Democratic Education in the Era of New Media

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ABSTRACT

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The proliferation and pervasiveness of new media and technologies in many U.S. young people's daily life has reshaped their civic life experiences. Civic learning is now not only happening in offline environments but also online spaces. However, there is little research on the potential of new media for civic education. This study investigates young people' learning experiences in new media civic education (NMCE) programs. The major research questions for this study are: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? How can new media civic education foster youth civic identity?

This study uses a qualitative collective-case study method to investigate two civic programs that integrated new media productions and address social issues: one program prepared students to learn about sustainability issues and to produce a series of virtual talk shows about sustainability issues in Second Life (a simulated world digital platform); the other program facilitated students' production of radio stories about homeless youth. Findings from this study reveal that NMCE can help students navigate in a new media mediated world to learn about social issues, produce digital stories to raise awareness about these issues, and mobilize their interests for civic causes. In addition, students can develop authentic voices about social issues, exercise civic agency and reach out to real world audiences across the world to facilitate social change. Both cases in this study demonstrated a mix of success and failure in facilitating civic learning and civic identity development.

Results from this study suggest NMCE programs adopt three distinct pedagogies: (1) pedagogies that embrace students' cultural experiences to develop youth voices on social issues (e.g. the pedagogy of collegiality); (2) ones that facilitate examination of their emotions in manipulating what they perceive about social issues and the other (e.g. a pedagogy of discomfort); and (3) pedagogies that encourage mentorship and peer teaching/learning about digital production skills (e.g. studio mentorship model). Furthermore, it is necessary to consider not only the expression of youth voices, but also how these voices will be heard, what kinds of conversations might be sparked based on these digital works, and how students would respond to them. Thus, creating spaces of participation where students can meet people with diverse perspectives and have dialogues with them around social issues discussed in their digital productions is important for NMCE to prepare democratic citizens.

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I. INTRODUCTION

New media and technology have become ubiquitous in the daily life of many young people in the U.S. According to a recent report from Pew Research Center, as of September, 2012 95% of all teens ages 12-17 are online; 78% of them have a cell phone and almost half (47%) of those own smartphones; 77% of online teens use Facebook, and 24% of them use Twitter. In addition, an earlier report indicates that almost all teens play electronic games and at least half of them play games on a given day (Lenhart, Kahne, Middaugh, Macgill, Evans & Vitak, 2008). The impact of technologies and new media on youth and learning/education has often been a popular debate topic in the public arena because it ties so closely to people's hopes and fears about the future of the society (Buckingham, 2007).

Some are optimistic about the transformation brought up by the Internet and new media technology since 1990s. For instance, Tapscott (1999) contends that young people who grew up in the era of the Internet and of a digital culture, who he refers to as net generation, will be more analytic, creative and inquisitive than their processors who grew up in the relatively passive television culture. In a similar vein, Prensky (2001) coins the term "digital native" when he refers to a young generation of students who "are native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet" (p.1); in contrast, digital immigrants are those who migrate to the digital worlds and are picking up new skills. Prensky (2001) argues that digital natives, unlike digital immigrants, have a very different approach toward learning. They prefer visual and graphical content, and enjoy interactive presentations that are common in popular youth media such as video games and music videos.

Unlike such optimistic visions of a new generation and a more democratic and active online culture, others worry that new media and technologies would negatively impact young

people's learning. Findings from recent studies show that using Facebook and texting, two popular social activities online, while doing schoolwork is negatively associated with students' GPA. In these cases, technology and new media seem not to facilitate but instead distract students from learning (Junco & Cotton, 2012; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Rosen, Carrier, Cheever, 2013).

Among these discourses, technological-determinism, an idea that technology will bring about social changes irrespective of the ways and social contexts in which it is used, often directs the conversations (Buckingham, 2007). However, technological-determinism oversimplifies the complicated learning experiences in new media era and understands them through the narrow lenses of few technology affordances. Undeniably each technology affordance has some strength to make certain work easier. However, the social contexts and ways in which technologies and new media are used in learning activities play an equally important role in shaping learning experiences. Thus, we should consider the "political economy of youth culture, the social and cultural policies and practices that regulate and define young people's lives, and the realities of their everyday social environments" (p.15, Buckingham, 2007), not only technology changes alone when understanding youth, new media and learning. For instance, youth, a socially constructed category set apart from adulthood, are kept in age-segregated institutions such as schools and have no or limited access to workplaces and are increasingly restricted from other public spaces. Social media has gradually replaced traditional forms of informal, face-to-face socializing in public spaces, and has become a new institution where young people get to interact with each other and where they gain social learning experiences (Boyd, 2007; Ito et al., 2009).

Ito et al.'s (2009) recent ethnographic research report contextualized new media and learning in the broader cultural, political and social landscapes of young people's daily life. They

argue that youth nowadays develop their identity and negotiate autonomy in the rapid changing digital communication environment where new media productions and circulation of these works in networked publics are part of many people's daily practices. The online world enables youth to extend their offline friendships and gain valuable skills in interest-driven communities. In friendship-driven, "hanging-out" activities such as messaging and social networking, youth are picking up important interpersonal skills that prepare them to work and live in the new networked world. In interest-driven, creative production online communities such as fan fiction, music production and game design communities, they learn from peers, including adult hobbyists, compete with and get feedback from each other, and advance their new media skills that in some cases are preparatory work for their future career, and in some cases turn into foundations for youth entrepreneurship. This study clearly illustrates an ecology of learning with new media in which its usage is not incompatible with learning but facilitates the learning of important 21th century networking skills, and adults are not necessarily digital immigrants but could be resourceful peers, depending on the learning contexts.

New Media and Civic Engagement

As the latest research on technologies, new media and learning continues to provide a more nuanced understanding about how new technologies and media will shape the future, political scientists and sociologists address different research questions that share similar concerns about the future of our society. Especially, they are debating the impact of technology and new media on youth civic engagement and democracy. Putnam (2000), who reveals the decline of social capital in the U.S. and warns its negative impact on American democracy, points out that the online simulacra of most offline civic activities can be easily found within just a few years of the Internet's launch. However, he questions the nature of these virtual

connections and their relationships with social capital. Putnam (2000) acknowledges the Internet as a powerful technology to connect physically distant people with each other and facilitate knowledge sharing, but the ease of voice expression online might not foster democratic deliberation, and it might lead to the "cyberbalkanization" in which people stay only with like-minded others. Sunstein (2007) expresses a similar concern and points out that when people are engaged in discussions with other like-minded people in an anonymous condition, they are more likely to reinforce the extreme versions of their shared beliefs. Galston (2000) maintains that online communities are not conductive to exchanging diverse voices because participants have no obligations and can exit the conversations at any point, which is a significant contrast to how civic communication occurs in a face-to-face environment.

Recent research, however, has suggested different scenarios about youth, technologies and civic engagement. Drawing on survey data from over five thousand high school students from California, Kahne, Middaugh, Lee, and Feezell (2011) found that non-political, interest driven online activities contribute to young people's greater exposure to diverse perspectives. Many young people (57%) were exposed to perspectives that both align to or differ from their own when online, and few (5%) of survey participants reported being exposed only to views consistent with their own perspectives. In addition, news sites people visited online provide more diverse perspectives than their offline social networks that are associated with volunteer groups, work, or geographical communities (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010). Furthermore, youth participation in online political and/or non-political communities is positively correlated with an interest in future offline civic activities (Kahne, Lee & Feezell, 2011).

In addition to these debates about the impact of new media technology on youth civic engagement and democratic practices, scholars are also exploring how new media foster

innovative forms of civic engagement and new conceptions of citizenship. For instance, new media production has become a popular practice among youth. Levine (2007a) contends that youth can use public voice, a communication style to persuade other people to take action on social issues, in new media production and this approach would constitute a new form of civic engagement. Another example is online petition. Online petitions are much less expensive than offline petition drives because activists and organizations do not need to print out petition materials and hire volunteers to collect signatures. The lower organizing costs of online petitions and other social movement tactics might contribute to the formation of a "movement society" (Earl & Schussman, 2008). Furthermore, Kahen and Cohen (2012) argue that new media introduces youth to "participatory politics." Participatory politics is defined as "interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern" (Kahne & Cohen, 2012, p. vi). Examples of participatory politics include writing a blog post about political issues, starting an online group around a shared concern or public problem, or sharing videos that contain political messages with one's social networks. Participatory political acts can reach a large audience and mobilize social networks for a social cause with a comparatively low cost. Participatory political acts can also shape social agenda through dialogues and renegotiations with political leaders and enhance participants' sense of agency. Participatory politics is important because it allows individuals greater independence to circumvent traditional gatekeepers of information and have influence in the political realm (Kahne & Cohen, 2012).

Similarly, some of the most active youth-led informal civic learning communities are all facilitated by "participatory culture", a new media mediated culture in which culture creation, community participation, and informal mentorship have all become easier (Jenkins, Clinton,

Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006). Many scholars have seen the great potential of participatory culture communities for civic learning and investigated the connections between them. One of the most salient characteristics of these civic learning communities is the voluntary youth engagement in social issues and actions. For instance, many youth participants in Harry Potter Alliance (a fan community of the popular fiction *Harry Potter*), KONY 2012 (an online community that aims to stop war crimes committed by Kony Joseph and his followers), Nerdfighters and Youth Speaks are actively involved in community organizing, petitions and other forms of social actions to fight for a more just society (Ito et al., 2015; Kligler-Vilenchik & Shresthova, 2012; Kligler-Vilenchik, 2013).

Along with this reconceptualization of civic engagement and political practices is a reconsideration of the definition of citizenship. Many young citizens' daily lives are fully integrated with new social media and networking tools, and are thus more engaged in the conception of actualizing citizenship that favors loosely networked social actions mediated by interactive information technologies and individual expressions that engage online public audience (Bennett & Wells, 2009). These civic practices of actualizing citizenship are very different from those valued by traditional, dutiful citizenship, which emphasize the importance of voting, participation in political parties and civil society organizations, and following mass media to be informed about social issues (Bennett & Wells, 2009).

[Figure 1] Overview of Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of Problem
Research Questions
Theoretical Framework
Significance and Limitations
Chapter Summary

Statement of Problem

The topic of how new media and technologies can be used for civic education has been studied only minimally despite the outsize and growing presence of new media in the lives of youth and the emergence of new civic practices enabled by new media as mentioned in the previous section. Whether and how young people's engagement in social issues that are mediated by new media can be translated into civic education deserves careful attention since current research on informal online civic learning communities mostly suggests promising potentials of such civic learning practices for youth. More research on this topic is urgently needed because civic education is an important means to reach youth and prepare them to become democratic citizens (Levine, 2007b).

Dewey's conceptualizations of democracy and education emphasize communication and are particularly helpful for thinking about the importance of civic education in the new media era. Dewey (1916) views democracy as "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences" (p. 87) and characterizes the dynamic process of negoting interests that "each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own" (p.87). Thus, constant dialogues are needed in order to help a group of individuals address their diverse interests and concerns. Local communities, for him, are crucial contexts and starting points for these communicative democratic practices (Dewey, 1927). In addition, Dewey (1916) also believes that schools play a critical role to maintain and extend the democratic ideal; in order to facilitate social progress, schools should become democratic communities.

The communicative nature of new media makes them great contexts for Dewey's democratic practices. New media technologies have created numerous online communities and

have lowered the barriers for participation. Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, and Weigel (2006) point out that new media environment facilitates a participatory culture, which they define as "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices" (p. 3). Kahn and Middaugh (2009) present cases of online communities in which participants have shared concerns, take responsibilities for collective decision-making, have access to the free flow of information, and encounter diverse views. They contend that online communities can be democratic localities that were envisioned by Dewey. Online communities and the new media environment can also be great contexts for civic education. However, there is a lack of research examining how new media can be integrated in civic education and many fundamental questions need to be answered. This study is an effort to address this problem.

Research Questions

The primary research question guiding this study is: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? The secondary research question is: How can new media civic education foster youth civic identity?

To address these research questions, this study will use a qualitative instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) as the organizing approach while employing qualitative methods. I consulted experts in educational technology, new media, and social studies, and conducted an online search to seek potential programs and were able to gain access to conduct research on two new media civic programs that served historically disadvantaged urban youth: one after school program prepared students to learn about sustainability issues and to produce a series of virtual talk shows

about sustainability issues in a virtual world platform Second Life; the other in-school program facilitated students' production of radio stories about homeless youth.

Qualitative research is used to describe and understand a social phenomenon and make sense of the phenomenon according to the meanings participants have brought to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is naturalistic, emergent and evolving, and utilizes multiple methods to collect data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), and it is able to represent a "complex, holistic picture" of the social phenomenon that was investigated (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). Case study focuses on the particularity and complexity of a bounded system, and seeks to understand the activities and interactions within their contexts (Stake, 1995). I am particularly interested in the phenomenon of learning and youth civic identity development in new media civic education and selected two such programs as collective cases for this research project.

Civic and democratic education refers to any educational efforts fostering youth civic identity development, which is an essential process for preparing future engaged citizens. Drawing on the theoretical framings of Dewey (1927), Barber (1984), and Boyte and Kari (1996), Middaugh (2012) defines civic engagement as "engaging in public deliberation to identify issues of shared concern and to negotiate competing interests, engaging in sustained collaborative efforts to address these issues, and feeling attached to a larger public and committed to working to make it better" (p. 7). New media have provided new opportunities for youth to learn and communicate about social issues, participate in communities of shared concerns and interests, and engage in social actions to address social problems (see more in Chapter II). The fundamental elements of civic engagement proposed by Middaugh (2012) remain essential in new media age, and youth will need to learn to develop their voices and negotiate diverse perspectives online to solve shared problems. In order to prepare youth to be

engaged citizens, educators have to help them develop civic identity. The formation of civic identity is "a process of constructing models of the public and the self in relationship to one another, a sense of oneself as capable of participation, and a feeling of commitment or obligation to participate in public work." (Middaug, 2012), and this study adopts this definition in my investigation. In addition, I use civic education interchangeably with democratic education in this study. While civic education is a widely used term in schools, and is often viewed as a means to prepare citizens in the U.S, it does not inherently refer to educational practices that foster democracy. Authoritarian countries also use civic education as a means to prepare law-abiding citizens to support their undemocratic political and social practices. Thus, I use democratic and civic education interchangeably in this study to emphasize the democratic spirit I am looking for in the case studies. New media refer to "a media ecology where more traditional media such as books, television and radio, are 'converging' with digital media, specifically interactive media and media for social communication" (Ito et al., p. 8). This study will use digital media interchangeably with new media since digital media play a significant role in the new media ecology. New media civic education refers to educational programs that integrate new media in its civic teaching and learning efforts.

Theoretical Framework

This study will use Silverstone's (2007) conceptualization of mediapolis as the theoretical framework to guide the exploration and investigation of new media civic education. Mediapolis will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two. Media play a significant role in shaping our understanding of society; daily life is heavily mediated by various types of media. Silverstone (2007) proposes mediapolis as the global media era version of polis, a public space in ancient Greece where people met to discuss social issues. Mediapolis is "the mediated public

space where contemporary political life increasingly finds its place, both at national and global levels and where the materiality of the world is constructed throughout (principally) electronically communicated public speech and action" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 31). In mediapolis, everyday life is "a weave of the real and the symbolic, of the directly experienced and the mediated: one cannot enquire into one without simultaneously enquiring into the other" (p. 111). Mediation in a mediapolis is a dialectical notion that requires an understanding of "how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have to that environment and to each other" (Silverstone, 2005, p. 189). Mediation is also dialectical and political because participants and audiences of new media are creatively engaged in redefining social meanings of the dominant culture.

Mediapolis is both an empirical reality and a normative concept. Silverstone (2007) specifies three conditions that are crucial toward an ideal, normative mediapolis. First, media provide resources for our understanding of the temporal and spatial distant world and our judgment of the unfamiliar other. Thus, how to sustain a contrapuntal culture in the mediated public space and facilitate the presence of multiple voices is crucial for a healthy mediapolis. Second, there is the challenge of hearing all diverse voices and reaching a mutual understanding with diverse groups. Silverstone (2007) proposes the concept of "proper distance" as a condition for meaningful communication and understanding among audiences and participants. According to Silverstone (2007), proper distance

> refers to the importance of understanding the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding (p. 47).

Along with the positioning of proper distance, mutual understanding and full communications among people from diverse backgrounds, a mediapolis also require justice. Media justice concerns fair and just access to and participation in the mediated communication world. Along with media justice, being heard is an equally critical part in the reciprocal, meaningful communication. Thus, a responsibility to hospitality in mediapolis is of paramount importance. My research aims to explore the possibilities and challenges of new media civic education for preparing citizens in mediapolis.

Significance and Limitations

This study aims to explore what practices can and should be presented in new media civic education to prepare for active citizens in the era of mediapolis. The significance of this study is also tied to the increasingly dominant role of new media in young people's learning and civic life. Many studies have explored the potential of various new media for learning, and how new media can foster youth civic engagement. These studies focus mostly on voluntary online spaces and their findings suggest that new media mediated civic practices deeply engage youth in social issues and civic actions (Ito et al., 2015; Kligler-Vilenchik & Shresthova, 2012; Kligler-Vilenchik, 2013). However, less is known about using new media to enhance formal school civic education or informal after school civic education programs. As Levine (2007b) contends that civic education is a "public good", which means that everyone would benefit if most people become good citizens. Thus, it is important to explore how civic education could integrate new media to foster active youth civic identity. There have been some hypotheses and suggestions about new media integration for effective civic education based on theoretical foundations, (e.g., Kahne & Middaugh, 2009; Middaugh, 2012), but there are only few empirical studies in this area. Empirical findings from this research would enrich our understanding about the potentials

and challenges facing new media civic education. Especially, the findings of my research tell a very different story from those studies of informal online civic spaces. Students in NMCE in my study encountered many challenges as they experienced civic learning activities that were mediated with new media technologies. While NMCE did facilitate them to learn about social issues and foster their civic identity development, youth participants in these two case studies did not develop deep engagement in these civic programs. These findings have significant implications for civic educators who would like to leverage new media to engage youth in civic learning.

In addition, Buckingham (2007) contends that there is a new digital divide, a "widening gap between young people's out-of-school experiences of technology and their experience in the classroom" (p. 112) that worth our attention in addition to the old digital divide between people who have rich technology resources and accesses and those who don't have such resources. Similar points can be said on young people's experience gap of new media usage between their daily life and classrooms.

Civic educators have to be aware of the increasing gap between young people's online civic experiences and the disconnected classroom experiences. To address this divide, it is crucial that educators integrate new media into their daily teaching practices. Findings from this study will also contribute to educators' understanding about various pedagogical practices and help prepare more effective new media civic educators.

There are three major limitations of this research. First, the nature of qualitative research design focuses on in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, and the findings from such research design are not generalizable (though findings will provide valuable insights for those who are planning or engaged with similar programs). Second, among various kinds of new media civic

education, this study chooses only two approaches of new media civic education—radio production and virtual talk shows—due to time constrains and availability and accessibility of programs. Thus, the findings of this project only reveal limited possibilities of students' experiences in new media civic education. Third, this study only investigated programs that served primary historically disadvantaged urban youth. Thus, the findings are more specific to this student population. New media civic programs that work for different student population might have different strengths and limitations, which is not addressed in this study.

Chapter Summary

The proliferation of new media technologies has changed how young people learn and engage in civic life. However, there is only little research on using new media in civic education. This study aims to understand young people's learning in new media civic programs. The major research question for this study is: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? Using a qualitative instrumental collective-case study method, this proposed study will provide a rich understanding of how and in what circumstances new media civic education can facilitate civic identity and it will address the challenges facing the implementation of new media civic education. It would also shed new light on how civic educators and researchers can bridge the widening gap between young people's civic life experiences in and out of the classrooms.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will begin with a detailed description of the theoretical framework of mediapolis. Following the theoretical framework, I will review literature on mediated civic life. The research is organized around three major aspects of civic life in a modern democracy: accessing information online, embracing diversity, and civic participation. In the next section, I will summarize three traditions of civic education, literature about youth civic identity and review recent research on new media in civic education. Lastly, I will present findings and highlight gaps in the current literature review. I will highlight the need for more research on new media civic education, in particular research on how participants learn about social issues in new media environment and how they express themselves with and communicate about their digital productions.

[Figure 2] Overview of Chapter II

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical framework
Mediated Civic Life
- Accessing Information Online,
- Encountering Diversity in the Virtual World,
- Civic Participation Online

Civic Education in the Era of New Media
- Civic Education
- Youth Civic Identity
- New Media Civic Education

Findings and Missing Pieces in the Literature
Chapter Summary

Theoretical Framework

This study will use Silverstone's (2007) conceptualization of mediapolis as the theoretical framework to guide the research and data analysis. Building on Arendt's (1998) description of an ancient Greece polis as a public space where elites meet face-to-face to debate and discuss social issues, Silverstone (2007) proposes mediapolis as the corresponding concept in the global media era.. Silverstone creates the word mediapolis to represent the way media have become an inseparable part of our social and civic life. Media, as Silverstone describes, shape our understanding of the society; our daily life is heavily mediated by various types of media. Polis is more than a geographical location or city-state, it is any space where people act and speak together (Arendt, 1998). In a similar vein, a mediapolis is not tied to any physical location nor is it a nation state. Silverstone writes: mediapolis is "the mediated public space where contemporary political life increasingly finds its place, both at national and global levels and where the materiality of the world is constructed throughout (principally) electronically communicated public speech and action" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 31). Mediapolis therefore emerges among people's interactions in the deterritorialized, social "space of appearance." Silverstone continues on to write, "the mediated space of appearance in which the world appears and in which the world is constituted in its worldliness, and through which we learn about those who are and who are not like us" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 31).

In seeking to understand Silverstone's views of the mediapolis, it is useful to return to Arendt. Arendt's (1998) account of the "space of appearance" in polis allows us to further understand Silverstone's views. Arendt (1998) sees the space of appearance in the polis as meaningful and effective only when people speak, act, and think for and in relation to each other. Ideal public space for Arendt requires both living speech and effective actions; thought is a

precondition for the ideal public space. The absence of thought, according to Arendt, created the banality of evil of Adolf Eichmann and the Holocaust. However, thought without communication is solipsistic. For Arendt, communication is a process of collective reasoning and narrating; such authentic communication is a fortress against tyranny. Similarly, Dewey (1916) views the collaborative communication process, which invites diverse voices to dialogues and negotiations, as the foundation of democracy. Drawing on Arendt's ideas, Silverstone (2007) contends that mediapolis, the mediated space of appearance, requires "the active participation of human beings as thinkers, listeners, speakers, and actors" (p. 38) so that it facilitates not only appearance of diverse people but meaningful communication and social actions. In addition, critical reading and thinking about the appearance of the other in mediapolis is crucial to sustain the mediated public space for deliberation and collective decisions.

Mediapolis plays a significant role in shaping new realities of the world. However, it does not replace the experiential world, nor does it deny the validity and importance of face-to-face communications. For Silverstone (2007), mediapolis refers to a space where everyday life is viewed as "a weave of the real and the symbolic, of the directly experienced and the mediated: one cannot enquire into one without simultaneously enquiring into the other" (p. 111). In addition, the conception of mediapolis shares many resemblances with Habermas' (1989) conception of public sphere. Public sphere is a space where people can discuss public issues independently without the interventions from market or state institutions (Habermas, 1989), which is an important characteristic that mediapolis shares with. However, these two models of civic life differ significantly on what modes of communication and discourse are encouraged in its space. Public sphere relies on a commitment to rational debates and discourses. In contrast, the mediated civic and political space of mediapolis enables and encourages more diverse modes

of communication that are beyond rational discourses and include feelings and emotions. Thus, mediation in mediapolis involves "the production of narratives and personal performance … multiple rhetoric of voice and image", and "both the reflection and expression of the diversity of the world" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 46).

Mediation is a dialectical notion that requires an understanding of "how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have to that environment and to each other" (Silverstone 2005, p. 189). It also requires the social and cultural environments serve as a mediator to shape the social process of reception and consumption. Mediation is also dialectical because while mass and digital media might dominate and define social meanings, audience of these media is creatively engaged in and redefining social meanings of content from these media. Audience members are no longer passive recipients but also active participants in complicated mediated public space, and they present plural identities within multiple communities. In fact, the new advancement of media technologies made it difficult to use the term audience to define a person who emails, texts, listens, watches and seeks information on various screens in the space of mediapolis. Thus, Silverston (2007) describes them as *audiences and users as participants*:

> addressing those who live in the world in which the media are central and whose everyday life is perpetually but always unevenly interconnected with the mediapolis in its various (active, passive, benevolent or malevolent, challenging or collusive) manifestations. We cannot but be participants in this world of mediated appearance, and in our participation, we commit something of ourselves to the mediated world which is offered to us on an hourly basis. (p. 107)

Besides, mediation is always a political process. The power to work with or against the dominant meanings and beliefs in media is unevenly distributed across various social groups. As Silverstone (2005) stated:

> mediated communication must be understood as both producer and product of hierarchy, and as such fundamentally implicated in the exercise of, and resistance to, power in modern societies. This makes all mediated communication, in one sense or another, political: seeking to persuade, seeking to define one reality as opposed to another, including and excluding while at the same time informing or entertaining. (p. 190)

Silverstone (2007) specifies three conditions that are crucial toward an ideal, normative conception of mediapolis. First, media are mediators between the temporal and spatial distant world and our daily lives, and they provide resources for the judgment of inclusion and exclusion of the other. Thus, what resources are provided for our understanding of the world is crucial in the mediapolis. How to recognize and sustain plurality and a contrapuntal culture of the mediated public space is of central concern. In the musical discourse of contrapuntal, "the individual tones of voices only gain meaning from their presence alongside each other" and the relationship between these voices is "open, dynamic and fluid such that the dominant is never singular or secure" (p. 86). Borrowing from this music concept, a contrapuntal culture in the social world

> signals the ever and necessary presence of the other, the stranger, in time and space, as a point of reference and as an irredeemable contribution to the significance of the present, of the here, the now and the self. It also signals both the presence of, and the necessity for, a multiplicity of voices, the mediapolis's own polyphony, its plurality. The relationship between themes within a contrapuntal text is always a political one. (p. 86)

Based on his study of minority media in Europe, Silverstone (2007) found that minority media are relatively invisible in the mainstream media culture, reflecting the relative invisibility of these minority groups in these societies. However, this invisibility does not deny their presence in the society: "minorities and their media exist as a continuous subtext, occasionally appearing in, and being acknowledged by, occasionally challenging, occasionally defining and transcending, the dominance of the mainstream" (p. 95). Minority media thus become an important contrapuntal context to understand mainstream media. Ultimately, our relationships with other, as revealed in both real and mediated public space, define our status as human beings.

Thus, in the ideal world of mediapolis, a contrapuntal culture that invites diverse voices to be presented is fundamental.

Despite the presence of diverse voices in the contrapuntal culture of mediapolis, to what extent all these voices are heard thus increase mutual understanding among diverse groups is another challenge in mediapolis. Silverstone (2007) proposes the concept of "proper distance" as a condition for meaningful communication and understanding. According to Silverstone (2007), proper distance

> refers to the importance of understanding the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding. (p. 47)

The mediations in mass media, however, create polarizations that either the unfamiliar is pushed beyond our reach or beyond humanity (e.g., dehumanized news about wars in Iraq) or is drawn so close to us to make us believe that the other are indistinguishable from ourselves. Neither end of the polarizations in these mediations would help us connect to the other meaningfully.

Chouliaraki and Orgad (2011) situate the conception of proper distance within the ethics of mediation and its two competing discourses on otherness: the discourse of 'common humanity" and the discourse of "strangeness". The discourse of common humanity emphasizes cultural proximity, endorses a vision of cosmopolitanism that sees media bring the world closer together, and encourages altruism practices that ask the West to empathize with distant other. However, critics contend that the cultural proximity that is emphasized in the discourse of common humanity is grounded in the Western conception and such mediation approach fails to "recognize the radical plurality of world histories and cultures, and ultimately exclude those who do not fit the cultural norms of the West" (p. 343). In contrast, the discourse of "strangeness" views mediation that emphasizes "the irreducible otherness of the other as the only condition of

the possibility for a moral encounter with cultural difference" (p. 342). The discourse of strangeness challenges the self-righteousness in the discourse of common humanity. However, this "orientation may not necessarily lead to a sensitizing familiarity with the other but rather to a narcissistic engagement with "our" own pleasures and desires in the face of disconcerting difference" (p. 343).

Thus, the relationship and mutual understanding of us and the other in the mediated space is a dynamic journey. As Chouliaraki and Orgad (2011) maintain that "against the logic of sameness, it must reflexively assert the irreducibly distinct quality of the other while, against the logic of difference, it must sustain an empathetic sense of the other as a figure endowed with her own humanity." Similar to this conceptualization, but in the context of democratic and multicultural education, Parker (2003) points out the interdependent relationship between diversity and unity, and between "pluribus" (the many) and "unum" (the one). He argues that, on the one hand, diversity is essential to one defining character of democracy: liberty. On the other hand, the shared political identity and the commonwealth, namely the unity, is the very foundation on which our diverse cultural and ethnic identifications are secured and protected. In Silverstone's word, proper distance aims to "preserve the other through difference as well as through shared identity" (Silverstone, 2002, p. 770). Proper distance seeks dialectical coexistence of these two dimensions in the mediation practices.

Mutual understanding and complete communication among diverse social groups also require media justice and hospitality in mediapolis. Media justice concerns the issue of access and participation. Silverstone (2007) further explains that "access to and participation in a global system of mediated communication is a substantive good and a precondition for full membership of society, and that the distribution of such right must be fair and just" (p. 147). While media

justice emphasizes on entitled right such as freedom of speech, it does not necessarily address conditions that facilitate communication, which is a reciprocal, two-way process that includes not only expression but also being heard. O'Neill's (1990) distinction of rights-based vs. obligation-based approaches to communication further illustrates these points. Rights-based approach emphasizes on the entitlement of self-expression; in contrast, obligation-based approach focuses on how we should act to ensure full communication and mutual understanding. As O'Neil (1990) stated "Those who aim to communicate … must do more than refrain from violating others' rights. They must also communicate in ways that do not destroy or erode linguistic, social, and technical conditions of communication … "(O'Neill, 1990, p. 167, cited in Silverstone, 2007, p. 156). Furthermore, for communicators who want to go beyond the often one-way mediated mass communication, and to maintain a reciprocal mode of communication for a better democratic life, O'Neill (1990) suggests that:

> They must treat their own communication, as well as the communications of others whom they report as *particular voices among many,* as voices that are subject to challenge and error and not as the oracles of truth or authorities beyond question. Second, they must *respect the voices of their audiences.* They must be committed to communicating only in ways that neither *mislead* by assuming bogus authority nor *silence* others by undermining their standing and capacities to respond. Neither obligation is easily met. (O'Neill, 1990, p. 171, cited in Silverstone, 2007, p. 157)

Drawing on O'Neill's (1990) ideas of obligation-based communication approach, Silverstone (2007) contends that not only media justice, but also an obligation of hospitality that emphasizes on listening of diverse voices is essential for a healthy mediapolis.

In short, mediapolis is an empirical reality of the mediated public space and a normative ideal that envisions a contrapuntal culture of diverse voices and emphasizes on not only freedom of expression but also listening and mutual understanding. In addition to rational discourses, mediapolis also encourages communication rich in emotion and feelings. Audience members in

mediapolis are no longer passive recipients but actively participate in the mediated public space, and minority voices constantly redefine the social meanings of dominant mainstream cultures. These features of mediapolis correspond to the civic education ideal of democratic dialogues, diversity, affective citizenship, and civic participation, which I will address in detail in the later section. These areas of focus will guide my literature review and data analysis in exploring how NMCE will prepare citizens for mediapolis.

Mediated Civic Life

In the following sections, I will review literature on how new media mediates our civic life. I will organize this review around different aspects of life for democratic citizens. I will use the term competent citizens to refer to citizens who are informed and thoughtful about public affairs, have civic virtues (e.g., tolerance and respect), and are engaged in both community and political activities (CIRCLE, 2003). Accordingly, the relevant literature will be organized in three sections: accessing information online, encountering diversity in the virtual world, and civic engagement online.

Accessing Information Online

In new media environments, perspectives on various social issues are easily accessible. As a result, new media environments change the way young people access, understand and disseminate news, a major source of civic information. Today, the Internet has outpaced newspaper and other media, with the exception of television, as the primary source of national and international news. 59% of young people under the age of 30 receive their news from the Internet, the same percentage use television as a source of news (Kohut, Keeter, Doherty & Dimock, 2008). As these numbers show, the Internet has become the second largest source of

news for young people. In addition, young people increasingly have less loyalty to specific news platforms and programs. Instead, young people get their news and civic information from disaggregated online outlets such as social networking sites, emails, and cell phone text messages (Moeller, 2010). A recent survey of nearly 3,000 youth respondents (aged between 15 to 25 years old) in the U.S. reveals that 45% of youth reported getting news from social networking sites such as Twitter or Facebook at least once in the past week. This percentage is close to the 49% of youth who say they have received news from a magazine or newspaper in the past week (Kahne & Cohen, 2012). By choosing to read news sources, sharing sources on social platforms and dialoging about news sources on social platforms, young people have become "*audiences and users as participants*" (Silverstone, 2007). That is, young people are active participants in their news consumption. Young people are participants in the mediation process by deciding what news stories deserve more attention through social networking platforms.

In addition to accessing the news, civic information is transmitted through various media formats in digital era. For example, Bennett and Wells (2009) examine the case of 2008 *Yes We Can* music video. The video was based on one of Barack Obama's campaign speech and had approximately 26 million views. The sheer number of viewers demonstrates how this music video created a different way for the public and young people to engage in Obama's speech. The video did this by providing more content of the speech than a traditional news story format would allow, and in so doing, the video allows the public to discuss the speech content outside the political narrative that usually frames news story. This kind of non-politically framed format is more likely to attract young citizens to pay attention to the speech, and has a longer life cycle than a news story that contains similar content. Popular music, such as hip-hop, is another example of media format that carries civic learning content. Hip-hop "serves as a source of pride

and authenticity in communities that are struggling for agency in American society" (Forman, 2002, cited in Boyd, 2010) and could be great materials for culturally relevant pedagogy (Hill, 2009). Furthermore, hip-hop texts have educational potential for "nurturing critical consciousness and activism (Forman, 2002; Stovall, 2006, cited in Hill, 2009). Kohut et al.'s (2008) survey reveals that young people learned about the 2004 presidential campaign from comedy programs such as *The Daily Show*. More investigations are needed to understand these alternative news sources, which I will term multimodal civic media contents, and how they enhance youth civic engagement. However, it is clear that civic information not only comes from traditional media formats, such as newspaper and television news, but can be carried in various media formats, such as music videos, hip-hop music and political comedy shows. These alternative media formats for acquiring civic information reveal that rational discourse and various forms of narratives play a significant role in conversations about social issues.

Despite the widely accessible and heavily used media formats, disaggregated online information outlets with civic information in various media formats present a challenge to young people seeking to consume various types of information about social issues. Flanagin and Metzger (2007) have identified that challenge of navigating a large landscape of resources and they point out pressing need to increase information evaluation and credibility assessment in the digital media era. New media technologies afford an unprecedented quantity of and access to information, but they also lack gatekeepers. In addition, news sources and the context of the information have become increasingly ambiguous. Furthermore, there is a convergence of different content types and media channels. As a result of the vast number of un-regulated news resources, it is critical youth are prepared with critical media reading and credibility assessment competency.

Although some researchers believe young people who grow up with digital media are naturally skilled in using new tools to access and generate information because they have been saturated in the environment, scholars point out that since young people have comparatively limited life experience and knowledge they are not able to evaluate online information effectively (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; Gasser, Cortesi, Malik & Lee, 2012). As an example, Harris (2008) shares that his students had difficulty understanding a World Trade Organization spoof site due to their limited understanding of the topic background. In addition, some white supremacy and holocaust denial web sites are designed in a sophisticated manner to make them looks credible, presenting new challenges to information evaluation. Provoking cognitive dissonance by presenting a variety of problematic websites and having students read these sites carefully is one effective teaching approach to address these challenges (Harris, 2008). While the increased absence of gatekeepers (e.g., teachers, parents and editors) gives young people freedom to think and discuss online, it also puts more responsibilities on youth to evaluate information independently online (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; Sundar, 2008). Given this, it is important to equip young people with skills to evaluate the information they encounter online every day.

Encountering Diversity in the Virtual World

An important quality of a democratic community is exposing individuals to and engaging individuals in the diverse range of perspectives of various groups (Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). Whether the virtual environment of the Internet facilitates a greater exposure to diversity or confines an individual's views of the world to those who are like-minded online participants has been an important debate topic among scholars since the advent of the Internet. Sunstein (2007) points out that the Internet provides greater individualization and customization of one's access

to and selection of information, resulting in the "Daily Me Effect" and less attention to public issues. He adds that when people are engaged in discussions with other like-minded people in an anonymous condition, they are more likely to adopt extreme versions of their shared beliefs. Galston (2000) maintains that online communities are not conductive to exchanging diverse voices because participants have no obligations and can exit the conversations at any point, which is a big contrast to the case at local communities.

Scholars dispute the view that the Internet causes people to be more self-interested. Rheingold (2001) argues that members of interest-driven online communities may have more diverse social and economic backgrounds than geographic-based communities since members in face-to-face communities often share similar social perspectives. Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) point out that news sites people visited online provide more diverse perspectives than their offline social networks that are associated with volunteer groups, work, or geographical communities. These scholars seek to argue that the ideological segregation of news consumption online is lower than offline in one's face-to-face local community. The scholars also find that visitors of more conservative sites (e.g., rushlimbaugh.com) or liberal sites (e.g., moveon.org) are more likely than typical online news readers to visit news sites that present perspectives of the opposite ideological spectrum. Horrigan, Garrett, and Resnick's (2004) study reveal that wired Americans were more aware of key issues and various political arguments, including those challenge their views, in the 2004 presidential campaign than those who did not use the Internet. Given this summary of research, it is only fair to conclude that whether the Internet results in the "Daily Me Effect" or widens people's exposure to diversity remains inconclusive empirically.

Kahne et al.'s (2011) recent quantitative study on youth Internet usage and diversity exposure suggests a new direction that is worthy of more attention. Their study indicates that

politically and non-politically driven online activities both contribute to young people's greater exposure to diverse perspectives. Furthermore, many young people (57%) are exposed to perspectives that both align to or different from their own when online, based on the analysis of self-reported survey items about exposure to shared interests and divergent perspectives on social issues. Only 5% reported only being exposed to views similar to theirs, remaining sheltered from any diverse perspective. Despite the increase in exposure to diverse points of view, a more pressing issue is the fact that a sizable group of young people (34%) are not engaged in any discussions online driven by social issues. This fact reveals that new media environments might make it easier for youth to tune out social issues. Thus, the gap between those who are engaged in social issues and those who are not, and the role new media environment plays in this gap, is worth further attention and that has not been fully addressed in current research.

Civic Engagement Online

Social scientists have become concerned about whether Internet and online communication will diminish offline community participation and interactions (Kraut et al., 1998; Nie, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Recent research, however, shows that this might not be the case. A recent large scale quantitative study reveals that frequent Internet users and bloggers are more likely to become members of local volunteer groups and visit public spaces, such as parks, than non-Internet users (Hampton, Goulet, Her & Rainie, 2009). In addition, youth participation in online political and/or non-political communities is positively correlated with an interest in future offline civic activities (Kahne et al., 2011). Middaugh (2012) further points out that many young people are highly mobile in their youth. Mobility is a significant obstacle for youth civic engagement, but online communities help them to remain connected with their fellow community activists and members and facilitate youth civic engagement. Raynes-Goldie and

Walker (2008), in their research on the social networking site *Taking It Global (TIG)*, find in an online survey of 501 TIG members that most youth who are interested in civic engagement go to online social networking sites to seek information about their interests, connect with peers who share an interest in similar causes, and find ways to organize social action. In the survey, 44% of respondents agreed that information, networks and mobilizing tools on the TIG site helped them make changes in their lives or in their local communities.

New media have created new possibilities and supported new approaches to civic participation. Everyday digital media and technologies, such as instant messaging, mobile phones, email, are now capable of and used to facilitate participation, collaboration and coordination in youth civic projects (Goldman et al., 2007). New technology has also enhanced efficiency in some civic action practices. For instance, online petitions are much less expensive than offline petition drives because activists and organizations do not need to print out petition materials and hire volunteers to collect signatures. The lower organizing costs of online petitions and other social movement tactics might contribute to the formation of a "movement society" (Earl & Schussman, 2008).

Zimmerman (2012), in a case study on youth activism and the DREAM Act, found that new media played a crucial role in mobilizing collective action given the involvement of legal vulnerable undocumented youth. Blogs, social media and online videos allowed undocumented youth to express their perspectives, foster shared identities, and facilitate the building of networks and communities. These networks and communities led to the increase of participants' political efficacy. In addition, friendship-based and interest-driven online social networks can become sources of social and political capital, capital that further supports the movement.

Kligler-Vilenchik and Shresthova's (2012) study on Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) is also an interesting case where a fan community is mediated through print and new media to support social action. HPA, inspired by the student activist organization 'Dumbledore's Army" in the book *Harry Potter*, uses parallel content from the book as a catalyst for fan engagement in civic actions. HPA is currently active and runs campaigns on issues of equality and human rights and leads philanthropic efforts. Aside from facilitating the process by which members learn about diverse social issues, organize and mobilize their peers around social causes, HPA also generates new civic practices by helping its members produce and circulate new media content to sustain social action efforts. For instance, in the "Body Bind Horcrux" campaign, HPA members created blogs and vlogs as part of an efforts to "denouncing harmful body images and learning to see the beauty in ourselves and others" (HPA, 2011a, as cited in Kligler-Vilenchik & Shresthova, 2012). While most HPA members join the community because of a common interest in print media (the book *Harry Potter*), new media also plays a significant role in shaping and transforming *Harry Potter* fans into an active community with abundant civic learning opportunities.

In short, all these cases illustrate that new media has mediated and facilitated offline social participation through online social networks and virtual communities. Most of these cases mobilize youth interests and affinities for civic causes and actions. How and to what extent these practices can be translated to the context of adult-led civic education deserves further exploration.

Civic Education in the New Media Era

New media has created new approaches and possibilities for civic life and civic engagement. How civic educators tap these new opportunities to engage learners in civic learning and prepare them to be competent citizens in mediapolis deserve further exploration. In

the following sections, I first review literature on civic education approaches that prepare competent citizens who are informed about social issues, participate in public affairs and embrace diversity (CIRCLE, 2003). I will then explore the topic of youth civic identity and civic education approaches that foster active civic identity development. Lastly, I will review research on new media civic programs, and present challenges and missing pieces in the literature about new media civic education.

Civic Education

Scholars have advocated for several approaches to preparing democratic citizens in social studies and civic education curriculums. Public issue discussion is an effective approach to develop informed and thoughtful citizens (Engle, 1960; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Hess, 2002; Parker, 2006). Although there are variations on issue-centered discussion pedagogy in social studies classrooms, generally the pedagogy is based on asking students to define social issues and problems, research the background of the selected issue, consider various perspectives on the issues, and produce a defensible decisions on the chosen public issues (Evans & Saxe,1996). Issue-centered discussion pedagogy has several strengths. First, it embodies the democratic discourse in the classrooms and provides teachers with opportunities to model democratic deliberation (Hahn, 1998). In "That Men May Understand," social studies scholar Rugg (1941) wrote:

> To guarantee maximum understanding, the very foundation of education must be the study of the actual problems and controversial issues of our people……To keep issues out of the school, therefore, is to keep thought out of it; it is to keep life out of it. (p. 171, cited in Fine, 1995)

As Rugg's quote highlights, to prepare youth to become democratic citizens, it is critical that teachers bring discussions about social issues into their classrooms. In addition, Avery (2002)

argues that without political tolerance to minority voices, we risk the tyranny of the majority. Political tolerance is "the willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to those with whom you disagree" (p. 113). To help youth learn about political tolerance, it is essential that they learn about conflicts and controversial issues in the classrooms. Furthermore, Engle (1960) contends that decision-making in social issue discussions pedagogy requires a synthesis of facts, principles and values. In this pedagogy, students have to consume more information and knowledge than traditional ground-covering style of learning in order to reach reasoned and defensible decisions on social and political issues. Lastly, issue-centered discussion also enhances students' critical thinking skills and the likelihood of future civic and political participation (see Hahn,1996; Hess, 2004)

Due to the challenges in a pluralistic society, Parker (1996) advocates an advanced citizenship that requires pluralistic minds and embraces diversity. In a similar vein, Banks (2001) believes there is a need for a new conception of multicultural citizenship education. Multicultural citizenship education, argues Banks (2008), will help students to understand how knowledge is constructed to be knowledge producers who act for a more just nation and world. In addition, students in a multicultural citizenship education develop cultural, national, and global affinities that can be balanced and sustaining. Multicultural citizenship education focuses on intellectual skills and aims to provide democratic experiences for students in schools and classrooms (Banks, 2008). Classroom-based multicultural democratic education has proved effective in teaching students with thorough disciplinary content of both official academic knowledge and transformative content. In this way, a multicultural democratic education provides an opportunity for students to participate in the exchange of diverse perspectives and to learn to respect differences (Marri, 2005). The ultimate goal of a multicultural citizenship education, argues

Banks (2001), is transformative social action. The pedagogical approaches of civic education that can facilitate social action and enhance participatory citizenship deserve closer review in the literature.

Community service learning is another popular practice to prepare future participatory citizens. This approach is widely supported by the government, volunteer organizations and democratic theorists as a way to enhance youth participation in the public sphere (Yates & Youniss, 1996). Research indicates that well-implemented service learning programs, which are defined as programs that include sufficient service hours, academic learning and reflection sessions, have a positive impact on students' civic attitudes, including their acceptance of cultural diversity and service leadership (Melchior, 1998) The rapid rise of service learning in K-16 education and the top-down federal funding in service learning movements lead to the "dilution" of service learning that views it as an effective pedagogical practice without addressing deeper complicated social issues (Butin, 2007). Justice-oriented service learning programs address these limitations by integrating elements of social justice education (e.g., contextualizing seemingly individual oppression in the broader social structure) in the service learning program and have been practiced in some K-16 settings (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Wade, 2007). Butin (2007) advocates the justice-oriented service learning approach for its avowal of the complex social realities in service learning experiences and its promotion of a critical stance towards the understanding of social issues.

In addition to the deliberative, pluralistic and participatory dimensions of citizenship, Zymbalys (2014) contends that citizenship and identity have an affective basis. An affective citizen is "a person who not only thinks and acts rationally, but also feels and cares affectively and sensitively" (Hung, 2010, p. 493, as cited in Zembylas, 2014). In the context of citizenship

education, students can be encouraged to investigate their emotional discourses and practices (e.g., sentiments towards minorities or other social groups), and examine how their "different emotional histories influence their decision-making, their action and their understandings of membership, identity and community" (p. 10).

In sum, democratic citizenship education aims to prepare deliberative citizens who think about social issues thoroughly and examine alternatives to address shared social problems. Along with creating deliberative citizens, democratic citizenship education develops pluralistic citizens, who embrace diversity and negotiate disagreements between each other, participatory citizens, who take actions to address social problems, and affective citizens, who reflect on their emotional discourses regarding social memberships and cultural communities. Issue-centered discussion, multicultural democratic education, community service and justice-oriented service learning, and critical emotional literacy are effective pedagogical approaches that prepare future democratic citizens; elements from these approaches will be useful for the development and examination of new media civic education.

These civic education approaches provide students with civic learning experiences and prepare them to become civically engaged citizens in the future. However, it is the formation of civic identity behind these youth civic learning experiences that sustains one's civic engagement in his/her adulthood (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Civic identity formation is "a process of constructing models of the public and the self in relationship to one another, a sense of oneself as capable of participation, and a feeling of commitment or obligation to participate in public work. (Middaugh, 2012, p. 10-11). In other words, one's sense of belonging to various communities and civic efficacy are important parts of his/her civic identity. In addition, civic identity also includes critical consciousness that helps youth to evaluate whether the social

contract and norms in the communities are just or moral (Middaugh, 2012). Active civic identity promotes universal reciprocity and interpersonal trust that are essential for people to work collectively on common goals; these collaborative works might not benefit the public immediately but are fundamental for a better democratic society (Atkins & Hart, 2003). Thus, it is important to help youth develop active civic identity.

One dimension to understand youth civic identity is to explore young people's ideas about citizenship. Drawing on literature, Kahne and Westheimer (2004) present three popular conceptions of good citizen: personal responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizen. Personal responsible citizens refer to individuals who act responsibly and lawfully in their communities; participatory citizens refer to people who actively participate in their communities and organizes local efforts to improve communities; justice-oriented citizens are individuals who critically examine social, political and economic structures to understand root causes of social problems and take actions to address these root causes. Fundamentally, these three conceptions present different assumptions about what individuals can and should do in the civic society to solve social problems and improve public life. Kahne and Westheimer (2004) suggest that participatory and justice-oriented citizens are important for a more democratic society, while personal responsible citizens, especially in the context of an authoritarian regime, might not be sufficient for a most just society. Kahne and Westheimer's (2004) categorization of good citizenship provides a useful framework for understanding youth civic identity development.

To foster youth civic identity, it is important to provide them with community participation experiences (Atkins & Hart, 2003). In civic education, service learning or civic action programs encourage youth to participate in community affairs. However, how these programs are structured plays a significant role in shaping youth's civic identity in these learning

experiences. Kahne and Westheimer's (2004, 2006) research on youth social action programs illustrates the dynamic process of youth civic identity development (e.g., civic efficacy) in such programs, and the difficult balance between providing encouraging learning experiences and presenting social problems and challenges in authentic social contexts. Three civic programs were investigated in their studies, and different program structures and designs resulted in differences in students' civic efficacy and political attitudes, which were all essential indicators of students' civic identity. In Youth in Public Service, a service learning program aiming to prepare participatory citizens, students had the opportunities to cooperate with government agencies on projects such as curbside recycling and housing plan. This practice fostered students' civic efficacy (i.e., students felt that they can make a difference in their community) and leadership efficacy. However, this program did not increase students' interest in politics and volunteer work after the program.

In Youth Action, a service learning program aiming to develop justice-oriented citizens, students chose issues of their interests and took actions to address social problems such as inadequate health care for local women members, or to challenge a State Senate bill that would try adolescents as adults for some crimes. These projects all challenged the status quo, and educators in this program did not contact all related government agencies in advance to arrange these educational experiences. Students were frustrated with the realities, and students' commitment to community involvement and leadership efficacy declined as evident in the survey results. Student's interest in future political participation (voting) declined; however, student's interest in talking political issues increased dramatically. In the third program, Bayside Student for Justice, a restructured program of Youth Action in the same school, students presented social injustice issues through pamphlet or videos instead of contacting government agencies directly

for policy change. Findings showed much better results and increase in civic efficacy, and general interests in politics (include voting).

In sum, these programs presented three types of civic education structures and designs: one encouraged civic participation without addressing any social justice-related issues (Youth in Public Service); the other addressed social justice issues and youth took social actions to push social change (Youth Action); and the last addressed social justice issues and focused on raising awareness (Bayside Student for Justice). Findings of different programming structures and their influences on students' civic identity and attitudes present the challenge of balancing between cultivating positive efficacy and attitudes in a relatively protected educational arrangements and encouraging students to work for change in the real world contexts.

In addition to community participation, gaining civic knowledge is essential for civic identity development (Atkins & Hart, 2003). Government and civic courses taught in secondary schools are popular civic knowledge sources for most youth. However, civic knowledge alone does not necessary foster active civic identity. Young people's social backgrounds and daily civic experiences are intertwined with civic knowledge learning and contribute to their civic identity formation. Rubin's (2007) research on the relationships between youth's daily civic life experiences and civic identity formation provides a useful framework to understand the dynamic youth civic identity formation process. Drawing on the analysis of classroom observation field notes and interviews with youth from four socioeconomic diverse high schools, Rubin (2007) identifies two distinct axes of youth civic identity: "the range from congruity to disjuncture in the relationship between students' personal experiences and what they had learned were the ideals of the United States, and the range from active to passive in students' attitudes about civic participation." (p. 458). These two axes form a typology of youth civic identities of being aware,

empowered, complacent, or discouraged (Table 1). Students who are categorized as "aware" in Rubin's civic identity typology are those who did not experience disjuncture between civic knowledge, ideals and realities, but are aware of social inequalities and are willing to facilitate social change; students who hold "empowered" civic identity, in contrast, want to contribute to social change because they have experienced injustice; students who hold complacent civic identity are those who do not experience injustice nor recognize its impact on others; students who hold discouraged civic identity experience disjuncture between civic knowledge and realities and are cynical about social change.

Table 1 Typology of Civic Identity (Adapted from Rubin, 2007)

		Students' experiences in relation to the learned civic ideals	
		Congruence	Disjuncture
Students' attitudes toward civic participation	Active	Quadrant I: Aware	Quadrant II: Empowered
	Passive	Quadrant III: Complacent	Quadrant IV: Discouraged

Civic identity development is an interactive process in which civic educational efforts, young people's social experiences and authentic real world contexts all play roles in shaping it. Given such multi-dimensional dynamic development process, Nasir and Kirshner (2003) suggest a cultural practice perspective to understand civic identity development. Cultural practices refer to "reoccurring, structured activities that make up daily life" (p. 138) and they "allow for a close look at both cultural and psychological processes, as they incorporate the individual and social partners and allow for the analysis of joint activity as well as the individual's role in that activity" (p. 140). In addition, culture practices also "provide a context within which relationships are developed and maintained and in which one can view both socialization and active sense-making on the part of the child." (p. 140). Furthermore, Nasir and Kirshner (2003)

note that cultural practices are embedded in various institutional contexts "the histories, guiding philosophies, and notions of membership in these institutions influence the nature and structure of the cultural practices within them." (p. 140); meanwhile, social interactions within these cultural practices might foster or discourage participants to take up or reject certain aspects of civic identities. In social interactions, participants actively create or "author" themselves with selected roles and identities by drawing on resources in the cultural practices; they also have opportunity to frame and interpret the activities and their roles in them. For instance, in a case study of a youth community mapping program, Nasir and Kirshner (2003) found that students' responses on a community forum demonstrated expert knowledge on the experiences of young people in the city. Students became active participants of civic affairs and reframed the conversation about youth recreational facilities in the city to the focus of uneven accessibility. This authoring choice fosters their active civic identity development.

In Kirshner's study (2009), the cultural practice of youth organizing and activism provided a space where two competing discourses about youth civic identity and the relationship between the individual and civic society occurred. The first perspective is atomism, "a view of society in which persons were isolated actors motivated primarily by their own interests" with skepticism on collaborative work for a common good and resembles the realism in civic life that people only care about themselves. The second view is collective agency, which "emphasize the virtues of group solidarity and action" and that collective action as a solution for the common good. Unlike Rubin's findings that identified students from divergent social backgrounds subscribing to different civic identities, Kirshner (2009) found that same students in this youth organizing programs expressed competing perspectives in different circumstances and contexts. In internal interactions such as youth organizing meetings and interviews, youth voiced atomistic

perspectives and expressed doubts about "the campaign's potential for success"; in both internal interactions and external interactions (e.g., membership meetings and public actions), students voiced collective agency views, and believed that recruiting more people in their campaign would facilitate social change. These co-existing but competing perspectives were not necessarily mutually exclusive to these students. Instead, both views together could serve as sources for students to recognize the status quo and realism, and understand ways things could be, the idealism, and in the long term helped participants differentiate themselves from people who held only atomistic world views. Although data did not suggest that students' identity transformed completely after participating in this program, it was clear that youth were making meanings and exploring various possibilities of different civic identities. Overtime the number of statements with atomism views decreased, and youth organizing was a great approach to support youth to try a new civic identity of collective agency.

Providing civic learning opportunities that encourage youth to explore, make sense of, and try active civic identities are essential for preparing youth as justice-oriented participatory citizens. Young people's civic identity development is best supported when youth are treated as capable participants, not just future citizens, in local communities and provided with authentic learning opportunities (Middaugh, 2012). Research reviewed in this section also provides a few suggestions for civic educators. First, it is important to understand students' daily life experiences and consider how those experiences contribute to youth civic identity development (Rubin, 2007; Kirshner, 2009). Thus, an open and welcoming class climate that encourages students to share their experiences, and reflective learning opportunities that examine how those experiences shape their civic beliefs are important. Second, educators should carefully scaffold the educational experiences so that students gain an understanding of the reality, keep positive

civic identity, yet not be overwhelmed by discouraging responses from officials and people in the real world (Kahne & Westheimer, 2004). Issue-centered discussions and youth participatory research projects about social justice issues will help students understand real world issues and prepare them as active citizens (Rubin, 2007). In addition, helping youth to learn more about social activists and role models in the fields of their social issue interests would help them build a sense of shared commitments (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006), and is especially helpful when students are exploring social justice issues that are not easy to change in a short time.

Youth civic identity is grounded on young people's social life experiences and is continuingly shaped by civic learning activities in schools and other programs; it is not static but dynamically developed and constructed amid particular social structures and social practices (Rubin, 2007; Kirshner, 2009). Gordon and Baldwin-Philippi (2014) contend that in civic education research little attention has been placed on "the perceptions, attitudes or dispositions that arise from and are in dialogue with participation" (p. 761). Thus, more research on the dynamic process between civic identity formation and civic learning and participation is needed. New media civic education provides students with new opportunities to examine their civic identities through new media expression (Middaugh, 2012). In the following section, I will review relevant literature on new media civic education.

New Media Civic Education

Media education has been historically dominated by the teaching and learning of critical analysis of media texts. In the past decade, media production starts to gain more attention as an important pedagogical approach in media education. Media production is similar to composing texts, only in different and new formats that are enabled by new media technologies. In addition, in media production youth have to communicate their work with a group of audience in mind.

(Peppler & Kafai, 2007). Buckingham (2007) contends that in media production, youth not only learn about technology skills and gain new opportunities for self-expression, but also learn about how media ecology works in order to become more informed citizens.

Jenkins et al. (2006) point out that new media environment facilitates a participatory culture, which they define as "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices" (p. 3). Forms of participatory culture include affiliations (memberships of online communities), expressions (creative productions), collaborative problem solving (e.g., wikis) and circulations (e.g., podcasting and blogging). Jenkins et al. (2006) thus propose a set of new media literacy skills that not only emphasize reading and understanding information in various media formats (e.g., transmedia navigation, collective intelligence, simulation, etc.) but also expressing one's ideas through new media (e.g., performance, visualization & appropriation). Thus, new media literacies not only enable critical consumption of media, but more importantly, production of knowledge in various media forms, and they prepare youth to become active and effective members in the participatory culture.

The advancement of technology and new media makes new media productions feasible for young people with limited media production experiences. New media productions that focus on social issues – an approach of new media civic education – provide great opportunities for young people to frame narratives about themselves and their communities, express their perspectives, and amplify their views on these issues and reach a wider audience. Such media production projects could help young people make their voices heard in the public space that has been traditionally dominated mostly by adults (Middaugh, 2012). A study conducted by

Dunsmore and Lagos (2008) of a high school video production project focused on political issues found that minority youth who participated in the project demonstrated good understanding of social issues that were closely associated with their daily life experiences such as racial profiling and stereotyping. Due to their experience with the video production project, their knowledge of social issues was creatively expressed in media formats. For example one video production project used the format of a talk show. Dunsmore and Lagos (2008) argue that experiential learning projects of video production have great potential to foster youth civic engagement and provide space for young people to express their views on social issues more comprehensively. In a similar vein, Goldman, Booker and McDermott (2007) investigated the digital video production program of a public school youth group in a low-income urban community. The researchers found that media production projects provided youth with opportunities to learn media skills and explore, research, and reflect on social issues that impacted their daily lives. These media production programs equip young people with skills to express their perspectives on social issues through various media formats.

Youth issue-centered video production projects are not confined to digitalized videos, but also machinima, films that are produced in 3D virtual environments. In my dissertation pilot study (Lan, 2009), I investigated an after-school civic education program designed to help urban high school students communicate their views on global issues to broader audience using machinima. The students had many opportunities to practice civic leadership skills and utilize new media skills for civic expression and engagement in the program. Throughout the program, students felt passionate about social change and saw social issue machinima as a powerful means of raising public awareness about important social issues. The students publicly screened their

virtual movies in both physical and virtual spaces to raise awareness about human trafficking, a global issue chosen and researched by the students in the after-school program.

New media technologies offer new opportunities for young people to examine their identities, an important process preparing them to appreciate and embrace the diversity of life in a democracy. Among various types of new media, virtual world, a simulated online environment that allows users to create identities through designing avatars and to interact with other players, has great potential to help young people explore identity and diversity issues. In Lee's study (2006, 2007), students were engaged in gender-bending activities that asked them to assume an opposite gender role in Second Life, a virtual space. Students experienced differentiated treatments and responses in Second Life based on opposite avatar gender they chose. Students gained an expanded understanding of diversity about race and ethnicity and about gender. Bers' (2001) study of a pilot project in Zora, a virtual environment where young people can create objects and virtual homes to represent their values and identities, reveals a virtual environment makes it easier for minority students to discuss controversial issues such as racism. Alternative means of communication in a virtual world (e.g., typing instead of talking) and an alter ego (embodied through the avatars) provided an environment where minority students felt more comfortable talking about racism.

Soep' research (2006, 2010) on Youth Radio provides the most in-depth understanding about the teaching and learning of new media civic education. Youth Radio is a San Francisco-based nonprofit afterschool organization in which youth learn to produce stories for local and national radio stations. With more than a decade experiences in youth media programs, Youth Radio establishes several pedagogical practices that reflect the spirit of a democratic community. At Youth Radio, educators adopt a collegial pedagogy, in which "young people and adults jointly

frame and carry out projects in a relationship of interdependence and mutual accountability" (Soep, 2006, p. 7). In addition, it establishes an internship program for participants to take peer teaching roles in the organization. This design not only provides great instructional resources for new learners but also creates a youth learning community. Aside from helping youth to produce radio stories, Youth Radio also aims to support young people's social and professional life and helps them build a sense of responsibility and agency to address social justice issues.

Aside from virtual world construction, video and radio production, everyday digital media and technologies (e.g., mobile device, instant messenger) can be used in new media civic programs. In Goldman et al.'s (2007) study, representatives of the Student Advisory Board (SAB) in a large urban school district used various digital media, such as instant messenger, mobile phone, email, to work collectively on bylaws and resolutions, such as those related to budget cuts and school closures. In this process, students learned to change and adapt everyday digital media practices that were more casual and playful for civic practices; this helped them to better and more efficiently coordinate and collaborate on civic projects without having to meet face-to-face.

Findings and Missing Pieces in the Literature

Today new media mediated many aspects of our civic life and presents new civic learning opportunities and challenges. Young people can access the various perspectives on social issues easily online, but disaggregated online information outlets and civic information in various media formats requires them to consume civic information carefully and critically. In addition, customizable online information environments makes it easy for young people to confine themselves in virtual communities with like-minded people, but online space also goes beyond spatial limits and allow young people to interact with others who hold different views from

theirs. Furthermore, online communities and networks can be effectively mobilized for offline social actions and movements.

In contrast to the studies on booming new civic opportunities in the society, there is relatively little research with respect to the potential of these new civic practices for civic education. In general these studies do not pay enough attention to how students learned about social issues and produced new media works in the converging new media environments where more traditional media such as television, videos and radio are converging with interactive and social media. In addition, new media provides a faster and wider bandwidth of communication. New media could help youth to connect and communicate with diverse people and discuss their civic media productions with distant audiences. These mediated communications would, in turn, reshape youth understanding of their own work and identity as citizens, though the process of mediation is complex and works in both supporting and hindering civic identity development. The aspects I have just listed are not comprehensively investigated and deserve further exploration. Lastly, the landscape of new media learning opportunities has been expanding and changing rapidly. More research is needed to capture diverse practices of new media civic education in an effort to comprehensively understand the strengths and limitations of new media civic education.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I introduce the theoretical framework of mediapolis, the mediated public space where people conduct civic and political activities, as the epistemological stance of this study. I reviewed the literature on different aspects of mediated civic life. With the advances of new media technologies, youth can access civic information online through various platforms across genres, interact with people with diverse perspectives or confine themselves to a "daily

me" virtual environment, and participate in social actions that are mediated through social media. Following the literature review on mediated civic life, I presented current studies about new media civic education, which included social issue media productions programs and projects that help youth explore identity and diversity in virtual environments. However, not enough attention has been paid to how students learn about social issues in dynamic converging new media environments and how new media can be used to facilitate democratic dialogues and mutual understanding, especially through youth produced new media. More research on new media civic education would provide a more comprehensive understanding about the strengths and limitations of this emerging civic education approach and how it can prepare active future citizens.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The goal of my dissertation is to understand students' learning experiences in new media civic education and how their experiences help them develop civic identities. The primary research question guiding this study is: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? The secondary research question is: How can new media civic education foster youth civic identity? To achieve this goal and address these research questions, this study used a qualitative instrumental case study as the organizing approach, while employing qualitative methods. In the following sections, I will explain in detail the rationale for using qualitative research and case study, as well as the case selection procedure and research contexts, data collection, and data analysis process, and the limitations of this study.

[Figure 3] Overview of Chapter III

Research Method

- Rationale for Qualitative Research
- Research Design
  - Researcher's Role
  - Case Selection Procedure
  - Human Subjects in Research
- Program Contexts and Participants
  - Global Youth Leaders and Digital Leadership Program
  - Urban Youth Radio and Pioneer Youth Radio Story
- Data Collection Procedures
  - Naturalistic Observations
  - In-depth Qualitative Interviews
  - Print and Electronic Documents
- Data Analysis
- Limitations

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research places emphasis on describing and understanding a social phenomenon and on making sense of the phenomenon according to the meanings participants have brought to it. A qualitative research approach situates the researcher in naturalistic settings, and turns the world into various forms of representations (e.g., field notes, interviews, recordings, etc.); thereby making the world visible through a set of interpretive practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative researchers are interpreters in the field, working dynamically to observe and record the happenings in the case, examine their meanings, and "redirect the observations to refine or substantiate those meanings" (p. 8–9). Qualitative researchers also pay attention to "episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, and the wholeness of individuals" (Stake, 1995, p. xii). Thus qualitative studies are naturalistic, emergent and evolving (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Due to these characteristics of qualitative research, it is able to represent a "complex, holistic picture" of the social phenomenon that was investigated (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). This study seeks to understand the emerging civic practices in new media civic programs, and a qualitative research approach is effective in capturing and understanding them. A case study focuses on the particularity and complexity of a bounded system, and seeks to understand the activities and interactions within their context (Stake, 1995). An instrumental case study is unique in that the focus is not on the case itself but on a particular problem and phenomenon. I am particularly interested in the phenomena of civic practices and engagement that are associated with new media civic education, and have selected two such programs as collective cases for this research project.

Everyday life is "a weave of the real and the symbolic, of the directly experienced and the mediated" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 111) in the mediapolis, thus it is important that this study

employ a research method that investigates both the directly experienced and the mediated civic practices in new media civic programs. This study applied key concepts from “connective ethnography” (Leander & McKim, 2003), and explored the instructors’ and students’ civic practices through observations of both online project spaces and offline class activities in these programs. Leander and McKim (2003) contend that the binary of online space and offline world is a false dichotomy because online and offline social spaces are dynamically interrelated in many cases. They propose a connective ethnography that emphasizes flow, which describes "not merely a networked structure, but rather, the performance of individuals of and through that structure" (p. 226). In addition, connective ethnography examines the construction of boundaries and explores textual constructions of social space and self. These strategies help to capture participants' comprehensive experiences of connective online and offline social lives and civic practices. This study thus collected data from both online and offline activities of the new media civic programs, and interpreted these data as an integral whole that represented learners’ program experiences.

Research Design

Researcher’s Role

Since the qualitative researcher is the means for data collection and the interpreter of data collected from the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), the lens carried by the researcher—values, research interests, personal experiences— inevitably shapes knowledge production in qualitative research. It is important for a qualitative researcher to reveal the lens he/she used to conduct qualitative research so the audience can gain a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge produced from the qualitative project.

My conceptions of democratic citizenship are shaped by my experiences as a middle school civics teacher and as a citizen from a young democratic country, Taiwan. While voting is widely perceived as an effective democratic practice since the lifting of martial law in 1987 in Taiwan, social activists have advocated for more democratic deliberations on public issues, and on more civic participation in the decision-making process. However, civic education in Taiwan remains focused on the memorization of knowledge about government and lacks important components of democratic dialogue and civic engagement. As a former civics teacher, I was eager to learn theories and effective practices of democratic citizenship education in a democratic country with a longer history of democratic practice. My study at Teachers College, Columbia University, has shaped my conceptualization of democracy. In particular, I have become a firm believer in Dewey's (1997) conception that "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences," a conception that was part of the program statement in the social studies program at Teachers College. Furthermore, during my academic journey at Teachers College, I also read literature that conceptualizes democratic education with the deliberative, pluralistic and participatory dimensions of democratic life. My conceptualization of civic engagement and civic education are based on this understanding. None of the new media civic programs selected in this study are focused narrowly on political participation, but broadly on a variety of civic learning activities including community participation, social issue discussions, and multicultural education.

As a member at EdLab, a research and development unit for educational technology and media at Teachers College, for more than four years, I was involved in designing and researching innovative practices of learning with/through new media. I explored the various affordances of a wide range of new media technologies, researched their strengths and limitations for different

learning tasks and contexts, and designed professional development materials to facilitate new media technology integration in the classroom. I learned that social contexts play a crucial role in effective technology integration in teaching and learning activities, and became aware of the limitations of technological determinism, which is so tempting for many advocates of technology and new media for better education. In addition, I participated in new media production (e.g., as a co-host of an audio professional development podcast show, and as a demonstrating instructor in an online professional development video on learning games) while working at EdLab. These radio and video productions provided me with first-hand, empowering experiences about using various visual, audio and interactive media to convey ideas and thoughts that go beyond face-to-face communications. Meanwhile, I also encountered the challenges of reaching out to a wider audience through these new media works, and of understanding how the audience makes sense of these media productions since they did not generate much feedback and discussion.

These experiences in civic education and new media and learning shaped my design and conceptualization of this dissertation, which are explained in detail in the following sections.

Case Selection Procedure

There are several criteria for case selection in this research project. First, the program's goals should be related to preparing democratic citizens who would be able to deliberate on public issues, participate in civic activities, and/or respect diversity. Second, new media should play an integral role in students' learning experience. It could be that teachers rely heavily on new media in their teaching activities, or that students are engaged in digital media production projects that address social issues in which they are interested. Digital media here refer broadly to social network or blogging sites, social issue videos or audios, or online/video games (Gee,

2009). Third, the class or program should have an online venue for students to share their works and for visitors to learn and to interact with these program participants.

With these criteria in mind, I consulted experts in educational technology, new media, and social studies,[1] asked for recommendations, and conducted an online search to seek potential programs. I identified three nonprofit organizations that offered what I defined as new media civic education programs, and participated in public screening events organized by these organizations to learn more about their youth new media civic programs and to determine their compatibility with this research project. After talking with staff members from these organizations about research possibilities, one organization declined this request due to limited resources to support regular research visits at the time; two organizations, Global Youth Leaders and Urban Youth Radio,[2] agreed to invite me to work with their youth programs. However, the types of programs available for research were also largely determined by the availability of funding. Stake (1995) indicates that a case study is not "sampling research" (p. 4) since even a collective case study only draws on a few cases and is not likely to defend its representation effectively. While balance and variety are important considerations for case selection, the focus of a case study is the "opportunity to learn" (p. 6) and to explore and know a case in depth. In the end, this study followed one radio production program at Urban Youth Radio and one new media production program (virtual world talk show production) at Global Youth Leaders.

[1] I consulted professors, researchers, and practitioners in the Social Studies Program, the Communication, Computing and Technology in Education Program, the Center for Technology and School Change, and EdLab at Teachers College, Columbia University.

[2] The names of these organizations in this paper are pseudonyms.

Human Subjects in Research

This study complied with research guidelines set out by the Teachers College Institutional Review Board and addressed the human subject population and selection process, informed consent procedure, confidentiality, and research benefits and risks in detail in the Teachers College IRB application (Appendix A). Formal approval from each organization that was involved in this study (Pioneer High School, Urban Youth Radio, and Global Youth Leaders) as obtained. Before the start of this research project, I explained the purpose and procedure of this research to all participants and obtained informed consent forms from them. All participants were informed that they would only encounter minimal risk that is equal to their daily classroom and after-school program activities since all observations and interviews would be conducted within the school or the organizations where students attend the new media civic programs. In addition, I gained written permission for audiotaping from participants in this research project. To protect identities of the subjects, I used pseudonyms in field notes and interview transcriptions, and all data were kept confidential and stored in a locked cabinet or password-protected computers to which only the researcher had access. The participants were informed that the result of this study would be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for Teachers College, Columbia University. The audience for this work includes educators and researchers who are interested in this research topic.

Program Contexts and Participants

Global Youth Leaders and Digital Leadership Programs

Global Youth Leaders (GYL) is a nonprofit organization located in a northeastern metropolitan city, and aims to "ensure that urban youth have the knowledge, skills, experiences and values they need to succeed in school, participate effectively in the democratic process, and

achieve leadership in their communities and on the global stage" by providing a variety of learning experiences, including global issue discussions, service learning and social action projects, and digital media literacy programs. Most GYL program participants come from low-performing schools and/or from communities whose members are historically underrepresented politically. GYL's Digital Leadership Program (DLP), according to its program statement, "integrates international and public policy issues into digital media programs to encourage digital literacy and technical competency, foster global awareness, promote civic participation and develop twenty-first-century skills." This study followed the program of Sustainability Talk in DLP.

Sustainability Talk (ST) was a virtual talk show production program that aimed to "introduce Global Youth Leaders to a broad range of concepts related to the topic of sustainability including energy, urbanization, pollution, biodiversity, global warming, and global health," and to equip them with "online broadcasting, and virtual world construction" skills. At the end of this program, students coproduced a virtual talk show about three topics of sustainability: food justice, global warming, and e-waste in Second Life. These talk shows were filmed in front of a live audience within the virtual world Second Life, one of the most popular online virtual worlds for youth.

The first phase of the ST was designed as a 5-week paid summer internship program. Students learned about various sustainability topics and online broadcasting skills in the Second Life virtual world, and prepared all preproduction materials such as scripts and settings for the virtual talk shows in this summer program. There were two leading facilitators and several supporting and interning facilitators who took turns helping this program at different time periods. Each week students met for four days and worked 25 hours in this internship program.

Students were recruited mainly from one of GYL's partner high schools, the School of Future Citizens, an urban high school that serves students from historically disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (see Table 3 for details). Twelve students applied to this program with required materials, including a copy of a resume and a statement of interest about their understanding of sustainability, and all were accepted. Four students dropped out in the first two weeks. The remaining eight students included two girls and six boys. Most of them are black and are immigrants (see details in Appendix B). All eight students participated in this research project. At the end of this program, students completed draft scripts of three topics—food justice, global warming and e-waste—and some preproduction visual materials for the Second Life sustainability talk show.

The second phase of ST was an after-school program that met once a week in the following fall semester. Ideally, students who participated in the first stage of the summer internship program of ST would continue to join the second stage of the ST program to refine their scripts and conduct the virtual talk shows. However, none of these eight students from the summer internship program continued to join the second stage of the ST program. GYL facilitators recruited new participants at the same school. Several students joined the fall ST program at the beginning, but only two students continued to attend and perform in the Second Life virtual talk show productions. GYL facilitators helped these two students become familiar with preproduction works that were done during the first phase, and provided huge support to help them perform and coproduce virtual talk shows on three sustainability topics within a short period of preparation. In sum, nine students agreed and participated in further interviews from both phases of the ST program.

Urban Youth Radio and Pioneer Youth Radio Story Program

Urban Youth Radio[3] (UYR) is a nonprofit organization that provides journalism and radio production training to urban youth. It believes that "a nuanced, balanced, and diverse news media is both a human right and a public good," and helps disadvantaged urban youth to be not only smart media consumers, but also media makers and to create media that convey diverse and unheard voices to the public. Youth Radio Story (YRS) is an in-school program "that involves youth in building the skills to produce media about topics currently missing from the news" through project-driven courses. This study followed the YRS program at Pioneer High School, one of UYR's partner schools in a large northeastern city. Most of the students attending Pioneer High School are Latino (60%) and Black (27%), and 78% of them are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Pioneer's YRS was a special mandatory program for students who were in the Reading Writing Workshop, a remedial course for students who needed extra assistance in their reading and writing skills. Each week, students attended two sessions on special reading and writing skills and two sessions for the YRS program. In the YRS sessions, students learned the basics about the nature of media and journalism, as well as broadcasting and radio production skills. In addition, they discussed current issues and investigated issues and problems at their local communities. Besides, they also had hands-on experience of radio story production, and produced several small radio stories about their communities and social issues in which they were interested. Although not implemented in a formal civic education course context (e.g., government, U.S. history, civics), the curriculum of YRS addressed media literacy, journalism,

[3] The name of this program is a pseudonym.

and social issues and problems in the students' community, and its emphasis on radio production and distribution on the web met the criteria of new media civic education that are outlined in the previous section. There were seven students in this program and five agreed to participate in further research interviews. Although at the end of this program students were not able to produce a culminating and coherent radio story on their selected issue of homeless youth, they produced various radio pieces about this issue.

Table 2 Characteristics of Two New Media Civic Program

Program and Sponsoring Organization	New Media Technologies Focus	Program Type	Participation Type
Pioneer Youth Radio Story (by Urban Youth Radio)	Radio production	In school program, taught in conjunction with a ninth-grade Reading Writing Workshop class at Pioneer high school	Mandatory
Sustainability Talk (by Global Youth Leaders)	Virtual talk show production in Second Life	• Phase 1: Five-week paid summer internship program • Phase 2: After-school program	Voluntary

Table 3 Demographics of Partner Schools of Two New Media Civic Programs

Program	Partner School	Demographics of Student Population at the Partner School
Pioneer's Youth Radio Story	Pioneer High School	● 60% Hispanic, 27% Black, 9% Asian, 3% White ● 78% are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch (2010–2011 Data)
Sustainability Talk	School of Future Citizens	● 90% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian or Alaska Native ● 78% are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch (2010–2011 Data)

Data Collection Procedures

Rossman and Rallis (2003) recommend qualitative researchers to utilize a variety of data collection approaches to better understand the investigated social phenomenon. In this study, I

utilized three methods of data collection: naturalistic observations, in-depth qualitative interviews, and print and digital documents collection.

Naturalistic Observations

In this research, I assumed an unobtrusive non-participatory role to visit each program and conduct filed observations. On the first visit of each program, I had opportunities to introduce myself and the purpose and approach of this research project, and gave participants opportunities to ask any questions about this project. I sat in the corner of the classroom during the field observations so that I minimized the influence of my presence on the class's activities. These field notes provided clues and evidence of what students had learned and experienced in the programs that were not likely to be stated explicitly in the interviews or in other print and electronic materials due to participants' positioning.

The frequency and total observations of each program varied due to different institutions' approval timeline and to the curriculum structure of each program. For Pioneer's YRS program, I was able to participate in only the last three months of the program due to the limitation of Teacher College's IRB and the partner schools' approval timeline. Although I did not observe these programs and interview participants at the beginning of the programs, I was able to access all digital and print program materials that were produced and used from the beginning of the program. During the data collection period, I visited these programs once to twice a week. For the ST, I participated in the complete cycle of its summer program and visited the program four days a week (see Table 4 for details). These extensive program observations enabled me to capture details of teaching and learning activities in the naturalistic contexts. In addition, continuing visits over a two-to-three-month period in each program also helped me to build

rapport with students because they got used to my presence and felt more comfortable to have conversations with me, which helped during the interviews conducted later.

During each visit, I wrote a field note that documented the happenings during my observation. Although I was primarily interested in the civic dimension of new media learning in this research project, I wrote down as many details as possible during my visit since they would provide valuable contexts to fully understand the nature and dynamics of teaching and learning activities in each program. Along with the descriptions of events in the field notes, I wrote my reflections and comments, which contributed to my understanding of these events and facilitated later data analysis. I also audiotaped each class for later reference. Aside from regular class visits, whenever possible I also participated in the field trips, student production work such as community interviews, and public screening and/or presentation events of students' new media work, and I kept field notes and memos about these learning and production activities.

In-depth Qualitative Interviews

A semi-structured interview is another major method I used for data collection in this research project. I conducted half-hour interviews with the lead instructor/facilitator of each program at least three times at the beginning, middle, and end of each program during the research period, and conducted conversations regularly to understand their perspectives, foci, expectations, and reflections on the new media civic education. I also interviewed supporting instructors/facilitators of each program once or twice to get additional perspectives on these programs. At strategic moments during the programs, these audiotaped interviews documented instructors'/facilitators' views on teaching and learning in various temporal contexts, and provided opportunities to check instructors' core conceptions and beliefs about digital media and civic education across time.

As outlined in my dissertation proposal, I planned to draw a diverse group of student interviewees in terms of their facility with digital media and their academic performance, as well as their ethnic/racial, gender, and class backgrounds. In addition, I planned to interview these students three times to capture their experiences with new media civic education at different points throughout the programs and to understand their conceptions of democratic citizenship and new media. In practice, however, I interviewed all students who agreed to participate in this research project due to the limited number of students and research participants from each program. In sum, nine students in the ST and four out of seven students in the Pioneer YRS program participated in research interviews. Due to limited time availability, most of them participated in two interviews, and some of them either participated once or three times in the interviews.

Interview protocols were designed in advance for both instructors' and students' interviews (see Appendix C). Maxwell (1996) suggests that an interview should involve "real questions" (p. 74), which are far more context-specific than general research questions. The interview protocols were designed with this suggestion in mind. Reflective notes were kept along with the transcription of each interview to capture my interpretations of key ideas that emerged from the interviews.

Print and Electronic Documents

Print documents such as lesson materials, brochures, production guidebooks, presentation and/or screening events materials, and students' assignments and classwork were collected or copied whenever possible during my observations. In addition, I visited program websites periodically and took screenshots of relevant webpages or weblogs where students presented their work, and wrote memos about my thoughts and understanding of students' online presence

and productions. Besides, with assistance from program facilitators and instructors, I also gained access to all program materials in the first half of the Pioneer YRS. These materials helped me to get a more comprehensive understanding of these programs.

Table 4 Data Sets Summary

Program	Data Sets	Data Collection Period
Pioneer Youth Radio Story	• 40 hours field observation • 16 semi-structured interviews (with 3 leading and supporting instructors and 4 students) • Print and digital program materials, including audio and video production files	Mar. 2011–Jun. 2011
Sustainability Talk	• 60 hours field observation • 26 semi-structured interviews (with 4 leading and supporting facilitators and 9 students) • Print and digital program materials, including audio and video production files	Jul. 2011–Jan. 2012

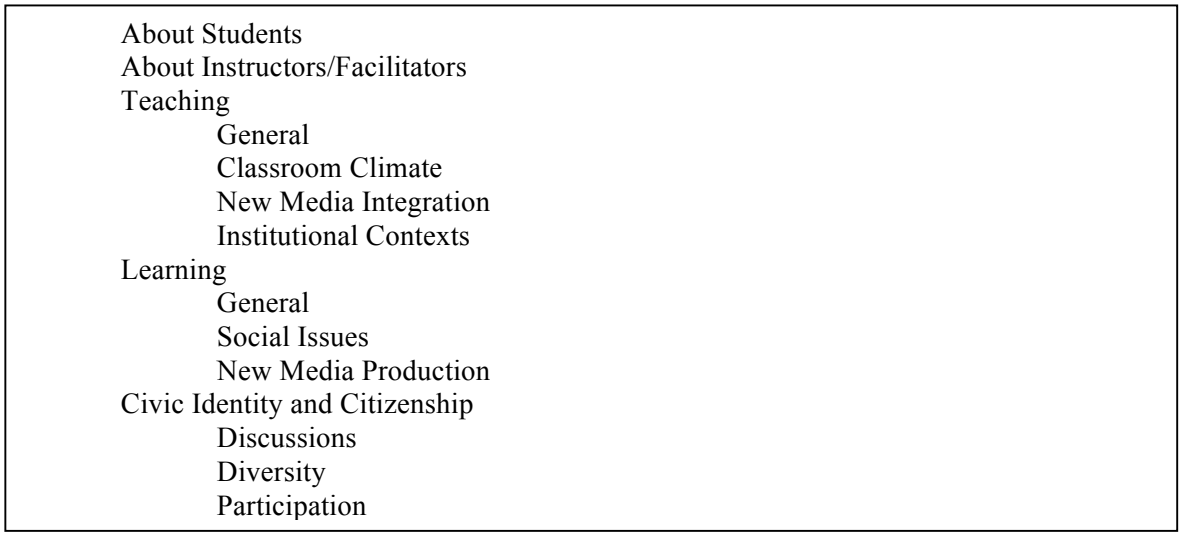
Data Analysis

Maxwell (1996) divides qualitative data analysis strategies into two groups: categorizing and contextualizing strategies. Categorizing strategies aim to fracture collected data and rearrange them in categories that help explicate dynamic relationships between different pieces of data and develop theoretical concepts. Contextualizing analysis, in contrast, "attempts to understand the data in context" (p. 79). In practice, this study employed five categorizing and contextualizing strategies that are effective for qualitative case study data analysis. These strategies are: coding, categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, patterns, and description of the case (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1998).

At the initial stage of the data analysis process, I used a spreadsheet to construct logs of various types of data collected in this project with information such as date, program, data type (i.e., observation, interview, print or digitalized documents), and quick memos to support later

data retrieval (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I then conducted an initial open coding process on collected raw data, including observation field notes, interview transcriptions, electronic artifacts, and researcher reflective notes and memos using qualitative data analysis software NVIVO 9. Coding is an essential means in this initial data organizing stage and can be conceptualized as both data simplification and data complication (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Coding as data simplification refers to its function as indexing data texts for easier data segment retrieval. During the multiple readings of the data, I modified redundant or similar codes and started to think of grouping codes into various categories. In contrast, coding as data complication implies "thinking creatively with the data, asking the data questions, and generating theories and framework" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 30). This complicating process is connected closely to categorical aggregation. Categorical aggregation sorts instances from various sources into similar categories in order to observe emergent meanings of important issues (Creswell, 1998). At this stage, all codes were categorized into five big categories and several subcategories (see Figure 4; see Appendix D for a sample list of extensive codes under the Learning and Civic Engagement and Citizenship categories).

[Figure 4] Categories and Subcategories



After initial coding and categorical aggregation, I played with codes and categories to generate meanings and interpretations. I paid attention to codes with higher frequencies within each category and sought for interconnections and patterns that emerged from these codes and different categories. In addition, I applied direct interpretation and explored deeper meanings of unexpected, unique, or irregular events and instances in the data sets within their social contexts. Analytic and reflective memos were written during this data analysis period as well. Memos keep a record of a researcher's reflections and explorations on theory, methodology, and research practice. Memos not only document a researcher's continuous thinking on data analysis, but also facilitate this process (Maxwell, 1996).

Based on these analytic works, I started to write naturalistic generalizations and to conceive a case description for each program. Naturalistic generalizations and a case description pay attention to interconnections between categories and patterns, but more importantly, look at themes and patterns in their contexts and weave them into a coherent whole. I constantly challenged my interpretations and revisited codes, categories, and patterns across different data sources (field notes, interviews, and print and digital artifacts) to seek alternative understandings of the phenomena and to verify whether my interpretations reflected what had been documented in the raw data within their contexts. Last, I used rich and thick descriptions along with quotations from the participants and my interpretations to present findings, with the aim of helping readers acquire a detailed and comprehensive picture of each case.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study. First, the nature of qualitative research design focuses on in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, and the findings from this research are not generalizable, though they will provide valuable insights for those who are planning or engaged

with similar programs. In addition, among various kinds of new media civic education, this study chose only three types of new media civic education—radio production and a virtual world talk show— due to time constrains and availability and accessibility of programs. Thus, the findings of this project only reveal limited possibilities of emerging civic practices and civic engagement of historically disadvantaged urban youth in new media civic programs.

Second, the original design of the data collection process was discounted by complicated negotiations with all parties involved in research approvals for the Pioneer YRS. I was not able to participate in and follow this program from its early development. However, I collected program materials and student works that were used or produced during these early program stages as much as possible to build a more complete understanding of each case. Besides, I was not able to interview students three times, as I outlined in my research proposal, to capture their changes, if any, in major research conceptions such as civic engagement, democratic citizenship, and new media production. This was largely due to extremely limited availability of students' free time for interviews during the school day/program hours. To address this limitation, I tried to acquire as much information as I could within the limited time in each interview and to explore students' new media works (e.g., blog posts, vlogs, radio production, etc.) comprehensively to understand their perceptions and changing attitudes of major concepts.

IV. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I respond to this study's two research questions: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? How can new media civic education foster youth civic identity? In each case study, I will begin by providing a program sketch that outlines the curriculum design and class activities of each new media civic program. In the following section, I will present the major themes of students' learning experiences from each program.

[Figure 5] Overview of Chapter IV

Findings

Case 1: Sustainability Talk in Second Life
- Learning about Global Issues through Online Videos and Documentaries
- Learning about Sustainability through Online Research
- Civic Learning in Second Life
- Youth Voices through Virtual Talk Show
- Conceptions of Citizenship, Youth Civic Identity, and Social Changes

Case 2: Urban Youth Radio
- Preparing Active News Consumers in a Supportive Learning Community
- Learning about Media Literacy and Discovering Bias and Stereotypes
- Understanding Diverse Life Experiences through Interviews
- Conceptions of Citizenship, Youth Civic Identity and Social Change

Chapter Summary

Case 1: Sustainability Talk in Second Life

Global Youth Leaders (GYL) is a non-profit organization located in a major city in the northeastern United States. It aims to prepare urban youth to be community leaders and global citizens through "academically rigorous, socially dynamic, content rich" learning activities. Aside from various types of after school programs toward these ends, its digital leadership programs incorporate digital media practices to promote urban youth civic engagement. Sustainability Talk (ST) is one of these leadership programs. ST aims to "introduce Global

Youth Leaders youth to a broad range of concepts related to the topic of sustainability and equip them with online broadcasting skills." At the end of this program, students will produce a virtual talk show about sustainability within Second Life (SL).

There were two phases in the ST program (see Table 5). The first phase, in which students learned about various topics on sustainability and online broadcasting skills in Second Life and prepared all materials for the virtual talk shows, was designed as a five-week paid summer internship program. Each week, students met four days and worked twenty hours in this internship program. In the first two weeks of this summer program, facilitators introduced a variety of topics and concepts in sustainability, including climate justice, global warming, alternative energy resources, biodiversity, and food justice to a group of eight high school minority/immigrant students, two of whom are girls (see Appendix B for detail). In addition, students learned basic navigation skills for Second Life (SL), the virtual world where students can design their own avatars, interact with other people from anywhere in the world, and ultimately host their virtual talk shows.

In the remaining three weeks of this summer program, the focus shifted to the virtual talk show pre-production. Students were divided into three groups and followed the project guide that was designed by GYL facilitators to create scripts of their virtual talk shows, which were themed around global warming, e-waste, and food justice, respectively. Although students continued to learn about sustainability through various web resources, guest speakers, games, and field trips, and practiced SL creation skills, they learned mostly through conducting research on their talk show topics and drafting their own talk show scripts. At the end of this summer program, students finished the drafts of the three virtual talk shows.

Table 5 Sustainability Talk Program Design Summary

Time	Sustainability Talk 2011 Summer (Pre-Production)	Sustainability Talk 2011 Fall (Pre-Production & Production)
Program Type	Five-week intensive paid internship program; 20 hours/week.	Semester-long voluntary afterschool program; 1.5 hours/week.
Program Focus	Learn about issues of sustainability and Second Life navigation and creation skills; complete Second Life talk show scripts and all pre-production work.	Learn about issues of sustainability; perform in the Second Life talk shows based on given scripts and Second Life settings.
Participants	8*	2* (None of them participated in the Sustainability Talk summer program)

*Number of participants who joined the program from the beginning to the end

The second phase of ST was an after-school voluntary program that met once a week in the following fall semester. Ideally, students who participated in the first phase of ST, the summer internship program that expected participants to complete talk show scripts and most pre-production works would join the second phase of the ST program to refine their scripts and perform in the virtual talk shows. However, none of these eight students from the summer internship program joined the second phase of the ST program, which seemed to indicate students' lack of strong commitment to complete what they began during the summer sessions in these virtual talk show productions. In fact, several students indicated that internship payment during the summer sessions was an important factor that motivated them to apply for the ST.

GYL facilitators recruited new participants at the same school. Several students joined the fall ST program at the beginning, but only two students continued to come and performed in the virtual talk show live productions. After several sessions that prepared students with a basic understanding of the food justice talk show topic and one prep session in SL about basic navigation and communication skills, these two students performed their first live, one-hour-long

virtual talk show on food justice in late October. There were about thirty participants from across the United States joined this virtual talk show. The second and third productions on global warming and e-waste followed a similar path: students learned background knowledge of e-waste and global warming, rehearsed their virtual show production in SL, and produced the live virtual talk shows.

In the following sections, I present major themes of the students' learning experiences from the ST and their conceptions of citizenship and civic identity development. I present these themes in the chronological order of the program design and development.

Learning About Global Issues through Online Videos and Documentaries

In the ST, online videos and documentaries were one of the major knowledge sources for students to learn about global and sustainability issues. From the beginning of this program, online videos about sustainability topics such as global warming, climate change, biodiversity, green movement, and consumerism culture were screened in the class. GYL facilitators wanted to give students background knowledge and presented them with various perspectives about sustainability issues through these videos. After each screening, the facilitators discussed with students major ideas and messages from the videos and gave them opportunities to share any thoughts about the topics presented in the videos.

Ms. Chen explained her pedagogical decisions behind her choice of videos and documentaries in interviews. *An Inconvenient Truth* was selected because it is "highly referenced in almost every conversation about climate change…Al Gore talks a little bit more about science behind it"; *The Story of Stuff* was chosen because it addresses the consumerism that is highly connected to young people's daily lives and it might facilitate students to reflect on and rethink their shopping habits; *Greening the Ghetto* is a TED talk video focusing on social justice and

encouraging collaboration between communities; *The Meatrix*, a short animated parody of the movie *The Matrix,* presents the problems of factory farming in a short, concise cartoon that is engaging to younger viewers..

Although GYL facilitators had clear ideas about what knowledge they would like to convey through these videos, they also found that oftentimes, students constructed their understanding about these social issues from the videos in ways that went beyond their expectations. Ms. Chen stated, "we never really know how students will react until they react."

The first surprise was that most of the students were not engaged in the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* and fell asleep in the middle of the screening. Accordingly, GYL facilitators had to stop the screening and start debriefing earlier than was originally scheduled. In the interviews, several students shared their thoughts about this documentary. Laura compared this documentary with other videos and commented that "the way it [*The Matrix*] was presented was in a more fascinating manner, whereas the *Inconvenient Truth* was boring . . . it was informative, but it was boring." Diego felt that "He [Al Gore] just kept going on about one thing over and over again, repeating himself and got kind of boring." Ms. Chen shared her observation about the students' responses to this documentary:

> They felt like they knew it already so they were like we don't need to see this, we know it exists you know, polar ice cap are melting we know it; we don't need to sit through charts to prove it to you. But I think they don't realize that there are actually a lot of people who still don't believe it or who are just skeptical of it , or think global warming is a government conspiracy

Another surpise came from students' responses to *The Story of Stuff,* an animated talk and criticism about the life cycle of material goods and excessive consumerism. This video seemed to be well received by the students, and it did help some students to rethink their shopping habits as Ms. Chen and other GYL facilitators had expected. For instance, Laura echoed the perspective

presented in the video that when the price goes down, people, including herself, buy more, and said she should think twice before throwing old shoes away and buying new ones. Troy said that "we're a consumer society and many people do buy things like those in the video," but "we should let everybody know and everyday people can do things to help." Ms. Chen reminded students to check twice before they buy things: "Do I really need this? Why is it so cheap? Why did they break so fast?" Students also noticed that some goods such as headphones were not durable and got broken after using them for a short period of time. They lamented the amount of toxic materials in our daily lives and that these harmful elements even influenced breast feeding negatively.

One of the most passionate conversations about this video, however, came from some students' responses to the relationship between the government and corporations, which was not as Ms. Chen anticipated. Annie Leonard, the narrator and presenter, explained the model of material economy and people, government, and corporations' roles and relationships in this video. In the middle of the video presentation, Annie commented: "As the corporation has grown in size and power, we see a little change in our government which we're a little bit concerned about, for things working out for those guys than for us," referencing an animation of a relatively tiny government figure polishing the shoes of a big corporation figure in the video (Figure 6). This brief twenty-second illustration of a government-corporation relationship garnered a disproportionally large amount of attention in the discussion following the twenty-minute long video.

[Figure 6] *The Story of Stuff* screenshot

Annie's statement especially resonated for several students: "I noticed that they said things like you know it's all about greed, it's all about this corporations and government working together and we can't do anything about it" recalled Ms. Chen.

Students' responses illustrated their lack of trust in government. Students' daily experiences of social injustice, especially police brutality, seemed to be an important source of this distrust of government. In an interview, Diego said that one of his family members was arrested by police for doing nothing, and he shared his view on police brutality and his distrust of the government:

> They arrest people for things that nobody do. They take advantage of us. As you can clearly see, if we ever do something bad they hold it against us and send us to jail… They have the government and the courts on their side…Many people tried protesting. It didn't work. It's still going on today. It's going to be an everyday problem. It can't be fixed.

In a class discussion about current events, Javel shared what he saw from a Facebook video post about a policeman who killed an innocent person in Jamaica. A few in the class, including GYL facilitators, were shocked by the police brutality in that case. Some resonated with the problem.

Marc shared another episode of police brutality against one of his neighbors who lived just two blocks away from him back in Guyana. In an interview, Marc expressed his anger about community violence and his use of songs to express his anger. Across national borders, students were witnessing police brutality in their daily lives, and these events might have resulted in the distrust of government that was reflected in their strong responses to the image represented in the *Story of Stuff*.

In addition, seeing is believing is one underlying assumption most students held in their knowledge construction with video contents. For most of them, visual presentations in online videos guarantee the truthfulness of those events or objects presented in the videos. As Javel said in the interview, "The videos are good because hearing about something and seeing it is very different cause when seeing it, like, you see the impact . . . so I think it's better to see stuff . . . I learn better that way too." In the class reflection, Javel mentioned another example: "[The] US exports waste to other countries . . . but like seeing it on the video is just different, seeing what's happening, is really bad, like smoke, what they burned and stuff." Marc's strong response to a video about the production of chicken nuggets from grinding eyeballs illustrated this underlying assumption as well. He was so surprised with what he saw on the video that he could not stop to share it with his classmates. Ms. Chen encouraged Marc to find more sources other than videos in his search and reminded him that the sources of video contents are usually more difficult to verify for credibility. However, Marc seemed really captivated by this video, watched it a couple of times, and did not work further on finding other sources. The following quote from his class reflection illustrated Marc's lack of awareness about the limitations of online videos as an information source.

> Ms. Chen: Were there some sources that worked better for you than others?
> Marc: Yes.

Ms. Chen: Which ones?
Marc: YouTube
Ms. Chen: Ok, why YouTube?
Marc: As you know, yeah, YouTube is a big website.
Ms. Chen: We all know.
Marc: It has videos, everything you could probably think about so a variety of things that you can look on, a lot of stuff that I don't know about.
Ms. Chen: But is every video on YouTube good quality?
Marc: No, yes, some of them real, some of them not, you got to know where you're looking at; look at the sources on YouTube

Like Marc, some of his classmates had vague ideas about the limitations of video content. Javel shared a similar idea of how he would tell the reliability and credibility of a video clip and said "When watching a video, I can tell what's true from fake stuff, but I don't have examples here; but I can tell when I see it."

Laura thought YouTube provides some useful and helpful videos, "but some videos you cannot really trust because it could be someone who post a random video because this is YouTube, everybody could post a video." When asked about what her criteria for credibility evaluation, Laura replied that she paid attention to the name of the person who uploads the videos. "Say crazychick and he post up 'you dance and some songs,' I'd go for it cause you name say that and you post that video, but if you're posting something educational I don't think that go for this," said Laura.

In an interview, Ms. Chen pointed out the problem with YouTube videos as information sources was that "you can't really trace where they got their sources from", and reflected that she did not help students learn more about the validity of online videos. In fact, my further investigation revealed that the photo of the pink pre-chicken nugget meat paste used in the video in which Marc's understanding of chicken nugget production was based on could not be verified. The *Huffington Post*, who also used the photo on one of its online stories, removed it from the site for that very reason. The video Marc found was from The Young Turks, a popular YouTube

channel that positions itself as "the largest online news show in the world, with over 1 billion views and counting" and hosts over 17,000 videos. Although The Young Turks channel has received the Webby Award Best News and Information Show and looks like a credible site, this chicken nugget episode illustrates the challenges facing youth to finding credible video sources on the web.

Interestingly, based on the seeing is believing assumption and the idea that videos hold persuasive power to convey truth, all of the students' talk shows included video screening components. The following words for a video screening activity from the global warming group's script are a good example of this idea:

> This video shows you how global warming is not only affecting us but also the animals, which leaves mankind with less species. It also shows habitats being lost and the world being overheated and melting; these are not fake events, these are real.

In the ST, students learned about issues of sustainability through online videos and documentaries. Ms. Chen chose a variety of videos to present diverse perspectives on the issues of sustainability. Students' responses to these videos surprised GYL facilitators. Further analysis reveals that students' daily life experiences of social injustice, and the visually mediated veracity in their video watching experiences all play a significant role in how they construct their understandings of sustainability issues with these visual materials. More analysis will be presented in the discussion chapter related to this pedagogical point.

Learning About Sustainability through Online Research

After gaining basic understanding about sustainability from course activities and choosing topics of their interest for their virtual talk shows, which were e-waste, food justice, and global warming, students conducted online research to learn more about their topics. The project book provided some basic guidelines for them to follow and to work on their research

and talk show production. It consisted of three sections: Select and define the topic and focus, collect information and make sense of it, and preliminary talk show development.

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose." This quote from Zora Neale Hurston was printed on the cover page of the students' project guide. Students were encouraged to explore at least five new media sources such as Google Search, Google News, YouTube, Twitter, and Wikipedia to find information and to compare and reflect on information found from each source. Ms.Chen explained the idea behind this design:

> We want them to see that not all sources give you the same type of information. So YouTube obviously gives you videos. A lot of these videos might be videos that people make at home so they are not necessarily news clips. Tweets, for example, gives you sound bite information, uh and Facebook other things ... those are things they come across every day, and these have become all places where news is being shared. So even when Osama bin Laden was found, actually a guy tweeted that first before any news people covered it. So it is like it is where we're getting our news, it's the direction we're heading in.

As students used search engines to find information about their research topics, Wikipedia entries frequently came up as one of the first results on the first search result page and were starting points for some students. Most students were aware of its limitations. For Ethan, "Wikipedia is not a good source because any person can go on and change that anytime." Javel thought that they should be careful about information from Wikipedia because "people can just write things that are not true." Sharing similar concerns, Troy said that he used it "somewhat, when I am trying to look up information," but "try not to go to there so much." While theoretically students were right that any person can register an account and publish articles on Wikipedia, they neglected the fact that Wikipedia's strict editing policy made its entries more credible and reliable than they thought. One facilitator, Treveon, also suggested students check references on the Wikipedia entry because "they usually take you to scholarly articles where they

supposedly got their information from and that would be the better resources than the actual Wikipedia itself."

Aside from Wikipedia, search engines provide information from various sources and media formats, including news from traditional newspaper sites; blog posts; articles; and texts from commercial or non-profit websites, videos, and images. Information evaluation and credibility assessment are more of a concern in the digital media era due to the increasingly ambiguous online sources and contexts and the convergence of new media (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). How to make sense of various online resources and find credible contents has become a challenge for students. GYL facilitators advised them to look on major news websites such as the *New York Times*, *BBC News*, etc. for credible articles and suggested Google News as another good starting point for searching for relevant information. Students did not seem to look for information from major news websites frequently. The quality of websites students browsed was uneven. Some were more credible publishers and non-profit organizations, but others were sites with clear commercial purposes that may present selected and partial information about sustainability issues to benefit their businesses.

When asked about how they determined which were good sources in their research process, some students had more objective criteria, such as looking for the ending .org or .gov on the website address; others could only provide vague ideas about how they evaluate what they found. Shanice's words illustrate the former:

> I like to [use] sources with .gov at the end and .edu at end because I found they are more educational and more factual. I take a little bit of opinion pieces just to get a general sense of how [the] public use it, but mostly I deal with facts and I did that through .gov and education sites.

Laura used a similar approach and added that ".com is just a regular site that anyone can have made up." In contrast, other students did not provide specific criteria for how they find and

evaluate information, except the relevancy of descriptions from the search results to their research topics. Javel was one of the students using this approach:

> Chingfu: Is it easy to find and search info?
> Javel: It's easy. We look on Google and YouTube. Basically I type keywords such as electronic waste, export, etc. in [the] search box to do the searches.
> Chingfu: How do you select information and websites?
> Javel: I see descriptions of each result and see whether that's what I want. I then click and choose links.
> Chingfu: How do you determine which is more reliable?
> Javel: That's no problem in general. I'm looking for e-waste stuff, so they won't fake us. But things like wiki you should be careful.

Javel's search habit based more or less on unexamined intuition was not unique, as research found young people's tendency to "fortuitous searching, a form of search involving browsing from link to link in an undirected manner" (Grasser, Cortesi, Malik & Lee, 2012, p. 9). Lukas and Ethan also used a similar approach to evaluate online information; however, Ethan seemed to be confused with the function of an anti-virus color indicator from McAfee software for Google search results with information credibility evaluation, or he held a very low standard of information credibility in which as long as information is from a virus-free site, it is credible. As he said in the interview, "with Google, they put a green check by the sources and they have a start rate." He used the "green check by the sources" (which referring to very low or no risk issues found by MacAfee Siteadvisor software) as a criteria for source selection" in addition to reading the descriptions of the search results.

An analysis of web links cited in summer ST participants' final talk show scripts reveals students' uneven skills and understandings about the credibility of online sources. Most web links cited in the e-waste talk show script were from government agencies and well-known non-profit organizations (e.g., EPA, UN, Greenpeace), news websites (e.g., CNN), or activist groups. In contrast, web links and videos cited and used in the global warming group were less credible.

One interesting website cited by students to respond to this question: "What is being done to prevent global warming?" was LEDlights.org. Although it has sections such as "Save the Planet" and "Global Warming" on its site, both sections only consist of a very small portion of the website, which aims to promote and sell a variety of LED light products. This site seemed to have commercial interest but disguise itself as a not-for-profit website by using a .org web address. This example also revealed the limitation of Laura's—who was a member of this group—formalistic source evaluation approach, which relied heavily on the domains of .org, .edu, or .gov on the web address as a criteria for reliable and credible information.

Twitter is increasingly become a social media platform for people to get and pass along breaking news stories (Madden, Cortesi, Gasser, Lenhart, & Duggan, 2012). Among the students in the ST program, Lukas was the only Twitter user. This low adoption of Twitter among program participants was consistent with survey data from 2011 that only 12% of youth were Twitter users (Guskin, 2013). However, Lukas did not think Twitter was a useful media platform to get information about their topic: "Twitter is to talk, not to look for information," said Lukas. He further distinguished Twitter from Facebook in that the former was more anonymous and a place to get to know new people and the later was a platform to keep in touch with friends he already knew in daily life. In short, Twitter was being used by GYL facilitators as a media platform to get updated information on topics of interest, but was rarely used by youth. The only Twitter user in the ST program considered it a social networking platform rather than a place to gather information.

Students in the ST program conducted online research in order to gain deeper understanding of their talk show topics. Most of them were aware of the limitations of Wikipedia, and about half of them used it as an entry point for a quick idea of their research

topics. Some used the web address endings of .org, .edu, and .gov as a criterion to search for credible sources, and others did not use a specific web information evaluation approach except search results' relevancy to their topics. Although Twitter has become a new media outlet for news, none of the students found it useful for topic exploration, and one viewed it as communication and networking media rather than a source for social issues and topics.

Civic Learning in Second Life

Virtual world as bait to foster learning. One unique aspect of ST was that it brought all participants to the virtual world of Second Life to produce a virtual talk show about sustainability. The major reason to have these activities held in Second Life (SL) was to use the game-like virtual environment as "bait" (Steinkuehler & Squire, 2014) to engage youth in learning about sustainability issues. As Ms. Chen put it "it's taking something that they are interested in and see how that can be used for educational purposes."

The "bait" seemed to work well with these students. Most students enjoyed learning activities such as scavenger hunts and virtual filed trips in SL, except during the moments when they encountered technical difficulties that interrupted the SL server connection. Mr. Gometz shared one student's response to a virtual field trip as an example of experiential learning in a virtual world:

> Troy was talking about the rich experience of learning in second life about alternative energy sources . . . 'You know? It would be different if I was in a classroom and somebody was talking to me about alternative energy sources.' Here, he said, 'I saw them. They were represented. They were graphical.' He saw a windmill and he saw solar panels on top of a house. He saw a hydroelectric plant. He was able to visualize those things, to actually see them. That for me was some of the power of the media in Second Life, these simulations that can happen.

In addition to experiencing the immersive and graphical virtual world, students can build objects in Second Life, which is another feature to engage students in learning. As Ms.Chen

pointed out “The potential to learn is there, like building the solar panels: they’re not able to do that in real life.“ Ideally, students in this program can build objects that were relevant to sustainability issues and created the performance stage for the virtual talk show, which was a potential that was less likely to be realized in the real world because of cost. Also it would be a playful component in addition to the civic learning activities in this program. However, most students did not pick up enough SL object creating skills in this program partly due to constant disconnection to the Second Life server, and also due to the complex object creation process. It was not uncommon to find that during the SL sessions two instructors (and sometimes with other supporting facilitators) wandered around the classroom and were busy helping individual students to solve connection issues or adjust various settings. Only few students gained advanced object creating skills. Particularly, Mr. Gometz was amazed by Ethan’s self-taught Second Life object construction skills: “Ethan, without me teaching him, he figured out how to change a script in SL. He found this object that was sending sparks. He figured out on his own the program that made that happen.” Ethan was a devoted gamer and often stayed up playing video games during the summer program, This background seemed to help him to navigate, build, and problem solve in Second Life quickly.

The graphic style of Second Life and playful object creation feature engaged students in the learning about sustainability issues. However, the relationships among these simulations, virtual objects and the real world were not further investigated in ST. For instance, while it was inspiring to see various simulations of recycling and alternative energies in Second Life for a more sustainable world, how practical and feasible these approaches were in the real world was not further discussed in these sessions. Furthermore, while building objects (e.g., solar panels) was an activity less accessible in real life but was doable in Second Life, how such object

construction in Second Life related to the real world production of these energy technologies was not fully explored. It seemed that ST emphasized more on the aesthetic and playful aspect of Second Life in order to engage students in learning about sustainability, but how Second Life mediated students' understanding about these green technologies in the real world was not addressed.

There was one advanced activity of building simulations of selected sustainability problems that would have used the full potential of Second Life for learning about sustainability, but it was not implemented in this program. Mr. Gometz explained this scenario and his vision in the interview:

> With time, you could have really taken these to great levels. If the students are working on e-waste, you could have built a small city and begin to dump e-waste there little by little. You could simulate the impact of what that has been there, small builders. Can you see this potential? That could be really amazing and powerful. You build a little town, peaceful, with trees (laughs) . . . You go and let them stay there for a little there. They come and they hang out. Suddenly, a cell-phone drops, then two, and three. They begin to pile up and they burn. Once they burn a cell-phone, a tree dies. That sort of simulation can be something that I think would be amazing, really powerful as a learning tool and as [an] experiential learning experience.

In this scenario, students would learn about a new media literacy skill of simulation, which is advocated and defined by Jenkins et al. (2006) as "the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes" (p. 4). Simulations help students to "form hypotheses quickly and test them against different variables in real time", and they can be effective in "representing known knowledge or in testing emerging theories" (p. 25). However, this advanced use of Second Life for learning was not implemented in ST due to time constrain and a different program focus.

> Lastly, Ms. Chen pointed out some challenges to teach in the virtual world:
> It is hard in the few times we tried to do these very focused lessons. It's hard because they got so distracted, they're trying to change their appearances, they're chatting with each other, and as the facilitators, you can't manage it very well. So there are challenges

> pose[d] to the facilitators . . . And for me it's so new, the SL stuff, I don't think I fully digested what educational outcomes are coming from it.

Overall, Second Life was a useful medium to motivate students to learn about these topics, but it also presented new challenges to instruction as it sometimes distracted students from learning focused lessons. In addition, students needed to learn about the nature of Second Life mediation in order for them to better understand sustainability issues through and with Second Life.

Identities exploration and civic protocols in the virtual space. In ST, Second Life also served as a new space where students interacted with members from across the world and raise awareness about sustainability issues. With the advances of new media technologies, there are many tools that allowed students to communicate with others beyond temporal and spatial limitations for promoting social issues awareness. However, Second Life is a unique environment because participants have to create avatars, a visual embodiment of themselves, to mediate virtual communication. Designing avatars provides a great opportunity for players to explore their identities. Reflecting on one's identity and embracing diversity is one of the essential goals in civic education (Bank, 2008), and Second Life is also a great platform for students to conduct identity experiments through avatar design and to learn about diversity (Lee, 2006). Mr. Gotmze shared his observations about students' engagement in creating avatars:

> people will immediately begin to self-design themselves. They figure it out that you don't need to go to a long class ... You have for example Javel, who was a monkey. [Laughs] He just decided to be a monkey. (Laughs). It was playful. It was really funny. Then you have Ethan who was always on a bike. He had a sword and he put a halo on. Laura wanted to have wings. She wanted to be some ethereal woman with all kinds of gowns and wings. You have Diego whose avatar became this Goth-Avatar.

Although avatar design activity held potential for identity exploration, Mr. Gotmez did not put much emphasis on this activity because he believed that students would get into this activity naturally. Too, students did not really put much thought into their avatar creating process, except

for fun and playfulness. Still, students had some ideas about their avatars and how their avatars represented themselves.

Laura enjoyed getting new clothes and other fancy objects such as motorcycles in Second Life because she could not afford them in real life. She recognized the affordances of Second Life to allow players to change their ethnicity or gender: "If someone wants to be white, and they are not, they can be white in Second Life," said Laura. But she enjoyed being herself and had a "mini me" avatar in Second Life that she changed the appearance of frequently. Shanice shared a similar preference for making her avatar like her, but was frustrated with her lack of Second Life skills to design a better avatar:

> I'm just lost and I don't know how to create her. She doesn't dress like me, her hair was different from mine, and everything about her would not reflect me at all . . . I don't want to be somebody else—I'm happy with who I am.

Marc, who was outspoken in real life but relatively inactive in most Second Life activities, did not think there was any way Second Life could help him present his identity. However, when discussing stage design with the guest speaker Gloria in SL, he enthusiastically asked about the possibility of creating a Guyanese flag for the talk show stage after seeing a Canadian flag flying during a lecture. When asked further about this, Marc stated: "cause I like to represent my country in every way." As an immigrant, Marc appreciated better educational opportunities in the United States, but he kept strong ties with his friends in Guyana via Facebook and text messages. In another instance, Lukas accidentally put female underwear on his avatar. Not knowing that his avatar wore female underwear because of his first-person viewing angle, he was laughed at and teased by his classmates. He quickly checked and changed the appearance of his avatar. He looked embarrassed but denied that he wore female underwear. While his embarrassment might be due to the sexual implication of female underwear and not about a

gender-crossing experiment, this case, along with other thoughts mentioned by Laura about changing racial appearance in Second Life, reveals the potential of using an avatar's appearance as a site for exploration of the meanings of diversity that has been documented in other studies (Lee, 2006)

In addition to identity exploration, students in ST were also exploring new modes, possibilities, and boundaries of civic inteactions in this virtual world. Unlike the offline world where the rules and civic manner expectations were relatively clear, Second Life presented new opportunities, challenges and also some ambiguieties in civic manners in the virtual space. Ms. Chen emphasized the importance of teaching and learning about this aspect:

> I feel like this generation of young people are so connected that sometimes they do forget that there are rules, unspoken rules, in the digital world. That's why there is cyberbullying and sexting and all the stuff that are becoming more pervasive. For us as facilitators to reiterate [that] actually basic rules still apply even in the digital world and also teaching them a skill that is going to be very important to them, like you can't just say what you want, you can't just push people.

In practice, the line between respectful behaviors, playful acts, and disrespectful deeds were not black and white. For instance, at the end of Gloria's lecture when she was still sitting on stage, Lukas took advantage of SL's transposing function, moved instantly and danced in front of her on the stage. Ms. Chen quickly reminded him to get off the stage and be respectful, though he remained on the stage till they disconnected from the virtual world. Lukas was apparently walking on the blurry line between playful and disrespectful behaviors, and testing the boundary and definition of respect in the virtual territory.

The following instance illustrates the need for exploring new protocols for communication and interactions in virtual space. Shanice's interaction with a stranger avatar who smoked next to her indicated that both Shanice and the other avatar were still confined to the real world conceptions of appropriate behavior that in fact might not be applicable in Second Life. As

Shanice attended one of the lectures and sat down, an avatar who was smoking sat next to her. Although she did not realize that she would not smell the smoke, as she admitted in the interview, she responded in the following manner:

> I showed her the no smoke zone. She laughed and said, 'It's not on.' She didn't realize that the cigarette was on, and then she cut it off. So, she was smoking by accident…I hate the smell of smoke and I hate everything about it and we're doing Sustainability Talk. And although it's a virtual world, it's still the idea that counts; although I couldn't smell how it smell, I still felt like I was being disrespected … I have asthma in human form; the whole point of the game is to educate people.

When asked about her ideas about the relationship between the virtual and the real worlds, she shared her thoughts about the question and her justification for her response to the smoking incident:

> The virtual world to me is not realistic of course . . . the real world from the virtual world, I know the differences. But I still find that if you have certain sets/aspects of goals that stick to the real world, that you should follow them regardless of [if] they have been virtual or not like if you don't do certain things in real world, don't do it virtually, because another global issue I learned about is cyberbullying . . . just because you wouldn't curse somebody out in person . . . I mean, they can't hear your tone and they can't hear you saying it, they don't know who's saying it, but reading it still hurts them. So, that's how I feel like, it's still a thing: it's a connection between people.

Even though in this instance Shanice was not physically impacted by the virtual smoking, it was the idea of smoking and its potential harm to other peoople in the real world that mattered to her. Second Life thus was a space for her to advocate offline world ideals to new audiences.

Overall, students did not have opportunities to freely explore and interact with other members in the virtual sapce. Thus, not much about students' interactions and civic protocols were discussed and developed. However, this case illustrated that Second Life could serve as an alternative space for students to examine civic manners that were taken for granted in the real world, and to investigate ideas behind those civic rules and protocols.

Youth Voices through Virtual Talk Show

Talk shows are a popular format of television entertainment, and the virtual talk show production has potential to engage youth in politics and social issues because it allows them to use a media format that is familiar to them and enact some of the tropes they have seen on popular talk shows such as *The Daily Show* to address social issues. Research has found that viewing popular comedy or satire talk shows such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* "has positive and significant effects on political participation through the mediator of political efficacy, as does viewing traditional TV news" (Hoffman & Young, 2011). The culminating project in ST was the production of *Sustainability Talk* virtual talk shows in Second Life. This virtual talk show was a new means for youth to communicate their perspectives on various sustainability issues with a broader audience outside of their daily life circles in the virtual world. This virtual talk show production was also a unique format for youth to learn about sustainability issues because it not only required youth to gain background knowledge about these issues, but also provided creative and entertainment components to engage them in these learning activities and production. Many participants expressed their interests in producing a talk show about sustainability; they not only wanted to make the show informative but were also excited to make it entertaining. Two unique civic learning opportunities were provided by this final project. First, students had to write scripts for each episode of the ST virtual talk show that included their research findings and understanding about sustainability issues, as well as other performing and transition components. Second, they learned to interact with audience in the virtual world to raise awareness about sustainability issues. These activities in developing and communicating perspectives on issues to thepublic echo Dewey's idea of democracy, which centers on "conjoint communicated experiences" in which various voices and interests are presented and negotiated.

Scripting sustainability talk show for awareness. To help students develop their own talk shows, the ST program first prepared them with a basic understanding about various sustainability topics and issues. Along with these content-learning activities were field trips and guest speaker lectures that prepared them with production experiences and skills. For instance, students had an opportunity to visit a local public media production center Neighborhood Network Station (NNS) in a field trip and improvised in a talk show exercise at the center during their visit. In addition, they got to talk with a marketing specialist in class session about how to make an engaging talk show. Shannice was especially inspired by the marketing lecture:

> I learned that one way to make the talk show more interesting is to focus the topic around a personal experience. I would like to find a news article relating to someone's sickness or death from eating improperly because of the foods they had access to.

These learning activities helped students understand the practice of talk show production and storytelling tips for an engaging talk show.

One of the first big milestones to translate students' learning about talk show production into practice was script writing for the sustainability virtual talk show. Script was a format for students to prepare, think about and plan their talk show. ST provided step-by-step learning activities about both sustainability issues and talk show production, which were outlined in the project guidebook. While several students naturally talked about music, and a little bit about their research topics of sustainability in the real world talk show at Neighborhood Network Station during their field trip, puting those words onto scripts was a very different process for most of them . In the case of the e-waste group, which had the least done in their script, students had a list of about 40 questions along with web resources answering those questions. However, it was not broken up into different entertaining segments. Interestingly, while the verbal performance in an improvised talk show during the field trip was easy for Javel, an e-waste group member,

turning spoken words into a written script with various segments to facilitate a good talk show flow was not intuitive for him. Students' writing skills seemed to be a factor in the slow process of script writing. Ms. Chen admitted that they overestimated students' writing skills:

> We were discussing yesterday, how, had we had more time, we would have really had to do a whole workshop on how you write a script and what you need to include because their writing skills we realized are very low . . . so a lot of grammar mistakes, spelling errors, unfinished sentences, run-ons, things like that.

Laura, like Javel, felt comfortable to perform the show without script for a more improvised performance. She also illustrated how performing without script could be a means for her to massage views that she did not agree with during the collaborative scripting process:

> I don't need a script. I can ad lib, pretty much, but if I have a script, [I] might as well stick to it and just add some of my own. Because I didn't really go through what the script said, because most of it I wrote, but then, Diego took control and wrote some. I didn't really like what he wrote, so I ad libbed over him, you know?

Sustainability talk show production provided students with many dimensions to express their thoughts and ideas. They could add any visual or audio elements in their show, or add songs, jokes or other styles of interactions to engage audiences in their topics. However, these creative possibilities sometimes became distractions that prevented them from focusing on civic messages they wanted to convey through the talk show. For instance, at the very end of the summer program, while students' scripts did not yet present a clear focus with solid content on three sustainability issues, students were all interested in the music component and searching songs to match their talk show episodes. Ms. Chen shared her thoughts about this:

> For me, what's more important is the script, the content, but a lot of them want to focus on that because they really like music. I think it presents a new challenge for them to realize they can't just listen to music that they listen to on their iPod, because it's not appropriate or because it's copyrighted. Gracia knows a lot about that, open-source music, so she was able to point them to specific sites where you can look for music that's free and available.

Students were not able to prioritize and focus their limited time in the program to develop clear and focused perspectives on sustainability issues, judging from the civic goals of ST, and other performative components, while interesting and important, distracted them from this task.

Rehearsal was an effective means for students to review their draft scripts because they would be ale to see and feel the performance, not the texts on the scripts. However, an unstable Second Life connection in the classroom due to high demand of internet bandwidth for a group of participants to be on Second Life simultaneously interrupted students' rehearsals on their draft scripts. This was a problem that also happened earlier in Second Life gaming activities. Laura expressed her frustration after their first and only rehearsal of the virtual talk show during the summer sessions:

> Oh gosh, so much lag like I'm trying to talk, and then like I heard myself in the background and then I stopped because I'm like wait I hear myself let me wait to see hear myself finish. I'm like, 'Wait, I'm supposed to continue talk[ing] so that it can finish,' and then that I can't hear Lukas and then just like answering at all moments. It was fun, except for the fact that there was so much computer lag.

Students could have easily rehearsed in person about major contents in the scripts without avatars and SL connections. In this case, however, technical barriers complicated the virtual talk show performance. As a facilitator who worked on SL virtual production program for the first time, Ms. Chen wondered about the value of conducting talk shows in the virtual world versus in the real world, since the convenience of easily accessible stage brought new technical challenges into virtual talk show production.

Script was a useful written document for students to plan and think about all the details and perspectives students wanted to present in the talk show, but students needed more guidance and assistance in script writing.

Raising social issues awareness in and through virtual world. The virtual talk show format had two unique features for raising awareness about social issues. First, students used avatars to promote their ideas about social issues and change; secondly, the Second Life virtual world was a new venue for them to communicate these ideas with people from around the world. Brandon, who said that he was less comfortable as a talk show host in the real world, explained the benefit of hosting a virtual talk show through his avatar:

> I like the fact that we can create [a] character, and like basically have your own show where you inform others . . . It's kind of comfortable when you don't have to be like have an audience, have people looking at you and . . . it's also good knowing that you can just sit behind the laptop and speak or type, and people still receive the information as if you were right there, the same way . . . I guess it's kind of easier for me cause I'm not a talkative person, but it is easier for me just type it in computer so other person can get the information, so I didn't really see a significant differences; it is just like, the differences in comfort level.

Overall, Brandon was very supportive of this SL talk show format because "this is different from reading a book or learning from a teacher—you can have fun while learning something new." He was also interested in promoting this production approach to other youth and hosting his own show in SL in the future.

However, this wasn't the case for every student. Marc represented a case at the opposite end of the spectrum. Ms. Chen noticed that Marc was not very engaged in most SL activities and shared her observation:

> He can't identify with his avatar, so he would rather do it in real life. Is it because he's more outgoing, so he would prefer just to be in real life, versus quieter, shyer students who want to do it through their avatar. I don't know if it's like a simple breakdown. That was one thing I noticed as a benefit of simulation for the students who were more flexible.

Marc's performance as a talk show host with Javel in an improvised talk show during their field trip to the local public media production center presented a sharp contrast to his lack of interest in Second Life virtual talk show. Both Marc and Javel performed naturally and

enthusiastically without any difficulties in front of the camera and their classmates and other visitors at the time. The passionately talked about their favorite music singer, Vybz Kartel, a Jamaican dancehall reggae artist, and his songs; they practiced their talk show topic food justice only briefly before they went back to talk about music. Music as the talk show topic seemed make the difference because it was what they were passionate about and what they were eager to share with others; however, in-person communication also made Marc felt more comfortable. He explained: "talk show in NNS is easier because I can just present myself in person. In SL, [the] avatar cannot represent myself."

Ideally, performing a virtual talk show in Second Life would also allow students to engage with new groups of audiences. However, the landscape has changed, which discounted this possibility. As Ms. Chen noted about this challenge:

> Also, one limitation is also—well, I don't know if we will hit it yet but getting the audience numbers in Second Life. That might be hard because there aren't as many teenagers on Second Life as there used to be . . . A lot of educators, who were working in Second Life with students, stopped doing it because they couldn't afford it anymore . . .

This challenge was also due to the closing of Teen Second Life months earlier before the start of ST program. Teen Second Life was designed specifically for youth users and many educational projects were held in this space. With the closing of this teen space, educators had to use Second Life mainland and it became more challenging to interact and network with teen users.

To promote ST virtual talk show, GYL facilitators contacted other educators in the field of youth media, and posted announcement on its blog. As reported earlier, for each episode the live show in SL had about thirty avatars participated in the show and half of the audience had connections with GYL. Besides, all three Sustainability Talk episodes were uploaded to YouTube after edited by outsourced professional team. For about three years on the internet, the

food justice episode had 807 views,[4] followed by the climate change episode with 391 views and two comments ("cool," "Former Global Youth Leaders member! You guys rock!"), and e-waste with 220 views. The talk show videos did not create a lot of traffic since they were uploaded online. How to have youths' voices heard, not only expressed, is a new challenge toward an ideal mediapolis that promotes not only media justice, but also media hospitality in which listening and understanding are encouraged (Silverstone, 2007).

Even though the design idea behind the Second Life virtual production was to leverage the game-like virtual environment to motivate students to learn, students, unsurprisingly, had various interests and this approach did not work for all.

Unheard voice in song writing. In addition to expressing their views through virtual talk show production, there was one interesting case of unheard youth voice in song writing that is worth further attention because it was a nice contrast to virtual talk show production and it illustrated interesting dynamics in youth voices, affinities and new media production.

As mentioned earlier, Marc seemed to have difficulty fitting in the virtual show production completely because of his lack of interest in virtual world performance. he was also the only student that was suspended due to disrespectful manners during a potential funding guests' visit to the program (He asked during the visit when he can leave as it was beyond their usual dismissal time at 4:00 pm) and was not able to attend the field trip to city government office because he did not bring permission slip. However, observed from his class activities and performance, he was active in participating class activities (except less so in the Second Life

[4] As of February 28, 2014. In January, 30, 2015, Food Justice episode got 994 views, while the other episodes were unavailable online.

sessions), and asked questions eagerly and frequently, and expressed his views without reservations most of the time.

Although he was not enthusiastic about virtual talk show, he was active in the in-person talk show performance during the field trip to a local public media station. In addition, he was enthusiastic about writing songs and used it as a means to express himself. Since the first day, Marc was always singing whenever he got the chance: during breaks, lunch time, or anytime when they were on the way to or back from the fieldtrips. For instance, on his way back from the public media production center back to GYS office, which took about an hour including walks and subway transportation, he sang non-stop all the way, sometimes with his phone playing music loudly without really caring about the surroundings and other times just mumbled. I was not able to understand the lyrics partly because I was not familiar with the genre, but also because of the "broken English," a unique English style of Jamaican Creole used in those songs. It was on a sunny day in the middle of the summer program on the street that I realized not only he was singing songs by his favorite singers but he was actually creating his songs in most of the times. "Chingfu, You got a pen?" he asked me as he walked with Troy on the street in the neighborhood to conduct interviews for their food justice talk show. Not paying much attention to the group work, he yet wrote on his A4 size notebook seriously and diligently as we walked. I asked what he was writing, and he said he just came up some great lyrics and had to write them down. I learned that his constantly mumbling during the breaks was part of his song writing efforts.

Later, as I tried to learn more about his songs, he said that it is "not appropriate" to share them with me because they were gangster songs. However, he shared some background and

thoughts behind those song writing in the interview. After talking about a police brutality video he shared with me, he continuted:

> Marc: I'm okay. 'Cause like things like there ain't nothing like I really never seen, you know violence things so-
> Chingfu: You mean in real life?
> Marc: Yeah so. People think that I never seen stuff or witnessed stuff like - it's just like different. They don't understand - I don't talk about stuff like that really so they don't know. But it's really not new to me. I see a lot of things. You know … I said I don't tell people a lot of things like that because I don't want anybody in my business, like people knowing. You know? So I just keep that kind of stuff to myself. I don't brag about stuff like that.
> Chingfu: And, like, singing is one way for you to kind of express yourself?
> Marc: Yeah. I like singing. Yeah. Even when I'm mad I sing a lot too.
> Chingfu: So that's one reason you want to write your own songs, kind of?
> Marc: Right.
> Chingfu: To write your own thoughts, your own songs?
> Marc: Yeah. I like writing songs.

When asked how was his song writing different from virtual talk show production, he said that feelings were important: "I got to put a lot of my feelings inside for this. Like, that talk show can't make me feel no way, happy or sad …I just do what I got to do." Marc illustrated an interesting example of how passion and personal interest can drive learning, and the challenge for new media civic education to connect youth interests to civic learning. Furthermore, his case also indicated his discomfort of learning in a summer program that was detached from his gritty life experience, thus a separation between his life and summer program experiences. Realizing the ideal of democracy as "a mode of associated living" and weaving students' daily life experiences into civic education remain a challenge facing new media civic educators.

In Sustainability Talk, students had opportunities to learn from experts about various aspects of virtual talk show design; they wrote scripts of three talk show topics. Students picked up digital learning skills such as audio and video editing quickly, but had to improve their literacy skills to write good scripts to express their voices. In addition, they were distracted from

other visual and audial elements in production and failed to integrate a good synthesis of research on sustainability issues in the scripts. Finally, their voices on the issues of sustainability were limited during the final virtual talk shows. As for the virtual talk show format, it provided benefits for students who shy away from the stage, but confined others from more natural, improvised performances on the stage. The unstable server connection due to high bandwidth demand from the simultaneous login of program participants was another challenge for new media production in Second Life.

Conceptions of Citizenship, Youth Civic Identity, and Social Change

Knowledge about one's local community and the society is essential for civic identity building (Atkin & Hart, 2003). As reported in the previous findings, most students acknowledged that they had little prior knowledge about sustainability issues and gained new understanding about them in the ST program. This new understanding made them care more about these public issues. Shanice explained in the interview:

> I was aware of what's going on with ice caps melting and sea level rising, but I'm going to be honest and say that I didn't really care as much. But because we spoke about it so much and we've gotten so much in depth with it, I care a lot more now.

Similar changes were found in other students who indicated that they were more aware of sustainable issues such as e-waste, factory farming and climate change, and were inspired to take actions to address these issues.

Participation in local communities and authentic learning contexts are important for facilitating youth civic development. During the summer ST program, students participated in one community service event and helped rake fallen leaves and clean a local park. Students also had opportunities to visit the city government office to learn from officials about the city's green initiatives, a community public media production center and a farmer's market near GYL's

office. In these authentic learning environments, they learned first-hand about local government's efforts to promote sustainability and the practice of public media production in a local center; they tasted fresh produce from local farms in the farmer market, and learned about the skewed distribution of current farmer market locations in the city; they recognized that most farmer markets were distant from where they lived, which presented a challenge for them and their families to buy healthier and fresher foods in these farmer markets instead of local super markets. These community participations and activities in the authentic contexts enhanced students' sense of belonging to the local communities and to the city.

Students in ST also interviewed people in the local communities with video recorders to collect various perspectives on sustainability issues. These interview clips were planned to be part of the materials for the virtual talk shows. The format of this production activity put students in the active role to explore local people's views. For instance, food justice group members interviewed a fish vendor at the local farmer market about fish farming, a staff at a supermarket's meat department about his understanding of meat production and factory farming, and one GYL staff member, who is a vegan, about her ideas of food justice. This interview task successfully pushed students to interact with local people, which was not easy as they spent time lingering in public places to think about whom to interview. Members at food justice group were aware of the importance of getting diverse views and tried to get people from different backgrounds. Thus, students strengthened their sense of belonging to the communities through these interactions.

However, students only got a brief explanatory session with tips about conducting video interviews and asking questions before they headed out to conduct interviews. Thus, overall these interviews were less structured and prepared, and little in-depth insight was generated from these conversations. In the end, none of these video interviews were used in the final production.

Aside from gaining new knowledge, community participation activities and interviews that helped students build better connection with local communities and the society and foster their sense of agency, students had opportunities to learn from social activists about their views on justice and social change. Students watched inspirational video talks by environmental activists, and also had guest speakers who worked on social change and sustainability issues to share their experiences working in the field. In a special arrangement, students had an opportunity to attend a special screening of a documentary about a rapper fighting for gender equity and for abolition of female genital mutilation in Senegal through music, and discussed about this documentary with its director. Most students enjoyed the documentary and were inspired. They discussed about what does social change mean for them, and talked about the lessons from the activist rapper who fight for gender equity. Diego expressed his admiration for the activist's commitment to social change and expressed positive perspectives on activism—that everyone's participation would contribute to a better world.

Another unique civic identity learning opportunity in NMCE is media production in which youth get to express their voices on social issues and engage with new audiences. Diego's idea about online broadcasting, which he addressed in his application essay for the ST summer program, illustrated this idea: "I'll speak for those kids who can't talk about the global problems such as war, global warming, gang activity . . . This program will help me with that by increasing my voice through a small radio." At the end of the summer program, most students wanted to raise awareness about sustainability issues through SL virtual talk shows. Javel said that he wanted his audience to learn about the importance of recycling and the impact of e-waste, and "we'll have video so people can understand it; we want to make it fun, so no sleep." Other students shared similar goals to make their talk show both fun and informative.

As reported earlier, students had two opportunities to interact with audiences: in the live Second Life talk shows as they performed as hosts and through comments on the archived, edited virtual talk show videos hosted on YouTube. Avatars who participated in the live virtual talk shows had some affiliations and connections with GYL, and most of them responded positively to the virtual talk shows at the end of the performances. This feedback encouraged the hosts and fostered their civic agency, which was evident in Brandon's interest to continue exploring other issues through this virtual talk show format. As for the archived talk show videos on YouTube, each video had several hundred views, and there were few supportive comments from GYL friends and members, judging from the user names and content. When asked, Brandon said that he did not watch the earlier uploaded video of the Food Justice show. This study was not able to find students' responses to these videos. However, there were no interactions with audience on the commenting section.

Although ST provided various opportunities for youth civic identity development, it was a dynamic process and competing views were presented in the cultural practice of this new media civic program. Students' views on what defines a good citizen illustrated their conceptions about the relationship between individuals and the society. Most of the students' conceptions of citizenship was aligned with what Kahne and Westheimer (2004) call a "personal responsible citizen"—a citizen who obeys the law and does his or her share to support the community. This was evident in several students' responses to the interview question about their conceptions of good citizenship. Students' responses included "You don't do violence, don't do things against the law," "no littering, following the rules," and "helping out each other and stuff like that," which were all typical characteristics of a personal responsible citizen. This conception of citizenship was also evident in students' thinking about solutions to various sustainability issues.

Although all of the talk show scripts provided some justice-oriented structural perspectives and understanding on these sustainability issues, they focused on individual responsible actions as ways to address these issues. At the end of the global warming group's script, for instance, students listed eight ways that the audience members can help to address the issue of global warming. All of these suggestions, such as use less air conditioning, use energy star appliances, go to a local farmers' market, etc., centered on individual responsibility without any social action approaches that tackled the social structural problems. However, students presented a sense of active civic identity and agency, and believed in making a more sustainable world through their advocacy and daily recycling and energy conserving efforts.

Although students mostly thought of personal responsible citizenship, during the ST program they had many opportunities to explore different visions of citizens and their relationships with the society and social change. It is clear that all of the students in ST wanted to help people learn about their talk show topics and take actions after they were more aware of these sustainability issues. In other words, they wanted to facilitate changes via new media and became participatory citizens. However, students were reflecting on the challenge of turning their knowledge and advocacy into justice-oriented social actions. Students thought some actions were easier than others for them to take. For instance, students did not express any hesitations about daily recycling or unplugging unused electronic devices to save energy but structural social change actions such as the unequal e-waste problems on a global scale were more difficult for them to enact.

Ethan, who worked on the topic of e-waste, said that recycling abandoned electronic devices was easy; fighting the pervasive consumerism culture in daily life, on the other hand, was more difficult. For instance, he learned the idea of "perceived obsolescence" in product

design that was intentional by the industries to encourage consumers to get rid of older yet working products and get newer versions. Although he thought that Apple should not make new models every year, but should have a longer redesign cycle, he admitted that not following up and getting the latest electronic products was difficult.

These shifting conceptions about their roles and what they can do with these social problems were most clear in their discussions about food justice and McDonald's role in food production industry. Most students got lunch at McDonalds during the summer ST program, and it had been part of their daily life. Students learned about the problems of some fast food industries in ST. For instance, Troy shared a blog entry about how McDonalds contributed to over-consumption of food in the world. He said in the interview that he gained a new understanding about the problems associated with factory farming and the fast food industry, and the benefits of farmer markets; he has paid more attention to family farm products since then. When asked about any actions he would take for change, he replied that "I would choose differently but still I wouldn't stop the problem that is going on." For many students, the practical challenge was that the closest farmers' markets or environmentally friendly supermarkets were usually far away from where they lived, as they found out in a class research activity. In addition, not many affordable restaurant choices were available in their communities.

Marc's views on food production issues and MacDonald's role in protecting consumer's health clearly illustrated the dynamic civic identity development. Earlier in the discussion about the *Story of Stuff*, he was one of the students who criticized eagerly on the corrupt relationship between big corporations and the government. In his research for food production talk show, Marc found that popular fast food chicken nuggets were made by mechanically separating meat that was washed and soaked in ammonia and flavored artificially; he enthusiastically shared this

discovery with his peers. Interestingly, in a human barometer activity in which students chose a yes/no stance on statements about sustainability issues, Marc chose "no" to the statement "Restaurants such as McDonald's should be held legally responsible if their customers get sick from eating their food regularly." He argued that consumers should know and expect what they will get from restaurants such as McDonald, and it is one's choice. One assisting facilitator revised the question and added "in poor communities" at the end of the statement, and asked whether students who said no to the statement to consider their answers again. Marc did not change his position. The facilitator used her neighborhood as a case to illustrate the limitation of Marc's argument about personal choice that failed to consider the bigger picture of social structure. She said she lived in an urban community

> where the four restaurants that I have an option to choose from are Checkers, McDonalds, Burger King and my corner store. Those are my options. I'm health conscious about my food. Yes, there are other options out there. There's the CFA, there's the farmer's market as you all were saying but as we also said before organic food is not out there for everybody. What about those people in the poor communities who have 6 dollars. You have 6 bucks. You have to feed 3 people, where are you going to go?

Not convinced by her, Marc replied:

> Yea, we see. You know what you said, in a poor community, if you have 6 dollars and you're only option is Mc Donald in a poor poverty community, you have to do what you have to do. You got to go buy it to feed your kids.

Despite all these conversations and new understandings, most students kept getting McDonalds meals during their lunch break every day during the summer program sessions. Ms. Chen reflected on the gap between knowing and doing in a blog post at the end of the summer session:

> Habits are hard to change (students still ate McDonalds everyday after all), but I'm slowly making lifestyle changes myself, in the age old 'practice what you preach' model, which probably is the perspective also shared by all [of the] students.

In short, although students had become more positive and active on certain aspects of theses sustainable issues and were comfortable to make changes through individual efforts, they

were not confident about structural changes such as over-consumption and e-waste that are both facilitated by industries.

Case 2: Urban Youth Radio

Urban Youth Radio (UYR) is a non-profit organization that provides journalism and radio production training to urban youth. UYR believes that "a nuanced, balanced, and diverse news media is both a human right and a public good" and helps disadvantaged urban youth to be not only smart media consumers, but also media makers and create media that convey diverse and unheard voices to the public. Youth Radio Story (YRS) is an in-school program "that involves youth in building the skills to produce media about topics currently missing from the news" through project-driven courses. This study followed the Youth Radio Story program at Pioneer high school, one of UYR's partner schools in the city.

Most students at Pioneer High School are from historically disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds; 78% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Pioneer High School is committed to implementing core principles, drawn from the Coalition of Essential School's "Habits of Mind," which include: using evidence, considering viewpoints, making connections, seeking significance, asking 'what if?', and being metacognitive. Pioneer High School has infused these principles into all areas of its curriculum and uses performance-based assessments as part of its graduation requirement to evaluate students on these principles. Ms. Smith, a English teacher at Pioneer High School, enjoyed teaching at this school because of its supportive and collaborative teaching environment. She explained in the interview:

> Well when I said the thing about a teacher-led culture, I just meant there are very few decisions that are made from the top down at our school in terms of like our principal doesn't tell us "now you'll do this, now you'll teach that." The decision making is left up to the teams and the teachers, and we do almost everything that way.

Pioneer Youth Radio Story was a special mandatory program for students who were in the Reading and Writing I course, a remedial course for students who needed extra assistance in reading and writing skills. Student met twice a week to learn about reading and writing skills, which were taught by English teacher Ms. Smith and supporting teacher Ms. Amelia. In addition, two other sessions, exclusively for the YRS program, were taught mainly by the YRS instructor Ms. Kim, and Ms. Smith helped facilitate some class activities. The YRS curriculum emphasizes media literacy and radio story production. The curriculum was designed by Urban Youth Radio. Ms. Smith thought the YRS curriculum and her reading and writing class complemented each other in enriching ways:

> I just thought it would be a good idea to do it with this particular group of kids since the focus of the class is really on their reading skills. I didn't want them to get bogged down four days a week just in phonics instruction, because I thought that could be kind of demoralizing, I wanted them to have a space where they have a voice and they're exploring other ways of expressing themselves so I thought that Youth Radio Story would be a good match because it's about verbal expression, and I think that's a strength of a lot of the kids in the class. I wanted them to have some experience with their strengths since the class is really about addressing their weaknesses, which is the reading and writing. I just thought it would be nice for them to have something to balance that out.

The YRS radio project gave students an opportunity to express their voices and connect to people in the real world. The opportunity changed how students learn and was essential to help students develop a sense of civic agency. Ms. Smith elaborated on this view in her interview:

> I feel like the stakes sort of changed for kids when they are communicating for non-school purposes; like school writing and writing for teachers, you would write an essay and the audience was the teacher and the essay is about this thing that somebody else was assigned to you and that's a certain sort of loop that all stays within the school … your voice never really leaves the building in that kind of work, and I like that YRS gives them an audience outside the building so the stakes are kind of higher… I think that it's helping them learn how to communicate with adults better, in general, real world communication, so something like the interview that they did last week was a pretty amazing experience for them. I just think they have a sense of their words mattering more when they know there's someone from the real world listening, and it's not just all about what happens in school.

Of the eight students enrolled in the class and in the program at the beginning of the fall semester, four students---two black, one Hispanic/El Salvadorian American, and one Chinese-American---agreed to participate in this research (one student dropped out of the school at the end of the semester).

The eight-month long Youth Radio Story curriculum consisted of two major components: (1) learning about media and (2) radio production practices. During the first two-thirds of the program, students learned about important concepts in media culture and journalism. They discussed and learned about the basics of journalism and related topics, such as newsworthy-ness, bias and stereotype, and media conglomerates through interactive pedagogical approaches such as simulation, skit, and discussion. Meanwhile, students also learned about basic radio story production skills, such as how to use a digital recorder effectively, how to do ambient sound recording, script writing, and interviewing, and other applied skills necessary for creating small radio production projects. These projects provided students with opportunities to express themselves and to gain new understandings about their school and local community. For instance, their first recording project was an election reflection project, which took place during a local election. In this project, students shared their perspectives on various social issues, such as poverty, community violence, and marijuana legalization, through one-minute long first-person audio narratives. These narratives were then aired on both a local radio station and the UYR website. In another example, the students engaged in a practice project. The topic, Thanksgiving, explored what people were thankful for through interviews with people in the local community. Ms. Kim believed that students learned about media more effectively by doing media production; she integrated these two in her instruction in this program.

In the last three months of the program, Ms. Kim worked with students to create culminating projects. A strong believer in interest-driven learning, Ms. Kim helped students identify an interest for their final projects. She created an open climate for students to work on projects that reflected their interests or daily life experiences. The students decided to work on a group radio story project about homeless youth[5]. Students, however, were not able to complete the homeless youth final radio project. Part of the incompletion was due to that fact that students needed more scaffolding and guidance in the final project production than Ms. Kim had expected. Also, students viewed the YRS program as a supplementary class due to the fact that it was part of the reading and writing class (the YRS class requirements were distinct from those in their core classes that directly connected to their high school diploma). In the end, the completion of a final project required more input and commitment than the existing program arrangement of two hours a week.

In the following sections, I present major themes of the students' learning experiences from the YRS program and their conceptions of citizenship and civic identity development.

Preparing Active News Consumers in a Supportive Learning Community

At the beginning of each session in YRS, Ms. Kim led the "Headlines" activity and everyone, including all instructors, was invited to share one personal story and one news story he/she noticed recently. Ms. Kim believed that this activity would prepare students to be active news consumers, which was important for these students as they were learning to produce good radio stories.

[5] Two students worked on individual projects –one about his paint ball activity and the other about a photographer. This study focused on the group work of homeless youth as it was more relevant to civic education.

When this activity was introduced early in the program students often did not feel like sharing a personal or news story with the group. With modeling and encouragement from Ms. Kim, students gradually got used to opening conversations in their class community through sharing. Xiao, one of the least talkative students in the class, illustrates the most significant transformation as a result of "headlines." He refused to share headlines from the beginning of the program. He always passed on the sharing activity to the extent that his classmate Tyler teased him when it was his turn "Xiao all you do is say I don't know." Ms. Kim intervened and said that Xiao's no participation was a signal for assistance. She said she would like everyone to help each other to learn in a respectful manner. Language seemed to be a barrier for Xiao, as his classmates noticed, since he talked loudly when he was with his Chinese friends during lunch breaks in the cafeteria. With Ms. Kim's encouragement and support, Xiao became more comfortable in sharing personal updates, even if with only a few words about a news headlines, in the later period of the program.

The headlines activity also provided students with opportunities to talk about major world news events of 2011, including the Japanese tsunami, a nuclear disaster, Arab Spring, and the U.S. raid and assassination of Osama bin Laden. Along with these major news stories, they also discussed other news and educational topics such as standardized testing, low-performing school closure, and teacher evaluation. The students discussed in detail the events and expressed their perspectives. There were instances where students expressed perspectives that were rarely heard in news media. For instance, they read about a new city's educational policy to add more standardized tests as part of a statewide overhaul of teacher evaluation. Tyler commented in his notebook:

> I think that 7 or 8 test thing is so crazy I also think it stupid because if a student does not like a teacher they we fail the test so they do not have to see the teacher.

Several other students echoed Tyler's view. While this response is unlikely from higher-achievement students, Tyler's view is a crucial viewpoint of struggling students, that is, what matters most is not scores, but whether concepts are fully understood and whether their learning is supported by their teachers. Tyler's point reveals the limitation of a score-based teacher evaluation policy.

Bianca and Zoe had positive experiences in the Headlines activities and expressed an interest in following and understanding news. However, Xiao and Regina did not change their news consumption habits despite their learning experience. When asked about her news consumption, Regina pointed out that sometimes there were no need to read news because all important events, such as the assassination of Osama bin Laden, are shared on Facebook and in her family circle. She did not think there was any need to change her news consumption habits. Xiao did not follow news as well unless he got really bored, but he did get news stories from family and friends as they brought those news up in conversation.

In short, students in the YRS shared their daily life updates with the class in the headlines activity, got opportunities to discuss major news events, and expressed rarely heard youth perspectives in some cases. During these discussions, students also learned about media literacy, and gained a deeper understanding of bias and stereotypes in their daily lives, and in the current media environment, which will be addressed in detail in the following section.

Learning about Media Literacy and Discovering Bias and Stereotypes

In the YRS, a significant portion of the curriculum was designed to help students learn about media, media literacy, and journalism. "What is your source?" had become a standard question that Ms. Kim asked students after they shared news stories in the headlines activities;

this helped students to be aware of the importance of credible and reliable sources. Not surprisingly, at the end of the second semester, students spontaneously asked one another about the sources of their news stories as they shared in the regular headlines activities. Zoe, one of the most outspoken students in the class, expressed her skepticism about news and media frequently after she learned about the ecology of media conglomerate. Such critical media literacy is fundamental to become an informed citizen to participate in public affairs. She explained what she learned about media in this program in the interview:

> Zoe: Not all media is going to tell you the truth. Some of them are, and some are not. You have to be careful of what you choose to listen to, and what you don't. You have to look into it more, instead of just one picture. You have to look at the whole thing. You have to look into it more, and it's your decision to take it in, or to learn, and not react to it. Osama, everybody overreacted to it.
> Chingfu: Overreacted? Say more about that.
> Zoe: Everybody was like, how he should die, and everything. We're all citizens, and we're all people, at the same time. We're all human. Our decisions make a big impact on us all around. I think when we say something, we shouldn't react to it, as much as we do; we shouldn't overreact to it. People were talking about the pictures in the newspaper, and they were so graphic, and stuff, but they weren't even real. You understand me? Some pictures weren't even real. We have to take in some information and see if we trust it or not. It's our decision. I think that's what helps a lot.

Students in the YRS also got many opportunities to learn about bias and stereotypes both in the media and in their daily life experiences. In many instances, students exposed their stereotypes in class activities, which gave Ms. Kim and Ms. Smith teachable moments to address these concepts. At the same time, this presented challenges for them to unpack the complicated and interwoven relationships among students' understanding of the world, daily life experiences, and stereotypes.

In a session in which students were learning to identify loaded words in news stories, they read one story of a fatal shooting of a black university football player by two white officers.

In the middle of the reading, a heated conversation about bias, stereotype, students' unpleasant experiences with polices, and racial tensions sparked.

> Regina: I swear to God they are always white people. No offense. No offense.
> Tyler: Wow…wow!
> Bianca: I know what Regina is saying, cause all of the cops that kids got shot by they were either Caucasian [interrupted]
> Dave: Caucasian or white? I don't think it's like that.
> Ms. Kim: When you generalize, when you say, "Always," when you say your opinion, it's okay to have your opinion, but when you state it as a fact, then sometimes it becomes a bit inaccurate.
> Bianca: But like Sean Bell. Sean Bell got shot by two white guys.
> Regina: In a party, then a shootout, who comes? White people. White people come and arrest you.…
> Ms. Smith: You know what a trick that I teach my students sometimes to use to get you out of generalizing is to say, "In my experience."
> Regina: Okay. Like, in my experience, it's often white people that are the police.
> Ms. Smith: That's just making it clear that you're just saying what you've experienced. It's not like that for everybody.…
> Bianca: In my experience, it was summer, and I was still outside, like, 9 o'clock and you cannot walk in the park, but I didn't know that. It was me and all of my friends, and we walked, and we laughed, and, yes, we were loud, but it was summer. Everybody was outside so we were walking, and, like, they came out like ninjas, the cops.
> Tyler: [*Laughs*]
> Bianca: This is crazy. You're on top of the thing, and you won't see nothing. It's dark outside. We was out late so all you see is three people coming up the hill, and with shiny badges, and all of the sudden, this thing goes, "Bling!" We got scared. One of them, he said, "You guys, come over here." I came up there. I didn't have nothing to do. He was like, "Oh, y'all know you can't be at the park." I was like, "What you talking about?" He had the audacity to yell at me saying, "Oh, talk to me like that one more time I could arrest you, and take you to the 47th Precinct." Excuse me? [*Tyler laughs*] What did I do to you? I came up to you, but my friends are still there being disrespectful saying, "F--- you." No. Excuse my language, saying, "F--- you" And all this stuff. Yeah. I came up politely to you, and you're telling me you're going to take me to the 47th Precinct and everything?
> Ms. Smith: In your experience, it can be pretty tricky and frustrating.

This example illustrated how some of the students' stereotypical understandings about the world were deeply rooted in their daily life experiences. Ms. Smith and Ms. Kim did great work listening to and responding to these experiences with an empathetic tone, and provided students with a way of expression that would help them avoid being stereotypical and possibly offensive

in such instances. However, it seemed clear that the speech code approach on stereotypical thinking missed the bigger picture of institutional oppression and cannot effectively address students' frustrations regarding social injustices. It was challenging to try to respond to students' authentic experiences and have relevant instruction and discussions in the curriculum for new media civic educators in such cases. However, addressing social injustice issues more directly in such instances was necessary to more effectively address students' stereotypical thinking and perceptions, which seemed to be the surface issues of the deeper problems.

In another class, Ms. Kim listed four major components of a story—characters, conflict, setting and events—on the blackboard and facilitated a discussion about narrative development and storytelling skills. Students were given two characters, one sixty-five-year-old woman and a fifteen-year-old boy, as the starting points. They proposed the setting as somewhere close to the city zoo. As they thought about the events and conflicts, some proposed that the youth followed the lady, pretending that he wanted to help her, but later stole stuff from her at her place. The boy was later sent to the prison. Unconsciously, as illustrated in their storytelling practice, these students themselves stereotyped young males as criminals.

In the follow-up class, Ms. Kim pointed this out and tried to help students gain further understanding about stereotypes. She started the class by defining a stereotype as

> something you think of another person that is based on not because you know anything about the person, but because of other things you have heard or experienced ... stereotype is generalization. It is like saying all people are like this all certain people are like this.

Using this definition, Ms. Kim further urged students to reflect on the last storytelling exercise:

> All of us pretty much thought that the fifteen-year-old boy was a bad kid. There's one stereotype. You have it. That's a stereotype. They're not necessarily all bad, but you think they are. How about this? All women are bad drivers. All Korean people are good at math. All Italians are in the Mafia.

However, it was not easy for students to transfer these understandings of stereotypical thinking to other cases. In another instance a couple of weeks later, Ms. Kim had students share their perceptions of homeless people as the starting activity for the later online research activity about this population. This activity got the students thinking about what stories they would want to tell in their final production. “Beard,” “drunk,” “cigarette,” “black,” “usually men,” and “crazy” were some of the terms students suggested as they thought of homeless people. They then conducted online research to learn more about homeless people, including looking at images and checking out advocacy websites. During the course of research and discussions, Regina expressed a couple of times that she did not want to interview homeless people because “you might talk to people who are crazy.” Ms. Kim reminded her that this was a stereotype. In the end, it was their first interview with a homeless person that transformed Regina’s bias toward homeless people, which I will address in detail in the next section, along with students’ interview experiences with other people in the community.

Understanding Diverse Life Experiences through Interviews

Ms. Kim believed that good journalism provides good stories and would help listeners understand people in the society; it is:

> something that can help build a connection…connects the listener to the story, right, so maybe you won't be able to see them face-to-face to have a personal connection, to then be able to challenge on a stereotype…if it's an authentic story it doesn't use stereotypes, it doesn't use bias, it doesn't use these things. You can get more authentic information.

Interviewing is an effective tool for good journalism, and was one major skill in YRS’s radio production that allowed students to get various perspectives on topics from people’s daily lives. This process allowed them to understand more deeply other people’s lives so they could be represented to a wider community. Students learned the basics of digital audio recording,

interview manners, ambient sound collecting, and drafting interesting questions to get useful information from interviewees. Zoe reflected on the excitement of their first interview practice session, which was about what people were thankful for during the Thanksgiving holiday week:

> Zoe: It's interesting, because you don't know who you're going to talk to. You can't tell by looking at a person, what they've gone through, so you have to find out. When you're recording, you hear stories, and you learn about what goes on. Not just you, but around you; what goes on around you. That recording helps a lot.

Regina shared a similar excitement; she thought she got great stories from people on the streets, but was upset that she didn't successfully push the recording button twice to turn it from standby mode to recording.

As they worked on the homeless youth radio story, students went out to interview their school principal, administrators, and teachers to get ideas for their questions for their interviews with homeless people. Students understood other aspects of these school adults whom they met on the daily basis through interviews. Particularly, Bianca and Tyler were impressed by the principal's yearly charity work with his church to help homeless people, which gave them a new perspective about him. They saw him not as a principal, but also as a citizen trying to effect social change through action.

As they prepared for an interview with a special guest, Michael, who had been homeless for almost three years after he lost his job unexpectedly and is now an advocate for homeless people and an adequate housing movement, students looked at his profile and background in order to develop the list of interview questions. They learned a better way to frame the questions in order to get Michael's perspectives on some potentially stereotypical questions about homeless people. For instance, they framed the question about homeless people lying about their life stories as "I heard that homeless people lie about their life stories. Is it true?" They also learned to ask open-ended questions to solicit richer answers.

The session started with Michael sharing his background and homeless experiences, and how he was able to go back to work. He talked about deciding to fight for housing justice and help homeless people to have adequate housing options. Students were engaged as Michael shared his experiences. Aside from the questions that were prepared in advance, one of the most engaging and moving conversations came from Tyler's question about Michael's decision not to seek assistance from family members even though he lived in the shelter that was not far away from his family.

> Tyler: Why did you decide to go the shelter and not back to your parents' house?
> Michael: This is interesting. I love to tell this story, because I was the first child in my family to complete high school and to graduate from college.
> Tyler: Congratulations.
> Michael: I was always thought of as the rock in the family, the strong person of the family. I felt that I kind of let folks down by losing the job. It was like, "You know what? He was the person that everybody in the family always looked up to. He got his high school degree, he went through college." Anytime there was a problem, my sisters or brothers had a problem, they came to their brother, Michael, and he helped them through the problem, helped them think through it. Now here I am, with the biggest problem of all, right? The whole time, the two years I was homeless in Miami, my family never knew. I would call my sister every Sunday, like I always did, ask how's she's doing, is everything all right. My sister never knew. When I came back, I was looking kind of scruffy, I was unshaven. I didn't want her to see me that way. My thought was just to go to the shopping center, get something to eat, clean myself up, get on the bus. Then, I found out it was an actual shelter. It was someplace I could stay and I decided to just stay there. To this day, my family still doesn't know I was homeless for those two years and ten months.
> Tyler: Are you planning to tell them?
> Michael: It's hard. I think about it if there's a lot of guilt in me. A lot of times I'm saying, you know, you need to share. That's what family is for. It's difficult for me, because my sister is very ill. She has sickle cell anemia, she's diabetic. I don't want her carrying my problems or thinking and worrying about it. I mean, my life is fine now, you know. I still just don't know how she might react. She's sick. One day I might tell her.

Michael also talked about what he did in his current position as a human rights advocate for a nonprofit organization to fight for housing justice and shared how the internet can be used as a great tool to raise awareness about this issue and build communities for social change.

This interview with Michael seemed to have a much bigger influence in shaping and changing the students' understandings about homeless people and issues than all the studying and learning about housing injustice and homeless issues through research and interviews with other school teachers. Such influence might come from an opportunity to conduct a two-way conversation with a former homeless person, which allowed students to learn about some of the most difficult and authentic situations for a homeless person that were moving and beyond their expectations. Michael's background as a minority and the first in the family to attend college, and then abruptly become homeless and hold all the difficulties for himself, avoiding letting his family down seemed to engage students deeply, partly because all students also shared that minority identity. Ms. Kim noticed that even the quietest students, Dave and Xiao, approached Michael after the talk to thank him for his sharing and genuinely asked ways they could help address this issue. Ms. Smith shared what she observed in the class following the interview:

> What I noticed was that some of their assumptions about homelessness had changed, so the way that they were talking about the topic was different. I tried to point that out to them and they were sort of like, "No, no, I thought this all along," but I do feel like they changed in the way that they were thinking and talking about the homelessness.…When we first started asking them about the topic I feel like they had a lot of sort of stereotypical expectations of what it means to be homeless and they were expressing that a lot in the conversation.… Several of them were really insisting on saying things like "Oh these people are bums, they're crazy, I don't want to talk to them, what if somebody yells at you." After the interview they really stopped talking that way, so I think that that was kind of transformative even if they don't acknowledge it and realize it.… I'm just impressed that that experience of interviewing somebody shifted that.…

This transformation was especially evident in Regina's attitude toward the final project. Not only did she stop expressing resistance to interviewing homeless people as she had before, but she sought new possibilities and worked actively to arrange an interview with one homeless youth, Tiffany, in the school. However, their first interview with Tiffany did not work well, and not many details about her homeless experiences were shared. In reflection, they found that

Tiffany did not feel relaxed with the talk and they thought about what some other possibilities to make the talk more effective might be.

Meanwhile, Bianca was frustrated with her interviews with fellow students at Pioneer High School regarding how they think about the issue of homelessness because most of the interviewees responded to her questions playfully, with jokes, and not seriously and considerately, giving answers that she was hoping to get. She reflected on the unpleasant experience and realized that where and when she had interviewed her peers–in her case, late afternoon before students were leaving and in the hallways—did not create a good environment for them to share views on serious issues.

Conceptions of Citizenship, Youth Civic Identity and Social Change

Ms. Kim thought critical consciousness about one's social situations and social action were important parts of good citizenship and would like students to understand these dimensions of citizenship. She talked about youth participation and different formats of social action (e.g. making donations to help Japanese tsunami victims, organizing fund-raising activities for causes, protest) on various issues, such as the DREAM Act, school reform, and the Egypt revolution. In the case of homeless people, Ms. Kim invited Michael to give a talk not only about his own experiences as a homeless person, but also his perspective on social movement and policy solutions. Besides, Ms. Kim facilitated discussions about social justice issues (e.g. loaded media depictions of victims of Hurricane Katrina, undocumented immigrants, media conglomerates) in the class, and believed that it was critical for disadvantaged social groups to express their own voices to the public.

Aside from her efforts in these areas, YRS provide many opportunities for youth civic development. Getting informed about what is happening in the community and knowledge about

community issues foster one's sense of belonging to a community and the society. In YRS, the Headlines activities in every sessions that invited students to talk about current news got students opportunities to learn about what's happening in the society. More importantly, some (though not all) started to follow news on a daily basis, which is an important habit for them to become engaged member in the society.

Similar to ST, students in YRS had opportunities to understand and participate in local communities through interviews. Throughout the program, students understood more about the daily life of people who lived or worked near their school neighborhoods. They also understood more about their peers, teachers and the principal's thoughts about life and social issues. This understanding shaped and fostered their sense of belonging to the school and local community. Before each interview, students had discussions about what questions they wanted to ask that would help to tell a good radio story. This end goal of radio production helped their interview process to get more in-depth understandings about people in the local community.

Radio story production is a unique civic identity development opportunity in YRS. It played an important role in fostering students' sense of civic agency for change. Ms. Kim and English teacher Ms. Smith also, implicitly or explicitly, believed in voice-as-democratic-participation (Crawford, 2011) and thought radio production was a great approach for students to have their voice heard and foster active civic identity. Ms. Smith further addressed this point in details:

> Well, I think my angle for wanting to work with the program in the context of reading and writing is just the idea that democracy and citizenship mean feeling confident that you have a voice and knowing how to access your voice and knowing how to make your voice heard. It kind of connects to that thing of like where does control lie? Like in lots of students thinking like somebody else is controlling everything that has to do with them, I want them to understand that they have a say in the things that are happening in their world or they have a say in the things that are happening in their life, they have a voice, so I feel like this part of their education is just helping them understand that they have a voice and how to use it.

In YRS, most students believed that they can contribute to social change by producing radio stories about homeless youth in the city and raising people's awareness about this issue. For instance, Tyler said in the interview about their radio production: "Listen to it, even fourteen-year-old kids care about this, at least these kids can do something to raise awareness."

Radio production could provide students with a new channel to express their findings on the issue of homeless youth. Through online research, first-hand experiences, and interviews with their classmates and friends, students learned that the media depicted youth homeless people as choosing to run away from families and to sleep on the streets instead of going to the shelter, which were inconsistent with what they learned from interviews. Ms. Kim's facilitation in the last development session summarized their major findings and direction for the homeless youth radio story production:

> Ms. Kim: You told us Tiffany said that, you go to a shelter, you're more likely to get accepted to a shelter if you're with a family than if you're a single person?
> Regina: Mmhmm. [Positive]
> Ms. Kim: We were listening to the news, right? And the news, one news report was talking about young people who are homeless and the number is hard to count, right? And one of the reasons that it's hard to do that is because when young people, young people don't use the shelter system. In a way, when I listen to it, when we listen to it, they made it sound like, oh they don't bother to go to the shelter.
> Regina: Yeah.
> Ms. Kim: But if the shelter doesn't accept them, it's not that they don't use the services, it's more like shelter services don't want to accept, or like aren't really available for them. Right?

Students were excited about these findings from their research, interviews, and other pre-production work, and wanted to share these radio stories, although in the end they did not complete their final production.

While students did not get to broadcast their perspectives on homeless youth to audiences outside of their class community, in interviews they shared some thoughts about

communicating with audiences on social networks. Facebook was a convenient starting point for them to share their productions. Although students did not get to share their audio productions through their Facebook and other social media channels, their perspectives on how they productions will be perceived by peers online revealed a dynamic relationship among their sense of civic agency, topics of their productions, and the audience and their peers' preference. They were comfortable sharing their production about homeless youth stories, but did not feel comfortable to share their earlier productions, including their first production on a social issue they cared about for a local election. Regina said that she would not share her radio productions on Facebook because, for her, the platform was a place to share her daily life, and she did not think that her peers would be interested in them.

> Chingfu: Will you share your radio productions on Facebook?
> Regina: Mmhmm … no.
> Chingfu: Definitely no?
> Regina: No.…They are my friends and I know them. They wouldn't care, like, o*kay*, what the hell?

However, when further asked about sharing the ongoing homeless project, she immediately and firmly said that she would share it on Facebook when it was completed to let more people know about homeless youth.

> Regina: Because a lot of homeless people should have homes. I don't know if a lot of people on my Facebook are homeless or something but I feel like they should hear it.…Cause that story is not heard at all. Some people just look at homeless people like oh he is homeless but he is homeless for a reason. You cannot judge somebody because they are homeless.

Zoe provided another perspective on sharing her earlier production about voting on Facebook:

> Zoe: I feel like they're not going to be into it, because I know what friends I have.
> Chingfu: Oh, I see. That's interesting. Just because the topic is about voting, elections.
> Zoe: Yeah. Some people don't care, because we're in school. We're not allowed to vote, so what's our opinion about? That's what they think about, but now I've learned you can do something about it.

In sum, students were passionate about sharing their production and findings to raise awareness about social issues. However, their sense of civic agency and being able to make change also depended on various factors including topics and who the audiences were

Lastly, students' conceptions of citizenship reveal their ideas about what roles they should and can play in local communities and the society. Similar to students at the ST program, students at YRS associated the concept of citizenship with being kind, obeying the laws, and doing services for others. Tyler's reply to what being a good citizen means to him represents most students' conception of personal responsible citizenship:

> A person who helps others. For instance, if there is an old person falling down in the street, you will try to help him, and not leave him there. Also, a good citizen does community service. Obey the law, know your rights. Not being selfish, I guess.

Interestingly and ironically, despite the fact that both ST and YRS provided new civic engagement practice such as raising awareness through radio stories or virtual talk shows to facilitate social change, most students' conception of citizenship was tied deeply to a rather traditional idea of law-abiding, personal responsible citizenship (Kahne & Westheimer, 2004). In addition, Zoe, one of the most active students in the program, expressed a similar view in the interview, but also reported that she participated in fundraising efforts after a documentary screening event on the issue of children soldiers. Xiao, an immigrant who moved to the U.S. from China when he was 10-year-old and who still struggled with both English writing and speaking skills, was the only student in the group that held a detached attitude toward government, civic action and social change, and thought those affairs should be taken care of by adults and were none of his business. Preparing disengaged youth like Xiao with a more active attitude toward civic participation was one of the major tasks for new media civic education.

Also similar to ST, YRS provided many opportunities for youth to develop other conceptions of civic identity that goes beyond being a personal responsible citizen and fosters civic agency. Due to Xiao's detached civic attitude during many class activities, it was particularly interesting to see him, along with another shy boy who rarely expressed himself in the class, approached Michael after the interview and sincerely asked him what a youth can do to help address homeless issue. This was a good indicator of Xiao's becoming more engaged in civic life and affairs. Although Xiao showed interest and seemed to be enthusiastic about the issue at the moment, in the later interview he retreated back to the aloof stance on social issues and civic participation. When asked about what social action meant to him, Xiao replied: "Something about the government; something is not our business, not our students' business" and it is the business of "government, or those who are 18-year-olds, those adults." When prompted that he would be an adult soon and what he would do, he said "nothing." He responded with a similarly disengaged attitude toward the follow-up question on the issue of homeless people. Nevertheless, the inspiring interview with Michael still provided a positive experience to Xiao's continuing civic identity development process.

In contrast to Xiao's detached attitude toward social change, other students learned more about structural injustice behind social issues and were passionate about making change. For instance, Regina transformed from being passive about and stereotyping homeless people to wanting to produce radio stories about homeless people to raise people's awareness; Zoe was actively advocating the importance of understanding media bias and passionate about helping people gain fresh perspectives about social issues through their productions.

Overall, students in YRS gained more civic learning experiences compared to ST. Since in ST students had to spend more time learning about Second Life navigation, creation and

production skills, they spent less time engaging in civic learning experiences. In YRS the technology of audio recording was relatively simpler to learn; thereby giving the stuents more opportunities to focus on civic education.

Chapter Summary

In Sustainability Talk, students gained a new understanding about sustainability. Online research and videos were important sources for them to construct their knowledge of sustainability. Various forms of new media, including search engine findings, Wikipedia, online videos, and social media, presented new challenges for students to evaluate the credibility of information sources, and students needed to learn media literacy skills in order to find reliable information sources for their research projects. Learning activities in the virtual world of SL motivated students to learn about sustainability topics; however, virtual worlds' full potential for simulation was not fully tapped for civic learning in ST. Virtual talk shows were a novel approach for youth to express their perspectives on social issues, but the complexity of production and the technical requirements were barriers for implementation. However, students believed that virtual talk shows would have positive impact on social change and would raise people's awareness on sustainability issues. Meanwhile, students also acknowledged that some structural aspects of these sustainability issues such as food injustice, factory farming and consumerism-driven e-waste were not easy to change through their individual efforts.

In YRS, teachers and students discussed and shared current news events and their daily life updates with the class through the headlines activity and built a supportive learning community. Students learned about global and social issues, examine their stereotypes, and distinguish the facts from opinions and their relationships with personal experiences. Interviewing was an effective means for students to understand other people's life experiences

and dispel their misunderstandings and stereotypes about other people. In their final project, students gained a new understanding about homeless youth and believed that they can raise people's awareness about this issue through radio story production. However, they were not able to complete the final story, and various pieces of interview stories only were shared within the classroom. Still, students in this program held active attitude toward social change, and believed that they can raise people’s awareness about the injustice for homeless people through their radio productions.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I will discuss major findings from two new media civic education programs through the lens of the theoretical framework of mediapolis and address two research questions: How does new media civic education facilitate youth to address social issues? How can new media civic education foster youth civic identity? These discussions outline the strengths and limitations of current new media civic education, and have several implications for the future design and research of new media civic education.

[Figure 7] Overview of Chapter V

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Learning and Addressing Social Issues in New Media Civic Programs
  - Learning about Social Issues in New Media Mediated World
  - Digital Storytelling for Social Change
  - Mobilizing Youth Interests and Affinities for Civic Learning
- Youth Civic Identity Development in NMCE
  - Knowledge and Community Participation to Foster Civic Identity
  - Empowering Youth through Authentic Youth Voice
  - Reaching Out to the World and Exercising Civic Agency
- Prepare Citizens in and for Mediapolis
- Implications
  - Teacher Education
  - NMCE Program Design and Development
  - Future Research

Learning and Addressing Social Issues in New Media Civic Programs

New media production provides various civic learning opportunities. Through new media projects that address social issues, students can learn to express their perspectives on social issues and connect to audience around the world, reframe narratives about social justice through media production and digital storytelling, and conduct critical analysis on new media production, circulation and remix (Middaugh, 2012). However, there is a lack of research in these areas.

Findings from this study provide empirical evidence on how new media civic programs can provide these civic learning opportunities and the challenges facing these programs.

Learning about Social Issues in a New Media Mediated World

Young people nowadays are living in a world where their learning and understanding about social issues are affected by new media. Online videos play an important role in shaping youth's understanding about reality; social media (such as Facebook) are platforms where they get a significant portion of news; digital interactions occur in spaces that are no longer embodied yet constitute a substantial portion of discourse, and search engines are intermediaries for student learning about social issues. Although the openness of the Internet and new media environments gives young people new space and freedom for thinking and discussion, it also puts more responsibility on youth to evaluate information independently as they navigate online (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). And it requires that they 'learn new devices' constantly since some platform to platform migrations are easy, others are not, as evidenced in the ST program on video creation and second life. Most youth recognize the challenge of judging the credibility of the information they receive through various media, and 84% think they would benefit from learning new media literacy to help them identify trustworthy and credible information (Kahne & Cohen, 2012). Findings from these two case studies echo the urgent need of equipping youth with skills to navigate in new media information environments to learn about social issues.

Social studies and civic education scholars have been advocating issue-centered education as an effective approach to prepare informed citizens (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Hess, 2002). Both ST and YRS used issue-centered education approach that required students to define social issues and problems, research the background of selected social issues and problems, consider various perspectives on the issues, and make defensible decisions on chosen public

issues (Evans & Saxe, 1996). Among these various components of issue-centered instruction, conducting research in new media environments has presented new challenges to youth. In the ST program, students had uneven levels of online research skills. Some found more credible information from websites in the .org or .edu top level domains (though there were also limitations in such formalistic evaluation approach), and were aware of the limitations of Wikipedia, while others did not understand how to select credible sources or even what criteria to use in assessing those contents. Students' understandings about sustainability issues were heavily mediated by visual materials such as YouTube videos, which in some cases resulted in problematic views about sustainability issues with unverified visual sources (e.g., the chicken nugget video). In addition, the entertaining elements of their virtual talk shows such as music, videos, avatar appearance, and stage design drew their attention and took their time from getting more in-depth research on their topics within the limited program timeframe. For students, creating an informative show was only one of the goals of their virtual talk show production; they all wanted their show to be entertaining and fun, which was likely shaped by the popular satire talk show culture (e.g., *The Daily Show*) that presented civic topics in entertaining ways. Although Ms. Chen did facilitate some new media literacy discussions in the ST classes, she acknowledged that more discussion about information credibility (especially video content evaluation) was needed in the ST program along with attention to the use of the media themselves.

In the YRS, Ms. Kim found that students needed more assistance in their research activities as they started to work on the final project, and she provided individualized guidelines and worksheets to help students identify various perspectives on youth homeless issues from various online sources including news articles, reports, and nonprofit organization websites. She

also facilitated class discussions to help students develop their narrative about homeless youth based on both their research and interview findings. Students were able to read online information more critically with Ms. Kim's close guidance, and slowly formed a habit of questioning and verifying sources critically. However, the high demands of individualized assistance made it challenging for Ms. Kim to guide the class efficiently and more supports to help students with critical media literacy were needed in the YRS.

Both cases of ST and YRS suggested the importance of preparing youth with skills to evaluate credibility of online resources as they conducted research on social issues. Veracity of information was the basis upon which students could think about social issues and plan actions accordingly to address those social problems. Although credibility was a fundamental criterion for searching for high quality information, it was not sufficient because information and new media materials (videos, audios, graphics) used in students' final new media production were very different from those needed in traditional school written assignments. The styles and formats of online resources (e.g., videos, songs, graphics, sound effects, etc.) in their digital production and digital stories presented student producers' personalities, identities, aesthetics and the ways they wanted their perspectives on social issues to be conveyed in new media space. These choices also were likely to determine how their digital works would be perceived in the new media era. In ST, students searched for songs and videos that matched their topics and told stories about sustainability in engaging ways, despite some of these materials only containing generic information about sustainability issues; in YRS, students' production on the topic of homeless youth was not only about the veracity of homeless youth's experiences, but also about how those stories resonated with and moved the public, just as they were moved by Michael's

story of homeless. Thus, a more comprehensive approach to understand and evaluate information quality in new media civic programs is needed.

Gasser, Cortesi, Malik, and Lee (2012) contended that a more holistic framework of information quality evaluation that takes into account the process and context of information searching is needed in this new media era. This framework considers various phases of information searching that include "determining information needs, searching for information, evaluating information, adapting and applying information, creating new information, and disseminating information" (p. 7). In such framework, credibility remains important but is one of many other components; other considerations such as what the information is for, how the information will be used in new media production and dissemination also play significant roles in determining the information quality. Such framework is needed not only for new media civic education participants, but for every youth because it would also help them navigate in new media information environments where intermediaries such as search engines play key roles in everyday information searching and gradually replace traditional gatekeepers (e.g., editorial boards from print and broadcast media).

In addition to the consideration of search/research context and process, de Vries, van der Meij, and Lazonder (2008) proposed "reflexive web searching" approach that encourages students to reflectively compare new online information with their life experiences and prior understandings about the search topics. Inspired by constructivist learning theory, this approach emphasizes students' ownership of search questions and the mutual adaptation between students' prior understandings and learned information. In this approach, students' background and personal experiences also play a significant role in shaping their search findings and understanding in addition to the criteria of credibility.

Zembylas and Vrasidas' (2005) conceptualization of normadic ICT practices provides a great theoretical foundation to support the personal, idiosyncratic, or emotional aspect of online searching and interaction experiences. The nomadic narrative of ICT practices is a response to the dominating global-village narrative of ICT practices. The global-village narrative "is a modernist myth that presents cyberculture as culturally neutral and equally approachable by all peoples" and it erases "cultural differences and national boundaries" (p. 66). In contrast, nomads "learn to live with the discomfort of uncertainty and multiplicity" and are not like "global villagers' who are assumed to have identical and universal needs and desires" (p. 66). Thus, in the nomadic narrative "the idiosyncratic becomes a source of empowerment in a non-hierarchical space defined solely by heterogeneity, connectivity, and multiplicity" (p. 70). In this nomadic narrative, Zymbalys and Varasidas (2005) propose critical emotional literacy, which fosters students to analyze and critique the ways new media and technologies encourage certain emotions and prohibit others, and examine how emotions are manipulated by new media. The examination of the online emotional practices and landscapes will help users to understand why and how they see the world in certain ways but not the others.

In short, these context and process-oriented approaches to information quality evaluation would help to guide students' search and understanding about social issues from multiple new media sources and to find good quality materials for their new media production. Furthermore, more attention should be paid to the aesthetic and personal aspects of information searching. This focus is also critical in students' activities of digital storytelling in the NMCE programs.

Digital Storytelling for Social Change

Digital storytelling is an effective means for youth to make meanings and raise awareness about social issues, and NMCE provides such civic learning opportunity. Storytelling is a

"collective activity in which individuals and groups contribute to the telling, retelling, and remixing of stories [or narratives] through various media platforms" (Brough & Shresthova, 2012). A good story is a powerful tool to move people to take action for social change (Polletta, 2009).

One current example is the KONY 2012 campaign. KONY 2012 is a half-hour documentary produced by three young filmmakers and their organization Invisible Child. The documentary is about Kony Joseph, the leader of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and their crimes of children kidnapping and forcing them into slavery and children soldiers. As its official website states, "The KONY 2012 campaign started as an experiment. Could an online video make an obscure war criminal famous? And if he was famous, would the world work together to stop him?" It has successfully raised people's awareness about related global issues, as it reached 100 million views within a week, and 3.7 million people pledged to arrest Joseph Kony. This campaign used storytelling to amplify a social action message. Furthermore, the success of this campaign also lied on that it created multiple entry points for audiences to participate and collaboratively shape the movement's major narratives of arresting Kony Joseph and ending the human rights abuses by Joseph and LRA (Soep, 2014).

Contrasting to this highly produced documentary, the "30 Mosques Project" presents to a different kind of digital storytelling approach. Started by two young American Muslims in 2009, they blogged about their experience visiting a different mosque in New York City each night during Ramadan. The project was featured on NPR and got mainstream media attention, and their most popular posts even received more than 9,000 comments (Shresthova, 2013). Unlike the high quality production of Kony 2012 documentary, their narratives mixed with cultural observations and trivial details in their everyday life. Shresthova (2013), who studied several

other young American Muslims storytelling projects such as Love, InshAllah, Hijabi Monologues, and "What Does a Muslim Look like," pointed out that all these projects aim to "diversifying, humanizing and multiplying representations of American Muslims" (p. 65). She further argued that such storytelling projects served two purposes:

> Firstly, stories articulate diverse American Muslim experiences rather than falling back on the same limited and limiting set of stereotypes. Secondly, the creation, appropriation, circulation and discussion of stories, supports and nurtures loosely connected, heterogeneous, yet in some ways cohesive, American Muslim networks and communities that may at times mobilize towards civic or political action.

Similar to KONY 2012, participatory culture played a crucial role in these projects' success in raising awareness about diversity issues. For instance, as they expanded the scope of the "30 Mosques Project", the founders added new interfaces on their site to allow people to contribute their own experiences not only through comments but also photos. The project founder Aman Ali pointed out that without new media he would not even have a project.

Digital storytelling is an effective means for raising awareness and understanding about social and diversity issues (Soep, 2014). Both the homeless youth radio story production in YRS and sustainability virtual talk show in ST aimed to facilitate social change through digital storytelling. In YRS, students learned that homeless youth have been described and presented on mainstream media as running away and reluctant to use shelter services. However, interviews with their homeless classmates presented a different story—that many homeless youth were abused and kicked out of the home, and shelter services in many cases give preference to families instead of single homeless youth. In this process, students learned a valuable lesson about mainstream media's implicit cultural assumption of youth as rebellious people, as well as seeing how such knowledge was constructed and could be reconstructed differently. Although students were not able to put various audio pieces into a coherent final production at the end of

the program, and they did not incorporate much structural dimension of homeless issue in their audio stories, they were able to retell the stories of homeless people and people's perceptions about through these short audio clips.

In ST, students learned about transformative knowledge—the kind of knowledge that challenges mainstream knowledge and its assumptions—(Banks, 2008) of imbalanced e-waste distribution on a global scale and food justice for more accessible healthy foods for all. Using virtual talk show format, students created a narrative structure that invited guest speakers to share their stories and views on sustainability issues, and added other interaction and entertainment components such as songs, videos and jokes to create narratives about sustainability issues and foster social change.

Although students in both programs had some civic learning opportunities to create narratives that reflected social justice on social issues, they were not yet equipped with sufficient writing, research and digital production skills, and critical emotional literacy in order to express their views more fully and completely in their new media production and digital storytelling. Both programs provided some supports but also presented unique challenges in learning about these skills.

In terms of writing skills, students in both programs were from under-resourced communities and were also working on their writing skills (as evident in the grammar and sentence structure issues in their in-class writings). Different program structures at ST and YRS resulted in different opportunities to improve their writing skills in these two programs. Research suggests that students learn and improve their writing skills more when they are writing for a real world audience (Black, 2005). This seems to be the case in YRS. Both Ms. Smith and Ms. Amelia noticed students' improvement in their reading and writing skills over the YRS program

year. Although taking the remedial writing classes during the YRS program year no doubt played an important role in enhancing students' literacy skills, radio productions provided them with authentic writing tasks and a (potentially) wider audience base that drove them to work hard on their writing. There were instances in the class when students asked enthusiastically if the assignments they were working on at the moment be published later.

In contrast, new media production did not seem to enhance students' writing skills in the ST program. Ms. Chen acknowledged at the end of the program that she would emphasize more on writing skills if she knew that students need more assistance in some basic writing skills such as sentence structure and basic grammar. Also for students in the ST summer program, the scripts were perceived as a writing assignment for this program and were not immediately reaching the audience since the virtual talk show productions were planned to be on the virtual stage in the following semester, which made their writings temporally distant from the audience. In short, two types of program arrangements resulted in differences in students' improvement in their writing skills. How to help historically marginalized students with their writing skills in NMCE is an important priority, since many of them need assistances in writings, and new media productions serve as authentic tasks that would engage them to learn and practice writing skills.

In addition to writing and searching quality information skills, it was crucial that students be equipped with new media production skills so they could express their perspectives through digital works in the mediated public space. In ST, students spent about a third of the program in Second Life learning basic navigation and object creation skills so that, ideally, they would be able to design the settings and all needed objects for their virtual talk shows. In addition, they learned the basics of talk show design and production. However, in the end students did not contribute substantially to the construction of the talk show setting and all other needed objects,

and were only able to perform as the hosts in the virtual talk shows. Part of this was due to the huge Internet bandwidth demand of Second Life, which led to technical difficulties and constant interruptions and disconnections in the Second Life sessions. In addition, learning about basic virtual world navigation and creation skills required lots of hands-on practices. Thus, the instructor-centered approach in ST sometimes became less efficient and effective because two instructors can only respond to some students' needs and questions at a given time. For the virtual talk show video recording and post-production editing, it required advanced skills and was outsourced to professionals. In sum, students in the ST got a taste of new media production of virtual talk shows in Second Life. However, they were not equipped with complete skill sets in using this media production approach to express perspectives on social issues.

In contrast to the advanced skills needed to produce virtual talk shows in Second Life, students in the YRS learned basic skills of digital recording, interviewing, and ambient sound collecting, and the audio story was relatively easier to produce. The post-production editing and music were completed by Ms. Kim and UYR supporting staff. Students who were committed to gaining advanced radio production skills and working on post-production could participate in the advanced summer program designed by the UYR. Although radio production was comparatively easier than virtual talk show production in the technological terms, other institutional and contextual factors (such as the supplementary nature of this program to the Reading and Writing class) resulted in incomplete final radio production in the YRS.

The learning of new media skills is often hands-on and requires more close mentorship and individualized instruction. More instructional resources in this area would be helpful for NMCE programs since they have to integrate learning not only about civic knowledge and skills but also new media production skills. Peers could be a great instructional resource for this

purpose. (In both ST and YRS, there were college student interns coming to the programs to help instruction occasionally.) In ST, a few students were more advanced in Second Life and video editing and production skills. For instance, Laura was able to teach group members simple video editing, and Ethan was able to figure out more advanced modeling and object creation in SL by himself. They were both great peer-teaching resources and can help their classmates to learn about digital production skills. To recruit youth as assisting instructors, a more explicit structure of supporting roles and expectations for students with advanced digital production skills can be designed in NMCE programs.

Sheridan, Clark and Williams' (2014) study on program participants' changing roles – from passive learners to active mentors and peer instructors—in a digital game production program provides a great inspiration for peer teaching at new media civic programs. The case study documented a digital game production program over four years and found that over 30% of program participants took leadership and/or peer mentor roles in year four, increased from 8% in year one. The results came from a change of pedagogical approach— from a teacher-centered instruction to a studio mentorship model in which participants with advanced skills were recruited as peer mentors to help other students learn. Since more students actively took leadership and instructional roles, they were able to bring their cultural knowledge into the design and practice of this program. Thus, it also illustrated "culturally relevant computing pedagogy", in which youth create and build the programs that embrace rather than reject their cultural identities. At the core of successful peer teaching is to construct new roles for students and encourage them to take these leadership roles to foster their agency (Sheridan, 2014). Recruiting past program members as peer teaching interns is another approach to help all participants learn about digital production skills more efficient and effectively. This approach

would also create a democratic community that gives past program students a new role to take responsibility and give back to the community (Soep, 2006; Soep & Chaves, 2010).

Emotion plays an important role in digital storytelling, and critical emotional literacy is an important skill for students to produce engaging digital media about social issues with awareness about emotion's role in how digital stories engage the audience. A pedagogy of discomfort (Zymbalys & Varasidas, 2005) "requires individuals to step outside their comfort zones and recognize what and how they have been taught to see (or not to see)" (p. 74), and is an approach to prepare students with critical emotional literacy. This pedagogy helps students explore how emotions determine what one chooses to see and not to see, and how emotions shape one's identity and attachment to social group memberships and communities. In ST, there were teachable moments for a pedagogy of discomfort to help students further examine their feelings of frustration, powerless or anger as they faced structural problems of sustainability or other social issues (e.g., corrupted government-corporation relationship, excessive consumerism, community violence) and explore how these feelings shape their perspectives and decisions on social actions. However, the ST facilitators did not seize these teaching opportunities. Marc thus only expressed his anger in his song writing, and passively fulfilled his program responsibility of virtual talk show production. In YRS, students' fear of unfamiliar others – the crazy homeless people – was resolved through their interviews with homeless people and youth, which helped them learn to recognize the homeless as real people. Since digital stories were not only about rational discourses but also about affective narratives, it is essential to use a pedagogy of discomfort to prepare youth with emotional literacy for digital story production. These efforts will also prepare youth to be affective citizens in the mediapolis.

In sum, ST and YRS provided great opportunities for students to learn about digital storytelling skills for social change. However, NMCE educators need to explore pedagogical models that would effective help youth to learn various skills needed for good digital storytelling. Participatory culture communities that work on civic causes provide some practices that could help educators design better pedagogies for NMCE.

Mobilizing Youth Interests and Affinities for Civic Learning

Accommodating to students' passion about new media production, pop culture and interests in social issues is one important method to engage them in new media civic projects. In ST, the game-like Second Life virtual world platform was used for talk show production, hoping to leverage students' interest in games and engage them in learning about civic issues. While students seemed excited about this novel approach of new media production to learn about social issues and express their voices at the beginning, the technical barriers, especially the constant disconnections to the SL platform server seemed to dampen their passion; their lack of commitment was reflected on the fact that none of the summer program participants continued to join the fall ST program and performed in the virtual talk shows. Marc presented an interesting case about how interest and passion can play an essential role to drive one's learning and efforts. Although in his case he saw song writing and a virtual talk show about sustainability as two separate works—one to express personal feelings about community issues and the other as work he had to do—there might be other potentials for civic educators to bridge students' interests and civic learning in civic education program. For instance, many scholars found that hip-hop music can be great resources to engage students in meaningful learning (Hill, 2009). Since many students were excited to put music elements in their virtual talk shows as they all spent time looking for relevant music for their shows, the facilitators could encourage Marc to produce

songs for these shows. In addition, it is important for educators to continue understanding students' interests and passion and to find ways to connect them with civic learning.

Although YRS classes were mandatory, students had more freedom to choose issues of interest for production. They decided to create a radio story about homeless youth. Although it was a group decision and at the beginning not everyone was interested in this topic, it was an issue that most of them can relate to through friends or people in their communities. Thus as they gained deeper understanding about the issue through interviews, most of them were engaged in this production. However, YRS was part of the Reading and Writing classes, and it was viewed as secondary to other core courses such as math in which their performance on the subject would determine their graduation. At the last few weeks before the semester ended, it was apparent that students paid more attention to other subjects and sometimes asked if they could use YRS class time for assignments and work for other subjects.

New media civic education implemented in different institutional contexts presents various strengths and limitations for learning. In both the ST and YRS, most students enjoyed learning about social issues and new media productions. However, none of these students showed the high commitment level that was observed in dedicated youth in interest-driven online new media production communities (Ito et al., 2009). It would be valuable for NMCE educators to explore successful elements, aside from self-motivated interest, from online civic learning communities and find ways to adapt them to NMCE programs.

Many scholars have seen the great potential of participatory culture communities for civic learning and investigated the connections between participatory culture youth groups and civic learning possibilities. Kligler-Vilenchik and Shresthova (2012) investigated civic practices in two organizations, Harry Potter Alliance and Invisible Children, that were operated based on

participatory culture practices. Both organizations leveraged the features of participatory culture in their communities for civic learning. Kligler-Vilenchik and Shresthova (2012) identified four categories of civic practices. Among them, "create" was the most unique category, which included new media production and storytelling. There were also other conventional civic learning categories such as inform (e.g., learn about issues), connect (connect within and beyond groups), and organize/mobilize social actions. Findings from both cases suggested that when civic activities were linked to young people's interests, they were more likely to be mobilized and engaged in these civic activities. It was through the "mechanisms of translation" (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2013) such as tapping content worlds of pop culture for civic causes that participatory culture communities can successfully foster youth civic engagement.

Civic Identity Development in NMCE

Knowledge and Community Participation to Foster Civic Identity

Knowledge about community and social issues is an important foundation for civic identity development (Atkins & Hart, 2003). However, young people's daily civic experiences might be congruent or incongruent with civic knowledge learning thus leading to either active or passive civic identity development (Rubin, 2007). In both ST and YRS programs, students gained new understandings about social issues. However, these new understandings did not foster active citizen identity in all students; some students in ST gained deeper understandings about social issues but did not believe that they can make changes at the structural level of these social issues. Their life experiences of social injustice contributed to their low civic agency.

Overall, deeper understandings about sustainability issues helped turn ST participants to become more active on environmental issues and to raise awareness among the public through

the virtual talk shows. However, new understanding about the current economic production system presented the challenge of structural change. Troy's uncertainty about how much difference he could make on the wasteful fast food production model and Ethan's difficulty to resist perceived obsolescence were two examples. Furthermore, these understandings about issues and how they might contribute to one's belief of his/her agency to social change were situated in one's civic life experiences. Marc's inconsistent and conflicting positions on fast-food industry were a good example to illustrate this point. He was one of the students who were more aware of and angry about the corrupt relationship between big corporations and the government as they watched the *Story of Stuff*; he was shocked by the unhealthy ingredients of chicken nuggets served in fast food restaurant as they conducted food production research and was eager to share this understanding with peers. However, he was also one of the few students who thought individuals should take responsibility to maintain their own health as they consume fast food because it was their own choice. Research in civic identity of historically disadvantaged urban youth provides some potential explanations to Marc's contradictory views. Kirshner (2009) points out that "self-reliance has an adaptive quality for youth growing up in settings where public systems have failed to meet people's needs or where discrimination is common." and is associated with the discourse of atomism in youth identity development. This seems to be the case for Marc, as he experienced and witnessed injustice in daily life, was angry about community violence yet did not believe that situations can be changed. His new understanding about sustainability issues and social injustice did not encourage him to advocate for change, but rather to choose self-reliance discourse when facing structural social injustice. Interestingly, Diego, who also witnessed social injustice in his daily life experiences, took a more active civic

identity as he explored global warming, though he focused more on individual action such as recycling rather them structural or policy level social changes.

In YRS, regular sharing in the Headlines activities about current news, social events and their daily life experiences helps them to build a sense of community also a sense of being a member in the society. Some students had a new habit to follow news because of this class activity. New understandings about social issues in YRS encouraged most students to explore ways to raise awareness about homeless issues and for social change, except for Xiao who seemed to struggle to integrate to U.S. life and remained somewhat detached from civic participation. However, there were moments (e.g. after the interview with Michael) when Xiao presented an active civic identity and was interested to learn about solutions and actions for change.

Participation in community fosters youth civic identity development as well. In both ST and YRS, students interviewed community members in order to understand various perspectives on sustainability issues and homeless issues respectively, and to produce video and audio materials for their final productions. The interview activities effectively engaged students in local communities. Students in both programs all felt they understood their school communities and members in those communities better. Instead of assuming a passive role in most traditional classrooms, students in these interview activities became active investigators and directed the conversations in order to get views and perspectives relevant to their new media production topics. However, different levels of preparation before the interviews led to different results. In ST, students had only one brief orientation on how to use a video camera before they headed out to talk to people in the neighborhood and at the GYL office. It was a good activity for students to engage with people and learn various perspectives. However, lack of more comprehensive

planning (such as identifying potential candidates, preparing question lists, etc.) made these video clips more as practicing works and were less useful for final talk show production. In contrast, interview played a central role in YRS radio production. For the interview with Michael, students researched his background, came up with a list of questions, conducted mock interview with one teacher to practice interview skills and reflected on their practice. Thus, students were well prepared for the talk and discussion. Similar preparation—background research, questions, mock interviews/practice, and reflections—applied to other mini-productions and interviews. Thus, the interview with the social activist Michael changed students' perception about homeless people in this program. For instance, Regina, who thought homeless people might be "crazy" people and were reluctant to work on this topic, became actively involved in the later interview and production activity. Students were also able to get good perspectives and new understandings about their principal, teachers and other school members. Overall, well planned interview activity is an effective pedagogical approach to urge youth to explore issues and people in their communities and engage deep community participation.

Empowering Youth through Authentic Youth Voices

At the core of youth civic identity is how youth see themselves connecting with others and with the society, and their sense of being able to and willing to participate in public affairs and facilitate social change (Middaugh, 2012). One unique opportunity for youth civic identity development provided by NMCE is new media production in which youth express their voices about social issues and raise awareness about these issues through digital artifacts. Students in both programs felt that they can facilitate social change and raise awareness on sustainability and homeless issues through their virtual talk shows and radio production respectively. In new media

production, it is critical to first help young people explore what issues they care and develop their views on those issues. Young people's daily life and cultural experiences are important sources for authentic voices in this exploration process and embracing their backgrounds in these programs are crucial, especially for these youth from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Ladson-Billing's (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy provides guidance for this effort. Culturally relevant pedagogy educators embrace non-mainstream culture elements that are popular among minority youth (e.g., hip-hop, peer leadership) and help students from non-mainstream and historically disadvantaged cultural backgrounds not only be confident about their cultures, but further to be committed in academic works and foster critical awareness on their social situations. This approach also aims to address the phenomenon of some academically talented African American youth who are labeled as acting white and lose cultural and psychological health to be excellent academically. In other words, culturally relevant teaching emphasizes and includes "an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (Ladson-Billing, 1995, p. 483). Behind this pedagogy is the belief of "teaching as mining" (Freire, 1974, p. 76) or pulling knowledge out. Thus, learners' daily life experiences and cultures become the starting point of learning.

Soep (2006) share the values of culturally relevant pedagogy and further propose and exercise collegial pedagogy in her practice of teaching and facilitating youth media production, "which young people and adults jointly frame and carry out projects in a relationship of interdependence and mutual accountability" (p. 7). Essential to such new media production approach are the unique cultural references and understandings of the world youth bring to the projects that adult don't have. Meanwhile "mentoring adults provide access to equipment,

expertise, in-the-moment advice, and crucially, a network of relationships with outlets for young people's work" (p. 8). Thus, it constitutes a co-production process in which youth authentic voices can be expressed through new media artifacts.

Both the ST and YRS programs reflected some extent of culturally relevant teaching and collegial pedagogy, but also presented unique challenges in practices. In ST, open climate allowed students to discuss and explore sustainability issues that were highly relevant to these urban youth. For instance, issues of fast food production industry was closely related to their daily diet habits (as evident in that they got McDonald for lunch every day during the summer program); lack of convenient access to farmer markets was the case for most of them; and perceived obsolescence had a real impact in their purchase of electronic devices. However, as reported in the findings, the complexity of virtual talk show productions and technical barriers distracted them from digging deeper to unearth unique youth voices on these issues. Clearly from the final talk show productions, there were only less than half of the content representing their ideas, and it could have been more critical on these sustainability issues. Besides, Marc's angry, unheard voices in his songs suggest possibilities for civic educators to keep exploring every student's authentic concern because, as Marc demonstrated in his hard work on creating songs, that such deepest passion and care would be the strongest drive for learning and new media production.

Similarly, students in YRS were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas on news, current events and their daily life experiences. With these weekly conversations as foundation, students were able to explore issues that they felt most engaging and relevant to them. They actively interviewed homeless people and youth to explore deeper about this topic and identify a myth about homeless youth that was less reported on most media. While they were on the right

track to create their voices based on research and their experiences, supplemental nature of the YRS program in school curriculum made them less committed to the radio production work among other school works at the end of the program.

In sum, an open class climate and culturally relevant pedagogy are starting points to help students develop their voices on social issues through new media. However, new media civic educators have to integrate various teaching tasks including social issues, research skills, writing literacy and digital production skills in NMCE programs for historically disadvantaged urban youth. All these skills are essential to ensure that their voices can be developed into the final productions, which was challenging judging from the incompleteness of final productions in these two programs. Culturally relevant pedagogy, collegial pedagogy, peer teaching and studio mentorship model (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Soep & Chaves 2010; Sheridan et al., 2014) are some possibilities to address this challenging work; also better planning and evaluation of program tasks and technology demands, and setting up clear, smaller milestone productions along the way to the final productions might be helpful.

Reaching Out to the World and Exercising Youth Agency

Whether students' digital works can reach real world audiences and how the audiences might react to their works and interact with them are closely related to their sense of civic agency and identity. Soep and Chavez (2010) point out that distribution, other than most popular pre-production, production, and post-production phases, is an important phase in youth media production programs. In this phase, learners and facilitators think about sharing their work with audiences, manage audience responses, and repurpose their works for different outlets and even extended use (e.g., as materials and supports to policy makers).

Youth media educators also point out the importance of audience for youth media production. Goodman, the executive director of the Educational Video Center (EVC) indicated that "our students always come away from their screenings feeling a sense of accomplishment, pride, success and recognition they never experience in school or elsewhere in their life. There are times when their parents, friends and teachers see their creative and intellectual potential" (Levine, 2007b, p. 166). McDermott, director of Global Action Project, pointed out that program participants "needed people to watch their video in order to affect the social issues that concerned them"; participants said "Because that's how we're going to make it work on open up the audience's eyes" (Levine, 2007b, p. 164). Similarly, youth "were interested in thinking through where the community screenings will take place, and how sharing their stories can empower others, challenge isolation and lead to organizing campaigns," observed by Anderson at Main Street Project (Levine, 2007b, p. 166). Connecting with audience in order to use digital production to enact civic engagement also echoes media scholar Hobbs' (2010) conception of digital and media literacy competencies as a spiral of empowerment. Hobbs (2010) proposes that digital and media literacy should include access, analysis and evaluation, creation, reflection and action; these competencies work as a spiral of empowerment that encourages people to critically consume and create media and actively participate in social life with media productions

As reported in the findings, each episode of the ST virtual talk show attracted about thirty avatars though many of these avatars were friends of GYL. It provided a great starting point for students to perform and gain some feedback from the audience. Overall, the feedback was encouraging, but there is potential to further develop conversations about these sustainability issues based on these productions. As for the edited talk show videos that were uploaded to YouTube, there were several hundred views for each episode. However, not much interactions

and feedback can be drawn from these data. In YRS, almost all of their mini radio productions were shared only within the class. Students' ideas about how their different radio productions will be received on their Facebook among their friends suggested that their civic efficacy on social change also depended on contexts, such as the topics and who the audiences were. Arranging distribution and audience thoughtfully is important to foster youth civic identity through these outreaching activities.

Although it seems that there were only limited resources and time to incorporate distribution and audience engagement activities in these two programs, it is critical that NMCE educators put some thoughts in this area as they plan these programs given the importance of audience interactions in shaping youth's civic identity and agency. In addition, a more specific screening plan or wider audience groups may further motivate students to work on their digital media production.

However, identify and reach out to audiences is not easy for many youth media programs, especially in current crowded commercial media environments. Online media world exists a phenomenon of power-law distribution, in which "a tiny proportion had a large fraction of the audience, and most sites received virtually no traffic" (Levine, 2007a, p. 163), and this distribution presents a big challenge for youth media productions to find audience members. With this "audience problem" for digital media production programs, Levine (2007a) suggests that organizing face-to-face screenings and turning students' offline communities, especially their schools, into more genuine communities of audiences is one solution to address this problem.

In addition to seeking audience offline, there are many online communities that could be valuable audience bases for youth media productions. Ito et al. (2009) found that many online interest-driven communities about youth media productions (such as digital videos, podcast,

video games, fan fictions) are great venues for youth who are “geeking out” to gain valuable feedback and continue improving their works. Peers in these communities are audiences, critics, collaborators and co-producers. In addition, several studies and reports (Montegomery, 2004; Bennett & Well, 2010; Middaugh, 2012) have explored the strengths and limitations of popular online civic websites for civic learning. Civic websites analyzed in these reports are great starting outreach candidates for youth media programs to promote their works and invite people to give feedback on their efforts.

In an interview with Herr-Stephenson et al. (2009), Soep noted that participation should be part of the media production cycle, and also pointed out the challenge for new media educators to help students face and learn from the real world responses to their works, especially those public inflammatory and racist comments and feedback as responses to her organization Youth Radio's stories. Thus, how to create "spaces of protection" in addition to the "spaces of participation" is another task for new media civic programs. In sum, creating spaces of production, of participation, and protection for youth to explore and build their voices on civic issues with new media productions and communicate them with the broader world is the goal but also a challenge for NMCE.

While it is helpful for students to first start publish their works in a relatively protected environment to get supportive and constructive feedback, it is also important to prepare them to face strong disagreements or inflammatory comments in the online space. Kahne and Middaugh (2009) contend that in addition to prepare students to negotiate divergent perspectives about controversial public issues in face-to-face classroom discussions (see Hess, 2008), it is also important that students learn these discussion skills for an online environment. In youth new media productions, students conduct research and express their voices on social issues.

Inevitably there will be disagreements about their perspectives in the public space. Preparing students with skills to understand and negotiate with views from the opposite social and political spectrum is important to help them become deliberative citizens in the society. Relevant to this concern, Soep (2006) emphasizes the importance of having multiple outlets and audience bases for NMCE programs. At Youth Radio, it has multiple broadcasting outlets, from a channel with smaller audience base, a relatively protected space for beginning students to voice their perspectives starting from their first week, to highly trafficked websites of popular shows on National Public Radio where more experienced program participants can present their work in front of listeners nationwide. Aside from serving students' different needs, multiple outlets also allow Youth Radio to find space for productions that address controversial social issues.

Preparing Citizens for Mediapolis

Mediapolis is a mediated public space where the directly experienced and the mediated civic life are increasingly intertwined together (Silverstone, 2007). In the ideal mediapolis, audiences are participants in the world of mediated appearance; they not only passively consume media but also actively participate in the mediated public space and create narratives and discourses; minority voices constantly redefine the social meanings of dominant mainstream cultures. All these efforts contribute to a contrapuntal culture of mediapolis. In addition, people constantly seek “proper distance” for meaningful understanding and communication with the other. Such proper distance helps reconcile the tension between the seemingly dichotomy of sameness and difference of the other in the discourses of common humanity and strangeness (Chouliaraki & Orgad, 2011). In other words, citizens in mediapolis seek to understand the diverse others about both their irreducibly distinct quality of diversity and universal humanity.

Members of mediapolis need to embrace media hospitality and listen to divergent perspectives. Such listening includes not only rational discourses but also feelings and emotions.

Both ST and YRS illustrated some initial efforts to prepare citizens for the ideal mediapolis. However, these efforts were not yet effective and sufficient. Students need to have opportunities to develop authentic voices about social issues and be equipped with skills to tell digital stories to be participants and creators of a contrapuntal culture mediapolis. As discussed in the previous section, both ST and YRS students gained some experiences in these areas, but they needed more support to develop writing and digital production skills along with deeper reflections of life experiences in order to develop such voices and convey them in the mediated public space.

As for seeking proper distance to enhance understanding about the other, YRS provided an effective learning activity –- interview — for this, while ST missed the opportunity of using Second Life to attain this goal. The YRS students' interview with Michael helped them dispel their stereotypes of the homeless as crazy people and understand how a homeless person experienced and struggled through structural social injustice, just like them but in a different context. The YRS students' interview with a homeless youth at their school opened their eyes to seeing the differences between a homeless youth and themselves behind their daily high school life routines; the interview with the school principal allowed them to see that despite different roles in the school system, they were all citizens who all hoped to make social change. In ST, the mediation of avatars in online communication had great potential for students to understand others through avatar design experiments. For instance, Lee (2006, 2007) found that students who participated in gender-bending activities by assuming an opposite-gender role in Second Life gained expanded understanding of gender and diversity because of different treatments and

responses they received in those activities. The mediation of an avatar in this case allowed them to understand others through difference (by using an avatar that appeared different from their own gender) and shared identity (as a human being who expects equal treatments from other people) thus creating a proper distance for understanding the other. However, ST missed the opportunity to teach diversity through such proper distancing with avatars. These are two examples of how mediation via new media in NMCE can create proper distance to foster mutual understanding. New media civic educators should continue exploring proper distancing through new media mediation in different contexts to foster students' learning about diversity and common humanity.

Lastly, media hospitality encourages members of mediapolis to listen to people of diverse backgrounds and experiences. Both ST and YRS prepared (though with limitations) students to learn about diverse perspectives in the mediated new media environment as discussed previously. However, both programs could have done more to prepare students to listen to feelings. For instance, both ST and YRS students implicitly or explicitly expressed their feelings of frustration, powerless, or anger as they faced structural problems of sustainability or other social issues such as corrupted government-corporation relationship, excessive consumerism, police brutality or community violence. These emotions played a significant role in shaping students' sense of agency and willingness to social change. Helping students critically reflect and examine on how these emotions and feelings influence their perceptions about the other, the society, and shape their civic identities is crucial to prepare them to be active citizen in and for mediapolis.

Implications

Mediapolis encourages a contrapuntal culture of diverse voices, emphasizes not only freedom of expression but also media hospitality and listening, and fosters proper distance among people that is essential to maintaining caring and just relationship with others in the mediated world (Silverstone, 2007). NMCE can prepare young people to be citizens in the mediapolis. NMCE presents opportunities for youth to create digital stories about social issues and raise awareness through these digital projects. In the process of production, they can learn about social issues in a new media mediated environment and exercise civic agency by broadcasting their voices to facilitate social change. However, to realize all these potentials, students have to be equipped with various skills. Findings from this study hold potential value for civic teacher educators, new media civic education program developers as well as researchers.

Teacher Education

Findings from this study have suggested several pedagogical directions for new media civic educators. Civic teacher educators can prepare future teachers with these pedagogical skills in order to be competent educators for new media civic education. First, students' voices on social issues are shaped by their diverse social life backgrounds. Thus, it is crucial that educators provide opportunities for students to bring their life experiences into the classrooms as they learn about social issues. Soep and Chaves' (2010) collegial pedagogy is a useful approach for NMCE in this regard. In addition, it is important that students not only examine rational discourses about social issues, but also explore how emotions can mediate what is and is not seen about social issues and people from diverse social cultural backgrounds. A pedagogy of discomfort

(Zymbalys & Varasidas, 2005) pushes students to step outside of their comfort zone and explores this affective aspect of their experiences and voices on social issues.

New media environment provides various media formats for students to express their views on social issues. In this study, virtual talk shows and radio stories illustrate two examples. Students not only need to explore social issues and reflect on their life experiences, but also learn about new media production skills to develop their voices in the new media world. Findings from this study suggest that teacher-centered instruction is not effective in responding to students' varying levels of new media production skills. The peer-learning approach in popular participatory online communities (Ito et al., 2009) and the studio mentorship model (Sheridan, Clark & Williams, 2013) in which mentors play heavy roles in instruction and knowledge sharing are two useful pedagogies for new media production. These pedagogies suggest new media civic educators to assume the roles of resourceful facilitators instead of instructors; they can recruit skillful and experienced youth to teach digital production skills. This design would more effectively help students learn new media production skills. In addition, it will create opportunities for youth mentors to take leadership roles and develop civic agency.

Reaching out to the audiences from across the world and exchange views on social issues is essential for mutual understanding. However, this is the least developed aspect of NMCE. Arranging audience participation in NMCE can motivate students to be more engaged in their digital production and social issues exploration. Building connections with students' local school communities and connecting with online civic sites and participatory communities are some choices for students to develop communities of audiences (Montegomery, 2004; Levine, 2007a; Ito et al., 2009; Bennett & Well, 2010). Creating spaces of participation and of protection (Soep, 2006) in which students can comfortably share controversial perspectives on social issues in their

new media production with respectful audiences is fundamental to help students learn meaningful online dialogues.

Civic identity development is an interactive process in which civic educational efforts, young people's social experiences and authentic real world contexts all play roles in shaping it. NMCE provided opportunities for youth to explore various possibilities of civic identity development. Knowledge learning, community participation and the development of youth voices in the process of new media production fostered students' civic identity development, even though at the end of both ST and YRS most students did not publish their final digital projects online. Furthermore, students in these new media civic programs all believed that new media productions were a means for them to facilitate social change and exercise civic agency. However, Soep and Chavez (2010) point out that there exists a common assumption that new media production and expression in and of itself turns things around for youth and foster youth agency, and they want to complicate this assumption. They agree that expressing voices through new media productions is important for young people to develop active civic identity. However, they also warn that each new media production on civic issues is but one episode in the dynamic and ongoing civic identity development process. Continuing educational support is needed to foster youth civic agency, and scholars have suggested several pedagogies in this regard. These pedagogical approaches include controversial issue discussions in an open climate classroom, (Hahn, 1998; Hess, 2002), critical research on social justice issues (Rubin, 2007), connecting youth with role models and social activists to build shared commitments (Westheimer & Kahne, 2006) and critical reflection on community service and social action experiences (Youniss & Yates, 1996). These teaching approaches would support NMCE program students to be active

citizens, and civic teacher educators should help future civic educators be familiar with these pedagogical skills in order for them to teach in NMCE programs.

NMCE Program Design and Development

Unlike a rosier picture of research findings from other interest-driven online youth civic learning communities, the case studies of ST and YRS suggest some extent of youth engagement but a lack of commitment to new media production for social causes. Both cases of ST and YRS have illustrated the need for a coherent NMCE program design that integrates multiple pedagogies suggested previously and puts institutional contexts into consideration in order to best prepare students to be democratic citizens. In ST, all students dropped after the first phase of the program. Technology disconnection and complexity seemed to be one of the major factors in this result; in YRS, students were not able to complete homeless youth story project due constrain of limited time and lack of flexibility in the mandatory curriculum structure. Putting these factors in consideration is crucial for successful NMCE program design.

In addition, accommodating to students' passion about new media production, pop culture and interests in social issues is one important method to engage them in new media civic projects as evident in informal online civic learning communities. Learning the "mechanisms of translation" from those communities would be very helpful for NMCE program design and development. Ito et al.'s (2015) conception of "connected civics", a civic learning approach that is "socially engaged and embedded in young people's personal interests, affinities, and identities" (p. 10), provides great insight for NMCE program designers.

Ito et al. (2015) identified three supports that are critical to help youth learn about connected civics. These supports include hybrid content worlds where youth "connect their interests and affinities with agency and civic opportunity" (p. 19), building shared practices that

leverage connected social media practices for civic purposes, and developing cross-cutting infrastructure that employs both online and offline, peers and adults resources for civic learning and action.

Ito et al. (2015) also pointed out that institutionalization and increased infrastructure might undermine youth-driven affinities that are foundations for successful connected civics learning; networks and organizations that are relatively successful in addressing these tensions have the following features in their infrastructures:

> tend to be organized around youth interest; facilitate alliances with adults on young people's terms; allow for youth participation to take a range of forms; connect with young people on- and off-line; and invite investigation and critique on the part of those involved.

These guidelines extracted from successful online youth civic learning communities provide good directions for NMCE program development and design.

Future Research

This study explored how two new media civic education programs facilitated youth civic identity development and youth learning experiences in these two programs. Findings suggested that new media productions about social issues can foster active civic identity and engage youth to learn about social issues, but there are also challenges to prepare youth with media literacy to critically digest information in the crowded and converging online space, and to communicate their voices with networked public in the new media space. More research on new media civic education would help researchers, policy makers and educators understand about this emerging and important field. Several research directions deserve further investigation. First, the landscape of new media and learning transforms frequently and rapidly with the advances of new technologies, and there are potentials of new civic education approaches for youth with other potentials that worth exploring. This research only investigated two of such possibilities. Other

new media civic learning such as app creation for social good, serious game production, and fan fiction for civic cause all hold great potential to engage youth in civic learning and identifying novice civic education practices that integrate these new media productions formats would reveal an important understandings in the evolving field of new media civic education.

Second, as Rubin (2007) points out that youth civic identity is shaped by their background and is a dynamic developing process with new civic learning experiences. This study only investigates historically disadvantaged urban youth's civic identity within the context of new media civic learning programs. Students from different backgrounds, based on Rubin's research, would have a different trajectory in their civic identity development. Further research on different youth groups' experiences with new media civic programs would provide a more comprehensive understanding of new media civic education with different youth groups.

Third, Soep (2007, cited in Herr-Stephenson, 2010) suggests that new media production should include distribution as part of the production cycle, and create spaces of participation and spaces of protection are important for guiding youth to learn new media productions and develop their point of voices. These suggestions apply to NMCE as well. Students learn valuable lessons not only from research the social issues and producing new media stories, but also from communicating with real world audience about their works and perspectives on social issues. This study did capture some of these communications. However, more research attention should be paid on how students learn from the circulation and distribution of their works. As Silverstone (2006) points out, mediapolis is not only about expressing but also listening, which is a critical part to start dialogues. More research on media expression, listening and dialogues would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the potential and values of NMCE.

Conclusion

The proliferation of new media and technologies in young people's daily life has reshaped their civic life experiences. Civic learning is now also happening in and mediated through online spaces. Scholars have been advocating new media civic education (NMCE) as a civic education approach that allows youth to express their voices on social issues and reach a wider audience, retell stories of social justice from different perspectives, and foster their civic agency (Middaugh, 2012; Kahne & Middaugh 2009).

This study explored how two NMCE programs--one integrated virtual talk show productions about sustainability and the other helped youth produce radio stories about homeless people-- facilitated youth civic identity development and what young people learned from these programs. Findings suggest that NMCE can help students navigate in a new media mediated world to learn social issues, produce digital stories to raise awareness about these issues, and mobilize their interests and affinities for civic purposes. In addition, students can develop authentic voices about social issues, exercise civic agency and reach out to the real world audience across the world to facilitate social change. ST and YRS demonstrated both a mix of success and failure in fostering civic identity development.

Designing a coherent NMCE program structure that provides more support to help youth learn new media literacy and critical emotional literacy, digital production skills and social issues conjointly is essential in ensuring that students will have the capacities and skills to express their voices more completely in social issue media productions. It is necessary to consider not only the expression of youth voices, but also how these voices are/would be heard and responded to, and how students address these responses around their digital productions. Thus, creating online or offline spaces of participation where students can meet people with diverse perspectives and

engage them in dialogues about their new media productions and social issues is important for NMCE to effectively prepare future democratic citizens.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Forms

Teachers College, Columbia University

INFORMED CONSENT (FOR PRINCIPAL/TEACHER PARTICIPANTS)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH:

You are invited to participate in a research project about digital media and democratic education. The goal of this research project is to explore young people's learning experiences in digital media civic education. Findings from this project will help researchers and policy makers to better evaluate the role of digital media in civic learning and assist educators to design more effective practices. For this study, you will be observed during the classes of the _____ program, and will participate in individual interviews which will be audio-taped. These recordings will subsequently be transcribed for the sole use of the researcher. They will not be for public viewing. All identities will be protected on field notes and transcriptions by the use of coded names. The research will be conducted by Ching-Fu Lan in Spring/Summer 2011.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Although subjects who agree to participate in this research project (with informed consent) might not be accustomed to qualitative research activities such as observations and interviews and might encounter discomfort in this process, there won't be substantial risk from these research activities other than those typically associated with attending a class about citizenship. As carefully explained in the informed consent process, participants can withdraw from participation at any point. There is no direct benefit of this research study to the subjects. However, students and teachers might be proud of their contribution to the emerging development of knowledge about digital media and civic learning.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY:

All audio-recording of the interviews, transcripts, and video-recordings and observation field notes will be kept confidential. They will be stored in a locked cabinet and/or pass-word protected computer belonging to me, and only I will have access to them. Only code names and initials will be used in the field notes, transcriptions, and the final dissertation, so as to protect all individual and institutional identities.

TIME INVOLVEMENT:

The observations of the children and teachers in the classes will not take up additional time during the teaching in the school. The researcher will be in the classroom for formal data collection for up to 5 months (from February to June/July to August, 2011, as soon as this project is formally permitted by NYC Department of Education and Teachers College, Columbia University), 2-4 hours a week observing activities within the classes. The duration of the individual interviews will be 2-3 hours in total.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:

Eventually, the documentation of this work will be used to help educators, researchers, policy makers and parents understand the role digital media could play in democratic education. The documentation will be in the form of a dissertation—the requirement of a doctoral degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, and possibly in the forms of conference papers and journal publications in the future.

Teachers College, Columbia University PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Ching-Fu Lan

Research Title: Democratic education in the era of new media: Toward a framework of democratic media literacy

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is (646) 234-4752.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
- Written, video and/or audio taped materials ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____

Date:____/____/____ Name: _____

Teachers College, Columbia University INFORMED CONSENT (FOR CHILD PARTICIPANTS)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH:

Your child is invited to participate in a research project about digital media and democratic education. The goal of this research project is to explore young people's learning experiences in digital media civic education. Findings from this project will help researchers and policy makers better evaluate the role of digital media in civic learning and assist educators to design more effective practices. For this study, you child will be observed during the classes of the _____ program and participate in individual interviews which will be audio-taped. These recordings will subsequently be transcribed for the sole use of the researcher. They will not be for public viewing. All identities will be protected on field notes and transcriptions by the use of coded names. The research will be conducted by Ching-Fu Lan in Spring/Summer 2011. The research will be conducted at the school and/or programs your child attends.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Although subjects who agree to participate in this research project (with informed consent) might not be accustomed to qualitative research activities such as observations and interviews and might encounter discomfort in this process, there won't be substantial risk from these research activities other than those typically associated with attending a class about citizenship. As carefully explained in the informed consent process, participants can withdraw from participation at any point. There is no direct benefit of this research study to the subjects. However, students and teachers might be proud of their contribution to the emerging development of knowledge about digital media and civic learning.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY:

All audio-recording of the interviews, transcripts, and video-recordings and observation field notes will be kept confidential. They will be stored in a locked cabinet and/or pass-word protected computer belonging to me, and only I will have access to them. Only code names and initials will be used in the field notes, transcriptions, and the final dissertation, so as to protect all individual and institutional identities.

TIME INVOLVEMENT:

The observations of the children and teachers in the classes will not take up additional time during the teaching in the school. The researcher will be in the classroom for formal data collection for up to 5 months (from February to June/July to August, 2011, as soon as this project is formally permitted by NYC Department of Education and Teachers College, Columbia University), 2-4 hours a week observing activities within the classes. The duration of the individual interviews will be 2-3 hours in total.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:

Eventually, the documentation of this work will be used to help educators, researchers, policy makers and parents understand the role digital media could play in democratic education. The documentation will be in the form of a dissertation—the requirement of a doctoral degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, and possibly in the forms of conference papers and journal publications in the future.

Teachers College, Columbia University

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Ching-Fu Lan

Research Title: Democratic education in the era of new media: Toward a framework of democratic media literacy

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.

- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is (646) 234-4752.

- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.

- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

- If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.

- Written, video and/or audio taped materials ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____

Date:___/___/___

Name_____

If necessary:

Guardian's Signature/consent: _____

Date:____/____/____

Name: _____

Teachers College, Columbia University

Assent Form for Minors (8-17 years-old)

I _____ (child's name) agree to participate in the study entitled: Democratic education in the era of new media: Toward a framework of democratic media literacy. The purpose and nature of the study has been fully explained to me by___Ching-Fu Lan_____ (investigator's name). I understand what is being asked of me, and should I have any questions, I know that I can contact _____Ching-Fu Lan_____ (investigator) at any time. I also understand that I can to quit the study any time I want to.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Verification of Explanation

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to _____ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language. He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Characteristics of Interview Participants

Name (Pseudonyms)	Program	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Laura	Sustainability Talk	F	Puerto Rican/Bangladeshi American
Shanice	Sustainability Talk	F	Black/Panamanian American
Javel	Sustainability Talk	M	Black/Jamaican American
Lukas	Sustainability Talk	M	Black
Ethan	Sustainability Talk	M	Black
Diego	Sustainability Talk	M	Hispanic Black
Troy	Sustainability Talk	M	Black/Guyanese American
Marc	Sustainability Talk	M	Black/Guyanese American
Brandon	Sustainability Talk	M	Black
Zoe	Pioneer Youth Voice	F	Hispanic/El Salvadorian American
Regina	Pioneer Youth Voice	F	Black/Dominican American
Xiao	Pioneer Youth Voice	M	Asian/Chinese American
Tyler	Pioneer Youth Voice	M	Black

Appendix C: Sample Interview Protocol

First Interview Protocol

Pioneer Youth Voice: Instructor/Facilitator

Background Information

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
    - What subject areas and which grades do you teach?
    - How long have you been a teacher?
    - How do you like the school and your current position so far?

Perceptions and Experiences of Key Research Concepts

- What does democracy mean to you?
- What does a good citizen mean to you?
    - Can you talk about what are some public issues that concern you the most nowadays?
- Can you talk about what role do digital media and technology play in your daily life?
    - Most frequently visited sites and watched shows/program?
    - Most frequently activities via your mobile device?
    - Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Online Games?
- Do you think that digital media can promote democracy? Why or why not?
- Do you think that digital media can engage students in learning? Why or why not?
- Do you have any media production experience before? If yes, can you share with me some of your experiences in those projects?

Understanding about and Perceptions of the Program

- Can you talk about your goals for this class?
- One important goal of Youth Voice is to prepare future citizen with journalism and media production skills. To what extend do you think this program achieve this goal?
- This radio production curriculum is implemented in the reading and writing class. Have you encountered tensions between these two efforts? To what extent and in what ways do you think this combination enhance students' literacy skills and make them better citizens?
- What strategies do/have you implement/implemented to achieve these goals?
- What are some challenges to achieve these goals in this class?
- Do you think integrating radio production curriculum into regular high school classes is a good model? If yes, can you envision this media production curriculum widely adopted by other schools/classes? Why or why not?
- Aside from this radio production approach, do you think other digital media (games, social networking sites, blogs etc) can be effective and useful to promote student learning and civic education?
- This program has been implemented for couple months. Can you talk about what are some strengths of this program? What are some limitations?
- One of the goals of Youth Voice is to prepare future citizen with journalism and media production skills. What do you think students have learned from this program so far?
- How do you think about students' digital media work?

First Interview Protocol
Pioneer Youth Voice: Students

Background Information

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
    - What grade are you?
    - How do you like the school? What are your favorite activities in the school?
    - What is your interest in general?

Perceptions and Experiences of Key Research Concepts

- What does democracy mean to you?
- What does a good government mean to you?
- What does a "good citizen" mean to you?
- Can you talk about what role do digital media and technology play in your daily life?
    - Most frequently visited sites and watched shows/programs
    - Do you use FB/Blog/Twitter/Games Frequently?
    - Most frequently activities via your mobile device
- Do you think that digital media can promote democracy? Why or why not?
- Do you think you learn anything from any digital media usage in your daily lives?

Understanding and Perceptions about the Program

- Can you talk about your first radio production experience of the 2010 November mid-term election? What impressed you the most from that experience? Did you listen to your own audio work on the website and how did you react to it when you first listen to it online?
- How do you like this program so far? Any parts that interest you the most? Any parts that bored you?
- What do you learn from this program so far?
- Can you introduce your audio project? What is it about? What do you aim to achieve with this audio production? Are you satisfied with your own work? Why or why not?

Appendix D: Sample Open Coding List

General

- student interest
    - motivation
    - headline activity
    - relevancy
- outcomes
- perceptions of the
    - program
    - school
    - instructor
- by doing
- by gaming
- research activities
- internship
- work ethics
- media literacy
    - truth & reality
- prior knowledge
- stereotypes or bias
- misunderstandings
- content
    - science
    - local histories
    - social issues
- skills
    - questioning
    - critical thinking
- seeing is believing
- structural understanding (about social issues)

Social/Current Issues

- school closing
- dropout
- racial discrimination
- gay marriage
- religious diversity
- homeless
    - homeless youth
    - Shelter policy
- police brutality
- endangered animals
- climate justice

- global warming
- e-waste

New media production

- pre-production
- production
- post-production
- ambient sounds
- music
- songs
- script writing
- SL (Second Life) skills
- SL norms
- game production
    - content
    - narrative
    - testing
    - design
- radio production
- interview
    - skills
    - diverse perspectives
- youth voice
- public voice
- impacts
- innovation
- audience
- rehearsal
- feedback
- challenges
    - hardware
    - broken equipment
    - broadband access
    - institutional barriers
- authentic work
    - critical reading/watching