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Journal article

A queer critical media literacies framework in a digital age
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A Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework in a Digital Age

Teaser Text

How can teachers use digital media with a Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework to critically read gender and sexuality?

Abstract

Media literacy skills are focal for many educators across the globe in an age of ubiquitous access to the internet and the rapid circulation of digital texts. A critical media literacies perspective is often a key element in teaching adolescents to “read” a range of texts. A queer critical media literacies pedagogy supports a social justice agenda aimed to address inequalities in education for youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+), with the “plus” accounting for other identities, such as asexual, agender, and questioning. Queer theories provide the basis of a new pedagogical model that is aimed to empower educators to guide young adolescents in identity formation as they navigate a range of content. The model is presented as a Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework aimed to directly support the work of teachers in classrooms, including illustrative key questions, learning experiences, and related teaching resources.

Introduction

The following anecdote is an experience of the first author as a teacher of adolescents. It highlights the difficulties some teachers may experience when responding to LGBTQ+ themes that are encountered in media texts within the formal and public context of schooling:

When I was a classroom teacher, teaching 12 year olds, I had students researching on computers for a project. One student was doing a project on an Australian bird called a ‘Galah’. I

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happened to be behind the student as they typed ‘Galah’ into the search engine. The search results revealed a link to a website about a lesbian netball team and I panicked. I wasn’t sure how much I should say in this particular school community about the link to the lesbian netball team. So, I closed the window to avoid the conversation. I reopened the window and suggested that the student do a new search using ‘Galah and bird’ as the search terms.

This account highlights how teachers need conceptual resources, such as a Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework, to openly and confidently respond to LGBTQ themes in every day media content and beyond. Students access information about sexualities via a range of resources (Robinson, 2008), including digital media sources, such as YouTube, that feature prominently in adolescent literacy practices (Stornaiuolo, Hull & Hall, 2017). For example, there are multiple websites, blogs and videos that promote the “top LGBTQ YouTubers” and “top YouTube Channels (See for example, Murphey, 2016). In a digital age the ubiquitous circulation of web content, media, and popular texts about gender and sexualities is an important part of adolescent lives, whether teachers are ready or not (See, for example: Falter, 2014; Dunkerly-Bean & Bean, 2015). How can teachers implement queer critical media literacies practices in a digital age, when textual practices include, but extend beyond, print-based material?

The Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework (QCMLF) is proposed to enable teachers to critically interrogate gendernormative and heteronormative assumptions within media texts in digital communication environments at school. The term “queer” signals a conceptual break that began in the USA and Western Europe shortly after World War II in a body of scholarship called queer theory that was well-established by the 1990s (Jagose, 1996). It denotes a suspension of fixed categories of gendered and sexual orientation, which interrupts heteronormativity, and which acknowledges the human rights of diverse people (Miller, 2015). The term

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heteronormative, coined by Warner (1991) assumes that heterosexuality is the norm for all groups. This culturally constructed ideology is deeply embedded in schooling systems. For example, the surveillance and control over access to digital media such as online search engines and social networking sites (Robinson, 2013). children.

We, the authors, also distinguish between sex, gender, gender identity, and sexuality. Sex refers to the biological, anatomical and physiological differences among people, which may or may not be a match with one's gender identity (Case, Stewart, & Tittsworth, 2009). Gender refers to the performance of one's biological sex based on social expectations and gender identity refers to one's self-identification. Sexuality or sexual orientation is "multivariable" (Vrangalova & Savin-Williams, 2010, p. 92), and can be defined by several criteria such as attraction, behaviour or identity (Riley, 2010).

Homophobic and transphobic bullying has become a global problem that is a violation of students' rights (UNESCO, 2012), and failure to address these issues in the safety of an inclusive classroom is prohibiting social justice for many LGBTQ+ students. The proposed framework is a contribution to the social justice agenda – not a solution on its own. Without a QCLMF, the adolescent literacy curriculum and the unchallenged heteronormative assumptions in digital texts will reinforce binary views of gender, delegitimizing diverse identities, while reinforcing students' vulnerability to oppression by the most dominant groups.

The following outlines the literature justifying the development of Queer Critical Media Practices and follows with a theoretical position. Then the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework is introduced including practical classroom examples.

Why Queer Critical Media Practices?

Many teachers worldwide require support within their school context to respond to the broadened array of digital media texts that implicitly or explicitly position LGBTQ+ students in particular ways. Evidence from research has demonstrated that themes and experiences involving diverse gender and sexualities do arise, and teachers are required to respond in ways that openly acknowledge and incorporate differences of opinion among students in the classroom and school community (Paige, 2016). Most educators today are likely to teach LGBTQ+ students, and will need to be knowledgeable about the needs and educational barriers that confront this group, particularly if teachers have not received training in their pre-service education courses. The focus of this paper is to support educators as they teach students to critically engage with digital sources that now form part of a globalized communication environment in adolescents' lives, such as video games (Garcia, 2017), video and image sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Instagram), web searches, Snapchat, and other social media sites (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter).

Supporting LGBTQ+ Students in English Language Education

While there has been a long-standing argument for queering the curriculum—reading the curriculum in non-heteronormative ways (Sears, 1997)—academics such as Page (2016) are arguing for a queer-inclusive English language arts curriculum, including inclusive literature that addresses themes and experiences of diverse genders and sexualities. Educators need frameworks for discipline-specific classroom applications to read texts. For example, researchers such as Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2016), and DePalma and Atkinson (2009), advocate for the inclusion of queering literature.

Whilst we acknowledge the importance of queer-inclusive literature, we highlight the need to produce critical thinking in young people that supports some analyses of

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heteronormativity in digital texts. We hope to equip teachers for supporting new LGBTQ+ inclusive pedagogies in relation to young people's use of digital media and multimodal literacies in education. This is vital because multimodality and screen-based textual practices proliferate in the digital communications environment (Mills, 2016), and LGBTQ+ models for literature need to extend beyond print and conventional media. Multimodality expresses the complexity and interrelationship of more than one mode of meaning such as images, words, or audio. Knowledge of how modes are used to construct gender and sexualities can assist students when analyzing media texts. For example, characters can be positioned on the margins or the center of a scene, or depicted close up and looking directly at viewers at eye level to create solidarity, or looking away and positioned further from the viewer to create social distance (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013).

Adolescents can be encouraged to consider multiple readings of a range of media texts to open up discussion and alternate points of view rather than unlocking or reproducing the "correct" meaning. Without such critical media literacies, reading, writing, and viewing media texts at school becomes mere cultural reproduction, bringing readers' values and viewpoints into alignment with the dominant culture (Mills, 2013).

Critical media literacies bring to the foreground subjugated knowledges; that is, the worldviews or perspectives of subordinated groups that are silenced in texts. However, the issue of sexualities is caught up in the hierarchy of difference—certain kinds of differences and identities like race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and dis/ability—are given more preference for open discussion by society. For example, research shows that teachers of children are more comfortable talking about multiculturalism, bilingualism, and cultural diversity, than other forms of difference, such as single parent families (related to separation, divorce and

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death), race, and poverty (Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2000). Gender and sexualities have also been conceptualized in terms of “difficult knowledge” – topics that are often socially and politically constructed by adults as sensitive (Britzman, 1998; Robinson, 2013). In the absence of a queer framework, critical media literacy practices may elide topics, such as diverse sexualities, in the reading of media texts.

Theoretical Position

Queer theory underpins the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework.

Heteronormativity reproduces existing inequities while limiting opportunities to make connections between difference and diversity, power relations, structural inequalities and discrimination (Surtees, 2008). A definition of queer theory is somewhat intangible and difficult to articulate. However, Meyer (2010, p.20) suggests, “queer is understood as a challenge to traditional understandings of gender and sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, binaries, and language to support them”. The definition is difficult because as Jagose (1996, p.11) suggests it, “...is an identity category that has no interest in consolidating or even stabilizing itself.”

Our approach also extends the work of Miller (2015), who draws on queer theory to present a critical argument for a Queer Literacy Framework (QLF). Miller outlines a theoretical discussion involving ten key values, principles or commitments for LGBTQ+ educators to honor, such as ‘advocates for equality’ (Miller, 2015, p. 42). Miller’s framework and the one posited here are grounded in similar epistemological underpinnings. However, the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework differs significantly from QLF by suggesting pedagogies and learning experiences. It does so by synthesizing key LGBTQ+ research sources to distill and refine a set

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of pedagogical approaches to equip teachers to critique heteronormative assumptions of texts in the context of adolescent multimodal and digital practices in school settings.

Similar to Miller's QLF, we aim that the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework developed here might sit across disciplines, such as English, media arts, information and communication technologies, and in the curriculum content areas, such as science, history, and geography, as a vital step in the development of LGBTQ+ inclusive pedagogies. Visibility for LGBTQ+ youth should not be relegated to areas such as health and physical education, but reflect the continuity of student identities across the curriculum.

Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework

The Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework aims to support students to “read” genders and sexuality through the perspective of queer theory. It consists of four components, which are to be seen as fluid rather than fixed, hierarchical, or sequential: (a) Recognizing Rights, (b) Reflecting Dialogically, (c) Reconstructing Representations, and (d) Reconnecting Intersectionalities. Each element is defined and its basis in research explained, and practical classroom examples and key questions are provided.

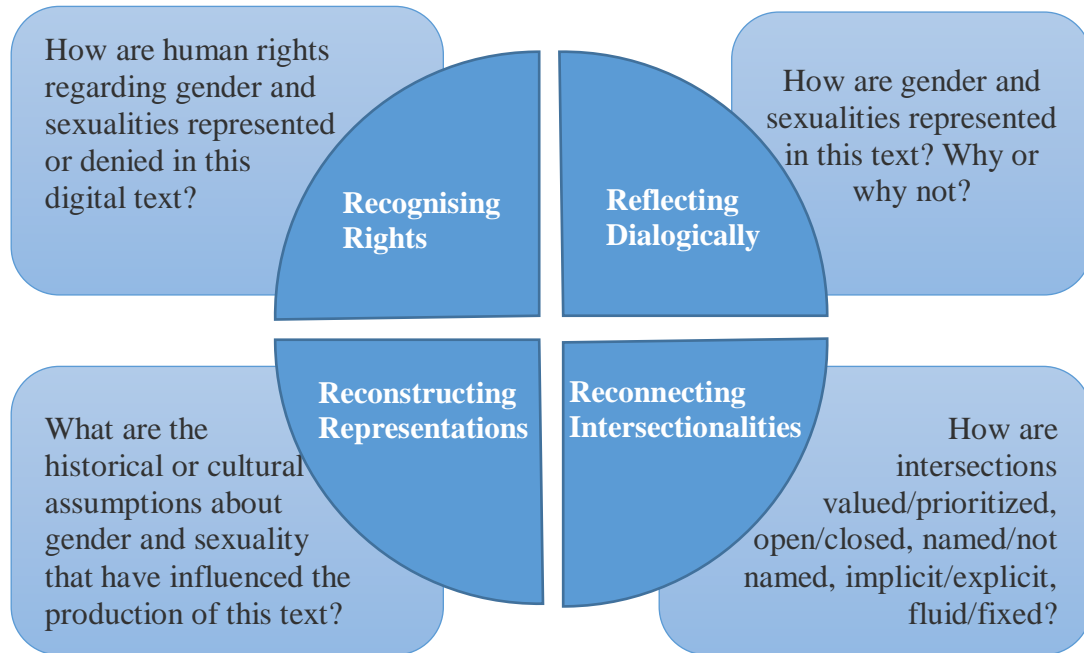


Figure 1: Queer critical media literacies model

The model is put forward tentatively, to be seen as flexible and open to revision and refinement by other researchers and educators. It highlights the conceptual keys to begin to assist teachers and students to negotiate multiple identities in diverse and complex social milieus. The model has been inspired by Miller’s Queer Literacy Framework (2015), in combination with critical media literacies and other literacy approaches. Queering critical literacies in digital contexts extends a queer youth reading of “traditional” texts (Blackburn, 2003), and the queering of literature, to include queering digital textual practices – both reading and producing media texts.

Recognizing rights

Recognizing Rights is a foundational component of the model developed to engage teachers in a pedagogy that challenges heteronormative privileges within a human rights domain. This vital element of the framework acknowledges that protecting and promoting the human rights of people who identify with diverse gender and sexualities is a critical literacy practice

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essential for the 21st century. Global organizations, such as The United Nations Human Rights Council, contribute toward a growing movement for improved equality for people who identify as LGBTQ+. The Council declared gender and sexual discrimination a human rights issue, and twenty-three countries, including the United States of America, were in support of the council's proposal to conduct a global study on discriminatory laws and practices (Council for Global Equity, 2010).

Teachers can encourage students to ask key questions such as the following: How are LGBTQ+ identities represented in this text? Why or why not? Teachers can also include digital media that positively represents LGBTIQ+ identities. Figure 2 provides an example of how teachers can encourage students to consider the human rights of people based on gender and sexual orientation.

Example of Recognizing Rights

Students research their local area, Harrisburg, the state capital of Pennsylvania, for a report writing task. They encounter the following text about a nearby town from:

<http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/civil-rights-lgbt/>:

The first documented public protest for LGBT civil rights in the city began with a sit-in. On April 25, 1965, Dewey's, a diner near Rittenhouse Square with a large clientele of gay youth, drag queens, and sex workers, began refusing to serve customers who appeared to be gay or lesbian, as well as those wearing clothing that did not match their gender. After more than 150 such customers had been denied service, three teenagers refused to leave and were arrested.

The teacher and students critically evaluate the extent to which the text represents or denies human rights regarding diverse gender and sexualities.

Key Question: How does the digital text acknowledge, challenge or reproduce the denial of human rights?

Teacher Tip: This media text shows how LGBTIQ+ people in our local area have historically been denied their human rights. They were not afforded the right to participate in social and cultural activities of the local community in Rittenhouse Square and this adversely affected these people; some were arrested.

Guide the students to explore web texts about the UN's decision to affirm the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals (e.g. <http://www.un.org/en/index.html>). Students provide a discussion paragraph on this topic in their report.

Critical questions:

- (a) Are there any LGBTIQ+ local perspectives that are published on the World Wide Web?
- (b) How might we ensure LGBTIQ+ voices are heard, and LBGTQ+ perspectives published?

Finding More: Students find out more by interviewing LGBTIQ+ people about their experiences regarding their human rights and create a local history blog of LGBTIQ+ perspectives: <https://englishteachinginoz.wordpress.com/2017/06/09/4th-year-vlogs/>.

The web text was chosen to provide a digital text example of how students encounter LGBTIQ+ themes and issues as part of their use of the World Wide Web to source information in the content areas.

Figure 2 Example Scenario: Recognizing Rights

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Teachers can ask the key questions to support critical thinking, as exemplified in the framework and example scenario in Figure 2, supporting students in interactive, guided and independent learning episodes to develop critical thinking. The teacher's role in such discussions is to begin to create a more equitable and accepting space toward a queer-inclusive literacy curriculum, to support the student's understanding and valuing of their own and others' rights to self-determination in relation to gender and sexual identity. The teacher must help to provide a safe classroom environment that affirms authentic identity choices, and which opposes domination, oppression, and bullying. Failure to disrupt and challenge assumptions of gender and sexuality delegitimizes difference, creating a flattened and monolithic view of identities (Miller, 2015).

A queer framework is preceded on a suspension of rigid gendered and sexual orientation categories (Jagose, 1996), and is characterized by efforts to interrogate and interrupt heteronormativity. It acknowledges and respects all individuals across diverse gender and sexual identities (Blackburn & Clark, 2011). Human rights are often read in heteronormative ways, and such an activity requires students to interrogate how people who identify as LGBTQ+ have been discriminated against, and how their human rights have been violated. By intentionally asking questions about human rights regarding diverse gender and sexualities, teachers can take a position that encourages students to recognize the rights of people who identify as LGBTQ+.

Reflecting Dialogically

Reflecting Dialogically uses texts to overtly explore how gender and sexual identities are constructed and represented in digital media texts, including understanding the social, cultural and historical shaping of these constructions (Miller, 2015). Dialogic discussions expect that all participants are engaged in constructing meaning with others and consider "other" meanings to

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create new understandings. The ‘reflecting dialogically’ element of the framework ensures that teachers provide a critical dialogic space for students to critique how norms about gender and sexuality are represented. This is achieved by encouraging students to reflect respectfully on their own life worlds or on the life worlds of others, in media and digital spaces. In the example provided in Figure 3, teachers can apply an approach that critically evaluates how gendered bodies are positioned in the text.

Example of Reflecting Dialogically

Students work on a visual arts project exploring family portraits, creating their own family portrait using a range of multimedia tools. Students also collect several examples of family portraits. A quick google pic search using the term “family” reveals the following:

[Images of heterosexual couples with children displayed in the published article are not included here. Please refer to the published article by JAAL 61 (4) p. 401-411]

The teacher and students critically reflect on how gender and sexuality identities are represented in these texts:

Key Questions:

- (a) Which gender is represented in the most central position, and what does this imply?
- (b) How are other gendered bodies positioned?
- (c) What is depicted as normal in these images of families?
- (d) Which kinds of family structures are missing from these images?
- (e) What intersections of race and sexuality are missing from these images?
- (f) What is a more inclusive set of family images?

Critically analyze the digital production of the images:

Key Questions:

- (a) Are there generalizations that can be made by the production of certain images?
- (b) Why do so many similar, White images of heterosexual couples with two children result from an image search of “family”?
- (c) Who provides or selects the images that result from the google search?
- (d) What ideologies or false beliefs or assumptions do these images perpetuate?
- (e) How do other cultures propose representations of family?

Activity Sequence:

1. Model: In the first picture, the females in the family are foregrounded in the photograph and the male is positioned above and behind like the overseer.
2. Independent: Students analyze the one picture on their own.
3. Think, Pair, Share: tell the person beside you what is foregrounded in the picture combined with your cultural knowledge to create some assumptions about this family.

This activity applies the QCLMF to visual literacies and digital text production.

Figure 3 Example Scenario: Reflecting Dialogically

As such, a dialogic approach encourages critical thinking specifically about gender and sexualities. Teachers should also compare these with images and examples of families that were produced with a queer perspective by queer authors. Not only does a queering of a critical media literacies pedagogy provide opportunity for queer identities and voices to be included within a dialogic discussion, it encourages conscious discussion about concepts such as heteronormativity.

Reconstructing Representations

Reconstructing Representations is based on an understanding of gender and sexual identity as socially constructed. If we understand that gender and sexual identities are socially constructed ideologies that change across time, geographical location, and cultural belief, then it follows that texts are critically read in this way. This section of the framework is about teaching students to critique historical and social constructions of institutions and cultures that frame the textual production of gender and sexualities to reconstruct texts and identities. In Figure 4, the teacher asks the students to think about the digital texts through a critical queer literacies lens.

Example of Reconstructing Representations

Students think critically about the leadership of their country. Students locate a YouTube clip listing the USA presidents with pictures of each and a summary of their key achievements, for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20tIy89aimA&t=316s>. Students might choose other prominent or famous role models with whom they identify.

Key Questions:

- (a) How does gender and sexuality bias play a role in leadership?
- (b) What assumptions about gender and sexuality have influenced the presidential election outcomes?
- (c) What has been the role and voice of gender and sexuality in the leadership of the country, including the female presidential and vice-presidential candidates?
- (d) In whose interest does the digital text and its production and distribution serve?
- (e) Who are the top female or LGBTIQ+ leaders in other countries around the world?
- (f) What is the future role of women in leadership?

Teacher Tip: Heterosexual males dominate the presidential leadership list. Societal structures such as patriarchy, and social norms, such as male dominated boardrooms, have influenced the leadership list. Why is it that America hasn't had a female president? Student responses will provide some feedback for the teacher regarding students' understanding about gender inequality e.g. education rights, women in the workplace, women's liberation movements.

Finding More: Let's investigate the American leaders who have openly represented diverse gender and or sexualities:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_first_LGBT_holders_of_political_offices_in_the_United_States

YouTube has been chosen as the digital text in this example because it is widely used in young people's out-of-school literacy practices. This activity could be used beyond English in the content areas, such as history or civics.

Figure 4 Example Scenario: Reconstructing Representations

In this scenario, the students consider how constructions of gender and sexuality are associated with leadership. They consider how the historical and contemporary social norms concerning gender and sexuality have influenced the leadership of their country. They also

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consider who might benefit from the text, and conversely, whose views about gender and sexuality are subjugated. Without challenging gender or sexuality bias in historical and related media texts, students might assume that it is abnormal or unnatural for women or LGBTQ+ people to assume major leadership roles.

Current beliefs and practices about sexuality that remain unchallenged in texts influence the beliefs and practices of schools, teachers, and students as they live and work in the culturally constructed institution of schooling (Robinson & Davies, 2008). In a typically heteronormatively institutionalized school, students learn to read and understand the world in heteronormative ways. Teachers can compare and contrast the heteronormative identities and biases of certain online authors with the voices of well-known LGBTQ+ authors in the blogosphere. Activities such as these aim to examine the historical, cultural, and gendered assumptions that have influenced the production of the media text.

Reconnecting Intersectionalities

Reconnecting Intersectionalities seeks to develop a critique of how identities of gender and sexuality intersect with other identities and how these are represented, or not. These might include, but are not limited to, culture, language, age, religion, race, social class, dis/ability, and geographic location. For example, LatCrit theory strongly emphasizes intersectionality because it seeks to acknowledge differences among Latina/o experiences and to address the intersections of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

Intersectionality provides a critique of binary understandings of identity and systems of oppression, such as male/female, Black/White, native/immigrant, or rural/urban. Alternatively, it posits that oppression and people's lived social realities are based on interrelated kinds of discrimination and inequity including classism, sexism, racism, ableism and nationalism (Mills

& Godley, 2018). Aspects of identity that are difficult to discuss in the hierarchy of difference should be recognised as equally important.

A related feature of this pedagogy is that it aims to avoid essentialism, that is, the notion that people of a particular gender, sexual, racial, or other social grouping think, act, and experience life in the same way (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Essentialism obscures diverse and multi-layered identities, failing to account for the intersection of multiple forms of oppression and identities that shape lived experiences and forms of oppression. Recognizing intersectionality in literacy theory and practice is essential for understanding the increasingly complex dimensions of sexism, racism, and multiple oppression in online and multimodal communication and representation (Mills, 2017). In the Reconnecting Intersectionality pedagogy, the teacher asks questions such as: How are intersections valued, or not prioritized, open or closed, named or not named, implicit or explicit, and fluid or fixed? We argue that it is vitally important to tease out aspects of constructions of identity. However, it is also important to acknowledge and respect that these ideologies overlap, intertwine, and are fluid. Identities can change in different contexts or over time; for example, a character might be “straight” at home, but “come out” as “gay” to their friends at school. In Figure 5, students construct a sociogram (Johnson, 1984) – a diagrammatic network or structure of interrelationships to reveal who is marginalized or centered. Students consider the socially constructed ideologies of power that are served by the media texts.

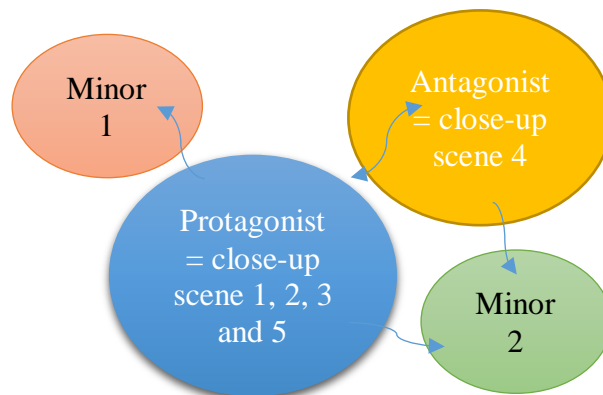
Example of Reconnecting Intersectionalities

Students view and read *Fruits Basket* (Takaya, 2017), a teen digital animation series, which students access at home and school via a range of devices. The main character is an orphan who is cursed to turn into an animal of the Japanese zodiac. Characters transform when they are weak, stressed, or when their torso touches the opposite sex, such as during a hug:

<https://www.funimation.com/shows/fruits-basket/>

Teacher Tip:

- (a) Model how to create a sociogram to map the social affinities of the characters.
- (b) Define and explain how screen shots are used, for example, close-up denotes importance, makes the audience feel close to the character.
- (c) View an episode and take-note of the close-up shots: Who is in focus and who does the creator want us to feel close to, and why?
- (d) ‘Read’ the characters, evaluating who is valued/prioritized, open/closed, named/not named, implicit/explicit, or fluid/fixed?
- (e) Code the sociogram to represent aspects of identity, such as location, race, age, gender, sexual orientation and dis/ability.



- Vary the size of the circles to show the relative importance of each character in the plot.
- Use overlapping circles or connecting lines to show how the characters interact with one another.
- If students are reading different texts, compare multiple sociograms to look for common patterns. For example, what are the identities of all the protagonists? Which types of identities are not represented across the texts, and why?

Figure 5 Example Scenario Reconnecting Intersectionalities

Assumptions about gender and sexualities often perpetuate hegemonic discourses, such as the “good citizen”; a White, heterosexual male or female who is educated, wants to find love, have children, and other characteristics of a model citizen (Robinson, 2013). The teacher and students might engage in queer critical thinking in a digital space in conjunction with learning about multiple semiotic modes of meaning, such as the use of vibrant colours or ambience to show powerful emotional connections between characters, or the use of discordant music to show the fragmentation of relationships.

Characterization is a key feature of narratives, both digital and print, in which characters are carefully constructed by creators. However, features particular to digital texts, such as the use of close-up, medium or long shots, adds to the complexity to the critical reading of texts. For example, the sociogram might focus on enlarging the circles for characters that have close-up shots. They can analyse what is happening in the story at the time of the close-up image, such as which character is solving the problems and who is being rescued. Students could reflect on how this impacts on cultural and social understandings about gender.

Whilst we have suggested a queer critical approach to reading texts by critically analyzing the intersections of identity, including gender and sexuality, consideration of LGBTQ+ inclusive texts is similarly important. Queer inclusive literature provides an opportunity for students to see themselves in stories (Blackburn and Buckley, 2005). Digital media sources such as video games, film trailers, blogs, and videos provide new ways to extend the limited selection of LGBTQ+ literature, which currently excludes less clearly defined sexualities, such as bisexual and transgender identities (DePalma, 2014). Educators can conjecture that different digital practices provide varying opportunities and risks for students — for example, experimenting

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with other sexualities in video game role play, or determining how much to share one's sexual identity on social media. The wider potential audiences on the web, cyber-bullying, and other issues of adolescents' gender and sexual construction online call for future classroom research applications of the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework to examine how educators and young people can confidently negotiate new digital media spaces.

Conclusion

Returning to our opening anecdote, we can consider how the teacher would respond with a Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework in mind. Perhaps, the teacher might have used a Reflecting Dialogically strategy, utilizing this experience to acknowledge the links produced by the web search and address questions that the reading may have produced for the student. Instead of immediately intervening by shutting down the search, the teacher could have allowed the student to explore the web results. If the student clicked on the site curiously, this may have offered a natural opportunity for a safe dialogue around sexualities. Because the teacher would continue to view the search, she could ensure that the site content was not inappropriate or derogatory. . Such incidents can be managed confidently by the teacher in a way that does not silence social realities, but which guides the students to navigate typically heteronormative digital worlds. It is our hope that researchers and teachers might apply the framework in the classroom and research the framework in practice. The framework is a tentative model to venture toward reflective dialogue about queering critical media literacies pedagogy in the classroom, and to guide classroom practice by researchers in the adolescent literacy classroom.

Literacy learners need the conceptual tools to identify and critique the ideological assumptions and silences of texts on the issues of gender and sexualities, rather than becoming uncritical, confused, or silent consumers. As Miller (2015) suggests, a queering approach will

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support an expanding social justice agenda seeking to achieve not only educational equality, but social and cultural equality for young people who identify as LGBTQ+. In the 21st century it is vital to challenge the way that sexualities and subjectivities have been discursively produced across the modes and media of digital spaces.

Take Action

- 1) Think about the digital texts that your students read and access both at school and at home. Consider the types of texts and how they could be read with a queer digital literacies pedagogy framework.
- 2) Engage the four features presented in the Queer Digital Literacies Pedagogy Framework:
 - a) Recognizing Rights
 - b) Reflecting Dialogically
 - c) Reconstructing Representations
 - d) Reconnecting Intersectionalities
- 3) Use an Action Research Model to analyse how well the model works:
 - a) Plan to use the model.
 - b) Action the strategies in planning and classroom.
 - c) Observe how the strategies work in practice.
 - d) Reflect on effectiveness and plan for changes to improve.

More to Explore

1. Mediasmarts: <http://mediasmarts.ca/tag/categories/queer-representation>.
Suggested teaching lessons and resources regarding queer representations in media.
2. Advocates for Youth website: www.advocatesforyouth.org/sexual-orientation-

- [and-gender-identity-lessons](#). Provides a range of resources such as lesson plans for a range of student ages and stages.
3. UNESCO website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/hiv-and-aids/our-priorities-in-hiv/sexuality-education/> Provides global background knowledge on the place of sexuality education.
 4. Book: Meyer, E. J. (2009). *Gender, bullying, and harassment*. New York: Teachers College Press. A book of strategies for addressing gender bullying in schools.
 5. Website: <http://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/guides>. Educator guides on curriculum and intersectionality; elementary to high school, inclusive curriculum guide, intersectionality and more.
 6. View this YouTube clip to see how queer-inclusive literature is included under the banner of diversity in a Denver classroom:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RCz2D24GyE>
 7. For students' perspectives on queering poetry, view this youtube clip:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDn4vKGq70M> OR youtube search 'queer slam poetry'.

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