

CHAPTER 10

Time travels in literacy and pedagogy: *From Script to Screen*

Becky Parry, Lucy Taylor and Nadia Haerizadeh-Yazdi

This chapter is dedicated to Katy Jones, who was an extraordinary woman, with thanks for her passion for children's storytelling in all media.¹

Introduction

In this chapter, we present an analysis of *From Script to Screen*², a learning resource created by BBC Learning that focused on the popular television series *Doctor Who* (Newman, 1963). This online and multimodal resource invited children to draw on their enthusiasm for the programme, and provided support for a range of related literacy activities. Our analysis found clear evidence that connecting with children's experiences of popular culture in this way is part of a productive pedagogic strategy for literacy learning in schools. However, we also observed the ways in which contemporary literacy curriculum, with a focus on writing and skills, overly exerts limitations on the learning activities proposed. The analysis we present in this chapter draws on the New London Group's (1996) multi-literacies theory which highlights the need to go beyond making connections with children's experiences of popular culture with a stronger focus on the development of analysis, criticality and creative production. We use this theoretical framework to analyse the extent to which the resource takes into account more recent understandings of literacy as both multimodal and culturally diverse. In

doing so, we attempt to imagine a literacy classroom which acknowledges the TARDIS-like potential of children's experiences of television drama and narrative in popular culture. We argue that literacy in school should enable children to undertake meaningful, critical, creative and cultural explorations of the quickly evolving literacy landscapes they inhabit both now and in the future. We also propose that curriculum must respond to this changing landscape, learning from but not 'living' in the past in order to empower others in the wider education context to do so.

In a higher education context we often seek new ways of understanding the world and perhaps sometimes valorize new theory, concepts and tools. However, in the course of preparing this chapter, focused on a popular TV drama based on time travel, we have attempted to reflect on the past and present of literacy and English education. We believe this is important due to the recent and considerable 'marketization' of education where broadcasters, museums, galleries and theatres compete with multiple commercial organisations for the school market. A key attribute in the marketability of education resources is their orientation to curriculum; any resource of value must be seen to be delivering curriculum objectives or helping to improve attainment. Rather than looking to research for guidance or inspiration, the starting point for education resources is, predominantly, the contemporary curriculum. Curriculum is therefore increasingly reified, not only in school-based literacy resources but also often in those which children encounter in other, out of school, spaces. It is therefore important to attempt to understand the influence of contemporary curriculum on education resources and to reflect on the potential for research to play a stronger role in their development.

For the purposes of this research we have revisited the New London Group's (NLG) position paper on literacy (NLG, 1996). This has proved to be timely in a context of political rhetoric which persists in evoking anachronistic images of rote learning, spelling tests and

cramming - time travels indeed. Meanwhile children's cultures are increasingly moving image rather than print based. In the annual OFCOM³ survey of children's media practices, television retains its centrally significant role, despite the proliferation of screens and devices that it is viewed on. The NLG (1996) proposed that conceptions of literacy should be broadened and that literacy pedagogy should shift to accommodate this broader conception. Fast forward and the relationship between children's engagements with popular culture and their literacy and identity practices is well established (Marsh, 2004; Merchant, 2009; Pahl, 2002) in research. It is widely acknowledged that the inclusion of popular culture in the curriculum not only increases children's engagement and motivation, but perhaps more significantly, also enables them to make explicit understandings of the theories and concepts they have begun to use intuitively to help them make meaning from texts (Parry, 2014).

Meanwhile in the, often, parallel universe of the school, the literacy curriculum, at times, appears to be taking a backward trajectory and has, in England and Northern Ireland, been dominated by a focus on the written and spoken word and prescriptive pedagogic interventions. What has been most concerning is the way in which curriculum is devised without reference to key developments in the field. The work of Barton and Hamilton (2000) has had a significant impact, shaping understandings of literacy as a socially and culturally constructed practice. In response to changes in society and the role of new technologies the NLG (1996) coined the term 'multiliteracies'. The philosophy underpinning their ideology is that today's world requires a broader view of literacy, which can address the different national and cultural experiences of individuals as well as the demands imposed on them as makers of meaning within their changing workplaces, public spaces and personal lives. By contrast contemporary curriculum continues to map a narrow literacy landscape, ignoring many of the

substantial changes in the way literacy is lived, researched and understood. For example, both recent iterations of the literacy or English curriculum (2008; 2014) have distanced themselves from earlier attempts to include an acknowledgement of the role of the moving image or multimodal texts despite concerns about the narrow focus on print literacy (Marsh & Millard, 2000; Burnett et.al., 2014).

The most recent (2014) changes to curriculum for England and Northern Ireland, are shaped by a long process of review and reform in which the terms literacy and the subject of English have been contested. In the first iteration of the National Curriculum in 1988 the programme of study for English addressed the skills which are now associated with literacy, but within a broader context of what it meant to become literate. By 1998, when the curriculum was reviewed and what became known as the Literacy Hour was introduced, concerns were already being raised that *Literacy is not Enough* (Cox, 1998). Literacy came to be seen as a set of functional skills which reduced the broad study of English to secretarial and vocational skills through which children would ‘master... the code’ (Medway, 2005, p.22) of language. The focus on basic skills has been a cornerstone of education policy under successive governments, with literacy skills being framed as both a democratic entitlement on one hand and as a reductive, utilitarian approach on the other. Today, in most primary schools in the UK the terms literacy and English have become interchangeable. However, literacy and English are not the same thing and the terms should not be left unexamined. The Literacy Hour was never intended to replace English in the curriculum, and when the curriculum was further reviewed in 2006, the structure of the hour became more flexible. However, with the increasing emphasis on high stakes testing in primary schools, the focus on ‘testable’ skills has not diminished and impacts on children’s experience of school based literacy daily.

We undertook this analysis of the *From Script to Screen* project with this context in mind. Given the public discourses about children’s ‘lack’ of literacy and failure to achieve

nationally set standards, it seemed pertinent to explore one project which set out to use the popularity of one television programme to engage children, boys in particular, in a series of literacy activities. Our analysis takes the concept of multiliteracies and the four elements of multiliteracy pedagogy as a critical framework for understanding both the activities proposed and to identify those that are absent. Although the field of literacy and pedagogy has evolved in the meantime (Burnett, et. al., 2014), we believe that it is timely to revisit the context and rationale provided by the NLG to enable researchers and educators to take global, social, cultural, technological and economic changes into account in their understandings of literacy. Given the multimodal nature of the resource we chose to analyse, the focus of this theory on the affordances of different media was of particular relevance.

Influenced by his observations that children draw on a wide range of cultural resources in their reading and writing Kress (1997) led the NLG to work with the idea of Design as a tool for rethinking literacy learning. To summarize, the cyclical process of designing involves engagement with existing tools and ideas (Available Designs) which enable children to make sense of texts which they drawn on (Design) adapt and even transform (Re-design) and create new texts and practices which in turn become part of the existing Available Designs (NLG, 1996). If we think about this in terms of moving image it is possible to think of all the different modes of making meaning, (uses of sound, light, gesture, editing, camera composition) and these have conventions children recognize which they then draw on and adapt in their own text production in a process of design and redesign. Not only does this heuristic tool enable us to see literacy as plural and multimodal, it also acknowledges the active way in which children engage with texts. The pedagogical framework or the 'how' of multiliteracies offered by the NLG comprises of four components: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing and Transformed Practice (NLG, 1996):

1. *Situated Practice*: Immersion in experience and the utilization of available discourses, including those from the students' lifeworlds and simulations of the relationships to be found in workplaces and public spaces.
2. *Overt Instruction*: Systematic, analytic, and conscious understanding. In the case of multiliteracies, this requires the introduction of explicit metalanguages, which describe and interpret the Design elements of different modes of meaning.
3. *Critical Framing*: Interpreting the social and cultural context of particular Designs of meaning. This involves the students' standing back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context.
4. *Transformed Practice*: Transfer in meaning-making practice, which puts the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites.

(NLG, 1996, p.35)

The multiliteracies project has been criticized (Leander & Boldt, 2013; Jacobs, 2013) and revised and revisited recently by Cope and Kalantzis (2012) who are using it to propose a wider pedagogical movement 'Learning by design'⁴ which takes the key tenets of this approach and adapts and applies them across subject areas. Recent articulations clarify and render more accessible the fundamental core components which have been used in the analysis that follows.

Research Methods

Our data is drawn from a small-scale research project which took place over a period of six months in 2013. Our analysis included:

1. identifying references to the (2008) curriculum in the *From Script to Screen* online resource and accompanying lesson planning materials;
2. deconstructing the *From Script to Screen* resources allocating them to a category based on the multi-literacy pedagogy components;
3. reviewing the summary of an evaluation of the project;
4. thematic coding of an interview with the associate producer, the late Katy Jones.

Doctor Who: From script to screen

Katy Jones, who was Executive Producer at BBC Learning led the development of the *From Script to Screen* resources. She described herself as from a family of teachers and a parent and school governor based in Manchester. These experiences led her to become interested in what she regarded as child-centred learning: ‘tapping into a child’s perspective on the world to help make learning fun and relevant.’ Jones’ interview also highlighted her critical but pragmatic orientation to the literacy curriculum which was a key document in planning. She was concerned that contemporary children have increasingly limited access to socio-dramatic play at school and that drama should be an important element of the activities. Jones stated that on arrival at the BBC in 2011 her motivation for undertaking the *From Script to Screen* project was an awareness of national figures for literacy achievement:

Boys in particular were lagging behind at KS2 SATS, with one in five leaving primary school with poor levels of literacy. *Doctor Who* was simply the coolest show on

television for children aged nine and over - and the ambition was to use the power of the brand to get children excited about writing.

(Interview, 2013)

As a result, in April 2011, BBC Learning and *Doctor Who* launched *From Script to Screen* - challenging children in upper primary schools (aged 9 - 11) to write a 3-minute script for The Doctor. The prize was to have your script performed by the eleventh Doctor, Matt Smith and broadcast on national television. To support the competition, BBC Learning produced a wide range of resources that were made available online. These included detailed lesson plans, which aimed to develop pupils' confidence about writing over a period of time. The teaching resources included 'how to' films, featuring interviews with key members of the cast and crew such as the director, producer and set designer, talking about different aspects of writing and working from a *Doctor Who* script. Video challenges from the Doctor's companions were also commissioned to accompany each lesson. For example, the Doctor's assistant, Amy, asked the children to write her blog entry to help the children to write 'in character'. Her boyfriend, Rory asked them to build a model of the world where they were landing to help them to imagine the setting for their story. Also available were downloadable sound effects; printable *Doctor Who* script writers' note books; monster masks, and extracts from *Doctor Who* episodes along with the actual scripts and story boards, to see how they looked on the page.

Impact and Evaluation

During the seven weeks the competition ran, the resources were downloaded more than 300,000 times and over 100,000 children took part. The feedback from teachers, given directly to the BBC Learning team, suggested that the competition had a strong impact, particularly

on reluctant writers who became 'fully immersed in activities.' The survey measured teacher perceptions of the children's enjoyment, motivation and engagement with the project and the quality of the materials. An independent research company, Discovery, also collected some more detailed qualitative data from teachers which indicated a strong perception of the motivation qualities of the activity, especially with children who do not usually fully engage:

The boys are sometimes hard to motivate and they absolutely loved it.

It motivated kids that usually found literacy a bit of a struggle.

Interestingly, these comments highlight ideas which can be associated with the first aspect of the multiliteracies approach, 'situated practice.' The children's existing knowledge of a genre was being valued as an asset in relation to literacy and this is suggested as a key reason for both motivation and improvement. Our subsequent analysis revealed that this idea was well established in the resources whereas other aspects of the process of Design, suggested by the NLG (1996) were less evident. We structure the remainder of our analysis of the resource under headings based on the components multiliteracies pedagogy, beginning with 'situated practice' but acknowledging that the components intersect and overlap.

Situated Practice

Situated practice requires children to be involved in learning which explores or makes connections with ideas they are familiar with. As suggested above traces of this approach are evident in the resources and in producer, Katy Jones' very clear aim for the children, 'not to feel they were *doing* literacy, but that they were writing a script for the Doctor!' Teachers clearly recognized the value of working with a text which was familiar and popular and reminiscent of what Bromley (1996) referred to as an almost universal shared cultural experience:

The *Doctor Who* element meant they were all working with a genre they understood and enjoyed.

(Katy Jones, Interview, May 2013)

This was a strong aspect of Jones' thinking when planning the activity:

It was important for children to be able to inhabit the characters, to be familiar with the monsters, and have a clear idea of the world where they were setting their stories before they started to put pen to paper.

(Katy Jones, Interview May, 2013)

Choosing to base a classroom literacy resource on a popular children's or family television drama actively values what children already know about a text and usefully connects with their own cultural worlds. The *From Script to Screen* activities encouraged the children to make use of their existing knowledge of *Doctor Who* and to be actively engaged in the sharing of their responses. Having been provided with a notebook template, one task required the children to make use of their existing knowledge of *Doctor Who* and to comment on his appearance, manner and personal attributes. Indeed a video clip accompanied each activity in the resource, and initiated regular group discussions, consistently encouraging the children to utilize their knowledge and understanding of the character of *Doctor Who* and the various planets he has visited and aliens he has encountered. This approach has been demonstrated by Marsh (2000), in particular, to be highly productive. We argue that the suggested literacy activities were positioned firmly within the realm of children's cultural worlds (although we acknowledge the need not to assume all children are fans of a particular programme). How-

ever, in our analysis of the other categories we found a gap between what the children were drawing on, in terms of media and what they were being asked to ‘design and redesign’.

Overt Instruction

Drawing on Vygotskian ideas about thinking and concept development, the need for Overt Instruction refers to the process of enabling children to make intuitive understandings they gain from reading texts explicit. The NLG argue that children need to undertake systematic analysis in order to develop a conceptual framework which would enable them to critically analyse a text. For television, this might mean looking at the way transitions signal movement in time, or the way a piece of music establishes mood. To return to the overarching idea of design, the children may implicitly comprehend meaning from film or television as they are watching but there is an advantage to enabling them to reflect on the different meaning making elements such as sound or camera position. Through a process of analysis, guided by teaching which enables the use of overt prompts and overt conceptual tools, children are able to recognize the available designs and by doing so make more intentional use of them. Sometimes thought of as grammar or language of film, the NLG invite us to think of this as semiotic tools, that is to say the meta-language(s) of the moving image.

Although there was evidence of overt instruction in the *Doctor Who* resources these were not related to the metalanguage of the medium of film or television, but instead focused entirely on writing. For example in Lesson three (The Setting) the stated focus is on the use of imagination in order to construct a descriptive piece of writing, with an emphasis on the structuring of a report. The children are invited to use storyboards and newspaper templates in order to plan their report about a new planet. However, there is little mention of the metalanguage of a newspaper, and certainly there is no mention of any metalanguage of film or

television drama. In order for this to have seemed to be a priority, the task would have had to shift to being a video or film production task.

Carefully mapped on to the 2008 literacy curriculum the suggested learning outcomes of lesson two are to develop an understanding of characters and to act, speak and write in character. Although the concept of character is one which crosses media or narrative form, the emphasis here was on unrelated writing skills such correct use of ‘tense’ and ‘vocabulary,’ ‘headings’ and ‘bullet points.’ A further objective of the lesson, linked to the idea of writing in character, was to learn how to write in the format of a blog or diary and how to edit this. However, no vocabulary appears which might at the very least prompt an awareness of the affordances of a television programme in particular. The benefits of a visual and aural representation might have given the children great opportunities to say what they, as a character, saw or heard but this needs to be actively signalled by the resource. For example, throughout the resource the children are asked to write in the voice of a *Doctor Who* character in the form of a blog or diary using the templates offered to them. Teachers are invited to ‘make sure that the children know that a blog is an online journal or diary which is updated regularly.’ Although this is clearly an attempt to demonstrate an awareness of contemporary social media forms, these are provided as paper-based templates for a blog and diary which conform to a very traditional style of writing.

The restrictions imposed on the students in the form of a writing template and the requirement to conform to the use of bullet point and headings whilst writing a blog/journal post result in an activity which becomes more about the performance of a skill in using tenses, new vocabulary, expressive and descriptive writing, report writing, blog writing, newspaper report writing and poster presentations all of which feature within the curriculum.

In a further example of overt instruction the purpose of the lesson (Lesson Four: Aliens) is to learn new vocabulary in order to describe, and to use research methods in order to

find out facts and to help produce fact sheets. The children are asked to watch a video and use their existing knowledge of the *Doctor Who* characters in order to name the aliens from the show and to describe them. This is followed by an introduction to new words, which may be of use to the children when describing the aliens; the use of images also aids them understanding the alien names based on their features and characteristics. Again the task, which involves research and learning new vocabulary, is so focused on the written word that opportunities to explore the meaning created by the visual appearance of the aliens are potentially restricted.

Critical Framing

Being able to stand back from a text and consider its meaning in context is a demanding task. However, developing the ability to consider who made a programme, how it was made, which audience it was for and how it represents the world are important concepts, associated with media literacy, which we can begin to lay the foundations for in the primary phase. The main concept found here in terms of critical framing relate to the who and how of production, influenced by the strong ‘behind the scenes’ elements which are key to the pleasures of being a fan of *Doctor Who*. Activities which begin to do this in the *From Script to Screen* resource include a suggested examination of *Doctor Who* scripts as well as storyboards which allowed the children to share and rehearse their interpretation of the text (both individual episodes and the whole set of ideas that characterize the programme) framed by an emerging understanding of media production practices. This sort of framing invites the children to imagine being a script-writer or a director involved in the development of a storyboard. This is extended in the task which follows where students were invited to watch a video clip of Steven Moffat, the writer credited with re-energizing *Doctor Who* for contemporary audiences. Moffat discusses what makes a good *Doctor Who* adventure, linked to an opportunity to watch and ana-

lyse an excerpt of *Doctor Who* and to work in groups and comment on different aspects of the plot. The stated aim of this session is to introduce the students to the project and to familiarize them with the layout, features and function of a script, e.g. characters, pace, mood and plot. There is a strong focus on the development of skills: The lesson plan states: ‘tell the children that during the next few sessions they will be developing the skills they need to write a script.’

This is an interesting and complex modality which the children are invited to navigate, that is to say, the children are expected to engage with the doctor as a character amongst other fictional characters and an actor alongside other actors and programme makers. Whilst the use of the fictional world of the programme enables children to work with the familiar, the production world is unfamiliar. The children are asked to imagine themselves in the role of a script writer, actor, costume designer etc. for various activities. The closing of this session also suggests an opportunity for the children to act out a scene using stage directions to orientate themselves conceptually to the context in which the programme would be made, either a television studio or a location film shoot. The resource does, therefore, provide a clear critical framing in terms of how texts are made and a number of distinct pedagogical approaches to enabling children to engage with the idea of being a costume designer or script writer. However, there are further unexplored opportunities which could be rich sources of learning. Given that *Doctor Who* travels back in time the children could be asked to think about how historic places and events are represented. They could also be invited to research the audience for *Doctor Who* and consider what it means to be a fan of the series. Even in terms of the taking up of roles in the question of ‘who is the maker of the text,’ the children could be invited to consider telling the story from the point of view of a child in order to see how that might shift the way the story is told.

Transformed Practice

In order to be transformative the NLG argue that children need to explore the full range of meaning making available to them, including the range of modes of the moving image. However, whilst *From Script to Screen* is a rich multimodal resource, the tasks the children are asked to complete are a limited acknowledgment of the changing digital context, such as using the internet in order to research the aliens or the creation of a blog. The lack of a distinctly moving image creative task in particular inhibits the possibilities for transformative practice.

Our analysis led us to conclude that the least represented of the multiliteracy pedagogies in the *From Script to Screen* resource was the opportunity to engage in fully transformative practice. Ultimately the final task is a script, albeit one that could, if it wins, be turned into a filmed sequence (but only one child's entry received this treatment). Even so had the emphasis been on a script as a working tool for television production, then an approach which more closely mirrored the design approach of the multi-literacies pedagogy might have been possible. As it is, very often the written task is more influenced by curriculum linked learning objectives than following a logical sequence in teaching children about script writing. For example, a proposed learning outcome of lesson five (The TARDIS) is to learn how to write instructions. This is presented alongside the need to make children familiar with what a three minute scene might consist of, through role play. Since gadgets feature heavily as part of the TARDIS, learners are encouraged to work in pairs in order to come up with a new gadget and are given ten minutes to write instructions for their new invention. Having been given an image of the TARDIS, the students are invited to label each gadget and feature of the TARDIS and to write instructions on how to land the TARDIS. This is a particularly clear example of the influence of curriculum. The written instructions could be something which is subsidiary to the main activity but instead all the focus is on the written task and how to complete something which is a distinct learning objective. Indeed the proposed activity can

be seen as an attempt to use the popularity of *Doctor Who* to sugar the pill of learning to write instructions. Although it emerges from the fictional world of *Doctor Who*, the act of compiling instructions does not emerge from the context of script writing. Given the very limited time span of the project it is clearly a decision made on the basis of the curriculum requirements rather than one which will scaffold the skills of a script writer. As a result a gap begins to emerge between the engaging task of creating an idea for an episode and the actual concrete tasks the children are asked to undertake. It is the strong emphasis on structure and outcome in the form of the written word, which overshadows and potentially hinders the content and context of the work produced by the children.

Conclusion: The multimodality gap

The newest iteration of the curriculum for English, published after our analysis, states clearly that it wishes to ‘prepare children for modern life in Britain’ (DfE, 2013) but the only acknowledgement of the digital era can be found in the focus on computer coding. In the 2008 curriculum for literacy⁵ the only mention of radio, film and television is included under ‘Listening to recordings.’ In this version (the main document referred to) no mention is made of film, television programmes or games in the texts children should be encouraged to engage with. ICT and news media are mentioned only in the context of non-fiction and non-literary texts. Although it is suggested that ‘Pupils could compose on screen and on paper’ which might imply film or game compositions, the focus of the learning is clearly on the language, vocabulary, style and form of the written word. No attention is paid to the different ways in which different texts or media make meaning and the need for children to read and compose texts in different media, either as important in its own right or as related to and a means of developing and enhancing print literacy.

Whilst it may be the case that teachers could critically interpret the curriculum, finding ways to incorporate the moving image for example, there is little evidence of this being the case. The system of national standard assessments currently in place in England and Northern Ireland has a significant impact on the way schools and teachers choose to interpret curricula. Where a teacher may once have felt able to interpret the framework provided by the curriculum, she is now concerned with demonstrating progress, narrowly defined, which relates to curriculum content. The statutory elements of the 2014 curriculum for English (grammar, spelling and punctuation are specified for each year group) may make it less likely that teachers will take what they perceive to be risks in moving away from traditional definitions of literacy. The role of spoken language has been significantly reduced in the latest (2014) curriculum, to the extent that there is no longer a programme of study for speaking and listening. Spoken language is intended to be embedded in the teaching of reading and writing, but this leads to the risk that spoken language is seen only as a function in preparing children for writing, not as an end in itself. This further diminishes the likelihood that teachers will feel comfortable in engaging in any but the most traditional notions of literacy practice. The change from literacy to English in the latest form of the curriculum is significant. In many ways a positive move away from the reductive notion of literacy as a set of skills to be taught and learned, it can also be seen as reinforcing a more traditional view of ‘English,’ with all the connotations of English literature (the approved, canonized sort) and English grammar.

The stated aims of the authors of the new National Curriculum for English (2014) were not to dictate to teachers how the curriculum should be taught (Hough, 2013). Teachers were to be free to use whatever approaches, resources and subject content they felt allowed them to most effectively teach the skills the curriculum demanded. In many ways the curriculum does allow this flexibility. The requirement, in the Year 5 and 6 programme of study for

reading, that pupils ‘identify... how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning’ (DfE 2014, p.34) can be interpreted by an imaginative teacher in the context of a variety of different texts from novels to animation. Interestingly, whilst the latest 2014 version of the National Curriculum is clear that the programme of study is English, not literacy, the statutory appendices of grammar, spelling and punctuation, along with the tests of these aspects of the curriculum suggest that teachers will find themselves increasingly concerned with teaching them. Teachers encounter tensions between engaging with pedagogic innovation and levels of accountability and scrutiny they and their schools face in terms of national testing (Austin, 2015). The 2014 curriculum seems to offer both additional freedom and additional constraints and in this context it would seem to be unlikely that either a multiliteracies approach or indeed a further innovation, emerging from research will find a way to influence practice.

Our analysis of the *From Script to Screen* resource suggests that the majority of the actual learning objectives and tasks of each lesson are designed primarily to deliver specific learning objectives stipulated in the curriculum. Whilst this may seem like a pragmatic approach to ensuring teachers and senior managers engage with the resource, it is one which assumes that curriculum is enabling and informed by research. However, as we have demonstrated, although the work of the NLG (and numerous others) has been in existence for a number of years there is very limited recognition in the national curriculum for English of literacy as dynamic, plural and multimodal.

The *From Script to Screen* activity provided a rich context in which a multiliteracies pedagogy could emerge, especially due to the situated approach at its heart, which clearly engaged children. However, our analysis revealed limitations in terms of the tasks the children were asked to undertake and the form these took. The suggested activities were demonstrably more influenced by traditional understandings of literacy, even in the context of a text

which is fully transmedia in its nature. Interestingly many of the lessons end with the phrase: ‘If there is time’ with an invitation to teachers to utilize video footage, writing templates, images, storyboards and existing scripts provided by BBC Learning. These precious resources are products of a highly valuable public service broadcasting tradition where high quality drama is made for children. The curriculum, in each new form, bestows value on education activities, but this ubiquity is problematic and needs to be questioned. Perhaps we should hijack the TARDIS and fast forward to a place where time is made for children to examine these cultural resources, not as a quick fix of fun to sugar the curriculum pill, but as content of value in its own right as a piece of children’s television and an aspect of children’s shared cultural lives.

Notes

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/may/06/katy-jones>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/doctorwhocompetition/>
3. http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/media-use-attitudes-14/Childrens_2014_Report.pdf .
4. <http://newlearningonline.com/literacies>

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