

EDCP 333 Article Review: Popular Media, Education, and Resistance by Michelle Stack and Deirdre M. Kelly

Reviewed by Alexandra Reid

Throughout this article, Stack and Kelly (2006) enforce just how controlling and controlled media is in our current society. The authors focus on who controls media, who is left out of the media, how to respond to media, and how teachers can include media in their classrooms. This is a valuable article for teacher candidates and current teachers to read to learn how to be critical of media and how to be aware of their own and other people's interpretations of media and popular culture.

It was shocking to read the drastic increases in media geared towards children, knowing that their parents fall into the same trap. We've become a "billboard society" that conglomerates such as Disney, Time Warner, Viacom, and Murdoch's New Corporation influence on the daily (Stack & Kelly, 2006). This concept of turning from a knowledge society to a billboard society could imply a few different things. Firstly, that we have become numb to what surrounds us in media. Secondly, media strikes a cord with us and we respond as consumers. Or finally, we critique what we see. Although media surely does have some negative impacts on students, we tend to neglect seeing the benefits of media that Stack and Kelly point out throughout this article. Students are now able to create their own forms of media online, through video, and over social media, and they can share their thoughts and knowledge on a larger scale (Stack & Kelly, 2006). This concept of shared information is truly ideal in the sense that students can learn from and teach one another, students can relate to events and knowledge through media that they view and create, and they can gain technological skills that will benefit them in the long run.

Who gets left out of the media? Media stereotypes; it creates false impressions of what is right, wrong, beautiful, taboo, cliché, cute, normal, etc. These impressions can be manipulated as long as we incorporate critical media literacy into classrooms and into our every day lives.

"News is neutral, pop culture is evil" Stack & Kelly, 2006, p. 12

The above quote was a subtitle of the article that launched into a heated debate on whether or not news could be trusted and if pop culture was a true evil within the media framework. This is a striking argument, as society tends to trust the news because it is "supposed" to come from a place of neutrality by journalists who are supposed to do their research. It turns out that conglomerates and new broadcasters will still manipulate what the public sees and hears by selectively choosing their stories. Meanwhile, these companies leave many stories and important news off air. I question then, can news even be trusted any more? Kids searching the internet for information seems to be frowned upon as an unreliable source, yet at times this could be more valuable and insightful than the actual news itself. Pop culture on the other hand has been fetishized to the point that the

celebrity world has become a type of alternate universe. Young people look up to these pop stars and movie icons to the point that imitation becomes a regular occurrence. These pop stars will sometimes have more influence on students in a day than the news, their teacher, their school, or even their own family, therefore why not critique this in the classroom? Stack and Kelly (2006) note that pop culture can be a great way to relate to your students and learn from their media savvy. I agree with Stack and Kelly (2006) that it is more worrisome that we place so much trust in the news, which has changed so drastically over the past few decades. I do not see one of either news or pop culture as being of more or less value, and I do see them both as being valuable teaching tools and methods.

I think that we do not give society enough credit in their interpretation of the media. Conglomerates have to work hard to grab the attention of the public and hold it. We, as society, are unpredictable in what we want and enjoy. As the article notes, we need to provide space in which citizens can learn about, critique, and resist popular media, and I think one of the best places to teach this is in the classroom (Stack & Kelly, 2006). I do think that changes need to be made in the curriculum to address how prevalent media is within our school system and to help students critique the media that surrounds them daily. At the same time, they can use these critical analysis skills to critique their textbooks and any sources they use, as there will always be biases within them.

References

Stack, M., & Kelly, D. M. (2006). Popular media, education, and resistance. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 29(1), 5-26. Available at <http://www.csse-scee.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE29-1/CJE29-1-stackkelly.pdf>