

21ST CENTURY LITERACY: MEDIA AND MEANING

MEDIA & MEANING: HYPERTEXT, CONTEXT, WHAT'S NEXT?

Sarah Feldman

Before we can look to effectively creating and using media in education, we must first ask this fundamental question: In the 21st century, what does it mean to be educated? Is it the retention of facts, or is it the ability to locate, convey, analyze, and make meaning out of the “facts” and ideas we encounter? Only when we can define what we aim to do can we explore what we need to do to educate.

Too often our escalating frenzy to create dazzling content overwhelms our capacity to process that content. While discussions surrounding accessing information are important, it is equally valuable to look at the need for assessing information — evaluating media for accuracy, relevance, and quality. But media literacy doesn't stop at honing our ability to analyze images and information. The depth and inherently conjunctive role of hyper-textual environments present whole new possibilities for perceiving, organizing, and communicating ideas. While many traditionally see links as a disassociative interface convention, it is also important to look at their synthetic potential. In other words, where once information was organized in linear outlines and encyclopedic formats, now information is seen through the prism of its connections to other data. Where once we proclaimed “content is king,” one could argue that “context is queen.” But are digital artists taking full creative advantage of this new way to communicate? Are educators? Savvy interface designers are moving away from the logo-phobia that once plagued them, instead recognizing text's vital role in enhancing and extending content and the users' experience.

This session explores the possibilities that the Web's hyper-textual and video-enhanced interfaces present to students, educators, and other media makers and consumers. The session included the capacity of interfaces to redefine the ways in which we organize, convey, and understand information; their role in a whole new artistic and communication paradigm; and the stylistic and syntactical uses of hypertext. The panelists look at how new video and Web-converged media may potentially shape the way we make — and make meaning of — media in the 21st century.

Sarah Feldman has more than 15 years' experience as a strategist, presenter, writer, and consultant for a broad spectrum of media and education outlets. She is currently senior producer for Oxygen.com and director of internal content strategy for Oxygen Media, a unique cable television and online network for women. She was previously producer and writer for Oprah Goes Online, a Web site dedicated to helping Web neophytes use the Internet. And as the director of audience development for several sites that serve as portals to Oxygen's multiple suite of online venues, she devised and implemented converged content strategies for Oxygen's wealth of Web-based and video programming. Previously, she served as National Project Director for PBS' Thirteen/WNET. As Director for the National Teacher Training Institute for Math, Science and Technology, she traveled across the country conducting presentations to hundreds of education, television, and online professionals on the strategies and vision needed to integrate

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technology and media into curricula. In addition to her work as a consultant and “evangelist,” she developed content for a variety of broadcast, multimedia, K-12 curriculum, online, and videotape projects. She also conceived and developed numerous educational programs, curricula, and online material. Prior to working for Thirteen/WNET, Sarah wrote for the “MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour” and taught second grade in Harlem and the South Bronx.

USING WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION

Anthony Chapman

In the burgeoning world of multimedia, PBS' Thirteen/WNET New York has remained ahead of the curve in every facet of electronic production, regularly winning top awards for its Web site and its companion pieces for all the major Thirteen-produced series and specials. From video streaming to online classroom instruction, The Kravis Center for Multimedia Education has yielded top-notch, highly creative projects in this sophisticated and rapidly evolving environment.

Long a pioneer in educational uses of television and technology, Thirteen/WNET is actively involved in the ongoing digital revolution, with The Kravis Center being a vibrant laboratory for research and production of advanced multimedia projects for educational purposes. In addition, Thirteen/WNET's Web site, Thirteen Online, features sophisticated and in-depth online companion pieces to our ongoing national series and original online content to complement Thirteen/WNET's other educational initiatives. Projects as varied as New York: A Documentary Film and NATURE Online allow viewers to interact with our programming in exciting new ways.

NEW MEDIA LITERACIES FOR A
NEW CENTURY, NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Faith Rogow

America's public school system was created when print was the dominant form of mass communication so, naturally, curricula and teaching methods reflected the need to be literate in that medium. But in the digital world, print is no longer supreme, and it is time for schools to catch up. But what does that mean? What does literacy for the 21st century actually look like? What should it look like? Rogow's presentation shows how media literacy provides a new foundation for teaching and learning, emphasizing a vision of literacy that includes the ability to interpret and communicate with images, sound, and technology along with print.

Called the “Wayne Gretzky of media literacy,” Faith Rogow has trained thousands of teachers, students, childcare providers, and parents to understand and harness the power of television in her nearly 20 years as a media educator. She has authored award-winning training and educational outreach materials for “The Puzzle Place,” “Teletubbies,” “Theodore Tugboat,” “Storytime,” and “Tots TV,” as well as discussion guides for the “P.O.V.” Television Race Initiative, and media literacy materials for “Life & Times Tonight” and “Bill Moyers: Close to Home.” She has served as a consultant to PBS’ Ready to Learn Service, Sesame Workshop, “Frontline,” and a variety of instructional television productions. In recognition of her work on outreach for “Sesame Street,” she was given the Ralph B. Rogers Award in 1996 by Children’s Television Workshop. She is currently owner of Insighters Educational Consulting and national president of the Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA).

FROM SMOKE SIGNALS TO 3-D VR:

WHY MEDIA EDUCATION IS FUNDAMENTAL

Elana Rosen

Though most of the world’s population has access to media produced in America, we are the last developed country to integrate media courses into our primary, secondary, or higher educational systems. Rosen discusses Just Think’s work around the globe and examines model programs at home and abroad with a special eye to ensuring that all young people have the access to the media and technology tools critical to lead thoughtful and productive lives.

Elana Rosen has 15 years of experience in the nonprofit and media worlds, working with KQED-TV in the news, current affairs, and cultural departments before joining George Lucas’ Educational Foundation. As senior associate, she developed educational interactive prototypes, produced the content for dramatic films on learning environments of the future, and created a national information resource for dissemination on the Internet. Elana has lectured on multimedia, online information, and educational issues at such institutions as Stanford University, Mills College, the California State Department of Health and Human Services, the University of Catamarca, and the White House. In 1995, she produced an interactive exhibition for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. In March of 1995, she co-founded the Just Think Foundation and has served as its executive director since its inception. She is the co-author of “Changing the World Through Media Education” and received an Emmy nomination for the documentary “Czeslaw Milosz: A Poet Remembers.”