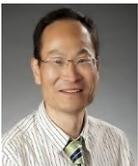


## Social Justice through Literacy: Integrating Digital Video Cameras in Reading Summaries and Responses

Rong Liu  
John A. Unger  
Vicki A. Scullion

**ABSTRACT:** Drawing data from an action-oriented research project for integrating digital video cameras into the reading process in pre-college courses, this study proposes using digital video cameras in reading summaries and responses to promote critical thinking and to teach social justice concepts. The digital video research project is founded on Vygotskian and semiotic theoretical approaches. A qualitative analysis of the method and a demonstration of its processes and benefits are provided using exemplar cases. Students practice critical thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation components, in multiple phases of the activity. Social justice issues are addressed through literacy as students analyze editorials from newspapers and respond to state a position and provide support. Synthesizing summaries and evaluating editorials in order to write a personal response can promote both critical thinking and awareness of social justice issues.

**Key words:** Social Justice, Literacy, Digital Video Cameras, Critical Thinking, Reading Summaries & Responses, EAP/ESL



Rong Liu, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of English for Academic Purposes at Georgia Gwinnett College, in Lawrenceville, Georgia, USA. His research interests focus on language processing and using technology in second language reading and writing. He can be contacted at: [rliu@ggc.edu](mailto:rliu@ggc.edu).



John A. Unger, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of English for Academic Purposes at Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, Georgia, USA. His research interests revolve around integrating digital video cameras and other digital tools into the reading and writing process.



Vicki A. Scullion, Ed. S. is a specialist in curriculum and instruction and a certified K-12 English teacher. Her current research centers on designing effective literacy lessons that incorporate technology for adult English for Academic Purposes students.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly” (King, Jr., 1964, p. 79). One way educators can cultivate students’ awareness and understanding of social justice issues is through literacy, i.e., incorporating social justice into the reading and writing curriculum (Halcrow, 1990). This paper explores and presents findings on one method—social justice through literacy: integrating digital video cameras into reading summaries and responses.

Using digital video cameras in reading courses is a potentially effective avenue for addressing social justice issues while at the same time emphasizing basic summarizing strategies and the use of transition words and phrases for specific expository patterns, such as the argumentation-persuasion pattern taught in this study. For the data presented in this and other related papers, students were guided into writing summaries and responses as a part of academic writing objectives. As a first step toward meeting these objectives, students chose and read editorials on social justice topics, including drug issues as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights.

To integrate the digital video cameras into the summarization and response process, students video recorded their summaries and responses according to customized guidelines (see Appendix A). The digital recordings and the entire process aimed at providing opportunities for students to self-assess their comprehension and develop their social justice awareness. The response component grants students a chance to voice their own opinions on the social justice topic they chose and to defend their positions with supporting details. “Taking action on an issue or

a problem that they have learned about through literacy activities helps to make these experiences more authentic” (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006).

Burden and Kuechel (2004) found that digital video creation improved students’ conceptual understanding of higher order thinking and critical discrimination skills. Moreover, the digital recordings and archived written summaries and responses allow teachers, students, and researchers to revisit specific moments in the process for a variety of assessments. Other benefits of using digital video are: enhanced motivation, development of group work, media and visual literacy skills, critical and reflective thinking and self-esteem benefits (BECTA, 2003; Greene & Crespi, 2012; Theodosakis, 2001; Yildiz, 2003). Most of the findings, however, are primarily at the secondary or elementary level (Hofer & Owings Swan, 2005). Furthermore, although many studies have examined the potential of digital video projects, no study has proposed and analyzed integrating digital video cameras into the production of reading summaries and responses to address social justice issues. This study will describe a method in which students use digital video cameras in a pre-college reading course to promote literacy, social justice, and critical thinking.

### Research Questions

This case study is descriptive in nature. The focus is on the process features of interaction by following a well-known fundamental of studying human interaction proposed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly” (King, Jr., 1964, p. 79)

*To study something historically means to study it in the process of change . . . .To encompass in research the process of a given thing's development in all its phases and changes—from birth to death—fundamentally means to discover its nature, its essence, for 'it is only in movement that a body shows what it is'.* (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 64-65, italics in original).

Because video data and digital resources are available to disseminate raw data, readers, students, teachers, other researchers, and readers from the broader general population can gain a more profound understanding of student interaction with text than when studies are presented with layers of interpretation without transparency. Although subjectivity and interpretation is built into any investigative endeavor, the least amount of interpretation can be promoted by sharing the data as with the current paper and other related studies (see Unger & Liu, 2013; Unger & Scullion, 2013); specifically, the video data shows language and thinking occurring as these communicative events unfold “right before one’s eyes” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 61). This broad Vygotskian, qualitative, action-oriented research design has proved ideal, particularly for systematically integrating new tools into the reading and writing process, making adjustments based on empirical data and collaborative analyses.

Qualitative research is for “research problems in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (Creswell, 2005, p. 45). Because of the descriptive nature of this exploratory study, research questions often change and can be adjusted to reflect the data collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). One such question arose after students commented that the digital video activity deepened their critical thinking about many issues they read, which prompted the researchers to find more evidence. Because this paper’s focus is on documenting evidence of social justice awareness and critical thinking as students participate in the activity, the research questions in the study are:

1. What processes in video-making promote literacy (reading comprehension, language skills, writing responses)?

2. What evidence does the data present for the development of participants’ social justice awareness?

3. What evidence does the data present for enhancing critical thinking among students during the procedure?

### **Theoretical Approach**

This case study broadly follows case study and action research guidelines proposed by Stringer (2014) and Yin (2009). To understand the data and effectively apply an action-based case study approach to integrating digital video into the classroom, as mentioned previously, researchers use older as well as more current Vygotskian and semiotic theoretical approaches to investigate the development of sign systems across cases. Specifically, seven related accessible terms and concepts are available to describe and analyze the data. These are: signification, mediation, the act of pointing, (Kita, 2003; Tomasello, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), the concepts of intention-reading and Joint Attentional Frames (Tomasello, 2003), and the idea of multimodal literacy with an emphasis on the quality of design (Kress, 2003).

### **Signification and Mediation**

A place to start understanding the terms mentioned above is from the term signification and the often-cited reference to tying a knot in a piece of string to represent something (Vygotsky, 1978). Imagine an early shepherd trying to count her flock. After she ran out of fingers and toes, she would have to use some part of her surroundings to count. To follow the Vygotskian example, suppose this shepherd tied a knot in a piece of string to represent five sheep; she created a sign (see also Peirce, 1990; Eco, 1976). She is then able to use the knots as a tool for counting, which enables her to plan when to rotate pastures or show someone how many sheep she has without being physically present. The knot, as five sheep, becomes a part of a complex sign system that will become inseparable from her memory and planning. Signification, a process germane to human cognition and language (Peirce, 1991; van Lier, 2004) refers to the activity of assigning meaning to the world, as with the knots representing five sheep.

A very important part of understanding this perspective on human learning and development, particularly in the adult literacy classroom and with the data presented here, is that once a sign has been created, as with the knot and shepherd, the sign mediates mental activity affecting the mental states of self and others as human communication and planning unfolds. These signs and sign systems become resources for concrete and abstract interactions of human activity with the world (Davydov, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998; Wells, 1999; van Leeuwen, 2005).

For analyzing and understanding the data presented in this paper and for understanding how to most effectively position students, language, digital video cameras, and the visuals to create meaning, the interrelated process of signification and mediation are central to understanding how students are creating meaning. Most important for this study is how mediation and signification comprise the continual process of sign creation (i.e., semiosis see Kress, 2003; Robbins, 2003). However, to extend these older foundational ideas through more recent theories and findings on human activity with signs and to make these ideas more practical for instruction, the directions for students are to prompt them to create acts of signification for an audience. This process generates a triadic arrangement of speaker to audience that mimics an idealized version of a Joint Attentional Frame (Tomasello, 2003; see also Unger & Liu, 2013; Unger & Scullion, 2013).

### **Joint Attentional Frames and Intention Reading**

Tomasello's (2003) concept of a Joint Attentional Frame describes a frame of reference for communicative activity that is more contextually pronounced and profound than might be envisioned by students and literacy educators. For students, teachers, and researchers, the idea of a Joint Attentional Frame provides an accessible way to conceptualize interaction as a semiotically grounded triadic to evaluate the way that interlocutors enact communicative events.

To paraphrase this explanation from Tomasello (2003), suppose an adult comes into a room with a diaper in her hand. The adult looks at the diaper, the baby follows the adult's gaze to the diaper, and the

adult might even say "time to change the diaper." The baby reads the adult's intention as "changing the diaper" and an expected sequence of events will follow. Tomasello contrasts this scenario with one in which the adult comes into the room with a toy, and as the baby follows the adult's gaze to the toy, the adult might say "time to play," and an expected series of events might follow that involve playing with the toy. A triadic is created as the adult and the child are focused on an object that is represented by a specific word and activity; the child reads the intentions of the adult through this sign creation process, and this intention-reading provides the foundation for the way humans collaborate in a more profound way than any other species. Humans read the intentions of others through these kinds of triadic events, and, through this process, internalize the mental states of others; in this way, humans can understand the perspectives and feelings of others more completely and intimately than other species.

Most important for the process of integrating digital video cameras into the adult writing/reading classroom is guiding this natural process to enhance acts of signification. Specifically, this enhancement is via the way students present concrete as well as abstract ideas and intentions to audiences through oral, written, and multi-modal text as they summarize articles on social justice issues and argue a specific position in response. The directions presented to the students intend to create this same kind of idealized triadic as an early, integral step in the writing process. An important part of creating this triadic where attention and intentions are shared is some manner of pointing, such as in the example where the baby follows the adult's gaze to the diaper or the toy. The act of pointing appears in other areas of research on human learning and development and is an important part of the signification process unfolding in the data.

### **The Act of Pointing**

In addition to the obvious importance of pointing in creating Joint Attentional Frames and enhancement of intention-reading, the act of pointing is an established part of research on learning, development, and communication (Kita, 2003; Goodwin, 2003; McNeill, 2005; Tomasello, 2003). Tomasello describes the situation of a person who

does not speak the local language in a train station in a foreign country. If questions are asked far away from the ticket booth, the person asking for directions might be idly pointing in the general cardinal direction of one thing or another, but nothing specific. Now suppose the traveler stands next to a ticket booth with a clock and destination names clearly displayed. The traveler can point to specific concrete items in the immediate context. This example weaves pointing into a complex textual activity system of language and intentions; pointing becomes as inseparable as any other part of the interaction (i.e., signification and mediation). When this concept extends across different modes, such as speech and writing, and then connects to image, light, and sound, these ideas can be moved on the specifics of communicative events between speaker/writer/text designers, the audience, and sharing intentions to see the importance of multi-modal literacy and the concept of communicative proficiency as a matter of design, which is salient in the data and in any 21st century communicative event.

### Literacy as Design

According to Kress (2003), “The world of communication is now constituted in ways that make it imperative to highlight the concept of design, rather than concepts such as acquisition, or competence, or critique” (p. 36). For these classroom activities, three different identifiable resources are emphasized for students, teachers, and researchers, as reference areas to developmentally track the creation of meaning. The ultimate goal for this part of the ongoing research is to involve all stakeholders with accessible reference areas in the data that act as units of analyses. These tentative units of analyses to track the process of literacy as design are speech, the visual, and the act of pointing. These units are acting as reference areas for the initial sharing of raw data through hyperlinks.

### Speech, the Visual, and the Act of Pointing: A Framework for Evaluation

Initially, these three modalities of speech, the visual, with chunks of language on the visual (see Figure One), and the act of pointing, are positioned as follows: 1) speech—students create an oral, video-recorded presentation of their summaries; 2) a visual—students create a poster, often with specific graphic organizer styles such as tree diagrams, concept maps, matrices, or flow diagrams, to emphasize different reading paths (Kress, 2003). A parallel aim here is to prompt students to the awareness of white-space and the size and color of letters that frame chunks of language (averaging four to seven word chunks). And 3) the act of pointing—the teacher prompts students to use their hands or long twenty-four inch pointers to point to chunks of language on the visual.

“The world of communication is now constituted in ways that make it imperative to highlight the concept of design, rather than concepts such as acquisition, or competence, or critique” (Kress, 2003, p. 36)

By identifying speech, visuals, chunks of written text, and the act of pointing as interrelated, accessible units of reference for students, teachers, and researchers, the long-term objective is to provide all stakeholders with the ability to evaluate precisely how to create meaning. Through these accessible units of reference observed

during purposeful design, specific features and variables in the process can be linked to outcomes, although any quantitative measuring of variables is in the future.

### The Triadic, the Design Process, and Critical Thinking

During this process of arranging resources in a triadic manner, the teacher prompts the students to examine the precise meaning they want to create and

convey, to synthesize salient information, and to evaluate their arguments (Kress, 2003; Unger & Scullion, 2013). These are all core processes in critical thinking, defined by Scriven and Paul (1987) as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Defining Critical Thinking section, para. 3). The exemplar cases presented here illustrate students engaged in a disciplined, formal process that can teach and strengthen multiple critical thinking skills (Elder, 2007; Paul & Elder, 2005; Scriven & Paul, 1987).

One of Paul and Elder’s (2005) critical thinking principles focuses on “intellectual autonomy,” a process of independently deciding “what to believe and what to reject” (Standard Seventeen Performance Indicators section, para. 1). This aspect of critical thinking is important when people such as teachers present students with social justice issues. In this case study, students are challenged to “avoid passively or mindlessly accepting the beliefs of others” by responding to an editorial about a current world problem (Standard Seventeen Outcomes section, para. 2). Integrating the teaching of literacy and critical thinking skills about social justice issues with a digital video element has not been researched; the intent of this case study is to present one method of combining the two components.

### **Current Case Study**

The next several sections will entail the details of the case study. The design of the study will appear first, followed by the two students who participated in the study along with their outcomes.

### **Participants, Context, and Directions to Prompt Processes and Outcomes**

Participants are adult students whose native language is not English and who are taking English for Academic Purposes (EAP/ESL), non-degree-bearing-credit courses to prepare for a higher education academic curriculum. The major focus of the EAP/ESL courses is to develop students’ academic language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Many of the participants are first generation immigrants who are underprepared for college and live at a low-income level. Generally, the overall context of these students’ lives is that they are truly living social justice issues: many have children and are working part-time, some work full time, and many are from war-torn places where formal academic schooling was not available. Overall, schooling and a basic critical thinking curriculum are not a part of many of these students’ backgrounds, though specifics of these issues are beyond the focus of the current study. Participants’ instructional needs overlap in two broad areas: they are generally English as a Second Language students, learning the dialect of academic English, and they are developmental students with regards to their formal schooling. Specifically, students develop critical thinking strategies, that is, the ability to follow direction, put together information, evaluate information, and use all of the specific features evident in the literature on developmental learners (Perin, Bork, Perverly, & Mason, 2013; see also Higbee, 2012).

The main textual prompts for the process and outcomes are newspaper editorials (opinion articles), which are ideal reading materials for emphasizing students’ social justice awareness because many articles focus on social justice topics and present authors’ perspectives and arguments; these arguments may or may not be in line with students’ views.

### **The specific directions to produce the data:**

1. Find an editorial focusing on social justice (many topics are provided). Example topics are: poverty, unequal education funding, crime and incarceration, health issues, gambling, homelessness, illegal immigration, identity theft, juvenile crime justice, child abuse and sexual molestation, drug safety, mental illness, suicide, terrorism, toxic waste, unemployment, human trafficking, and others. See here for a comprehensive list: <http://saintleo.libguides.com/content.php?pid=64752&sid=1515902>
2. First create main idea statements using the following two questions as guides to produce one or two sentences that express the answers, but not the

question stem (i.e., do not write: “The author wants me to know....”

What is the topic?

What does the author want you to know?

Then, find three supporting details for the main idea.

3. Create a poster using answers to step two:

Main idea and supporting details

4. Use a digital video camera to record a video speech of approximately two minutes, pointing at the poster as you speak about each detail and explain how it relates to the main idea.

5. Watch the video and answer questions to prompt self-evaluation.

6. Write summaries and responses. Summarize the editorial and then respond to the article; defend your position.

Class or pair discussion of the social justice topic often follows the videos before students write.

7. Revise and resubmit.

See Appendix B for instructions that students receive for this project. See samples below.

### Classroom Examples Using Digital Video Cameras in Reading Summaries and Responses

The following exemplar cases illustrate the process and the potential benefits of the overall digital video procedures and assessment as of the writing of this paper. These cases are part of an ongoing investigation to study effective positionings of literacy resources and specific procedures to integrate language and resources across modes. It is important for all stakeholders in the process to understand that the directions and outcomes may be adjusted as needed for adaptation to different educational contexts.

In order to promote more direct reader and stakeholder access to making individual peer-oriented decisions on the validity, reliability, and credibility of the findings and suggestions for instruction presented here, original data related to

this study can be accessed at: [http://transitional-literacy.org/?page\\_id=9928](http://transitional-literacy.org/?page_id=9928) The password is rabbit14. The data presented in this article is unedited; student errors in speaking and writing that are common to adult English language learners were not corrected in order to allow the original data to be presented accurately and authentically. The case study videos available on the webpage listed above have student faces blocked in order to preserve the privacy of the students. When used by the students in the classroom for evaluative purposes, the videos are unblocked.

### Case F, Frances

Frances is a student from Colombia where drugs are a prevalent social problem. She chose this topic because of her personal experience; in her response she wrote, “I have lived closely to the drug problem.” She also wrote:

I feel sad to see that Colombia's guerrillas are using Colombian people and their land for the cultivation of coca. These farmers have to work for long periods of 10 to 12 hours a day, just for the minimum wage. The wives of these farmers are used in household duties such as wash clothing and cook food for large crews of the FARC.

The original editorial is at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/02/opinion/02wed1.html>

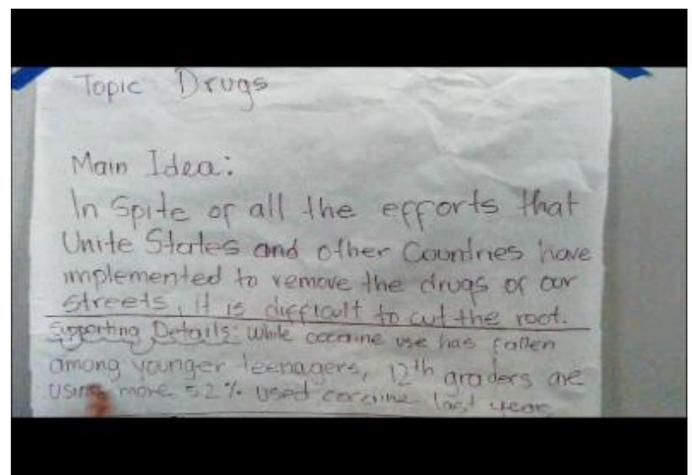


Figure 1. Case F’s Poster on “Not Winning the War on Drugs”

The following are some of the salient features of Frances' data (recall that the video data can be viewed at [http://transitional-literacy.org/?page\\_id=9928](http://transitional-literacy.org/?page_id=9928)

Frances highlighted the metaphor “cut to the root” in her video presentation, which became the title of her summary and a theme of her response. She repeatedly used this language chunk, and this metaphor provides a glimpse into how she envisions the sources and avenue in solving a specific social problem. Furthermore, at each step of the process observed across different modes, she adds more information, expanding her ideas, making abstract intentions more concrete for the audience in the process. As always, these participant-students, as students do everywhere, deviated from the directions; however, these deviations are natural, positive, and effective, as can be seen as Frances expands her ideas and connections between supporting details and main ideas across modes. For example, the poster she used in the video had only one supporting detail, but in the final summary, she provides three. This result strongly illustrates the potential for students to use the time and space provided by this digital step in the process of experimenting with different language forms, observing themselves using these forms, and critically evaluating what is important information to highlight in final drafts. Additionally, Frances' data illustrates how these procedures reveal patterns of errors found across different textual spaces and modalities. For example, Frances does not understand subject-verb agreement, which is evidence of literacy development potential because such error patterns can be corrected as a follow-up practice or in the revision process. This example is just one of the many avenues for a continuing, developmentally oriented view of communicative proficiency as digital design.

### Case E, Elena

The social justice topic of this editorial is AIDS. Originally from Africa, this student has strong feelings about this problem—a social justice issue in her life.

As with Frances, raw data from Elena, including the original editorial, the poster, the video, the video

transcript, the draft, and the final summary and response, can be accessed at the webpage [http://transitional-literacy.org/?page\\_id=9928](http://transitional-literacy.org/?page_id=9928). The password is rabbit14. The editorial is at <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/29/opinion/opinion-world-aids-day-progress/>.

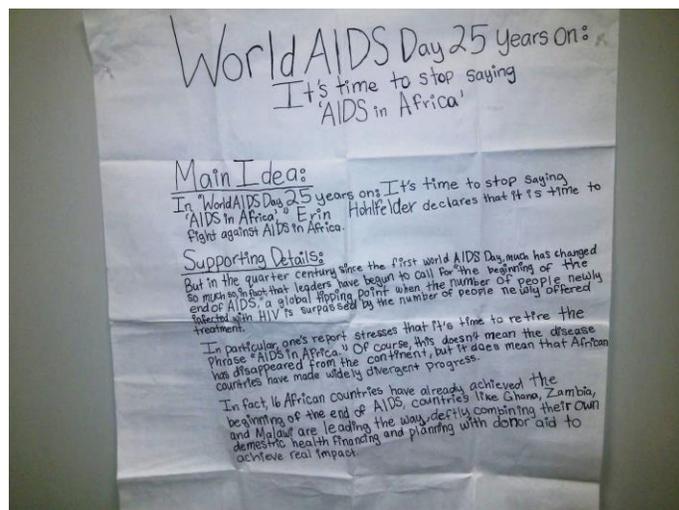


Figure 2. Case E's Poster on “World AIDS Day 25 years on: It's time to stop saying ‘AIDS in Africa’”

As shown in her video (See [http://transitional-literacy.org/?page\\_id=9928](http://transitional-literacy.org/?page_id=9928)) and in her overall summary and response, Elena wants to stop discrimination against her native continent regarding AIDS. “AIDS is not just a problem in Africa,” she writes. In her written response from the self-evaluation step in the process, she continues:

One moment in the video the word I think I emphasized was stop saying Aids in Africa. People think that Africa is the poorest continent but is not. AID is not in the Africa but entire the whole world. We need to help those who have this sickness and try to find the treatment that will heal them.

The classroom discussion following this presentation demonstrates the merit of editorials as a way to raise students' social justice awareness. Many students were surprised to learn of the improvement of AIDS treatment in Africa and the widespread nature of the disease around the world. AIDS is not just a problem in Africa; it is a global issue. This discussion inspired a classmate who did a subsequent poster about world AIDS problems for this class.

A prominent feature in the data is how Elena explicitly positioned speech, the visual, and chunks of language through the act of pointing, with all of these resources featuring a design initiated by the directions and guided by both her planned and spontaneous decisions to refer to the text on the visual. Elena and the audience were arranged in a triadic with the visual, like the baby and adult pointing at a diaper or toy, or a traveler pointing to relevant objects and cardinal or abstract directions in a train station. Elena created a rich context to make her intentions clear to an audience, prompted by the entire process to mimic a Joint Attentional Scene, assigning meaning to chunks of language, along with distinguishing between more-to-less relevant chunks (e.g., evaluating her own supporting details), and making abstract relationships between supporting details and main ideas more concrete for the audience and herself. Across all the data and participants, the emphasis is on these sense-making processes and identifiable reference areas; the speech, the visual, the chunks of words on the visual, and the act of pointing enhance students' literacy skills and critical thinking skills and, for this series of lessons, social justice.

### Findings and Reflections

Overall, the ongoing research follows research principles and guidelines laid out in Stringer (2014) and Yin (2009), and, as mentioned earlier, the researchers present the data using the Vygotskian idea of watching the process of signification and mediation unfold across modes and over time. Students' videos, transcripts, draft summaries, and final summaries and responses illustrate the processes and potential for integrating digital video cameras into the process of creating reading summaries. Moreover, the integration of digital video with reading involves students' metacognition, which can be realized as empowerment when students apply literacy skills and strategies to social justice issues.

Recall that the research questions at the current time in the ongoing study are as follows:

1. What processes in the video-making process promote literacy (reading comprehension, language skills, writing responses)?

Teachers prompt students to understand the abstract relationships between the main idea and supporting details; these abstract relationships are essential in reading comprehension and critical thinking. One of the central questions students encounter on the self-evaluation form and throughout different iterations of a process that is undergoing continual adjustment asks students to decide which supporting detail is strongest and to explain why. This reflection guides students to locate the main idea and affirm their summarized statements. Students also learn to manipulate chunks of language across modes, for example, "cut to the root," a phrase that Frances used. In working across modes while creating and answering questions about their videos, students can become more aware of how to shape complex semiotic systems to express specific intentions. Students learn literacy as design and address all kinds of literacy and critical thinking issues from a more dynamic, multi-modal perspective than is normally provided by paper, textbook, word processing programs, and static screens.

With the two exemplar cases, as with many student-participants across multiple cases with slightly different iterations of the directions being applied, students are consistently adding more information at each step across modes.

2. What evidence does the data present for developing social justice awareness?

During the entire reading, recording, and writing process, students reflect on the chosen social justice topic, voice their own opinion, and defend their proposition. As with Elena and Frances, most chose a topic related to their lives, understood the problems, and tried to find solutions. Through the video-making process of the summaries and responses, students can take critical positions and question injustices. For example, Student E (Elena) questioned the justice of thinking that AIDS is in Africa only. Subsequent class discussions raised peers' social justice awareness about the topic.

3. What evidence for the enhancement of student-participant improvement and/or development of critical thinking during the procedure can be found in the data?

Overall, the digital video cameras and procedures create a setting supportive for interaction, idea sharing, and discussion. Students film each other and discuss in pairs or as a whole class. Students feel comfortable and safe in sharing their ideas and thoughts. Schuck and Kearney (2005) pointed out that incorporating digital video in classrooms creates opportunities for collaborative learning. For Frances and Elena and in the classrooms chaotic with students creating videos, making visuals, and talking and writing about their topics through all stages of activity, students collaborated and took charge of their learning. Another benefit is student engagement. Students actively involve themselves in the whole process. This level of profound involvement that digital video recordings can provide has been discovered in other studies (Miller, 2007, 2010; Yoon, 2013).

### Challenges

One challenge is that some traditional students need detailed instructions in order to use technology for class projects. The good news is that many students have smartphones and know how to use their phones to record a video. Some students chose to use their own familiar technology, which decreased the need for direct instruction on the use of the digital video cameras.

Technology failure can be another challenge. As every educator who relies on technology in the classroom knows, there is always a chance that the video cameras will be low on battery, the connection cords needed to upload the videos to a file on a classroom computer are forgotten at home, or the computers in the classroom have been disabled for some unknown reason. Prior planning can eliminate some of these challenges; flexibility and a sense of humor are necessary to work through others. Also, be aware that video uploading may take some time and that students sometimes forget to copy and share their videos.

Another challenge for students is that they do not know which topic to choose from because there are too many interesting topics that occur in this world. Possibly limiting the number of choices of social justice topics given to students would alleviate this issue. Moreover, locating relevant supporting details

in editorials involves still-developing critical reading skills as well as unfamiliarity with the vocabulary, making this process difficult. As one student states, it is hard “to separate the author information from people’s comments related to it.”

### Concluding Thoughts

This paper has presented Tomasello’s (2003) concepts of intention-reading and Joint Attentional Frames, along with the act of pointing, mediation, signification and multimodal literacy, as the theoretical concepts for integrating digital video cameras into the reading and writing process. This study has found that speech, the act of pointing, and a visual can act as reference areas and mediational means for students to engage in the complex meaning, understanding, and sense-making processes involved in comprehending and creating academic text.

The evidence in these case studies supports the idea that students through literacy activities can understand social justice. As shown by Frances from Colombia, editorials are effective resources for students to write summaries and respond because editorials detail many types of social justice issues from different viewpoints. Critical thinking as empowerment is another important feature of social justice. Students develop their critical thinking skills through the video creating and self-reflection process. In addition, students work with evidence and propositions, constructed as supporting details to main ideas; they actively decode and fully engage in the nature of argumentation by discussing their opinions. Reading and writing followed by pair and/or class discussions takes the students deeper into the topics and strengthens their understanding of social justice concepts. Reflection helps students develop critical thinking skills and prompts a deeper understanding of what it means to “live” social justice in the twenty-first century. Students’ writings reveal that they had a much deeper understanding of social justice than might be revealed through more traditional literacy instruction. One student’s final reflection provides evidence of this inspiration: “I’m not a person who check news but this influence me to check news. Summary and Respond now I get hangg of it.” “Social justice fosters human progress in the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions, and so

promotes human rights in the struggle for dignity and fundamental freedoms” (“Suggested Social and Environmental Justice Topics,” 2014). Social justice

through literacy is one way to promote awareness and prompt for social justice practice.

### References

- BECTA: British Educational Communications and Technology Agency. (2003). *What the research says about digital video in teaching and learning*. Coventry, UK: BECTA ICT Research.
- Burden, K. & Kuechel, T. (2004). *Evaluation report of the teaching and learning with digital video assets*. Coventry, UK: BECTA.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Davydov, V. (1999). The content and unsolved problems of activity theory. In Y. Engestrom, R. Miettinen, & R. L. Punamaki (Eds.), *Perspectives on activity theory* (pp. 39-52). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Duke, N. K., Purcell-Gates, V, Hall, L. A., & Tower, C. (2006). Authentic Literacy Activities for Developing Comprehension and Writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(4), 344-355.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A theory of semiotics*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Elder, L. (2007). Another brief conceptualization of critical thinking. In *The critical thinking community* (Defining critical thinking section). Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>
- Greene, H., & Crespi, C. (2012). The value of student created videos in the college classroom-an exploratory study in marketing and accounting. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 5 (1), 273-283.
- Halcrow, B. (1990). Bringing social justice issues into any curriculum area. *Social Alternatives*, 9(2), 42-43.
- Higbee, J. (2012). Commentary: Who is the developmental student? In R. Hodges, M. Simpson, & M. Stahl, *Teaching strategies in developmental education: Readings on theory, research, and best practice* (pp. 71-80). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Hofer, M., & Owings Swan, K. (2005). Digital moviemaking—the harmonization of technology, pedagogy and content. *International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 102-110.
- King, Jr., M. L. (1964). *Why We Can't Wait*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Kita, S. (2003). *Pointing: Where language, culture, and cognition meet*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum \ Associates Publishers.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Miller, S. M. (2007). English teacher learning for new times: Digital video composing as multimodal literacy practice. *English Education*, 40(1), 64-83.
- Miller, S. M. (2010). Towards a multimodal literacy pedagogy: Digital video composing as 21st century literacy. In P. Albers & J. Sanders (Eds.) *Literacies, Art, and Multimodality*, pp. 254-281. Urbana-Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- McNeill, D. (2005). *Gesture & thought*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2005). *Guide for educators to critical thinking competency standards: Standards, principles, performance indicators, and outcomes with a critical thinking master rubric*. [Kindle Cloud Reader version]. Available at Amazon.com
- Peirce, C. S. (1991). *Peirce on signs: Writings on semiotic by Charles Peirce*. E. J. Hoopes (Ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Perin, D., Bork, R., Peverly, S., & Mason, L. (2013). A contextualized curricular supplement for developmental reading and writing. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 43(2), 8-38.
- Robbins, D. (2003). *Vygotsky's and A. A. Leontiev's semiotics and psycholinguistics: applications for education, second language acquisition, and theories of language*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Schuck, S., & Kearney, M. (2005). Teachers as producers, students as directors: Why teachers use student-generated digital video in their classes. Proceedings of the Apple University Consortium Conference [Electronic version]. Retrieved from <http://www.ed-dev.uts.edu.au/teachered/research/dvproject/pdfs/auc05.pdf>
- Scriven, M. & Paul, R. (1987). Defining critical thinking. In *The critical thinking community* (Defining critical thinking section). Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stringer, E. (2014). *Action research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Suggested Social and Environmental Justice Topics. (2014). Retrieved from <http://saintleo.libguides.com/content.php?pid=64752&sid=1515902>
- Tomasello, M. (2003). *Constructing a language: A usage-based theory of language acquisition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Theodosakis, N. (2001). *The director in the classroom: How thinking inspires learning*. San Diego, CA: Tech4learning Publishing.
- Unger, J. A. & Liu, R. (2013). Digital video cameras for main ideas, and supporting details: The process and potential. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 44(1), 105-113.
- Unger, J. A. & Scullion, V. (2013). Digital video cameras for brainstorming and outlining: The process and potential. *The Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 9(2), 131-139.

- van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective*. Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Toward a sociocultural practice and theory of education*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Yildiz, M. N. (2003). Teaching media literacy through video production. Proceedings of ED- MEDIA 2003, World Conf. on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications. Waikiki, Hawaii.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yoon, T. (2013). Are you digitized? Ways to provide motivation for ELLs using digital storytelling. *International Journal of Research Studies in Educational Technology*, 2(1), 25-34.

## Appendix A

Instructions for making the video---Social Justice through Literacy: Integrating Digital Video Cameras in Reading Summaries and Responses

As in the model video ([http://transitional-literacy.org/?page\\_id=9928](http://transitional-literacy.org/?page_id=9928)), introduce each Supporting Detail and provide an explanation by using the following general language forms. Do not worry about being too informal. Remember that we are actually producing an oral rough draft of a Summary and Response.

1. Read your original Main Idea Statement; then

**Introduce your supporting details in sequence by saying the phrases below that are in quotes; the capital letters below highlight the material on your poster paper that you should read:**

“The first supporting detail is”: READ THE SUPPORTING DETAIL

“This supporting detail supports the main idea because”: SAY WHY YOU THINK THIS SUPPORTING DETAIL IS RELATED TO THE MAIN IDEA

2. “The second supporting detail is”: READ THE SECOND SUPPORTING DETAIL

“This supporting detail supports the main idea because”: SAY WHY YOU THINK THIS SUPPORTING DETAIL IS RELATED TO THE MAIN IDEA

3. “The third supporting detail is”: READ THE THIRD SUPPORTING DETAIL

This supporting detail supports the main idea because: SAY WHY YOU THINK THIS SUPPORTING DETAIL IS RELATED TO THE MAIN IDEA

4. Read your response statements; try to keep this only one or two statements (remember you want to write about a 4 to 7 sentence response on the final).

5. Choose the most appropriate supporting detail that you think supports your response: SAY WHY YOU THINK THIS SUPPORTING DETAIL IS RELATED TO YOUR RESPONSE

6. Conclude by saying anything you want, though if you are stuck with something today, say something like: “And that concludes my Main Idea and Supporting Detail Presentation about” SAY YOUR THEME HERE.

7. After the person concludes, the cameraperson should turn off the camera.

8. After your triad is complete, download the files from your camera to ONE COMPUTER to speed things up. Then each of you takes turns uploading to your Dropboxes or transferring to flash drives.

## Appendix B

Instructions---Digital Video Cameras and Reading Summaries and Responses

**Step 1:** Find an editorial (see below for possible sources) related to social justice (see below for possible topics).

Please choose the "Opinion" section or "editorial" section in news sites.

Suggested sources:

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/opinion/index.html>;  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/opinion/>;  
<http://www.usatoday.com/opinion>;  
<http://www.cnn.com/OPINION/?hpt=sitenav>;  
<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/world/opinion.htm>  
<http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/index.html/>  
<http://chronicle.com/section/Opinion-Ideas/40/?eio=58977>  
<http://chronicle.com/section/Opinion-Ideas/40/?eio=58977>

Please give the source (url or an electronic copy) in the beginning of your draft so others can read the article.

Possible social justice topics:

Abortion	Civil rights	Genetic engineering	Organ/body donation
Affirmative action	Creation science vs. evolution	Global warming	Pledge of Allegiance
AIDS	Drugs and drug abuse	Government vs. religion	Poverty
Alcohol and drinking	Drunk driving	Gun control	Prayer in schools
Animal rights	Environmental protection	Homelessness	Racial profiling
Binge drinking	Euthanasia and assisted suicide	Homosexuality	Same sex marriage
Capital punishment	Famine	Human Rights	Terrorism
Censorship	Flag burning	Immigration	Tobacco
Child labor	Gangs	Legalization of marijuana	Violence
Children's rights	Gender issues	Nuclear proliferation	Welfare

**See a comprehensive list of Social and Environmental Justice topics here:**

<http://saintleo.libguides.com/content.php?pid=64752&sid=1515902>

**Step two:** Use two well-known guide questions that appear in many pre-college English language/literacy textbooks to create main idea statements:

What is the topic?

What does the Author want you to know?

Use these two guide questions to create an original statement or two that expresses the answer to these questions; the answer is a main idea statement that is intended to be in your own words. Below the main idea statement, identify material quoted directly from the text that you can use to support the main idea. After writing the main idea statement, find three supporting details that support the main idea.

Submit your word document with the source of the editorial; copy the whole article into your word document; create a main idea statement and three supporting details in your word document;

**Step 3:** Create a visual/poster based on your step 2. Write it on a large piece of paper: create a poster and bring your visual to class and we will make a video. Also take a photo of your visual and upload it to our class website.

**Step 4:** Make a video. See Appendix A for instructions.

**Step 5:** Reflect on the video by using the following guidelines:

You answer the following questions first:

1. Very briefly, describe one moment in the video in which you think you emphasized one word, phrase, or any chunk of information over the rest. To do this, you need to watch the video (download yours) and pick one moment in the video where you think you “highlighted” or emphasized one specific piece of information or another, one word over another, something over everything else.
2. Which supporting detail is the strongest one that supports your main idea statement?
3. Which quote is the strongest to use in a response?

**Step 6:** Write a summary and response (two paragraphs in total), following the Rubric below (use it for self-assessment), using a quote in the Summary, and a quote in the Response.

**Rubric:**

Band	Summary of Reading	Position Statement and Paragraph The position statement is student's (your) response to the reading, similar to taking a position in an argument.	Accuracy
<b>Excellent</b>	Summary indicates excellent comprehension of the main ideas and major details contained in the reading(s). The main idea statement must be written in the student's (your) original words (not copied directly). Specific examples and other details in the summary are of high quality, with at least one quote included. The summary should provide a comprehensive answer to these two questions: <b>What is the topic of the reading? What does the author want you to know?</b> 20 pts.	Sharp focus on the position is maintained throughout; position is well-developed; few, if any, digressions. Sound reasons are supported by specific examples and details and at least one quote; evidence of critical thinking (i.e., the quote is related to the position; this demonstrates analysis and synthesis) 20 pts.	Writer demonstrates consistent facility in language use; demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice; there may be some minor lexical or grammatical errors. 10 pts.
<b>Fair</b>	Summary indicates fair comprehension of the main ideas and major details contained in the reading(s). Specific examples and other details in the summary are of good or fair quality; quote is included but may be incomplete or not entirely appropriate.	Focus on the position is partially maintained; some digressions are noted. Position is somewhat developed; reasons are partially supported by some examples and details; quote is included but may be incomplete or not entirely appropriate; modest evidence of critical thinking	Writer demonstrates some facility in language use; some variety in syntax and word choice. Minor lexical and grammatical errors do not interfere with communication of most ideas.
<b>Poor</b>	Summary indicates poor comprehension of the main ideas and major details contained in the reading(s). Specific examples and other details in the summary are of modest or poor quality or missing.	Focus on the position is not maintained or position is never expressed. Digressions do not lead back to the main topic. Supporting examples and/or quote may be missing or of poor quality	Writer demonstrates inconsistent or poor facility in language use. Lexical and grammatical errors frequently obscure meaning or require more careful reading to understand.

**Step 7:** Revise and resubmit your final draft of the summary and response.