Remix Culture

Digital Music and Video Remix, Opportunities for Creative Production

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the tools and strategies such as remix that our students are using today to make their voices heard. We will explore how to adapt these tools and strategies to classroom activities that encourage everyone in the classroom to participate in their own learning. Since education is not a single or solitary occupation but a collective, embracing, and transforming process of engagement, this chapter focuses on opportunities for creative production through remix.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

Think back to the stories your parents told you as a child, stories sampled from reality and combined with make-believe. Each time our parents retold a story, they embellished it, adding dramatic twists and turns that created a new story from the original source. As children, my cousins and I would bunk up on the third floor where my mother sent us to sleep with stories from the Greek myths. I still remember her calling, "No man! No man has blinded me!" swaying to and fro, and adding a tremulous voice to emphasize the poor Cyclops' plight. Each retelling became more dramatic, ensuring that we would anticipate and laugh at Polyphemus' foolish attempt to out-trick the greatest trickster in literature. With Odysseus, we escaped the third floor room and sailed to the Land of Forgetfulness.

In the morning, our minds would teem with remembrances as we claimed a small part of the beach as our own island and transformed the bedtime stories into our own creations. Sometimes we would create new adventures where Menelaus and the Greeks lost the battle of Troy, and Paris and Helen remained lovers forever. Sometimes Odysseus would land on a new island and befriend our favorite movie character, E.T., who would point a shortcut home where Odysseus would romantically reunite with his lovely Penelope.

My mother's stories were elaborately retold from the literature she taught to her high school students—stories we knew when we reached the classroom but in a very different fashion from the texts we read in English class. Fortunately for me, the remixing of myth and reality I shared with my mom and cousins gave me a deeper understanding of the characters, plot, and the morals of the stories because they were a part of my lived childhood experience.

This recipe for adapting bedtime stories to elements of our own culture and adding a dash of personal creativity transformed the Greek myths into repositories for entertainment, self-identity, and the creation of a subculture within my family where I felt accepted and fulfilled. Stories are just as important to us today as they were when we were children. They have the same ability to transform our culture and to help us adapt to the world we live in. Just as when we were children, we use stories to be entertained, to explore our identities, and to create a subculture that gives us a sense of belonging.

Pew Internet and American Life Project noted in their Teens and Social Media report that nearly two-thirds of online teens are content creators (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). But they are not just creating content for themselves . . . Students lose track of time as they spend hours navigating the Web for material to create their stories and feel a sense of belonging through encouragement by their peers to post their stories on Facebook, illustrate them on Flickr, and share them with friends and the public at large through the multiple resources available on the Web. This participation in new media environments is a way to be creative and innovative, but it is also new opportunities for our students to acquire and synthesize information in a meaningful way.

One in four online teens remix content they find online—like songs, text, or images—and remix them into their own artistic creations (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). By remixing texts, teens re-create and redefine them to share with others. In the process they are acquiring new habits of expectation, meaning, and credibility; new ways of acting, interacting, and doing; and gaining the competencies to become part of this digital world. These gained experiences are the new equivalent of a hidden curriculum.

The learning ecology teens participate in today is similar to the hidden curriculum educational theorists in the 1960s who said that children whose parents took them to museums, had dinner conversations on politics and civic engagement, had encyclopedias in their home and listened to opera records

would perform differently in school than those who didn't have those opportunities. Students who grow up in households with access to Wikipedia, Facebook, and YouTube have different experiences in the classroom than those who don't. Project New Media Literacies refers to this divide as the "participation gap" and that means educators in afterschool programs, library programs, and classroom programs have to help solve the gap by giving access to skills, such as remixing, and encouraging learning in a participatory culture.

Students today often **remix** original texts based on their own interests in order to create a new work that encapsulates their ideas and concerns about the issues that matter most to them. It is up to us as educators not to leave some students behind but to encourage them as media-driven explorers, sparked by social and cultural experiences, which play an important role in fostering creativity in the classroom.

WHAT IS REMIXING?

Remixing is building upon a work that already exists and using it to make new meanings and express new ideas. To develop a remix, the creator must first consider how the original source is related to a new context. When I transformed the fall of Troy into my own story of love and triumph, I remixed the *Aeneid* with romantic characters and images that were part of my life experience. The original source held the key for me to interpret and reinvent, through my own imagination and analysis of the original text, the story for my contemporary world.

History shows that the great authors are great remixers. William Shakespeare could not have written *Henry IV* without Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. William Blake could not have created *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* without the *Old Testament*. It doesn't matter to the reader that Shakespeare's Richard the Third is based on misinformation from Hall's *History of England*. The character is so transformed for the contemporary audience that the original source is now intimately bound to the new creation and they are no longer separate but one. The Teachers' Strategy Guide is a set of curriculum modules for English and language arts classrooms created by Project New Media Literacies, a research project first established at MIT and now at the University of Southern California, states that teachers need to understand how their students work together to "think, critique, and create." Students do this by taking existing information and transforming it for their own needs through a multitude of strategies that encourage students to appropriate what exists, remix it into something new, and post it to their peers for immediate feedback.

A second consideration in building a remix is to determine how the meaning of the remix embodies and relates to the meaning of the new

creation. A remix is not borrowing. In other words, the form and content of the original is acknowledged even as they are transformed into something that is distinct from, but reminiscent of, the original. It is not only literature that has a history of remix. During the late 1950s, early '60s, contemporary fine art artist, Robert Rauschenberg created a series called *combines*, which incorporated trash and found objects into his art. He chose to incorporate trash and found objects because he wanted something other than what he, himself, could create. His goal with combines was to transform the objects into something new. An example of these fine art remixes includes *Retroactive I* (1964), which incorporates publicly available printed images with mixed media to create a ***collage*** of related images. Rauschenberg discovered the synchronicity between the images and brought them into juxtaposition to create a new and contemporary statement on the condition of humankind at midcentury. This remix allows viewers to experience a sense of recognition that leads to reflection on our history and our ability to build upon our past.

Rauschenberg often remarked that the combines' series allowed him to work "in the gap between life and art." This work was a reflection of Rauschenberg's shift from creating art for his own individual expression to involving his community into his artwork by writing into meaning his views on the state of society—to represent what was happening in history.

We are in a paradigm shift in the classroom where educators need to work in the gap between life and school. Across multiple art forms, youth are immersed in the remix culture. This provides teachers an opportunity to offer learning objectives in their classrooms in a new way, while at the same time offering students opportunities to read and write their cultural practices that are central to their own everyday experience (Jenkins, 2006). Incorporating participatory practices into the classroom, such as remixing, allows for a blurring of boundaries between informal and formal learning and harnesses the power of digital technologies for students to reflect on the participatory culture that they live in.

Often hanging out and messing around encourage geeking out on something you're really passionate about (Ito et al., 2010). This happens by accessing an interest-driven network and learning happens from the culmination of all people you have met and all you have learned and discovered from them along the way. The George Lucas Educational Foundation released the Digital Generation Project 2009 that gives voice to children of the digital generation. Instead of adults talking for them, this project profiles a variety of children of all ages as they geek out on their passions. What this project provides to teachers is a glimpse into our students' lives and the strategies they engage in to communicate, socialize, and learn—not just from us but from their peers and larger community.

Jalen is a 12-year old artist, the epitome of a young creator of media and an active member of the Digital Youth Network located in Chicago, Illinois. Jalen says he was on the computer painting pictures by the time he was three, playing games on his Gameboy at five, exploring different drawing techniques by the age of seven, and creating his first comic book by the time he was 10. And in sixth grade, he received his first laptop, which opened up new doors of discovery and the tools to remix culture for his own purposes. Now his assignments at school, such as a book report transformed into a comic book, encourage the practice of remixing the knowledge required with the knowledge that has meaning to him, creating a more lasting impact on what he will remember in his learning experience (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_1).

We can clearly see that Jalen is geeking out on his passions and using them to influence his learning across the subject areas he studies during an average day in school. Jalen combines his talents and uses them to reflect on what matters to him, as he poignantly described in the poster he created on *Division 101*. The poster reflects a film about the racial divide he worked on.

Jalen is not alone in his quest to use new practices in learning.

Why Are Remixes Important?

So remixing is not new. Throughout human history, we have borrowed, reinvented, and remixed texts. However, remixing today is not an individual endeavor, especially among youths. Whether teens are sampling from a favorite song, television show, film, game, or a combination of media, they are having fun and learning from each other. They are forming communities based on the task of bringing together disparate elements and forming new creations. They are motivated to create—not to receive a prize—but to be part of a peer-based learning community.

Teens are drawn to the practice of remixing because it enables them to explore music, art, and video, reinterpret it, remix it, and produce their own versions to share immediately with their peers. Creating a remix requires youths to take the position of author, to be made aware of one's audience, and to contextualize one's intended meaning within a particular setting.

Take, for instance, the 15-year-old Atlanta hip-hop artist known as Soulja Boy, who rocketed to fame by not following the traditional standards for making a record (Driscoll, 2009). He took his music right to his peers by posting his songs and dance steps on YouTube and encouraged everyone to participate by offering a dance to go along with his song—similar to the Macarena or the Electric Slide that had been popular a few years

before. Soulja Boy encouraged people to take up the dance and make it their own, and he created a phenomenon (http://www.youtube.com/).

People instant-messaged the latest dance video on YouTube, downloaded it to their iPods, and copied the routine. Teens quickly mastered the dance moves and added new steps, which created a new dance remixed from Soulja Boy's original moves. Between classes they videotaped others doing the new dance, loaded it back on YouTube, and tagged it to others who also participated in the Soulja Boy phenomenon.

Because Soulja Boy allowed anyone to remix their own dances, he connected them with others who had joined in on the craze. At the same time, he circulated to fame, rising to the top of the charts for seven weeks and getting a record label and Grammy nomination. Soulja Boy benefited from sharing his work with others and allowing them to adapt it for their own purposes. Those who participated in this community learned how to appropriate and transform the content of the original dance video. This process engaged young and old alike in what is known as ***collective intelligence,*** the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others for a common goal. This is achieved both ***synchronously*** with those in their own community and ***asynchronously*** with others in the YouTube audience.

By bringing remixing techniques into the classroom, students can collaborate and collectively create substantive learning challenges using the new media literacies available to them on the Web. As the community who participated in the Soulja Boy phenomenon shows, some students already think and work collectively. These students have already formed communities of learners. Teachers can channel this grassroots methodology to lessons presented in the classroom.

Additionally, incorporating remix into everyday classrooms offers teachers and students a chance to think creatively and encourage appropriation, a new media literacy skill. ***Appropriation*** is the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content to make it one's own (Jenkins, 2006). The contemporary use of appropriation seen as a new literacy originates from music terminology and refers to transforming existing music into new versions by adding, subtracting, or modifying elements of the original. Appropriation is practiced across various disciplines and each discipline has a diverse array of methods. In traditional literature, for example, methods include parody, adaptation, or translation, and for the music culture, methods vary from sampling to mashup. Through practice, students will have a deeper understanding of how remixes exist within a large network of media and practice encourages students to acquire the habits of mind as well as the skills and competencies to become part of this digital world.

According to Jenkins (2006), the focus of literacy is changing from individual expression to community involvement where creative manifestation

and active participation are the hallmark. The new media literacies (NML) are becoming increasingly important. When thinking about new media literacies, such as the skill, appropriation—one might interpret the language of the words *new media literacy* to refer to a new era where we build upon our interactions with media to analyze and critically consume media so that we're no longer consumers but producers of media. Remixing is synonymous with new media literacies appropriation. By practicing this art form we interpret and better understand the social and cultural world.

Access to new media encourages a wider population to remix. This new form of literacy helps teachers understand that our students are reading and writing in new ways. Reading and writing was once relegated to reading books and writing papers (lessons commonly found in English and language arts classrooms). However, a possible hypothesis is that the educational system has not caught up with the shifting landscape of participatory culture where there are new ways to read, write, and compute numbers.

Shifting Landscape	
Past	**Present**
Reading a book	Reading a transmedia story
Writing alone	Networked writing
Memorizing formulas	Gaming as problem solving

Students are seeking more active participation in learning. Our classroom practices must change if we are to encourage and expand on these new habits of thinking and value the new forms of participation and learning that have become a social construct for teens. In a participatory learning environment, knowledge happens by encouraging learning as emergent rather than prestructured; transmedia rather than unified; situational rather than universal; and collaborative rather than hierarchical.

Project New Media Literacies believes that the new media literacies should be integrated across the curriculum—not as an added subject but as a paradigm shift in how we teach and think about traditional school content. Each discipline needs to take ownership of those skills that are central to conducting research and practice in their area. The sciences may want to take up issues of **visualization** and **simulation**; literature could take up the issue of **appropriation**. To offer a model of how these skills can be integrated into the curriculum, Project New Media Literacies has developed a series of teachers' strategy guides that can inform and inspire teachers working in multiple disciplines, and spark further experimentation and innovation. For access to these resources, see http://newmedialiteracies.org/educators/.

POPULAR KINDS OF REMIX

There are a variety of subcultures of people who participate in remixing content because they are passionate about a specific style of production, whether it's mixing music or editing videos or performing backyard theater. These amateur productions are drawn from multiple sources and illustrate the practice of remixing media as a form of participation. Thus, youth have online spaces where participants share and build upon each other's ideas, where they pool their knowledge and are engaged and connected because of a similar interest.

Music Remix

Music helps define who we are. Music is one of the top modes of expression for bringing youth together and building a sense of community. We sing songs around the campfire and lull our babies to sleep. We learn our first form of literacy by singing the ABCs. We see the importance of music in how Soulja Boy used the power of social media to encourage a community beyond his peers to dance to his song and help build a visibility that made him a phenomenon of participatory culture.

The practice of remixing as we define it today gained popularity in the music industry as a result of the Jamaican dance hall culture of the 1960s where a **DJ** with microphone in hand would rally the crowd to get the party started. The DJ would often encourage a battle of the bands to determine which had the better sound. Using two turntables, the DJ would mix his favorite parts of multiple songs to force certain sounds and rhythms to stand out in relief. As DJ Spooky explains, "A DJ is a hunter and gatherer—collecting sounds, collecting images. We go off and hunt them down and gather them. It's not a passive relationship where you sit there and press play. The whole idea is to make things change; have them transform. You're changing a found sound, a found record, a found file." (View the What is a DJ? video at http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_2.)

Geek Out on DJ Culture!

You can find out more about DJ Spooky and other artists by visiting Project New Media Literacies' Media Producer Profile Series: Learn about DJ Culture! at http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_3

Combining two very different genres creates a surprise for the listener while introducing a new style of music. This type of sampling is called a

mashup*.* I first realized I liked hip-hop when artist, Eminem, collaborated with pop artist, Dido, to sample the chorus of the song "Thank You" and incorporate it with the lyrics of "Stan" (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_4). Often, we like a certain genre of music or are attracted to one style over others. Eminem laid rhythmic hip hop with a slow bass line underneath the lyrics that attracted me more than the other range of hip-hop I had heard. This is an example of how an alternate music culture moved beyond the walls of the clubs into mainstream America, winning a 2002 Grammy for best remix.

Creating remixes provides a way to update the old and invoke enjoyment of the lyrics and sounds of yesterday. American Film Institute nominated "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" as the greatest song of all time. Not surprisingly, this song has been remixed and adapted for every genre from alternative to blues to dance (http://same-melody.com/category/over-the-rainbow). "Jawaiian" (Hawaiian reggae) artist, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, known as Iz to his many fans, has one of the most popular remixes of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," which he has remixed with a totally different rhythm and ukulele accompaniment (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_5).

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Reason, FL Studio, and a Laptop

Digital Revolution in a Back Pack

By Ron Nobu Sakamoto, Instructional Media Technician and Specialist

A new golden age of music has emerged with the revolution in digital technology. Advancements in new media and digital technologies have transformed the music industry and the rules of the trade. The tools of the new music trade have never become more accessible for youth today. Anyone can become a music producer with the right audacity, talent, and entrepreneurial spirit. Equipped with only a laptop, a pair of headphones, and a microphone, youth, can create a portable recording studio that can all fit within a school backpack. Urban kids today are converting their bedrooms, closets, garages, and sheds into micro-recording studios and are now able to produce their own music beats and lyrical songs, upload them to their iPods, MP3 players, to the Internet and share them with their peers and to a worldwide audience. The creation of new digital audio recording software programs such as Logic, Pro Tools, Reason, and even free shareware software programs like FL Studio have helped to spawn a whole new generation of "cultural creatives" forcing the recording music industry to redefine itself.

As a classically trained pianist, I enjoy reading, playing classical music, and love all genres of music. I am always amazed at how adept students are with how quickly

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they learn how to create rhythm, tempo, cadence, without even knowing how to read a single note of music! I especially love the improvisational nature of Jazz music and think some head musicians in hip-hop are at the forefront of one of the most improvisational music forms emerging today.

Students as Beat Makers

I want to share with you my experience with one student in particular. His name is DeAndre, and to outsiders, he appears to be just a normal high school kid: He walks down the school hallways, looking all fresh with his black hoodie, sporting an unmarked NFL cap as he listens to his iPod. He socializes and contributes to class discussions like any other normal teenager. Ask him to compose a five-paragraph essay and he would come up short for words and really struggle to organize his thoughts in grammatically correct sentences. But ask him to compose a song and he'll deliver you rhythmic verses that have deep philosophical truths about his struggles with class, race, and the injustices he sees in society.

DeAndre is a very industrious kid who is very mature for his age, not from choice but out of necessity. He had to raise himself basically in the shelter of his grandma's house without parents. He worked at a local bakery almost every day after school to support himself financially. It was in the beginning of his senior year when he finally achieved his goal of purchasing a new laptop to start producing his own beats in his granny's backyard shed. The storage shed contained a collection of old furniture, torn up rugs, and cobwebs that hung low from decades of dust. DeAndre ran a 50-foot AC cable that powered his laptop from the main house and accompanied a professional microphone and stand I gave him to record his vocals on. I think his only escape from the turmoil that constantly surrounded him was to immerse into his own creative self and produce music whenever he could.

After we returned from holiday break that winter, I found students huddled around DeAndre's iPod, as they listened to a song he had just produced with another student Nick. The song was about Nick scoring an almost perfect 2400 on the SATs. The song expressed Nick's commentary about the educational system and the meaninglessness of his test scores. Nick, who is white, is an exceptionally gifted academic student, and also quite socially awkward, lanky, and lives in an affluent neighborhood. That day, DeAndre and Nick illustrated to their fellow peers that music *can* bring the most unlikely students together and bridge the cultural class divide.

Producers of Music

DeAndre like almost every youth creating beats today are using Reason, FL Studio, and any audio software program and sound effect plug-ins they can find to experiment and create original works of art with. Reason is a professional audio software program for both Apple computers and PCs. Reason has become synonymous with hip-hop music as the main software program youths and professional musicians alike have adopted both for its affordability and its capability to be able to integrate with

other software programs such as FL Studio and audio hardware from midi controllers to professional audio mixing boards. For a novice or untrained person looking at the interface of the program on a computer screen, it appears extremely complicated and full of dials, buttons, switches, and level meters (See Figure 7.1).

Ironically, to become a good producer of music you have to inherently develop a skill for listening, isolating instruments and sounds, instruments, beat tempos, all composited on multiple tracks in a single song, any Reason producer will tell you that. So while students may appear totally checked out walking through the hallways with their hoodies down below their eyes and earphones plugged in, I would argue perhaps all their creative synapses have kept them up all night long listening, learning a new beat, intuitively developing rhythmic algorithms. I have observed how music and beat making is all-pervasive in the hearts and mind of youth culture today. If public education can find innovative ways to bridge the cultural gap and explore new ways of teaching, both educators and students may come to a new understanding of learning and listening.

Figure 7.1   Reason Interface
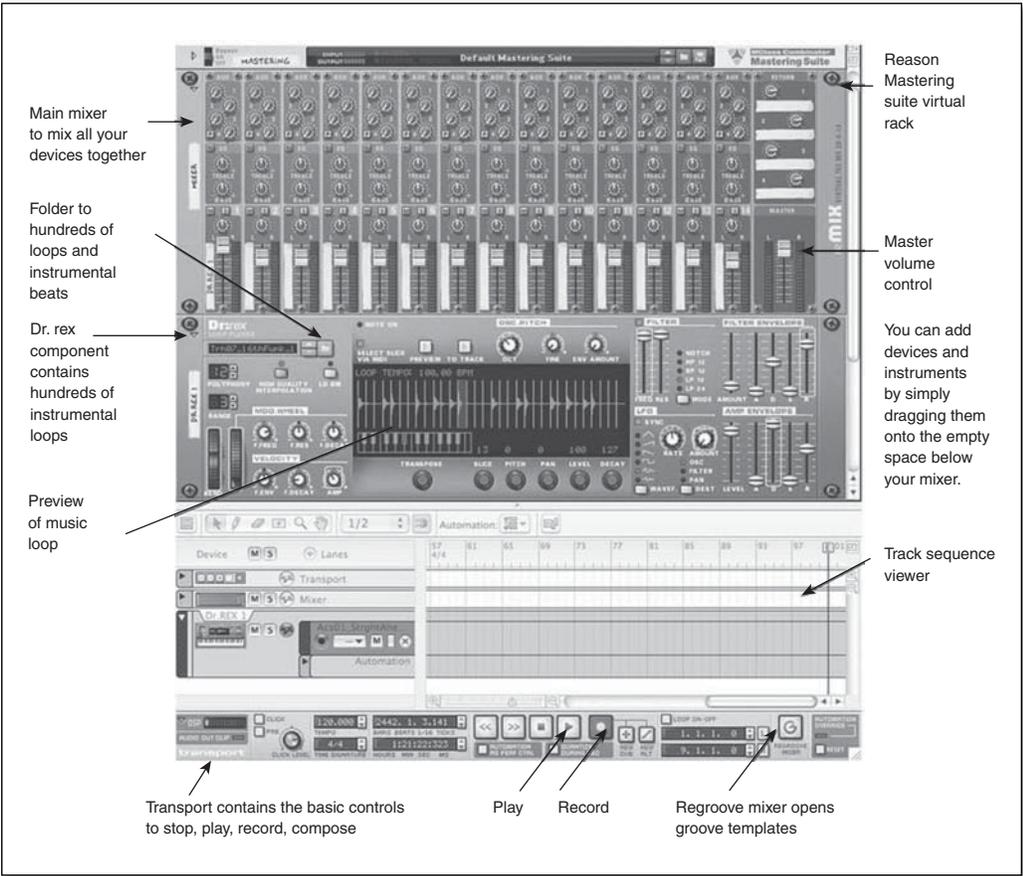
BECOMING A MUSIC REMIXER

A music remix is a reinterpretation of a pre-existing song, which dominates the sound in the remixed version. With the increased availability and use of the creative tools found on the Web, such as Mixx, Scratch Live, and Traktor and in software such as Reason, Pro Tools and GarageBand, we can mix and manipulate audio files and publish our own songs. So what inspires you? What song do you sing when you're in the shower or alone in the car? If you're looking for inspiration, begin at ccMixter (http://ccmixter.org/), a great community for entering into the world of music remixes.

Most music on ccMixter is made by people who aren't professional musicians. However, famous musicians like My Morning Jacket, David Byrne, and the Beastie Boys have posted their music on ccMixter to be remixed. Although you might not find most of your favorite songs on *ccMixter*, you will certainly find a new favorite!

Users post content to ccMixter in three different categories, each of which is noted by a tab at the top of the Web page. The first is Samples of instrumental elements, such as a drum beat or guitar solo. The second is A Capella, singing or rapping without background music. The final category is finished Remixes that pull both elements into one track. Everything on ccMixter is available for remixing, so users can collaborate on music without ever meeting each other, and can work together from around the world and across languages.

Music Remix Activity

Project New Media Literacies Learning Library challenge, *New Versions, New Visions* provides an interactive activity that encourages you and your students to explore the new media literacy, *appropriation*, by browsing through audio remixes on ccmixter.org, a community remix site. Find the challenge at http://www .newmedialiteracies.org/library/#/challenge/38.

The cc in ccMixter stands for **Creative Commons**, and the site is all about (re)mixing common material. At ccMixter, people make, share, and listen to music remixes—legally. The music on ccMixter is licensed under Creative Commons, which means that it can legally and ethically be used in various ways, as long as the creator of the new work follows any rules

attached to the license of the work that he or she is remixing. Some rules say the creator can't make money from what is sampled, and often the work that is being remixed asks to be given credit as the original source.

Even though one in four teens are remixing content online, it is often relegated to their social setting outside of school. Remixing is usually not used in the classroom because of the ongoing debate about copyright and freedom of expression. Teachers are rightly concerned about ownership and authorship; but digital tools have increased the ability of users to sample and remix content to make it their own and it is not a subject that should be avoided or ignored. Instead of encouraging educators to better understand fair use of copyright and tools such as the Creative Commons, schools tend to reject remixing out of hand and dismiss it as a new form of learning.

> It's understandable that a lack of clarity around copyright and fair use can cause frustration but don't dismiss these opportunities! Put your mind at ease and arm yourself with these resources that help set the record straight.
>
> - "The Cost of Copyright Confusion" by Renee Hobbs, Peter Jaszi, and Pat Aufderheide (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_6)
> - "Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Media Literacy Education" (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_8)

Participating in creating remixes does raise legal questions. Remixed creations use material that has some type of copyright from the original author; however remixes recontextualize the original source and create new meaning and are highly eligible to be a fair use of copyrighted material. For example, it is legal, due to the transformative nature of the work. However, remixers must be aware that fair use is a case by case judgment call, which they can help make themselves based on the Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Online Video (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_7). Knowing your rights as a remixer is key to protecting your free speech and thus, a key component of media literacy.

Schools can often misunderstand what copyright allows and does not allow. Identifying ownership and authorship is an important part of media literacy. One only has to look at the 2008 presidential campaign to see the influence of remixing media to help transform political campaigning. The professional photographer, Manny Garcia, makes his living by

selling his best photographs to the press. **Copyright** allows Manny to have control over how his photographs are reproduced, adapted, and distributed in the United States.

At one of the press events during the 2008 elections, Manny Garcia took an infamous photo of Barack Obama. Artist Shepard Fairey was looking online for photos of Obama to use in a poster and created the famous Hope poster by remixing the photo taken by Garcia. The Associated Press (AP), Garcia's employer, owns this photo, and AP wanted to be credited for the image and paid for any poster sales. Shepard Fairey believes that the use of the photo comes under **fair use**. According to fair use, four key features need to change to legally use an original source: the nature, the purpose, the amount, and the effect of the original. By changing these key features, the artists transformed the original into a remix, which created an original in its own right.

Anyone who produces creative works such as images, videos, or music, might want people to remix them. Using a Creative Commons' license allows artists to communicate with others about the specific ways that they can or cannot use their work. The license gives people the freedom to make copies of a work and distribute it, with some restrictions, which combine the following elements:

- *Attribution,* which means people are allowed to use the work as long as they give the artist credit for creating it.
- *Noncommercial,* which means that people can use the work as long as they don't make money using it.
- *Nonderivative,* which means that people can use the work as long as they don't modify or change it.
- *Share alike,* which means that people can use the work as long as they offer their remix under the same license as the artist's.

VIDEO REMIX

In addition to music remixes, people are also remixing videos. A diverse subculture has developed on the Web centered on creating and sharing video remixes. Armed with free programs, such as http://jaycut.com/, or software programs such as iMovie or Windows Moviemaker, teens are learning from each other how to remix videos. Teachers can bring this creative production into the classroom. A variety of video remix styles, including movie trailer **recuts**, political remixes, and remixed music videos, allow students to build upon the originals and create new meaning, such as a parody, alternative messages, as well as new forms of music with subliminal messages.

Video Remix Activity

Project New Media Literacies Learning Library challenge, *Total Recut: Transformations* has you explore a video recut of *The Shining* that transforms the classic horror film starring Jack Nicholson into a romantic comedy. This challenge explores how appropriating content, specifically sound, can transform meaning. Find the challenge at http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/library/#/challenge/40

Fan vidders (vidder originates from song vid, vid short for video) create fan-made music videos derived from television shows or movies. If you've ever created slideshows set to music, then you are part of the precursor to fan vidding. Fan vidding has a rich history of vids, aesthetics, and technologies and is the earliest music video remix culture having been in existence since 1975 and is recognized having been established by Kandy Fong who created a remix with Star Trek slide images set to Leonard Nimoy's song, "Both Sides Now" (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_9). Most notably, this is a genre that is primarily practiced by women and something very important to understand since video making has been associated as a male-dominated movement. But this is a misconception that we need to squelch in order to ensure equality in participation and statistically there is no gender difference in teens remixing and creating online (Pew Internet and American Life, 2005).

Today vidders edit clips of their favorite television show or movie and transform them into a music video. Television shows such as "Heroes," "Supernatural," or "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" or movies such as *Star Trek* or *Twilight* inspire us to participate in telling more of the story or redefining it to share with others. Fan-vidding is our visual poetry, an interpretation of the television shows and movies that vidders love. The viewer will understand the vid better if they are familiar with or have seen the television show or movie that is being represented. With this knowledge, a viewer can move beyond the storyline to see the nuances of what a vid is trying to represent both in story, aesthetic, and technical remix.

Often vidders work collaboratively on a project. They usually become interested in the process after they find a vidder willing to teach the technique or by accessing a well-known vidding forum found on Live Journal (http://www.livejournal.com/). Live Journal is a discussion forum and social network site and hosts one of the biggest fan vidding communities. This peer-to-peer mentoring community is very welcoming and willing to share their expertise.

The best vids have a fully thought out concept with layers of meaning; but the song choice must fit the tone of the story and still be entertaining.

Point of view is vital to a successful video remix and vidders must consider the role of the characters and the message projected through them.

The novice vidder should watch many videos to learn vidding techniques and Live Journal's vidding archive has worked to gather vids from the Internet into one place (http://community.livejournal.com/vidding_archive/profile).

To get started, here are two vid classics that have had widespread interest and have been critiqued and analyzed by the vidding community as an excellent representation of what makes a good vid:

- "Vogue" by Luminosity (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_10) which spread to the mainstream in 2007, brought new attention to fan vidding by being voted Best Online Video in *New York Magazine* bringing the very underground world of fan vidding and media literacy to the forefront and turning sexism in the movie *300* on it's head. Luminosity objectified the male characters in *300* for the female characters to admire, and Madonna was portrayed as the pagan goddess.
- "Buffy versus Edward: Twilight Remixed" by Jonathan McIntosh is inspired by vidding history, but is considered a political remix because it doesn't rely on music to narrate the story. It constructs a political message using the format of a television show, instead of a music video. This remix is a clever mashup that brings one of the all-time powerful female characters, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, up against Edward Cullen from *Twilight*, the popular book and film series, to portray a feminist critique of Edward's patriachal attitude (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_11).

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

In his book, *Understanding Media,* Marshall McLuhan (1994) says that a medium is "any extension of ourselves," (p. 7) suggesting that a hammer extends our arm. Tools we have today, such as the ability to sample music, capture video, and edit media encourages students to use that which they are comfortable with to socially construct meanings of the world. Remixing allows us to find ways for people to connect around common interests and encourages the expertise of both youth and adults in the learning process, where contributing to knowledge building is the reward for their inputs.

We as teachers have a new role to play in the classroom. Taking the apprenticeship model, we cannot continue to be on the sidelines of

participation in the new media environment. We have to participate as well to produce and create alongside our students and to become facilitators of their learning. We also need to realize that as teachers, we do not need to hold all the knowledge. Social media provides teachers an avenue to bring new knowledge into the classroom by inviting experts and other perspectives to the discussion. Where this used to be a costly field trip or stipend to bring someone in, we can now harness new media to create a globally connected world of participants. Our relationship with students is to offer guidance, establish mutually agreed upon norms in the classroom, and provide learning goals to accomplish. It is not about providing all the answers or giving them specific directions but instead giving our students a map for them to achieve. The idea of remixing might be foreign to the classroom, but there are ways to wade into participation.

Over the past few years, Project New Media Literacies located at University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication has developed curricula for use both in school and out of school. One of New Media Literacies's resources created is the Learning Library, a Web-based platform for teachers and students to collaborate, share, and design new knowledge by remixing media to serve their specific context or learning purpose (http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/library/). What's unique about using this platform in learning is it encourages both teachers and students alike to see and use media in a different context than what its original purpose was for.

For example, the Web site—One Million Monkeys Typing (http://www .1000000monkeys.com/) allows you to create collaborative stories or choose your own adventure narratives while harnessing the power of collective intelligence. The original intent of this site was for fun, a way to read, write, and publish your story ideas and have the audience participate and add to your ideas. One Million Monkeys Typing wasn't intended for the classroom but as teachers, we can remix its purpose and envision this site as an engaging tool to bring into the classroom to learn about history, reflect on our world, or develop our skills in storytelling. As teachers, we build the context, the learning objective.

The Learning Library is made up of two primary features, media elements and challenges and offers a robust set of tools and media-focused activities, which are designed to get learners (teachers and students alike) exploring and experimenting with the new media literacies and in the process, producing and sharing media-related activities (challenges) with each other.

New Media Literacies has seeded the Learning Library with the Media Makers Challenge Collection that features exemplary new media makers and offers members rich opportunities to learn about and practice the new

media literacy skills. The goal of the Learning Library is that, ultimately, users will produce and share their own content with other members of the Learning Library.

Teachers in a pilot program used the challenges in a range of different ways. Some sought to gain a better understanding of the new media literacy concepts and practices. Others took the challenges directly into their classrooms and applied them to texts they were studying with their students. Most adapted the challenges to different curricular contexts, using core Learning Library principles to develop their own challenges. In short, the teachers appropriated and remixed the challenges for their own ends.

EXPRESSING CHARACTERS

The Learning Library challenge, Expressing Characters (http://newmedialiteracies .org/library/#/challenge/37), encourages exploration by the learner to consider how a character can be expressed through different media. Each media focuses unique elements of the character. For graphic illustrations, the learner has to think about movement, color, the character in one time and space. In video, the learner reflects on the character in motion, as a live being in a real world. In theater, learners have to think of the character as interacting with other characters. All three express character in very different ways but the goal with transmedia storytelling is to make each expression and present the *same* character. Similarity in multiplicity is a great way to get students to think about how an author expresses character and remains consistent.

Once a teacher learns how to navigate the Learning Library, it becomes a valuable resource for stimulating classroom participation in forming and "teaching" the lesson. Starting the lesson with a character the students already know will let them buy in to the class project and increase their willingness to add to the learning environment and objectives.

Integrating expressing characters into a larger lesson would be a way to incorporate popular culture into the classroom and could be tied to a character in a literary text that the class is reading by practicing transmedia storytelling. This could be used as an introductory activity or extension by having the class collaborate on creating a *Twitter feed* for the different characters from *The Great Gatsby* over a few weeks. How would Jay Gatsby speak? What if Jay Gatsby hadn't taken the blame for Myrtle's death, how would the others act? What would each of them write in 140 characters over a couple of days of storytelling, especially if this story were of today's American Dream instead of the 1920s?

This twitter activity is only one example of how to remix *Great Gatsby* but with the knowledge of music and video remix—what other ways can teachers extend this classic? For example, one English class encouraged music remixes of the *Great Gatsby* (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_12).

Visit http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_13 to find out about expressing characters and other media makers' challenges.

ANALOG REMIX

For many of today's youth culture, remixing is native to the digital tools afforded to them. However, you do not need to have technology in order to encourage remixing in the classroom. Remixing, like all the new media literacies, is on the development of skills and mental models rather than on the tools and techniques of new media. So one can look across disciplines and see how they apply.

Project New Media Literacies has developed the Teachers' Strategy Guide: Reading in a Participatory Culture to study authorship in relation to a range of literary works, pushing us to reflect more deeply on how authors build upon the materials of their culture and in turn inspire others who follow to see the world in new ways. Theater director, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, engaged incarcerated youth in a deeper understanding of the classic literature in Melville's *Moby-Dick* and was the inspiration for the strategy guide. Ricardo's process had youth adapt and interpret *Moby-Dick* for their language. What emerged from the process was *Moby-Dick: Then and Now,* a play that combines two narratives: the original Melville story, i.e., Ahab seeking revenge on the "great white whale," and a present-day narrative about urban youth on a quest to hunt down an elusive character named WhiteThing, which loosely represents the social and cultural forces surrounding the cocaine trade. By remixing the original text to the gang culture they knew and understood, these youths had a better understanding of the original. The original and the appropriated story were performed in parallel on stage, juxtaposing the language of the 19th century with the 21st century. As you can see from this example, Pitts-Wiley did not put technology first but instead helped to encourage a new mindset of how to read deeply the classic literature of *Moby-Dick*.

Learning to remix is a basic skill for the production of culture. By applying analog remixing techniques students become aware of the degree to which all cultural expression builds upon what has come before. One method to try in the classroom is William Burroughs' the ***cutup method***. A *cutup* is performed by taking a finished text (printed on paper) and cutting it into pieces with a few or single words on each piece. The resulting pieces are then rearranged into a new text (Lombana, 2007).

Ask your students to bring in their favorite song lyrics to cut up and remix with other lyrics or poems in order to create something new based on a theme you suggest. For example in my recent gender and media course, I had my students remix women poets and music lyrics to represent what it means to be a feminist in today's media culture. As you can see from Aonya's example, there were certain works of art that she sampled from, such as Maya Angelou and Riot Grrrl's song lyrics from "Bikini

Kill," and then there were influences, such as a patriarchal view of society and Aonya representing herself as a Christian woman, that helped to shape her cutup.

Aonya McCruiston discusses her process of remixing the varied texts to interpret what she thinks it means to be a feminist today:

In my poem (http://tiny.cc/teachtech_7_14), I wanted to sample life-defining texts and create something that reflected my thoughts and concerns about the future of the feminist movement and my involvement in it.

I wanted to take extremely tough sounding lyrics about revolution and reaffirm my identity as a woman. I think it's easy to take for granted that men are the revolutionaries since so much of history defines them as the owners of all its great revolutions, such as American, communist, and industrial.

I wanted to make a statement that women do change the world, which is why I added the truth quote about Eve. Women have been changing the world ever since, but I don't think it gets recognized enough. My generation might disagree, but I think that giving women a voice that is at least some say in all aspects of public and private life definitely revolutionized the American way of life. However, I think that there's still a lot more to be done which is why I added that the revolution's coming.

I believe that equality is obtainable.

Little girls have been raised with the idea that they can do anything they want. More women are graduating with more degrees than ever before. I think there will come a point when these educated, confident women will fight back against inequality.

I think we're all just waiting for some driving force, but I don't know what that is.

I ended my poem with the Audre Lorde quote "wondering which me will survive all these liberations" from "Who Said It Was Simple." In it she seems to be worried about losing her identity, but when I wrote it, I was actually wondering how I will change if a third/fourth wave does come? Do I have to change? Are there aspects of me that are unfeminist? I don't know the answers to those questions, but I think the answers will come as the feminist movement and I continue to grow and change.

ORIGINAL VERSUS REMIX

Becoming familiar with current remixes is a way to help you understand the aesthetic. Encourage your students to bring in remixes, mashups, collages, and recuts that interest them and share these links that provide a history of each music video remix genre and offer sample remixes to review. As you review examples with your students, have a discussion relating the original source to the remixed version.

Examples of fan-made music video remixes

- *Vidding* see examples, check out http://www.video24–7.org/video/vidding.html
- *Machinimists* are artists who use three-dimensional graphic engines from video games. To learn about fan machinima and see examples, check out http://www.video24–7.org/video/machinima.html
- *Political Remix Videos* (PRVs) use video clips from popular media such as new clips, speeches, TV shows, and movies to convey alternative messages not just on political structures but on social issues as well. To learn about PRVs, check out http://www.video24–7.org/video/political_remix.html
- *Anime Music Videos* are edited animated Japanese cartoons that add to a song or tell a story. To learn about AMVs, check out http://www.video24–7.org/video/anime_music_video.html

Using the following template, have students identify the original source and in review of the remix share the media influences and the media that was sampled from the original to create the remix.

Remix Template:

_____ is the remix; _____ are the influences of the remix.

The remix is inspired by and appropriates from the influences (media content) by sampling _____ (elements).

Example:

The film *Shrek* is the remix; *fairy tales* are the influences of the remix.

The remix is inspired by and appropriates from the influences (media content) by sampling characters (such as an evil lord) and situations (such as sleeping princess).

Template from NML's TSG: Reading in a Participatory Culture

CREATE A REMIX

Through peer-based learning and supportive adults in a model that is defined more as an apprenticeship community, teens are acquiring educational experiences they are a part of their larger learning ecology that expands beyond the classroom walls. This is the most important

pedagogical practice I can suggest for all teachers—*get involved* and be part of the promises of this learning ecology.

You don't have to learn on your own or feel your way through this blindly by yourself. There is a community out there waiting for you to participate and not just as a lurker on the sidelines anymore. Use this as an opportunity to make time in your schedule to create change in your classroom.

Each genre of video music remixes has a community and offers opportunities to begin participating in remix.

- *Total Recut* (http://www.totalrecut.com/index.php) provides online resources and social networking opportunities for fans and creators of video recuts, remixes and mashups.
- *Political Remix Video* (http://www.politicalremixvideo.com/) hosts a blog to critique power structures, deconstruct social myths, and challenge dominant media messages, as well as share the most innovative and inspiring political remix videos.
- *Organization of Transformative Works* (OTW) (http://transformative-works.org/projects/vidding-history) supports all fan works and provides a history of vidding as well as many projects that document this culture.
- *Machinima* (http://www.machinima.com/) showcases thousands of trailers, videos, gameplay, montages. and original machinima using game engines such as *World of Warcraft* and *Sims2*.
- *Anime Music Videos* (http://www.animemusicvideos.org/home/home.php) welcomes all to share, learn, and create AMVs together, offering many technical guides on how to acquire the knowledge and techniques to create anime music videos.

SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS, STORIES, AND EXPERIENCES!

We want to hear from you. Join our community of teachers by visiting our Web site (http://projectnml.ning.com/) and posting your responses to this chapter. Here are some questions to address when reading a remix:

1. What constitutes the primary source material?

2. What is the media form of the remix?

3. What is the context of the remix?

4. What elements of the primary source material are being remixed?

5. Are the works of the same genre or different ones? How do you know?

6. What techniques are deployed in reworking the original material?

7. What is the intended purpose of the remix?

8. How does the remix build from, add to, or alter the cultural meaning of the original work?

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Project New Media Literacies Resources: http://projectnml.ning.com

- Learning Library
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- Teachers' Strategy Guide: Reading in a Participatory Culture, Expert Voices
- Our Space: Being a Responsible Citizen of the Digital World (a collaboration with Harvard's GoodPlay Project)

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