Going Public

AN ADOLESCENT'S NETWORKED WRITING ON FANFICTION.NET

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Writing in networked spaces provides youth opportunities with audiences unlike those available to them in many writing classrooms.

Much of the writing adolescents do in today's secondary schools involves taking notes, producing cogent arguments about texts, and writing organized and formal explanatory analyses that conform to genre expectations, with teachers as the primary audience. When our participant Laura (all names are pseudonyms) talks about the writing she does in school, she laments, "I think the problem with [school] writing… is it wasn't storytelling at all. It was just regurgitation of facts or it was analysis of stories that were already there" (June 19, 2014). Laura recognizes her English teacher as her audience, explaining, "I'm doing this because I'm trying to demonstrate I was listening to you, and I'm demonstrating mastery of the material you just taught me" (June 19, 2014).

When young people find school spaces limiting, those passionate about writing turn to other spaces. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 93% of surveyed teens "write for personal reasons or just for fun outside of school" (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Macgill, 2008, p. 10), and much of that writing occurs online. Sharing writing in online fanfiction spaces provides young people access to identities as writers (Black, 2005; Gee & Hayes, 2010), facilitates their collaboration (Thomas, 2006), and encourages self-directed creation of multimodal content (Curwood, Lammers, & Magnifico, 2013). Yet, the changing literacy practices of adolescents' everyday, media-rich lives are not reflected in the outdated print-based literacy instruction dominating many educational systems (Alvermann, 2011; Bomer, 2011; Burke, 2012; O'Brien & Scharber, 2008). Despite continuing research revealing the dynamic nature of youth out-of-school literacy practices (Curwood, 2013; Ito et al., 2010; Lammers, 2013), little room has been made to bring these findings to bear on literacy instruction, provoking a warning that schools "are moving dangerously toward irrelevance" (Larson, 2014, pp. 1–2). We aim to argue, as Kalantzis and Cope (2012) do, for literacies instruction that prepares youth to be "new kinds of people" (p. 7) who are "flexible… innovative, creative risk-takers."

For Laura, writing fanfiction—fictional texts created by fans and derived from their fandom of a particular media such as a movie, book, musical, or

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videogame—provides her with opportunities to engage in writing that connects her with audience in ways unavailable in her English classrooms. As Laura explains, "one of the main appeals of fanfiction is that the story doesn't have to end so if you're really passionate about it or you just really enjoyed it, then it can go on for you" (June 22, 2012). Fanfiction stories begin with established storylines and characters that authors appropriate to produce their own interpretations or extensions of a text. Sharing these stories in spaces like FanFiction.net (FFN), a popular archival site with millions of fanfictions based on a variety of media, connects authors with a global, engaged audience of fellow fans (Black, 2008; Curwood et al., 2013). Our work contributes to the field's understanding of fanfiction as a literacy practice by examining how the FFN networked public influences and informs writing in the digital age.

Our analysis of Laura's writing and sharing with the fanfiction public is guided by these research questions: What writing opportunities are afforded to Laura on FFN? How does the fanfiction public shape her practices and perspectives as a writer? In this article, we first situate our inquiry within sociocultural perspectives on literacies and aligned theories of audience and publics. We then describe the study's design and introduce Laura. The findings center on how access, anonymity, and fanfiction's genre conventions facilitate Laura's writing for and sharing with audience in ways unavailable to her in other writing contexts. We discuss what it means to write within networked publics, and offer suggestions for how Laura's case can inform classroom writing spaces.

Situating Our Research

Literacies as Social Practice

Grounded in a sociocultural perspective, we recognize literacies as socially constructed practices situated within particular contexts (Gee, 2008; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). Our definition of literacies also acknowledges rapid changes brought about by engagement with digital media and technology (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). According to Lankshear and Knobel (2011), these changes have created a paradigm shift in the way we do literacy, or "the technical stuff," and the way we think about and value literacy, or "the ethos stuff." Thus, in designing our inquiry into Laura's writing practices on FFN, we examine the affordances of the technical stuff within the site, and how she engages with the social practices of this space in ways that signal her thinking about sharing her writing. A sociocultural view of literacies recognizes their embeddedness within social, cultural, political, historical, physical, and digital contexts and points us toward the following understanding of audience.

Twenty-first century writing practices...put authors "among the audience".

Audience Within Publics

Stemming from our sociocultural perspective of new literacies, and acknowledging the changing nature of writing with information and communications technologies (ICTs), we recognize the shifting role audiences play for writers. Twenty-first century writing practices, including writing in online spaces such as FFN, put authors "among the audience" (Lunsford & Ede, 2009) and positions their work to receive immediate attention and global input. Sharing writing within networked publics, which boyd (2014) defines as both "the space constructed through networked technologies" and "the imagined community that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (p. 8), affords young writers recognition and access to passionate, public audiences (Curwood et al., 2013). However, it also necessitates that authors consider the context of that public and the constraints or norms "that make some writerly choices seem obvious and 'natural,' while others are 'unnatural' or entirely hidden from view" (Lunsford & Ede, 2009, p. 48). In framing our understanding of the role audiences play in networked publics, we find Magnifico's (2010) work particularly useful. She argues:

> Audience as an abstract concept ("writing for readers") helps the writer to internally frame her individual thoughts, intuitions, and plans about the writing… whereas audience as a social group of readers ("sharing writing with readers") provides external feedback about how that writing communicates ideas, arguments, or stories in the world. (p. 176)

Therefore, our analysis pays attention to how Laura plans her writing with expectations of FFN's readers in mind and how she interacts with the readers who shape her writing more directly through feedback. Conceptualizing audiences in this way, we now

turn to describing our investigation of Laura's writing within FFN's networked public.

Study Design

We are three years into a longitudinal study of how Laura's writing across multiple contexts (school, home, and online) persists and shifts over time. Data presented in this article focuses on the FFN context—the most public arena for Laura's writing. As we seek to explain, describe, explore, and critique the phenomenon of Laura's public writing, a qualitative approach (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) aptly addresses our research questions.

Laura

Laura stumbled upon FFN at age 11 while searching online for information about a character in *Wicked*. She created her first account on the site and began reading and posting fanfiction based on various Broadway musicals, primarily *Wicked*. In learning how to participate in the space, Laura claims she "just kind of found everything by accident" (August 28, 2012), acknowledging that reading what other writers posted provided her with the "exposure" needed to understand fanfiction practices. In the five years since, Laura has created two different FFN accounts, each with its own screen name, and published 18 different stories totaling more than 68,000 words of shared writing in this space.

We met Laura in June 2012. Earlier that year, her father had approached Lammers (first author) after hearing her research talk on adolescents' digital media practices, saying, "my daughter writes fanfiction." At the time of this writing, Laura, now 16 years old, just completed 10th grade. She lives in a middle-class home in a suburb outside of a mid-sized Northeastern U.S. city with her father, an associate professor, her mother, a nurse, and her 14-year-old brother, Jake. Laura is a passionate actor, athlete, dancer, singer, and writer. She competes with her high school's cross country team and develops her acting craft through summer camps and by acting in local productions. Laura spends much of what little free time her schedule allows at her computer writing *Wicked* or *The Hunger Games*-inspired fanfiction and working on her novel.

Laura's middle school teachers recognized her abilities as a writer, and encouraged her family to advocate for early enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) English courses, which are not typically taken until at least 11th grade. Laura was given permission to transfer into AP English Language and Composition, becoming the first ninth grader to take the class at her high school. Laura scored a 4 (on a 5-point scale) on the AP exam, which indicates she is "well qualified" to do the work of an introductory-level composition course in college (https://apscore.collegeboard.org/scores/about-ap-scores). During 10th grade, Laura completed a one-semester Mythology elective and AP English Literature and Composition, in which she earned an A and scored a 5 ("extremely well qualified") on the AP exam. A successful student who writes for a variety of purposes and publics, Laura's case affords us the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of adolescent public writing on FFN.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to delve into the particularity and complexity of Laura's writing for the fanfiction public, we are constructing an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). In building this case of Laura's public writing practices, we aim to contribute to the field's understanding of adolescent writing in the digital age. With detailed, "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) we provide insight into Laura's public writing, giving readers the opportunity make "naturalistic generalizations" (Stake, 1995) to their own worlds of familiarity—whether they be classrooms, their own research, or research literature.

Data analyzed for this article include transcripts from four interviews with Laura and several e-mail exchanges. We also analyzed digital artifacts including 18 published fanfictions, with their accompanying author notes and reader reviews, from Laura's two different accounts, which represent Laura's participation on FFN dating back to May 2010. Our own reflective research memos complete the data corpus.

For data analysis, we stayed close to the data and Laura's perspective during the first cycle descriptive and in vivo coding, using Laura's own words as codes (Saldaña, 2013). In the second cycle, we moved onto focused and axial coding where we identified themes emerging from the data. This article explores themes related to how social and abstract audiences shape Laura's writing within the FFN networked public.

Findings

"In fact, fanfiction might have been my first introduction to the concept of audience" (June 19, 2014).

The FFN networked public provides both an abstract audience, whom Laura considers while she writes, as well as a social audience, with whom Laura interacts directly via posts, private messages, and reviews. On FFN, Laura has a multifaceted experience of considering and interacting with audience. In the following, we present findings illustrating how access, anonymity, and genre conventions facilitate Laura's writing for and sharing with the audience within the FFN networked public.

Access

The FFN networked public expands access temporally while also allowing Laura to access audience expectations and engaged social others.

Temporal. As FFN is an online space, accessible 24 hours a day, from any location with Internet access, fanfiction writers from around the globe can write, post, read, and comment on each other's work whenever they choose. Unlike school-based writing, which tends to limit audience access to the teacher or other classmates who mostly see each other and each other's writing during the school day, FFN writing expands access geographically and temporally. For Laura, who feels anxious about sharing her writing, FFN's 24-hour, online access affords her choices for sharing. Laura prefers to post her fanfictions late at night. Reflecting on one such post, Laura says, "I got it done and I edited it again, like I think probably 1:00 in the morning, and then I posted it, and I was very proud of myself 'cause I'd actually gotten it out there" (August 27, 2013). Laura sees her posts as acts of courage—opportunities to take her carefully honed fanfictions and share them widely. As a networked public, FFN provides an immediate, expansive, and accessible connectivity that allows writers to "easily share with broad audiences and access content from greater distances" (boyd, 2014, p. 11). Freedom to choose when she will reach out to imagined readers—audience in the abstract—not only facilitates her sharing, but increases her exposure to the FFN audience.

Audience expectations. FFN provides Laura with access to the audience's expectations as she studies other writers and how they make choices with their writing to appeal to this audience. For example, Laura follows popular FFN *Wicked* writer, Queenbeefairy, and notes: "I think like she's more likely to sway her ideas for a story based on what her reviewers want or what her friends want her to do" (August 28, 2012). Though Laura critiques Queenbeefairy's priorities—audience over writing integrity—she also recognizes the writerly move to assess and fulfill audience expectations, which in turn garners increased readership. As Laura admits, "it does bother me sometimes that [Queenbeefairy] has over 200 reviews" (August 28, 2012). According to Reinghold, Laura is grappling with developing her public voice as she "consciously engage[s] with an active public rather than broadcasting to a passive audience" (as cited in Lunsford & Ede, p. 64). Laura recognizes this tension in herself:

> I think a lot of times when I write creatively it's for me, and so it's hard to consider the audience, but that's another dynamic that I need to work out as a storyteller because—I mean the goal is to share a story not to write it so it pleases you. (June 19, 2014)

Unlike school-based writing, where teachers assess merit based upon perceived quality, successful writing in the FFN networked public requires understanding and conscious engagement with abstract audience.

Social others. Laura not only gains access to the FFN abstract audience's expectations, she also directly communicates with a social audience through reviews and direct messaging. Laura seeks reviews, in quantity and in quality, which contribute to a fanfiction writer's legitimacy within FFN. In addition to reviews that offer simple praise or encouragement to write more, Laura also receives reviews commenting on the nature of her writing, such as: "Wow… this is amazing. I'm glad someone's taking a slightly darker look into the relationships. Your grammar and spelling are spot on! Bravo!" (FFN Review, January 15, 2012). Laura describes her reaction to these reviews as, "oh you actually read it; that was meaningful" (August 27, 2013). Reviews both compliment Laura's writing and also provide confirmation that Laura reached a fellow audience member—an experience Laura describes as "meaningful." While Laura would prefer longer, more detailed reviews, she derives a level of satisfaction

Writing in the FFN networked public requires understanding and conscious engagement with abstract audience.

from knowing her work was read by a social other—someone who shares her passion for *Wicked*.

Writers also connect with social audience through personal messaging on FFN. In describing her online relationship with Goldilocks, a follower and fellow *Wicked* fan, Laura explains, "so she sent me a very nice personal message and she said 'oh maybe I'll check out something that you've done,' and then she did and she reviewed it but it was brief, but it was nice that she reciprocated… we're just going back and forth" (August 27, 2013). This to-ing and fro-ing with Goldilocks exemplifies a kind of writing collaboration that, according to Magnifico (2010), "might be impossible for a young person to command in the real world" (p. 180). Laura's access to her social audience shapes her writing as it provides direct feedback and a sense of connection.

Anonymity

Laura explains why she prefers to stay relatively anonymous on FFN: "I purposely don't say anything like on my profile…. But just so I can stay anonymous so I'm not judged by like me but just judged by the writing" (August 17, 2012). Laura, who considers herself a serious writer, likes the idea that her anonymity will focus FFN readers' attention on her writing, not her personality—that the "judging" will not be personal, but more professional, thereby providing her feedback to help develop her craft. She considers her implied audience when choosing how much to divulge. Such anonymity is not available to Laura in school, but on FFN writers have more control over how they engage each other and how much of themselves they choose to reveal.

A closer look at Laura's two FFN author pages illustrates her commitment to anonymity. Her current author page makes no mention of age or location, beyond USA, and includes a statement: "That's all you're getting. ☺" (FFN, December 27, 2012). Similarly, her previous author page, which she last updated at age 13, read, in part: "I am a young, aspiring writer who enjoys writing/reading fanfiction as a hobby (sort of a secret… uh… guilty hobby) and an exercise. That's pretty much all I'm going to tell you, because I don't want to be stalked" (FFN, June 27, 2011).

On FFN, Laura can allow the audience to know as much or as little about her as she pleases. boyd (2014) claims that as participants in a networked public, writers like Laura "choose to share in order to be a part of the public, but how much they share is shaped by how public they want to be" (p. 203).

Laura acknowledges another appeal of writing anonymously when she says: "I think it's the anonymity… there are things that I write on fanfiction that would never get out. [But] it's fanfiction so it's fine. Yeah, so it's not something I would share with my teachers or peers or anything" (August 17, 2012). Laura openly acknowledges that she does not take her fanfiction writing as seriously as she does her novel or academic writing, partly because her relative anonymity protects her from being identified and connected to this writing. Behind this cloak of anonymity, Laura shares her creative writing with the FFN audience more willingly than she does in other contexts.

Genre Conventions

While access and anonymity encourage Laura to share her writing, conventions and norms within FFN facilitate the writing itself. As legitimized practices, genre conventions such as one-shot writing, borrowing, and character pairings represent shared expectations for the fanfiction abstract audience.

One-shots. The fanfiction genre of "one-shots" provides an accessible framework for Laura's writing. Here's how Laura describes them: "We call them one-shots… it's just one chapter… or like a scene between characters or like an exploration of like something that happened and I like those because those are mainly what I do" (June 22, 2012). Laura places herself within the FFN public through her use of "we" and communicates a shared understanding of fanfiction genres. Of the 18 fanfictions she has published, 12 are one-shots, illustrating her comfort with this genre. According to Magnifico (2010), one of the ways writers become experts in a particular area—like fanfiction writing—is by "learning the genres and conventions" (p. 173) of a context. By taking on a writing community's conventions, behaviors, and ideas, writers legitimate their participation and learn through social interaction with that public. The fanfiction context makes writing one-shots a natural and obvious choice for Laura, yet in other contexts like school, such choices may be hidden (Lunsford & Ede, 2009).

According to boyd (2014), sharing in networked publics increases visibility, a key affordance to explore in any public. On FFN, Laura is recognized for her one-shots, as evidenced from the following reader reviews she's received: "Lovely story, a perfect one-shot" (FFN Review, May, 27, 2010); "… it is one of the best one-shots i [*sic*] have ever read" (FFN Review, June

10, 2012); "Your one-shots are always so interesting :-)" (FFN Review, April 17, 2013). Such responses demonstrate the social audience's appreciation of Laura's work in this genre.

Borrowing. Fanfiction as a larger genre can be understood as a massive endeavor in borrowing—from established stories, characters, and cultural forms. The fanfiction public engages in borrowing as a legitimate writing practice (Jenkins, 1992), while school policy often interprets borrowing as plagiarizing or cheating. For Laura, borrowing facilitates her writing to flow more easily. She borrows characters and settings from which to launch her writing; therefore, she experiences a freedom and a sense of being unencumbered. Laura recognizes how borrowing facilitates her writing here:

> With fanfiction it's easier because you don't have to come up with those things. Okay, so I know the backstory, so I know what happened before, so I know these characters, and I know the descriptions, and I know them because I've seen them, as for *Wicked* like I've seen them portrayed on stage… and I can just write and so that's very helpful because the backstories and everything for me takes so much time. (August, 17, 2012)

Like anonymity, borrowing signifies a practice recognized as natural in the fanfiction public. Borrowing empowers Laura to write for FFN's abstract audience, or imagined community, and to share her writing.

When writing fanfiction, Laura also borrows and remixes from a variety of sources, including television commercials, song lyrics, and other media. Though such borrowing may be a natural practice within the FFN public, Laura at times explicitly alerts the audience to such borrowing, as she does in this excerpt from the summary of a *Wicked*-based one-shot: "Potter Puppet Pals (a series of weird and funny YouTube videos featuring puppets of *Harry Potter* characters. They are hilarious, you should look it up, it'll be funnier if you've seen them)" (FFN, May 28, 2010). Sharing this fanfiction within the *Wicked* section of FFN, Laura assumes the abstract audience's familiarity with that musical. However, this note displays Laura's understanding that her audience may or may not be familiar with all of the texts from which she borrows, and recognizes that their appreciation for her writing, in part, depends on shared experience with the original source material. When referring her readers to the YouTube videos, Laura moves from writing for an abstract audience to sharing with a social audience in the FFN public.

Pairings. Another popular convention within fanfiction that Laura experiments with involves romantically pairing two characters who were not so-linked in the original work. Similar to her distaste for prioritizing audience preference over writing quality, Laura sees pairings as a "ploy to get reviews" (August, 27, 2013), often at the expense of writing integrity. Yet, Laura continually struggles to balance her commitment to quality with her desire for recognition from the audience. As a compromise, Laura alludes to pairings in some of her author notes, such as the following: "Is it Gloq, or is it Bessa? Or is it just our favorite pitiful Munchkin boy all on his own, in the end? You decide. :)" (FFN, April 8, 2013). Here, "Gloq" refers to pairing Glinda and Boq, and "Bessa" refers to Boq and Nessarose—all major *Wicked* characters who do not engage romantically in the original musical. However, as Laura describes, the actual fanfic that follows this note to the audience does not in fact fulfill the expectation she sets up, as neither a Gloq nor a Bessa pairing ever materializes in her story. "That was a little ploy that I pulled for readers because they're really, really obsessed, like infatuated, with pairings" (August, 27, 2013)—a ploy that resulted in three positive comments from readers. Laura's coy use of pairings appropriates the popular fanfiction genre convention, and uses it to attract reviews, enabling her to acknowledge her abstract audience while staying true to her sense of integrity.

Discussion

Contributing to existing scholarship on fanfiction (e.g., Black, 2008; Chandler-Olcott & Maher, 2003; Curwood et al., 2013; Thomas, 2006), our study of Laura's sharing and connecting with the FFN public enhances understanding of how networked publics reconceptualize writing as *networked writing*. Analysis reveals that writing and sharing are inextricably linked as a literacy practice in the FFN context, particularly when viewed through the lenses of Magnifico's (2010) audience in the abstract and boyd's (2014) networked publics, which both recognize that while writers engage in the act of writing they are already connecting with their audience even before they actually share the work. As Magnifico (2010) argues, "without understanding the communicative use of the writing,

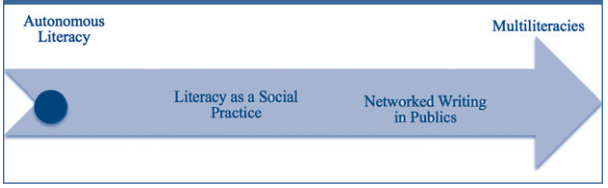
that is, what kind of audience members are reading the writing and to what ends, we cannot fully understand the processes in which any writer engages" (p. 174). Laura's case helps us understand more about the process involved in networked writing.

Our findings suggest that ICTs continue to expand and redefine what we mean when we say "literacy." We might think of literacy constructions as sitting along a spectrum, with autonomous literacy (Street, 1984) at one end, and a literacy as a social practice account helping to move our conceptualization toward multiliteracies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012) at the other (see Figure 1). Whereas autonomous literacy, predominant in school settings, requires technical, transferable skills, rarely does the concept of social others—save a teacher—come into play in order for an activity to be considered literate. Yet, Laura's fanfiction writing requires audience and a public to exist at all. We find Laura's networked writing inseparable from her social engagement with her public.

Unlike an autonomous model, a process-oriented or workshop approach to writing pedagogy (Atwell, 1998; Murray, 2004) prioritizes a writer's consideration of audience as integral to learning and teaching writing. However, with the advent of ICTs and related online literacy practices, the nature of audience has significantly changed. Whereas writing process pioneers emphasized the importance of finding print-based publishing opportunities for student writing, the Internet offers myriad online spaces where audiences provide immediate feedback as they communicate directly with authors (Magnifico, 2010). While the workshop approach remains an effective, recommended element of writing instruction (Graham & Perrin, 2007), a reconceptualization of audience has yet to be integrated.

Exposure, access, and awareness of publics in online contexts takes the social practice account of literacies further along this imagined spectrum. Magnifico (2010) explains how this works when she claims that "the audience, rather than being an external consideration, is internal and embedded within the writing because when writers write, they are writing to someone and for some purpose" (p. 173). Our findings align with this claim, as Laura accesses and studies the expectations of FFN's abstract audience, engages FFN's social audience directly through reviews and messages, shares while maintaining her anonymity, and writes using the context's genres and conventions.

FIGURE 1 Literacy Spectrum



We argue that new literacy practices' "technical stuff" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), which enables Laura's access and communication with the FFN public, as well as "ethos stuff," in the form of an abstract and social public whom Laura keeps in mind while composing and connects with when sharing, interweaves the composing and the sharing in new ways, making them inseparable as a literacy practice. Composing for an abstract audience combined with sharing with a social audience reconceptualizes writing in the digital age. This new way of valuing writing goes unacknowledged in most classroom writing contexts. Therefore, FFN and other networked writing spaces offer adolescent writers like Laura the opportunity to "write" in relevant, motivating ways.

Conclusion

Though Laura, and students like her, may lament the writing requirements in many secondary classrooms, as English teacher educators, we recognize the various social, cultural, and political constraints within which English teachers operate. We also remain mindful of the cautions about bringing youth literacy practices into school spaces (see Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Curwood et al., 2013). Therefore, we recommend applying the lessons learned from Laura's case by focusing on the real-world need to provide students with teacher-supported learning about what it means to connect with audiences in a digital age. This remains important because, even Laura, who lives in an environment oriented toward academic success, and who excels at her English studies, nonetheless finds school writing does not prepare her sufficiently for engaging with abstract and social audiences. Classroom teachers can do this in two ways: providing scaffolded opportunities to share writing with audiences both online and offline, and providing explicit instruction to help students critically analyze various audiences in networked publics.

Anonymity affords Laura the opportunity to take risks with her writing in the fanfiction context without

Take Action

STEPS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

Steps for Immediate Action:

1. Using the results from a student interest inventory, connect students to networked writing spaces, such as blogs or online forums, where they can write for abstract and social audiences aligned with identified interests.
2. Design instruction that scaffolds students' awareness of the expectations and conventions within their chosen networked writing space. Journaling prompts, for example, could help students uncover what they know about their networked public.
3. Guide students through an analysis within their networked writing spaces to recognize and understand how technology connects writers with a social audience.
4. Encourage student publication in networked writing spaces by including online venues as options for students to share their classroom writing.

fear of failure or personal judgment. Formal writing instruction often follows a vertical model of knowledge transmission (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012), in which students produce high-stakes, evaluation-centered writing to demonstrate content and/or genre knowledge. Instead, writing instruction might involve granting students anonymity as they share their work within the classroom public and expanding exposure through assignments that allow them to write for audiences in networked publics. Teachers might also consider not grading this writing through evaluative measures, but rather recognizing students' participation.

Through reading what others posted on the site and learning "by accident," Laura gained familiarity with the abstract audience's expectations in FFN. While we recognize, like Black (2007), the value in peer-supported, out-of-school literacy learning, we also advocate for teacher-supported, school-based experiences to support instruction in the literacies required of new technologies. Teachers have an opportunity to support students' critical analysis of the audiences with which they engage in networked publics. To do so, writing instruction might involve researching a networked public (like FFN) to develop an audience profile that makes the imagined, abstract audience more concrete before writing a piece to share within that particular public.

If we acknowledge the rapid changes in literacies brought about by everyday use of networked technologies, and we adopt a purpose of schooling that focuses on facilitating learning, meaning-making, and knowledge production for all students (Larson, 2014), then classroom literacy instruction must continue to evolve beyond a focus on "college and career readiness" (NGAC & CCSO, 2010). Tapping into students' interests and connecting them to networked publics serves as but one way to make classroom writing instruction more relevant to students' lives. Perhaps more importantly, since online spaces can also be sites of civic action (boyd, 2014), scaffolding students' critical analysis of how to write for and with the audiences in networked publics can empower youth as they seek to solve real-world problems.

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More to Explore

CONNECTED CONTENT-BASED RESOURCES

- ✓ Atwell, N. (2014). *In the middle: A lifetime of learning about writing, reading, and adolescents* (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- ✓ Curwood, J. S., Lammers, J. C., & Magnifico, A. M. (2014, March 14). Adolescent writing in online fan fiction spaces. Reading Today Online. Available at http://www.reading.org/reading-today/classroom/post/engage/2014/03/14/adolescent-writing-in-online-fanfiction-spaces#.UydByFFdW-U
- ✓ Jamison, A. (2013). *Fic: Why fanfiction is taking over the world*. Dallas, TX: BenBella Books, Inc.
- ✓ Jenkins, H., & Kelley, W. (Eds.). (2013). *Reading in a participatory culture: Remixing Moby-Dick in the English classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- ✓ McWilliams, J., Hickey, D. T., Hines, M. B., Conner, J. M., & Bishop, S. C. (2011). Using collaborative writing tools for literary analysis: Twitter, fan fiction and the crucible in the secondary English classroom. *The Journal of Media Literacy Education, 2*(3). Available at http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/jmle/vol2/iss3/5