Much of the research on youth digital literacies relies on the experiences of exceptional cases, while less is known about more typical youth who share their writing in online spaces. Through the examination of a novice writer in an online space, this article explores the convergence of factors shaping young people’s networked writing and addresses recent critique of the New London Group’s (1996) Designs of Meaning framework. Data were gathered during a two-year ethnographic investigation of an online affinity space, The Sims Writers’ Hangout, and analyzed through a Designs of Meaning lens. Data sources include the writer’s posts on the site, responses she received from others, her Sims fanfiction texts, interview responses, and researcher field notes. Findings of this study make visible the multiple factors influencing this writer’s choices, revealing how Available Designs from within and outside the site shaped her creations and how she leveraged her online participation to Design products that met the expectations of this audience. This analysis contributes to the field’s understanding of how online affinity spaces influence youth digital literacy practices and argues that a Design perspective makes such shaping more visible. The article also argues for a more complicated notion of affinity space audiences as collaborators, rather than just supportive reviewers. These findings suggest the need for continued study of typical participation in online spaces and future research to examine networked writing within classroom contexts.

By studying a novice writer in an online space, this article explores the convergence of factors shaping young people’s networked writing and addresses recent critique of the New London Group’s (1996) Designs of Meaning framework. A growing body of research examines the literacy practices involved when youth engage in technology-mediated content creation, doing important work to legitimize these practices (e.g., Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003) and demonstrate how sharing writing in an online space connects youth to authentic writing identities (e.g., Black, 2005). However, much of this research relies on the experiences of youth who are the “exceptional case” (Black, 2008, p. 101)—expert teens who have a unique constellation of factors fueling their passion and engagement. Thus we have rich, inspiring cases, including Jack (Curwood, 2013), who created podcasts, blogs, and tutorials to support players of a popular Hunger Games alternate reality game, and Kate (Roozen, 2009), whose fanfiction writing informed her graduate
English studies and vice versa. Less is known about the experiences of more typical youth who create and share in online spaces. This study addresses that gap by sharing the case of Angela, a novice participant in an online forum for writers.

Angela, described below, was an informant in a two-year ethnographic study I conducted within *The Sims* Writers’ Hangout (SWH). SWH was an online affinity space (Gee, 2004; Lammers, Curwood, & Magnifico, 2012) whose members, primarily adolescents and young adults, used discussion forums for a variety of activities associated with writing stories using the life-simulation videogame *The Sims*. Many players of this game create *Sims* fanfiction, a fan literacy practice that produces multimodal (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), hybrid (New London Group, 1996) texts combining screen shots from the game with written narratives to tell stories with *Sims* characters (see Lammers, 2012, for more explanation). *Sims* fanfiction, thus, arises from the intersection of videogame play, digital image editing, and writing (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Screenshot of a Sims fanfiction that Angela uploaded to the Exchange](image-url)
When writers share their work in online spaces like SWH, they place themselves “among the audience” (Lunsford & Ede, 2009), inviting immediate attention and input on their creations. Connecting with a wider online audience can motivate youth as they receive feedback from passionate readers (Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013), but it also brings challenges as youth navigate competing expectations when trying to write both for and with that online audience (Magnifico, 2010). Thus, online spaces provide unique writing contexts, in which readers and writers collaboratively construct genre conventions and standards for quality. In such networked writing (Lammers & Marsh, 2015), writing and sharing are inextricably linked as engagement with the audience becomes inseparable from the act of writing. This rhetorical situation demands that writers attend to numerous factors, “from generic or situational constraints to ideologies that make some writerly choices seem obvious or ‘natural,’ while others are ‘unnatural’ or entirely hidden from view” (Lunsford & Ede, 2009, p. 48). While creativity may be rewarded, the audience will speak up if authors’ writerly choices are too unnatural.

Past research exploring online fanfiction contexts has focused on writers’ perspectives (Korobkova & Black, 2014; Stedman, 2012), structures and practices within the spaces (Black, 2007; Lammers, 2013), or the interactions between writers and audiences (Black, 2005; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Magnifico, Curwood, & Lammers, 2015). In the present study, I focus my gaze on the intersection between the online affinity space (SWH), a novice writer, and her Designing work (New London Group, 1996), highlighting how Angela leverages her online participation to meet audience expectations as she creates and shares Sims fanfiction. I use the Designs of Meaning framework specifically because it recognizes conventions writers attend to while also shedding light on the Design work authors do to both transform and reproduce these conventions. Sims fanfiction serves as a rich rhetorical situation in which to explore such Designing, as its conventions arise out of traditional storytelling, a popular videogame, and the online affinity space to create a multimodal literacy practice some youth use to explore their fandom and develop as writers. By locating my exploration in this context, this article contributes to our growing knowledge about writing with and for online audiences, while also illustrating the continued utility of the New London Group’s framework, in dialogue with recent critique (Leander & Boldt, 2013). The following research questions guided this study: (1) What is the nature of the literacy practices recruited for participation in SWH? (2) How does participation in SWH shape this adolescent’s Sims fanfiction?

Situating This Inquiry

This article contributes to an ongoing conversation in this journal aimed at understanding young people’s digital literacies in activities such as online journaling (Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005), digital storytelling (Hull & Katz, 2006), fanfiction (Black, 2009; Roozen, 2009), and social networking (Buck, 2012). In particular, I take up the discussion by examining the convergence of factors impacting the writing young people share in online affinity spaces. I begin by reviewing insights
from fanfiction research, and then articulate the theoretical perspectives of learning, literacies, and affinity spaces informing this study.

**Fanfiction Research**

Online, youth have access to a global network of fans who display their interest in a variety of media by sharing fan-based creations on websites, discussion forums, blogs, and social networking sites. Research about young people’s online fanfiction has shed light on opportunities for youth to connect with others in ways that motivate them and foster literacy practices (cf. Curwood et al., 2013; Roozen, 2009). Youth who feel marginalized by peer groups at school can find camaraderie when writing fanfiction with other fans (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003). Studies of exceptional cases also suggest that youth engage in authentic, collaborative writing practices for a variety of purposes. Jenkins (2006) shared the story of Heather, a home-schooled teenager inspired by how the *Harry Potter* books encouraged kids to read. Therefore, she launched *The Daily Prophet*, an online “school newspaper” for the fictional Hogwarts, to encourage kids to write. Heather managed a global staff of over 100 children, who produced fanfiction news stories about the imaginary school they co-constructed. Black’s (2008) ethnographic study of Fanfiction.net yielded insights into how English language learners who shared anime fanfiction in this space gained access to and affiliation with identities as English writers. Interactions through author notes and reader comments scaffolded the girls’ language learning as they wrote about characters and storylines that interested them. In theorizing how online spaces nurture passion, Gee and Hayes (2010) juxtaposed a popular *Sims* fanfiction author, Alex, with Stephenie Meyer, author of the popular *Twilight* series of vampire romance novels on which Alex based her stories. By focusing on each author’s relationship with her fans in online spaces, they illustrated how “Stephenie and Alex, as writers and readers, professionals and amateurs, are closer than such types of people have ever been before” (Gee & Hayes, 2010, p. 144).

While the field understands more about how sharing fanfiction in online spaces encourages persistent engagement for young writers, what remains less clear is how the multiple expectations within those spaces impact the writing. By its very nature as a derivative practice of basing one’s creations on existing media, fanfiction writing brings with it a need to conform to expectations. Sharing that work with other fans means recognizing that “the audience these works are intended for . . . have already formed opinions about the ideas, themes, characters, sounds and other various pieces of the original texts, which shapes reactions to new [fanfiction]” (Stedman, 2012, p. 108). Similarly, Magnifico (2010) posits that the audience with whom writers share their work online is an often-abstract group of people whose real (in the case of an active, participatory audience) or imagined (in the case of a more distant audience) characteristics and reactions can help the writer plan and assess the shape and style of her writing. (p. 175)

Research has explored the role of such audiences in fanfiction writers’ practices (Black, 2008; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Magnifico et al., 2015), but audience is
just one of the multiple factors shaping fanfiction when it is shared in an online space. This analysis explores how fanfiction genre expectations, an online space's particular practices and audience, and a writer's interests and expertise converge to shape what gets created and shared. Through the case of a novice writer, I illustrate this convergence of factors shaping networked writing, a subject not fully addressed by the literacy researchers answering calls for continued study of young people's interest-driven digital literacy practices (Alvermann, 2008).

Theoretical Perspectives
Sociocultural and situated approaches to understanding learning and literacies inform my study. My sociocultural approach is rooted in Vygotsky’s (1978) work, which argues that social interaction is fundamental to learning. I also draw on Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of situated learning, emphasizing “comprehensive understanding involving the whole person” and learning as a social process of engaging in activity “in and with the world” as the learner, the learning, and “the world mutually constitute each other” (p. 33). In this way, learning both is contextualized in and develops out of social interaction.

Similarly, I acknowledge the situatedness of literacies (Barton, 2007; Gee, 2004, 2008; Heath, 1983; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Street, 1984), recognizing how literacy practices influence and are influenced by the contexts in which they occur. As Barton (2007) says, “there is not one way of reading and writing, there is not one set of practices” (p. 37). Informed by New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2008; Street, 2003), my conceptualization of literacies aligns with Lankshear and Knobel’s (2011) definition of literacies as “socially recognized ways in which people generate, communicate, and negotiate meanings, as members of Discourses, through the medium of encoded texts” (p. 33). Connected with this understanding of literacies, texts, according to the New London Group (1996), “are designed using the range of historically available choices among different modes of meaning” (p. 81). Recognizing literacies and texts as such positions authors like Angela as designers of Sims fanfiction texts in recognition of the social/historical context and of audience expectations within SWH. Leander and Boldt (2013), in contrast, argue against characterizing youth literacies as such “purposeful, rational design” (p. 24). Their “rereading” of the New London Group’s work instead adopts a perspective of texts as “participants in the world” and youth as not aiming to produce them rationally for purposes of generating meaning, but rather as happening “to use them, to move with and through them, in the production of intensity” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 25). Their understanding allows them to recognize bodies, movement, and sensation as central to literacies, and favors viewing literacy practices through a lens of nonrepresentational emergence instead of socially situated design. However, as this study aims to understand the convergence of factors shaping the Sims fanfiction Angela creates and shares, a socially situated design perspective of literacies and texts focuses my analysis on how Angela leverages her participation in SWH to meet this audience’s expectations.

The theoretical construct of affinity spaces (Gee, 2004; Lammers et al., 2012) provides a conceptual framework for understanding SWH’s organization. Gee (2004) characterizes videogame-related affinity spaces as informal learning sites
where “newbies and masters and everyone else” interact around a “common endeavor” (p. 85). The common endeavor of *The Sims* videogames, specifically in *Sims* fanfiction-related practices, brought participants to SWH. Three affinity space features are of particular relevance to this study.

Within affinity spaces, participants have opportunities to enact “different forms and routes to participation” (Gee, 2004, p. 87). Affinity spaces provide “powerful opportunities for learning . . . because people can participate in various ways according to their skills and interests” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 177). Thus, affinity spaces encourage self-directed, multifaceted, and dynamic participation (Lammers et al., 2012). SWH’s forums catered to different purposes related to community building, creating, and sharing Sims fanfiction. Members passively participated by viewing and reading content without posting. They also actively participated by posting fanfiction, critiques, and praise for others’ creations, or by supporting others’ writing by sharing tutorials, answering questions, or proofreading drafts. Still others filled leadership roles as moderators of forums and/or contests. These varied participation routes were available to members of SWH, allowing their skills and interests to direct their engagement.

The ways “both intensive and extensive knowledge are encouraged” (Gee, 2004, p. 85) are also relevant to this analysis. In affinity spaces, displays of expertise “are highly variable and contingent on activity and context at any given moment” (Black, 2008, p. 39), and thus participants might have knowledge about one aspect of creating Sims fanfiction, but not others. SWH encouraged members to display, gain, and leverage intensive, or specialized, knowledge of various aspects of Sims fanfiction. For example, posing Sims, much like in real-life photography, was an important element of capturing images for these multimodal fanfictions. In one forum in SWH that focused on photo-taking advice, members displayed intensive knowledge by creating tutorials, answering others’ questions, and sharing posing cheat codes. Sims fanfiction authors developed their intensive knowledge from these resources, or leveraged the knowledge of others by asking experts to create photos for them. Members also displayed extensive, or broad, knowledge about story writing and *The Sims* as they created fanfictions and shared them for others to read. Extensive story-writing knowledge was displayed by following writing conventions in one’s own Sims fanfiction, for example, or serving as a proofreader to assist another member in the writing process. In these ways, SWH engaged members in practices that encouraged displaying, gaining, and leveraging both intensive and extensive knowledge.

Finally, ways “both individual and distributed knowledge are encouraged” (Gee, 2004, p. 86) in affinity spaces inform this analysis. Participants display their individual knowledge by contributing to the affinity space. While they engage in these displays, individual knowledge becomes part of the distributed knowledge of the group, shaping future interactions and creations (Black, 2007). In SWH, fanfictions displayed one’s individual knowledge and skills related to *The Sims*, writing, and oftentimes, digital image editing. When members shared tutorials or answered others’ questions, they helped create the distributed knowledge available in the
space. Members could tap into the distributed knowledge network of SWH. As Gee (2004) points out, “Such knowledge allows people to know and do more than they could on their own” (p. 86). Together, these theoretical conceptualizations of learning, literacies, and affinity spaces formed the prism through which I explored how a novice writer Designed her Sims fanfiction, leveraging her participation in SWH to meet the expectations of this online affinity space.

**Study Design**

The study presented in this article came from a larger research project (Lammers, 2011) aimed at understanding the learning and literacies involved in youth creation and sharing of Sims fanfiction. The exploratory nature of this project and my interpretivist stance (which recognizes the importance of context and participants’ own multiple ways of constructing meaning) pointed me toward a qualitative approach to answering my questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). With a particular interest in making sense of what shapes young people’s networked writing in online affinity spaces, I constructed an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) that represented the particularity and complexity of Angela’s Sims fanfiction writing. Situated within larger conversations about fanfiction as a literacy practice and the implications of sharing writing in an online space, this case is “at once particular and general” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 112), and I present it to help understand how factors converge to shape what a more typical, rather than exceptional, writer creates.

This study aligns with a growing body of research employing ethnographic methods to study virtual environments (e.g., Black, 2008; Hine, 2000). In this tradition, I view the “Internet as a culture where the uses people make of the technology available to them [are] studied” (Hine, 2000, p. 9). I sought understanding of SWH by immersing myself in the space, “[using] that experience to try to learn how life is lived there” (Hine, 2009, p. 6). In defining my field’s boundaries, I drew on Leander and McKim’s (2003) conceptualization of online ethnography as a “moving, traveling practice” (p. 237) and thus followed Angela’s Sims fanfiction-related activities wherever they led, including SWH, the Exchange (a corporate-run site), and her own website.

**Research Context**

SWH was an online discussion forum created by and for youth to support their endeavors as Sims fanfiction writers. At the time of this study (as of May 12, 2010), SWH had more than 12,000 members who had contributed over 665,000 posts on more than 31,000 different topics organized into 22 forums and 72 sub-boards. The forums included tips for overcoming writer’s block, a “Classified” section for writers to solicit proofreaders and collaborators, links to Sims custom content available for download, and tutorials offering help with practices such as photo editing. The space also contained forums not directly related to Sims fanfiction, including a “Writers Lounge” for posting non-Sims poetry and prose, and “Chit Chat” forums where participants talked about school or answered personality quizzes (see Lammers, 2012, for more discussion of SWH).
Data Collection

Data were collected following principles of affinity space ethnography (Lammers et al., 2012), a method derived from discourse-centered online ethnography (Androutsopoulos, 2008). I examined the relationships among members and noted the processes involved in creating and sharing Sims fanfiction in SWH. Through “systematic observation,” I mapped out the forums and read informational texts posted by moderators within each forum. I repeatedly observed the spectrum from the most active forums to those with little activity. I read threads with posts by prolific members and moderators, as well as those posted by newer members, thus moving from the “core to the periphery” (Androutsopoulos, 2008, p. 6) of SWH. I also followed hyperlinks wherever they pointed. Though I did not participate in SWH, as I worked to ensure that the impact of my presence on the space was minimal, my observation was more than gazing at artifacts on the site; rather, it was an attempt to understand SWH as a culture.

Based upon 12 months of systematic observation, I identified potential key informants whose interactions spanned different types of participation. Following Androutsopoulos’s (2008) “practice-derived guidelines for contact with Internet actors” (p. 6), I contacted informants through the private message system in SWH. Eight young women consented to participate. As Table 1 shows, these informants included moderators, longtime members, prolific posters, and newer members, representing a range of activities and status markers in SWH.

Angela serves as an instrumental case for understanding how participation in SWH shapes a writer’s Sims fanfiction because observations revealed her continued use of multiple SWH features as she tapped into the distributed expertise within this affinity space. Additionally, Angela joined SWH during my observation period and remained active throughout the study, reaching “Full Member” status, placing her among the 140 SWH members with 200 to 399 posts. This allowed me to capture a novice’s interactions in the space as they happened. To gain Angela’s insider’s perspective, I conducted three semistructured virtual interviews through email, with customized interview questions based upon my observations of her participation and artifacts. I maintained contact with her throughout the next 12 months of data collection and analysis, as she continued to inform my understanding of her writing and SWH.

Data sources used in this analysis include Angela’s 280 SWH posts, responses she received from other members, the Sims fanfictions she hosted on her website and blog, her interview responses, and field notes capturing my observations.

Participant

During our interviews, Angela was a 15-year-old student in her first year of high school, living in a rural area of the northeastern United States. Angela’s favorite subjects were English and science, and she aspired to “teach English classes as well as become a famous author down the road” (January 25, 2010). When she joined SWH, she introduced herself by saying, “I like to write stories, so I figured I’d join. I’m [Angela]” (SWH post, August 10, 2009).
Table 1. Information about Study Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant*</th>
<th>Date Joined SWH</th>
<th>Total SWH Posts</th>
<th>SWH Status*</th>
<th>SWH Activities</th>
<th>Data Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANGELA 15</td>
<td>August 10, 2009</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Full Member</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, sharing story ideas, posting requests, using proofreaders, writing non-Sims stories</td>
<td>Interviews, follow-up emails, SWH posts, 5 story threads, 5 Sims fannictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTWOOD 19</td>
<td>April 4, 2006</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, using proofreaders, entering contests</td>
<td>Interviews, follow-up email, SWH posts, 1 story thread, 2 Sims fannictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEANOR 18</td>
<td>August 24, 2005</td>
<td>5,675</td>
<td>Demi Goddess</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, role-play, writing My Chemical Romance (a band)-inspired fanfiction, writing non-Sims short stories</td>
<td>Interviews, follow-up email, sample of SWH posts, 3-chapter Sims fanfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVE 23</td>
<td>October 17, 2005</td>
<td>3,843</td>
<td>Royal Member</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, creating Sims movies, entering contests, creating photo-editing tutorials</td>
<td>Interviews, follow-up email, sample of SWH posts, 2 Sims story threads, 7-chapter Sims fanfiction, Sims creations shared elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAWAII, UNITED STATES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSY 23</td>
<td>February 17, 2006</td>
<td>1,591</td>
<td>Senior Staff</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, moderating and entering contests, moderating forums</td>
<td>Interviews, sample of SWH posts, 1 Sims story thread, 3-chapter Sims fanfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAOMI 18</td>
<td>May 22, 2008</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading and writing Sims fanfiction, proofreading, using proofreaders, writing non-Sims short stories</td>
<td>Interviews, sample of SWH posts, 1 Sims story thread, 2-chapter Sims fanfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMELA 18</td>
<td>May 11, 2007</td>
<td>3,409</td>
<td>Senior Staff</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading Sims fanfiction, moderating and entering contests, moderating forums, welcoming new members, managing the site</td>
<td>Informal email exchanges, sample of SWH posts, including contest entries and site moderation, 1 Sims fanfiction &quot;Coming Soon&quot; thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAHRAH 22</td>
<td>December 9, 2007</td>
<td>2,228</td>
<td>High Priestess</td>
<td>Chit Chat, reading Sims fanfiction, answering requests, moderating contests, creating custom content</td>
<td>Interviews, follow-up emails, sample of SWH posts, including requests filled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Informants identified themselves as females. Data are as of June 1, 2010.

*aPseudonym, age, and place of residence.

*bStatus markers were displayed on all SWH profiles, and changed as members posted more or took on moderator roles. This column indicates whether the informant was actively posting on SWH during data collection.
Angela remembered first watching her older brothers play *The Sims* and then beginning to play when she was 11 years old. She visited *The Sims* Resource (TSR; www.thesimsresource.com), a popular fan site for custom content, with her mom to download content for her brothers. When she received her own copy of *The Sims*, she returned to the site “in hopes of creating prettier Sims with nicer clothes, skin, etc.” (January 25, 2010). On TSR, she was introduced to *Sims* fanfiction as she browsed the stories “just for their pretty covers at first, and then I finally decided to check one out.” She posted her first *Sims* fanfiction on TSR on July 6, 2008.

In August 2009, Angela discovered SWH while reading *Sims* fanfiction posted on a corporate-run site, the Exchange. Angela searched for SWH and joined, immediately creating a thread for a story she was writing. She began reading others’ fanfiction while she “waited for somebody to check out” hers (February 9, 2010). Angela logged into SWH nearly every day to vent about school and other frustrations in the Chit Chat forums and follow the progress of fanfiction she enjoyed. She called SWH “the most helpful” for her writing because, unlike other *Sims* fan spaces where she had previously posted, SWH “members actually read the stories a lot more closely and try to give really good advice” (February 20, 2010). The first *Sims* fanfiction she posted on SWH garnered critical reader responses. A reader encouraged her to “describe the settings, don’t rely on the pictures to tell us what the rooms look like” (SWH post, August 10, 2009). Another wrote, “In all honesty, I expected better from what I saw in the cover” (SWH post, August 10, 2009). Angela learned from this feedback, saying, “After that, I definitely learned The Hangout was serious business, which made me learn to take time on my stories and actually develop some good plotlines” (February 20, 2010). She persisted in writing with and for this “serious” audience, seeking and incorporating feedback as she created story threads for five *Sims* fanfiction series on SWH. She initially hosted fanfiction on the Exchange; then, in December 2009, Angela created her own website on webs.com and began hosting her *Sims* fanfiction there.

Angela’s experiences in the affinity space were typical in that she participated in many *Sims*-related online spaces, both fan-created and corporate-run, and this participation changed over time as her interests evolved and she discovered different sites. On SWH, whenever Angela posted a story idea or request, she received responses from a few members. After early critical feedback, readers began posting more positive comments on her *Sims* fanfictions, such as “It’s a great story and I enjoyed reading it. Keep the chapters coming” (SWH post, November 15, 2009). When she released a new story or chapter in an ongoing series, most posts garnered two to five responses each, though some of her non-*Sims* writing received no response. Despite not being a very popular writer on SWH, Angela developed a loyal readership of two members who repeatedly read and commented on much of what she wrote. Therefore, Angela provided insights into experiences of more typical, rather than exceptional, youth creating and sharing in this online affinity space.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using the New London Group’s (1996) Designs of Meaning (DoM) framework. A component of their seminal work to reconceptualize literacy
pedagogy from a multiliteracies perspective, the DoM framework represents “the ‘what’ of literacy pedagogy” (New London Group, 1996, p. 73), or what students need to learn to be able to navigate the “radically changing” (New London Group, 1996, p. 65) nature of work, public, and private lives in our global, networked society. The DoM lens views literacies as semiotic activities involving three elements: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned. For Sims fanfiction writers, Available Designs represent the “structured set of conventions associated with semiotic activity” (New London Group, 1996, p. 74), and are the patterns, grammars, and resources they draw on when writing fanfiction. Designing describes the unique work authors do to transform Available Designs for their own purposes, and “it always involves making new use of old materials.” The “outcome of Designing” is The Redesigned, which becomes a “new meaning-making resource” for the affinity space (New London Group, 1996, p. 76).

Analyzing practices on SWH with this conceptual tool encouraged me to see creating and sharing Sims fanfiction as progressing, though not always sequentially, through this process:

- Authors draw on storytelling conventions, patterns of other Sims fanfiction, and literary elements such as genre and voice (Available Designs).
- Authors work on and transform these available resources, making choices about modes of communication, to create a desired meaning (Designing).
- Authors produce a finished Sims fanfiction product (The Redesigned).
- Others read this Sims fanfiction (a new Available Design), making new meaning from the texts (Designing).

My analysis involved tracing Angela’s Sims fanfiction in SWH, beginning with her first mention of an idea in a “Story Ideas” thread, through her Classified post requesting a proofreader for drafts, to the continued release of chapters in a “Bookshop” thread. I included responses she received from other members. Each discussion board post, together with materials linked therein (e.g., The Sims screen shots on Photobucket.com and chapters hosted on her website), became a point in the Design process. I categorized data according to which element(s) (Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned) the literacies represented, based on my understanding of them, which was informed by Angela’s interview responses (see Table 2). Finally, I shared parts of my analysis with Angela, asking her to confirm or correct them as necessary.

Findings

The findings below demonstrate how Angela leveraged her participation in SWH to Design Sims fanfiction that met the expectations of this site’s audience. Examples from discussion posts, interviews, and her Sims fanfictions illustrate the Available Designs, the Designing, and The Redesigned elements of her Design process. While presented here as discrete elements for ease of discussion, in practice, Angela’s
process followed a messy, recursive path, involving offline and virtual resources and Design practices.

**Available Designs**

Available Designs are Design conventions, or socially constructed patterns and resources, available for use in the activities of a semiotic system. They include the “form of discourses, styles, genres, dialects, and voices” (New London Group, 1996, p. 75) people draw from to participate in any semiotic activity. As Angela participated in SWH, she drew on Available Designs from multiple offline and virtual contexts. These contexts included story writing (e.g., dialogue, character development), life experiences (informing her characters and plotlines), the *Sims* game design (e.g., *Sims* avatars, the Story Mode), and SWH (e.g., posts, *Sims* fanfictions).

**Offline Available Designs**

Angela recruited story-writing conventions as Available Designs for her *Sims* fanfictions. For those stories she told in installments, Angela often wrote a prologue and then released subsequent chapters, modeling Available Designs she recognized...
Angela’s use of narrative Available Designs, including this excerpt:

“You’d think I’m a comedian with the way you laugh, babe,” I say as I shake my head at her. I walk across the dark wooden floor to the television and turn around, once again facing her. Clara is still giggling, her charcoal hair falling over her shoulders as she does so. With the way the sunlight hits her pale skin, one could easily mistake her for an angel. To me, there is no difference. (Legally Dead, March 16, 2010)

Here, Angela followed narrative writing conventions, weaving dialogue and description together to create a scene as she introduced characters in ways familiar to readers.

She also utilized various literary techniques when creating Sims fanfictions. Angela wrote that she planned to include flashbacks as a central feature of one story about longtime friends whose new class schedules prevented them from seeing each other as often. She explained, “I thought of maybe having the story start at the meeting place with a few flashbacks to earlier years” (SWH post, August 16, 2009). Angela also recognized that openings needed to engage readers, without revealing too much. She used a technique of starting a scene amid action already in progress, without providing orienting description, as she did in her story Rave (see Figure 2). Here, Angela applied the Available Design to both the written and visual modes of this first slide; she dropped readers visually into a group of characters dancing, their faces not seen, and dropped readers into text with the protagonist’s description of action already begun and lyrics from a song already playing.

Figure 2. The first slide of Angela’s Rave fanfiction
Angela also drew on her life experiences as Available Designs for Sims fanfictions. These resources were most visible in the characters she created and the storylines she pursued. Angela recognized the importance of creating an authentic voice, saying, “I write mostly using teenagers as the characters, for I don’t want to try and sound like an adult and come up shy” (February 20, 2010). She incorporated Available Designs from her personal experiences as plot inspiration. Such resources included her friends’ lives: “April’s Mercury is actually based on a true story about a friend of mine and her best friend”; her childhood dreams: “When I was younger, I always wanted to be a figure skater… I was watching it [on TV] when I decided I wanted to write about a skater”; and her classes: “The idea for this story came from one Science class in December when we were learning about heart transplants. My teacher brought up the term ‘legally dead,’ and my mind wandered to the story” (March 14, 2010). Through a DoM lens, these story-writing conventions and life experiences became offline resources, or Available Designs, that Angela recruited into the Sims fanfictions she Designed with and for the SWH audience.

Virtual Available Designs
The Sims videogame provided Angela with virtual Available Designs on which she drew while creating Sims fanfictions. Angela attributed some of her story ideas directly to her Sims’ interactions in the videogame. For example, one story “was inspired by the relationship a Sim could have when they’re adopted, have magical powers, and can’t stand their new life. . . . Again, it was all inspired by the game itself.” Another story came “from a neighborhood I was creating in the game. I wanted to make all of the families have individual and nice houses, and then I wanted to write about a group of teens” (March 14, 2010). The videogame also provided Angela with tools for taking snapshots and the Story Mode functionality for pairing images with her narrative to create Sims fanfictions.

Angela’s SWH participation connected her with other virtual Available Designs in the form of discussion forum posts. To position herself as an insider in SWH, Angela followed the conventions of other posts. For example, to announce the impending release of a story, Angela posted a cover image, a summary, character images, a “spoiler” (intriguing excerpt from the story), and statistics about her progress. Thus, she applied the Available Designs of other Coming Soon posts on SWH. To request proofreading assistance, Angela posted the following to the Classified forum:

Hey guys. I’m looking for a proofreader for my new story, If You Leave. Just a few requirements.
1. Know your stuff, like grammar and whatnot.
2. Be reliable.
3. Color code the changes, just so I know what I did wrong.
4. Be able to get at least the prologue back to me within two weeks.
Oh, btw, I have the story saved in one document and I only need the prologue and the first chapter proofread. It’s fine if you send them back one at a time. I’d like two proofreaders. (SWH post, October 9, 2009; all emphasis in original)
This post exemplified conventions from other SWH request posts. Before making requests, Angela acknowledged that she “read the rules of the boards probably twice each and read so many different request threads by members... It was helpful to read what others had said” (February 20, 2010).

Finally, others’ Sims fanfictions were resources for Angela. She recalled the influence of the first story she had read on another fan site, saying, “It happened to be one of my favorite stories for about a year after I’d first looked at it, and it was actually the inspiration to create my own” (January 25, 2010). Angela also noted her appreciation of what she called “pretty covers” on other Sims fanfictions. She drew on this Available Design, as evidenced by her own cover images, which included digitally edited Sims snapshots and stylized titles (see Figure 3). In these ways, the Sims videogame platform, the SWH discussion posts, and others’ Sims fanfictions became virtual Available Designs that shaped Angela’s Sims fanfictions for the SWH audience.

**Designing**

Design, according to the New London Group (1996), is an iterative process of meaning-making involving “re-presentation and recontextualization” (p. 75) of the Available Designs in a given context. Designing is the work a reader, writer, or listener does to make meaning in a semiotic activity. Angela’s Designing around

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![Figure 3. Angela’s cover for Legally Dead](image)
Sims fanfiction took place outside of and within SWH. Her Design work outside of SWH included writing stories, capturing and editing images, and uploading to her website. Within SWH, Angela was Designing as she solicited, and then responded to, feedback from other members and requested various contributions from experts in the space.

**Designing outside SWH**

Much of the Designing Angela did outside of SWH involved the actual creation of her stories. This process included developing story ideas and characters, writing narratives, and capturing and editing Sims images. After forming an idea, Angela used *The Sims* to create characters and settings through which she enacted the story. She built neighborhoods, created Sims, and then moved the story’s action forward visually by both posing Sims into desired scenes and watching the game unfold. In one instance, Angela’s Design decision to include images of a character (Evan) singing and dancing came from her engagement with the game: “[The singing] just went on for so long because I enjoyed watching Evan dance, ha” (SWH post, August 11, 2009). Angela talked about the multiple modes of Designing Sims fanfictions this way: “The writing part of the stories is really fun, at least for me, and when you’re taking pictures as you write, it’s generally also fun and helpful when writing. However, the image editing part is really tedious” (April 15, 2010). She lamented that it “takes hours” to edit images to convey her desired message.

Sometimes Angela’s technology constrained her Design. She acknowledged how using Microsoft Word and PhotoFiltre affected her Designing, posting, “I don’t use Photoshop, so there’s a limit to what I can create on my computer” (SWH post, September 20, 2010). At times, her computer affected her Designing because it could not accommodate the videogame’s graphics. Angela posted, “My computer is being an imbecile as always and takes forever to take a screenshot on the Sims 2. The next chapter, since I’m halfway through it, will have a lot less pictures than the first one did” (SWH post, September 5, 2009). Angela’s desire to finish and share this chapter meant she had to forego adding more pictures to the story. Angela also made Design decisions about where to host her Sims fanfiction, posting some on the Exchange, which required that she Design them in the videogame with an image for every page, and others on her website, which offered her more Design flexibility. When asked about what directed these decisions, Angela explained that she posted “the longer stories on my website . . . because I can work on them even when I don’t have time to play the game” (March 14, 2010). Each of these writerly choices constituted the Designing Angela did outside of SWH, as she wrote with and for this audience.

**Designing within SWH**

Angela’s Designing to create Sims fanfiction also occurred within SWH. Angela used the “Sims Stories: Advice, Ideas, and Tips” forum, posting emerging ideas for early input. Months before Angela shared the first chapter of *Legally Dead* on SWH, she posted her idea for a story based upon a character with cardiomyopathy and concluded the post with “Feedback?” (SWH post, December 12, 2009). She also
solicited input as she finished stories and/or chapters. When she released them with announcements in an SWH story-related forum, Angela often included statements such as “Hey everyone! Chapter two is out now! I’ll admit that it’s not my favorite. I’d still like some advice or whatever on it, though” (SWH post, December 22, 2009).

In responding to feedback, Angela indicated her intention to incorporate suggestions into future Sims fanfictions. For example, a member posted this about one of Angela’s stories: “Maybe describe the settings, don’t rely on the pictures to tell us what the rooms look like” (SWH post, August 10, 2009). Angela responded, “I’ll try to remember to describe the settings in the next chapter” (SWH post, August 10, 2009). Another member gave Angela feedback about how to alert her readers when switching point of view (POV): “Perhaps for the next chapters, if you are going to change POVs you should make it obvious, like have each persons [sic] name at the top of the first slide that has their POV” (SWH post, August 11, 2009). Again, Angela responded, indicating how she planned to address POV in future chapters: “I’ll try and remember to add like a little name tag to the screen shots whenever it switches point of views to make it easier to understand” (SWH post, August 11, 2009). When asked how she felt about receiving such input, Angela said it “made me learn to take time on my stories” (February 20, 2010).

Along with requesting and responding to feedback, Angela’s Designing within SWH included tapping into resources available in the space by soliciting expert assistance. In response to criticism about the first Sims fanfiction she shared on SWH, Angela decided to use proofreaders during her Design process: “I’m going to get a proofreader for the future chapters to make sure I’m submitting better quality work” (SWH post, August 11, 2009). She reported having mixed results with SWH proofreaders, saying,

I think the idea is wonderful, but my proofreaders have never really stuck with me for more than a chapter or two. . . . Proofreaders do seem to work for everybody else on the Hangout, but I think I’m going to stick with having my family proofread for me. (March 14, 2010)

Another way Angela’s Designing leveraged her participation in SWH involved her requests for photos. As noted above, Angela’s technology sometimes hampered her ability to Design the images she wanted for Sims fanfictions. To overcome this, she posted requests for others to Design images for her stories. One request read,

Hey guys. I’m writing a story called If You Leave and I’m going to need some help actually finishing the cover/banner. . . . Be sure to put like a little made by (insert your name here) thing on it. I love giving credit! (SWH post, September 20, 2009)

Within this request, Angela posted photos of her Sims characters and a story synopsis, and she received two responses from members interested in helping her. For another series, Angela wanted “a diverse collection of teenage Sims” (February 20, 2010), and decided to request help from SWH rather than Designing the images herself. In this request, she wrote, “I need pictures of teen couples for the layout on
the story site. . . . The shots can be taken as close or as far away as needed, and the Sims can look however you please” (SWH post, January 1, 2010). Within a week, Angela had responses from three SWH members giving her 31 images of five teen couples, a few of which she incorporated into this story’s website.

Finally, though Angela’s Designing leveraged many resources available to her in SWH, she made very little use of the tutorials offered in the space. In fact, Angela said she only ever looked at one tutorial “about creating custom [sic] story covers for the game. It was very helpful, considering I’ve been doing it ever since” (February 9, 2010). This tutorial reinforced SWH’s expectations for attractive covers, so even when Angela’s technology did not allow her to Design them herself, she tapped into the distributed expertise within SWH to ensure her fanfictions continued to have custom covers. As a space where Angela requested feedback and solicited contributions, SWH was an integral part of Angela’s Designing Sims fanfiction with and for this audience.

The Redesigned

The Redesigned is the product of a meaning-maker’s Design work. It is neither a “simple reproduction” of Available Designs nor a “simply creative” (New London Group, 1996, p. 76) unique production. Rather, The Redesigned represents an outcome of Design with a “ring of familiarity” that connects it to the context in which it was created and shows a transformation resulting from the Design process. Angela’s forum posts and Sims fanfictions were The Redesigned products she created to participate in SWH.

Angela’s forum posts displayed both her familiarity with SWH’s conventions and her unique Design work to create them. As noted earlier, her Coming Soon posts included expected elements, such as a plot summary, character descriptions, and statistics about the story’s completion. However, these posts were unlike any others because they announced the impending release of her unique Sims fanfictions. Similarly, her Classified posts requesting photos and proofreaders relied upon the Available Designs of other requests. Yet, these posts also represented Angela’s recontextualization of the practice. For example, Angela acknowledged that her request for Sims photos was unique, noting, “I don’t think very many of the members, considering it’s a Sims community site, would have thought of somebody asking for pictures of Sims” (February 20, 2010).

Angela’s Sims fanfictions were The Redesigned products reminiscent of the resources she used and evidencing her own Designing to transform those resources. Following Sims fanfiction conventions, Angela included stylized covers that attracted readers, as seen in this post, in which a reader tied her reaction to the cover to her action of going to read Angela’s story: “Ah! I like the cover! *goes to read*” (SWH post, August 11, 2009). Comments Angela received about her work reflected the ways her products exemplified The Redesigned, as in this example: “Kind of sort of reminded me of Bella and Edward’s relationship (not to bash your writing or anything if you hate Twilight, don’t get me wrong their relationship is very lovely in its own way)” (SWH post, September 5, 2009). This SWH member saw the influence of the popular young adult novel Twilight, but also acknowledged the
unique nature of Angela’s product. As representations of The Redesigned, Angela’s SWH forum posts and her Sims fanfictions were products of her meaning-making, reflecting the Available Designs she incorporated and the Designing she did to write with and for the SWH audience.

Discussion

Adding to the field’s knowledge about youth networked writing, which is largely derived from studies of exceptional cases, Angela’s case shows how a novice Designed her contributions with and for an online audience. Studying Angela’s Designing reveals the complexity of such literate activity, illustrating how she made “writerly choices” based on multiple factors impacting this particular rhetorical situation (Lunsford & Ede, 2009). Some choices can be linked back to resources Angela drew on from conventions or life experiences outside of the SWH space, whereas others were informed directly by the Available Designs she found within this context. Working with The Sims videogame also informed Angela’s writerly choices as her gameplay found its way into her stories and complicated her Design work by bringing with it expectations of multimodal storytelling and digital image quality that challenged her technology, interests, and expertise. As she shared her Redesigned Sims fanfictions in SWH, Angela directly engaged the audience, opening her writing up to their reactions, which in turn shaped her continued Design work in this space as she incorporated these real or imagined reactions into future writing.

To navigate challenges experienced while writing and sharing Sims fanfiction, Angela leveraged her participation in SWH to help negotiate the multiple factors complicating this literacy practice. Angela participated in various forums throughout her Design process, floating ideas for feedback, tapping into the distributed knowledge of SWH, and requesting the assistance of proofreaders. As a result, her Design process included steps that had Angela directly connecting with readers and other Designers in the SWH space, calling on their contributions to shape her final product. Angela overcame technology constraints by Designing her Sims fanfictions with contributions from members who provided Sims images in response to her requests, thus benefitting from others’ specialized, intensive knowledge within SWH. Here Angela’s case sheds light on how a writer’s active participation in an online writing space can shape the Designing process, resulting in collaboratively constructed Redesigned products that are returned to the space to be shared. Had Angela written Sims fanfiction without participating in SWH or shared her work in a different context, we can imagine that both her process and product might have been different, as she would have drawn on different resources and Designed to meet different expectations.

By focusing this analysis on the intersection between the online affinity space, a novice writer, and her Design process, this study addresses Lunsford and Ede’s (2009) call for nuanced analyses illuminating the complexity of writing for online audiences. The resulting insights about how Angela Designed with and for the SWH audience complicate our understanding about the nature of online
affinity space audiences. Affinity space scholarship often positions the audience as responders to writing, offering “support and encouragement” (Gee & Hayes, 2010, p. 113) and occasional instructional feedback (Black, 2008; Magnifico et al., 2015). However, Angela’s solicitation of images positioned the SWH audience as direct collaborators in her writing. Additionally, the analysis made visible how Available Designs produced and shared by others within SWH informed Angela’s Designing, positioning the audience as indirect collaborators. These direct and indirect contributions available to authors who share their writing online move us away from narrowly conceptualizing the affinity space audience as supportive sources of feedback.

Responding to calls for research capturing continuous change as the Internet affects the literacy lives of youth (e.g., Leu, O’Byrne, Zawilinski, McVerry, & Everett-Cacopardo, 2009), Angela’s case illustrates how such lives are lived while drawing on resources from across spaces and contexts. The field continues to grapple with questions about how youth experience context and boundaries as they navigate their literacy lives. Gee (2004), Gee and Hayes (2010), and Black (2008) contrast the literacy learning available to youth in online affinity spaces with what they argue is typically available in classrooms. The participants in Korobkova and Black’s (2014) study themselves contrasted their fan writing with school writing, recognizing that they had more agency online while acknowledging how their fan-fiction “positively [informed their] disposition toward text and language-learning as a whole” (p. 630). Other studies highlight how youth digital literacy practices traverse and blur boundaries (cf. Buck, 2012; Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2007). For Angela, Available Designs from classrooms, SWH and other Sims-related online spaces, The Sims videogame, and other aspects of her life all informed her Sims fanfiction writing practices, thus adding another illustration of blurred boundaries. However, Angela’s case by no means settles the issue. Further investigation is needed to better understand whether continuing to reify distinctions between online and offline, or formal and informal contexts accurately represents literacy practices as they are experienced by today’s youth.

Employing the New London Group’s (1996) Designs of Meaning approach in this analysis also made visible how conventions shaped Angela’s Sims fanfiction practices. Whereas Leander and Boldt (2013) critique this framework as too “text-centric” (p. 31) and limiting in its emphasis on reproduction of grammars in literacy practices, I found it particularly useful in acknowledging how recognizing the expectations within a space shaped Angela’s Sims fanfiction texts. If literacies are, in part, “socially recognized” practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), then theories used to make sense of such practices need to allow researchers to see how literacies become recognizable in various contexts. While a DoM perspective limited what Leander and Boldt (2013) could see about young boys’ embodied reading and playing with Japanese manga texts because it did not account for the “moment-by-moment unfolding or emergence of activity” (p. 34), these researchers’ emergent perspective has the potential to limit understanding of how an online affinity space audience shapes youth literacy practices and texts. Angela’s SWH activities
were aimed at producing texts to be appreciated and recognized by her audience in this context, and thus she had text-centric goals for her literacy practices. These findings also show that, while Angela did not simply replicate the Sims fanfiction and posts she found in SWH, she did consider these Available Designs when constructing her own creations. If they want their work to be recognized, writers need to attend to the grammars, structures, and expectations valued by their particular audiences. A DoM lens shed light on the genre conventions Angela adopted and transformed as she Designed her Sims fanfiction in this context. Thus, we see her networked writing practices as highlighting the reproductive and unique nature of writing with and for an online audience.

**Conclusion**

To make sense of the constantly changing nature of youth digital literacy practices, it remains important to follow youth and their literacies wherever they may lead. The development of new technologies and online spaces will bring new opportunities for youth to Design their own literate lives, requiring our methods of inquiry to evolve (Lammers et al., 2012). While we learn from studying exceptional cases of youth “geeking out” (Ito et al., 2010) in digital media spaces, tracing the practices of users like Angela or examining broad participation patterns across online affinity spaces (Magnifico et al., 2015) may have more to tell us about how typical youth take up digital literacies. While some have begun to address this need through studies with larger participant samples (e.g., Korobkova & Black, 2014), more work is needed to understand broader, rather than exceptional, engagement in these practices.

This study also leads us to consider how Angela's case might inform instruction to prepare youth to navigate the rhetorical situations they will face in online contexts. While some secondary writing teachers acknowledge that digital technologies connect students with wider audiences and encourage greater collaboration (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013), investigations of classroom practice continue to show that, with few notable exceptions, most students experience limited, teacher-centric uses of technology in writing classrooms (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014). Research about more typical experiences of youth in online spaces may have potential to inform writing instruction in ways that connect with youth and that encourage teachers to incorporate lessons learned from these spaces into their classrooms. Educators should look not to import Sims fanfiction into the classroom, but rather to find ways to connect youth writers with online audiences who can shape their writing. Rather than sharing students' writing on a classroom website or blog, whose audience rarely extends beyond the students, teachers, and others connected to that class, writing tasks asking students to share with existing, authentic online audiences should be encouraged. Writing instruction could then guide students through the process of critically evaluating and responding to expectations in digital writing contexts (Lammers & Marsh, 2015). Curriculum reform movements around the globe, including the Common Core State Standards in the United States and
the Australian Curriculum, have begun integrating digital literacies into English standards (Leu, Forzani, & Kennedy, 2013), which makes space for educators to provide such instructional support and incorporate writing for online affinity spaces into classrooms.

However, though Angela’s case demonstrates the complexity of writing for and with an online audience, more research set in classrooms is needed to encourage and equip teachers to provide youth with instructional support to navigate such complexity. Thus, while I echo the cautions of others who do not support directly relocating fanfiction practices into formal instructional spaces (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Curwood et al., 2013; Roozen, 2009), I encourage researchers to collaborate with teachers to study the implementation of students’ writing with and for online audiences in classrooms. In helping educators and youth navigate these dynamic writing situations, we move toward the literacies pedagogy Kalantzis and Cope (2012) describe as preparing new “kinds of people” who are “flexible . . . innovative, creative, risk takers . . . able to navigate change and diversity . . . capable, in other words, of negotiating ‘literacies’ in the plural” (p. 7).

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