Cultural Transformations

Youth and Pedagogies of Possibility

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Representing Self Through Media

Supporting Transitions to College with Digital Self-Representations

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And also just like the connection that everybody had with each other. I really liked that. I don’t know, I thought of it as a family away from family because I couldn’t be with my real family, my blood family, so it was kind of like another family.

—CHRIS, INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORS, APRIL 2011

CHRIS WAS A STUDENT in our freshman seminar, Representing Self Through Media: A Personal Journey Through This American Life, at University of Wisconsin–Madison. And like many students of color at our predominantly white university, he was required to enroll in a freshman program designed to make the college experience more accessible. But as Chris describes, the class was more than a requirement; it was another family. As Chris’s words highlight, the freshman college classroom can be a powerful space to engage underrepresented young people in transformative, pedagogical experiences. While these experiences are typically constructed in the context of the K–12 classroom, our work with a First-Year Interest
Group (FIG) program on a large midwestern college campus represents an effort to take the insights of scholars from this volume and from the field at large to the college classroom. Our goal is to understand whether and how the production of digital representations of self, in this case digital radio episodes, improves learning for underrepresented student populations, specifically, students of color and first-generation college goers. Very little research has been done to identify the pedagogical experiences that support productive college transitions for these young people, despite continued inequities in college success and graduation rates for students of color. We hope that this chapter begins to open up the conversation around transformative pedagogical practices in the college classroom.

To that end, we begin by first theorizing the transition to college and its importance for young people in general and for those who may lack support structures for college success in particular. We then describe how attention to digital media production processes creates a pedagogical space to explore the identity, transition, and experiences of nondominant students on campus. Finally, we explore some of the key features of our freshman seminar, focusing on Chris and how he experienced pedagogies of possibility in the college classroom.

COLLEGE AS A SITE FOR PEDAGOGIES OF POSSIBILITY

College is an institution that supports the development and understanding of emerging adulthood, a newer conceptualization of the extended transition between childhood and adulthood that has come to characterize many twenty-first-century societies. College has long been considered a site of "institutionalized moratorium" for young people, a space where identity crises can be explored and resolved. Philip and Barbara Newman stress the importance of choosing the right college, because it is here that youth's identity is shaped or because college at least serves as a safe place for figuring out who you want to be. Indeed, the university setting is an "identity transforming one" where the individuals within it are "not yet likely to have fully established a viable adult identity." Given the role that the college setting plays in identity transformation, we extend the reach of youth development to include college students, emerging adults in transition from childhood, and adolescence to adulthood. Specifically, we define youth as inclusive of adolescents through young adults, thirteen to twenty-three, from middle school through institutions of higher education, including universities and community colleges.

THE COLLEGE TRANSITION AND MINORITY STUDENT POPULATIONS

The transition to college is an important developmental milestone for all students; this period is especially important for young people who are more likely to struggle in the college environment. Such youth include students from low-income families, racial and ethnic minority students, and first-generation college goers. These students often experience a disconnect between their college and noncollege lives, making persistence difficult. Specifically, there is a strong correlation between a student's family income and his or her college completion; currently, fewer than half of the African American students who enter college complete their degree within six years. In this chapter, we share how the participation by one black male youth, Chris, in our freshman seminar exemplifies the opportunities for self-expression and reflection created by engaging in a pedagogy of possibility in the transition to college.

Many college communities have responded to the challenges of a student's entering, completing, and succeeding in college with the development of supportive transition programs. In transitional experiences, students explore what it means to be college students and to define who they are. While programs such as these have been around since the 1970s, very little attention has been paid to understanding how the programs help traditionally marginalized student populations. Meanwhile, emerging research has demonstrated that participation in artistic production supports positive identity development for traditionally marginalized groups. Specifically, autobiographical art helps adolescents explore their own identities in the face
of their traditionally stigmatized identities. Furthermore, artistic production supports both individual and collective conceptions of identity, opening up the possibility that multiple models for development can be accommodated within the same type of instructional setting, an important feature for learning environments that hope to include students from a variety of home communities and to facilitate positive developmental trajectories.

DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION AND IDENTITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Digital art-making is a fundamentally representational practice—the digital media that youth create should serve as an expanded way to learn about how young people represent their own identity and experiences. Digital media literacy as a social practice enables young people to “embrace multimodal forms, combining, and remixing visual images and video clips, words, sounds and songs, dance and gesture, and costume . . . [and use] their bodies as canvases in communication and self expression.” The task for adolescent literacy researchers and practitioners is to create “culturally responsive pedagogy” to “shake things up [in their teaching] in ways that still uphold rigor and excellence.” It is up to students and teachers to codesign their own multimodal worlds.

Digital media production has become an essential outlet for many adolescents to think about and represent their changing identity as they progress from adolescence to adulthood. Many young people make this transition in a collegiate environment. While the literature chronicling new college students’ participation in digital media literacy and production activities is limited, the literature on out-of-school media production organizations that work with adolescents aged fourteen to twenty shows the value of these opportunities for empowering young people through digital media literacy.

In our work, we used radio as the digital production medium for the Representing Self Through Media course. The use of radio as a digital medium for young people to represent themselves has been studied almost exclusively in out-of-school settings, with a focus on middle school and high school students. In radio production, they are empowered to express ideas that matter to them and to bring these issues to a public audience.

Through the process, young people learn valuable literacy skills, most notably the ability to monitor the quality of their own work through critique. One way to turn an explicit focus toward identity in the college setting is to construct an environment where students can share their personal stories. Hooks notes that the telling and sharing of stories of personal experience can provide a meaningful context for students from underrepresented groups to connect to an academic context. However, when stories are represented in a traditional academic text based mode, it may “alienate most folks who are not also academically trained and reinforces the notion that the academic world is separate from real life.”

Author bell hooks reminds us that we have choices when we represent self: we choose our audience, which voices to share, which voices to silence, and the language and mode of representation. The choices of representation for today’s young people, regardless of their status as underrepresented or in the majority culture, are not limited to traditional academic texts. They have available to them an arsenal of new digital media technologies to make artistic meaning and present their identity to an audience they choose.

In analyzing our freshman seminar course, we explore the pedagogy associated with digital art production, with a focus on how these pedagogical practices affect students of color and first-generation college goers. The research on the use of digital art production in college settings is sparse. We hope that a focus on the course as it directly relates to the identity development and artistic self-expression of underrepresented students demonstrates the value of digital media production in institutions of higher education.

THE COURSE AND THE PARTICIPANTS

Our freshman seminar was part of the First-Year Interest Group program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. FIGs are “learning communities
of about 20 students who are enrolled in a cluster of three classes that are linked by a common theme. Throughout the ten-year existence of the FIG program at this large midwestern university, students who have participated in the program have demonstrated higher GPAs and higher student satisfaction than their non-FIG peers. The university is predominantly white, and the FIG program targets underrepresented student populations to enroll in its courses; however, FIG courses are open to all incoming first-year students at the university. Students select from among forty unique FIG course sequences during their summer orientation session. Many students—including Chris and several others in our seminar—are required to enroll in a FIG experience because of their participation in a summer bridge or student support program. As a result, students of color and first-generation college students are overrepresented in FIG courses, though their academic accomplishments are comparable to the broader student population.

All of our students were traditional college freshmen at the time of the study and were eighteen years old when the course started in September 2010. Of the nineteen participants, five identified as first-generation college students. The breakdown of students' self-identification of ethnicity was as follows: two black, one Hispanic or Latino, five “other” (e.g., multiracial or multiple ethnic identifications), and eleven white. Ethnic minorities comprised 37 percent of the class and constituted a much larger percentage than the overall 11 percent at the university.

**REPRESENTING SELF THROUGH MEDIA**

The learning goals of the course were defined in terms of both theory and practice. The course covered three topics: identity, literacy, and representation. For identity, we explored both sociological and psychological constructs. We took a new literacies approach to the study of literacy, focusing on both a paradigmatic and an operational shift from traditional conceptions of literacy. Holistically, we considered literacy a situated practice within the contexts in which ideas are produced, where meanings are not fixed but rather constructed through interactions between people and tools. Operationally, we discussed literacy as moving beyond the ability to read and write text, but rather as inclusive of all available media forms that convey images and hold meaning.

Finally, we used representation as a bridging concept between identity and literacy, focusing on the role of external representations in the development of meaning, specifically how different tools for representation afford communication of meaning. The practice-based component of the course involved the creation of a representational identity piece as a radio show in the style of National Public Radio's *This American Life*. Each episode of *This American Life* airs stories grouped around a theme; the producers describe the format as a "movies for radio" approach rather than a news or talk show format. Students participated in a complementary small seminar course focused on radio production, which afforded them the opportunity to focus on the technical skills necessary for their piece's creation.

**Chris as a Case Study**

Chris's experiences are nested in a larger research study that explored how the Representing Self Through Media seminar affected the students' transition to college. In this chapter, we take an intrinsic case study approach, focusing on Chris's experiences in the seminar and the radio piece that he produced. Using observational data, interviews, and a multimodal analysis of Chris's radio piece, we aim to paint a picture of Chris's engagement with issues of personal identity in the freshman college classroom. Our goal here is not to use Chris as representative of the experience in our class; nor is it to speak to the experience of African American male students on our campus. Rather, we aim to highlight how the course engaged Chris in conversations about race and class on the college campus, how these issues are connected to his emerging sense of self, and how digital media production afforded exploration and representation.

Chris is from a large urban metropolis outside Wisconsin. He is also a first-generation college student and the son of immigrants from Jamaica. Chris initially reported his ethnic identity as black, but then changed his self-report to Jamaican American at the end of the semester. Perhaps connected
to this change, the radio piece Chris produced for the class placed a heavy focus on his Jamaican identity and how his parents’ journey to America has allowed him to become the strong, independent man he is today. Growing up in a predominantly black urban neighborhood, Chris was a member of the majority population. It was not until he began high school at a private school that his ethnic identity as a black man became a significant marker. Similarly, at the university, Chris’s ethnic identity placed him distinctly in the minority of the student population. These changing identity markers were the subject of in-class discussions, his radio piece, and interviews conducted with Chris outside the classroom.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM CONVERSATIONS

Since the course had both theoretical and practical goals, most of the classroom discussions addressed the relationship between theories presented in the course readings and the creation of multimodal representations of self. One conversation in particular stood out for its power to engage students in the relationship between race, class, and personal and social identity. Late in the semester, we engaged in a class session titled “What’s so bad about stereotype?” To prepare for the discussion, the class read Nicole Fleetwood’s “Authenticating Practices: Producing Realness, Performing Youth,” which explores the challenges of representing real youth voice in the context of guided media production.27 One of us (Erica) began class by explaining why she had chosen the reading and by providing guiding questions:

I think Fleetwood raises a lot of interesting issues about representation and what makes a representation real... If you’re making a piece of art that is supposed to be about personal experience, what makes that experience real? How do you understand the realness of that experience?28

The main thrust of the initial conversation involved describing normative and non-normative populations, and whether highlighting minority groups as “non-normative” exacerbates their isolation or helps shed light on existing inequities. Bryan, a young man who identified as Mexican American, described a situation on campus where an invitation to represent the campus in photos was sent to a campus group composed predominantly of students of color:

They wanted to take a picture of this group at school... a very diverse group. The e-mail said, “Come to these three points at these three times. We want to take a picture representing the university,” and that does not represent the university at all. In that situation, their obligation is to tell the people who are receiving this picture, this is not what campus is like... The e-mail never said a representation of the group; it said a representation of campus.

Stephanie, a multiracial young woman, commented that the e-mail made her angry: “They are just trying to show, ‘Hey, we have people of color!’” Maggie, a white middle-class student, shared a similar situation. Her Catholic high school tried to make sure a certain number of students of color were in photos in the school’s brochure.

Seeing that the class seemed to be agreeing on the propriety of the photo, Erica presented a counterargument:

To be fair, part of the argument is, if we just take a random picture of white people on campus, that doesn’t capture the scope of the experience, because there are lots of different kinds of color on this campus. This room is relatively multicolored compared to the broad array of color on campus. I have also walked into rooms of a whole lot of white people. Which is the truer representation of folks on campus? Are we just keeping up with the dichotomy?... Are we just perpetuating it?

At this point Chris, the only black male in the class, said that he supported the idea of a photo that targets minority students:

They are just trying to attract more students of different backgrounds. Not anything wrong with that personally. If you are just taking pictures, they see pictures of white people all the time, but when they see a group of people of minorities, they think there are minorities here. If you want
to find out the statistic, you can go online. If you see diverse people, it will draw or attract more diversity. By them taking that picture, it appeals to someone who is searching for school.

Chris also argued that the university needed to place a caption under the picture, which led the discussion back to the idea of representation and how different media affords varied tools for representation. Another white male student pushed back, asking if it was honest to try to attract minority groups by using a picture of minority students. Chris reiterated the importance of the words or the statement the university put under the picture: “If they are saying that this is what the university represents, that is not true. But if they put it with a group of other pictures, they are being true, saying that there is more than one race at this school—that there is a big group of minority students.”

Chris’s strong position on the importance of including a picture with minority students as part of the representation of the student body at the university may have stemmed from his transition from primary to secondary school, where he went from being in a school that was “all black with just one or two white people in the whole school” to a high school where there were multiple races and “twenty percent of the high school was black.”29 While Chris was no longer in the majority at his high school, “it was enough. There were enough black people there where I didn’t feel like I was an outcast or just like I was alone. I just felt like there were other people there that I could communicate to.”30

Erica continued the class discussion by talking about truth statements, particularly the idea that “kids of color on this campus prefer experiences with other kids of color because it makes them feel more at home.” Noting that this observation is not true for all students of color (though it holds for many), Erica asked the class, “When we are talking about reality, what do we do with a statement like this?” The students of color in the class represented these differing perspectives. Sarah, a young African American woman, remarked that she did not want “to be on black-people island for all four years,” while Stephanie, who is multiracial, represented the other side. She said that the group being represented in the picture is “a place for minority students” who see it as their “home.” All three of these young people—Sarah, Stephanie, and Chris—describe the relationship between their personal racial identity and the representation of students of color on campus. Informed by their varied backgrounds with other young people of color—Chris grew up in a predominantly black neighborhood, Stephanie and Sarah did not—conversations such as these afforded opportunities for a mixed classroom to openly discuss how minority students are represented on a predominantly white campus and how students can challenge these representations in their own work. These nuanced understandings of the relationship between race or ethnicity and representation made their way into many students’ final pieces and into the students’ reflections on the pieces.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS AS A SPACE FOR EXPLORING IDENTITY

Against a backdrop of readings by Fleetwood and by Vivian Chávez and Elisabeth Soep, conversations such as the one recounted above, and opportunities to reflect on these ideas in written responses, students were asked to create radio pieces in the style of This American Life. The task was to explore and represent their personal identities in the productions. While the theme for the pieces was left open, many students chose to engage in explorations of their race, ethnicity, social class, or sexuality as influenced by their course readings and in-class discussions about identity. Chris’s story about his parents was featured in an episode titled “The American Dream”; he focused on how his parents’ immigration from Jamaica to the United States shaped the lives of their children, especially, Chris.

To unpack Chris’s representational choices, we analyze his use of the medium’s modal features, which for radio include dialogue, soundtrack, tone, and timbre. Producers need to choose not only the individual features but also how these features interact with one another and what is created as a result of their interaction.31 Andrew Burn and David Parker
make this interaction concrete, calling it the kineikonic mode, "literally, the mode of the moving image." While in radio there is no moving image on a screen, the ways the modes, or features, of the radio piece interact can, and should, create a visual story for the listener. The kineikonic mode best describes how meaning is made when elements are combined in specific and deliberate ways.

Chris’s production experience exemplifies the role of multimodal production in exploring and representing issues of identity. He used the kineikonic mode, in particular the interaction between dialogue and song lyrics, to represent his parents’ Jamaican identity and his own Jamaican American identity. Using the lyrics of Bob Marley, Jamaica’s musical bard, Chris wove a connective thread throughout his piece as complements to his spoken-word poetry messages of thanks, interviews with his parents discussing Marley lyrics and their importance in their lives, and informal sing-alongs. The interaction between the dialogue and lyrics created for the listener Chris’s desire to represent himself as a young man with utmost respect for his parents’ American dream and how their dream has allowed him to live his own American dream.

Chris knew which part of his identity he wanted to discuss in his radio piece from the first assignment, the initial story idea. He posted on the learning management system (LMS) site a post titled “My Parents’ Success Story”:

I look up to my parents as my heroes, as do a lot of kids, but not just because of everything that they have done for me in my life and the things that they have given me but for the many things they had to overcome in order for me to be where I am at today. My parents are immigrants from Jamaica. They both are from a family of 10. The way that they were raised, they had to do things on their own when they were little kids. They did not really have any role models to help them. All they had were their [sic] brothers and sisters. They did not have as many opportunities as I did growing up. They came here to America just so that me, my brother, and sisters do not have to go through the same problems that they had to go through. I would like to tell there [sic] story and how I was raised, leading up to me being who I am today.

Chris met with his peers as the group-episode decision progressed, but he maintained the message of thanks and understanding that he wanted to express to his Jamaican parents in his story throughout. In an editing session leading up to his group’s final episode presentation, Chris and one of us (Michelle) discussed some of his representational choices:

The reason why I put the thank you at the beginning is because mine is more on how my parents influence me. Like the whole central theme is the American dream. Mine more is how my parents influenced me, what they’ve gone through to make my American dream. Like, I’m not going to say directly what my American dream is. But it’s like how my parents had an American dream when they came here and how they influenced me to just become the person who I am.

Chris does indeed open and close his story with a thank you to his parents for giving him the ability to make his own American dream, with a special focus on his connection to his Jamaican identity. However, it is not just Chris who tells the story. He is aided by the lyrics of Bob Marley.

[The song “Buffalo Soldier,” performed by Bob Marley and the Wailers, plays, and Chris starts humming along.]

CHRIS: Dreadlock Rasta . . . I remember as a kid, we’d be driving in the car, and you guys would play this song so much and sing along off-key. At first I didn’t want to, but then I joined in to sing with you guys. I never really understood, though, why you played this song so much back then. I always remember having a good time mumbling the words and trying to sing along. But then I matured a little more, I then realized you guys both wanted me to be sure that I never forget that I was a Jamaican. And
the Jamaican roots that are inside of me will help to make me a stronger person mentally, and they have made me the person who I am today, and who I will one day become. Thank you.

[Chris’s father sings along to “Three Little Birds,” as Chris and his dad share laughs.]

“Buffalo Soldier,” with its familiar, but slightly incongruous, mixture of cheerful Jamaican syncopation and sorrowful lyrics about African slaves being brought to the Americas, continues to play in the background as Chris speaks.

While it is technically well-balanced and does not interfere with the listener’s understanding of Chris’s dialogue, Bob Marley’s music and lyrics help the listener appreciate how influential Jamaica, his parent’s journey to America, and Marley’s music itself, have been to Chris’s identity as a Jamaican living in America. His parents have worked hard to provide a good life for their children since their arrival in the United States, and it is this hard work that Chris wants to acknowledge and thank them for in his piece.

In between his monologues at the beginning and end of his piece, we hear selections of interviews Chris had with his parents. They share stories about growing up in Jamaica, their decision to move to America, and how they tried to raise Chris and his siblings so that their children could have an easier life than they had. The conversation is always interspersed with Marley’s music, with Chris using lyrics to emphasize a point from their stories or to share his revelation about the songs’ message.

In the opening interview segment, Chris’s mom and dad tell him Marley’s songs “always have a message.” Chris asks his parents if Marley’s songs have touched them in some way. His mother replies, “Yes, especially the song about emancipate yourself from mental slavery. If you listen to his song closely, there is always some type of message, one love, you know. Or no woman no cry.” In the most familiar version of “No Woman, No Cry” the song starts with the audience and Marley singing together the opening words “No woman, no cry.”

Chris’s mom and dad share memories of their childhood and playing outside in the hot Jamaican climate. His mom recalls:

We were poor, but we were proud. If we didn’t have, we’d do without. We wouldn’t go begging to other people, but we’d work to achieve whatever we have and they [her parents] always stressed the importance of education to better ourselves.

The emphasis on education and emancipating the self from mental slavery is reiterated in “Redemption Song,” which plays after this interview segment. Chris then includes his parents’ discussion of why they came to America. His dad speaks about the financial influence:

Some people I know, they leave to come to America; they said it’s a great country. You can work hard and make some more money than working in Jamaica and make the money. So that’s why I really come to America. And I understand that a lot of people come to this country because it’s a better country and to work, [make] money.

Chris’s dad was sponsored to become a U.S. resident following an apprenticeship in the jewelry business. Because his parents were married, Chris’s mother was “part of the package.” They had two children in America, and then his mother went back to school, she explains, “cause I figure with education you can go as far—the sky was the limit. And you can achieve anything you put your mind to.” Chris explicitly asks his parents about their American dreams, to which his dad responds, “Money.” His mom says it’s to work hard to make a better life for herself, her children, and her relatives in Jamaica. Chris asks if their dreams are still the same after living in this country for more than half their lives. His dad responds that he has worked hard “trying to make you guys [his family, specifically his children] happy, send you to school and whatever it is. Try to make some money to make life easier, and that’s about it, really.” His mother’s
dream is very similar to her original one, though she is now more focused on her children’s happiness and success:

**Mom:** My American dream now is to see—hope—that I have planned or set the foundation for my children so that they can achieve anything they want in life and they’ll have a better life than I did. Money isn’t the total driver here. I just want you guys to be happy.

**Dad:** Right.

**Mom:** In whatever you do.

His parents go on to talk about their American dreams when they came to the United States as young people: Chris’s father’s dream was economically focused, and his mother’s was centered on giving her children a chance at a better life than what she had. Chris closes his piece with a statement of gratitude and love for the opportunity to live out his own American dream as a result of theirs from so many years ago:

“Mom and Dad, you know what? I love you. I know this might be stupid, but it’s something that I never say. You always say how strong Jamaican men are, so I don’t want to come off as weak by saying this, but you always want the best for me. As a child, I never realized how much you guys sacrificed and how stressful life really was for us, because you worked so hard to make sure we didn’t notice. You were living a stressful life just for us, just for me. I never realized that Bob Marley’s words are not just words, but it’s about the blood flowing through our veins, helping me to survive, and live life with the traits, morals, and values that you have instilled within me. I no longer mumble these words to the songs that helped you get over tribulations and the homesickness. Because they now help me get over the difficult times that I am having in my life. I know that you don’t approve everything that I do in life, Mom and Dad. But I want you to know that I will not let you down. With my American dream of being successful and having a happy life, derived from your American dream of your children having an easier life than you had; I am now the Buffalo Soldier with the Emancipated Soul living life jammin’.”

The opening chords of “Jammin’” then lead us out of Chris’s piece. While his piece was focused by the episode’s theme of the American dream, Chris’s story had the added thread of thanks and understanding of how his parent’s American dreams allow him to be living his. He uses the words of Bob Marley to show the listener that songs can be more than just melodies; they can hold the messages that support dreams generations over. Chris’s use of monologue, interviews, and song lyrics in combination is just one example of how the kineikonic mode was used to create meaning through purposeful interactions between modes for representation in students’ radio pieces in the Representing Self Through Media course.

**THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM, TRANSITION, AND PEDAGOGIES OF POSSIBILITY**

Course experiences like Representing Self Through Media are part of the emerging movement to design for pedagogies of possibility. By working at the intersection of identity, literacy, and representation, the class focused on why making autobiographical art matters and the theories behind the creation and sharing of digital representations of self. Through this focus, we asked students to embrace “an inherent creativity in the ways in which people use and do literacy, which, rather than being decried as a loss of standards, can be embraced as the achievements of people making meaning for themselves and others in their lives.” We were especially interested in how embracing multimodal forms of communication and destabilizing the relationship between codified knowledge and students’ experiences could support students who may feel marginalized by the university academic context. Many students, Chris included, felt that we accomplished this goal.

Many scholars have demonstrated that schools are not organized for the broad-scale adoption of digital media-rich pedagogical practices. School environments have not yet changed to accommodate “the evolution of new technologies, geographies, and communicative modes” that young people use in their out-of-school lives. Furthermore, most school-based production practices continue to focus on single-mode communication

and top-down structures for teaching and learning rather than embracing "a world replete with multimodal text, remixing and mashing, and fluid novice–expert relations." Most research on the experiences of minority students in university settings focuses on students' acceptance and retention rates. However, very little research examines the black box between the first day of college and graduation day. Differences between high school and college for all students include dramatic changes in the relationship between students and teachers, in expectations for work, and in intellectual development. Moreover, most young people are experiencing their first significant separation from family and, importantly, from the role of child; it should be no wonder, therefore, that the transition from high school to college is a difficult one. As a result it is crucial to provide opportunities in the freshman year to explicitly attend to transition and identity development, especially for underrepresented students, who often lack positive experiences with respect to their minority status at this transition time.

While support for the positive identity development of these students needs to be addressed at all levels of the education system, our particular interest is the college classroom, specifically in courses targeted toward freshman students. Our focus on the creation of digital representations of self in a course using autobiographical digital art-making demonstrates that it is important to embrace a pedagogy of possibility in the college classroom through an explicit focus on the relationship between identity and narrative in the digital context.

IN THIS ERA OF high-stakes testing, learning objectives, grade-level standards, and interventions are all tightly prescribed from the state down, with little room for mobilization of on-the-ground knowledge. In this chapter, we discuss how learning may be possible through imaging and reimagining the common school-based requirement of an internship in a professional setting. We provide glimpses into an internship project designed for critical consciousness and cultural transformation rather than assimilation. Our findings address how existing structures can be modified to manifest opportunities for cultural transformation.

We are meeting with a group of about thirteen high school seniors, all newcomer immigrant youth with fewer than four years in the United States, to discuss their second internship day. At one small table in the corner of the