Students’ critical analyses of prominent perspectives in a digital multimodal text

Lisa Molin
Researcher, Department of Applied IT, University of Gothenburg
lisa.molin@educ.goteborg.se

Anna-Lena Godhe
Associate Professor, Department of Culture, Languages and Media, Malmö University

Abstract
The purpose of this article is to explore how aspects of students’ critical digital literacy can be developed through the analysis of digital multimodal texts in a secondary school classroom. The analysis of students’ group discussions, when deconstructing a video clip, shows that opportunities to develop a critical awareness of prominent perspectives in a digital multimodal text increase when students become aware of the construction of the text. However, more instructional attention needs to be given to the role modes play across diverse elements in a digital multimodal text.

Key words
Critical digital literacy, Technologies, education

Introduction
Texts are increasingly digital and multimodal and, due to the interactive features of Web 2.0, also user-generated (Jenkins, 2006). As this expands the potential for carrying partial representations of the world (Janks, 2018), it has raised concerns about potential damage to democratic systems. Therefore, calls to promote critical digital literacy – that is, understanding the different aspects of power at play in the construction of texts – are amplifying (UNESCO, 2013). The implications for education – especially the role that literacy education may play in supporting students to become critically aware consumers and producers of contemporary digital multimodal texts – were the focus of this study.

Creating a text is a process of selecting in which certain perspectives become prominent while others are silenced, and each text mediates a partial representation of the world. Short video clips, such as those on YouTube, have become a popular digital multimodal genre. Thus, making meaning of different design elements in video clips can be regarded as a basic condition of critically analysing literacy practices online (Kress, 2010).

This study took place in Sweden, where most students in compulsory education are provided with individual laptops or tablets. The national curriculum in Sweden emphasises aspects of critical digital literacy, such as digital competence and being able to identify, interpret and analyse messages and motives in texts (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2018). However, according to recent reports, critical literacy work in Swedish
schools mainly focuses on analogue texts (Carlsson & Sundin, 2018; Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2018) and more focus must be placed on particular aspects of digital multimodal texts.

The aim of this study was to explore how particular aspects of digital multimodal texts can be incorporated and developed within critical digital literacy practices in a classroom. Students aged 14–15 years participated in group discussions where they analytically discussed prominent perspectives in a digital multimodal text (i.e. a video clip). They did so during a Swedish language lesson, and the text under scrutiny was the introduction sequence to the first episode of a popular teenage web series.

Through an iterative process based on a design research (DR) approach (e.g. McKenney & Reeves, 2012), the researchers and teachers worked closely together to explore how critical digital literacy work can be incorporated and developed in lesson designs. To address particular aspects of critical digital literacy work in the classroom practice, the five resources model of critical digital literacy (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014) was used to frame both the lesson design and the analytical process.

The following research question was addressed:

How does deconstructing a video clip enable students to become critically aware of how perspectives become prominent in a digital multimodal text?

Critical digital literacy – a theoretical perspective

Due to ongoing communicational changes, the concept of literacy must be expanded (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013). Sociocultural aspects are increasingly considered; thus, reading and writing are viewed as socially situated activities that must be understood in relation to the context in which they take place (Leu et al., 2013; Wertsch, 1998). Another key dimension of the reconceptualisation of literacy is the increase in multimodal aspects of digital texts (Unsworth, 2014). All semiotic resources, such as language, images and audio modes, bear meanings, and the concept of multimodality, describe how each mode contributes in a specific way to the overall meaning of the multimodal ensemble (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Constructing digital multimodal texts (e.g. video clips) is a matter of deliberate design in which creators shape the resources available so that the representations match their intentions (Kress 2010). As interacting with multimodal texts is part of most students’ everyday literacy practices (Elf, Gilje, Olin-Scheller, & Slotte, 2018), literacy education must include digital multimodal aspects of texts in order to shed light on adolescents’ meaning-making in their everyday lives.

The concept of critical literacy – how different perspectives are represented and foregrounded in texts – was central to this study (Janks, 2010). Doing critical literacy work raises students’ awareness of how a text’s construction may promote a certain perspective of the world, but also how texts may be redesigned (Janks, 2010; Luke, 2012). However, as infinite combinations of modes are possible in digital multimodal texts, alternative interpretations and readings across modes and digital multimodal texts may become more ideologically charged (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010).

The five resources model of critical digital literacy underpinned the design and analysis of this study (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014). This model offers a rearticulation of Freebody and Luke’s (1990) widely acknowledged four resources model, which states that to become critically literate, students must simultaneously be involved in practices of breaking codes, meaning-making, using texts functionally and analysing texts. Both models have proven useful for framing curriculum development and classroom analysis (Honan, 2008; Molin & Lantz-Andersson, 2016; Molin, 2020).
Hinrichsen and Coomb’s (2014) framework contextualises a critical literacy approach to
digital environments and adds a fifth resource: persona. Although the five practices are
viewed as interconnected and of equal importance in the model, in critical literacy work,
one may only pay close attention to a few practices at a time. In this study, the practices of
decoding, meaning-making and analysis were the foci of the video clip deconstruction. The
practices of using texts (i.e. deploying digital tools appropriately and effectively for the task
at hand) and persona (i.e. managing and calibrating one’s online persona) were not in focus.

According to Hinrichsen and Coombs (2014), decoding in the digital domain involves
developing a familiarity with the structures and conventions of digital media and a sensitiv-
ity to the different modes at work within digital multimodal texts, including the design and
presentational elements (e.g. layout, illustration styles). It is important to consider and sep-
arate different modes and their contributions to the message, and acknowledge that modes
have different characteristics and conventions.

Meaning-making in the digital domain is an increasingly reflexive process where the
text is in dialogue with the readers’ responses, prior experience and knowledge (Hinrichsen
& Coombs, 2014). This practice involves understanding and interpretation, and being able
to follow narratives across diverse semantic and structural elements (Pachler & Daly, 2009).
Another central aspect is the ability to translate the purpose, or intention, in digital texts
across a range of communicative modes and design elements (Kress, 2010).

Finally, analysis involves critically discerning elements that contribute to the meanings,
uses and messages of digital multimodal texts, such as employing skills of analysis to ques-
tion the role that modes have in content and interactions in a text (Hinrichsen & Coombs,
2014).

Prior empirical research on critical digital literacy in education
Several studies have emphasised the value of using digital and multimodal texts in learning
environments (e.g. Molin, 2020; Oldakowski, 2014; Åkerfeldt, 2014). Oldakowski (2014)
demonstrated that students’ discussions expanded when they created multimodal presenta-
tions in response to particular literary elements of a popular young adult novel. They par-
ticipated in detailed discussions of the complexity of the text, such as its multiple themes,
symbols and other motifs. In Molin’s (2020) study, when a class of Swedish 14-year-olds was
introduced to one mode at a time in a digital multimodal text, they became increasingly
aware of how the different modes shaped the meaning of the text.

Other studies have evinced that transforming traditional print-based instruction into
digital multimodal formats is a complex process. Conventional school genres and formal
school curricula, which prioritise written texts, often dominate reading and writing activi-
ties (McGrail & Behizadeh, 2017; Sofkova Hashemi & Cederlund, 2016; Svärdemo Åberg &
Åkerfeldt, 2017). Moreover, teaching digital competence is commonly considered its own
goal, separated from literacy teaching (Sofkova Hashemi & Cederlund, 2016). In a Grade 6
classroom in Canada, Loerts and Heydon (2016) observed that despite having opportuni-
ties to perform multimodal literacy activities, students showed no clear enactment of mul-
timodal literacy pedagogy and, thus, rich learning opportunities were minimised.

Despite the increasing incorporation of digital multimodal texts in everyday classroom
practices (Early, Kendrick, & Potts, 2015), there have been few empirical investigations into
critical dimensions of contemporary texts in classroom practices (Huang, 2019). Critical
digital literacy work may, for example, enable adolescents to engage with, and critically examine, the cultural world that they inhabit and revise their own literacy and academic
identities using digital tools (Janks, 2010). Some studies have shown an increase in students’
critical awareness when they became aware of how different semiotic resources construct meaning (Huang, 2017; Lim & Kok Yin Tan, 2018). In their study on secondary school students in Singapore, Lim and Kok Yin Tan (2018) found that when students critically analysed how arguments were constructed to reinforce a particular point of view in film clips, they gradually moved from a superficial response towards a critical and informed interpretation supported by textual evidence. Using students’ interests and prior out-of-school experiences of texts may also increase students’ critical awareness (Ajayi, 2015; Molin, Godhe & Lantz-Andersson, 2018; Tan & Guo, 2014). Ajayi (2015) studied critical digital reading activities of Nigerian girls in Grade 9. The students were taught to critically analyse the use of multiple modes to represent meanings in texts relating to their own interests. Their interests and experiences were found to have the potential to challenge the social reproduction of power relations in multimodal texts and resist practices that diminish students’ voices.

Method

This study was part of a larger project conducted in a Swedish inner-city school over five months in 2016–2017. The research involved a class of 16 students (nine girls and seven boys), aged 14–15 years, and two teachers. The school was selected due to the students’ access to individual laptops and the local policy of fostering co-operative skills and critical awareness. In line with the Swedish Research Council’s (2017) ethical guidelines, all parents signed a consent form and the students were informed about the research, their options for consenting to being video and/or audio recorded, and their ability to terminate their participation at any time. All students in the excerpts presented in this article consented to participate in the study, and pseudonyms are used in order to meet requirements of confidentiality.

A design research (DR) approach was used to explore how particular aspects of critical digital literacy can be incorporated and developed in the local educational practice (McKenny & Reeves, 2012). The goals of DR are both pragmatic and theory-oriented, and its application is interventional, collaborative, iterative and adaptive. The intervention design was the result of three physical meetings between one Swedish teacher and lead researcher. The goal was to collaboratively design three lessons where students would have opportunities to develop their awareness of how digital multimodal texts are constructed in order to distinguish different perspectives. The process started with a literature review to yield a common knowledge base in the design process. The researcher proposed literature on critical digital literacy (e.g. Janks, 2010; Luke, 2012) and the teacher, literature on instructional aspects of digitalised classrooms (e.g. Fleischer & Kvarnsell, 2015). To support students’ critical awareness of particular aspects of digital multimodal texts, the researcher proposed the five resources model of critical digital literacy (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014) to inform the lesson design. To address students’ prior literacy experiences and interests (cf. Fairclough, 1989; Freire & Macedo, 1987), the teacher suggested using the Norwegian web series Shame 1. The opening sequence of the first episode was selected as providing a convenient example of a digital multimodal text, in the form of a video clip, to support the students’ decoding, meaning-making and analysis of texts.

The focus of the lessons – that is, for students to explore how digital multimodal texts are constructed to convey meaning – was largely new to the students, and supporting their

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understanding of the task before they performed it independently was critical (Greiffenhagen, 2008). In the first lesson, the students watched episode 1 in its entirety as a class and then participated in step-by-step instruction, focusing on the opening sequence one mode at a time (Molin, 2020). The second lesson, presented here, involved a small-group activity where the students discussed prominent perspectives in the text. In the last lesson, the text was redesigned to challenge and alter the perspectives originally found in the text.

The purpose of the second lesson was to let students discuss and deconstruct the opening sequence critically in small groups. The discussions were supported by five questions: (1) What is happening in the introduction? (2) What did the creator do to construct a particular meaning? (3) Whose perspective – i.e. whose story/voice – is heard and seen? (4) Whose perspective is not visible? (5) Who is the recipient?

Data collection and analysis
An ethnographic approach was used to collect the empirical data. It included field notes and a total of three hours of transcribed video and audio recordings from four group discussions. The groups were divided by the teacher according to the students’ consent regarding participation. Two groups were video recorded, one group was audio recorded and the last group, of which four students had declined to be recorded, was not documented at all.

The video recordings were done with one camera facing the group gathered in a half-circle at a table; equipment for additional audio recording was also used. The audio-recorded group had the equipment placed in the middle of the table. For the third group, the researcher took field notes while sitting outside the group circle.

To describe the activities and students’ interactions, the material is presented as transcribed excerpts from the video- and audio-recorded groups. The names given are all pseudonyms and the teacher is merely referred to as the teacher. The excerpts were translated from Swedish into colloquial English, in most cases, verbatim, but also with respect to the interpretation of the specific activity (Duranti, 1997).

To gain a broad overview of the transcribed material, the observation notes and recorded material were initially reviewed and then longer interactions relevant to the research question were reviewed and transcribed thoroughly using Jefferson’s (1984) conventions. From this material, sequences of particular interest were selected for further analysis. These sequences came from group 1 (Sophie, Marie, Filippa) and group 2 (Linn, Alan, Richard) and were chosen because they illustrated aspects of students’ critical awareness. A careful analysis of these sequences was conducted in a second step. By scrutinising and comparing different sequences, analytical claims could be made about how a particular case could be said to show signs of students’ understandings of different perspectives in a digital multimodal text (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014).

Shame
At the time of the study, the Norwegian teenage web series Shame (Skam in Norwegian) was very popular among Swedish youth.² Its narrative and distribution format were considered relevant to adolescents’ experience and prior knowledge of texts.

Shame aired for four seasons from 2015 to 2017. The series follows the daily lives of a group of teenagers and aimed to give adolescents opportunities for identification. Its real-time, snippet-based distribution conveys a sense of authenticity. This trans-media storytell-

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² The series has also been recognised internationally and an American version, SKAM Austin, was launched in 2018: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skam
An analysis of prominent perspectives in the opening sequence of the first episode is presented in this paper. Usually, the same opening sequence is used at the beginning of all episodes in a series. However, the 30-second-long introduction to *Shame* serves as a threshold text for the whole series and only occurs once. It is constructed as a video clip comprising numerous seemingly amateur film clips representing the happy, privileged and decadent lifestyles of Norwegian teenagers. One of the main characters in the series, Jonas, is the oral narrator.

**Empirical findings**

The findings below reflect two peer groups’ discussions of the opening sequence of *Shame*. The examples and excerpts are divided into two sections that point to significant aspects of the students’ critical analyses: prominent perspectives in the text and the introduction as part of a larger story. The two sections are somewhat intertwined and the distinction is mainly an analytical construction. Each example is followed by an analysis of how aspects of decoding and meaning-making are integrated in the critical analysis (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014).

**Prominent perspectives in the text**

Initially, the groups drew similar conclusions regarding the first question\(^3\): that the perspectives of the young Norwegians and the poor are at the core of the narrative. They interpreted the overall message as showing that the lavish lifestyle of the rich in the Western world, which is rarely reflected on, is lived at the expense of the poor in other parts of the world. However, when taking on the more analytical questions of how these perspectives are constructed and made prominent, students detected ambiguities and contradictions in the text. They tried to handle these obscurities but began to question their initial assumptions. As excerpt 1 below shows, Linn and Alan noticed contradictions between the oral and visual modes and tried to use their decoding knowledge to understand how meaning is constructed.

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**Excerpt 1**

Group 2

L: Right. But he [Jonas] was kind of only talking. You didn’t even see him. And the pictures had very little to do with what he talked about. Rather I think the creator wanted to show that we are(...)

A: How we are...

L: Yeah. I mean... that we are more well-off.

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\(^3\) What is happening in the introduction?
I think movies are the best tools because they make things stick really well if the pictures are good and if there is a good voice. It sticks and becomes interesting compared to if you only listen to someone who talks, talks, talks all the time. After a while (.) you can’t bear to listen.

Here, Linn argues that the perspective of the oral modes – that is, Jonas’s narrative voice – only partially corresponds to the perspectives mediated through the visual modes and that they have ‘very little to do’ with what he is talking about. She concludes that by only showing the visual modes of young Norwegians’ lives, the creator wants to show how well-off the Western world is. Being able to consider and separate modes and how they impact the message is important in decoding digital multimodal texts (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014). In the excerpt, Linn demonstrates an ability to critically discern some of the different modes at play. As she interprets how meaning is created, she also acknowledges that structural elements can be contrasted across the narrative, thereby conveying diverse meanings.

Alan agrees with Linn, but argues more generally that movies are the best way to get a message across. Similar to Linn, Alan expresses a sensitivity to the different modes at work in digital multimodal texts. His decoding knowledge of how modes bear particular meanings becomes particularly visible as he disregards the oral as a single mode and claims that the ensemble of visual and oral modes conveys the message best, making it more interesting to the viewer. Alan not only shows an awareness of the role that different modes play in meaning-making in the digital domain, but also of a deliberate design that depends on ‘good’ choices of modes in order for the resources to closely match the creator’s intentions (cf. Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Sophie’s reflection reflects an attempt to interpret why contradictory modes are used to express meaning:

Excerpt 2

Group 1

S: Mm. I think the pictures show more what the series actually is about (.) as opposed to what Jonas’s narrative is telling. And I’m not sure it means that young people are unaware. Perhaps he instead created it with the intention of showing that young people in the Western world are well aware of how well-off they are (.) but don’t give a shit about how that burdens poor people’s lives. At least I don’t think the purpose of the introduction is to provide an eye-opener of such a perspective (.) because nothing else in the series deals with the perspective of the poor.

In Sophie’s decoding of modes in the opening sequence, the visual modes correspond with what she perceives as the prominent perspective in the rest of the series. Her decoding is thus part of a reflexive meaning-making process in which the content is in dialogue with her prior knowledge of the narrative across the design elements of the text (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014). By drawing on this prior experience, she begins questioning the group’s initial assumption that young Norwegians were intended to be positioned as unaware. Instead, she considers them to be portrayed as indifferent and selfish. By referring to her prior experience of the text, she gives the visual modes precedence as a meaning-making resource in her analysis. Scholars have argued that regarding images as the primary mode in constructing meaning is a common pattern in contemporary meaning-making (e.g. Kress, 2010). Although Sophie is aware of different modes bearing different meanings, she does not consider the modes as equally contributing to the overall message. Instead, she interprets the perspective voiced in the oral modes in the opening sequence as being of little importance in the rest of the series.
In excerpt 3, Marie similarly prioritises the visual modes when she makes meaning of the fact that the poor are notable only in the oral modes.

Excerpt 3

Group 1

*M: I wonder how the narrative connects to the pictures. When Jonas talks about junk food (.) such pictures come up and they match. But when he talks about the children in India (.) there are no pictures at all. It was kind of (.) how shall I say? The voice of the poor is heard but (.) at the same time it’s not really in focus.

Marie initially shows familiarity with the structure of a digital multimodal text, where one mode is connected to another. Her decoding also indicates her awareness of how different combinations of modes may affect the overall message (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014). She notes that modes within the text sometimes correspond – for example, when Jonas talks about junk food. When she recognises that the perspective of the poor is not equally portrayed in the visual modes, she concludes that the poor are not in focus. However, her interpretation overlooks that narratives can be followed across diverse semantic modes.

In these excerpts, Sophie and Marie show their awareness of how different modes contribute to the construction of meaning, and they identify prominent perspectives. However, they do not consider that the combination of different modes, particularly contradictory ones, must also be critically examined and interpreted. Instead, they tend to regard the perspective in the oral narrative as less prominent in the overall meaning of the text.

The introduction as part of a larger story

In their discussions, students also contextualised their analyses by referring to the first whole episode as well as the series as a whole. In excerpt 4, Filippa relates her analysis to her experiences of watching *Shame* at home.

Excerpt 4

Group 1

*F: I’ve watched half of the *Shame* episodes back home (.) but I realised I’d actually forgotten the introduction. The deepness of the introduction vanishes as you keep watching all the other things happening in the series. The introduction didn’t stick really. It just caught my attention initially.

After some more discussion involving the others in the group, Filippa adds the following:

Excerpt 5

Group 1

*F: When you keep watching the first episode and realise it was a school task (.) the perspectives of young rich Norwegians living at the expense of the poor suddenly seems less important. The perspective in the intro doesn’t come back later on.

Filippa states that she has forgotten the introduction and claims that the serious message conveyed through the oral mode in the opening sequence vanishes as one continues watching. Similar to Sophie’s reflection, Filippa concludes that this perspective lacks importance in the series as a whole. By referring to her prior knowledge of the series as a whole, Filippa
critically analyses and interprets narratives across diverse elements of the text (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014). Moreover, she analyses the construction of the opening sequence itself, as it is a school task, as she suggests that the perspective of the poor lacks importance to the whole.

Group 1 elaborated on how the opening sequence might be interpreted in relation to the rest of episode 1 and in light of this being a school task.

Excerpt 6

Group 1

M: Right. It [issues of the poor] seems to be really important (.) but then it falls flat when it appears to be a school task. Then it seems less important because the narrative of the rest of the episode tells other things. I don't get that really. Wonder what he meant by that.

F: If they would have come back to it later on (.) it would have made it stronger. But perhaps they do. Further on in the series I mean (.) after all (.) I haven’t seen all of it.

Marie finds the issues of the poor to be very important, but the structural elements of a school task disrupt this serious message. Similar to Sophie’s reflection in excerpt 2, Marie questions the creator’s intentions because the perspectives of episode 1 are contradictory. While Filippa suggests that returning to the serious message later on would be beneficial, she also conjectures that it might be included later in the series. Filippa shows an awareness of the numerous alternatives that a creator has to choose from, thereby showing her understanding that the narrative must be understood across diverse semantic and structural elements.

Group 2 also referred to the importance of relating to the whole series. Their discussion focused on the importance of contextual information for completing the task at hand.

Excerpt 7

Group 2

L: I agree. The thing was that since you knew you were watching Shame and what it was about (.) then you understood (.) or I understood (.) that it was probably a school task or something. But if you hadn’t had that background information that we’re watching Shame (.) it would kind of have been ‘hang on, what are you talking about? Is this a non-fiction movie?’. But they are also showing ordinary teenage lives. It would have been weird and hard to grasp.

A: Right. You don’t get really (.) what it’s going to be about. The opening sequence is about the issue of young people in Norway partying, messing things up and forgetting how well-off they are. And it prompts us to think about how things are in the world. That’s great. But then (.) when you start to watch the series (.) it’s about a girl and what it’s like to have a boyfriend who just wants to be with his...

Linn starts by arguing that if they had not known that they were watching Shame, she would have had problems identifying the genre of the opening sequence. The contradictory sense of non-fiction and the narrative of teenage lives would have been hard to understand. In that sense, relating to the whole episode or series becomes an enabling factor in the analysis (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014).
**Discussion**

This study was aimed at exploring how particular aspects of digital multimodal texts can be incorporated and developed within critical digital literacy practices in a classroom. In line with previous research, the findings suggest that opportunities to develop critical awareness increase when students become aware of how certain perspectives become more prominent in the construction of a digital multimodal text (cf. Molin, 2020; Huang, 2017). In particular, the analysis revealed that students identified and verbalised that meaning is constructed by different modes and diverse design elements (cf. Jewitt, 2008). Thus, paying attention to one mode at a time in the previous lesson (Molin, 2020) supported students’ understanding of the task before they performed it independently (Greiffenhagen, 2008) and also equipped them with language and concepts to verbalise their critical analyses. Moreover, students’ discussions became more detailed and complex when they paid close attention to particular features of digital multimodal texts (cf. Oldakowski, 2014). For example, students made critical inquiries when trying to make sense of contradictions or ambiguities in the construction of meaning in the text. Although they acknowledged that ensembles of modes convey a message, they did not critically examine and interpret the combination of contradictory modes. They noticed narratives running across different design elements in the text, but did not elaborate. Instead, they tended to give precedence to the visual modes as a meaning-making resource when identifying prominent perspectives, at times even explicitly disregarding the importance of oral modes to the overall meaning of the text. As shown in previous studies, a common pattern in contemporary meaning-making is to give precedence to visual modes (Kress, 2010). Hinrichsen and Coombs (2014) claimed that to develop critical digital literacy awareness, education must account for several ongoing practices simultaneously. The findings of this study imply that comprehension, interpretation and analysis must be applied and highlighted across modes and the decoding of diverse elements in a digital multimodal text (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2014).

The popular teenage web series *Shame* was chosen because previous research showed that using students’ interests and prior out-of-school experiences of texts may enhance their critical awareness (cf. Ajayi, 2015). Even though all students did not actively follow the series, they were all acquainted with it. *Shame* also represents a contemporary genre that is familiar to most students. How a narrative evolves across several episodes in a series is, therefore, common knowledge among students. Moreover, the findings show the students’ awareness of the deliberate design and vast number of choices that are made when constructing digital multimodal texts (cf. Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). However, the students’ focus on critical analysis and interpretation of mismatched design elements tended to lead to a narrow analysis that increased the risk of missing out on the meaning-making across modes and time. The only exception is Filippa, who argued that answers to the contradictions might become evident further on in the series.

This is a small qualitative study and the activities described only exemplify some of the possible examples of how combinations of critical digital literacy aspects can be incorporated in lesson designs. However, by identifying some vital aspects of critical digital literacy work that occur in ordinary, ongoing classroom activities, the study offers insights into instances where students may become increasingly critically aware and develop knowledge of how digital multimodal texts are constructed. Thereby, this study serves as a point of departure for further studies by contributing knowledge of in situ critical digital literacy work that can inform a complex field of research.

To sum up, the need for critical digital literacy is increasingly emphasised in society, and knowledge of how texts position partial representations of the world is particularly relevant.
when the potential exists for anyone to create and share almost anything online. In this article, empirical examples of how video clips are deconstructed by students are analysed to illustrate how this enables students to develop their critical awareness of different perspectives incorporated in a multimodal text. The study thereby contributes with examples of how to work with developing students’ critical awareness of texts in a classroom, but also points out aspects that need to be further developed. The examples shown in the study and the conclusions made, can serve as a vital step for researchers and practising teachers to further explore the possibilities and potential pitfalls in a gradual process where students become increasingly critically aware and develop knowledge of how digital multimodal texts are constructed.

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