, ABR is especially well-aligned as it “makes use of diverse ways of knowing and experiencing the world” (Finlay, 2008, p.79; see also Grbich, 2012). Susan Finlay (2008) also notes that:

by its integration of multiple methodologies used in the arts with the post-modern ethics of participative, action-oriented, and politically situated perspectives for human social inquiry, arts-based inquiry has the potential to facilitate critical race, indigenous, queer, feminist, and border theories and research methodologies. (p. 71)

Data Collection/Generation Methods

To support a qualitative and arts-based case study methodology, I utilized multiple data collection methods, some generated by the participants and some by me. Figure 3 provides a chronological breakdown of the data collection methods I used, when I collected each source of data, and who generated the data.

Entrance Questionnaire

As I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, due to time constraints between confirming research participants and starting the video-storytelling program, my original plan to conduct interviews before the program began wasn't possible. This would have allowed me to gain a better understanding of each of the participants and note significant themes to track and to follow up on in the second interview at the end of the study. Instead, I quickly created and distributed a brief digital questionnaire with a few short answers. This was intended to support our conversations in the introductory session and allow me to get a further sense of the participants' reason for signing up, their editing experience and interests, and the devices they had access to before we moved into the rest of the program.²⁴

²⁴ Questionnaire questions and a general interview question list are available in Appendices A and C.

Figure 3*Data Collection Methods, Sources, and Contributors*

	Data Collection Method	Details
Pre-Workshop	Short-Answer ‘Entrance’ Questionnaire	1 completed per participant
During Workshop	Vlogs/video diaries	Each participant contributed one or more of these at their discretion over the course of the program—these were then transcribed to text via an AI web-based transcription tool
	Video Project Artifacts: completed projects and additional video footage	Each participant contributed 2 or more video projects. Additional footage included some of the raw video footage not necessarily included in the final project, as well as recordings of one pair’s Zoom call to conduct their interviews for their Profile Story videos
	Email and Text-based correspondence (Zoom and Microsoft Teams chats)	
	Observational (video) footage of the workshop sessions/breakout rooms	
	Researcher field notes and reflections	Audio and/or video recorded and transcribed to text via an AI web-based transcription tool
Post Workshop	Semi-structured, video-recorded ‘exit’ interview	1-1.5 hours with each participant—audio transcribed to text via an AI web-based transcription tool

Vlogs/Video Diaries and Video Project Artifacts

Video-generated data are frequently utilized in participatory research methods (Gubrium et al., 2015; Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Milne et al., 2012). Visual data sources are said to evoke the senses and are of value in revealing the affective aspects of participants' experiences (Rose, 2016). Participant-generated visual and media-based approaches are well-suited for research with young people, positioning them as knowledge producers (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Prosser & Burke, 2008; Porter et al., 2020). Scholars note that visual data is helpful where traditional methods might not fully access what a researcher is inquiring about, and visual research tools can offer an additional perspective that "elaborates" on the data (Leavy, 2015). An artistic component for self-expression can be helpful in teasing out perspectives from children and youth, as Pink (2013) posits when observing that moving images can convey that which written description often cannot (as cited in Rose, 2016, p. 330).

I asked the participants to record short vlogs, also sometimes referred to as video diaries, on their smartphones throughout the program. The goal here was to allow them to speak on their own terms and decide what to speak about regarding the experience. I provided them with sample questions and recorded a short vlog as an example and shared these resources on Padlet. I indicated that they should aim to produce a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 vlogs, and that each vlog should be about 2-3 minutes long. I also gave them the option of recording a voice log instead. I recommended recording a vlog once a week, either right after the second (last) session that week or after they had completed a video project so that they could talk about that experience.²⁵ In my previous experience, limitations of this approach are that commentary can be very surface level and brief, especially as there is no way to ensure participants speak to all

²⁵ I include the instruction document I created for this task in Appendix B.

talking points/themes, nor is there a way to ask them to clarify their responses. I collected participants' video projects mostly to better understand their video-making approaches and processes and also because, given the virtual context of the study, I was in a position to witness little if any of these elements. I also collected their various video projects, intending to see what they offered in terms of insights into participants' video-making approaches.

Observational Footage (documentation of the research site, participants, and activities) and Researcher Reflections

Given my dual role as facilitator and researcher in this study, video-recorded observational footage was a necessary part of my data collection, including to capture an “objective” documentation of activities (Cresswell, 2018). The shift to a virtual research study both complicated and simplified this method of data collection. On the one hand, I was able to record entire sessions with one click of a button. On the other hand, I could only record the rooms that I was connected to, which created a dilemma for me in that I was hoping to collect data from all the breakout rooms as well. It would be interesting to consider participant dynamics as well as what they shared in these smaller, more intimate spaces. I anticipated this would contrast considerably with the less intimate and unavoidable classroom feel of the main Zoom room. Although far from a perfect solution, I explained to participants that they should try to ignore me if I ever popped into their breakout room. I noted that I would turn off my camera to signal that I was stepping into my researcher role. I was also able to request the assistance of the staff member who was present for all sessions to enter and record some of the breakout rooms as well.

Fieldnotes, including observational notes (using all senses where possible) and analytical memos (tending to take place as the end of a day in the field) are often used to support qualitative research methodologies that seek to understand participants' lived experiences

(Groenewald, 2004). Flowing back and forth between and sometimes simultaneously performing the roles of facilitator and researcher in this study (and as this work is heavily informed by my own journey as a women media-maker), I opted to record voice notes prior to or after sessions which I then transcribed so that I could review them. Further, the process of writing notes can also help revise and adapt future interview questions (Caelli, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1984, as cited in Groenewald, 2004); this was the case for me as I adapted the list of guiding questions (see Appendix C) for each participant based on observations I made throughout the program.

The “Exit” Interview

Open-ended and semi-structured interviews are often a key method in qualitative research, and particularly in feminist research (Cresswell, 2013). This was indeed the case for this project. However, conducting interviews with children can be challenging, in part because it can be difficult to verify whether participants have fully understood the question without structuring questions in a leading way, which can lead to participants offering answers that they feel the researcher wants to hear. In the spirit of participatory research, I began each interview by indicating that participants should feel free to take the conversation in new directions as well as contribute their own questions. I also often followed threads that they introduced, especially if they seemed excited to talk about something specifically. In this way, I endeavoured to situate each participant as a “knowledgeable guide” about her own experiences and perspectives (Linde, 2008; Vasudevan & Riina-Ferrie, 2019).

In the spirit of semi-structured and open-ended interviewing, I prepared guiding interview questions.²⁶ Each interview began with a discussion of the participant’s previous experiences with videomaking, general interests, school life, etc. Much of this was motivated by my own

²⁶ See Appendix C for a list of these guiding questions.

experiences with media making as a child, as discussed in the introduction, and a curiosity around the interconnected moments and variables that shaped each girl's media-making interests and path. After that, we moved into their overall experience with the program and different topics we covered with regards to video making as well as some Zoom activities. Next, given that I was interested in understanding their media-making approaches, which I viewed as emerging out of both process and product (Blum-Ross, 2013; Harvey et al., 2002), we engaged in a specific discussion about each of the videomaking activities and the video projects that they had created. I had intended to also incorporate video elicitation (Pink, 2013); however, with only this one extended opportunity to connect one-on-one and that I was unable to ask many of these questions in an "entrance" interview, I made the decision to omit this component. I did, however, reference specific parts of the girls' projects, and, given that many had just completed them only days before, their memories were still quite fresh.

Returning to the challenging nature of conducting these types of interviews with children, I noted that I was more so challenged by the virtual interview format. I did not anticipate having trouble establishing a similar comfortable rapport and natural flow of conversation which I had perfected in a career involving conducting interviews with people of all ages. I suspect this was the result of not being able to pick up on facial and body language and other cues as I was accustomed to doing with in-person contexts. I noticed too, beyond the context of this study, that a Zoom etiquette has emerged where people tended to err on the side of waiting a few extra seconds to ensure they don't speak on top of someone else. This new etiquette, combined with meeting participants' keeping themselves on mute and unmuting only when they are called on, often resulted in a lack of an easily flowing conversation. These interviews were recorded with the intention of creating text-based transcripts for analysis purposes. As such, I focused less on

taking notes during them and more on ensuring that I understood what a participant was saying, and that she felt comfortable in this artificial and unfamiliar context.

Summary of Data Collected

I collected: 11 vlogs (ranging in length from 20 seconds to 3 minutes); video-recorded interviews that totalled close to 5 hours (196 pages of transcripts); 8 completed digital questionnaires consisting of 5 short questions, given out at the beginning of the program; 15 pieces of media (video and audio) stories produced by participants (including drafts and final creations)²⁷; video recordings of 8 Zoom sessions, as well as an additional session with two participants who performed their co-interviews for the profile and accompanying audio transcripts and saved chats; transcripts and screenshots of the chats in Microsoft Teams; a Google Doc planning document from one pair of participants; and my own field notes and reflections recorded as voice notes and transcribed (1 hour of recordings and 46 pages of transcripts).

Data Analysis - Part 1: Coding

Keeping in mind the overall case study design of this research and my main research goal around aiming to understand each participant's video-making experiences and approaches, I initially focused on analyzing the interviews. I began by reviewing one transcribed interview at a time and engaging in a manual, open-coding process. This reflected my effort to let the data speak for itself and see which themes or narratives stood out to me, while being careful not to impose too many labels too early on (Grbich, 2013). As I read, I took notes on key words or themes that came up repeatedly and made other observations such as places where the participant offered a notably robust response to a question or offered especially detailed insights on a topic.

²⁷ I discuss what each participant created in their dedicated Chapter (6-10).

Next, I imported all interview and vlog transcripts into NVivo. To reiterate, I was aiming to develop an understanding of girls' video-making experiences as well as their approaches. As such, my coding considered girls' development of creative, social, and technical skills in relation to media production (Buckingham et al. 1995; Goodman, 2003). For example, I noted any references made to previous video-making experiences, the use of video-making terminology, and described limitations or challenges around video making, etc. But I also noted references to interactions and experiences with the other participants as well as me. I further paid attention to language (in vivo coding) to see if there were repeated phrases or expressions that might reveal insights about a participant's interests and personality, as well as her experiences (Saldaña, 2013). During the first few "cycles" of coding (Saldaña, 2013), I found that I had built an extensive list of codes²⁸ including:

- Potential influences on their **video-making approaches** from an aesthetic as well as a technical standpoint (e.g., types of videos they watch, creators they enjoy and where they go to watch videos, other media they enjoy, and other interests)
- Particular aspects of video-making interest (initially considering the planning, filming, and editing phases of media production)
- Reference to/evidence of prior **video-making learning or experience or skills** and reference to/potential examples of learning and skills development in the program
- Reference to any particular **video-making techniques, platforms, or terminology**
- Reference to **feelings** of excitement, discouragement, pride, etc.
- Experiences with the various projects in the program
- Comments on the program

²⁸ Parent codes are underlined and in bold; sub-codes are underlined.

- Reoccurring **language/expressions**

I made an effort to apply a “block and file” approach throughout this process to keep the narratives as intact as possible, to avoid having the data become “decontextualized,” and because I planned to use excerpts in the reporting. Next, I set out to apply an “accordion-like” approach, which “expands and contracts categories and begins to reveal relationships across them” (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p. 46).

I found this approach and process well-suited in supporting the secondary goal of this study and informing a discussion around effective video-making program design and necessary supports and other considerations for girl video storytellers.²⁹ However, my main research goal was to explore participants’ video-making experiences and approaches and what stood out to me during this coding process was just how unique each participant’s video-making journey was. During this phase, I also found myself frequently reflecting on my own journey as a media storyteller and considering my own experiences engaging with the research participants. I also begin to consider how I would present their stories in a way that would both honour them and maintain my feminist-informed research commitments. I wish to “interrupt” this discussion to describe how my data analysis process shifted in light of these considerations.

²⁹ In hindsight, I also reflect that I may have “defaulted” to this approach to coding as it was what I was most familiar with. My previous experiences with data analysis almost exclusively involved coding participant interviews and building code books. I also have a sense, now, of being a bit daunted by the amount of data I had generated and wanting more common themes to emerge to help me organize it.

Narrative Portraiture and Writing Feminist Research

The “emergent” nature of feminist research includes uncovering elements that may not be anticipated, going in fluid directions, and leaving room for unintended but valuable insights (DeVault & Gross, 2012). In *The Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, Chakravarty et al. (2012) suggest that feminist researchers pay a great deal of attention not only to what they write but also to how they write it and how the representational quality of research is an important element of feminist research dissemination, “including the development of multiple strategies for the dissemination of research findings” (p. 694). Further, as Creswell (2018) notes, the researcher is considered a key instrument in qualitative research and interpretations cannot be separated from their background and prior understandings. A feminist research approach also acknowledges that the researcher is part of discovery and understanding process (Kelly et al., 1994) and considers the researcher’s relationship with the participants (Pillow & Mayo, 2012). Furthermore, an arts-informed methodology (Knowles & Cole, 2008) often includes “*strong reflexive elements* that evidence the presence and signature of the researcher” (p. 61). While I felt that I understood these ideas conceptually and had applied them to the research design and approach thus far, I was less certain about how to factor them into the data analysis and dissemination stages. It was at this point that I encountered literature describing and/or engaging with a narrative portraiture methodology. This literature seemed to both articulate and offer a remedy for my uncertainty and the challenges I was experiencing and especially the tension I was experiencing as a researcher straddling the arts and social sciences and how to both approach and communicate about my findings in a way that aligned with my methodological commitments.

Narrative portraiture is described as a qualitative methodology that blends art and science (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016). It draws from ethnography, narrative inquiry, phenomenological research, and arts-based research that utilizes and positions interviews and field notes as key data sources, focuses on participants' stories, and pays attention to aesthetics in both data collection and dissemination (Travis, 2020). Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot is attributed with developing this methodology in 1983, and it was further developed with Jessica Hoffman Davis (1997). They describe five key features of this methodology: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and aesthetic whole. Voice points to the fact that the researcher's voice is present: "as witness, as interpretation, as preoccupation, as autobiography, as discerning others or listening for the voices of other identities or feelings, and as voice in dialogue through interviewing and having informal conversations with participants" (Given, 2008, p. 645). Portraiture research not only maintains the researcher's voice throughout the research but insists on a vigilance about offering enough room for alternative interpretations of the data (Given, 2008). As Gaztambide-Fernandez and colleagues note (2011), narrative portraiture "underscores the relational and phenomenological aspects of research that are usually ignored in deductive or confirmatory research, opening up opportunities for exploring the intricacies of becoming a researcher through firsthand experience. For example, portraiture highlights the researcher's role in constructing a vivid representation of the context and the participants by making herself visible and explicit as the instrument of research" (p. 5). This methodology positions description as both interpretive and analytic, and portraits are formed out of relationships that are attentive to an ethics of care (Gaztambide-Fernandez et al., 2011). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2016) notes that her approach endeavours to "map[] the aesthetic context that surrounds the person or the institution, seeking to capture sensory dimensions, the visual, the tactile, the auditory" and "'listen[s] for' metaphors, the images, the allusions people use, and the repetitive refrains that lace" the participants' talk; the

portraitist then proceeds to triangulate the data from these multiple sources (p. 22). Lisa Given (2008) posits that portraiture aims to “record and interpret the perspectives” of the participants (p. 644). Finally, portraits also support the goal of engaging in discussions about the arts in education with audiences beyond academia (Gaztambide-Fernandez et al., 2011). These ideas align with the principles and tenets of feminist research, including that the data analysis process cannot be separated from data collection and writing, and that “writing and choosing how to tell the stories of our research are political acts as well as places of responsibility—as we code, theme, and imagine our data, we are, in essence, writing and constructing our text” (Pillow & Mayo, 2012, p. 197).

Data Analysis - Part 2: A “Holistic” Approach and Crafting Video-storytelling “Personas”

Narrative portraiture emboldened me to expand my approach to analyzing and discussing the data. It created the opportunity to consider themes I already noted in the process of coding various data while opening up space for a more holistic exploration and presentation of each participant’s data. It also supported my increasing desire to produce narratives about each participant. This involved a more holistic approach where I immersed myself into each participant’s data, moving back and forth across all of her data sources and even moving between digital transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews in an effort to get closer to her experiences. I also reviewed my field notes and video recordings of the program sessions and took additional text-based and audio-based notes during the analysis process that included observing through the lens of my professional media-making background. I further reviewed the data that I had previously coded into NVivo, this time looking at each participant’s codes and themes. Although this process was relatively fluid, there were two general stages. In stage one, I reviewed each participant’s data sources to gather biographical and background information,

including any insights that reflect her various identity markers and interests; I also reviewed the data to produce a “summary” of her overall participation in the video storytelling program/intervention, including snippets of our interactions and her interactions with other participants and what pieces of content she created. All of this information informed a narrative portrait that I wrote for each participant.

In stage two, I moved back and forth across each participant’s data again, in an effort to pick up on threads that weaved across multiple sources, approaching triangulation but also representing what I would describe as a “coarse-grained” phase involving writing reflective notes and some diary-style free-writing (Butler-Kisber, 2014). This also represented an effort to maintain reflexivity through the analysis phase of my study. Video recordings were especially useful here, allowing me to revisit parts of the program/intervention and observe each participant more closely. Video observational data also enabled me to note details that supported or contradicted threads I was tracking and to pick up on other moments or themes that I may have missed while I was focused on my role as program facilitator. In this stage, I further reviewed the data with the ultimate goal of shaping two or three descriptive categories or headings to reflect each participant’s “video-storytelling identity or persona.” This idea was inspired by Patricia Lange’s (2015) notion of “technical identities,” and how, as she notes, most studies of girls’ media making “have excluded investigations of technical affiliations as central research loci” (p. 64). Each persona, via these two or three descriptive categories or headings, encompassed a participant’s video-making experiences as well as approaches, considering the technical as well as the “social, creative, and embodied” aspects of her video-making process (Blum-Ross, 2013; Ito et al., 2013). The descriptive categories or headings reflected specific facets of the video-process that participants seemed drawn towards or skilled at. For example, I noted and crafted categories to acknowledge how several participants demonstrated a specific interest and

experience with video editing, which is a more technical process that grade school students don't tend to learn in school. These categories/headings also addressed a participant's interest in (and the influence of) a specific video storytelling platform. For example, in the case of one participant, I observed that she made multiple explicit references to TikTok in her interview, as well as used TikTok-related terminology. In another case, a participant's data pointed to her being more influenced or interested in YouTube. Finally, in several instances, a category/heading was shaped by other variables or topics that I noted in a participant's data, such as a desire to explore her ethnoracial identity through video storytelling or how a specific hobby drives her approach to working with the video medium. In the latter case, one participant articulated a passion for drawing and graphic novels, which led me to consider all of her work in relation to this observation.

A Note about Analyzing Multimedia Data

Arts-based methods utilize forms of thinking and representation that the arts provide as means through which the world can be better understood (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Digital storytelling further represents an arts-based method that offers participants a way to explore topics affecting them and their communities. In the case of this research, each participant's multimedia creations offered insights into how each participant understood and approached storytelling through video media. In some cases, I did undertake some visual analysis, considering technical as well as aesthetic elements, approaching a consideration of what Brushwood-Rose and Low (2014) refer to as their "craftedness" (i.e., looking for how many shots were included in a piece, how they were framed or angled, etc.) to support my understanding of a participant's approach to crafting a video-based story. As Brushwood-Rose and Low note, "We are interested in how these aesthetic qualities and experiences might act as further evidence of experience, contributing to our overall understanding of the meaning of the

multimedia narrative, rather than calling the multimedia story's status as empirical evidence into question. How do we make sense of multimedia works that are both stories of individual experience as well as crafted artefacts" (p. 269)? There was a considerable range in the vlogs and video projects that participants submitted. As such, I spent more time reviewing a multimedia creation when I felt—again, drawing from my professional media production background—that it related to, supported, and/or enhanced an emerging persona category/heading.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative and arts-based case study methodology that informed this research, including how it aligned with my feminist-informed inquiry. I described my multi-method approach to data collection/generation—which included participant- and researcher-generated as well as multimodal data sources—and summarized the data I collected/generated and referring to supporting documents included in Appendices A-C. Next, I discussed my evolving data analysis process in an effort to both chronicle and be as transparent as possible about my experiences as an emerging feminist researcher straddling the arts and social sciences. This discussion included how I moved away from an initial focus on coding and the sole intention of comparing and contrasting participants' data, to embrace an additional and more holistic approach that was inspired by narrative portraiture methodology. I offered an overview of this methodology before discussing how it helped me not only to revise my analysis process and but to determine how I would present my findings in a way that complimented and aligned with my methodological commitments and the feminist-informed nature of my inquiry.

The proceeding five chapters focus on presenting and discussing the data from this study and reflect an effort to illustrate how unique each participant's video-making interests and

experiences are. Each of the first four chapters focuses on the story of a single participant. It begins with a narrative “portrait” that is part biography or “backstory” and part summary of her overall video storytelling program/intervention experience, including the content that she produced. In the spirit of feminist research, this section also includes reference to moments from the program and research study and/or my interactions with the participants that I found notable (Pillow & Mayo, 2012); this approach reflects an effort to, once again, acknowledge that knowledge is shaped by the context in which is situated and produced and reveal my presence—via some of my reflections as I engaged with the data (Kirsch 1999; Peake 2017; Valentine, 2002). The portrait is followed by a section that discusses the participant’s unique “video-storytelling persona” which, again, centres around two to three themes or categories that represent insights I gleaned from her data. I weave thematic and visual analysis findings together with select screenshots of video content, aiming to emphasize her perspectives in her own words, while also allowing my voice to be present at times. This includes noting characteristics, details, moments, and interactions that stood out to me (as filtered through the lens of my own identity and experience). Although each persona aims to approach an understanding of these interests and experiences, I note that it cannot, nor does it aim to represent, her overall engagement with or production of video-based media beyond the context of her participation in this workshop and research study. Each chapter concludes with a summary or “snapshot” of the participant’s video-making story.

In the final data chapter, I return to the secondary goal of this study that focuses on program design considerations and how to better support emerging girl video storytellers. Drawing more so from the initial coding process that I undertook, I discuss common themes across participants’ data as they relate to several key concepts from the areas of scholarship that situate this research study.

Chapter Seven: Alexia's Story

Portrait

Seventeen-year-old Alexia is the oldest participant in the video storytelling program. She is of Filipino descent and was born and spent some of her early childhood in the Philippines before moving to Canada. She describes herself as a feminist and environmental activist and feels that her most important trait is being able to stay positive. She frequents the Centre as a peer tutor and participant in various programming. Like all of the participants, her schooling has been disrupted by the pandemic and she spent the previous two “quadmesters” where “*the whole day would be spent on the screen.*” Unlike the rest of the group, she has already completed high school, a semester early, and is waiting to officially graduate. She is headed to university next year and aspires to become a psychologist. Her hobbies and interests include biking, crocheting, and running.

These days, she's watching sitcoms and the teen comedy *Sex Education* on Netflix and enjoys content from several YouTubers and TikTokers. She enters into the program with an interest in “*learn[ing] different software to use, different stories to share, and how to edit videos well,*” and in exploring video topics and types such as opinions on trends, vlogs, morning routines, and tutorials. She's also interested in creating for YouTube and has already begun to dabble in it. She enjoys creating videos for fun and for family members' special occasions such as birthdays and has made numerous video projects for class assignments in language arts since middle school. In spite of these experiences with video production inside and outside of school, she's never taken media arts or filmmaking or photography or visual arts as a high school elective. She has also never participated in a formal program around video or filmmaking.

Alexia attends all but one of the sessions: she missed #2, as she has accidentally double-booked herself, which the Centre staff member who is helping with facilitation communicates to me. I do notice early on that she tends to promptly log off at the one-hour mark whereas other participants sometimes stay to chat further or ask questions. Little by little, I get a sense of how much she has on the go. Even during a time when the city is under stay-at-home orders, Alexia is busy with many extracurricular commitments and other responsibilities. She keeps her webcam on for the majority of the program and whenever I glance at her designated box, I see her listening attentively with what appears to be a focused, level expression. Every now and again, such as when she's giving or receiving feedback, her face lights up with a wide, warm smile. She engages respectfully with the younger participants which I attribute partly to her involvement with the Centre as a peer tutor. Similar to the other girls in the sessions, Alexia is fairly quiet and reserved during our Zoom group meets. So, it is wonderful to see glimpses of her personality come through over Teams in both private messages and in the group chat. It is here that I get a sense of her playful side. Her responsible nature and relative maturity in relation to the other participants also comes through in this format, too. Her vlogs offer a window into her personality and upbeat energy. Her rather quick-tempo and emphatic speech features lots of positive language and superlatives and she tends to focus on the things she likes about or has benefited from during the program. Alexia contacts me on a regular basis via our private Teams chat, messaging clearly and directly with a casual yet polite tone—the transcript is peppered with “*thank you*” and even a check-in to see how *I’m* feeling about the last session. In one instance, she reaches out to let me know when she's added a new vlog to her Google Drive folder for the study and requests that it remain private (i.e., for data analysis purposes and not included in the video clips for any of my dissemination materials). Another time, she reaches out to check if I will have any issue if she submits the second activity a day later than I indicated in our sessions,

explaining that she is working on a scholarship application. Early into our Zoom sessions, I notice Alexia's curiosity about the next oldest participant, Fernanda, and vice versa. It reminds me of that tentative-yet-excited feeling I've experienced when the possibility of a new friendship presents itself. The girls private message me when I'm explaining the final two-person activity to ask if they might work together; they are thrilled when I say "absolutely." By the end of the program, I learn that they have been in touch socially as well.

She produces five videos during the study. Although there are only 3 assigned video projects, I get a sense that there's a misunderstanding around the Profile Story video project when Alexia and Fernanda finish theirs a week early. With some probing, I learn that they use a phone app to edit their videos instead of the recommended collaborative, web-based computer software that I encouraged everyone to try out.³⁰ With the misunderstanding cleared up, Alexia decides to produce a new edit of her own profile as well as a video version of her audio poem using the WeVideo software. After our semi-structured interview, Alexia follows up as promised with a link to a YouTube video she created prior to the program. This content helps illustrate her perceived approach and attitude towards videomaking on social media.³¹ She contributes the most vlogs (4 in total) out of all of the participants and most closely followed the guidelines I provided. Her vlogs further stand out in that they represent a considerable effort and commitment. From a content perspective, they explore a summary of learning and activities in the sessions, insight into her experiences of making the various video projects, and other insights into her interests and thinking. They are filled with positive language, including the word "*positive*," and a very conversational style: "*[W]e learned a lot about Tatyana's life, which I*

³⁰ The rationale here is that the software allows for layered edits with multiple tracks for visuals and audio (which is part of what we discuss in the program) and the ability for me to go in and add notes directly on their work and for us all to be in the project together in real-time.

³¹ I discuss this further in the thematic section.

found really interesting.” Vlog #3 offers the first real critique of the study and Alexia mentions that while she enjoys the vlog question prompts, there are perhaps too many and some could be combined so as to be less intimidating. In Vlog #4, Alexia gives the media-making program a “10 out of 10.”³²

Collectively, her vlogs, interview, and in-session discussion give the impression that she is proud of the work she has created in the program but is also open about her need to improve on filming techniques. She also mentions wanting to be more active with video making because of the video storytelling program and asks if she can keep in touch with me as a resource. About a month after our post-study interview, Alexia messages me to let me know that she’s deleting the Teams app and Google Drive “*for storage purposes*” and wishes me all the best with my “*research and future endeavors.*”

Video-Storytelling Persona

YouTube Influencer/Vlogger Culture Focused

Alexia enters into the video storytelling program with some video-making experiences both inside and outside of school, and her various data suggest that she consumes social media as well as contemplates how to contribute to it in her own way. It is interesting to note that she most often references and frames her experiences in the program in relation to a particular social media platform and culture. Throughout the interview and vlogs, and based on the videos she

³² With a personal interest in better understanding how to design and utilize youth-attuned, feminist, and participatory methods, which include vlogs, I was prompted to undertake a closer examination of her vlogs via a content as well as a thematic analysis. In doing so, it also became apparent that there was a tension that I should consider in future workshop design: Alexia seemed to struggle with wanting to ‘practice’ being a YouTuber and giving me the types of answers that would support my research, which were arguably not of the same interest to her imagined/perceived/desired ‘audience’ on YouTube. I was curious to see what could be gleaned from her effort to produce these.

creates in the program, YouTube (the platform/culture) heavily informs her interest in, approach to, and understanding of video making:

“...And I was able to really think about how I use technology in my life and how I use it to tell stories even I mean, I don't think I use it as often as maybe, like, a YouTuber would. But I do make some videos for school or even just for some friends for fun.”

In this quote, Alexia is reflecting on the first session of the program, which centers around setting up and answering questions about the research study and its focus on youth-generated and girls-specific content. In this introductory session, I also asked participants to think about whether they see girls and stories that capture their experiences in the media content they consume, what they are hoping to learn in the program, and where video making fits into their lives.³³ Via the entrance questionnaire, Alexia indicates the types of content she is interested in, and mentions opinions on different trends, vlogs, morning routines, and tutorials; this response reflects the broader “YouTuber” culture.³⁴ In her first vlog, she reflects on the first (Silent Story/Day In My Life) project:

“I thought it would take 30 minutes. It took three hours. Honestly, it was a really fun three hours, so it wasn't bad. But honestly my respect for all those YouTubers and filmmakers just really soared. Okay, like I thought they were cool before but now ‘Wow, they are doing some hard stuff’.”

She frames her experience in relation to her understanding of YouTube culture and aesthetic, even though the aesthetic that she applies to her Silent Story/Day In My Life video

³³ In the program, I do not specifically favour any video-based social media platform, and endeavour to refer to both YouTube and TikTok. It is interesting to see which platforms different participants reference or are influenced by.

³⁴ While YouTube remains a ‘repository’ for all types of content, including a promotional vehicle for big brands/media production conglomerates, I am specifically referencing the “YouTuber”/influencer/vlogger culture.

very clearly mimics the daily routine trend that is popular at the time on TikTok. Her video begins in this way:

Mellow music plays over a Medium-wide Shot of a darkened room and a bed backlit by a window. An animated caption in the top right of the screen reads 'Morning Routine'... –See Figure 4.

Figure 4

A screenshot from the first clip of Alexia's Silent Story/Day In My Life video showing her waking up and the title of the video.



A body moves around exaggeratedly in bed and rises, back to camera.

CUT TO: a close-up shot of a hand quickly smacking over an alarm clock. –See Figure 5.

Figure 5

A screenshot showing an alarm clock from Alexia's Silent Story/Day In My Life video.



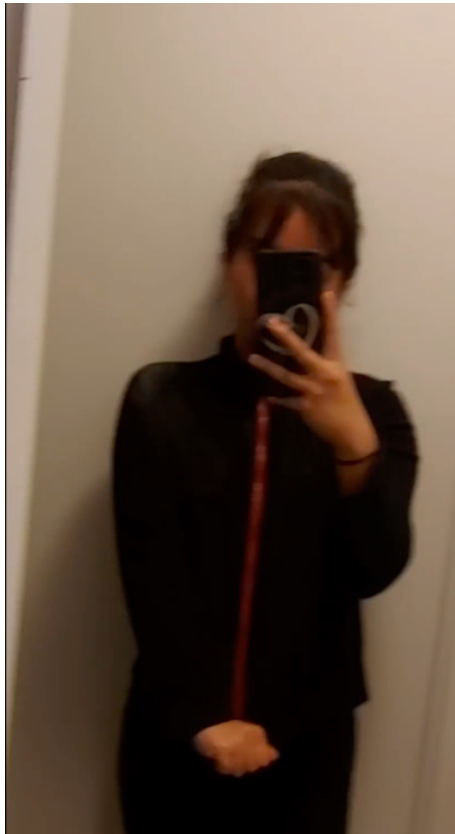
The video continues with a Close-Up shot of hands opening a notebook.

CUT TO: a Close-Up on the journal page with 'My Goals:' scrawled in pencil.

The camera MOVES ACROSS the page to reveal the words 'BE HAPPY'...

Figure 6

A screenshot from Alexia's Silent Story/Day In My Life video that shows "who's behind the camera."



Whereas YouTube content tends to be longer than a few minutes and for the most part is filmed in landscape orientation, Alexia utilizes a quick sequence of mostly point-of-view-style, portrait-mode clips that feel like a video-based highlight reel with a few clips that reveal the person whose daily routine this is (see Figure 6). This is very much a TikTok aesthetic.³⁵ Further, in our interview, Alexia speaks generally and non-specifically about having “*most*” social media

³⁵ Alexia isn't in attendance for Session #2, when I set up this Silent Story/Day In My Life activity, and yet her creation demonstrates an understanding of how to tell this type of story effectively.

platforms but is very specific when she talks about YouTube. When I hear that she has a YouTube account, I ask her what motivated her to create it. She responds:

“Honestly, I wanted to like find a career out of it. I was like, ‘What if I could be an influencer?’ And this was in the middle of quarantine. I was like, ‘There's nothing to do. There's no work. I might as well just do something.’”

Alexia further describes how she posted her first video, an “intro video,” to her YouTube channel at that time but then stopped contributing more, for reasons that were unclear. During the program and research study, Alexia refers to three YouTube content creators: Cody Ko, Joana Ceddia, and Leendadong. She mentions the first two in both the questionnaire and interview but speaks more about Joana Ceddia, whom she calls her “*all-time favourite*”, in the interview:

“And she started, like, I think when she was like 17. So, like, it was really cool. Because I was like, oh, wow, that's like my age. And she's super relatable. Like, she's just like being herself. And she also really likes swimming. And I guess you can just easily relate to her stuff too.”

“[I]t's so cool because it isn't just random blogs. Sometimes she'll talk about stuff she actually likes. Like, she'll paint for 10 minutes while like ranting about random things that come to her mind. And she also discusses like the process of what happens in a YouTube channel. And I was kind of like, ‘Oh, cool. That makes me kind of want to start one.’”

Upon some exploring of their YouTube accounts after the interview, I observe that all of the creators she references are Canadian. Leendadong, a woman of Chinese and Vietnamese heritage, appears to have stopped posting on YouTube and is now a popular TikTokker whose content I also enjoy. Both Cody Ko and Joana Ceddia have considerably large audiences although they could be said to represent opposite ends of the influencer content creation spectrum. Cody Ko, a 30-something White male, has 5.66 M subscribers, with videos in the last few years garnering on average 15M views and curated into playlists. He appears to fit more of

the quintessential millennial influencer-content-creator profile: his bio states that he is an “actor/comedian/YouTuber/podcaster/SoundCloud rapper/internet badboy” and his content encompasses comedy skits, vlogs, music videos, and videos from podcast appearances that are relatively polished with a clear attention to production value/quality. Meanwhile, Joana, a White female in her early 20s, has 3.23M subscribers, and her videos from the last few years average about 4-5M views or more. Joana’s content feels very much like an eclectic smorgasbord, much of which appears to have a home-made/user-generated aesthetic.

With the added context of Joana Ceddia’s video content, which to me reads as thematically all-over-the-map while at the same time having an air of casualness and authenticity in her vlogging style, I observe that Alexia’s interest and approach to video making is certainly inspired by this YouTuber. Her vlogs, in particular, clearly illustrate her consideration of (and some experimentation with) content, language, audience, and stylistic techniques popularized by YouTuber culture; the evolution of her vlogs further demonstrate her efforts to translate learning into practice and refine her techniques. Her vlogs average around 3 minutes in length and are well-organized, each one recorded in a different indoor location, presumably at home. She also contributes them at regular intervals throughout the program: #1 is filmed after session 3 (week 2) and after she created video project #1 (Silent Story/Day In My Life); #2 is filmed in week 3, prior to that week’s sessions and while she was working on activity #2/the audio poem; #3 is filmed in week 4 prior to that week’s sessions and while working on activity #3/the Profile Story; and #4 is produced after we finished the sessions and before our one-on-one-interview. Her first two vlogs are shot handheld and in portrait view/framing. In her second vlog, she references our previous session: *“I also liked how we were talking about the vlog and how to improve it. Because now I am in front of this little scenery, my clock.”*

In Vlogs #3 and #4, Alexia appears to have mounted or propped up her cellphone against something stable and she shifts to the landscape view/framing that is standard on YouTube. She also increasingly pays attention to her background. In the first vlog, she is recording with her back close to a blank, nondescript wall. In the second, she is further away from a wall and a clock is visible in the upper left corner. In Vlog #3, she is sitting on a couch with colourful cushions beside her, and the room is well-lit from what appears to be a big window. In Vlog #4, she is sitting in a different room, perhaps her bedroom; however, for the first time, the lighting is a bit dim and the footage ever-so-slightly blurry. It is perplexing that given our discussions about lighting and making sure there is plenty of it, especially when working with smartphones for filming, that this vlog is not better lit, and I regret not following up on this point with her.

Also of note is how Alexia approaches content as well as her approach to addressing the audience: Vlogs #1-3 represent more of a research-study vlog where she indicates via her language that she knows she is talking to an audience of one (researcher). In Vlog #1 she speaks about me in third person before switching to second person in a few instances. I can't be sure if this is accidental or intentional but, regardless, it demonstrates her awareness of her audience. All of the vlogs also always begin with a "*hi*" but whereas the first two end somewhat abruptly, by #3 and #4, when Alexia is filming with more of a YouTube aesthetic, she signs off with "*bye*" as well. The final vlog is also interesting because it contrasts with her first contribution. She is now 'broadcasting' to her imagined audience that goes beyond me. Alexia opens with: "*Hi, everyone! Welcome to my fourth and final vlog.*" The combination of this introduction that references a wider audience along with her decision to add a music background to a vlog for the first time suggests that she is combining her interest in vlogging for YouTube with her commitment to sharing her perspectives as a source of data for this study. At the same time, she signs off with a direct message to me (the researcher) which, again, might suggest a challenge for

her between balancing our competing goals for the vlogs. She also does something different in the middle of the final vlog:

“Sorry, I have like a little screen over here on the screen trying to look at like my little prompts of what I tried to remember to talk about with the questions... Oh, wow, I'm really, going really long.”

This comment might be interpreted in two ways: 1) her effort to pull back the curtain and let the viewer in on some of the behind-the-scenes of her vlogs—YouTuber style; or 2) an effort (conscious or subconscious) to demonstrate her comfort with vlogging as a research activity at this point in the study. In either case, thinking back to Joana Ceddia’s vlog style and tracing Alexia’s journey via her vlogs, I observe a teen who is gaining confidence and more fully embodying a YouTube vlogger identity. When considered as a package and viewed in succession, the four vlogs chronicle one teenage girl’s process of learning to vlog, experimenting while overall improving in technique and communicating with a growing confidence that more and more approaches a classic YouTuber aesthetic.

Later on in the interview, she refers to her herself as an “*aspiring YouTuber*” and wonders aloud what types of content would be most effective in getting views and how the YouTube algorithm worked. By the end of our conversation when I ask where she sees herself taking her video making, Alexia says:

“I think I'm gonna, like, use it as like a hobby or like an extracurricular and if it makes money even better [laughs]. But, like, on the side. I'm thinking maybe like an after-school activity. Like once a week, I'll release a video. It'll probably be much longer than like a day to, like, record everything. But I think I'm gonna let it be consistent and actually, um, keep it involved in my life.”

Overall, what I glean from her data is a personally-motivated extracurricular interest in video storytelling: she's making content because she wants to. But she's also going it alone. She says that her creativity is what she feels makes her a good digital storyteller and indicates that she often comes up with ideas randomly and proceeds to just try them out. The manner in which she discussed her experience with making content in the video storytelling program and overall video-making experiences does not suggest any high-stakes investment or pressure in these endeavours. She casually critiques her work, always finding ways she could improve but at the same time, not necessarily holding herself to a higher standard. At the same time, she is clearly thinking about and creating video content of her own volition. Her comments also give a sense, overall, that she's fairly confident and relaxed about her video-making process and doesn't appear to second guess herself too often. In describing her first activity:

“So, I started out by ordering everything I do, like on my phone, in my notes app. And then I was like, ‘Okay, this way I can think about what's associated with and that one was like, in my mind, ‘Okay, I wake up, where am I going to be? Okay, I'm going to be in bed with my sheets over my head.’ And then like, ‘Okay, you journal. What are you gonna do? Okay, let's write something like ‘Be happy’.”

When asked in the interview if she considered herself to be a video-maker, Alexia said yes and further qualified it in the following way: *“casually on the side. Like, very, like a beginner, but like you're still working.”* This quote encapsulates the overall impression of Alexia's video-making endeavours. I'm left wondering if she is satisfying with this level of involvement or if there are other barriers or unarticulated reasons that prevent her from diving in more deeply, ones that she is aware of but does not wish to discuss.

Video Editing-Inclined

During the program, Alexia demonstrates an interest in the craft of video editing. She notes that she has been editing on her phone for about 2-3 years (Vlog #4); however, other than a brief experience working with iMovie on an iPad, it's all been phone app video editing. She also mentions that in school, she has often offered to perform the editing for group video assignments "because I have the app." For this reason, I focus on asking her about editing in our interview:

Tatyana: *If there was something you used more often or more frequently, what would that be in terms of tools? Like, have you used video cameras before? Have you used editing platforms? Can you take me through a little bit of that?*

Alexia: *So, mine's, I'd say, super casual. For the past, like couple years, I'd say I only use my phone and like only the software apps that are available through, like, Google Play Store. So, for the longest time, I used Power Director, and like it worked, but there was also this awful watermark, that'd be so hard to remove. So, I got Kinemaster instead. And it was, like, a little more subtle. So, I prefer that. I also found was a lot easier to navigate. And, yeah, I think I just stuck with that for a while. No actual professional, digital, digital cameras, though.*

As briefly discussed in her portrait, Alexia demonstrates that she is familiar with videomaking early into the program through her Silent Story/Day In My Life video. She reveals to me that she did not edit this inside TikTok, which has an editing tool that really simplifies the process and imposes some creative limitations by forcing the creator to record clips in the exact order in which they will be broadcast.³⁶ Overall, her video has good pacing, with a clip length that suits the tempo of the music and her creative use of different angles.

³⁶ During the course of this study, the TikTok platform continued to adjust its features and launch new ones. Somewhere during the study, the app moved from a strictly linear method of composing video clips, which required the creator to think and plan all elements in chronological sequence, to more of a non-linear method which mimics professional and prosumer computer-based software.

In Alexia's first vlog, she also specifically references wanting to learn new software for editing, and by her third vlog, which she recorded right after filming with her partner for the third activity (Profile Story), she appears to be very enthusiastic about the next stage:

"We also learned about production, which is filming, and how post-production is editing. A-Roll, right, is like the interview. And then the B-Roll is like the supporting films, or videos and images to back it up. Now I can actually use those terms. And I feel so fancy."

Alexia does not initially use the WeVideo editing software that I introduce in the video storytelling program to edit the third video project, defaulting to using one of her phone apps. It's unclear whether this is resistance/reluctance or miscommunication as, in our Teams chat and interview, she explains that she initially thought they could edit on whatever platform they wanted. According to Alexia, the duo films their A-Roll/interviews on their phones in person and uses Zoom to collaborate during editing. Alexia also tells me that they do not upload footage to a desktop or laptop, and instead review and edit footage on their phones:

"I'd be like, 'Okay, what do you think of this?' And she was like 'Uhhhh, uhhhh'—She was, like, trying to see and said, like, 'I think it looks good.' And then, we'd end up sharing a project, and then she'd be like, 'Yeah, this is good. Can you like cut out the last part though.' I was like, 'Alright, cool.' And I did that, and she was like, 'Okay, that's good'."

During the sessions, I am dismayed and slightly frustrated when I learn that this is the approach that she and Fernanda take. This is especially the case because I know of Alexia's interest in further developing her skills with video software editing. However, in reviewing the interview data, a different perspective emerges. I recalled my experience working with professional editors and how, to succeed as an editor, one must be able to work independently as well as collaboratively with a producer or director who is giving notes and making requests. So, in fact, trying to edit over Zoom with what sounded like Fernanda giving notes for Alexia to

implement, inadvertently modelled the interpersonal dynamics and collaboration of the professional media-making industry.³⁷

Once I re-iterate the rationale behind using WeVideo (to achieve the A-Roll and B-Roll layering we have been discussing), and how it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve the same results on any phone app, Alexia decides to try using the software. For reasons that remain unclear, she also takes on all of the physical editing for both her and her partner for the third activity. Out of all the participants, she engages in the most extensive editing, and she shares an enthusiastic summary of the benefits of using WeVideo with the younger participants in her breakout room during Session #6. A large portion of her final vlog is also dedicated to explaining what the experience of working with WeVideo was like. In both cases she notes that layering B-Roll is so much easier as was the process of creating an A-Roll track, because the software has multiple audio and video layers. She concludes with an eye on next learning steps:

“I still have to work on music and layering, because I don't know how to get the music to like sync up with what I'm saying. And when I say sync, I mean to compliment whatever I'm talking about.”

This comment in addition to her perceived enthusiasm after asking in the interview if she will have access to her WeVideo account beyond the program (to which I answer “yes”), suggests that she will continue to develop her editing skills in the future.

Sharing her Life and (Ethnoracial) Stories

The various video storytelling program projects were designed to explore different approaches to self-expression through video storytelling. On numerous occasions, Alexia references welcoming the opportunity to share parts of her life and hearing about the lives of the

³⁷ Unfortunately, I do not make this connection at the time and, as such, am not able to share it with Alexia.

other participants through stories. In both her vlog and interview, Alexia indicates that the “Where I Am From” audio poem is her favourite out of all of the activities. This activity, as I discussed in the methods chapter, is adapted from curriculum planning documents that focus on culturally responsive and relevant teaching. To reiterate briefly, it also focuses on scaffolding a poetry writing experience through the use of a template to allow a participant, regardless of writing level or skill, the ability to communicate their unique history and life. Alexia reflects on the experience quite a few times in her vlogs, beginning with Vlog #2 when she is in the midst of working on the poem and revealed some of her process: “...now I'm really reflecting on my culture and my identity and like what it means to be a young Filipino immigrant.”

This is significant given that, in both a vlog and in the interview, she reveals that she has struggled to describe or talk about her ethnoracial roots: “*I never really know how to talk about my culture when people go like, ‘Oh, what's your background’ and I'd be like, ‘Oh, Filipino.’ I never know how to explain it.*”

Alexia describes how she initially approached the activity, and later references what might be referred to as a turning point in her process:

“I actually started out by— you know like the template you sent out to us? Yeah, I actually started by filling that out. And I was like, ‘Okay, this isn't too bad. I’ve just gotta fill this in. And then I was like, ‘Okay, how do I describe this in more detail?’”

“...after like scrolling through like a bunch of old Facebook photos, I finally got to think about like all the family memories that made me happy. And I got to connect it to my Filipino heritage.”

The poem evokes a warm nostalgia that centres around food, traditions, and beliefs, and carefully selected adjectives that effectively bring her words to life and describe her heritage, childhood memories and family. It is, objectively speaking, a strong poem. It further inspires

Alexia to create a video iteration, approaching the digital storytelling model championed by StoryCenter and Joe Lambert. However, unlike the StoryCenter model, Alexia does not focus on creating a piece solely out of personal photos or videos. Instead, she utilizes high-definition, professionally-filmed footage (see Figure 7) from the WeVideo stock footage library. The piece does end with one with a slow zoom into a single photo of her family of five, all smiling in what appears to be a winter environment (see Figure 8). The process of going down memory lane proves to offer even more for Alexia:

“Well, I had to like really search back on my old family photos, mostly through Facebook. And I was like, ‘Oh, we did do that!’ And I had to kind of recognize, like, ‘Oh, those are the holidays we did.’ And then by describing those events in more detail, I was able to also learn more about myself. Like more than I expected.”

The above interview excerpt is significant because it captures a level of self-reflection that stands out and is not evident from the other participants, although it is perhaps unsurprising, given her age and developmental stage and the introspective nature that she exhibits throughout the study.³⁸ Although she does not speak as much about her Profile Story video (which was supposed to have been edited by her partner and not her) the content of that piece also focuses on her ethnoracial roots. It presents a deeper discussion of some of the pieces of her life that she briefly introduces in her poem.

³⁸ Alexia’s communication style prompted the creation of a code category called “self-awareness/meta-reflection.”

Figure 7

Screenshot of a WeVideo stock footage clip that Alexia used in her “Where I Am From” video to illustrate where her parents come from.



Figure 8

A family photo that Alexia includes in her “Where I Am From” video.



To articulate how much her ethnoracial roots play into the Profile Story project, I now briefly discuss the content of the video. It begins with a screenshot of Alexia smiling and sitting in one of three of her interview set-ups with the title “The Story of Alexia” in large White letters layered on top (see Figure 9):

Figure 9

A screenshot from the first clip and title of Alexia's Profile Story video.



After a short interview clip where Alexia says that she comes from a family of five, her very next clip mentions that she grew up in the Philippines surrounded by family. Although the piece covers her upbringing as well as offering insight into who she is today, there is a strong presence of her heritage in the first half of the 2:50 minute video. The B-Roll is mainly comprised of still photos which Alexia adds a motion effect to. They pop on and off the screen rather quickly. She uses a total of 18 photos and 5 pieces of video B-Roll, including three clips that appear to be from previous social media posts. Out of all of the photos, five showcase large group shots of relatives back in the Philippines, and five other photos feature her immediate family of five. This is the first and only time she mentions her Catholic faith. Her audio is layered under the five family photos as she elaborates on the influence of religion: *“We really held together that family value of obey your mother and father, stick together, stand up for one another and always be kind to strangers. And I feel that shaped my character...”*

The second half of the video moves more into the present, her interests, her values, and her goals in life, including how she sees herself as a young person heading to university. It demonstrates a level of self-awareness and a desire to capture the various facets of what makes her who she is.

Across various data, Alexia often and enthusiastically refers to the opportunities she has in the program to share her story, both through team-building activities in the Zoom sessions and in the video-making activities outside of the sessions. She also indicates what it was like to get to know the other participants through their stories, including via their video creations. It is as though she has not had prior opportunities to create videos that ask her to communicate about her life in this way. When she references previous school video projects, there does not appear to be any autobiographical storytelling that took place. Alexia makes a comment in the interview, which takes place shortly after she completes the second, condensed iteration (described above) of her Profile Story: *“I think it's also important for people to make stories, not just to share it, but also to discover more about themselves.”*

This comment represents an even deeper reflection into the value of video making and, given her interest in making content for larger audiences on YouTube, it is rather poignant.

“Snapshot” Summary

Alexia is a seventeen-year-old girl of Filipino heritage who immigrated to Canada with her family when she was young. She identifies as a feminist and environmental activist and aspires to be a psychologist. Although she has some experience with video-editing for school assignments and recreational projects and has also dabbled with filming her own videos, she has never had any formal education around or support with video-making. She produces the most

pieces of content—both media projects and vlogs—during the program and research study. This includes all of the projects in addition to new ones. Her vlogs reflect a considerable effort to reflect and share insights on her experiences.

She is *YouTube influencer/vlogger culture-focused*, inspired by the creators she admires on YouTube. Although familiar with other social media platforms including TikTok, she most often references her content consumption in relation to YouTubers and also often frames her discussion of her own video-storytelling goals and ideas in relation to the content (subject matter and aesthetics) common on the platform. She also seemingly grapples with the tension between creating media content for pleasure and approaching a more labour-intensive process involved in striving for more visibility on social media.

Alexia is also *video editing-inclined*, embracing opportunities to hone her abilities. Having worked with iMovie on an iPad as well as different smartphone apps for editing, she requires a bit of coaching and coaxing to venture into more robust computer-based video-editing software. Once introduced to the software, she engages in an “extra” project by working with stock footage to craft a video version of her audio poem. She further proceeds to transfer the two videos she had made (her and her partner’s Profile Stories) to WeVideo to more directly explore the theory behind and application of techniques regarding A-Roll and B-Roll.

Her data further points to her interest in finding a way of crafting videos that is authentic to who she is by *sharing her life and (ethnoracial) stories*. Although she is able to emulate current TikTok trends, such as the daily routine aesthetic, it appears that she is also consciously striving to figure out an approach (style- and voice- wise) that fits her. It also appears that she has had limited to no prior opportunities to create media about her ethnoracial

background. This can be seen in her Profile Story, which focused heavily on this part of her identity. This may also explain her additional efforts to produce a video iteration of her “Where I Am From” audio poem.

Chapter Eight: Ziggy's Story

Portrait

Ziggy is 11 years old, and the youngest participant in the video storytelling program and research study. She is in Grade 6, sharing during one of the Zoom sessions that her birthday is coming up and that she will not be having a big party like she has in the past, when she turns 12 during our time together. She is from Toronto (as she says, “*the Six*”), of Afro-Caribbean (St. Lucian and Creole) heritage, and references her family of four, which includes two brothers and a large extended family. Her favourite food is lobster mac and cheese; her favourite colour is purple; and her favourite subjects in school are French, gym and math. She hasn’t been getting homework from her teacher “*for almost two years because of Corona.*” This leaves her lots of time to pursue her main hobbies: painting, reading, and baking. During the pandemic, she has also taught herself to code better. She is also consuming lots of media, including Netflix shows like *Full House*, *Fuller House*, *Nailed it*, and *Sugar Rush*. She has some favourite YouTubers as well, all of whom are in their 20s and live in the United States: multiracial (Spanish/Hispanic and White) brother and sister content creators Brent Rivera (16.3M subscribers) and Alexa Rivera (6.68M subscribers), and Pierson who is a White American woman (@piersonwodzynski—2.08M subscribers). Ziggy does not quite articulate why she likes their content other than to say she enjoys interesting and funny videos.³⁹ Ziggy also goes online to watch cooking and baking videos for recipes and techniques (“*like, get all the icing work, like, perfect, on point!*”) as well as gymnastic content. She talks about being encouraged by friends to get TikTok and she now has a private account with a handful of followers. She enters into the program without any

³⁹ Scanning through these YouTubers’ content, they all appear to fit into the influencer/content creator mold in that they are attractive, White or White-presenting twenty-somethings that blend vlogs with other candid life footage mixed in with skits, etc.

specific topics she wishes to make videos about but mentions that she's fluent in French and good at baking: "*I don't even know what I want to do with my life. I love so many things though I don't even know.*"

Ziggy is a regular at the Centre and recognizes several of the faces in our sessions from other programs. As she explains to me, her mom tends to sign her up for multiple programs every cycle. At the time of the video storytelling program, she is participating in afterschool activities on Zoom 4-5 days a week, with the schedule starting to blur together for her. She tends to mute and unmute herself and often steps away from the computer to ask the folks around her to quiet down: a lively family environment including occasional baby sounds can be heard when she unmutes to participate in breakout rooms. Ziggy is always in attendance save for one session when she and her family are delayed on their walk to a coffee shop after school. However, she still logs on before the session is over and stays to explain what happened very earnestly and chat with me afterwards—it is moments like these that I feel demonstrate her maturity. From the start, I anticipate pairing her with the 13-year-old participant Sam in our group for the Profile Story project however, Sam seems to have issues with completing activities, which made it necessary that I pair Ziggy with 12-year-old Jeannie.⁴⁰ In many ways, I feel as though I spend the most time with Ziggy during the program. She messages me regularly via Teams private chat to update me on what's happening with her progress on activities, or to ask questions. I have a separate Zoom meeting with her to help troubleshoot the issues she's having with uploading the B-Roll of her baking footage from her phone to her computer. I also set up and join her and her partner's Zoom call to support their interview process, offering some gentle suggestions and

⁴⁰ Sam continues to attend the workshop each week but does not contribute the requested video tasks as well as vlogs.

troubleshooting the technology. The pair's enthusiasm at this activity radiates through the screen despite some hiccups and glitches, both technical and human.⁴¹

Ziggy produces two videos by the end of the program: the Silent Story/Day In My Life, and a video version of her "Where I Am From" poem. The video version of her poem is what I suggested to her as an alternative activity after I caught wind of some issues with the partner Profile Story. After the program concludes and before our interview, she reaches out on Teams to let me know she's completed this video and can't wait to show it to me. Despite indicating no prior video editing experience outside of TikTok, she appears to get the hang of the basics of WeVideo. Although she produces the below spoken-word poem for another program, she asks if she can share it with me during our interview. I share it here now as it captures an added dimension to this pre-teen girl who has spent the last few weeks exploring her identity and storytelling voice across several programs:

I'm smart and honest. I wonder about my future. I see myself in Paris speaking fluent French.

I'm smart and honest. I pretend that I'm always happy. I feel excited for my future. I imagine touching the Eiffel Tower. I worry that my hopes and dreams will shatter.

I'm smart and honest. I understand that I have to work hard. I say I can do anything I believe in.

I dream of having a beautiful home and family. I will try to have a business for cakes and confections. I hope to accomplish all my goals.

I'm smart and honest. I'm Ziggy.

⁴¹ It becomes clear rather quickly that the webcam connections will not warrant a crisp, clear image and I have them record their own 'secondary' audio as they're being interviewed so that the audio can be better quality.

Video-Storytelling Persona

TikTok and Transitions-Centric Approach

Ziggy mentions TikTok for the first time about four minutes into our interview when I ask if she's ever learned about video making or video storytelling in school before. The answer is "no," but she explains that she's learned about editing transitions for TikTok via its tutorial videos. In her post-program interview, she says she made an account about a year ago and was mostly just watching videos at the beginning, until she finally posted her own first video:

Ziggy: *I wasn't in it, actually. So, I was doing a TikTok with my cousin. And I think my friend. And then we were doing a dance and then, and then my cousin's baby sister started dancing to it. And it was so cute!*

[cross laughter]

Yeah, so that's then we posted that one. And I wasn't in my first one.

Tatyana: *So, you were kind of the filmmaker for the first TikTok?*

Ziggy: *Actually, I didn't even film that one!*

Tatyana: *Oh, you didn't?*

Ziggy: *Yeah, my cousin did. But that was the first TikTok that I ever posted.*

She further describes much of her TikTok content as "*just literally dance videos.*" This is unsurprising given one of the main draws of the social media platform is users' efforts to replicate the numerous choreographies carefully synced to songs circulating at any given time. A quick peek at her content, which she has invited me to view without my asking, reveals that sometimes she is solo but often she has someone else doing the chosen dance alongside her.

Also, although Ziggy clearly spends lots of time rehearsing the choreography and is successful at it, the videos have a very documentary, fly-on-the-wall feel without much attention to lighting, framing, backgrounds, etc. I note this not so much as a critique but because it differs so greatly from the first video project Ziggy produces for our program, which does pay attention to those technical considerations. Before engaging in a content analysis of that video, I wish to note another theme that emerges from her data that can be considered “Tik-Tok-esque”: transitions.

Transitions, including her desire to get better at them, come up often in Ziggy’s data. Across the vlogs and interview, she mentions transitions more than a dozen times. Traditionally speaking, transitions are editing effects that most often strive to link one video clip to another (most often with dissolves or straight cuts) in a seamless and subtle way. TikTok videos often utilize transitions as well but in a way that often calls explicit attention to these effects. In fact, stylized and creative transitions are a signature element of the platform, including the “jump-cut.”⁴² In Ziggy’s case, she uses the term to describe: 1) an entire genre—“*I’ve never really done transition videos*”; and 2) a technique—“*...when I was doing the spinning transition, I did actually slip.*”

From the information she initially offers about being a TikTok user, it is unclear as to how much skill and experience Ziggy actually possesses when creating for the platform. When I ask her in the post-program interview what types of videos she may want to make on the platform in the future, she references the Silent Story/Day In My Life video project from our program. Keeping in mind her interest in transitions and the overall type of TikTok content her account

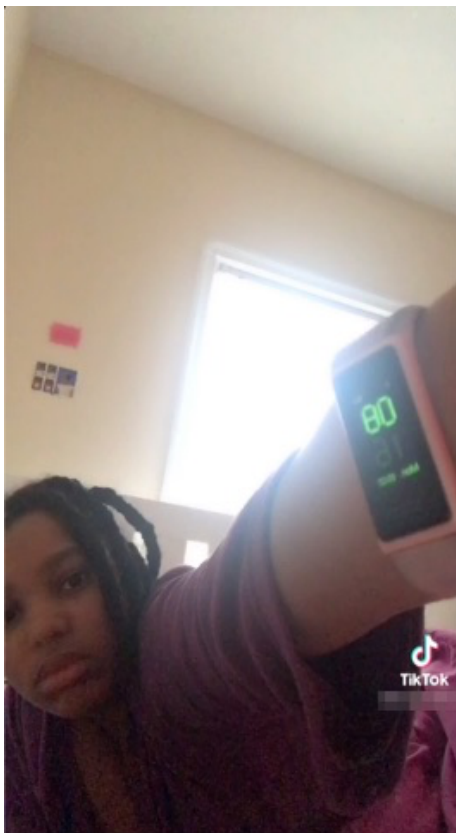
⁴² A “jump-cut” is where the framing of the clip stays consistent/the camera doesn’t move but the content in the image changes, signifying a “jump” in time.

contains, pre-video storytelling program, a deeper look into her Silent Story/Day In My Life video offers further insights.⁴³

The video starts with a wide shot on a pile of covers on a bed that is backlit by daylight coming through the window paired with a dancehall/reggae fusion song from a Jamaican DJ/singer/songwriter named Popcaan called “Win.” This first clip is continuous with the light in the room flicking on as Ziggy pops up into the frame and shows her digital watch to the camera which reads 8:16 AM (see Figure 10):

Figure 10

A screenshot from Ziggy’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video where she shows her watch to the camera.

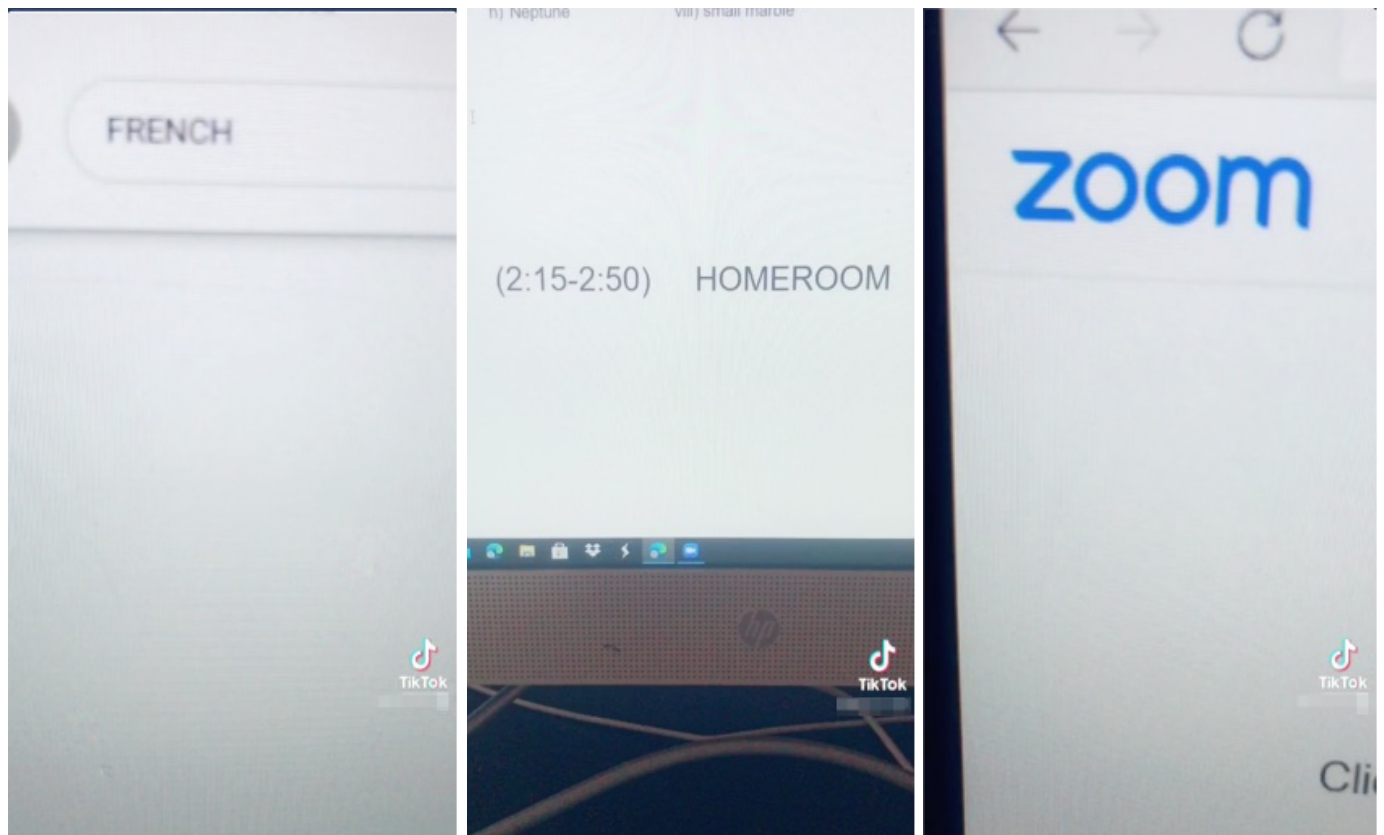


⁴³ The Silent Story/Day In My Life is a project I’ve used in my pre-TikTok research study with tween girls (2017) but has also become a popular daily routine trend on the platform, where creators sync approximately a dozen or more clips to the beat of a song, often to summarize a morning routine.

The video proceeds with clips that take the viewer through what appears to be an entire day, from breakfast to a Zoom school morning and afternoon with lunch in the middle, to an afternoon bike ride, at-home calisthenics, then dinner into bedtime. Ziggy uses a total of 40 clips in her 60 second video.⁴⁴ Thirteen of these clips focus on filming her computer screen and different text on the screen to illustrate her schedule, and how all of her schooling takes place over Zoom. Some of these clips pop on and off the screen for only a second or two (see Figure 11):

Figure 11

Screenshots from a sequence of quick screen-based clips from Ziggy's Silent Story/Day In My Life video that illustrate her day online.



⁴⁴ As a point of comparison, and for some contrast, this number of clips is almost double that of Alexia's creation. It also helps that Ziggy uses a faster-paced track which naturally motivates more transitions and therefore requires more footage.

The amount of time dedicated to her virtual schooling in this video creates a sense for the viewer that the majority of each weekday is comprised of school. It is interesting that Ziggy makes the editorial decision to translate this to the screen and dedicate ample time to it, rather than perhaps opting to emphasize other parts of her day that might be more visually dynamic or aesthetic. When describing the process and time constraints, she says:

“Actually, during the end, I started getting like suuuper worried that I wouldn't have enough time, because there was—there's a certain amount of time. You could only do it for one minute, but the song was actually, like um, 59 seconds. So, even though it's only one second off, it's actually like a big thing for videos like that. Um, especially if you're doing it from TikTok. So I was getting super worried there was this much and then I was like, this much that I still need to be three things. So, I was like, ‘Oh my god, what am I gonna do?’ And I was like, ‘Okay, I'll make each thing like one second,’ and then it ended up working out. It's like, ‘Well, I wish they had more time.’ But it is what it is.”

Ziggy is referencing TikTok's 60-second video length maximum and how she needed to really trim some of her clips in order to include them.⁴⁵ This might be why some of her clips that focus on virtual schooling are only a second long, although she seems to suggest that she had to mostly trim her later clips. Regardless of her motivation for editing the school part of the video in this way, the overall effect is quite impactful: it visually represents a blur of a school day filled with different classes all the while in front of one screen in the same room at home during the pandemic.

Given her interest in transitions, it is useful to explore how Ziggy works with them in this video. The video contains three clothing/outfit transition sequences: one “jump” shot where she jumps up in one outfit and lands in another, one “spin/twirl,” and one “finger snap.” To achieve these transitions, she explains that she propped her camera up on a dresser with a few books and

⁴⁵ The maximum length for a TikTok video has been extended since the time of the video storytelling program. Either way, the participants were asked to stick to a precise 60-second duration for this video task.

an old musical box to steady it and gain enough height. Although the first one is arguably the most commonly used outfit transition across Instagram and now TikTok, the other techniques are not and demonstrate a real effort on her part to push herself creatively. She describes the finger snap as well as the spinning transition:

Ziggy: *I was like, 'How do you do that?' Like, literally when I watch people, 'How do you get it so in sync?' Like, you can't even see that the camera actually cut. Sometimes I was like—I actually never did it before that time. Um, for the first project, and I was like, 'Okay, let's give this a go.' And then it actually came out super clean. I was like, 'Wow, I like the first one.' That one was my favorite transition. I think the snap would have been really good if I had got it like fully on sync, but it still turned out good, so.*

Ziggy: *And then, also, when I was doing the spinning transition, I did actually slip, but [small laugh] that's why—*

Tatyana: *Oh no!*

Ziggy: *Yeah, I slipped, but I didn't fall. But I slipped. But I couldn't, like, redo it. Because that was like a clip of when I showered so that's when I was holding my towel. And then I like spun, and it was way too late for me to redo it.*

She also uses creative transition techniques to show her meal preparation twice. The first time, her camera pushes in on an empty blue plate and as it moves back, crackers with cheese appear on it. The execution isn't flawless, but it is so quick, and the plate is so vibrantly coloured that it is very effective. The first clip in the sequence is an empty plate on a countertop and her hand comes in to spin it clockwise, and after a few spins the camera cuts to a new clip with the plate still spinning at the same speed with food on it. It is a really imaginative technique that stood out for me in reviewing the video for the first time (see Figure 12):

Figure 12

Screenshots from Ziggy's plate-spinning transition in her Silent Story/Day In My Life video.



When she shares this video in our third session, the feedback from her peers includes appreciating her efforts to illustrate a full day's range of activities. They also note how much she focuses on the little details of her day, like washing her face, blending a smoothie. They further enjoy her outfit transitions.

From the time I've spent perusing the content on TikTok, it has become very apparent when a content creator has carefully planned a segment. Further, the limitations of editing within the app itself that encourage a very linear method of storytelling. Speaking about her process, Ziggy explains:

“[F]rom when you said we’re going to be doing a silent video. I was like, ‘Okay, I have to wait till Monday because I don’t want to do a weekend day.’ And I was—I was already visualizing: ‘I’ll do—Oh, like, I’ll do a jump kind of shot. And then I’ll transition into new clothes. I’ll do this.’ Then I was like, ‘Okay, I got it down.’ And then, a few things I was still kind of stuck on. But then I was like, ‘Ooooh, what if I do this?’ And then some of them were unusual things like the spinning plate. I’ve never actually seen that. I was like, ‘What if I do that? It might look good.’”

She further explains that she filmed everything in one day and woke up earlier than usual to prepare for it. The confidence with which she speaks about her process reveals her learning process, including troubleshooting solutions, while she was also ok with not getting it “perfect.” Her video not only speaks to both her understanding of TikTok aesthetics and trends but to her creativity and videomaking instincts. There is an impressive variety of scenes and compositions and a blend of longer and shorter clips, all while keeping pace with the music. Although there are ways the technical quality could be improved in quite a few clips, the overall package is very impressive, a sentiment that she shares: *“...that was kind of like my first video that I’ve ever done with that many transitions and stuff. And like, it’s just very special to me now. And, and I just really like it.”* This undertaking represents a huge leap from the content she has posted on TikTok thus far. Before we move onto other topics in the interview, she returns to transitions yet again, stating that one of her goals is to get better at them in the future.

From Social (Media) “Play” to Skills-Focused Solo Storytelling

The next theme emerges out of an overall consideration of Ziggy’s evolution through the video storytelling program/research study. To some extent, it connects with the discussion in the previous session and her foray into self-narrative storytelling, TikTok style. Overall, her insights and video projects represent a shift from someone who has barely created video content to someone who demonstrates a growing motivation to produce content about her life and interests, while increasingly thinking in the language of video. To recapitulate, she had a handful of posts

on TikTok and indicated no prior video-making experience in school. As mentioned earlier, the nature of her TikTok content can be said to represent more of an emphasis on the social or participatory component of the social media platform: i.e., less about storytelling conventions and finding her voice as a storyteller per se, and more about playing with the trends and features of the platform and participating in a fun way with friends and family. Although the design of the activities in the program are intentionally focused on identity and self-expression, Ziggy's thoughts and produced content reveal her discovery of an emerging interest in sharing her stories in a video format and cultivating her own voice as a solo media storyteller.

In terms of content, her video allows us to peek into her life, and she makes a concerted effort to feature as many snippets from a typical day as possible, from her outfits to what's on her computer screen to hobbies to what she eats. Also notable is that she is the exclusive filmmaker, responsible for and fully undertaking this project alone. There is only one instance where she calls in help from another cameraperson: when she is riding her bike. In our interview, she comments on the learning curve with filming this video:

"I learned that it's very— it's kind of it's very hard to obviously film while you're doing something. It is kind of hard, so you can but you kind of want to get your perspective and someone else's, sometimes. And then though, like you said, that you actually stuck a little GoPro to—I forgot the girl's name—on her helmet when she was riding her bike. So that was—that's very smart. I'm gonna do that. I should have done that when I was riding my bike!"

Here, she is referencing the editing session where I showed a video project I created and discussed how I approached my B-Roll. This demonstrates her growing understanding of camerawork, and perhaps even her desire to become even more creative with her shots.

Her "Where I Am From" audio poem becomes her second piece of video content (instead of an interview profile of a partner) and discussing this process and product will make up the

bulk of the analysis in this section.⁴⁶ Ziggy prefaces our conversation about her audio poem activity experience by saying she's only ever worked on poems a handful of times in school and implies that those poems did not involve her as the subject. She begins this activity in a similar way to the approach of the other participants which is by following the template:

"I was like, 'Okay, so let me just remember what it was like when I was younger.' Because like, even though I'm still young, a looooot of things [laughs a bit] went on in my life when I was younger. So, I was like, 'Okay, let me think.' And I was like, 'Oh, family traditions. Well, we alllllways get together, like, on Fridays, like my family on my mom's side, or Fridays always get together.' And that kind of stuff. So, just following the template."

She tells me that she skips a few lines of the template and goes back to complete them, and also receives feedback from her mom as she is writing it.⁴⁷ I recall that in her small breakout room, where the plan was to read the poem aloud to a partner and vice versa, she indicates being a bit skittish about it as she had never done anything like it before, a sentiment she echoes in the interview. Her poem describes her connection to Creole language, the Rastafarian movement, being Canadian with a St. Lucian heritage, and meals like *"green fig and saltfish and bakes."* It illustrates a girl who is surrounded by a family she is very close to, and who is proud of her roots. I am especially touched by the ending, with several lines dedicated to her grandmother who passed when she was only 4 months old, and how it has taught her to appreciate every moment, and how she honours her memory by wearing her grandmother's earrings.

⁴⁶ As mentioned earlier, Ziggy is unable to proceed with editing a Profile Story of her partner Jeannie: in terms of B-Roll content, she only receives one still image and a short time-lapse video of Jeannie demonstrating her drawing abilities.

⁴⁷ While I appreciate this candidness, I am disappointed that I will not be able to determine when her mom's voice comes into the content and proceeded with my analysis with this in mind.

Ziggy moves on to edit a video version of her poem. This is a significant development because, again, she has only ever edited inside the TikTok app, yet she is able to pull off this video in less than a week:

“I was super nervous about it. And I was like, ‘I’ve never worked with any kind of thing that I could edit with the in that kind of ways like, how am I gonna do this?’ And the first time, like, I logged on to it... that was way before, when you said, ‘Oh, like, we’re gonna be using WeVideo next week, I’ll tell you guys more about it.’ So, I went on it. I was like, ‘What?’ I was—I’m like, ‘Um, what’s going on here?’ I was literally so confused. I’m like, ‘Okay, how am I going to use this?’”

She also reveals that she originally misunderstood the audio poem activity and had already gathered many images to use in editing. As we watch it together online, the piece feels both rough (as if at a draft-stage) and like a strong effort (given what she accomplishes in a short amount of time and with limited experience with editing). I notice that she has not revisited the audio she initially recorded because it is still slightly muffled, and you can hear pages rustling in a few places. What might be ruled out as a lack of attention to better sound recording takes on a different perspective via her interview:

“I have the phone like way—like kind of far from me. Because I was just this [non-descript]. And sometimes when I just—sometimes when I see that the video’s on, I get like intimidated. And then I’ll just—so, I put it like far from me. And then I just read it out.”

The video duration is 1:36 and uses 25 images. What she has created looks very much like the video storytelling model developed by StoryCenter and Joe Lambert: a series of still images that dissolve from one to the other with her voice narrating the story. The images are well-selected and dynamic, though somewhat hindered by the fact that few if any are resized to full-screen or to suit a landscape composition. She begins on a full-screen shot of her swaddled in the hospital at birth and ends on a half-screen current photo of her wearing her grandmother’s

earrings. The majority of the images feature her at various ages with family members; however, she also integrates some other complimentary stock footage-type images (see Figures 13 & 14):

Figure 13

B-Roll (still images) from Ziggy's "Where I Am From" video that illustrate her heritage and beliefs and accompany her voice reading her poem.



"I am from the family who prays and opens every year together."



"From respect and manners towards each and everyone."

Figure 14

B-Roll still images from Ziggy's "Where I Am From" video that illustrate her heritage and beliefs and accompany her voice reading her poem.



"I am from Rastafarian movement..."



"...embracing my Afrocentric beliefs and Blackness."

In the time we spend together on WeVideo, I demonstrate how she could add some movement to her images if she wants. She indicates that she likes what I show her, and we segue very naturally into a conversation about the stories behind some of the images. Unprompted, she shares what all the photos in a collage are from. A learning moment takes place for me when I

am demonstrating how to look for stock footage in the WeVideo library: I look up “figs” and as images pop up, Ziggy explains that Caribbean figs are actually not like other figs in that they look more like bananas. She goes on to tell me that they actually don’t taste like bananas at all. Her enthusiasm is evident throughout this exchange: she mentions that she may also add music to the piece and asks how she can share the video with her mom. She then mentions that she would like to share another poem she wrote with me. This segues into the final point, that demonstrates her emerging voice as a video storyteller. The poem that she reads to me, created in another afterschool program and also focusing on exploring who she is, is the same one I included at the end of her portrait earlier in this chapter. This poem is significant because, when I ask if she’d consider making a video version of the piece, she says “yes” immediately and goes on to say: *“I can already kind of picture some pictures for each one.”* This once again suggests that Ziggy is very much thinking in terms of how to bring her story to life through visuals.

An additional, albeit brief, point that demonstrates her emerging video storytelling eye is the richness/extensiveness of B-Roll video footage she provides for her partner for the Profile Story (see Figure 15). The focus of the profile is on Ziggy’s baking hobby. Ziggy arranges to bake strawberry shortcake cupcakes one weekend and records dozens of clips of her process. However, she finds herself taking the lead on what B-Roll to record—although the initial instructions ask the partner to request certain footage, Jeannie’s requests are somewhat broad:

“I filmed everything. I literally took the camera with everything I did. I had the camera. I was like, ‘Okay, I’m gonna do this.’ And then I was—even when I wasn’t holding the camera, I kind of like I set it down so that they could see what I’m doing. So then that way, [Jeannie] wouldn’t really need much more B-Roll. But I also something that I thought she would ask for was someone maybe tasting the cupcake. But I did take a video of my mom eating it, but then it got deleted.”

Figure 15

Screenshots of the cupcake baking B-Roll Ziggy provides for her partner Jeannie to edit with for her Profile Story video.



What is also interesting to me about her B-Roll is she often narrates what is happening in the clip, and even turns the camera on herself to provide commentary from time to time. In reviewing this footage, I note how knowledgeable and confident she is in describing the process of making the cupcakes, all the while trying to film hand-held without adequate lighting.⁴⁸ I will admit that I am fairly disappointed that this project doesn't quite come together. My

⁴⁸ It is at moments like these that I mourn the loss of being able to facilitate these sessions in person, and also having participants at such different skill levels. The opportunity to work with Ziggy to ensure she has support while filming, as well as how to suggest she increase the lighting and framing of the shots, would have gone a long way to support the considerable effort she has already put in.

disappointment stems from the consistent effort Ziggy has put into her video-making efforts thus far; this effort, combined with her passion for baking, would have made for a very engaging Profile Story video.

Ziggy's various pieces of media content, supported by her interview, suggest that she is moving from a general curiosity about video storytelling towards a true interest in this art and craft. Her data also reflect her desire to tell stories about her life and interests. Given Ziggy's very limited prior experience with video making, what she comes out of the program having created and communicated in a relatively short amount of time stands out. It is impossible to predict whether this program will have a significant impact on her TikTok contributions moving forward as people are drawn to the platform for different reasons. However, throughout the video storytelling program, she demonstrated strong creative instincts and a willingness to experiment with videomaking techniques. The question remains: will the foundational knowledge, support, and experience she received in the program be enough to encourage her to further cultivate her own voice as a media storyteller? When I ask her what's next with video making in general, she tells me: *"I definitely do want to make more videos. Probably going to be a new hobby."*

"Snapshot" Summary

Ziggy is a girl of Afro-Caribbean heritage who turns 12 during the video-storytelling program and research study. She describes herself as having many interests which include baking and dancing; these two hobbies feature in and/or inform her experiences and approaches to video storytelling. Although she watches a fair bit of media, including many YouTube channels and TikTok accounts, she has not had prior formal instruction around video-making. She produces almost all of the projects we explore in the program and even extends her "Where I Am From" audio poem into a video; she is unable to complete the final project due to technical difficulties

encountered by her partner. She also produces several vlogs and although they are brief, they reflect a definite curiosity about video storytelling and an effort to understand different techniques and theory.

Her media-making efforts reflect a *TikTok and transitions-centric approach* and aesthetic. Prior to joining the program, the extent of her video-storytelling encompassed recording and posting TikTok videos of her and friends or family members dancing. The influence of TikTok is evident in her continued reference to and efforts to produce interesting “transitions”: these are a kind of aesthetic, popularized by TikTok, where creators strive to find creative ways of transitioning from one clip to another. Her Silent Story/Day In My Life video particularly reflects the influence of the platform on her video-storytelling and approaches to moving the story along with some playfulness and creativity.

Ziggy’s media engagement also evolves *from social (media) “play”* (as per the above examples of her TikTok videos) towards *skills-focused solo storytelling*. This evolution is evident through her enthusiasm about branching out from working with mobile phone-based video editing apps to learn a more robust software-based program like WeVideo. She appears to enjoy and engage deeply with the Profile Story interview process, also providing an extensive amount of solo-captured B-Roll of her baking for her partner to edit with. She takes the initiative to craft a video version of her “Where I Am From” poem. Throughout the program, Ziggy further seeks out opportunities to learn more and receive support one-on-one, especially with video editing. Finally, she mentions the content she wants to produce next, contemplating ways to translate written projects into video stories.

Chapter Nine: Fernanda's Story

Portrait

Fernanda is 14 years old and in her first year of high school (Grade 9) at the time of the video storytelling program/intervention. She identifies as Indian/South Asian, having grown up in Dubai and attended girls-only classes from kindergarten to grade six before moving to Canada with her family. She describes the initial culture shock of suddenly having co-ed classes and extracurriculars. She also points out that she should be in grade 10 this year but needed to repeat Grade 6 because she was too young to enter Grade 7 when she arrived here. She has a younger brother and sister and mentions growing up amidst family gatherings surrounded by lots of cousins and pets. She describes herself as happy and likes to joke around.⁴⁹ Her closest friend would describe her as “*loud. I'm very in your face. I love to talk and laugh. I love to go out...*”⁵⁰ Her favourite subjects are drama, English and science, in that order. Fernanda's list of interests and hobbies is extensive, and includes the arts and fashion, playing soccer and tennis, swimming, reading, watching Netflix, working out, baking, and painting. She watches shows like *Never Have I Ever*, *Glee*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and ones she makes a point of mentioning that are not really for young teen audiences, like *Gossip Girl* and *Friends*. She refers to a lead female character from Netflix's teen comedy *Sex Education* as inspiring and mentions how many of the other characters are relatable or remind her of people she knows. At the same time, Fernanda doesn't see many on-screen characters that reflect her identity as a teenage girl and as a person of colour: “*I definitely don't see a lot of representation of that, especially in Hollywood. I think I've*

⁴⁹ There is an in-Zoom activity that I set up in Week 2, designed for participants to practice asking questions and listening (for the Profile Story coming up) and also to get the participants to interact outside of the main Zoom room and larger group. I pair Fernanda with Alexia, and this is one of the items Alexia asked Fernanda about in the short interview activity.

⁵⁰ In the first session, we end up in a breakout room together because her assigned partner appears to have stepped away from their computer. This is her response to the question prompt ‘how would your best friend describe you?’

seen maybe one show where the main character is South Asian. I think that's about it. I mean [a] Hollywood show."

She's referring to *Never Have I Ever* and goes on to mention how introducing more women of colour into the media industry is important: *"it's not only putting out stuff that you know, relates to them and other people that are watching, but also stuff that inspires other women to create again, and so just starts a cycle, circle..."* She's very active on multiple social media platforms and she can describe in detail how she decides what to post where and how they fit into her life. She doesn't really watch YouTube and uses it mostly for workouts (specifically from Chloe Ting and Lucy Wyndham-Read who appear to be in their 30s and 40s respectively; the former is a multiracial woman based in Singapore and the latter's ethnoracial identity is unclear but is from the UK). Even in pandemic times, Fernanda's kept very busy, describing the candy curation business she started as well as contributing to the school paper. She is incredibly interested in performing (stage and/or screen) and wants to pursue it as a career. She mentions having signed up for lots of programs the previous Spring only for them all to be cancelled due to the pandemic. She discovered the Centre around November 2020. Like the other older teen participant in the video storytelling program/research study, she is a peer tutor with the Centre for English, math, and science and participates in a program called Reader to Reader for pre-teen girls, where they *"would go over vocabulary and I'd help with pronunciation. We would do, you know, real questions, recap summary stuff."* Like all of the other participants, she has already participated in numerous virtual programs with the Centre, and she talks about being on a *"call"* (read: Zoom meeting or program) almost every day after school.

Fernanda recalls some opportunities to explore video making in middle school, such as creating and recording a fake political campaign in groups using the iMovie app on iPads. In her

first quad of high school (the term prior), she also recorded video diaries that were “*sort of like the vlogs sometimes we had to go over, you know, our reading of like a movie or not a movie, but like a play or a film that we saw.*” Coming into the workshop, she indicates an interest in learning how to refine her video storytelling as well as gaining insight into the storytelling industry. The topics she might want to make videos on include: BIPOC/women/LTBTQ+, life of a teenager, ways to get involved with the community, etc.

She attends every session and the seeming ease she has in unmuting herself to contribute brings a welcome energy to our small Zoom group. Fernanda is easily the most vocal participant in the sessions and is always on camera, listening, contributing, and commenting, and on several occasions lingers to chat a bit afterwards. Early on, there are hints that she and Alexia are interested in getting to know each other better: for example, when one of the two girls shares a thought in our sessions, the other often chimes in to indicate resonance, or thanks her for sharing. As I pick up on this, I begin to partner them up for breakout rooms when I can—they appear elated when I partner them up for the Profile Story project. I become aware that they are wanting to remix/put their own stamp on⁵¹ the last activity when Fernanda messages me on Teams to ask if she and Alexia can do “*a few longer (and more) questions*” as they “*really want to go into depth with each other and try new things.*” Fernanda mentions having seen Alexia in other sessions before, but that they hadn’t really had a chance to speak or interact much until this program. Ultimately, a friendship develops between the girls, with Fernanda happily explaining that she is “super close” to Alexia now.⁵²

⁵¹ See Jenkins et al., 2009 and my own research (2017).

⁵² This comes up in her interview. The vlogs also emphasize her emerging relationship with Alexia and what it was like to work with her on the Profile Story, and especially to meet in person and collaborate on editing (over Zoom).

Fernanda produces two videos in addition to the “Where I Am From” audio poem. The first video is the Silent Story/Day In My Life; there are two different versions of the Profile Story (one that is 5:18 in duration, one that is 2:50 in duration). She edits all of these videos on a smartphone app rather than the WeVideo web-based program that I have strongly recommended. She also submits only two vlogs out of the four that were requested for the study, and they are both rather short (1:00 and 1:30 in duration). After the interview, she follows up with me to share the first draft or what she calls the “discarded” Silent Story/Day In My Life video, as well as the Google Doc she and Alexia used to draft questions for their Profile Story videos. In her email, she asks me to please let her know if there’s anything she can do to help with my PhD, and that if I run more programs, she’d love to know about them.

Video-Storytelling Persona

Performance-Focused Creator

Fernanda has performing on her mind. The first time I hear about this interest is in Session #2 of the program. Here, I pair participants up and send them off to breakout rooms to ask each other questions in order to introduce their partner to the larger group afterwards. In the interview, there are multiple instances when Fernanda frames her response to my questions about different components of the program in relation to performing.⁵³ She also offers some context as to how long she’s been thinking about performing in her “Where I Am From” audio poem, an activity designed to encourage participants to reflect on their lives, with a focus on memories and moments from their early childhood:

⁵³ In my previous research (2017) with tween girls, I was surprised to witness a negotiation as to who would get to be “on camera.” I posited that youth growing up with vlogging and influencer culture position the concept of video-making with the role of an on-air performer at the centre. Further, this privileging of the person in front of the camera necessarily shifts how much interest and effort can therefore be dedicated to behind-the-lens craft. To some extent, that study informs how I consider Fernanda’s participation in the program and what she creates.

“From the first time I performed ‘Let it Go’ at my summer camp talent show and the time I realized that I loved the spotlight... From the time I performed on a real stage downtown Toronto. From the time I knew what I wanted to do...”

Her Profile Story—version 1 titled “Fernanda Amato: Navigating 2021 as an Ambitious Teen” and version 2 titled “Fernanda Amato: Teen Live During COVID-19”⁵⁴—also mention this interest. While this project explores lots of different aspects of who she is, there is a lengthy clip where she discusses performing. In the longer (draft) version, she says she “*loves acting*” and goes on to describe the virtual youth performance at the 2:00 mark. In the shorter version, this same interview clip shows up at the 1:10 mark, with several quick clips of her rehearsing or performing with others in masks (See Figures 16 & 17):

Figure 16

A screenshot from Fernanda’s Profile Story video showing her interview.



⁵⁴ There were two different versions of this project by the end of the program. It is unclear as to how much of the physical editing she performed, but the implication is that she was guiding the shaping of the story.

Figure 17

Screenshots from Fernanda's Profile Story video showing B-Roll of her performing with a group that accompanies her interview audio.



"I put on my first performance online last spring..."



"... and ever since then, it's just been constant, you know, rehearsing..."

The following is an excerpt that references her vision for her future. It is the final thought that appears at the end of the longer version of her profile:

“I think the future I envision for myself is definitely centered around arts. I definitely see myself doing something with performance, whether it be onstage in front of a crowd or on film and camera. I love I would love to be an actress, a film actress, and I would love to just put myself out there and see what I can do.”

The shorter version of Fernanda’s profile ends on advice she had offered her childhood self. The online performance she describes comes up numerous times across the data. She first brings it to my attention after Session #5, when she lingers to speak with me:

“I want to make a comment about when you were talking about you know, how important planning is. And I completely agree last spring. I did this play with the [redacted] Theatre, downtown Toronto. And yeah, and so we started off in person, right? So, I auditioned in December got in January, February, and then Corona happened. And so, we had to take everything online...”

It is entirely possible that she refers to this event numerous times during the study because it reflects the abrupt shift that happened in her life as a result of the pandemic, in addition to being a really unique and memorable experience. At the same time, considering how Fernanda approaches the various activities in the program, how often she mentions performing, and even reflecting upon her interactions with me, a comment like the above one supports how she appears to view video making through a performance-centric lens.⁵⁵ For example, early on during the post-program interview, when I ask her what types of opportunities she has had to explore video storytelling, she talks about the play again, and pivots to an online performance:

⁵⁵ I recall my previous experience working with girls slightly younger than her and the moment of surprise when I witnessed them negotiating who would get to be ‘on camera’. In that study, I posited that youth growing up with vlogging and influencer culture enter into video-making with the ‘on air performer’ at the centre. As mentioned earlier, this privileging of the person in front of the camera shifts how much interest and effort can be dedicated to behind-the-lens craft.

“...So, we had to write—we had to do like the sound lighting all that way to do all of that ourselves, as well as perform it. And it was definitely very hard. It came with its trials and errors, but I was really surprised about how it turned out. And I think that's what really got me started and thinking, ‘You know what? Maybe I'm not—I don't just like being onstage. Maybe I like doing stuff behind the camera too.’”⁵⁶

Later on in the interview, we discuss the different components of video making that the program explored, and I ask her about interviewing (my silent rationale here was that this process involves a “performance” on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee):

Tatyana: *We did a bit on interviewing skills. Had you ever interviewed anyone before this project?*

Fernanda: *Not seriously, maybe, like, we have to do like mock interviews in my French class. But we've never done anything. I've never done anything serious like this, or you'd have to film it and edit it.*

Tatyana: *Oh, that's so cool. Okay. Do you think—do you think that that's useful to you in any way? Or was it more just fun?*

Fernanda: *Okay, no, no, I definitely feel I feel like it definitely was fun, but I do feel it was useful because especially since you know, I definitely want to do something in the performing arts and you know, my backup is sort of like journalism. And so, I definitely feel like interviewing would come super in handy because like asking questions and answering them. So, I feel like, especially now that I'm a teenager too. That means I'm starting to apply for jobs soon. So, the interview skills, definitely they came in handy, too.*

By connecting performing arts with journalism, she is prioritizing one piece while filtering out the many other elements that comprise a career in that field. Nevertheless, these comments help to illustrate how much Fernanda sees video storytelling in relation to her interest in performance. Indeed, she is a confident speaker and articulates herself well, as demonstrated by

⁵⁶ This comment also connects with the next theme that I noted around tech/editing hesitation/resistance.

her “Profile Story.” I had anticipated gleaning a lot from her vlogs; unfortunately, her submissions are incredibly brief. I note a missed opportunity to perform, but at the same time a confidence that comes with being able to press record and just talk, which reflects a skill that she has perhaps cultivated through her experiences with acting.

A Visual “Eye” but Video Editing-Resistant

Fernanda’s video projects, in addition to her interest in painting, demonstrate a definite visual eye that lends itself well to video making. Yet, she seems to be conflicted about editing (on anything more robust than a phone app) and there appears to be a bit of a barrier to accessing video editing software and/or a lack of confidence around technical video editing skills at play.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, she’s thinking about where her editing skills lie. When I ask her in our interview what she feels her strength is as a digital storyteller, without any further contextualizing from me she says:

“I feel that my strength as a digital storyteller is more in the capturing than the editing. I already knew that I quite enjoyed photography and video making not specifically like editing, like maybe videos of the beach, stuff like that. I really liked the visuals, if at all. So, I think maybe my strengths are in the capturing part versus the editing.”

In the interview, I try to better understand where her interest in video making lies and ask if she has previously gone online to find tutorials to teach her things about video making. She responds:

“Yeah, I do remember, like the project I told you where we had to do the political campaigns. I was pretty lost with that. Because I was like, ‘How do I insert all these pictures and like things that are like flying in and flying out?’ And so, I did have to search up and watch a lot of YouTube videos for that and basically like an iMovie starter pack. So, I had to watch videos on that and how to start editing like that. I also used to run like a

⁵⁷ Based on having a sense that Alexia and Fernanda were experiencing some challenges surrounding editing around the time of the Profile Story videos, I scanned their data to see if I could better understand what happened.

few fan accounts. So, I did try and learn how to edit and all of that, but didn't work so well for me, quite obviously.”

Once again, Fernanda frames her response about video making in relation to the editing process. The second part of her comment suggests a certain frustration or disappointment at not being able to figure it out.⁵⁸ When these responses are considered together, and considering how certain formative experiences with tech, as discussed in my review of the literature, can have a strong impact on girls’ taking up of technical practices, it appears something interesting is emerging. Our conversation continues:

Tatyana: *All through iMovie?*

Fernanda: *Yes, iMovie. But I also tried using some phone apps like Video Star. I know that's a very common one. I did want to get After Effects, which is the computer one that used for a lot of common effects.*

Tatyana: *It's expensive now, though.*

Fernanda: *It is, yeah. And I was like, ‘Am I really that committed to editing?’ And KineMaster is good, too. And CapCut.*

Meanwhile, based on the final product of her Silent Story/Day In My Life, it doesn’t appear that she has any issues navigating the pared-down and hyper-simplified linear editor built into TikTok. This project warrants further discussion as it would appear, without the technical competency and/or blocks she appears to feel in relation to non-linear, computer-based software, her storytelling skills can really shine. She includes over 50 clips in the 1:00 piece, and there are so many dynamic images. These include extreme close-ups on slicing the leaves off from a

⁵⁸ I note her use of the word ‘lost’, especially in a curricular context with an activity that presumably is scaffolded to introduce students to editing techniques.

strawberry, a shot of a yoga mat being rolled out across the floor, and a day of classes on Zoom sequence that is well executed and dynamic (see Figure 18). Her images are also conceptualized and organized to create a feeling of peeking into her life (see Figure 19).

Figure 18

Screenshots illustrating the variety of angles and elements Fernanda includes in her Silent Story/Day In My Life video.

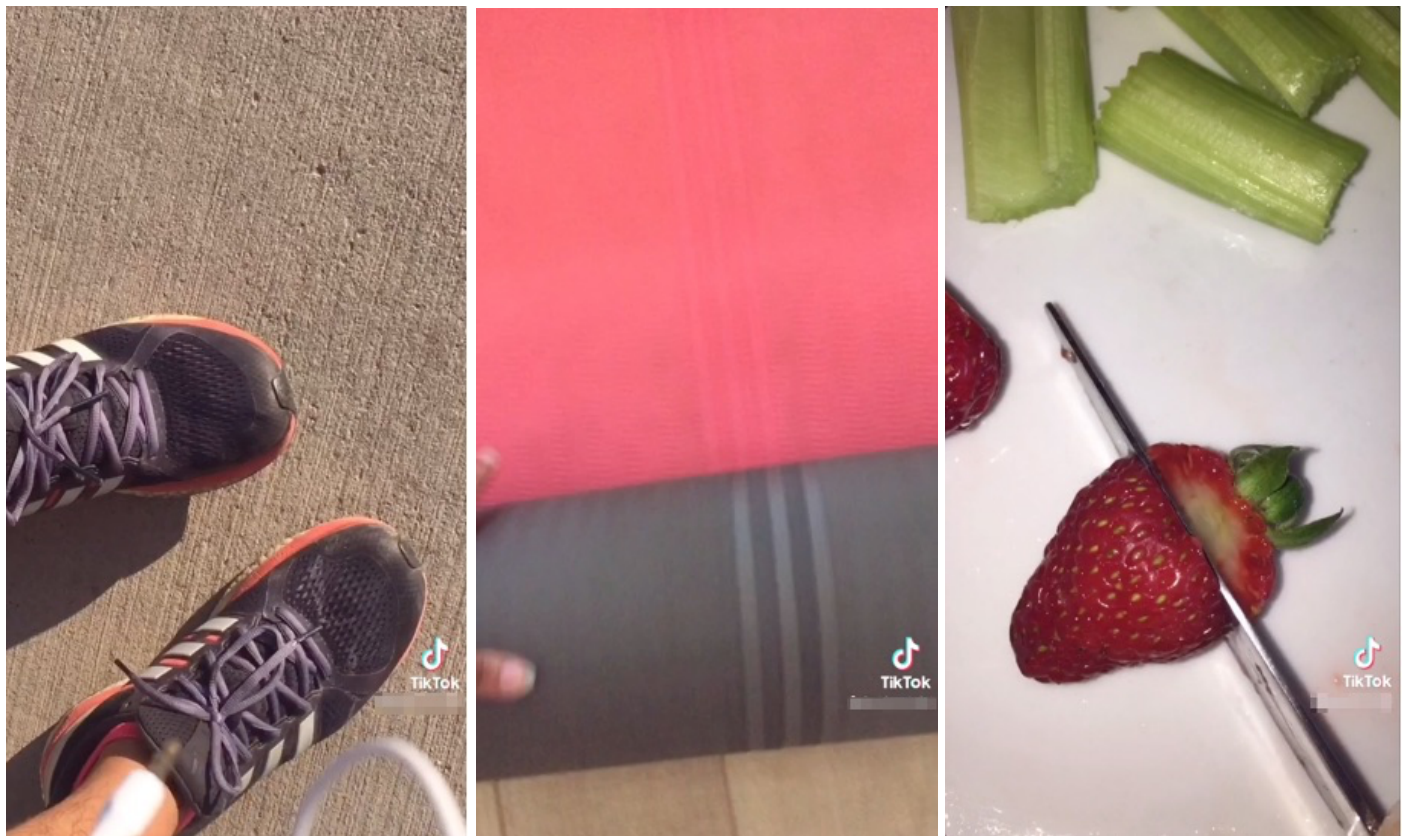
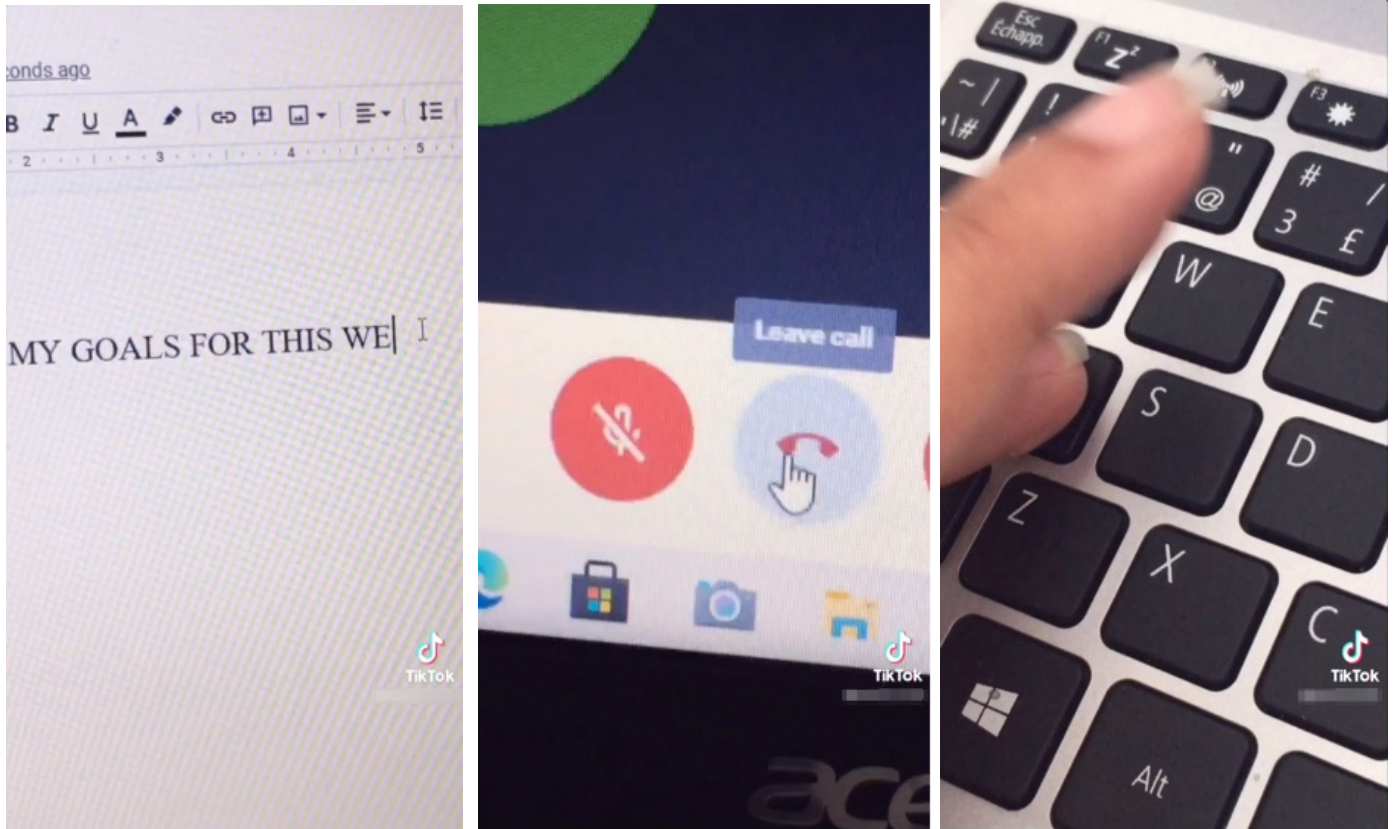


Figure 19

Screenshots of several 'screen-focused' sequences in Fernanda's Silent Story/Day In My Life video.



When it comes to working on the interview videos with her partner, Fernanda mentions in one of her vlogs that Alexia “*definitely took the leading hand on the editing, because I'm not too well versed with editing, especially on a phone. So, she definitely helped editing like a major, major part.*”⁵⁹ At some point, this issue with editing appears to evolve into Fernanda and Alexia adding in B-Roll for their own Profile Story videos and not their partner's as they were

⁵⁹ Given my own experience working with both video editing computer software and phone apps, I am slightly pained at the thought of how much more difficult the process was for her to rearrange A-Roll as well as B-Roll without the benefit of a larger screen and more importantly additional layers/tracks to work with. I also wish I had been privy to more of their process at the time so that I could have more information for analysis purposes.

encouraged to do.⁶⁰ In Session #6, Fernanda lingers at the end to ask me a question about editing in her B-Roll for the Profile Story, and expresses concern that her video is too long at 4 minutes. As she is speaking, it occurs to me that this pair has decided not to share B-Roll with each other so that they can edit each other's stories:

Tatyana: *So, I'm a little confused, because you were supposed to edit Alexia's story and she was supposed to edit your story.*

Fernanda: *Yeah, we are. We're working together to do it. Yeah.*

[cross talk]

Fernanda: *Because I don't really have lots of experience with editing other than phones. So, she was really like helping me instruct, cause she has experience doing editing stuff. So, we were working together. We had several zoom calls outside of digital storytelling. And so, we were working on it together.*

Tatyana: *Okay, yeah. I just want to make sure, because I was trying to design the experience so that I could support you through some of the editing...*

I mention that if she feels it is a strong 4 minutes, it can stay that length so long as she feels there is enough B-Roll. I also remind her that I am available if she wants to screen her draft together or talk about it or go through WeVideo together, etc. She thanks me and logs off and I don't see the video again until it's complete.⁶¹ Fernanda's Profile Story video is strong; as her partner shares a few versions of the video with me, I note the process in adding/swapping out

⁶⁰ As much as I tried to triangulate materials and get a sense of what happened here in terms of process, I do not have a definitive answer. I will discuss my theory in relation to a theme later. However, it seemed like, while there was some collaborative editing, each girl ultimately ended up editing her own version of the project (or Alexia did them all with direction from Fernanda).

⁶¹ Going back through the footage, I am disappointed that I was not able to more directly support or encourage Fernanda and that she doesn't take me up on the opportunity to do a smaller session together, etc.

sections/new images/reorganizing storyline over several iterations.⁶² She has brought in lots of different photos and previous video footage in to support her interview. This includes a B-Roll video clip of her going through her what appears to be play notes. There is only one B-Roll video clip that is filmed on the same day of the interview (which was part of the original suggestions for the task). It is a very brief but aesthetically pleasing shot, well-composed, and well-lit. It is an over the shoulder shot of Fernanda as she holds up her phone in landscape view to take a photo of something (see Figure 20).

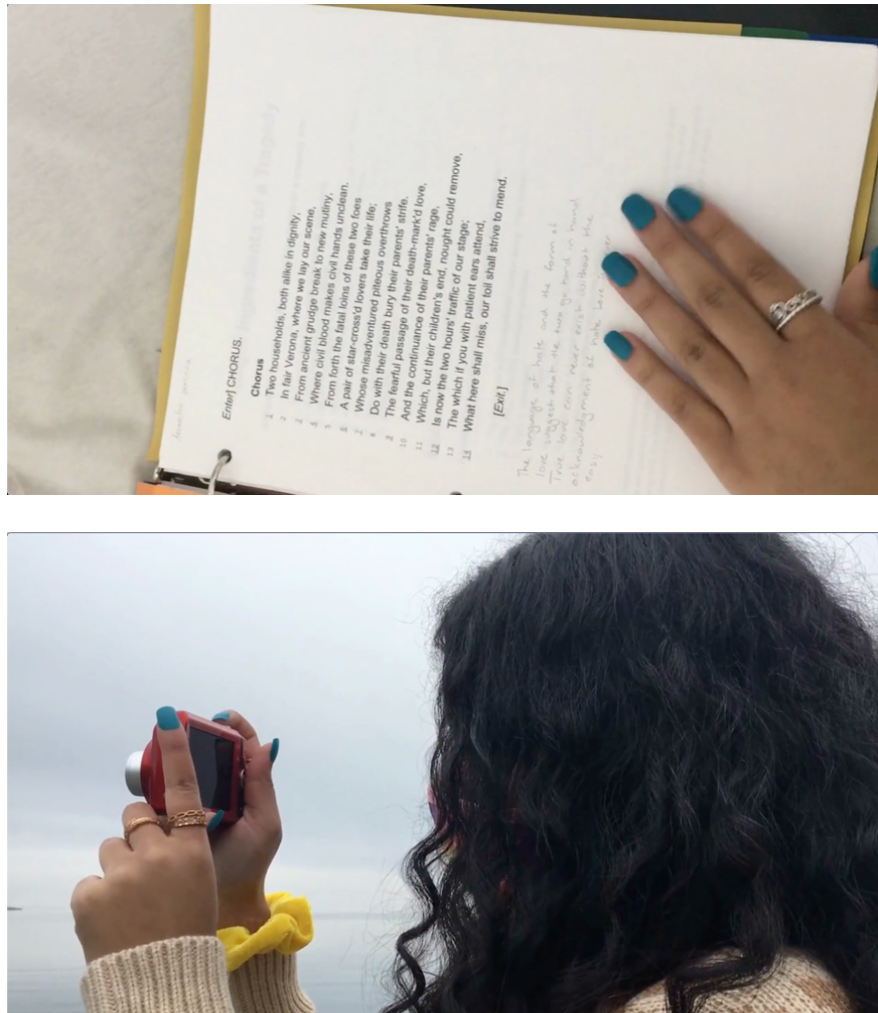
Fernanda reflects on how this project went for her and her partner:

“So, I think where we went a little wrong with that was we focused more on the interview than we did B-Roll. So, we did have a page for ideas for B-Roll, but we only had like two or three ideas on it. And then we realized if our if our videos are like three—four minutes, like, two clips are not going to be enough. And so, we went back. And we were like, ‘Okay, we have to search their photos. We have to search the videos now, wait for maybe new ones.’ So yeah, I had to definitely root through the old photos, and you know, like, the scrapbooks and all that to find some new photos and stuff. Because I realized we didn’t leave enough time for B-Roll. So, I definitely feel if we should have reconsidered how much time we’re gonna spend on the interview and the B-Roll.”

⁶² It is unclear where Alexia’s work ends, and Fernanda’s work begins; the same applies to the funny blooper video they assemble with unused footage from their day spent filming and interviewing together.

Figure 20

Screenshots of Fernanda's dynamic and well composed (full-screen, landscape-oriented video footage) B-Roll for her Profile Story video.



While I reflect that there should have been more B-Roll in relation to the length of the piece, at the same time, the two iterations of the video (and conceivably there were more that I didn't see), represent an effort to craft a compelling narrative and cover a lot of territory in 2-5 minutes. Because of the depth of their inquiry, the time allocated to complete the task is not nearly enough. This was the rationale behind suggesting that participants interview each other about a specific hobby or a memorable moment in their lives (to keep it contained). However, in many ways the pair have opted for the more difficult approach. It is arguably easier to make

editorial decisions about content when it is not your own story that you are telling. Even in screening Fernanda's versions back-to-back, I observe a strong effort to arrange interview clips in the most compelling way possible. With the content of the interview, there are endless ways Fernanda can construct the storyline, and she has to make some decisions. In my professional opinion, she's done a great job to produce a dynamic and visually-appealing profile. She has managed to include even more B-Roll in the shorter version, which is a much stronger, more focused piece. She uses 24 clips/images in this iteration, ranging from footage of past dance focused TikToks with a friend, footage of her performing, shots of her hands flipping through notebooks, and still images of her candy business, baby pictures, and more (see Figures 21 and 22):⁶³

Figure 21

Screenshots of B-Roll (Tik-Tok-style) footage from Fernanda's Profile Story video.



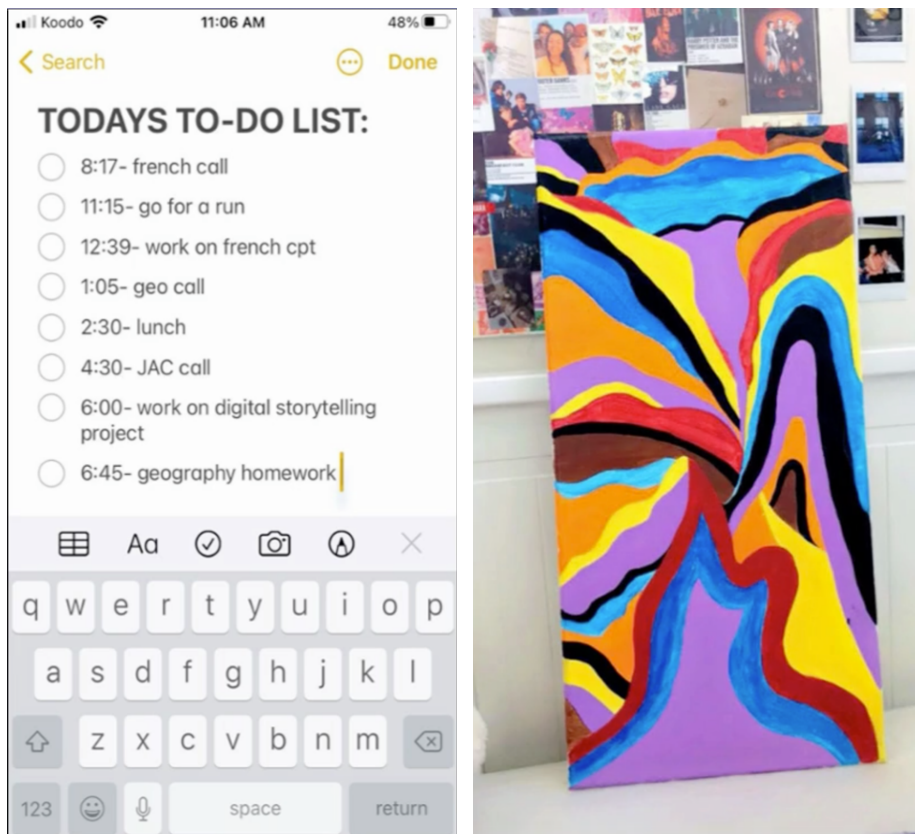
⁶³ The compromise she makes is that in this version she does not talk as much about her upbringing or family.

This current section of analysis for Fernanda departs from other participants' analyses in that in their case the focus was on tracing video storytelling in relation to the perceived most 'dominant' or influential platform. However, it is worth noting that there is a sense that Fernanda is on and knows a lot about a variety of social media platforms. She tells me that she has a YouTube account but doesn't post as a YouTuber: *"I use YouTube to look at other people's videos mostly. Okay, like workouts, baking."* As for TikTok:

"I do have videos, but it's not something—it's not—I'm not, like, very well versed with TikTok. I don't put any—this is this might be offending to myself, but I don't put anything worth quality on there. It's just fun stuff that I find. It's nothing that's pretty much important or makes a difference in any way."

Figure 22

Examples of still image B-Roll, captured in 'portrait-orientation,' in Fernanda's Profile Story video.



Based on our discussion, it would appear that she is most active on Instagram. In the interview, she explains that she has a “*spam*” and a “*main*” account: the former being private and for close friends for inside jokes and photos. If she visits places like the Niagara Falls Butterfly Conservatory, Pride Parade, a festival at Woodbine Park, she’ll post on Instagram Stories on her main account: “*Like, it’s also sort of like an online diary for me, so I never lose those things. So, if I want to say, ‘Oh, I’ve been somewhere, but I can’t really remember.’ I can always look back and see where exactly did I go.*” From her comments, there is a sense of spontaneity, of grabbing quick clips and photo series of places she’s been and the interesting things she sees, and of sharing them ‘socially’ and often. From her creations, it is apparent that she has an artistic/creative eye. However, it doesn’t appear as though she has come to some sort of conclusion by the end of the program or research study, as to whether behind-the-scenes work is really of interest to her.

My sense is that Fernanda has a definite ability to craft a strong story—what is unclear is whether or not the motivation to engage in the intricacies of careful shot composition and other aesthetics outweigh the dynamic personality that comes to life and wants to be in front of the camera, and/or the sharing of snippets of her life without much editing on social media. At the same time, given the consistent comments that suggest how full her plate is at the time of the program, combined with being potentially burdened by previous difficulties with editing software, I can see that for Fernanda to really get into editing (and video storytelling beyond social media posts) she would likely need to have proper support, and perhaps first want to learn it enough to weather the discomfort that comes with being vulnerable in the face of unfamiliar technological processes. In the interview, she also mentions having issues with uploading her footage to her computer and “*not wanting to make Alexia wait.*” I am left to wonder if Fernanda’s mindset around being technologically-challenged is greatly hindering her video-

making potential. I also wonder what Fernanda could create, should she be inspired to tackle one of the social issue driven topics that she indicated on the entrance questionnaire. Finally, I wonder for someone who, in the data, comes across as thriving on lots of social interaction and collaboration, what an experience like the original program I envisioned would offer her, including lots of opportunity to be supported and scaffolded through different techniques, as well as an emphasis on group work and collaboration. What would she create then?

“Snapshot” Summary

Fernanda is a fourteen-year-old South Asian/Indian girl who moved to Canada from Dubai with her family in Grade 6. She describes herself as outgoing and social and she has many hobbies, but she is especially interested and involved in visual arts as well as performance; she frequently emphasizes her aspiration of becoming a performer. She consumes a variety of media, social media platforms like Instagram most of all, and is especially tuned to the limited representation she sees in teen programs. She enters the program having posted images and some “live” video of her life on Instagram and TikTok. She produces all of the media projects we explore in the program and also produces a few vlogs, which are somewhat brief and offer limited insight into her experiences with the program and research study.

She is a *performance-focused creator* who appears to predominately view media storytelling through the lens of someone wanting to be on-camera rather than behind it. She also appears to be most drawn to and engaged in the spontaneous or “live” broadcasting functionality and the “social” (sharing) aspect of social media content (especially given that she has multiple Instagram accounts as well as a TikTok account). Her interactions with me highlight her passion for acting and both her “Where I Am From” audio poem and Profile Story make considerable reference to performing and its importance for her.

Fernanda also has *a visual “eye” but seems somewhat video editing-resistant*. Her creativity is clearly reflected in her approach to shot composition and evidence of thinking in terms of visual imagery, as demonstrated by her Silent Story/Day In My Life and some of the B-Roll she provides her partner for her Profile Story. However, she appears to be less interested or intimidated by the video-editing process. This is potentially due to unfavourable previous experiences—struggles and/or a lack of support—in her previous efforts to learn iMovie, a computer-based software. She appears relatively comfortable editing on phone-based apps but appears to rely heavily on her partner during the editing stage of the Profile Stories which involves more complex, multi-layered editing.

Chapter Ten: Jeannie's Story

Portrait

Jeanette, Jeannie for short, is 11 years old. She is of Jamaican heritage and comes from a “*Christian and Native-spirited background*.” Her favourite colour is blue, and she has one older brother. She enjoys reading and her favorite book series is *Heroes of Olympus*. She also enjoys writing, building things with recyclables, and doing digital art or comic making. Her favorite school subjects are literacy and gym, but she feels that her strongest subjects are literacy and math. During the pandemic, she has been focusing on how to make comics, and her dream job is an animator. Her favourite TV shows include *Big Hero 6* and *Pokemon XYZ*. She is on the autism spectrum and is in a small split Grade 7/8 class with other students with exceptionalities. Unlike many of the other participants, she has continued with all in-person classes during the pandemic. Like the other participants, she regularly enrolls and participates in programs through the Centre and recognizes many of the faces in our group. In this case, her mom strongly encouraged her to participate, and Jeannie admits that she’s actually glad she did.

Jeannie enters the video storytelling program and research study wanting to learn more about editing, creating a story, and filming. She has had no previous experience making videos of any kind in school and says she has made about two videos on her own—one of her gaming that she has since deleted, and a fan-art trailer video. She says she has some experience working with iMovie and it turns out that she is self-taught. She seems to be on YouTube quite a bit and mentions a number of creators and accounts that focus on comic art, animation, and some gamer content. This content, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, give a sense of

Jeannie's influences and inspiration with regards to her illustrations, as well as help clarify her interest coming into this program around making videos about "*fiction and adventures*."

Jeannie is always on camera during our sessions, listening intently and participating. Although she enjoys the program, and even asks when it will run again, she really doesn't like the online format. After the first few sessions and activities/media projects, I am struck by how capable and diligent she is, while at the same time recognizing that I am not able to provide her with sufficient support in this virtual context. I have a sense that she would thrive with a level of one-on-one attention and guidance that I am not able to offer. While working on the Silent Story/Day In My Life video, she messages me on Teams to ask for clarification about one of the writing prompts. As I am typing a response to her, I decide to send a few voice notes instead. Afterwards, she writes to me to say, "*thank you*" and letting me know that she thinks her autism makes understanding written instructions a bit challenging.⁶⁴ From this point forward, I make a point of recording audio to accompany the next video-making project. I also notice that she hasn't been submitting vlogs, so I also record audio to support that task and attach it to the appropriate post on our Padlet for the program.

She speaks a fair bit about classroom dynamics and tells me that she's at a "*tough age*." She also mentions she is transitioning into a Senior class next year, which will be even smaller than her 10-person class this year. Based on our conversations, she has what I recognize to be a sensitive nature.⁶⁵ A poignant line from her "Where I Am From" audio poem conveys more

⁶⁴ I am notified in advance by a Centre staff member that Jeannie is on the autism spectrum and that she has participated successfully in many previous programs.

⁶⁵ I note this as it is something that I see in myself, especially when she talks about having challenges with loud or disruptive classmates, as I often struggled with this as a child/teen.

about her nature and beliefs: *“I am from learning to love is something that we all have. And we all live together as one.”*

I pair her with Ziggy for the Profile Story videos as they are the closest in age and appear to know each other from previous programs. Jeannie prepares great questions for her partner and the interview goes fairly well, in spite of the less-than-ideal webcam quality and/or internet connection on both of their ends. She checks in with me on several occasions over Teams chat to ask questions or update me when she has completed a vlog. Even though she is more comfortable with iMovie, Jeannie works with WeVideo to assemble her partner’s Profile Story, as per the project instructions. Unfortunately, she does not provide Ziggy with enough B-Roll to enable her partner to complete a profile video. Like most of the participants, Jeannie faces her share of technical challenges including with uploading and sharing files, although this is not made clear to me until it is too late to do much in the way of troubleshooting.

Jeannie produces two video projects (the Silent Story/Day In My Life and the Profile Story) and one “Where I Am From” audio poem during the program. She also shares a draft of a third video—a trailer for a fan comic that she is working on—with the group. She does not initially record any vlogs and requires a bit of coaxing to complete them. Closer to the end of the program, she does post two vlogs: the first is barely 20 seconds long and the second is closer to 50 seconds. They don’t offer much in the way of insight but are helpful in terms of understanding how challenging it is for her to engage in this activity, and how vlogs appear to be unfamiliar to her. During our interview, Jeannie tells me she doesn’t like how her voice sounds on recordings and mentions a microphone that she is eyeing on Amazon that she feels will help solve the problem. She also shares the latest version of her fan comic trailer video and asks for my feedback. It is a nice way to end our time together: her sharing what she’s working on and an

opportunity for me to offer a few suggestions. Before we wrap up, Jeannie tells me that she wishes the program would have been longer and suggested that she would have preferred the sessions to be longer, for example, 1 hour and 30 minutes. She asks if I want access to her YouTube channel and tells me she hopes to post a trailer video that she is working on sometime in the next week. I tell her I would love to check out her content and follow along on her journey.

Video-Storytelling Persona

Illustrator and Graphic Novel-Motivated Approach

Jeannie represents a young person who wishes to create fictional, animated content and share it online. In a sense, she represents an example of the types of fan culture content creators which Henry Jenkins (1992) focused on in the years prior to developing the concept of participatory culture. In our interview, Jeannie talks about some of the other programs she was enrolled in with the Centre in addition to our video storytelling program, including one called “I am an Artist”, explaining that it was about “*some things that artists already know.*” Her responses in the entrance digital questionnaire about the content that she watches on YouTube further reveal the specific kinds of art she is interested in. She mentions: *Art of Rhues* (illustrator/story artist); *Tamaytka* (20-something animator and illustrator—anime style); *Foggy Crossing* (Raven, a 20-something American gamer-YouTuber, who makes *Animal Crossing New Horizons* videos); *Spatzline* (a comic artist named Aneliz who loves to draw silly comics and parodies of different shows); and *Demigodishness the Series*. Upon exploring further, I discovered that all of these creators have subscription bases of 2-4K with the exception of *Demigodishness the Series* who has 13.5K. This latter account appears to be more of the classic vlogger/YouTuber approach with an emphasis on Percy Jackson and other fantasy series fan-tribute TikToks. Interestingly, the majority of these accounts are run by women

animators/illustrators/storytellers in their 20s. In the interview, Jeannie tells me that her two favourite artist accounts are *Tamayka* (whom she also references in the questionnaire) and *Tribble of Doom* who, “...made a series about six lions called ‘My Pride’ and that’s why I want to do my own series.”

A review of *Tribble of Doom*’s About page reveals that she is a Canadian animator, and her account features two series: “Cow of the Wild, a show I made over the course of 11 years on my own in my spare time starting at age 14 about a cow who wants to join a wolf pack (but mostly about the wolves and not her)”, and “My Pride, a show about a limping lioness I made with an awesome team of artists throughout 2020!” There are 10 episodes of My Pride but it’s on hiatus as the funding source she used is not available for future seasons. The creator describes the project as an unfinished book she wrote ten years ago that developed a cult following on Deviantart:

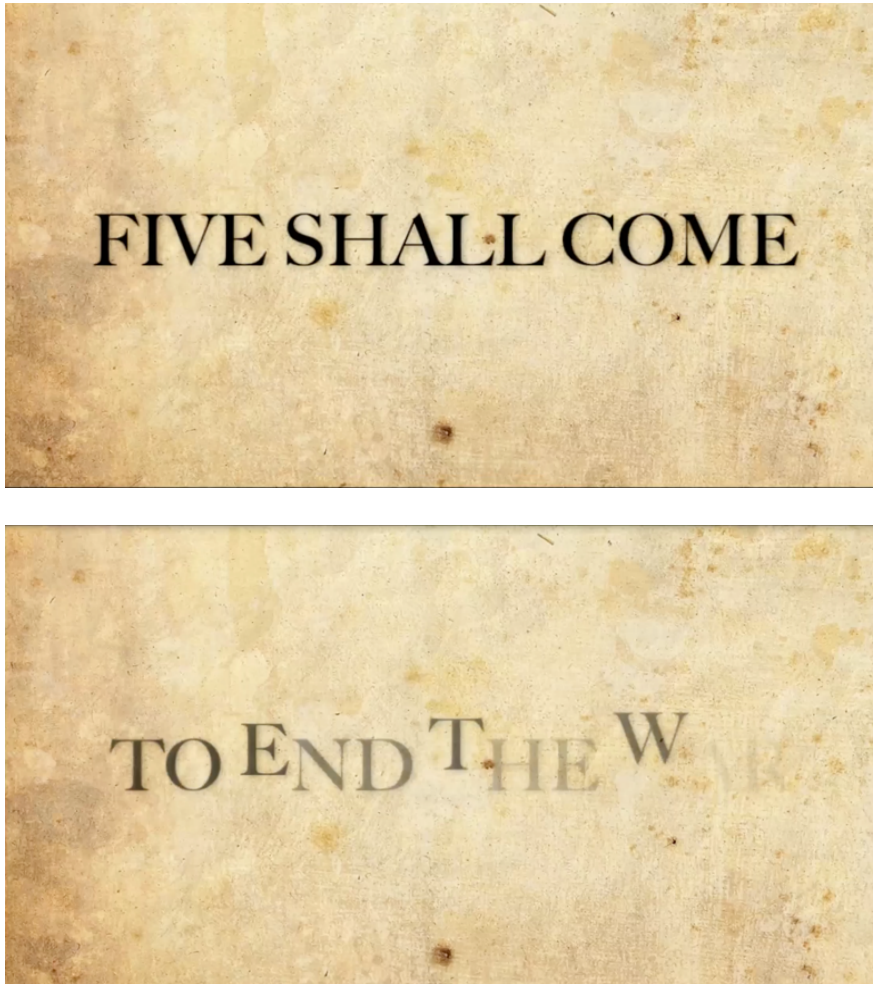
It follows the story of a limping lioness named Nothing looking for a new pride to call home. It’s a bit like *Watership Down*, *Warrior Cats* and *Whitebone*. It’s a story loosely based on actual animal behaviors with an (eventually) empowered disabled lead. It handles themes of mental health and feminism, includes LGBTQ+ characters, as well as a hefty dose of fantasy, ghosts, goddesses, and magic!” The animations feature cute lion characters however, each 15-ish minute episode begins with a disclaimer that the content is not intended for children with warnings of violence, trauma, gore, starvation, ableism, jump scare, and even suicidal ideation.

As a self-taught illustrator and aspiring animator, it isn’t surprising that Jeannie is seeking out content on YouTube to further support this interest. In our interview, she further explains that she is really into fan-made videos, giving the example of a show called *Miraculous Ladybug* and how she prefers to consume what the fans create around the show as opposed to consuming the original show. When I ask participants in our final session if they have other projects they have

worked on in the past or are working on now that they want to share with the group, Jeannie volunteers to show us a draft of a project. It is a 45-second video with a graphic background, fantasy-adventure-style music, and text that floats on and off the screen (See Figure 23):

Figure 23

Screenshots from Jeannie's text/graphics-based "teaser-trailer" video.



The video is what Jeannie calls a “teaser-trailer” for a comic/graphic novel fan-fic that she is working on, for a fantasy book series she enjoys called “Heroes of Olympus” by Rick Riordan. Her project is called “Legacy of Olympus”: “...*I really need work on the comic itself. I just thought on the characters, and maybe got a little ahead of myself but I really like it.*”

It is worth mentioning that this trailer video is one of only two video projects in total that Jeannie has ever made. It demonstrates that she has a sense of creating animated text and transitions as well as an aesthetic that is often used in trailers as a technique: sentences leading the audience along. The second video she created was *“just me playing games. I deleted those right away. Cause I absolutely hated them.”*

At the time of our interview, Jeannie has a YouTube account with no content on it:

“I’m still technically not old enough to have a YouTube channel. Um, even though they should change that. And they said that they would change that they just forgot to do that. I just decided to put a surname like a nickname, cause you don’t want people strangers calling you ‘Jeannie’.”

The above three comments suggest that Jeannie is eager to progress and produce original illustrated content. Without completed art, it makes sense that Jeannie would be focused on teaser-trailer videos that support her larger vision but rely on text-based content that tell us the storyline, as opposed to showing us the world and its characters. It also tracks that she would be keen to learn about editing, since this most closely resembles the work of animators when compared to the type of documentary-style projects that involve filming real-life that we explored in our video storytelling program. Her partner Ziggy does not end up editing together a Profile Story for Jeannie about her interest in illustration and comics, due to various technical challenges Jeannie is having providing B-Roll. The B-Roll that she does provide demonstrates her emerging creative abilities, on the illustration as well as the video-making side. Of the three pieces of B-Roll, two are photos and one is a video. The photos feature two of her pencil drawings-in-progress and one digital illustration (see Figure 24).

Figure 59

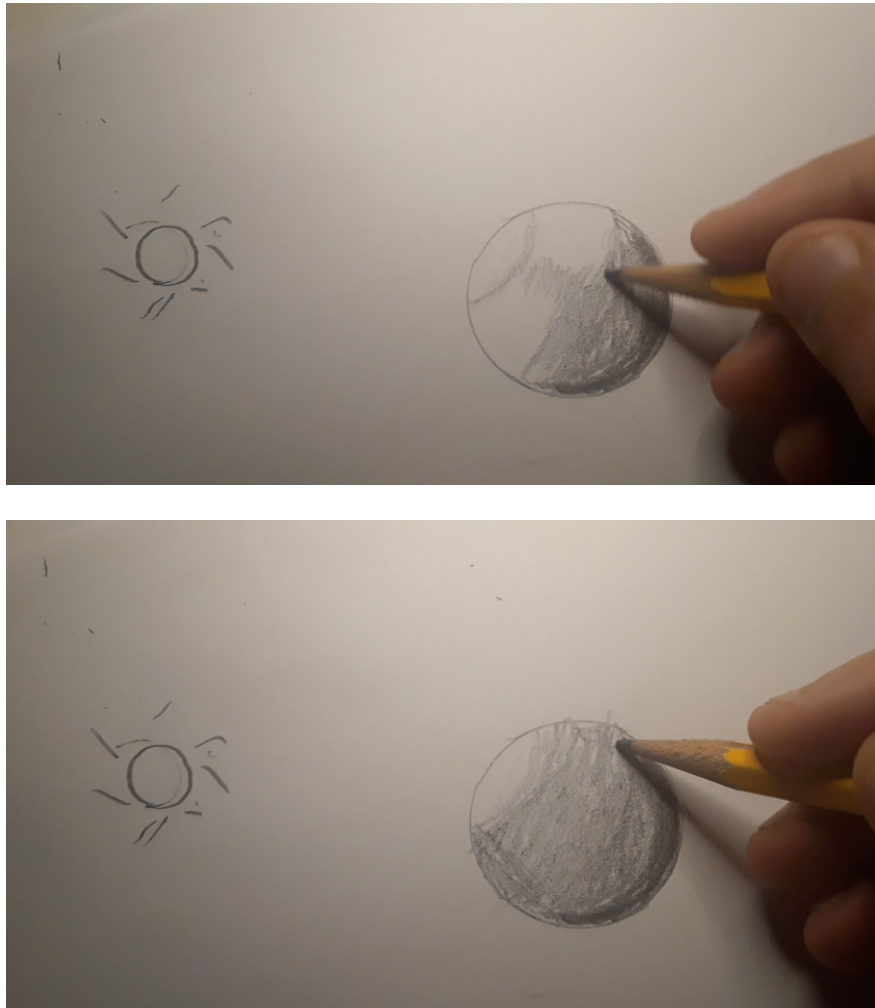
Example of a B-Roll still image that Jeannie provides for her Profile Story video: an image that she created with digital illustrator software.



The video Jeannie provides is 5:00 long and a form of locked off time-lapse clip where she is drawing a planet with pencil and is showing the audience what she is learning about shading and shadow techniques (see Figure 25). In her second vlog, Jeannie explains: *“It was actually fun filming the B-Roll, cause I actually wanted to test out my new phone stand to, um, to film with. It was really fun.”*

Figure 25

Screenshots of “raw footage” B-Roll that Jeannie provides for her Profile Story video: clips from a video of her drawing.

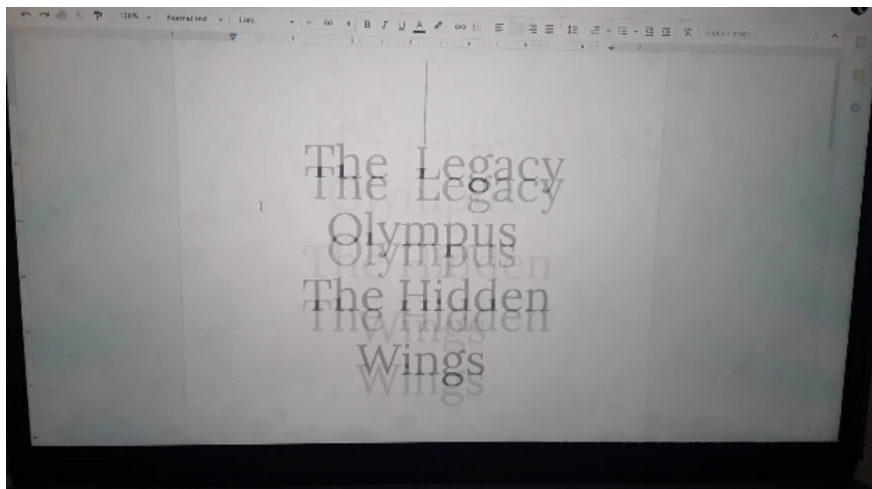


Other than being a bit dimly lit, it is a great idea that demonstrates her creative video storytelling eye. It also demonstrates that she is positioning herself as an illustrator by endeavouring to mimic what she has seen other illustrators on YouTube do: capturing their process using a phone stand and a locked-off shot that will enable the footage to be sped up for a time-lapse shot in editing. It will be interesting to see when she posts her first video to her YouTube channel and if it will in fact be the teaser-trailer one. This would be an interesting

choice as not only would it tease potential future subscribers and appeal to the communities that she wishes to participate in, but it might also serve as motivation for her to complete her graphic novel. It is interesting that elements of two out of the three video projects she creates and/or contributes to in this program help further illustrate her interest in comics and digital art. Her Silent Story/Day In My Life also includes a few clips of her computer screen as she opens up a file and scrolls through her “Legacy of Olympus” writing so far (see Figure 26):

Figure 26

Screenshot from Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video that scrolls through a fictional story that she is writing as it appears on her computer screen.



At this stage in her video-making journey, the influence of her interest in illustration is apparent through our conversations and her media projects. The trailer video and her approach to recording B-Roll of her drawing process both reflect someone who is filtering her video making through the lens of an illustrator and author of graphic novel-type adventure, fantasy fanfic. It occurs to me that she would have been better suited and more successful in a beginner program

focusing on digital animation. At the same time, Jeannie finds a way to approach her content creation in this program in a way that is meaningful to her and her interest in art.

Video Editing Enthusiast

Editing is on Jeannie's mind a fair bit during the video storytelling program and research study. In the pre-program digital questionnaire, the first thing she mentions in response to the question, "What do you want to learn or what are specific skills you want to develop?" is "*editing.*" She has the same response when asked what her favourite part of being in the program was and again with what she still wants to learn more about. In her very first vlog, which is incredibly brief, she mentions being excited to learn how to edit on WeVideo. Jeannie notes that she has worked with iMovie in the questionnaire, and in Session 4 she tells the group that she edited her Silent Story/Day In My Life video with iMovie and that she is just getting back into using it. In terms of how she has learned the basics, she tells us, "*I watched a couple movies on YouTube about it. Well, how to edit and add things to it. And also, how to add graphics on it.*"

It is interesting to consider how she approached and organized her first project, the Silent Story/Day In My Life video, to gain and understanding of her skill level around video editing. The first part of the project begins in this way:

Country-banjo themed upbeat music plays. A caption pops up on a black background that reads 'waking up to this guy.'

CUT TO: a handheld shot of a darkened room with the silhouette of a black cat on a bed surrounded by a few stuffed animals. The cat opens its eyes and yawns really loud. The cat leaves the shot—see Figure 27.

Figure 27

A screenshot from the first clip of Jeannie's Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring a dimly-lit shot of her cat on her bed.



WIPE TO: a shower screen with the sound of water running (with a lower-third caption: 'Shower').

TRANSITION TO: a clip of a hand clicking a file on Google Docs and opening up the title page of a story: 'The Legacy of Olympus: The Hidden Wings.' A caption reads: Working on book.'

The next clip is scrolling through the writing she has done so far.

TRANSITION TO an upside-down shot of a Nintendo switch on a surface with the Animal Crossing animated title popping up on the screen and Jeannie's fingers coming in to press a few buttons (caption: 'Playing games')—see Figure 27.

Figure 28

A screenshot from Jeannie's Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring a locked-off close-up shot on a Nintendo Switch with Animal Crossing on it and a hand touching a button.



CUT TO: a title card/graphic with the words ‘THE END’ fading up onto the screen and a slow push in on the galaxy graphic background—see Figure 29.

Figure 29

A screenshot from the final part of Jeannie’s Silent Story/Day In My Life video, featuring an animated title card that reads: “The End.”



The video is 0:35 long and features 6 clips (including the final graphic). It is very different aesthetically from what the other participants create. It is also shot in landscape-mode with no selfie shots. The video overall feels as though it’s made by someone who either has never seen a TikTok video or is uninfluenced by the daily routine trends and their accompanying aesthetics on that social media platform.⁶⁶ She utilizes wipes instead of straight cuts, which is also something I’m not used to seeing with youth content creators and reflects more of a professional aesthetic (not wipes per se but the effort to use transition effects between clips). The video gives me a sense of Jeannie’s unique imagination and creativity that does not appear to be incorporating

⁶⁶ I cannot be certain that Jeannie does not have a TikTok account or that she hasn’t been on the app; however, she doesn’t mention it at all in any of the data. This, paired with the aesthetic of her Silent Story/Day In My Life/Day In My Life video and the fact that she edits video content exclusively on her laptop further suggests that she is unfamiliar with and does not use TikTok.

trends or stylistic techniques. There is an impressive sense of effort that has been put into planning and composing each clip/shot. After watching it a second time, I realize that the first clip is not a black screen but in fact a close up of her cat's fur which pulls back to reveal the whole animal. Instead of creating a separate black background with a title, Jeannie creatively uses the fur as a contrasting background for her white-coloured text.

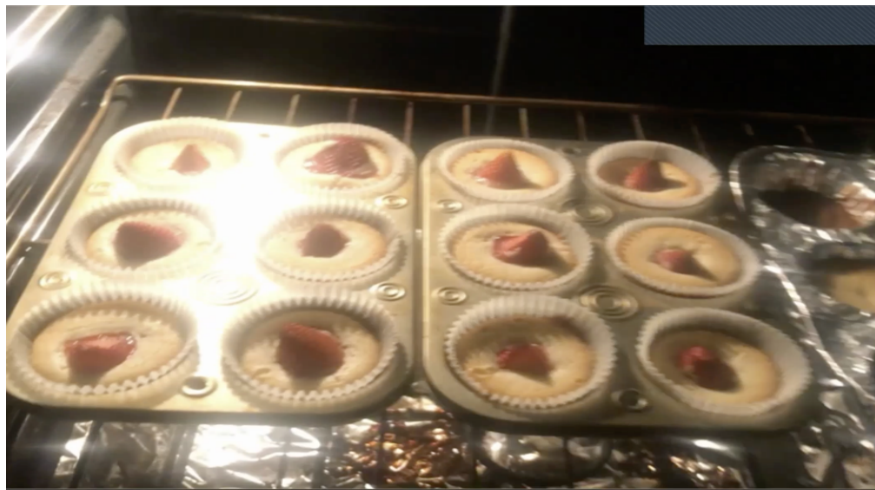
The editing that Jeannie undertakes for the second video project – the Profile Story of her partner Ziggy and her baking hobby – further demonstrates her skills and effort to explore the craft. For perspective, the unedited interview footage of Ziggy was about 3:30 in duration and involved one set of questions, a few suggestions from me (two additional questions), and then Jeannie asking a few other follow-up questions. I assisted with bringing the clips into WeVideo for Jeannie because she, like all of the other participants, was having issues with uploading content files to Google Drive over WIFI. I also wanted to help sync up the video with audio files that were individually recorded on Zoom. The final edited piece that Jeannie prepares is a few seconds longer than the raw footage. This is because Jeannie has incorporated a title and a “The End” clip. It does not appear as though she has trimmed or rearranged any of the interview footage.⁶⁷ She also has decided to leave her own audio asking the questions in the profile as well as a few behind-the-scenes elements that ideally would have been trimmed out (e.g., my voice, off-screen, offering a suggestion and Jeannie saying she has completed her list of questions). The final video piece also demonstrates Jeannie's efforts to put our discussion of layering B-Roll over A-Roll interview clips into practice. She has selected and layered a few B-Roll clips from the footage Ziggy has provided her with (there were 20 pieces of B-Roll to work with in total—

⁶⁷ Although it would have been ideal to edit out her partner's voice asking the questions, as per the video examples I share with the group in our session, it is also not something that I emphasize as a necessary piece of this activity and project.

see Figure 30), including: a very long, continuous clip where Ziggy films the oven temperature, takes the cupcakes out of the oven and shows us the fruit on top; a close-up clip of empty muffin liners in the trays; and a clip of a bag of Oreo cookies. Jeannie has also added a still image of cupcakes from WeVideo's stock footage library. There are dissolve transitions applied to move between these clips.

Figure 30

Screenshots of baking B-Roll that Ziggy provides for Jeannie and that Jeannie uses to edit Ziggy's Profile Story video.



The Profile Story ends with a bit of A-Roll of Ziggy talking and then moves into a black screen with the animated words “The End” just as Jeannie has ended her the other video piece that she created in the program. Considering the issues with Ziggy uploading the footage, that leaves Jeannie without a lot of time to work on it, and her decision to work independently and not bring me in to help, it is a good effort. She demonstrates an understanding of some of the basic principles of editing. Not only that, she takes up the use of a new editing platform (although it is very similar to iMovie).⁶⁸

In our interview, Jeannie mentions some unsuccessful experimentation with editing techniques. She was inspired by a clip I had shown in our program session -- a video profile I produced and directed for TVO Kids that featured layered graphics with the main character’s interview footage superimposed on top of the B-Roll at times: *“I tried to do um, the thing, um, that you showed us. I was trying to put Ziggy in front of the B-Roll and I put the B-Roll in a border. I tried to do that.”*

It is experimentation and trying new things that will help any beginner editor to develop new skills and progress in their craft and Jeannie does this without any coaxing or prompting from me. In the interview, I ask her if she felt prepared to use a new editing platform: *“It was, um, it was almost easy enough when you gave us the tutorial how to do it.”* At the same time, when I ask her whether she prefers iMovie or WeVideo, she responds:

⁶⁸ I discussed the variety of clips that Ziggy filmed for this piece while at the same time there were issues with very dark shots and lots of handheld footage. They demonstrated an ability to think visually, but perhaps not much attention to detail.

“Because um I could do a lot more on [iMovie]. And also, it's on my browser. And it's much easier to download it and do things on it, because it's actually an app. In iMovie, you don't really need you don't need internet to do it.”

This response demonstrates that she is familiar enough with the affordances of each platform to be able to compare them. Even more notable is that she's able to do this even though she has only explored using WeVideo for a week or so. She is also open to learning from her peers and getting feedback from the small community of video-makers we collectively formed for a few weeks. In the final session when she screens her teaser-trailer, one of the participants suggests that she keep each portion of text on the screen longer because it currently pops on and off the screen too quickly and is hard to read. I pick up that thread, agreeing that this is a great suggestion and that a good rule-of-thumb is to read the words out loud, slowly, to have a better guess as to how long to keep each line on the screen. Jeannie is eager to show me the second version of this video during our interview and to get my opinion as to whether the clips are slow enough. They are! This illustrates her willingness to learn, receive feedback, and grow as an editor. On that note, nearing the end of our post-program interview, I ask:

Tatyana: *What sort of things do you still need to learn? Or you want to learn?*

Jeannie: *More editing on iMovie and doing things and actual filming, like on the computer, and mostly about editing.*

This excerpt is significant because it appears that the reference to “*actual filming, like on the computer*” may be her attempt to describe digital animation-type storytelling. In light of this, I have a sense that part of her interest in video editing may actually relate to her desire to experience animation programs: to bring her hand-drawn and digital 2-D images to life. Based on her participation in this program and the projects she created, Jeannie appears to indeed be

more interested and skilled at editing as opposed to filming. At the same time, thinking back to her teaser-trailer video, it would appear that even her editing is motivated by the art and animated fictional adventure content she enjoys consuming and wishes to create. I am left wondering if and when she will be introduced to digital animation software and how this might impact her interest in editing. I am also left wondering when she will post her first video on YouTube and what is holding her back.

“Snapshot” Summary

Jeannie is an eleven-year-old girl of Jamaican heritage and from a Christian and Native-spirited background; she is also on the autism spectrum. She is especially passionate about drawing and the fantasy genre. She appears to be most drawn to the main social media platform that is frequented by the artists she admires which is YouTube; this is also the source of the illustration tutorial videos that support her self-directed hobby. She does not appear to have had any formal education around video-storytelling and signed up for the program thinking that we would be focusing more so on an animation-style of video storytelling. Nevertheless, she approaches the program activities with a willingness to try new things, although she does experience some difficulties in completing all of them. She produces a Silent Story/Day In My Life video as well as the audio poem and a version of a Profile Story for her teammate Ziggy. She also appears to struggle to produce vlogs and ultimately submits ones that do not offer much in the way of insights.

Her *illustrator and graphic novel-motivated approach* to video storytelling is evident throughout the study. Not only does she focus on her drawing hobby for her Profile Story, but she also is eager to share work that reflects the specific focus or aspect of her video-storytelling interest with the participants via a graphic-based “teaser-trailer” for a fantasy fan fiction novella

she is working on. She also includes B-Roll of this novella-in-progress in her Silent Story/Day In My Life video.

Jeannie also appears to be a *video editing enthusiast*, indicating her prior experience as well as demonstrating her confidence with iMovie software on her laptop during the program. She seems far more interested in learning how to craft a story by building graphics and transitions rather than filming live (non-animated) video content to edit with. Further evidence of her “geeking out” over editing is that she can articulate some of the reasons why she prefers iMovie over WeVideo.

Chapter Eleven: Discussion

Introduction

The previous four chapters explored my research questions⁶⁹ as well as my primary research goal—to centre research around girls who are interested in video making—by illustrating the unique media-making experience and approach of each participant. In this chapter, I further explore my research questions and continue to centre participants’ perspectives—this time by bringing all four girls’ voices and perspectives together. I present and discuss several themes I noted across each participant’s data sources and that align with several concepts from the literature that situates this study. I then return to the secondary aim of this case study: exploring how extracurricular opportunities can be developed to effectively support diverse populations of girls in their exploration of media storytelling. I begin by widening the lens to frame girls’ video making in a time marked by post-feminism and neo-liberalism. I further note that statistics on youth’s substantial uptake of video-based social media platforms, alongside observations I made with my small group of participants, call attention to how YouTube and TikTok function as key sources of informal learning about the art and craft of video-making. Given the scale of youth engagement and the blurred lines between consumption and production, I suggest the importance of viewing video-based social media platforms as sites of public pedagogy: not only are they reframing and reshaping video-making processes and products, but they are also fuelling the view of the video storyteller as a self-directed, solo operation. Finally, I reflect on the various points of discussion in order to consider what these can mean for future directions for video production programming for girls. With reference to

⁶⁹ Research questions: what are the experiences of tween and teen girls who engage in video-making as an extracurricular interest? What approaches do they take to creating video-based content and what informs/influences their approach?

ideas emerging from feminist media scholarship and connected learning (Ito et al., 2012) as well as intersectionality, I reflect on possible ways forward, paying particular attention to supporting marginalized populations of girls in this art and craft.

Uniting the Participants and Considering Common Themes

This section represents an effort—in the spirit of an arts-based case study—to consider unifying themes across participants’ (or “cases”) data that offer perspective in relation to a wider culture-sharing group: girls who are interested in video making. These themes consider the “more socially embedded and relations dimensions of creative production” (Lange & Ito, 2009/2019, p. 249), and align with key areas of interest or consideration in the areas of girlhood, informal/connected learning, and community-based media production education. I focus on the apparent significance of relationships and experiences of connection for tween and teen girls in girl-specific spaces, and on the significance of peer and adult support and feedback with regard to these girls’ interest in video making specifically.

Significance of Relationships and a Sense of Connection in Girl-Specific Programs

Relationships are really important to tween and teen girls. As discussed throughout this dissertation, girls experience an increased desire for connection and importance of experience as they move from pre-adolescence through adolescence (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Damour, 2016; Deak, 2010; Gilligan, 1982). And reports cite evidence of how girl-specific programs contribute to a girl’s sense of connectedness, among other perceived benefits (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2014, 2019; Girls Action Foundation, 2015). In their interviews, all of the participants in my research study either made explicit reference to relationships they formed in the program or noted moments when they experienced a sense of connection with the other

participants. My field notes and review of the program session recordings further identify moments of relationship and connection through what I perceived to be enthusiastic engagement with each other.

As I aimed to illustrate in Alexia's and Fernanda's portraits, both girls made myriad references to one another in their interviews and Alexia also referenced her developing relationship with Fernanda in a vlog.⁷⁰ I suggest that there is an additional way that the importance of relationship and connection or connectedness was demonstrated. To reiterate, Alexia and Fernanda were already peer tutors with the Centre, and, although they had been on multiple Zoom meetings about the tutoring program, they had not enjoyed the opportunity to speak directly with one another, one-on-one. However, as Alexia noted in her interview:

"...we never really said anything, except that time when we actually had that Zoom breakout room. And when we asked the question of like, 'What's the story behind this photo?' We actually got to talk a lot more. So, that was great."

Alexia was referring to the first time I placed her in a breakout room with Fernanda early into the program. I had asked participants to bring a photo that had themselves in it, and that was meaningful to them, and to tell the story behind the photo. The video storytelling program turned out to be the catalyst for a new friendship which was significant for both girls.

References to their experiences connecting with each other appeared in several of Alexia's vlogs. In our session immediately following the week when participants had recorded interviews for their Profile Story collaborative projects,⁷¹ both girls eagerly shared how great the experience

⁷⁰ To recapitulate, I did provide question prompts for the participants to use in the vlogs, but they were very open-ended, encouraging participants to focus on what stood out for them about their experience.

⁷¹ These were the third and final projects in the program. They involved assigned partners where each girl would interview and film their partner and edit a video about her, using different sources of B-Roll footage.

of connecting in-person was.⁷² Another interesting development was that the duo produced a video bloopers reel of their day spent filming. Although each of them took turns filming each other so they do not appear on camera together, the video is full of their interactions, smiles, and laughter. I have previously noted tween girls' motivation to produce bloopers videos of themselves (Terzopoulos, 2017). However, in the case of that study, the girl participants already had well-established relationships with one another, and I suggested that the videos appeared to satisfy their desire to see themselves on screen as well as extend their interest in comedic programming into their own content. In this case, Alexia and Fernanda's video could be said to demonstrate similar motivations. However, they had not known each other very long, and in tandem with the numerous references they make to their new friendship, as well as the impact of the pandemic on their lives throughout the data, I suggest that the video has a different significance. I interpret that their day spent interacting and working on a common project together was meaningful enough to warrant an effort to further commemorate it. It was also a meaningful enough experience to dedicate considerable time to crafting an additional video about it. It is worth noting that a contributing factor to this significance is that the girls opted to meet in person at a time when most youth were stuck at home and only engaging in person with their immediate family members. In any case, the significance of this relationship was a core part of both girls' experience in this program and study.

This part of the discussion emerges from comments made by every participant in relation to experiencing connection in the program. During the time of the program, several of the

⁷² Given that this took place during the pandemic and during a phase when we were encouraged to "social distance," I had recommended that the participants conduct their interviews over Zoom. However, it appeared Alexia and Fernanda had had a responsible conversation with each other and felt they would be safe filming outside, keeping some distance, at a nearby park.

participants were enrolled in other virtual programs through the Centre, and several had participated in other programs previously as well. This afforded me the opportunity to ask them to reflect on how this program might have been similar to or different from other “for girls” programs they had participated in. At the end of the interview, I also asked if they had anything else they would like to say about the program. Fernanda responded in this way:

“Usually, when we do something like, say, one of the other classes was painting. Like, if we were doing an art class, she would just be kind of instructing us and we just go along with it. And we didn't really get to talk about ourselves or things that we've done. We were more like, ‘Oh, you know, yeah, I'm doing good now. Oh, we're starting painting, okay.’ And then we started painting. But for digital storytelling, we really got to talk with each other and really learn, like a lot of—like, I got to know, the people who were in my class really well.”

Ziggy and Alexia's responses that comment on how their experiences differ with other programs also focus on the opportunity to get to know one another and share their stories. Jeannie's response is less explicit, as she references a preference for the small size of our session, without being able to clearly articulate as to why. However, when I asked her about the experience of interviewing Ziggy for the video profile, Jeannie replied: *“It felt kinda weird, but actually very nice. Because you get to know—like you actually get to talk to someone other than your family. That's about all the things that they like to do.”*

A girl may have any number of different reasons or motivations for enrolling in an extracurricular program, including to develop skills and knowledge and to socialize or make friends. And as was the case for Jeannie and Ziggy, it might be their parents who are doing the enrolling. On the one hand, any extracurricular programming could be said to fill a void for this group of girls at a time when they were not attending their physical schools and were unable to socialize freely with anyone outside of their immediate families. However, what is notable is that

three out of the four participants spoke enthusiastically about how the video-making program experience—including creating and sharing their videos and also experiences with different group activities in the Zoom meetings—gave them the opportunity to learn more about each other and share insights about their own lives. Furthermore, although research has previously noted the benefits of girls’ participation in girl-specific programming (Girls Action Foundation, 2015), I suggest that video-making programs offer a particular benefit for girls above and beyond developing technical or creative skills. Participants’ experiences of connection and relationship from this single, brief, and necessarily virtual program suggest that video-making activities can represent effective and enjoyable conduits for community-building efforts within any wider girl-specific extracurricular space or initiative.

The Significance of Peer and Adult Video-Making Support/Feedback

The themes of peer and adult support and feedback overlap with the aforementioned themes of connection and relationship. However, the focus of this discussion turns to themes across participants’ data that more directly reflect upon video making and girls who represent emerging video storytellers. Over the course of the program and across various data, there is evidence that, for these girls, video making is an activity that they have predominately engaged in solo. In spite of participants’ mixed range of video-making experiences, I noted multiple instances where the participants either took the initiative to reach out for support, either from each other as peers or from me as a “techne-mentor” (Ito et al., 2012), or they remarked upon the significance of being able to receive feedback from our group.

Jeannie’s teaser-trailer video and the process of revising it demonstrates the significance of having access to feedback and support from our temporary community of expertise (Ito et al.,

2009, 2019; see also Gee, 2003). In the last session of our video-making program, I offered participants an opportunity to share another video project they had previously made or were currently working on. As discussed in the previous chapter, Jeannie wanted to share her teaser-trailer and received feedback from her peers. At the end of my exit interview with Jeannie, unprompted, she brought up the teaser-trailer video again in the following exchange:

- Jeannie: *If you have time, because I'm thinking I'm posting a video later this week.*
Tatyana: *Okay...*
Jeannie: *Can you look over the changes right now um, that I did to it?*
Tatyana: *Yeah! Is this the trailer video?*
Jeannie: *Yeah.*
Tatyana: *Yeah, I would love to! I would absolutely love to!*

What I also noted is that after we watch her revised video together, she proceeded to tell me that she was going to post her first video to her YouTube account the following week. This certainly points to the constructive value of peer and mentor feedback in helping a video-maker to improve her craft. But it also leads me to wonder how much being an active member of a video-making community will contribute to a participant's motivation to create. I further wonder how someone like Jeannie, who has been working entirely alone on her videos, might be supported in actually completing some of her projects if she were a member of such a community.

There is another value of feedback and support, which came through on the day we all watched and discussed each other's Silent Story/Day In My Life videos. My observational notes indicated the overall lively vibe of the Zoom call throughout that experience. The older girls often led the post-screening comments, offering compliments followed by some gentle

suggestions. After screening Ziggy's video, the collective group was visibly impressed, and had lots of positive feedback to share with her. I noted what I read to be Ziggy's proud and happy body language and facial expression, which began during the screening and seemed to become even more elated as she received feedback. This prompts a pondering in relation to the current media ecology that girls increasingly engage with and the culture of Instagram and Tiktok: it involves posting content that is often created independently as opposed to collaboratively, with followers responding to posted content via text-based comments. It occurs to me that the experience of getting in-person suggestions and compliments on their videos was potentially a unique one for these girls. Further, this feedback was solicited in a relatively safe space, amongst like-minded peers and facilitator, unlike the wider social media universe which is fraught with privacy concerns and hateful trolls.

The Profile Story—the only collaborative project in our program—generated girls' explicit references to help and support each other; these ideas were further supported by my field notes. Jeannie and Ziggy requested my assistance in setting up the Zoom meeting for their interviews of one another. After checking whether they were fine with it, I stayed on the call to support them and to observe. In my field notes, I noted what felt to be palpable energy from both girls on Zoom on that Saturday afternoon.⁷³ Each girl was sitting up straight with notably alert body language. This was in stark contrast to the considerably more slumped body posture and measured expressions that I had become accustomed to from all of the participants during our afterschool sessions. This was understandable: most of the girls were spending all day online staring at their computer screens in “emergency” remote learning, prior to our afterschool

⁷³ These few hours on this weekend afternoon in Spring of 2021 were amongst my personal highlights of the research study.

meetings. Ziggy and Jeannie’s perceived energy could have also been chalked up to it being the weekend, but I also observed what seemed to be a nervous excitement in their voices, as well as each’s efforts to carefully review her interview questions and ask questions clearly. Both girls seemed to be taking the activity very seriously, taking turns assuming the role of interviewer and adopting a more formal tone. Also notable was the support each extended to the other, offering suggestions of additional questions to ask or ways to rephrase their responses.⁷⁴ Although my goal was to observe, I also offered some gentle advice, in the way of encouraging participants to respond in full sentences, providing context to set up each response.

I was not present for Alexia and Fernanda’s recording of their Profile Stories, so I spent some time during each of our one-on-one interviews inquiring about their process. As Alexia explained, their collaboration began with figuring out the focus of their profiles and drafting the interview questions:

“Like, we talked while doing it—we would text and go, like, ‘Is this question, okay’ And she’s like, ‘Oh, yeah.’ We did that for an hour just through Google Docs. And we were able to help each other um, modify, all the questions like in real time. That was really nice.”

I’ve already written about Alexia and Fernanda’s experiences working together and how I had a sense that Fernanda’s resistance or apprehension around video editing led to Alexia supporting her partner substantially in this phase. It is significant to also note that it appears both spent hours together over Zoom, laboriously and yet seemingly enjoying talking through the editing process. Alexia explained: *“We were yelling at our own screen on Zoom together, like*

⁷⁴ This experience, along with their efforts to collaborate and support each other, approached the “magic” of team-based media production that I described in Chapter 1. This is an experience that I wish I could extend to every young person curious about video storytelling. Although neither girl fully completed an edited profile for her partner, this experience demonstrated the value of the *process* of media making, in addition to or even more importantly than producing the *product*.

'It's not working!'” I note that she offers this information with what feels like joyful amusement. This is interesting to note as, out of all of the participants, Alexia seems to be the only one who entered into the program having independently produced a video featuring different scenes that she both filmed and edited on her own. As she told me in the interview: *“I feel like most of my friends are kind of like doing their own thing. And video making isn't really one of their passions.”* She also made numerous references across her data that suggest a grappling with how to start creating the kinds of videos she is interested in, inspired by the YouTubers she watches. Meanwhile, she ultimately produced the most pieces of content in our program: after editing her Profile Story and a version of Fernanda’s video, she proceeded to make a video version of her “Where I Am From” poem. That she is motivated to produce this amount of content in a relatively small window of time during our program feels significant. It further offers some considerations around how a girl finds the motivation to create and how opportunities to work alongside a peer towards a common project or how simply being in community with peers with a shared interest can contribute to her motivation.

The discussion thus far has drawn from examples across the data of girls’ experiences of mostly peer-based support and feedback from our small, temporary community of practice in relation to their video-making pursuits. I further consider my own role as a source of support and feedback. In her ethnographic work with girl video-makers, Lange noted the significance of female role models, and their influence on girls’ technological self-confidence (Lange, 2015, p. 90; see also Furger, 1998). I note that each participant made a conscious effort to connect with me one-on-one at least once, and in many cases frequently throughout the program and study. Their reasons ranged from wanting to share more about themselves to asking for specific support. In Fernanda’s case, she stayed after the second Zoom session to let me know that

something we had discussed in the session connected to her recent experiences with a theatre troupe. The conversation then segued into her desire to become a performer, which she excitedly shared with me. In their review of the girl-focused programs they support, the Canadian Women's Foundation references participants' responses in relation to adult mentors: "Girls who were mentored by adults liked that they had another trusted adult in their life to talk to. The girls said all of the mentors provided positive role models and offered real-life experiences from which they could learn" (2014, p.12). Ito et al. (2012) also note the role of "caring adults" and mentorship for youth, including in relation to positive future orientation. I grapple with the label of mentor since our relationship spanned a relatively short time frame and participants had considerably different goals in mind with regards to video making, making it challenging to offer customized support. But it was evident during this program that all participants sought to connect with a caring adult and share more about their lives and who they were.

In other cases, however, participants sought me out to explicitly request my video-making support, while seeming to want to build a rapport. In our interview, Jeannie told me: "*I actually really liked that, um, that I could contact you right away if I had any questions.*" It would seem as though I spent the most time directly supporting Ziggy's video making. She reached out to me on several occasions, which led to us spending time on Zoom going through the process of editing on WeVideo, as well as troubleshooting how to get video footage from her phone to the Google Drive. As I discussed in her chapter, she also asked to show me other creative work she'd made and seemed happy to find other things in common with me. Alexia communicated with me regularly over email and Teams, often asking for clarification about tasks or updating me on her progress. Yet she also shared more about her life in these exchanges. For example, it was through the Teams chat that I learned that she was applying for a scholarship for university

and was reflecting a lot on her life. Over chat, Alexia shared a more playful side that I hadn't observed during the Zoom program meetings. At one point during our interview, Alexia admits that she looked me up on the internet when she signed up for the program and was really impressed with how much I've done, and excited that she'd get the chance to learn from me. When I inquired if Alexia had any last comments or questions at the end of the interview, she asked if she could keep in touch with me, especially if she creates any more YouTube videos. On this note, Alexia emailed me a couple of weeks after our final interview to ask if I thought it was a good idea for her to submit her "Where I Am From" video to a Filipino community contest, to which I encouraged her to do so. In the case of Ziggy and Alexia, it is possible that I approached the role of mentor for them—albeit only temporarily.⁷⁵ The participants' overall video-making experience in relation to the program could be said to have been influenced positively by their ability to seek help from a more experienced guide. This aligns with research pointing to the unique role that facilitators of such programs fill, performing as "co-conspirators" within spaces that may approach more of a pedagogy of collegiality (Chavez & Soep, 2005) than those of traditional curricula and classroom environments. I suggest that the participants positioned me in a dual role: as "techne-mentor" (Finn, 2019) with a non-permanent position that involves supporting technology use in a specific context, and as a generally caring adult. These roles are of course not mutually exclusive. All these experiences suggest that mentor and peer support and feedback, especially for someone used to working solo on projects, can be an important motivator to help a video-maker move forward with and improve on a project.

⁷⁵ I indicated to all participants that they could feel free to keep in touch over email about their video making or with any questions.

Girls' Video Making and Learning in a Video-based Social Media Ecology

Turning the focus towards the secondary aim of this study, of considering how to design effective video-making programs for girls, it is useful to contextualize girls' video making with regards to the ecology of their production, including how "media practices are embedded in a broader social and cultural ecology (Ito et al., 2009/2019, p.5; see also Ito et. al., 2012). The wider media environment or ecology today's tween or teen girl lives amidst and engages with is more robust and complex than that of any generation prior. With regards to video-based media content that appeals to teens and tweens, this ecology reflects the continued dominance of YouTube, as has been the case for many years as of 2022, and the incredible influence of TikTok in more recent years (Omnicores, 2022; Perez, 2020). This would appear to be a significant moment in media history for girls, given their overall penchant for visually-focused social-media platforms (MTM Junior, 2021). Throughout this project, it struck me how different this project would have been, given the evolution of social media, had it taken place even as recently as 3 years ago. The girl participants in my study all indicated YouTube as one of their go-to sources of content, accessing the platform for entertainment as well as to support their exploration of extracurricular interests. This points to the continued relevance of the platform. All of the girls could quickly list off the creators or accounts that they like, many of whom are several to many years older than they are. This speaks to how YouTube has solidified its "broadcast yourself" ethos which gave rise to the vlogger/influencer culture that prevails today, whereby users follow individual accounts as opposed to watch favourite genres of shows or specific programs. Interestingly, Ziggy and Alexia's references to the creators they follow (Joana Ceddia and Lexi as well as her brother Brent Rivera) reflect a broad range of influencer-driven content: from creators producing raw and unfiltered video-diary style content, especially in their early years on

the platform, to more polished short-form content like how-to videos, skits, and other informational- or documentary-type content. Jessica Johnston (2019) notes how identity for young YouTube producers is “built through the catalogue of videos that document the transformative stages of their early lives” (p. 64). In all cases, successful creators and those wishing to emulate them are engaged in what Banet-Weiser (2009) refers to as self-branding. Many YouTube influencers have found their way onto TikTok as well. The Chinese-owned platform reflects the evolution of micro video-based lip-synching and dancing apps which makes sense given the initial dominance of dance trends on the app. Turning to the design of the app itself, its slot-machine style functionality where the user flicks through content has been the subject of much scrutiny, including its ability to keep folks on the app for hours: the average time spent per day is 52 minutes worldwide (Dean, 20220). This is even more notable given that the content users are scrolling through is generally only a few minutes long.

The Influence of Post-Feminism

Although it is important to note how platforms like YouTube and TikTok have influenced the media ecology of tween and teen girls, including the participants in this study, I am not in a position to sufficiently examine them here. I do, however, wish to consider girls’ media engagement with visual-focused and especially video-based social media in relation to this late modernity period in history, and the influence of neo-liberalism and a post-feminist sensibility. As Giddens’ (1991) has claimed, all humans in late modernity are engaged in a constantly evolving and never complete process of identity formation and this process is influenced by an increasingly complex, intertextual, and reflexive media environment. Tween and teen girls are very much engaged in this project, through both the consumption and creation of media. Although the concepts of agency and resistance are central to girlhood studies (Gonick et al.,

2009, p. 5), scholars have also problematized what it means to have agency in a post-feminist era. This includes a view of agency as associated with and complicated by the sexualization and commercialization of girlhood (Bhana, 2005; Coulter, 2014; Harris, 2005; McRobbie, 1991). Further, in this “after girl-power” period under neo-liberalism, they note how girls and women have been “constructed as the ideal rational actors who have succeeded in re-inventing themselves, adapting to shifting global market forces” (Gonick et al., 2009). McRobbie refers to a “youthful female phallicism” or “post-feminist masquerade” that society expects of women whereby they must “invest time and effort in the crafting of a self which ensures desirability” in the heteronormative sense, while also performing masculinity because she has “won” equality with men and must demonstrate this by adopting “male” behaviour (p. 84). Evidence of this is visible amidst the range of content young women create on both YouTube and TikTok. Melanie Kennedy (2020) calls attention to what she notes is the “insidious political and ideological work in the construction of girlhood” in the media’s celebration of girlhood via girls’ participation on TikTok. She revisits McRobbie and Garber’s (2006) exploration of girls’ ‘bedroom culture’ and their activities at the time which were subversive yet considered relatively safe and private. Currently, Kennedy notes how many girls’ bedrooms as well as other aspects of their lives are on public display and exposed to surveillance and evaluation concerns. Further, drawing from Johnston (2018)—who posits that girl media producers on YouTube can be said to demonstrate that consuming and producing media are not mutually exclusive—I further suggest that TikTok, with features like duets and stitch functionality (both facilitating response or remix videos posts) built into the platform, further blurs these lines.

In the early days of the pandemic, I downloaded TikTok myself, and witnessed a platform full of teens and young adults—and even adults—circumventing their boredom during stay-at-

home measures with dance trends and other stunts. In the foreground, the creators were predominantly White and normatively attractive. The literal background of these videos gave further context as to who these folks were and their high economic status, as evidenced by their expansive and aesthetic home environments. Unsurprisingly, a next generation (video-based content speaking) of influencer has emerged on this app which includes teen girl Charlie D'Amelio. The now 18-year-old is one of TikTok's biggest stars and representative of, as Kennedy notes, the "identity [that] continues the valorised heteronormative and conventionally feminine subject of 21st century tween pop culture" (p. 1072). D'Amelio is White, normatively attractive, and from a wealthy conservative family. Meanwhile, noticeably absent on this platform are the experiences of other girlhoods, including young black women and politically active girls (Bellan, 2020; Lorenz et al., 2020). Nevertheless, I do see a broader range of content on my feed of late, including content that reflects McRobbie's post-feminist masquerade. The platform has evolved considerably since the early days, with a wider range of content and BIPOC, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, people with disabilities, and less affluent creators. At the same time, there is evidence that the algorithm continues to be biased towards creators like D'Amelio (Biddle et al., 2020) and the platform is plagued with large amounts of hateful comments on posts, non-experts giving advice, and even dangerous activities, the latter of which often earns a TikTok generated disclaimer. This overview only scratches the surface of the media ecology for today's girl but does offer some sense of the overall influence on shaping girls' understandings of media. This includes a sense that these media platforms and their creators and conventions represent this group's primary means of learning about video-based media storytelling. As sites of informal learning, these platforms further shape girls'

understandings of what video content looks like, and subsequently influences their own approaches to video storytelling.

I now return to Lange's (2014) call for a focus on girls' technical affiliations as central research loci. She notes how girls' media studies has tended to focus on girls' media production experiences and processes in relation to negotiating non-technical aspects of the self, such as gender, class, and ethnicity. Once again, although I do not focus on girls' technical skills exclusively, they do factor into a more holistic examination, that also takes artistic and aesthetic considerations into account for what comprises each girl's video-storytelling persona, or her "way with video" (Lange, 2015, p. 11). As Chapters 6-10 aimed to illustrate, the four girls who participated in this study all had varying experiences and levels of engagement with video-based social media creation. In my interviews, all indicated that they had made some form of video content before, either in-school or for fun, but there was a sense that the content each had created alone was minimal or at least did not inspire much discussion. And yet, in examining the results of the girls' Silent Story/Day In My Life videos—the first video-focused project in our program—something interesting becomes apparent. I modelled this project after one I had used in a previous study (Terzopoulos, 2017), adapting it for this study after observing a prevalent TikTok trend being taken up by young women: a carefully curated, highly stylized, and un-narrated, daily routine sequence of still images and/or video snippets, set to music. I note, however, that I did not explicitly set up the activity as a "TikTok video project." Reference to the platform was made only in giving further context for the video's duration requirements: a 1:00 total duration was the same as the maximum length of a TikTok video. In the span of a little less than a week, three out of the four girls produced videos that bore a strong resemblance to each other in terms of how the stories were organized and styled: the videos featured a rapid

succession of relatively short video clips, akin to a fast-based photo slideshow. These were shots of their lives as seen through their eyes, with the obligatory quick shot of the creator somewhere in the middle and often filmed into a mirror. In contrast, Jeannie's video involved fewer shots, longer clips, and none that included her own image.

Kennedy (2020) suggests that the platform encourages the “spectacular mundanity” of girls’ bedrooms and an “e-girl aesthetic” built around goofiness and relatability. I suggest that may still be the case for some forms of content that girls create on the platform, perhaps even that spectacularly mundane content was specific to the period of the first wave of pandemic lockdowns. However, the daily routine video trend, at least the version produced by 20- and 30-year-old women appearing on my customized feed, seems to represent a different e-girl aesthetic. These creations contain artfully-composed and often minimalist shots of daily life that are carefully curated, and their overall composition as well as content in the shots portray the life of an it-girl, or “that girl” in TikTok vernacular. The impression is a life lived by someone successful, organized, disciplined, well-rounded, but also indulgent. The majority of these videos look uncannily similar, and, once again, the opulence of these videos suggests the relative affluence of the creators taking up this trend. Kearney (2015) refers to the “sparkle” phenomenon visible in media content featuring girls and how this is most apparent on girls’ bodies, “which are commonly adorned with glittery makeup, clothing and accessories” (p. 263). I suggest that the daily routine video trend is an extension of this same phenomenon, while girls take a temporary break from making their bodies the main focus of video content.

Alexia's, Ziggy's, and Fernanda's Silent Story/Day In My Life videos, although carefully planned and curated and visibly inspired by TikTok, present more like regular snapshots of a day

in their lives, akin to a class documentary-style of video storytelling. Mitchell (2008) refers to youth technological productions as “identities-in-action,” likening the process of producing them to identity processes in that they are “multifaceted and in flux, incorporating old and new images” (p. 27). Although the focus of this study is not on the different ways in which tween and teen girls identify, it is interesting to note that there is a clear effort on the part of all girls, including Ziggy, to capture different aspects of themselves, as well as give a sense of the composition of their days. Across the board, Alexia, Ziggy, and Fernanda’s videos feature their virtual school lives as represented by myriad shots of their computer screens and schedules. But they also choose to show their meals, their efforts to stay active, and their hobbies. Ziggy is the only one to feature a quick shot with family members. She is also the only one to focus a fair bit of her one-minute video on outfit changes. This latter theme also offers her the opportunity to experiment with her key area of video storytelling interest: different types of transitions.

Informal Learning, Public Pedagogy, and Video-Based Social Media

At the start of the program, I had a sense that the four participants had limited or no previous supported or formal educational experiences with video making. More specifically, tween-aged Ziggy and Jeannie referenced video-making activities they did for fun but did not indicate any opportunities to make videos in school. The teenaged participants, Fernanda and Alexia, made reference to parody ads or political campaign videos for classes, which aligns with curriculum mandated around media literacy, including production (as per Chapter 3). However, in the latter cases, they did not appear inclined to give much detail about these projects and referenced them in general or vague terms. Our conversations confirmed that none of the girls had prior experience with any sort of extracurricular program or club around media production. Yet in spite of this, and in tandem with the very limited instruction offered in the video-making

program we engaged in together, all of the participants were able to produce videos, and in a relatively limited period of time. In the case of the first video project, which I wish to return to again now, they were able to produce content with no additional assistance required from me. This means that they have learned how to make videos informally, and in a self-directed fashion.

Certainly, today's youth, just like the adult population, turn to the Web and video-based platforms like YouTube to be entertained, but also to learn. In our interviews, both Fernanda and Jeannie mentioned going to YouTube in the past to learn from tutorials how to do different things, like add graphics and titles in iMovie. Ziggy and Alexia did not specifically mention accessing video-making tutorials but did note that they use the platform to learn things that interest them. An interesting observation is that three out of four of the participants referred to relying on phone-based apps for their video editing. Historically viewed as a highly technical, specialized, and inaccessible craft profession, editing has arguably been demystified or democratized by apps like those the participants mention, such as Kinemaster and Capcut. In all cases, they are using apps that do not come with a cost and offer limited functionality: mostly the ability to organize video clips in a preferred sequence and to add an overall music track, as well as graphics like basic text and some simple static or animated images as overlays. If the participants in this study are any indication, these apps also represent a self-directed means for youth to be introduced to and “mess around” with this crucial part of the video production process. All of the girls were able to produce several pieces of video content in the program, and it is worth emphasizing once again that none of them had prior formal training or education around video editing. As a result, it can be said that they have all developed a competency in this regard through engaging in informal learning and by “doing” their own editing.

Further, as Chapters 6–10 aimed to illustrate, a girl’s video-based social media platform of preference, especially if she is a relative newcomer to video-production, has some influence on her approach to crafting video stories. This was most evident in Ziggy and Alexia’s video-storytelling personas and their engagement with TikTok and YouTube respectively. I suggested this was evident in Alexia’s exploration of her own vlogger style, as inspired by the style of the YouTube vloggers she watches. She also engages in meta-reflections as part of her vlogs, commenting on their evolution and her efforts to pay more attention to different details of the craft: she refers to vlogging conventions that do not surface in any of our discussions within the video-making program. Ziggy’s heightened focus on transitions, borne out of her active use of TikTok of late, is evident in her *Silent Story/Day In My Life* video, and comes up several times in her interview with me. Transitions in the TikTok sense involve a combination of aesthetic and technical mastery, and Ziggy’s desire to become good at using them can be said to further motivate her current interest and her approach to video making. What this discussion of Alexia and Ziggy’s experiences suggests is that YouTube and TikTok respectively function as sites for informal learning with regards to the art and craft of each girl’s video making. Put another way, even if they are not seeking out tutorial videos specifically, the act of engaging with these platforms is a form of learning about video-based storytelling.

I return to the fact that three out of the four girls were able to produce *Silent Story/Day In My Life* videos quickly, and that they reflect a similar overall composition or logic. In our interviews, the three girls refer to the process of creating this project, including how they planned what shots they would film, and the considerations involved when trying to capture a day in their lives authentically. None seemed at a loss for what to feature in their videos. The sheer number of these types of videos on TikTok, and the fact that the average user will sometimes spend hours

scrolling through videos and may be exposed to dozens upon dozens of the same trend, suggests that one can become familiar with the compositional aspects of the visual aesthetic and overall storytelling conventions through repeated exposure. But what significant exposure to similar types of videos cannot teach is technical proficiency. As I interviewed Alexia, Ziggy, and Fernanda, they described a common experience in the challenge of fitting all of the clips they wanted into the prescribed length of time. They also mentioned having issues getting shots that looked as good as they wanted. Evidence of this can be seen in the prominence of computer screen shots in their videos. Often, these clips were soft-focused or were quite shaky. Other areas for improvement further reflect technical skills that are unlikely to be learned from watching well-filmed videos, such as how to ensure shots are well-lit, and how to work with existing lighting conditions to get the best possible shot.

What I wish to emphasize is the sheer number of young people on these platforms and how they represent preferred sources of media content for many teens as well as tweens. Although it is not possible to draw any wider conclusions with such a small sample of research participants, it is interesting that a group of girls with no explicit prior instruction around video making created videos that mimicked a popular TikTok trend in terms of some aspects of their “craftedness” (Brushwood-Rose & Low, 2014). This speaks to the influence of such platforms on understandings of video storytelling, and arguably most of all for tween and teen newcomers to the art and craft. It demonstrates the need for further examination of YouTube and TikTok as video storytelling public pedagogy for current generations of youth, including with regards to its art and craft, through an emphasis on certain techniques, formats, and conventions on these platforms. The droves of girls and women on these platforms as well as the scope of content they create and share—ranging from “spectacularly mundane” to more polished and aspirational “that

girl” to political and defiant—also positions them as highly influential sites of education and learning about girlhood, and about the world and different societal issues as seen through the eyes of girls and women (Sandlin et. al., 2010). Even the spectacularly mundane, which Alexia, Fernanda, and Ziggy include hints of in their videos, reflect the public pedagogies of everyday life (Luke, 2012).

Meeting (Marginalized) Girls Where They Are: Considerations for Extracurricular Video Storytelling Programming

In this section, I bring together aspects thus far discussed in this chapter to consider various directions for video storytelling programming for girls. I refer to Ito et al.’s (2012) connected learning framework, as well as tenets of feminist media, to consider how to support youth learning more equitably around video making and cultivating girls’ video storytelling practice and community. I further reflect on how to specifically encourage and support marginalized and racialized girls’ video storytelling.

Program Environments, Programming Formats, and Social Capital

Research exploring how young people are engaging with media notes that, although it is common for today’s tween or teen to be hanging out with friends via technology, it is the more affluent youth who are developing technological expertise, or who are what Ito and colleagues’ (2009/2019) refer to as “geeking out” with friends inside and outside of school (Jenkins et al., 2009; Neuman & Celano, 2012). Although the four core participants in this research study represented diverse ethnoracial backgrounds and ranged in age considerably (from 11–17), they appeared to share one demographic variable in common: lower socioeconomic status. This is supported by the fact that they all are members of the Centre, an organization that offers mostly free programming as well as other resources for girls in a particular area of Toronto inhabited by

marginalized populations. However, it is worth noting that, as far as I know, there is no screening process or exclusions for enrollment. While I note that age did not necessarily correlate with video-making expertise, the overall level of skill and confidence demonstrated by their video making and discussions about it reflected a quite a considerable range. The overall level of competency and experience also contrasted considerably with that of previous research participants I had worked with, who were mainly White middle school girls of high socioeconomic status. The existing skill levels and confidence with videomaking that I observed with the former group was, on the whole, more advanced and more uniform across participants when compared with participants in this study. It suggests the high standard of education for affluent girls in this country. Although media literacy is mandated curriculum, it does not determine the level of video production (if any) that will comprise related activities and/or assignments, nor the level of instruction or support educators are able to provide to students. For example, in the case of the participants in my study, references were made to video-based school projects but not any specific opportunities to focus on the art and craft of video making. It was also curious to me that although Alexia seemed very keen to explore video making, she was a couple of months away from graduating high school and had neither enrolled nor been inclined to take any media arts elective, let alone one focused on video making.

Based on the above as well as data from this small sample of participants in my own research, racialized and other marginalized populations of girls are not even set up to effectively start making videos, and therefore even less so to succeed at it. It leads me to also wonder how it would ever occur to girls that a more dedicated video-making path was even an option for them. This is where Ito and colleagues' work on a connected learning framework is applicable. They note that there is need to focus on "equity and collective outcomes, otherwise, there is a real risk

that any approach to learning around technology becomes yet another way to reinforce the advantage that privileged individuals already have” (Ito et al., 2012, p. 8). According to these scholars, the key to increasing equitable educational futures is not technology but rather access to social, cultural, and economic capital. They emphasize “support, invitations, and infrastructure for connection”, and opportunities for young people to “become embedded in social networks and communities of interest and expertise” to learn from each other as well as from adults (Ito et al., 2012, p. 57). As explored earlier in this chapter, relationships and connection, as well as feedback and support from the community, are of particular importance to this small group of participants for their general learning, as well as in specific relation to video making. With regards to marginalized girls and their wide-ranging skill levels and prior experiences of video making, my own experience with this program further suggests the relevance of long-term programs or clubs. This would allow facilitators to move away from a clearly defined curriculum, such as the one I had to resort to, towards crafting a “complex alchemy of designed and emergent elements in a process of experimentation and flux” (Ito et. al., 2012, p. 62). An ongoing program would also leave ample room for organic social relationships to blossom and for girls to gravitate towards each other in terms of topics of shared interest. These would enhance the likelihood that participants would approach the rich social relationships described by Ito and her colleagues that are critical to cultivating connected learning experiences and environments.

The program environment that I aimed for in this study was influenced by the legacy of community-based youth media models in the US. I aspired to cultivate and support a “geeking out” experience and learning community. I admit that at times I was discouraged that this was not possible, given the myriad constraints imposed by a compressed schedule and a necessarily

virtual format, as well as by a group of participants who represented such a broad range of what I would come to refer to as “video-storytelling personas.” Reframing this perspective, I have come to recognize that a key factor, especially for girls with minimal prior experience, is to cultivate a hang out-type space and bring together girls who share a common interest, in this case video storytelling. Although these tweens and teens may have previously engaged in informal learning, it was significant that none of them indicated having friends who share such an interest in video making. Thus, a key emphasis of these programs should be relationship-building. Ito et al.’s (2009/2019) modes or genres of participation further reflect a middle option, “messing around,” which represents a self-directed curiosity and desire to experiment and learn more about media production, yet not quite at the “geek” level of engagement and mastery. I suggest that programs could explore an ethos along with their activities that merge in significant ways, and opportunities for hanging out as well as messing around without any initial expectation of “geeking out.” Put another way, for girls lacking cultural capital with regards to video making and social capital more generally, both of which are impacted by low socioeconomic status or class (Bourdieu, 1986), the important factor is to offer them community and a safe space to explore an interest. Such spaces may lead to better chances of keeping up with this interest, where technical mastery can be acquired later, once their enthusiasm is fostered and they become more comfortable with the group and the video technology. And if there is a desire for earlier mastery, this can also be supported to some extent. I recall Ziggy’s concerted efforts to learn as much as possible in the time we spend together, which evolved into a series of one-on-one support sessions from me during the program to support her specific level of competencies around different technical aspects. I also recall Alexia’s request to keep in touch in case she makes more videos. I am just one person who was fortunate enough to connect with and be

temporarily in a position to support four girls with their video making. Before moving on, I note that in the exit interviews, when I asked participants if they had any comments or other feedback about the program, 3 out of 4 immediately responded that they wished it was longer. I concur—we were only just getting warmed up.

Mobile Technology and Video-Making Project Design

As discussed earlier in this dissertation, mobile filmmaking has been positioned as having democratizing potential (Berry & Schleser, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2016). The earlier discussion around the ecology of youth's media lives, and the evidence of participants' obvious comfort levels when using their phones to film and edit videos, support a mobile phone-based model of video-based storytelling programs for youth. However, there are some caveats and challenges to this approach. Dahya and King (2018) conducted interviews with facilitators running programs through a feminist-oriented youth community media program in the US. They suggest media program facilitators need to work to eliminate the bias or hierarchy around types of filmmaking equipment in order to create more equitable experiences that do not frame any element as deficient or lacking. In my earlier work with youth, I admit that I privileged professional equipment and felt that it would give legitimacy or a heightened prestige to the program. At the time, I felt that bringing in iPads was a downgrade of sorts. I recall thinking: *What would be more empowering than having the girl students set up and record on a pro camera?* I now recognize this as partially projecting on my part, as I had felt more important and legitimate the first few times that I handled a professional video camera. Based on my experience running this program, which assumed participants' use of mobile phones but also introduced computer software-based editing software, I posit that professional equipment can and perhaps should be put aside when working with new and emerging youth media creators.

The focus can instead be placed on exploring the theoretical and non-technical fundamentals of media storytelling (i.e., story development, framing/camera angles), which are necessary foundational pieces of knowledge for an emerging video-maker. Although there are nuanced stylistic differences (and durations) across different video formats/platforms, there are always basic elements such as effective shot composition and story structure that transcend these differences. I incorporated some of these fundamentals into my video-storytelling program. For example, in the set up for the Profile Story video project, I introduced the idea of A-Roll and B-Roll as a proven approach to working with a main storyline and supporting visuals or other scenes that support the main narrative. At the end of the program, when I asked participants what they had learned in the program that they had not known about before, they all referenced A-Roll and B-Roll, and without being prompted elaborated on why it was significant that they learned about this component, including that it was something that is used by professionals. In Ziggy's case, she also seamlessly integrated the term when she described her process of recording clips of herself baking for her partner Jeannie.

Another consideration is the level of support required in working with professional video-making equipment. As Jenson and colleagues (2015) note, video production programs in school settings are resource-heavy, and often prohibitively so. I had anticipated minimizing these challenges by having participants use their own smartphones. Although there is incredible value in supporting learning around professional equipment, for beginner video storytellers, I suggest it is more critical to support youth creators in developing a strong understanding of key storytelling fundamentals. As such, it behooves any instructor of youth extracurricular programs, whether focused on mobile technology or not, to carve out time for participants to explore content creation on mobile devices. This also serves the added function of naturally shifting the framing

of a video-making program to acknowledge the solo-broadcast and do-it-yourself culture that is a fundamental part of the ecology of youth media. This way, programs can begin to bridge the gap between where youth currently are and where they may want to go with their video storytelling aspirations.

Other considerations involve the design of video-making projects for youth, the influence of video-based social media platforms, and the ways in which these forms of storytelling depart from media production industry standards. I noted the “individualized” approach to broadcasting oneself that is seen widely across video-based social media platforms, that seems to position video-making as a solo activity, and that emphasizes micro forms of storytelling. In our program, I intentionally created one activity that was more in line with this ethos and one that approached more of a collaborative, team-based model. Incidentally, collaborative approaches to video making are often emphasized in feminist media practice (Berliner & Krabill, 2019). Given the importance of relationships and connections for tween and teen girls, partner or group video-making projects have particular value. Even the evidence from this research project’s small group of participants illustrates the challenges they faced without the support of friends who share their interest in video making. I suggest designing video-making programs that approach a balance between different types of video projects. This will especially be the case if the goal for these programs is to evolve into providing experiences that will support youth who are interested in not just geeking out, but in potentially pursuing a further career path towards professional television production or filmmaking.

In striving to support girls entering into videomaking with very different interests and past experiences, including specific social media use, facilitators should strive not to explicitly privilege or prioritize any one platform or form of storytelling, and instead position all of them as

valid. In the case of these emerging video-makers, the focus should be on different ways to explore their video storytelling creativity in community with other girls. I recall Alexia's response in her interview to what she would need to progress with her storytelling:

“Maybe like, instead of like dealing with myself, I could also help other people—get me to film, because sometimes I have to put the phone down. And I really, there's no one else with me—I guess it's just, um, I guess expanding a team?”

Her experiences with Fernanda represented a first step towards collaborating with someone on an extracurricular video project. Unfortunately for Alexia, it would appear that Fernanda might not have the level of interest or desire needed to learn the technical side of things to support her peer in the ways that she needs to progress, including having someone else to film beyond this program. I also think of Ziggy filming B-Roll of herself while baking her cupcakes: the whole process resulted in lots of shaky point-of-view shots that looked alike. Having someone to film her process would have improved the experience for her as well as the quality of her B-Roll in leaps and bounds. In this influencer-driven and solo content creator era, it would perhaps seem that young people default to filming by themselves. This speaks to the additional value of a longer-running program for girls, as opposed to a brief intervention model or stand-alone program for them: a community of like-minded peers who can take turns supporting each other in different roles, in addition to advising, collaborating, and cheering each other on.

Additional Considerations for Marginalized and Racialized Girls' Video Making

Safe and supportive extracurricular spaces are important for youth who are disadvantaged based on their race, socioeconomic status, or other factors. Scholars aligned with critical and anti-oppressive pedagogy note the repercussions of educational experiences where young

people's social capital and cultural lives are not framed as assets (Valenzuela, 2016) and how "counterspaces" can re-humanize marginalized youth (Soep, 2016). Such spaces are sometimes referred to as "third spaces" (Gutierrez, 2008) and are most impactful when "teachers and students stop talking past each other or in opposition to each other and instead co-create a shared discourse" (Soep, 2016, p. 299). This also aligns with several goals or principles of feminist media, including a dedication to non-hierarchical relationships, as well as the creation of spaces for multivocal and dialogic expressions (Woodward, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 5, although I endeavoured to create as welcoming, equitable and safe a space as possible, I considered how my ability to serve as a mentor for these girls was hindered by the fact that I was unable to fully meet them where they were and more intimately related to them by virtue of my moving through the world as a White female. For example, while I can understand how "[g]irls' bodies are continually exploited across digital media platforms" but cannot possibly understand how "bodies of color, are inscribed with otherness, as strangers, as already and always out of place" (Dahya & King, 2019, p. 35; see also Ahmed, 2000; Dahya & Jenson, 2015). Certainly, any future initiative that plans to work with marginalized youth would be best undertaken with BIPOC mentors on board. This would be especially impactful for participants wishing to tell social-justice oriented stories pertaining to issues facing their community. Had the program run longer, my next planned activity was a short documentary film to further meet youth where they are, while continuing my efforts to explore feminist media tenets in relation to girls' storytelling. As Woodward notes (2019), female-driven digital media projects are often animated by a pursuit of social justice and a theoretical commitment to intersectionality. Similarly, in many youth community media programs, especially ones supporting marginalized communities, there is a clear social justice emphasis to the work and the framing of activities around awareness of issues

and actions leading towards solutions and advocacy. At the same time, I reflect upon how moments of doubt and discomfort were valuable in prompting reflexivity through ongoing consideration of my positionality. As Kirsch (1999) notes, these moments can encourage researchers to: “be more reflective, self critical, and sensitive in our interactions with participants; they can guide us toward more thoughtful renderings of participants’ lives and literacies” (p. xii).

Regardless of all the discussed ways this and other supported video-making opportunities could be improved upon, at its core, our program was designed as a beginner experience. What I did consider was the significance of encouraging students to use their own language “and in ways that allow[] them to express love for themselves and the many places they came from” (Filipiak & Miller, 2014, as cited in Soep, 2016, p. 297). It is therefore unsurprising that although the participants in my study enjoyed aspects of the collaborative Profile Story experience, when I asked them what their favourite project was in the study, the majority said the “Where I Am From” audio and/or video poem. Recalling that all projects were intentionally designed as entry-level or beginner explorations of video storytelling, the only one that asked participants to consider their ethnocultural and racial background was the “Where I Am From” audio poem (see Appendix D). At the same time, in the accompanying template provided to guide their writing (see Appendix D), the prompts refer to childhood environments, family traditions, including meals, and favourite memories, as opposed to explicitly asking, “What is your ethnicity or race?” and “How does your ethnicity and/or race inform or show up in your life?” For two participants, the activity was a catalyst to further exploration of this aspect of their identity: Alexia and Ziggy produced poems that I interpreted as centering around or emphasizing specific details and experiences related to their ethnoracial heritage. Notably, they were the only participants further

motivated to extend their written poems into video pieces (keeping in mind this was not an explicit activity I integrated into the program, but rather one that I hinted could be of interest to them). On this note, and upon further consideration of identity in relation to intersectionality, I also recognized that to some extent what participants chose to share with me or emphasize in their work with regards to “who they are”/their identity was impacted by the fact that I was a White program facilitator and researcher. This was a marked distinction, in addition to my being an adult with whom none had a prior relationship, between me and the participants. The program design and approach to setting up activities (created prior to securing a participant pool of all racialized/marginalized girls) did not explicitly emphasize ethnoracial identity, but rather what it means to be a “tween or teen girl.” All of the video storytelling projects were designed to explore participants’ lived experiences, striving for a balance between leaving room to explore aspects of themselves, their lives, and interests, and putting some creative limitations or boundaries in place to keep the projects reigned-in, given our limited time together. Certainly, the program’s lack of explicit focus on “being a racialized girl,” as well as having a White program facilitator, must have had some impact in terms of how much participants opted to focus or not focus on ethnoracial identity in their projects, and in the data and our conversations more broadly.

“Snapshot” Summary

This chapter explored the primary and secondary research goals of this case study. It maintained my efforts to centre the experiences of girl video-storytellers, this time by bringing all four research participants’ experiences together. Considering participants’ collective data further supported the aim of exploring how extracurricular video-storytelling opportunities can be developed to effectively support diverse populations of girls. I presented and discussed notable themes as they related to key ideas that intersect girlhood, youth informal/connected

learning, and community-based media production education, as well as this study's informing concepts: feminist theory, feminist media, and public pedagogy.

Across all participants' data, I noted numerous references to opportunities to cultivate relationships and experience connection. Interestingly, although all participants demonstrated a keen interest in video storytelling albeit in different ways, I was left with a sense, at times, that the opportunity to be in community with a supportive and intimately-sized group of girls superseded or was more significant than being in the company of peers and a mentor who shared an interest in video storytelling specifically. It was important to acknowledge how the pandemic had impacted young people's lives during this time with an abrupt shift to virtual school in most cases in addition to social distancing and stay-at-home protocols. In an effort to exercise reflectivity throughout the research process, I considered how this context may have contributed to a heightened awareness of—and potentially also an increased importance placed on—community and relationships; I further noted how this certainly was the case for me. At the same time, participants' collective data also pointed to the role of both peer and adult mentor feedback and support with regards to their video storytelling interests. In all cases, this program and research study appeared to be the first time that these participants were directly supported with their video storytelling and in community with other video storytellers; it was especially notable to me that each of the participants made a concerted effort to connect with and request support from me. This prompted me to further reflect upon how, in this current media ecology driven by solo-authored content and social media, generative feedback and opportunities to collaborate on video projects are seemingly few and far between for girl media makers.

These reflections also prompted me to widen my lens and to reflect upon the wider media culture that tween and teen girls are experiencing and engaging in. I noted the rapidly increasing significance of TikTok in addition to YouTube for girls. I also discussed the added complexity of this neo-liberal and post-feminist age which, briefly, involves an amplification of problematic ideals around girlhood while also opening up opportunities for feminist-oriented critique amongst creators. I further suggested that digital and social media platforms can be considered forms or sites of public pedagogy: beyond “educating” us about the world, they are redefining the aesthetics of and how youth understand and learn about video storytelling as an art and craft. I then turned towards specific consideration of the needs of marginalized and racialized girls.

Finally, it was notable that all of the participants seemed to have had limited opportunities to learn about and be supported with their video storytelling in school or through extracurricular programs. I returned to Ito et al.’s connected learning framework and their discussion of how opportunities to cultivate social and cultural capital can address youth digital inequities. I suggested that this small study points to how extracurricular and girl-focused programs can be especially relevant for marginalized and racialized girls who will otherwise encounter limited opportunities to build the necessary social and cultural capital to even consider a future path as video storytellers. As part of this discussion, I commented on how mobile devices can support exploring core video storytelling processes and theory that I argue is more important in supporting and cultivating a tween or teen girl’s initial interest in video storytelling—more so than access to professional-grade equipment. Building programming that “meets youth where they are” can further help support a media ecology that comprises both solo “YouTuber”-type content and collaborative professional media industry-type productions. Regardless, Canada is in dire need of community-based programming that the US has a legacy with; this would provide

girls invaluable space, I argued to bring together their desire for relationship and connection with the opportunity to collaborate with peers and mentors who share their interest in video storytelling. I conclude by reiterating that marginalized and racialized girls in particular need safer, community-based spaces through which to explore their interests and the value of culturally-responsive activities that explore and honour their ethnoracial backgrounds and lived experiences.

Chapter Twelve: Conclusion

I entered into this research with the aim of better understanding the experiences of Canadian tween and teen girls who take up extracurricular video making as an area of interest. I also wanted to consider how extracurricular media-making opportunities can effectively support diverse populations of girls. In the introduction, I presented my motivations behind this work, including exploring how my own life experiences and identity informed my interest in this topic and approach to the research. This included emphasizing how this research aimed to both centre girls' stories and experiences and contemplate ways to address the lack of gender parity in the media industry via a pilot video-making program/intervention for girls. Chapter 2 provided a discussion of this study's theoretical underpinnings: it was informed by the wider project of feminism and further situated in relation to key ideas associated with several "branches" of feminist thought, including intersectional, post-structuralist, postfeminist, and STS perspectives. I also discussed the influence of public pedagogy and feminist media pedagogy tenets and principles on the project. A review of the relevant literature spanned two chapters. Chapter 3 focused on a discussion of media education, experiences, and learning, beginning with media literacy curriculum in school-based contexts. It then moved into a focus on extracurricular and community-based programs, which included a discussion of the relevance of participatory video and digital storytelling theory and practice, as well as the documentary content genre, for youth-engaged media creation and research. The discussion then turned to scholarship focusing on informal youth digital cultures, highlighting concepts and frameworks that significantly influenced my research: technical identities and mediated dispositions (Lange, 2014), genres/modes of participation with media and technology (Ito et. al., 2009/2019), and a framework for connected learning (Ito et. al., 2012). This section concluded by noting the limited

availability of insights into the media learning and making experiences of tweens and teens living in Canada. Chapter 4 began by presenting a brief overview of the literature, along with some key considerations and developments in the area of girlhood and girls' studies. It moved into a more focused discussion of girls' media studies, before homing in on the limited scholarship that focuses on girls' media making and video making specifically, noting how Mary Celeste Kearney's book *Girls Make Media* (2006) played a significant role in motivating my research. The chapter also drew attention to the limited amount of research that utilizes an intersectional approach or lens, especially about marginalized populations of girls. It also called attention to the need for and scarcity of scholarship that focuses on the experiences of girls' living in Canada and explored girls' media making in Canadian contexts. It concluded by emphasizing the importance of engaging in research for, with and by girls.

Chapter 5 focused on the design of the research study, including additional context and considerations, beginning by noting how it was centered around a girls' video-making program, then followed by a discussion of the necessary adaptations made to the project due to the pandemic. Next, it gave an overview of the research site and participants, before moving into a positionality statement with a focus on working with marginalized and racialized girls, ethical considerations, and further information on the video-making program and activities. Chapter 6 turned to the study's methodology. It outlined the qualitative, case study methodology I applied, which incorporated elements of arts-based research and further described the range of participant- and researcher-generated data I collected/generated, with some insights into my approach. I then moved into outlining my approach to analysis, which focused on open and thematic coding. This section expands on the evolving nature of my process at this stage; this involved coding participants' interviews and vlogs and looking for common themes as well as a

more holistic and fluid process that focused on immersing myself in each participant's collective data. Next, I crafted a persona that encompassed several overarching themes relating to her video-making experiences and approaches. As a feminist-informed study that aimed to centre and communicate more deeply about girls' lives and experiences, each Chapter from 7–10 focused on one of the four participants and described her unique video-making story and journey. Finally, Chapter 11 explored several themes that I identified across the girls' collective data in relation to several of the key concepts that informed this study. It also considered the wider media environment or ecology amidst which these girls are making media and concluded with recommendations for girl-specific video-making programs as well as considerations for marginalized populations of girls.

Reflections on... Feminist media storytelling

As I write this conclusion, I have been taking breaks and scrolling through my TikTok “For Your Page”, which, thanks to the algorithm, has continued to feed me more and more feminist-oriented content. For the time being, and at this point in both this dissertation and the pandemic, I would prefer to stay on this “side” of TikTok. I have now peeked into the other side, via stitched videos critiquing numerous pieces of content from sexist and misogynist male users. Just today, I watched a video by a millennial woman creator whose account focuses on analyzing pop culture content. She had previously critiqued Ridley Scott's decision to privilege male perspectives in his recent film about sexual assault. This feels significant as I referenced Scott's *Thelma and Louise* in the introduction as one of the most impactful films ever for me. *And why wasn't a woman brought on to direct?* I haven't seen the film, but I learn that a woman wrote the screenplay. On the one hand, this is a win, on the other, the story as it is visually represented on the screen for audiences is filtered through the male gaze (as the TikTok creator I mention above

is critiquing). The video I came across was actually a response, sparked by a comment left by a man on her initial review of the film: “Oh god. You are so exhausting.” It is wonderful to see creators bring their perspectives (and often ones entirely ignored or misrepresented or stereotyped in mass media content) and take up important issues on a platform like TikTok and have their content reach millions of users. As I scrolled through the endless comments on both video from users who appeared to mainly be men, I noticed that in many cases the creator attempted to respond and clarify her position. I also noted how, for the most part, this effort to engage in meaningful dialogue was in vain. I cringe at the labour involved in this often seemingly-fruitless endeavour of democratic dialogue, to open up, as Paolo Freire described in his *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992/2014), “the thinking of others” (p. 110). There are days where it feels like being a woman in this society means forever feeling like you are on a hamster wheel or screaming off a cliff into the abyss, muffled by the voices of angry trolls and folks oblivious to the machinations of the Patriarchy. I cannot imagine how much more of a struggle it is for girls, and even more so for girls and women of colour or who are otherwise marginalized. In times like these, the inspirational words of Freire serve as a reminder: “there is no change without dreams, as there is no dream without hope” (p. 81). In the interest of a hopeful spin, prior to TikTok, user-generated videos such as the one critiquing the male gaze in cinema were not instantly pushed out to hundreds of thousands or even millions of users. And there are more creators where she came from, aiming to provide a more balanced media environment via representation and discourse. This might only represent a ripple, but a ripple nevertheless towards more diverse perspectives in media content. What needs to happen is for enough ripples to be broadcast simultaneously and across so many different parts of education and industry as to be impossible to be ignored or shouted down.

The individual ripple that I continue to advocate for is creating supportive spaces and supported experiences for girls to explore their media storytelling ideas and receive technical skills training to further develop their video-making confidence. No—this will not eradicate systemic barriers. No—this cannot prompt a universal shift away from the plague that is the Patriarchy. What it can do, however, is cultivate communities around filmmaking for young girls (and extend this to other marginalized groups), to support the next generation of storytellers. It would seem that we are long overdue to create a robust network of such spaces and yet—with mobile video technology becoming more and more accessible, and the relative success of apps such as TikTok in cultivating a video-oriented public square—one might say that the time has never been more ideal to support a paradigm shift regarding media storytelling.

Reflections on... Youth digital storytelling and healing amidst a pandemic

The old adage that “the only thing constant is change” might be a fitting summary to my overall path to conducting this research and writing about it. When I was finalizing my field site and setting up my fieldwork in its original iteration in early March of 2020, there was no way of knowing that so much of what I considered to be routine, constant, and/or relatively predictable about my life would shift so drastically. As I now proceed to conclude this dissertation in this last chapter, I remark upon how, in the end, every part of my research was impacted in some way by an ongoing, global crisis, and I struggle to reconcile that my research is a product of and will forever be inextricably linked to this difficult time. Feelings of gratitude, loneliness, pride, grief, and even guilt that have continuously intermingled throughout this journey have become further intertwined as of late. I also experience the occasional flicker of what I can only describe as a sense of dissonance or strangeness as I work towards concluding this research, while we are still far from reaching any sense of an end to the pandemic. At the same time, we have only just

begun to grapple with the social effects of the pandemic, and initial research exploring its impact on children, education, and well-being is emerging. This prompts me to consider what I have gleaned from this study, and what these findings point to in terms of future directions for exploring and supporting girls' video making. It also prompts me to contemplate the enormous societal task ahead in terms of supporting healing, in all contexts of the word, of our communities, and where/how extracurricular programming and media-making opportunities for youth may support what will ultimately need to be a multi-faceted next phase/strategy.

Conducting a study about tween and teen girls during a pandemic prompts a further question: *are the girls ok?* Common Sense Media, an American non-profit organization focusing on youth digital well-being via technology and entertainment reviews for parents and educators as well as research, sought to explore this question. The organization produced a series of sheets in March 2021 (the one-year anniversary of the start of the pandemic) in the US to explore how young people aged 14-22 were using digital media to manage their mental health, following up on a similar study in 2018. The fact sheets note that 39% of female youth reported mild to moderate depression symptoms, up from 30%, while 37% of Black youth and 44% of female Hispanic/Latinx youth reported symptoms of moderate or severe depression. Further, social media was noted as being either “very” or “somewhat” important in terms of girls expressing themselves creatively (66% of respondents indicated this), surpassed only by garnering inspiration from others (74% of respondents). For Black youth, social media was very or somewhat important in terms of expressing themselves creatively (71%), followed by inspiration from others at 70%; for Hispanic/Latinx youth it was a close tie in terms of how important social media vs others was in inspiring them to express themselves creatively.

The interrelationships between socialization, entertainment, and digital media are evident for this generation of youth. Common Sense Media released another report at the end of 2021 that examined tween and teen media activities in April and May of 2021. They surveyed over 1300 young people aged 8-18 to gain a sense of the role of media in kids' lives during the pandemic. One of their questions focused on whether kids had created content with a digital device. Slightly more than half had engaged in activities that included shooting and editing movies and making dance videos on TikTok, with girls slightly more likely than boys to do so, at 24% compared to only 14%. The study further divided responses based on race/ethnicity, with 28% of Black and 17% of Hispanic/Latino youth saying they had created digital content compared with 18% of White youth. What is also interesting is that when they segmented the data based on household income, the lower, middle- and high-income groups were virtually identical, lending credence to the idea discussed earlier of the democratizing potential of mobile technology for video making. This data does not indicate what type of devices youth had access to and were creating with, nor does it further segment the data to identify what BIPOC girls are creating. However, it is clear that digital creation has been an outlet for many American youth, and the story is likely very similar for young people living in Canada.

One might assume that a significant number of young people turned to media making as a temporary way to keep themselves entertained. Follow-up studies would assist in determining whether youth will continue to be actively engaged in making digital media content in the years ahead and whether the pandemic was responsible for an increase in digital storytelling for youth and by youth in the years to come. In the meantime, I note the potential for adult-initiated interventions and initiatives around youth digital media creation, to support youth well-being and healing in their peer groups and communities. I discussed the connections between arts-based

research, community digital storytelling, and creative arts therapy in the methods chapter. The writings of bell hooks' (2009) are applicable here once again, including how she notes that even if they do not share similar circumstances, many groups experience a deep alienation, despair, uncertainty, and a loss of grounding, and this shared sensibility can support empathy-building efforts. Joe Lambert (2013) remarks upon his experiences facilitating workshops using the digital storytelling model he developed:

We do not pretend to have license to function as therapeutic facilitators. The material that explains and markets our work does not suggest that this environment should be formally approached as a healing process. But it would be inconceivable, incomprehensible, and irresponsible if we did not recognize the emotional and spiritual consequence of this work.
(p. 83)

Everyone has been impacted by the pandemic, including the participants in my study. During a session, I ask them if they are in school or not and their responses are all over the map. Jeannie told us: *"I actually just got home because a kid on my bus got Co-Vid and I'm getting a test tomorrow, but I'm usually at school."* Out of the group, Fernanda appeared to be thinking or at least speaking the most about the pandemic explicitly. In the entrance questionnaire, she mentioned an interest in exploring the stories of teen life during this time. Although different iterations of her Profile Story video covered her childhood, cultural heritage, and current life, her final video project was entitled "Fernanda Teen Life During COVID." When I asked in the interview whether she had any ideas for future video projects, she responded that she has been wondering how other teenagers are doing and that life hadn't been easy for her lately, and it would be great to see more stories of different teenagers living through the pandemic. This

reflects the aforementioned relevance of research exploring how girls have been doing in this time. I recall wishing I had been in a position to continue the intervention to explore the project she describes.

Reflections on... Amplifying Girls' Media-Making Programs/Interventions and Research

Increased attention to research and research involving intervention work is direly needed if we are going to not only understand the diverse experiences of girls who are interested and engaging in media making, but if we wish to take steps towards initiatives that truly support them. There is also a pressing need for research that produces deeper, more nuanced understandings of how girls of colour are barred from taking up video making. This is challenging work. Work with youth populations and especially work that strives to be inclusive, equitable, and participatory, is not only labour-intensive, but it also takes time to develop processes and practices (Dahya & King, 2018; Fine, 2009; Jenson et al., 2014). This project, and my intentional inclusion of insights into my process, recognizes the complexity of this work. It also hopes to share knowledge with educators, researchers, activists, and media and/or other arts-based practitioners interested in the common goal of advancing opportunities for girls and women in media, both behind-the-scenes and on-screen. As I have mentioned throughout this work, having a social justice orientation from the outset, it was important to me to undertake some form of action-oriented, practice-based intervention as part of my research design. As a researcher who plans to continue this type of work in the years ahead, I am now able to build upon my experiences and subsequent reflections in a generative way.

If we are going to tip the scale and create momentum for girls to produce media stories (for audiences), media storytelling programs in extracurricular contexts cannot be positioned as nice-

to-haves, but rather as essential learning. Unfortunately, there continues to be a real problem in Canada around lack of precedence and infrastructure for non-profit arts-based organizations (Campbell, 2013, 2019). We are at a further disadvantage without programs such as US-based Youth Radio or PBS Student Reporting Labs which often help to unite researchers interested in advancing the interests of youth. There is some legacy of opportunities carved out for girls' media making via long-term ethnographic undertakings, such as Jennifer Jenson's work on the multi-year "Smarter Than She Looks" study, and other larger-scale studies that exist because of crucial research personnel and funding support. Clearly, this is not a tenable, long-term solution. While I find myself unable to suggest alternatives at this time, I remain steadfast to the idea that, in the meantime, it is critical to continue seeking out opportunities to unite researchers and media practitioners (and existing community-based organizations), in order to pool resources and access populations of interested girls. Equally critical is the need to engage in research that involves interventions and fieldwork, so that we can cultivate more nuanced understandings of experiences, barriers, and opportunities, which then in turn assist researchers and educators in informing experiences that meet youth where they are. In this way, we can at least inch forward towards change.

Final Words: "Goodness" and Messages to the Participants

This research was produced under incredibly challenging circumstances and my concerted effort to maintain hope in the midst of it all. In her description of a narrative portraiture methodology, Lawrence Lightfoot (2016) notes its emphasis on "goodness":

And by that I don't mean that it tries to idealize or romanticize human experience or social reality, but rather, that it is a counterpoint to so much of social science inquiry that has

traditionally been preoccupied with pathology, with searching out what is wrong and trying to remedy the wrongs... (p. 19)

In the spirit of goodness, I would like to reflect one last time on the digital storytelling-inclined participants without whom this research would not have been possible. I offer a brief note to each girl, framed as a “hope,” drawing from what she shared with me and what I observed in our time together, should she choose to continue to explore her ideas and storytelling approach through the creation of video content. Before doing so, I want to emphasize that I frame these suggestions through the lens of my experience as a media storyteller, life experiences, and the ways in which I look at and walk through the world. They are intended as a way to communicate my gratitude for their participation and my support of their video-making interests:

Alexia,

I hope that you continue to explore different media as artistic expressions and/or outlets for your ideas and thoughts, whether just for you or for others to enjoy. In our brief time connecting during this project, I was so excited to witness your efforts to create content that reflects who you are as a person but also as a media storyteller: your projects capture a thoughtfulness mixed with an optimism and at times even a playfulness that is inspiring. Even if a YouTube channel seems like too big of an undertaking (especially as you head into a brand-new adventure in university!), vlogging or creating other media for yourself might become your way of not only honouring your life’s journey but of processing and reflecting on your experiences along the way. One way to continue with your media storytelling is to find (or create!) a club that brings more girls together to collaborate and support each other, including by taking turns doing each other’s camera-work. Maybe video storytelling will be the piece that unites your interests and goals with

what I observed to be a strong desire to care for and help others and allow you to reach other young people in other exciting ways!

Ziggy,

I hope that you keep on making videos with the same level of creativity and enthusiasm that I had the chance to witness during this program. You have a creative spirit and a strong video storytelling eye. That, combined with how much effort you put into the details and wanting to make things look good on camera and in editing, will take you far! Since you are already a strong creative writer, I'd encourage you to spend some time planning out and getting creative with B-Roll to support your videos. And remember: always try to bring in lots of light, even if you want to create or show a "nighttime" or "dark" scene. That's something that helps make the footage you film on your phone that much clearer. I really hope you consider enrolling in media production or media arts courses when you get to high school, so you can be surrounded by others who share your passion and who can also support your many ideas for videos. Even though you've already shown you can do it all, it will be so exciting for you to back from being the camera-person and just focus on being the 'on-screen baker', while someone who shares your passion for video making does the filming!

Fernanda,

I hope that you continue to explore your clear passion for performance and keep seeking out opportunities to gain more experience both on the stage as well as on the screen. Your energy and entrepreneurial spirit are already converging in how you think about and use social media, and it's exciting to imagine where further efforts to experiment and create will lead you. Finding a collaborator, especially someone who is passionate about video editing, might support you well

and allow you to focus on characters, scenes, and sets. Perhaps you will consider exploring stage/screen directing as well at some point in your journey: not only would this give you a unique perspective and be an asset to you as an actor, but your confidence, energy, and artistic eye would lend themselves well to steering and shaping the entire vision and having a say in all of the elements of a media story! It could begin with starting to tell, through interviews, the true stories of diverse populations of teenage girls.

Jeannie,

I hope that you keep on drawing and dreaming up intriguing and exciting fantasy worlds and storylines. I can see the vision that you have for the kinds of stories you want to create and, in our short time working and learning together, it's clear you have the imagination and determination to keep honing your craft. Learning more about animation techniques and software, when you're ready, can help get you closer to that vision. I know that working on graphic novels can be a very solo process, but I hope that you will consider also looking for a program—maybe once you get to high school if not sooner—that explores animation techniques and tools but also supports you in your learning. An important part of the media storytelling process is testing out your ideas and workshopping them in safe spaces with others who share your passion: this will not only help to make your stories that much stronger but feel that amazing feeling when you've 'finished' making something.

A final note to all of the participants: I hope that you find ways to share back and/or pay it forward with what you've learned in our time together and... if you enjoy video storytelling, please don't stop! We need more of your stories in our world! And thank you so very much for sharing your stories with me.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2010). Killing joy: Feminism and the history of happiness. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 35(3), 571-594. <https://doi.org/10.1086/648513>
- Allen, D., & Densmore, D. (1977). Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. <https://www.wifp.org/philosophy/a-radical-feminist-analysis-of-mass-media/>
- Altenberg, J., Flicker, S., MacEntee, K., & Wuttunee, K. D. (2018). "We are strong. We are beautiful. We are smart. We are Iskwew": Saskatoon Indigenous girls use cellphilms to speak back to gender-based violence. In C. Mitchell & R. Moletsane (Eds.), *Disrupting Shameful Legacies: Girls and Young Women Speaking Back through the Arts to Address Sexual Violence* (pp. 65-79). Brill Sense. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004377714_004
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). *Teens' Social Media Habits and Experiences*. Pew Research Centre. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/11/28/teens-social-media-habits-and-experiences/>
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: The new mestiza = La frontera*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.
- Ares, N. (2010). *Youth-full productions: Cultural practices and constructions of content and social spaces*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Atton, C. (2003). Organisation and production in alternative media. In S. Cottle (Ed.), *Media organisation and production* (pp. 41-56). Sage.
- Azevedo, F. S. (2011). Lines of Practice: A Practice-Centered Theory of Interest Relationships, Cognition and Instruction. *Cognition and Instruction*, 29(2), 147-84.
- Azevedo, F. S. (2013). The Tailored Practice of Hobbies and Its Implication for the Design of Interest-Driven Learning Environments. *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 22(3), 462-510.
- Bakardjieva, M. (2005). *Internet Society: The Internet in Everyday Life*. London: Sage Publications.
- Baker-Bell, A. (2020). We Been Knowin: Toward an Antiracist Language & Literacy Education. *Journal of Language & Literacy Education*, 16(1), 1-.

- Banet-Weiser, S. (2011). Branding the Post-Feminist Self: Girls' Video Production and Youtube. In M.C. Kearney (Ed.), *Mediated girlhoods: New explorations of girls' media culture* (pp. 277-294). New York: Peter Lang.
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2015). Confidence you can carry!: Girls in crisis and the market for girls' empowerment organizations. *Continuum*, 29(2), 182–193.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2015.1022938>
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2018) *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Banet-Weiser, S., Gill, R., & Rottenberg, C. (2020). Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation. *Feminist Theory*, 21(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700119842555>
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts Based Research*. SAGE.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2015). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- Beavis, L, Ezcurra, M., & Smith Lefebvre, H. (2018). Call for Papers Girls Making Stuff: Creativity, Identity, and Pedagogical Practices. *Girlhood Studies: An interdisciplinary journal*.
https://journals.berghahnbooks.com/_uploads/ghs/GHS_Girls%20Making%20Stuff_CfP.pdf
- Berliner, L. S., & Krabill, R. (2018). *Feminist Interventions in Participatory Media: Pedagogy, Publics, Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351238984>
- Berry, M., & Schleser, M. (2014). Creative Mobile Media: The State of Play. In M. Berry & M. Schleser (Eds.), *Mobile Media Making in an Age of Smartphones* (pp. 1–9). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137469816_1
- Bhana, D. (2005). What matters to girls and boys in a black primary school in South Africa. *Early Child Development and Care* 175(2), 99–111.
- Biddle, S., Riberiro, P. V., & Dias, T. (2020) Invisible censorship: TikTok told moderators to suppress posts by 'ugly' people and the poor to attract new users. *The Intercept*, 16 March. <https://theintercept.com/2020/03/16/tiktok-app-moderators-users-discrimination/>

- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Roadmap from Beginning to End*. SAGE Publications Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226613>
- Bloustien, G. (2003). *Girl making: A cross-cultural ethnography on the processes of growing up female*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Bloustien, G. (2012). Play, Affect, and Participatory Video as a Reflexive Research Strategy. In E. Milne, C. Mitchell, & N. De Lange (Eds.), *Handbook of participatory video* (pp. 155-130). Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press.
- Blum-Ross, A. (2013). “It Made Our Eyes Get Bigger”: Youth Filmmaking and Place-Making in East London: Youth Filmmaking and Place-Making. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 29(2), 89–106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12007>
- Blum-Ross, A. (2015). Filmmakers/Educators/Facilitators? Understanding the Role of Adult Intermediaries in Youth Media Production in the UK and the USA. *Journal of Children and Media*, 9(3), 308–324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2015.1058280>
- Blum-Ross, A., & Livingstone, S. (2016). From Youth Voice to Young Entrepreneurs: The Individualization of Digital Media and Learning’ in H. Jenkins & S. Shresthova (Eds.), *Journal of Digital and Media Literacy* 4(1-2). http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67045/1/Blum_Ross_From%20youth%20voice%20to%20.pdf
- Bobkowski, P. S., & Belmas, G. I. (2017). Mixed Message Media: Girls’ Voices and Civic Engagement in Student Journalism. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 10(1), 89+.
- Bobkowski, P. S., Cavanah, S. B., & Miller, P. R. (2015). Who Are the “Journalism Kids”? Academic Predictors of Journalism Participation in Secondary Schools. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 72(1), 68–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695815622770>
- Bourdieu, P. 1986 [1984]. The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–58). New York: Greenwood.
- Brady, J. F. (2006). Public Pedagogy and Educational Leadership: Politically Engaged Scholarly Communities and Possibilities for Critical Engagement. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 3(1), 57–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2006.10411575>
- Brown, N. (2019). Foreword: Fire with Light. In A. Halliday (Ed.), *The Black girlhood studies collection* (p. ix – 1). Women’s Press

- Brown, L. M., & Gilligan, C. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development*. Ballantine Books.
- Bruns, A. (2007). Produsage. *Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGCHI Conference on Creativity & Cognition*, 99–106. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1254960.1254975>
- Brushwood Rose, C. (2009). The (Im)possibilities of Self Representation: Exploring the Limits of Storytelling in the Digital Stories of Women and Girls. *Changing English*, 16(2), 211–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13586840902863194>
- Brushwood Rose, & Low, B. (2014). Exploring the “craftedness” of multimedia narratives: from creation to interpretation. *Visual Studies (Abingdon, England)*, 29(1), 30–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2014.862990>
- Buckingham, D. (2003). *Media education: literacy, learning, and contemporary culture*. Polity Press in association with Blackwell Pub.
- Buckingham, D. (2009). ‘Creative’ visual methods in media research: Possibilities, problems and proposals. *Media, Culture & Society*, 31(4), 633–652. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443709335280>
- Buckingham, D. (2011). *The material child: growing up in consumer culture*. Polity.
- Buckingham, D. *The Media Education Manifesto*. Wiley Publishing.
- Buckingham, D., & Strandgaard Jensen, H. (2012). Beyond “Media Panics”, *Journal of Children and Media* (6)4, 413–429, DOI: [10.1080/17482798.2012.740415](https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2012.740415)
- Buckingham, D., Grahame, J., & Sefton-Green, J. (1995). *Making Media: Practical Production in Media Education*. London: Falmer.
- Burkholder, C. (2016). We Are HK Too: Disseminating Cellphilms in a Participatory Archive. In K. MacEntee, C. Burkholder, & J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.), *What’s a Cellphilms? Integrating Mobile Phone Technology into Participatory Visual Research and Activism* (pp. 153–168). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Burman, E. (2017). *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*. 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990/1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979>

- Butler-Kisber, L. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry: Thematic, Narrative and Arts-Based Perspectives*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526417978>
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2014). *Arts-based qualitative research*. In M. Savin-Baden & K. Wimpenny (Eds.), *A practical guide to arts-related research*. (pp. 50-53). Rotterdam: Sense.
- Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion* (Vol. 10). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203932100>
- Campbell, M. (2013). *Out of the basement: Youth cultural production in practice and in policy*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Campbell, M. (2019). From youth engagement to creative industries incubators: Models of working with youth in community arts settings. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 41(3), 164–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2019.1685854>
- Canada Media Fund (2017, March 8). *The CMF announces initiatives to increase the contribution of women*. <https://cmf-fmc.ca/news/cmf-announces-initiatives-to-increase-the-contribution-of-women/>
- Canadian Women's Foundation (2014). *Building Stronger Girls: Girls' Fund 2009-2012 Highlights*. <https://fw3s926r0g42i6kes3bxg4i1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CWF-GirlsFundReport-Highlights-EN-web-single-page.pdf>
- Canadian Women's Foundation (2019). *Building Stronger Girls: Girls' Fund 2009-2012 Highlights*. <https://fw3s926r0g42i6kes3bxg4i1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/190909-CWF-GirlsFundReport-Highlights.pdf>
- Cann, V., Godfrey, S., & Warner, H. (2018). Contemporary Girls Studies. *Girlhood Studies*, 11(3), vi–xxi. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2018.110302>
- Cann, V. (2016, December). *Classing Girls: (Re)Considering the Role of Class in British Girls' Lives*. [Conference Presentation] Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, University of Sydney, Australia.
- Carey, M. (2009). *The social work dissertation: using small-scale qualitative methodology*. McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.
- Carfagna, L. (2014). *Beyond Learning-as-Usual: Connected Learning among Open Learners*. Irvine, CA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.

- Caron, A., Caronia, L., Hwang, J., & Brummans, B. (2009). *A National Study on Children's Television Programming in Canada*. Centre for Youth and Media Studies. Universite de Montreal/ The Alliance for Children and Television. <https://www.ymamj.org/wp-content/uploads/medias/fichier/a-national-study-on-childrens-television-2010.pdf>
- Caron, A., Hwang, J., & McPhedran, E. (2012). *Are the Kids Alright? Canadian Families and Television in a Digital Age*. Youth Media Alliance. https://www.ymamj.org/wp-content/uploads/medias/fichier/are_the_kids_all_right.pdf
- Caron, C. (2011). Getting girls and teens into the vocabularies of citizenship. *Girlhood Studies*, 4(2), 70-91.
- Carter, C. (2007). Children and the News: Rethinking Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Children, Adolescents and Media*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203366981.ch31>
- Carter, C., Steiner, L., & McLaughlin, L. (Eds.). (2014). *The Routledge Companion to Media & Gender* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203066911>
- Carter, C., & Messenger Davies, M. (2010). Young Citizens and the News. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 450-459). London: Routledge.
- Carter, B. & Ford, K. (2013). Researching children's health experiences: The place for participatory, child-centered, arts-based approaches. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 36(1), 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21517>
- Castells, M. (2000). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.) Blackwell Publishers.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford University Press.
- Cazden, Cope, B., Kalantzis, M., Luke, A., Luke, C., & Nakata, M. (1999). A pedagogy of Multiliteracies Designing Social Futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 19–46. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203979402-6>
- Chakravarty, D., Cook, J. A., & Fonow, M. M. (2012). Teaching, Techniques, and Technologies of Feminist Methodology: Online and on the Ground. In S. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (pp. 693–709). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n34>
- Chavez, F. R. (2021). *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom*. Haymarket Books.

- Chávez, V., & Soep, E. (2005). Youth Radio and the Pedagogy of Collegiality. *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(4), 409–434.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.75.4.827u365446030386>
- Chávez, V., & Soep, E. (2010). *Drop that knowledge: youth radio stories*. University of California Press.
- Citron, M., Lesage, J., Mayne, J., Rich, B. R., & Taylor, A. M. (1978). Women and Film: A Discussion of Feminist Aesthetics. *New German Critique*, 13, 82.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3115189>
- Citron, M., & Seiter, E. (1981/2005). The woman with the movie camera. *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 26, 61-62.
- Clarke, A. E., Friese, C., & Washburn, R. (2018). *Situational analysis: grounded theory after the interpretive turn* (Second edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Coffman, E. (2009). Documentary and Collaboration: Placing the Camera in the Community. *Journal of Film and Video*, 61(1), 62–78. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jfv.0.0017>
- Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Unwin Hyman.
- Common Sense Media. (2015). *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens*
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/census_researchreport.pdf
- Cook, D. (2008). The missing child in consumption theory. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8, 219–43.
- Cope, D., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). “Multiliteracies”: New Literacies, New Learning. *Pedagogies (Mahwah, N.J.)*, 4(3), 164–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15544800903076044>
- Corneil, M. (2012). Citizenship and participatory video. In E. Milne, C. Mitchell, & N. De Lange (Eds.), *Handbook of participatory video* (pp. 19-34). Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press.
- Coulter, N. (2014). *Tweening the girl: The crystallization of the tween market*. Peter Lang.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of*

- Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (2011). Twenty years of critical race theory: Looking back to move forward. *Connecticut Law Review*, 43(5), 1253.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2016). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crocker, S. (2003). The Fogo Process: Participatory Communication in a Globalizing World. In S.A. White (Ed.). *Participatory video: Images that transform and empower*. Sage Publications.
- Crowley, K, Barron, B., Knutson, K., & Martin, C. K. (2015). Interest and the Development of Pathways to Science. in K. A. Renninger, M. Nieswandt, and S. Hidi (Eds.), *Interest in Mathematics and Science Learning* (pp. 297–3140). Washington, DC: AERA.
- Crowley, K., & Jacobs, M. (2002). Building Islands of Expertise in Every-day Family Activity. In G. Leinhardt, K. Crowley, and K. Knutson (Eds.), *Learning Conversations in Museums* (pp. 333–56). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (1st ed.). Harper & Row.
- Currie, D. H., Kelly, D. M., & Pomerantz, S. (2006). The geeks shall inherit the earth: Girls' Agency, Subjectivity and Empowerment. *Journal of youth studies*, 9(4), 419-436.
- Dahya, N. (2014). *Mediating Postcoloniality in Education: Mis/Representations of Muslim Girls Using Technology* [Doctoral Dissertation, York University]. York Space.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10315/27634>
- Dahya, N., Jenson, J. (2015). "Mis/Representations in School-Based Digital Media Production: An Ethnographic Exploration with Muslim Girls." *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* 9 (2): 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2015.1013209>

- Dahya, N. (2017). Critical perspectives on youth digital media production: ‘Voice’ and representation in educational contexts. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 42(1), 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2016.1141785>
- Dahya, N., & King, W. E. (2018). Feminist perspectives and mobile culture(s). In L. S. Berliner & R. Krabill (Eds.), *Feminist Interventions in Participatory Media* (1st ed., pp. 34–42). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351238984-4>
- Damour, L. (2016). *Untangled. Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood*. Random House Publishing.
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as Buzzword. *Feminist Theory* 9(1): 67 – 85.
- Deak, J. (2010). *How Girls Thrive*. Green Blanket.
- Dean, Brian (2022, Jan 5). TikTok User Statistics (2022). Backlinko. <https://backlinko.com/tiktok-users>
- De Beauvoir, S. (1989[1954]). *The Second Sex*. Alfred A. Knopf
- de Finney, S. (2014). Under the Shadow of Empire: Indigenous Girls’ Presencing as Decolonizing Force. *Girlhood Studies*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070103>
- De Ridder, S. (2013). Are Digital Media Institutions Shaping Youth’s Intimate Stories? Strategies and Tactics in the Social Networking Site Netlog. *New Media and Society*, 17(3), 356–374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813504273>
- Dentith, A. M., & Brady, J. (1999, October). *Theories of public pedagogies as possibilities for ethical action and community resistance: A curricular notion* [Paper presentation] AERA Conference.
- DeVault, M. L., & Gross, G. (2021). *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (By pages 206-236; 2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740>
- Dezuanni, M. (2018). Minecraft and children’s digital making: implications for media literacy education. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 43(3), 236–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2018.1472607>
- Dockney, J., & Tomaselli, K. G. (2009). Fit for the small(er) screen: Films, mobile TV and the new individual television experience. *Journal of African Cinema*, 1(1), 126–132.

- Driver, S. (2007). *Queer girls and popular culture: Reading, resisting, and creating media*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Driscoll, C. (2008). Girls Today—Girls, Girl Culture and Girl Studies. *Girlhood Studies*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2008.010103>
- Dumas, M. (2016). Against the Dark: Anti-Blackness in Education Policy and Discourse. *Theory Into Practice* 55(1), 11–19.
- Duopoly. (2017). *Women & Leadership: A Study of Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada's Screen Industries*. CMPA Canadian Media Producers Association. <https://cmpa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CMPA-Women-and-Leadership-2017-01-30.pdf>
- Eaton, C. (2010). The Practice of Feminist Pedagogy. *Feminist Media Studies* 1(3): 390–391.
- Einberg, E.-L., Lidell, E., & Clausson, E. K. (2015). Awareness of demands and unfairness and the importance of connectedness and security: Teenage girls' lived experiences of their everyday lives. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 10(1), 27653. <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v10.27653>
- El Ashmawi, Y. P., Hernandez Sanchez, M. E., & Flores Carmona, J. (2018). Testimonialista Pedagogues: Testimonio Pedagogy in Critical Multicultural Education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 20(1), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v20i1.1524>
- Eller, C. (2022, April 20). Cannes Has Trouble Fulfilling Its Promises to Women Directors. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2022/film/columns/cannes-2022-women-directors-1235236225/>
- Epstein, R., Blake, j., & Gonzalez, T. (2017). *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girl's Childhood*. Washington, DC: Center on Poverty and Inequality. www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-inequality-center/wpcontent/uploads/sites/14/2017/08/girlhood-interrupted.pdf
- Facer, K. (2019). Storytelling in troubled times: what is the role for educators in the deep crises of the 21st century? *Literacy (Oxford, England)*, 53(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12176>
- Ferguson, A. A. (2002). Naughty by Nature. In Jossey-Bass Inc (Ed.), *Jossey-Bass Reader on Gender & Education* (pp. 584-608). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Fields, D. A., & Kafai, Y. B. (2009). A connective ethnography of peer knowledge sharing and diffusion in a tween virtual world. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 4(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11412-008-9057-1>
- Filipiak, D., & Miller, I. (2014). Me and the D: (Re)Imagining Literacy and Detroit's Future. *English Journal*, 103(5), 59–66.
- Finley, S. (2008). Arts-based research. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 71–81). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fisher, S., & Jenson, J. (2017). Producing alternative gender orders: A critical look at girls and gaming. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 42(1), 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2016.1132729>
- Fisher-Keller, J., & Tyner, K. R. (2011). *International perspectives on youth media: Cultures of production and education*. Peter Lang.
- Fleetwood, N. R. (2005). Authenticating practices: Producing realness, performing youth. In S. Maira & E. Soep (Eds.), *Youthscapes: The popular, the national, the global* (pp. 155-172). University of Pennsylvania Press
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.
- Finn, M. (2019). The Techne-Mentor. In M. Itō, S. Baumer, M. Bittanti, d. boyd, R. Cody, B. Herr-Stephenson, & L.M. Tripp (Eds.) *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media* (10th anniversary ed.) (pp.59-60). The MIT Press.
- Freire, P. (2014). *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury. (Original work published in 1992).
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (Original work published in 1996)
- Freire, P., Ramos, M. B., Macedo, D. P., & Shor, I. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Ramos, Trans.; 50th anniversary edition.). Bloomsbury Academic. (Original work published in 1968).
- Furger, R. (1998). *Does Jane Compute?: Preserving Our Daughters' Place in the Cyber Revolution*. New York: Warner Books.

- Gaztambide-Fernandez, R., Cairns, K., Kawashima, Y., Menna, L., & VanderDussen, E. (2011). Portraiture as pedagogy: learning research through the exploration of context and methodology. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12, 1–29.
- Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2018). *Portray Her: Representations of Women STEM Characters in Media*. <https://seejane.org/research-informs-empowers/portray-her/>
- Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. (2019). *How film and media stereotypes affect the lives and leadership ambitions of girls and women. The State of the World's Girls*. <https://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-rewrite-her-story-plan-international-report.pdf>
- Genz, S., & Brabon, B.A. (2009) *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1992). *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Polity Press.
- Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, R. (2014) 'Unspeakable Inequalities: Post-Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers', *Social Politics*, 21(4), pp. 509– 28.
- Girl Scout Research Institute. (2003). *Feeling safe: What girls say*. New York: Girl Scout Research Institute. https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/research/feeling_safe.pdf
- Girls Action Foundation. (2015). *Evidence Supporting Outcomes for Girls' Groups Evaluation*. Report. Girls Action Foundation. https://www.girlsactionfoundation.ca/_files/ugd/0512fe_fa615230d5af4afab5429450c0606c46.pdf
- Given, L. (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Giroux, H. A. (2000). Public Pedagogy as cultural politics: Stuart Hall and the crisis of culture. *Cultural Studies*, 14(2), 341–360.
- Giroux, H. A. (2004). *The terror of neoliberalism*. Paradigm.

- Gonick, M. (2007). Girl Number 20 revisited: Feminist literacies in new hard times. *Gender and Education*, 19(4), 433–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250701442625>
- Gonick, Renold, E., Ringrose, J., & Weems, L. (2009). Rethinking Agency and Resistance: What Comes After Girl Power? *Girlhood Studies*, 2(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2009.020202>
- González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds.) (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Teorizing Practices in Households and Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production & social change*. Teachers College Press.
- Goodman, S. (2008). 11. The Practice and Principles of Teaching Critical Literacy at the Educational Video Center. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 104(1), 206–228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7984.2005.00012.x>
- Government of Canada (1991). Broadcasting Act. Retrieved from: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/b-9.01/page-1.html>
- Government of Canada. (2011). Women in Canada: A gender based statistical report, Edition: 7th edition, Publisher: Statistics Canada
- Gramsci, A., Hoare, Q., Nowell-Smith, G. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1st ed.). International Publishers.
- Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*. Second Edition. Sage Publications.
- Griffin, C. (2004). Good girls, bad girls: Anglocentrism and diversity in the constitution of contemporary girlhood. In A. Harris (Ed.), *All about the girl: Culture, power and identity* (pp. 29–44). New York: Routledge.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 42–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104>
- Grosz, E. (1993). A thousand tiny sexes: Feminism and rhizomatics. *Topoi*, 12(2), 167–179. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00821854>
- Gubrium, A., Harper, K., & Otañez, M. (2015). *Participatory visual and digital research in action*. Left Coast Press, Inc.

- Gubrium, A., & Harper, K. (2016). *Participatory visual and digital methods*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315423012>
- Gutierrez, K. (2008). Developing a Sociocritical Literacy in the Third Space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(2), 148–164
- Gutiérrez, K., & Rogof, B. (2003). Cultural Ways of Learning: Individual Traits or Repertoires of Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 32(5), 19–25.
- Hains, R. (2012). *Growing up with girl power: girlhood on screen and in everyday life*. Peter Lang.
- Hall, S. (2012). Encoding/Decoding. In M.G. Durham & D. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies Keywords, Second Edition* (pp. 137-144). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Halliday, A. (Ed.). (2019). *The Black girlhood studies collection*. Women's Press, an imprint of CSP Books Inc.
- Hammond, Z. (2021). Liberatory Education: Integrating the Science of Learning and Culturally Responsive Practice. *American Educator*, 45(2), 4–.
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, R. (2006). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. Teachers College Press.
- Hansen, J. D., & Reich, J. (2015). Democratizing Education? Examining Access and Usage Patterns in Massive Open Online Courses. *Science*, 350(6265), 1245–48.
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/350/6265/1245.abstract>
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Haraway, D. (Ed.) (1991). A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (pp. 149-181). New York: Routledge.
- Harris, A. (2005). In a Girlie World: Tweenies in Australia. In C. Mitchell, & J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), *Seven Going on Seventeen: Tween Studies in the Culture of Girlhood* (pp. 209-223). New York: Peter Lang
- Harris, A. (2012). Online Cultures and Future Girl Citizens. In E. Zobl & R. Drüeke (Eds.), *Feminist Media*. Transcript Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839421574.213>

- Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. UNICEF.
<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/100-childrens-participation-from-tokenism-to-citizenship.html>
- Hartley, J., & McWilliam, K. (2009). *Story circle: Digital storytelling around the world*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Harvey, A. (2019). *Feminist media studies*. Polity Press.
- Harvey, I., Skinner, M., & Parker, D. (2002). *Being seen, being heard: Young people and moving image production*. London: National Youth Agency/British Film Institute
- Hasinoff, A. A. (2013). Sexting as media production: Rethinking social media and sexuality. *New Media & Society*, 15(4), 449–465. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812459171>
- Hébert, Jenson, J., & Terzopoulos, T. (2021). “Access to technology is the major challenge”: Teacher perspectives on barriers to DGBL in K-12 classrooms. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 18(3), 307–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753021995315>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2012). Feminist Research: Exploring, Interrogating, and Transforming the Interconnections of Epistemology, Methodology, and Method. In S. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (pp. 2–26). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n1>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leckenby, D. (2004). How Feminists Practice Social Research’ In S. N. Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser (Eds) *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research* (pp. 209–226). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Piatelli, D. (2012). The Synergistic Practice of Theory and Method. In S. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (pp. 176–186). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n9>
- Hoechsmann, M., & Poyntz, S. R. (2011). Media Literacies: A Critical Introduction. In *Media literacies: a critical introduction* (1. Aufl., pp. xi–xi). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holloway, I., Brown, L. and Shipway, R. (2010). Meaning not measurement: Using ethnography to bring a deeper understanding to the participant experience of festivals and events. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* (1)1, 74–85. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17852951011029315>
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Between the Lines.

- hooks, b. (2009). *Belonging: a culture of place*. Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2015). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. (Original work published in 1984). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315743172>
- Horst, H., Herr-Stephenson, B., & Robinson L. (2019). Media Ecologies. In. M. Ito, S. Baumer, M. Bittanti, d. boyd, R. Cody, B. Herr-Stephenson & L.M. Tripp (Eds.), *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media* (10th anniversary ed.) (pp. 29-78). The MIT Press. (Original work published in 2009).
- Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., boyd, d., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., & Tripp, L. M. (2019). *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media* (10th anniversary ed.) The MIT Press. (Original work published in 2009).
- Ito, M., Gutierrez, K., Livingstone, S., Penuel, B., Rhodes, J., Salen, K., Schor, J., Sefton-Green, J., & Watkins, S. C. (2012). *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design*. <https://dmlhub.net/publications/connected-learning-agenda-for-research-and-design/index.html>
- Ito, M., Martin, C., Pfister, R., Rafalow, M., Salen, K., Wortman., A. (2019). *Affinity online: How connection and shared interest fuel learning*. New York University Press.
- Ito, M., & Horst, H. A. (2019). *Preface to the Tenth Anniversary Edition*. In. M. Ito, S. Baumer, M. Bittanti, d. boyd, R. Cody, B. Herr-Stephenson & L.M. Tripp (Eds.), *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media* (10th anniversary ed.) (pp. xiii-xxxvi). The MIT Press. (Original work published in 2009).
- Jackson, S. (2018). Young feminists, feminism and digital media. *Feminism & Psychology*, 28(1), 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517716952>
- Jenkins, Henry (1992). *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415905729.
- Jenkins, H. (Ed.). (1998). *The children's culture reader*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergent Culture*. New York: NYU Press.
- Jenkins, H., Clinton, K., Purushotma, R., Robison, A. J., & Weigel, M. (2009). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. MacArthur Foundation. https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/jenkins_White_paper.pdf

- Jenson, J., de Castell, S., & Bryson, M. (2003). "Girl talk": Gender, equity, and identity discourses in a school-based computer culture. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(6), 561–573.
- Jenson, J., & de Castell, S. (2010). Gender, Simulation, and Gaming: Research Review and Redirections. *Simulation & Gaming*, 41, 51-71.
- Jenson, J., Dahya, N., & Fisher, S. (2014). Valuing production values: A 'do it yourself' media production club. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 39(2), 215–228.
- Jesús, M L de. (2019, Feb. 13). "An open letter to the organisers of the Second International Girls Studies Association [IGSA]..." Medium. medium.com/@peminist/an-open-letter-to-the-organisers-of-the-second-international-girls-studies-association-igsa-5d25fd470399
- Jocson, K. (2018). *Youth media matters: participatory cultures and literacies in education*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Johnston, J. E. (2018). The Doll "InbeTween." *Girlhood Studies*, 11(1).
<https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2018.110106>
- Johnson, E., & Vasudevan, L. (2012). Seeing and Hearing Students' Lived and Embodied Critical Literacy Practices. *Theory into Practice*, 51(1), 34–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.636333>
- Kaltefleiter, C., & Alexander, K. (2019). Self-Care and Community: Black Girls Saving Themselves. In A. Halliday (Ed.), *The Black Girlhood Studies Reader* (pp.181-208). Womens Press.
- Karlsson, J. (2001). Doing Visual Research with School Learners in South Africa. *Visual Studies*, 16 (2), 23-37
- Katshunga, J. (2019). Contesting Black Girlhood(s) beyond Northern Borders: Exploring a Black African Girl Approach In A. Halliday (Ed.). *The Black girlhood studies collection* (pp.45-80). Women's Press.
- Kearney, M. C. (2006). *Girls make media* (1st ed). Routledge.
- Kearney, M. C. (2007). Productive Spaces: Girls' bedrooms as sites of cultural production. *Journal of Children and Media*, 1(2), 126–141.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482790701339126>

- Kearney, M. C. (2009). Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies. *NWSA Journal*, 21(1), 1–28.
- Kearney, M. C. (2018). Melting the Celluloid Ceiling. In G. B. Morgan, & M. C. Kearney (Eds.), *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture*, Vol. 2 (pp. 213–231). Peter Lang.
- Kearney, M. C. (2011). *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture*. Peter Lang.
- Kearney, M. C. (2012, December 11). *Feminist. Media. Criticism. Is. (Part 2)*. Antenna. <https://blog.commart.wisc.edu/2012/12/11/feminist-media-criticism-is-part-2/>
- Kearney, M. C. (2018). Girls' Media Studies. *Feminist Media Histories*, 4(2), 90–94. <https://doi.org/10.1525/fmh.2018.4.2.90>
- Keller, J., Blue, M., Kearney, M. C., Pike, K., & Projansky, S. (2015). Mapping New Methodological Approaches to Girls' Media Studies: Reflections from the Field. *Journal of Children and Media*, 9(4), 528–535. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2015.1091103>
- Kellner, D. (1998). Multiple Literacies and critical pedagogy in a multicultural society. *Educational Theory*, 48(1), 103–122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1998.00103.x>
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2005). Toward critical media literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations and policy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26(3), 369–386.
- Kellner, D. & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy is not an option. *Learning Inquiry*, 1, 59–69.
- Kelly, D. M., & Pomerantz, S. (2009). Mean, Wild, and Alienated: Girls and the State of Feminism in Popular Culture. *Girlhood Studies*, 2(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2009.020102>
- Kelly, L., Burton, S., & Regan, L. (1994). Researching women's lives or studying women's oppression? Reflections on what constitutes feminist research. In M. Maynard & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective* (pp. 27–48). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Kennedy, M. (2020). 'If the rise of the TikTok dance and e-girl aesthetic has taught us anything, it's that teenage girls rule the internet right now': TikTok celebrity, girls and the

- Coronavirus crisis. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2020, 23(6), 1069-1076.
<https://doi/10.1177/1367549420945341>
- Kincheloe, J. (2002). *The sign of the burger: McDonald's and the culture of power*. Philadelphia: Temple University.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (2004). *Kinderculture: The corporate construction of childhood* (2nd ed.). Westview Press.
- King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories: a Native narrative*. House of Anansi Press
- Kirsch, G. E., 1999. *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Knowles, J. G., & Cole, A. L. (2008). *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. Sage Publications.
- Kopcha, T. J. (2012). Teachers' perceptions of the barriers to technology integration and practices with technology under situated professional development. *Computers & Education*, 59(4), 1109–1121.
- Kosic, M. (2018). Media Literacy and for The Net Generation. *International Journal of Emotional Education* 10(1), 21. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1177650.pdf>
- Kozolanka, K., Skinner, D., & Mazepa, P. (2012). *Alternative media in Canada*. UBC Press.
- Kramp, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Media practice and everyday agency in Europe*. ed. lumière.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. R. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203299234>
- Kubey, R. (2003). Why U.S. Media Education Lags behind the Rest of the English-Speaking World. *Television & New Media* 4(4), 351–370. Doi: 10.1177/1527476403255808
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 159–165. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635>

- Lamb, S., & Brown, L. M. (2006). *Packaging girlhood: Rescuing our daughters from marketers' schemes*. St. Martin's Press.
- Lambert, J. (2013). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community* (4th ed). Routledge.
- Lange, P., & Ito, M. (2009). Creative production. In M. Itō, S. Baumer, M. Bittanti, d. boyd, R. Cody, B. Herr-Stephenson, & L.M. Tripp (Eds.), *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media* (10th anniversary ed.) (pp. 243-293). The MIT Press.
- Lange, P. (2014). *Kids on YouTube. Technical Identities and Digital Literacies*. Routledge
- Lauzen, M. M. (2021). *Boxed In: Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2020-21*. Report. https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2020-21_Boxed_In_Report.pdf
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2016). Commentary: Portraiture Methodology: Blending Art and Science. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 9(2), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.36510/learnland.v9i2.760>
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, & Davis, J. H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture / Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, Jessica Hoffmann Davis*. (1st ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method Meets Art, Second Edition*. Sage.
- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2021). *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (By pages 500-513; Second). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526417015>
- Lenhart, A. (2015). *Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/>
- Leurs, K., & Ponzanesi, S. (2013). Intersectionality, Digital Identities and Migrant Youth. In C. Cynthia, L. Steiner, & L. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Routledge Companion to Media and Gender* (pp. 632-642). London, Routledge,
- Lewis, P. (2014). Postfeminism, Femininities and Organization Studies: Exploring a New Agenda. *Organization Studies*, (35)12, 1845–66.

- Lewis, S. (2019). Pushing the Limits in Black Girl–Centred Research: Exploring the Methodological Possibilities of *Melt* Magazine. In A. Halliday (Ed.), *The Black Girlhood Studies Reader* (pp.157-180). Womens Press.
- Lewis, P., Benschop, Y., & Simpson, R. (2017). Postfeminism, Gender and Organization: Postfeminism and Organization. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 24(3), 213–225.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12175>
- Lievrouw, L. (2006). New Media Design and Development: Diffusion of Innovations v Social Shaping of Technology In. L. Lievrouw, S. Livingstone (Eds.) *The Handbook of New Media: Updated Student Edition* (pp. 246-265). Sage Publications.
- Linde, C. (2008). *Working the past: Narrative and institutional memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lotz, A. D. (2001). Postfeminist Television Criticism: Rehabilitating Critical Terms and Identifying Postfeminist Attributes, *Feminist Media Studies*, 1(1), 105-121.
- Low, B. E., Brushwood Rose, C. T., & Salvio, P. M. (Eds.), (2017). *Community-based media pedagogies: Relational practices of listening in the commons*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Low, B., Brushwood Rose, C., Salvio, P., & Palacios, L. C. (2012). (Re)framing the Scholarship on Participatory Media. In E. Milne, C. Mitchell, & N. De Lange (Eds.), *Handbook of participatory video*. (pp. 49-64). Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press.
- Luke, C. (1994). Feminist Pedagogy and Critical Media Literacy *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 18(2), 30-47.
- Luke, C. (1996). *Feminisms and pedagogies of everyday life*. State University of New York Press.
- Lumby, C. (2013). Post-postfeminism. In C. Carter, L. Steiner, & L. McLaughlin (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender*, (pp. 600-610). Routledge.
- Lunch, N., & Lunch, C. (2006). *Insights into participatory video*. Oxford, UK: InsightShare.
- MacEntee, K., Burkholder, C., & Schwab-Cartas, J. (Eds.), *What's a Cellphilm? Integrating Mobile Phone Technology into Participatory Visual Research and Activism*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers

- Madden, M., Lenhart, A., Duggan, M., Cortesi, & S., Gasser, U. (2013). *Teens and Technology 2013*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2013/03/13/teens-and-technology-2013/>
- Malchiodi, C. A. (2005). Expressive therapies: History, theory and practice. In C. A. Malchiodi (Ed.), *Expressive therapies* (pp. 1–15). New York: Guilford Press.
- Maltese, A., Tai, R. (2010). Eyeballs in the Fridge: Sources of Early Interest in Science. *International Journal of Science Education*, 32(5), 669–85.
www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09500690902792385
- Margolis, J., & Fisher, A. (2003). Geek Mythology. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 23(1), 17–20.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K. (2007). Through city students' eyes: urban students' beliefs about school's purposes, supports and impediments. *Visual Studies*, 22(2), 138–154.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research*. (4th edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Masterman, L. (1985). *Teaching the media*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203359051>
- Mayer, V. (2003). Living Telenovelas/Telenovelizing Life: Mexican American Girls' Identities and Transnational Telenovelas. *Journal of Communication*, 53(3), 479–495.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/53.3.479>
- Maynard, M. (2004). Feminist Issues in Data Analysis. In M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Handbook of Data Analysis* (pp. 131–145). SAGE Publications, Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608184.n6>
- Mazzarella, S. R., & Pecora, N. (2007). REVISITING GIRLS' STUDIES: Girls creating sites for connection and action. *Journal of Children and Media*, 1(2), 105–125.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482790701339118>
- McClintock, Anne. (1995). *Imperial Leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in colonial contest*. New York, NY: Routledge
- McDermott, C. (2016, April). *Genres of the Self: Grace Helbig's Affective Aesthetics*. [Paper presentation] International Girl Studies Inaugural Conference, University of East Anglia.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. The MIT Press.

- McPherson, K. (2019). *Black Girls Clapback: Intersectionality, Black girlhood and inequity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)* [Doctoral Dissertation, York University].
<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/37375>
- McRobbie, A. (1991). *Feminism and youth culture: from “Jackie” to “Just seventeen.”* Macmillan.
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. SAGE.
- Media Technology Monitor Junior (2021). *Staying Connected—Kids and Social Media Report*. Media Technology Monitor. <https://mtm-otm.ca/en/reports>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Merrigan, G., Huston, C. L., & Johnston, R. (2012). *Communication Research Methods* (Canadian edition). Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Milne, E., Mitchell, C., & De Lange, N. (Eds.) (2012). *Handbook of participatory video*. AltaMira Press.
- Mitchell, C., & Reid-Walsh, J. (2007). *Seven Going On Seventeen: Tween Studies in the Culture of Girlhood*. Peter Lang.
- Mitchell, C., & Reid-Walsh, J. (2014). A Girl’s Education. *Girlhood Studies*, 7(2), 1–5.
<https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070201>
- Mitchell C. M., & Sommer, M. (2016). Participatory visual methodologies in global public health. *Glob Public Health*, 11(5-6), 521-7. <https://10.1080/17441692.2016.1170184>.
- Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30, 61-88.
- Molina-Guzmán, I., & Marie Cacho, L. (2011). Historically mapping contemporary intersectional feminist media studies. In C. Carter, L. Steiner, & L. McLaughlin (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media & Gender* (pp.71-80). Routledge.
- Montgomery, M. L., Jetter, M. (2016). *“I Am From” Activity Guide: A Tool to Foster Student*

- Interaction in the Classroom*. Global Programs and Strategy Alliance and the Center for Educational Innovation, University of Minnesota.
https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I_Am_From_Faculty_Guide.pdf
- Moscowitz, L., & Carpenter, M. B. (2014). Girl Zines at Work: Feminist Media Literacy Education with Underserved Girls. *Girlhood Studies*, 7(2).
<https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070203>
- Mulvey, L. (1975). "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema". *Screen*, 16(3), 6–18. doi:10.1093/screen/16.3.6
- Nikken, P., & Walma van der Molen, J. H. (2007). "Operation Iraqi freedom" in the children's news: A comparison of consolation strategies used by Dutch and German news producers. In D. Lemish & M. Gotz (Eds.), *Children and media in times of war and conflict* (pp. 177-199).
- Neuman, S., & Celano, D. (2012). Worlds apart: one city, two libraries, and ten years of watching inequality grow. *American Educator*, 36(3), 13–.
- Olson, C., Lanthorn, K., Onut, G., Sekarasih, L., & Scharrer, E. (2019). Producing PSAs on consumer culture: Youth reception of advertising. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 36(1), 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2018.1526390>
- O'Malley, M. P., Sandlin, J. A., & Burdick, J. (2010). Public Pedagogy. In C. Kridel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412958806.n375>
- Omnicores. (2022). TikTok by the numbers: Stats, demographics & fun facts. *Omnicores*, 13 March. <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/tiktok-statistics/>
- Papert, S. (1993). *The children's machine: rethinking school in the age of the computer*. Basic Books.
- Peake, L. Feminist methodologies. In: D. Richardson, N. Castree, M. Goodchild, A. Kobayashi, W. Liu and R. Marston, eds. *The AAG International Encyclopedia of Geography*. Vol. V. Oxford: John Wiley and Sons Ltd. pp. 2, 331-2, 340.
- Perez, S. (2020) Kids now spend nearly as much time watching TikTok as YouTube in US, UK and Spain. *TechCrunch*, 4 June. <https://techcrunch.com/2020/06/04/kids-now-spend-nearly-as-much-time-watching-tiktok-as-youtube-in-u-s-u-k-and-spain/>

- Pike, K. (2018). Mediating the *Majlis*: Arab Girls' Documetnaries About "Women's Gatherings" in Qatar. In G. B. Morgan, & M. C. Kearney (Eds.) *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture Vol. 2*. (pp. 193-212). Peter Lang.
- Pillow, W. S., & Mayo, C. (2012). Feminist Ethnography: Histories, Challenges, and Possibilities. In S. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (pp. 187–205). SAGE Publications Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n10>
- Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3rd edition.). Sage Publications.
- Porter, G., Townsend, J., & Hampshire, K. (2012). Children and young people as producers of knowledge. *Children's Geographies*, 10(2), 131–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2012.667915>
- Postman, N. (1979). *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*. Delacorte Press.
- Prosser, J., & Burke, C. (2008). Image-Based Educational Research: Childlike Perspectives. In G. Knowles & A. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples and Issues* (pp. 407-419). Sage Publications Inc.
- Prout, A. (2008). Culture-nature and the construction of childhood. In K. Drotner & S. Livingstone (Eds.), *International handbook of children, media and culture* (pp. 21-35). Sage Publications Inc.
- Pungente S. J. (1989). The Second Spring: Media Education in Canada's Secondary Schools, *Educational Media International*, (26)4, 199-203, DOI: [10.1080/0952398890260404](https://doi.org/10.1080/0952398890260404)
- Rajiva, M. (2009). South Asian Canadian girls' strategies of racialized belonging in adolescence. *Girlhood Studies*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2009.020206>
- Ramazanoglu, C., & Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology: challenges and choices*. Sage.
- Reich, J., & Ito, M. (2017). *From Good Intentions to Real Outcomes: Equity by Design in Learning Technologies*. Irvine, CA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.
- Rice, C., & Mündel, I. (2018). Story-Making as Methodology: Disrupting Dominant Stories through Multimedia Storytelling. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie*, 55(2), 211–231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12190>

- Rideout, V., & Robb, M. B. (2019). *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens*. Common Sense Media.
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2019-census-8-to-18-full-report-updated.pdf>
- Rideout, V., & Robb, M. B. (2021). *The role of media during the pandemic: Connection, creativity, and learning for tweens and teens*. Common Sense Media.
- Ringrose, J. (2013). *Post-feminist education? Girls and the sexual politics of schooling*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Ringrose, J., & Renold, E. (2012). Teen girls, working-class femininity and resistance: retheorising fantasy and desire in educational contexts of heterosexualised violence. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(4), 461–477.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2011.555099>
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials* (4th edition). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Rosenfeld Halverson, E., Bass, M., & Woods, D. (2015). The Process of Creation: A Novel Methodology for Analyzing Multimodal Data. *The Qualitative Report*.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1796>
- Ross, K., & Carter, C. (2011). Women and news: A long and winding road. *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(8), 1148–1165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443711418272>
- ross, j. m., (2018). Pop-Up Public: weaving feminist participatory media into public radio. In L. S. Berliner & R. Krabill (Eds.), *Feminist Interventions in Participatory Media* (1st ed.) (pp. 43-51). Routledge.
- Rottenberg, C. (2014). The rise of neoliberal feminism. *Cultural Studies*, (28)3, 418–37.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Sandlin, J. A. (2010). *Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203863688>
- Sandlin, J. A., O'Malley, M. P., & Burdick, J. (2011). Mapping the Complexity of Public Pedagogy Scholarship: 1894–2010. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), 338–375.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311413395>

- Schleser, M. (2014). Connecting through Mobile Autobiographies: Self-Reflexive Mobile Filmmaking, Self-Representation, and Selfies. In M. Berry & M. Schleser (Eds.), *Mobile Media Making in an Age of Smartphones* (pp. 148–158). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137469816_14
- Seiter, E. (1993). *Sold separately: Children and parents in consumer culture*. Rutgers University Press.
- Selkrig, M. (2011). Learning about ourselves from others: Transformation of artists' identities through community-based arts practice. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 30(5), 577–589. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2011.570875>
- Share, J. (2009). *Media literacy is elementary: teaching youth to critically read and create*. Peter Lang.
- Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shaw, J., & Robertson, C. (1997). *Participatory video: A practical guide to using video creatively in group development work*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Shaw Rocket Fund. (2010). *Media and Technology Landscape Study Among Young Canadians*. <https://rocketfund.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/pub-2010MediaandTechnologyLandscapeStudyofYoungCanadians-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>
- Shaw Rocket Fund (2015, December 18). *Media, Technology & Content Consumption Among Youth*. <https://rocketfund.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/pub-2015-ShawRocketFundTech-MediaandTechConsumption-Dec2015.pdf>
- Shevinsky, E. (Ed.) (2015) *Lean Out: The Struggle for Gender Equality in Tech and Start Up Culture*. OR Books.
- Shrewsbury, C. (1997). What is Feminist Pedagogy? *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 25(1/2), 166-173.
- Smith, A. (2019). Theorizing Black Girlhood. In A. Halliday (Ed.), *The Black girlhood studies collection* (pp.21-44). Women's Press.
- Smith, S., Choueiti, M., & Pieper, K. (2016). Inclusion or Invisibility? Comprehensive Annenberg Report on Diversity in Entertainment. Report. USC Annenberg: School of Journalism.

https://annenbergl.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017/04/07/MDSCI_CARD_Report_FINAL_Exec_Summary.pdf

- Soep, E. (2016). Afterword: Necessary Learning. In H. Jenkins, S. Shresthova, L. Gamber-Thomson, N. Kligler-Vilenchik, & A. M. Zimmerman (Eds.), *By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism* (pp. 290 – 308). New York University Press.
- Spencer, S. (2010). *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203883860>
- Spurgeon, C. (2013). The Art of Co-Creative Media: An Australian Survey. *Cultural Science Journal*, 6(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.53>
- Spurgeon, C. (2015). Participatory Media and ‘Co-Creative’ Storytelling. *Media International Australia*, 154(1), 132–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X1515400116>
- Spurgeon, C., & Edmond, M. (2015). Making Media Participatory. *Media International Australia*, 154(1), 53–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X1515400108>
- Stack, M. (2009). Video Production and Youth-Educator Collaboration: Openings and Dilemmas. *McGill Journal of Education (Online)*, 44(2), 299-318.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications
- Stanfill, M. (2014). The Interface as Discourse: The Production of Norms Through Web Design. *New Media and Society*. doi: 10.1177/1461444814520873 .
- Sweeney, K. (2005). Grrls Make Movies: The Emergence of Women-Led Filmmaking Initiatives for Teenage Girls. *Afterimage*, 33(3), 37.
- Taaffe, C. (2019). A Meditation on (Re)imagining a World with Black Girls. In A. Halliday (Ed.), *The Black girlhood studies collection* (pp.279-282). Women’s Press
- Telefilm Canada. (2019, August 1). *Telefilm Canada releases update on gender parity initiatives* [News Release]. Retrieved from <https://telefilm.ca/en/news-releases/telefilm-canada-releases-update-on-gender-parity-initiatives>
- Terzopoulos, T. (2017). Informational video storytelling for children by children: exploring new directions in learning and making media in the classroom. [Master’s Thesis, Ryerson University/York University]. <https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14646354.v1>

- Theron, L., Geyer, S., Strydom, H., & Delport, R. (2010) Visual methodology to build a resilient 'communitas', *Education as Change*, 14(sup1), S85-S101. DOI: 10.1080/16823206.2010.517933
- Todd, A. (2016, April). *There are More Important Things That Need to be Talked About Than Taupe Eyeshadow: Virtual (Dis)Orientations and Luminosity of Disabled Girlhood* [Paper Presentation]. The International Girl Studies Association Conference, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
- Travis, S. (2020). Portrait of a Methodology: Portraiture as Critical Arts-Based Research. *Visual Arts Research*, 46(2), 100. <https://doi.org/10.5406/visuartsrese.46.2.0100>
- Treffry-Goatley, A., Wiebesiek, L., de Lange, N., & Moletsane, R. (2017). Technologies of Nonviolence: Ethical Participatory Visual Research with Girls. *Girlhood Studies*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2017.100205>
- Uptis, R. (2014). *Creativity: The State of the Domain. In Measuring What Matters* (Report). Toronto: People for Education.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive Schooling*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Vargas, L. (2009). *Latina Teens, Migration, and Popular Culture*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Vasudevan, L., & Riina-Ferrie, J. (2019). Collaborative filmmaking and affective traces of belonging. *British Journal of Educational Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12808>
- Wajcman, J. (1991). *Feminism Confronts Technology*. Polity Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ryerson/detail.action?docID=1215734>
- Wajcman, J. (2007). From Women and Technology to Gendered Technoscience. *Information, Communication & Society* 10(3), 287–298.
- Watson, C., Barnabas, S., & Tomaselli, K. (2016). Smaller Lens, Bigger Picture: Exploring Self-Generated Cellphilms in Participatory Research. In K. MacEntee, C. Burkholder, & J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.), *What's a Cellphilms? Integrating Mobile Phone Technology into Participatory Visual Research and Activism* (pp. 33–50). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Weber, S., & Dixon, S. (2007). *Growing up online: Young people and digital technologies*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Wells, T., & Sandretto, S. (2017). "I'm on a journey I never thought I'd be on": Using process drama pedagogy for the literacy programme. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 12(2), 180–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2016.1245147>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225-246.
- Wenger, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015). *Communities of practice: a brief introduction*. <https://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/07-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf>
- White, K. L. (2009). Meztizaje and remembering in Afro-Mexican communities of the Costa Chica: Implications for archival education in Mexico. *Archival Science*, 9, 43-55. doi:10.1007/s10502-009-9102-5
- White, S. (Ed.) (2003). *Participatory Video: Images that transform and Empower*. Sage Publications.
- Willett, R. (2008). Consumer Citizens Online: Structure, Agency, and Gender in Online Participation. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (pp. 49-70). The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Williams, R. (1980). Means of communication as means of production. in R. Williams (Ed.), *Problems in materialism and culture: Selected essays* (pp.50-63). Verso.
- Williams, R. L., & Ferber, A. L. (2008). Facilitating Smart-Girl: Feminist Pedagogy in Service Learning in Action. *Feminist Teacher*, 19(1), 47–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4054607>
- Women in View. (2019). *Women in View: On Screen Report*. Retrieved from: <http://womeninview.ca/wp-content/uploads/WIVOS19-Full-Report.pdf>
- Women's Media Center. (2014). *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2014*. https://womensmediacenter.com/assets/site/reports/2014-statistics/2e85f9517dc2bf164e_hm62xgan.pdf

- Woodgate, A., & Kleeman, D. (2021). Rocket Forum: Canadian Kids Media & Tech Study. Dubit Limited. <https://rocketfund.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rocket-Forum-Dubit-Study-Highlights-09.21.21.pdf>
- Woodward, K. (2018). On feminist collaboration, digital media, and affect. In L. Berliner & R. Krabill (Eds.) *Feminist Interventions in Participatory Media: Pedagogy, Publics, Practice* (1st ed.) (pp. 70-90). Routledge.
- Wright, R. R. (2010). Unmasking hegemony with The Avengers: Television entertainment as public pedagogy. In Sandlin, J. A., Schultz, B. D., & Burdick, J. (Eds.), *Handbook of public pedagogy: Education and learning beyond schooling* (pp. 139-150). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Writers Guild of Canada (2012, November 26). *CBC Must Be Held to Higher Standard, say WGC* [Press Release]. <https://www.wgc.ca/sites/default/files/resource/2018-09/WGC%20on%20CBC%20Licence%20Renewal%2011%2026%2012.pdf>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zurbriggen, E., Collins, R., Lamb, S., Roberts, T-A., Tolman, D., Ward, L. M., & Blake, J. (2007). Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. <https://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-summary.pdf>

Appendix A

Participant “Entrance” Questionnaire

1. What is your first name?
2. What do you want to learn or specific skills you want develop?
3. What are some topics you are interested in that you may want to make videos about?
4. What are some YouTube (or Instagram or TikTok) channels or creators that you watch and like? (If you don't know, please write "I don't know")
5. What are some TV shows (they can be on TV or Netflix/other streaming platforms) do you like?
6. What are some apps or programs do you use to create media (this can be video editing, graphics, social media, etc.)
7. What mobile device(s) will you be using for your digital storytelling tasks? Write the brand (and model/name if you know it)
8. Do you have any questions for me or things that you are unsure or unclear about? If so, write them below:

Appendix B

Instructions for Participant Vlogs



"EXPLORING MEDIA-MAKING & STORYTELLING FOR/WITH/BY CANADIAN GIRLS"



Instructions for Vlogs:

You are being asked to record yourself sharing your thoughts over the next month as you participate in the Digital Storytelling Workshop. These vlogs will help the Researcher better understand your experiences.
**If you and your parents consented, some short clips may be used in the research report and/or presentations.*

You will be recording a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 vlogs. Each vlog should be about 2-3 minutes long but you can record a bit more (up to 5 minutes) if you wish.

It is recommended that you record a vlog once a week, either after a Friday workshop or after you have completed an activity/task assigned in the workshops so you have something to talk about.

Before Recording:

1. Take a few minutes to think about the week's workshop sessions and activities and what you learned and felt. You can take jot notes to organize your thoughts if it helps.
2. Try to find a space and time to record that is as quiet and distraction-free as possible.

During Recording:

3. Film your mini-vlog 'horizontally' (holding the phone the way you would make a video call or a Tiktok). Try to keep the camera as still as possible. Do your best to speak naturally rather than reading a paragraph you've prepared out loud.
**you can watch my sample vlog if you're unsure*
4. The vlogs do not need to be perfect or polished. Don't worry if you lose your train of thought or stumble... You don't have to start over and can always press pause and pick up where you left off.
5. Start each vlog by saying what the date is and/or what the last session you had was. Next, talk about some or all of the following:
 - what you have enjoyed so far/are enjoying about the program
 - any interesting moments or experiences so far
 - something that you learned for the first time and/or found really interesting (and why!)
 - any questions or concerns you have
 - anything you didn't like or didn't find useful or helpful (and why!)
 - what you are still hoping to learn or explore
 - anything else that you think might be helpful or interesting to share!
6. Don't forget to upload your video to your private Dropbox folder and message me in the chat if you have any issues!

Thanks so much for your contributions!



Appendix C

Exit Interview/Post-Video Storytelling Program Guiding Questions for Participants

Before this program, have you learned about video making or digital storytelling in school or other programs?

Have you been asked to make videos for any school projects? Tell me about them.

Have you worked with a partner or in a group to make a video before? If so, what was that experience like?

Have you taken and media courses at school?

What are some of the other ways you've used other media (for example: podcasts or blogs) for school assignments?

Have you made videos outside of school or for fun?

If yes, let's talk about some of these videos: what were they about and who was involved?

Do you remember what the first video you ever made was? What was it about?

Are there other ways you create on digital media outside of school, like with Instagram, online blogging, artmaking, etc.? Tell me about what else you create.

Before this workshop, what were some of the ways that you have learned more about how to make videos?

What do you feel are your strengths as a video-maker?

What are skills you feel you still need to work on?

Do you think it's important for girls to create videos or other types of stories or content for other girls? Why/why not?

What are your favourite TV shows? What about favourite YouTubers or TikTokers?

What kinds of videos do you like to watch?

Why did you want to participate in this program?

Have you done other digital storytelling programs? If so, how did this one compare?

Have you done other online workshops? If so, how did this one compare?

What was it like to be in a group with such a mix of ages? Have you had this kind of experience with mixed age groups before?

What was it like to be part of a girls-only group who shared an interest in digital storytelling?

What did you like most about the overall workshop (things we did in the sessions/format, etc.)? Least? (something you didn't like as much)

Do you feel like you had a chance to get to know the other participants better? Why/why not? Was this important to you or not so much?

We worked on 3 projects... Which was your favourite and why? Least favourite?

Tell me a bit about the "Day In My Life" video. Had you made anything like this before?

Tell me a bit about the process of making it.

What did you learn?

What did you think of the final product/video?

What was it like to work on the I am from poem?

Tell me about your process of making it.

What did you think of the final product?

What was it like to share the poem with one of the other participants?

What was it like to work on the interview profile?

How did you and your partner work together?

What was the planning process like?

What was the filming process like?

What were the challenges you had?

What did you like about the final product?

Is there anything you'd do differently next time?

What kind of support or learning do you think you still need to take your video making to the next level/get better at it?

Do you think that having a community for support for digital storytelling is important for girls?
Why/why not?

What did you learn about digital storytelling in this program?

Did you learn any new skills or develop ones you had even more?

Did you learn anything from the other participants?

What would you like to learn more about or skills you'd like to develop in a future workshop?


What ideas/projects (topics for videos) are in your creative mind right now?

What was the most challenging part of this experience for you?


What was the highlight or favourite moment of this experience?

Appendix D

Audio Poem Activity Instructions and Brainstorming/Writing Template



"EXPLORING MEDIA-MAKING & STORYTELLING FOR/WITH/BY CANADIAN GIRLS"



"Where I Am From" Audio Poem Activity

The goal of this activity is to understand the role of audio/sound in digital storytelling. It is also a chance to honour and tell your own story in an audio poem format!

1. This activity is inspired by a poem written by George Ella Lyon. Start by reading, listening, and/or watching a video version of it [here](#).
2. Next, brainstorm on your own or ask a friend or family member to help you discuss your life. Take jot notes/make a list of some/all of the following:
 - Where you grew up and/or where you live now
 - The people in your family
 - Family sayings/expressions, nicknames for you and family members (pets, too!)
 - Favourite games or activities that you shared, celebrations, and religious traditions, tooSome more things to consider:
 - Favourite memories and 'big moments' in your life
 - What is your 'happy place'?
 - What memories or 'big moments' come to mind?
3. Download/make a copy of the poem template document [here](#) and use your notes to fill it out. You do not have to use the template, and you can add and delete lines from it as you wish!

Tip: Try to use descriptions where you can. How can you use your different senses (sight, smell, hearing, touch/feel, taste) to bring your poem to life? For example: "I am from a front yard with a tree" can become "I am from the giant old oak in the yard that turns golden in Fall".


Stumped or not sure you're on the right track? Watch [this](#)! And remember: there is no right or wrong way to describe your memories and write your poem!
4. Pick your level for the next step:

LEVEL 1:
Find a quiet place to record indoors. Using a voice notes app on your cell phone or tablet, record yourself reading your poem out loud. Try to read it with feeling as if you are telling us a story! When you are finished, upload your poem to your private Digital Storytelling GoogleDrive folder.

LEVEL 2:
Complete level 1. Then, import your audio file into WeVideo, and choose the 'podcast' option. Add sound effects and/or an instrumental track to your piece using effects from these [sources](#). When you are finished, export your project and upload it to your private Digital Storytelling GoogleDrive folder.

If you have any questions, please email or message me in our Team chat and I'll help you out over the weekend or during the week!

Happy creating!



I AM FROM POEM - Brainstorming/Writing Template

I am from the _____ (something that describes a memory of your home or childhood).

I am from the _____ (plant, flower, or some other memorable item, toy, keepsake in your yard/neighbourhood/garage/room),

I am from _____ (family tradition) and _____ (family trait),
from _____ (name of family member) and _____ (another family name)
and _____ (family name).

I am from the _____ (family tradition/nickname/trait) and
_____ (another one).

From _____ (something you were told as a child) and
_____ (another one).

I am from _____ (religion, or lack of it, or other family tradition).

I'm from _____ (place of birth/family ancestry), _____ (two
food items representing your family/culture).

From the (time when I/we) _____ (specific family story about a
specific person), when I/we _____ (another family/individual
moment or memory that shaped you _____ (another detail about
another family member/individual moment that shaped you).

I am from _____ (location of family pictures, mementos,
and what these mean to you).

Adapted from Montgomery & Jetter, 2016: https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I_Am_From_Faculty_Guide.pdf