



## On My Shelf: Jeff Share

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## **Abstract**

Trying to bring critical perspectives about media and technology to new teachers can be a difficult task, especially in the United States where there is so little of this actually happening. On my shelf I have a handful of texts that have been invaluable for my own understanding and for sharing with others.

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Trying to bring critical perspectives about media and technology to new teachers can be a difficult task, especially in the US where there is so little of this actually happening. On my shelf I have a handful of texts that have been invaluable for my own understanding and for sharing with others.

Teaching critical literacy can be a difficult task with adults and an even greater challenge with young children. In [\*Negotiating Critical Literacies with Young Children\*](#), Vivian Vasquez writes about her impressive work teaching critical social justice education with preschoolers. While Vasquez never claims a specific media literacy focus, she embraces a wide notion of literacies that incorporates media and popular culture and uses critical pedagogy for students to take action to solve problems. During one year in preschool, Vasquez's class documents their learning with an *audit trail*. Vasquez provides examples of 3-5 year-olds engaging in problem-posing pedagogy as they question and act on the problems they face at school and in the larger society. The book carries a powerful message for teachers at all levels; if preschool students can critically analyze their world and challenge the injustices they encounter, then so can older students.

Few books connect theory with practice. In [\*Teaching Youth Media: A Critical Guide to Literacy, Video Production, and Social Change\*](#), Steven Goodman combines critical theory with years of practical experience teaching minority youth video production and critical media literacy at the Educational Video Center in New York City. In this book, Goodman addresses the power of community-based youth media production to break the traditional factory model of

schooling and create transformative educational experiences and learning. This book models critical production work and is accessible for most teachers.

[\*Listening for a Change: Oral Testimony and Development\*](#) has inspired me with concrete examples from around the world where people listened first and then designed development programs *with* the people needing the services. Such a simple idea seems like a no-brainer, but surprisingly enough these cases are the exceptions. Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson do a fabulous job writing about how to use oral testimony and work with people to create meaningful projects of change and development. Easy to read and highly motivating, this book gives concrete examples of collaborative student-centered pedagogy.

When presenting on media literacy, there is one video that I know I can always count on to provoke *oohs* and *ahhs* from the audience. [\*Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis of Masculinity\*](#) provides an excellent analysis of the connections between masculinity and violence and the role media play in perpetuating it. In this 82 minute video, Jackson Katz offers numerous examples of media representations that created patterns of violent male masculinity, from boy's action figures to newspaper reporting of school shootings; the messages repeatedly tell the same myth, that "real men" are tough and violent. A powerful part of Katz's analysis highlights how our society, language and media have normalized male violence to such a point that we do not consider violence in the US a male problem, even though the vast majority of violent crimes are committed by men. Katz applies a critical framework with examples from popular media as well as provides examples of alternative possibilities to violent masculinity.

I like to start my classes with picture books because they can be potent vehicles for telling a meaningful story quickly and engaging all types of readers. In [\*Encounter\*](#), Jane Yolen takes the reader on a journey back in time to 1492, as striking illustrations by David Shannon fill the pages of this magnificent picture book. This is a story about the first encounter between Christopher Columbus and the indigenous people in the Americas. However, unlike most recounting of this historic event, Yolen tells the story from the perspective of a young Taino boy. Through his dreams and experiences the reader sees the encounter between the two worlds as far more problematic than we are typically led to believe. This book starkly demonstrates the importance of marginalized voices and the power of seeing different perspectives. This book is also available in Spanish.