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ABSTRACT

My autobiography is a critical reflective journey from my discourse of home into the Technology Literacy Club. Through the Technology Literacy Club, I overcame my early life exclusions from the print literacy club. Ultimately, through these technology skills, I was able to join print literacy clubs and gain access to the discourses that enable social and economic mobility in our culture. My argument is that technology is the new literacy club replacing the all important primary role of print literacy skills, and students must first join the Technology Literacy Club to access the discourses of power in today’s world.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................... vii

PREFACE ................................................................. ix

Purpose ................................................................. ix
Conclusion ............................................................... xxi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................. xxvi

DEDICATIONS ............................................................ xxvii

Chapter 1  Introduction ................................................. 1

  Why Feminist Theory and Autobiography as Methodology? .............. 2
  The Importance of Voice ........................................... 5

Chapter 2  Technology in the Projects ............................... 12

  A 1950s/60s Reflection ............................................. 12
  My father’s voice .................................................... 13
  Learning through the radio ........................................ 14
  Television makes its first appearance ............................ 20
  The party line telephone .......................................... 21
  Television returns to my home .................................. 22
  Shifting interests, changing heroes ............................. 24
  Television images of home and family life ..................... 27
  Building on radio’s contributions to my life .................. 30
  Technology moves forward ....................................... 31
Conclusion ............................................................... 32

Chapter 3  LITERACY AT HOME ...................................... 34

  Retention ............................................................. 36
  Looking Forward .................................................... 39
  Family History ....................................................... 42
  Television and Exposure to Different Cultures ................. 44
  Back to Reality ....................................................... 46
  The Illusion ............................................................ 50
  “Let that be your last battlefield” .............................. 51
Conclusion ............................................................... 55
Chapter 4  A Tale of Two Communities................. 58
  The English Classroom Community .................. 59
  The Band Classroom Community ..................... 68
  The Academic Community ............................ 71
  What I Learned from My Two School Communities 74
  12th grade ........................................ 76
  Conclusion .......................................... 79

Chapter 5  Discovering the Flow......................... 82
  Military Years ..................................... 82
  Berlin,Germany ..................................... 85
  Movie as a Medium, a Reality ...................... 90
  Movie’s Impact on Me ............................... 92
  Air Traffic Control .................................. 93
  How I learned ....................................... 95
  First Hacking Experience ............................ 97
  Conclusion .......................................... 98

Chapter 6  Learning in a Discourse of Technology... 100
  Penn State ........................................... 100
  The Classroom Experience ............................ 103
  Computer Anxiety or Technophobia .................. 107
  Conclusion .......................................... 109

Chapter 7  Resistance Is Futile......................... 111
  About Norfolk State University ..................... 111
  First Attendance ..................................... 112
  Back Again - August 2001 ............................ 114
  Faculty Meeting ...................................... 115
  The New Plan ........................................ 117
  The Students ........................................ 121
  Conclusion .......................................... 139

Chapter 8 ............................................. 141
Teaching In The Technology Literacy Club............. 141
  Norfolk State University ............................ 142
  Norfolk State University ............................ 143
  Woosong University .................................. 144
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Gunsmoke.................................. 15
Figure 2 Radio..................................... 17
Figure 3 Telephone................................... 21
Figure 4 Matt Dillon............................... 23
Figure 5 Chester................................... 23
Figure 6 Miss Kitty................................ 24
Figure 7 Original Mercury Astronauts.............. 25
Figure 8 Gemini Astronauts.......................... 26
Figure 9 The Donna Reed Show....................... 28
Figure 10 The Donna Reed Show...................... 28
Figure 11 Father Knows Best......................... 28
Figure 12 Leave It to Beaver........................ 29
Figure 13 Larry Ferguson Age 6..................... 34
Figure 14 Star Trek................................ 50
Figure 15 Maury High School ROTC.................. 55
Figure 16 Maury Club 1............................. 62
Figure 17 Maury Club 2............................. 62
Figure 18 Larry Playing Snare Drum................ 70
Figure 19 Larry Playing Timpani.................... 72
Figure 20 Tempelhof Central Airport............... 86
Figure 21 Passage to Berlin......................... 87
Figure 22 Keesler Air Force Base................... 96
PREFACE

Purpose

Before stating why I wrote this book and who I hope reads it, I must briefly ask you, the reader, to keep an open mind and be cognizant of my using this forum as a tool to give voice to my experiences in a series of discourse communities, beginning very early in my life when, as a member of a minority group, I was either excluded or silenced.

Frank Smith (1988) used the metaphor of joining a club, the “literacy club,” to explain how children learn to think and use language (both oral and written) through social interaction. Through such social interaction, like belonging to a club, they can learn to meet the expectations of the literacy community of discourse, which is so essential to gaining power in society. As the title of this dissertation indicates, I am proposing another metaphor, that of a “technology literacy club,” where technology provides a way to
become part of the literacy club and its associated access to discourses of power.

My autobiography is therefore a critical reflective journey from my discourse of home into what I am calling the “technology literacy club.” It is not a literal club, of course, with formal memberships and dues, but rather a discourse community. Through technology literacy, rather than print literacy, my reflective life stories show how I gained access to discourses of power and overcame my early life exclusions from the print literacy club. Ultimately, through acquiring these technology skills, I was able to join print literacy clubs and gain access to the discourses that enable social and economic mobility in our culture. In addition, my journey shows not only the importance of my own upward mobility, but as a teacher in a historically Black university, I can open up possibilities for my students and show them the future opportunities they may also experience through the technology literacy clubs of today’s ubiquitous technological world.
Throughout my life, I have constantly shifted through different discourse communities. These communities had different rules and languages. From compiling these stories, I finally have an opportunity to reflect on my life and seek answers to these questions: As I navigated through these different communities, what impact did they have on my life? Why am I using this forum to share these experiences?

There are many different definitions of discourse. Boler (1999) writes:

Rather than assuming that utterances and language are transparent or self explanatory, ‘discourse’ refers to the culturally and historically specific status of a particular form of speech, and to the variable authority and legitimacy of different kinds of languages or utterances. (p. 5)

Boler’s quote explains events that occur in chapter 4, “A Tale of Two Communities,” where I tell of being a member of two classroom communities. In the band classroom community, I was accepted, and my proficiency in playing percussion instruments was my
voice and gave me status amongst other band members. While in the English classroom community, on the other hand, I was debilitated from reading text that was not a part of my discursive construction.

Chimombo & Roseberry (1998) state:

Discourse has instructive, descriptive, and narrative uses that help people to understand, appreciate, and create their world. In this sense, discourse provides individuals with a sense of belonging and continuity by passing down the history, folk wisdom, and values of the cultures and groups to which they belong. . . . As conversation and correspondence, discourse cements ties among people and helps individuals maintain connections within networks of family and friends. (p. x)

As I show in chapter 2, “Technology in the Projects,” hearing stories about my grandparents--especially knowing that I was named after my grandfather--allowed me to become knowledgeable of where I fit on the family tree and to appreciate the
accomplishments of my forebears. In the realm of literacy, if individuals are aware of how discourses function within a particular discourse community, they become empowered from a literacy perspective.

Discourses are embedded in different communities. As I entered into the air traffic control field, for example, it was paramount that I acquire the verbiage used by controllers. Gee (2001) argues there are two different discourse communities: primary and secondary.

Gee makes a distinction between primary discourses (our native language with intimates) and secondary discourses (learned by access to and practice with public institutions, such as school). The secondary or dominant discourse of the school is "learned" formally in the classroom. Mastery of a secondary discourse within a school environment is all the more challenging for an English Language Learner (ELL) because there is limited access to settings in which the secondary discourse can be acquired naturally.

Gee argues that little acquisition is achieved by children who are not of the mainstream. "We must take
seriously that no matter how good our schools become, ... nonmainstream children will always have more conflicts in using and thus mastering dominant secondary discourses" (Gee 1989, 25; Lopez, 1999, p. 151)

Secondary discourse communities involve people who are speaking differently in different groups/communities. More importantly, secondary discourse communities involve moving into a discourse community of power, or a community of economic power. In chapter 5, I report that after joining the military, I attended a field maintenance school to become a Non-Destructive Inspection Specialist. Becoming part of this discourse community afforded me the opportunity to work at any airport after leaving the military, because I learned how to inspect airplanes using ultrasonic and x-ray technology. Discourses are hierarchical in nature; therefore some discourses confer more social power than others. Completing this course garnered me more respect in the military because it meant I now had
the ability to use the latest in technology to inspect several multimillion dollar aircraft.

The belief that we participate in multiple discourse communities is not a new idea, because it is commonly recognized that people inherently speak differently in different groups. Being able to use the language of these different groups (or “clubs”) grants access to the social and economic power of particular clubs. On the other hand, when children cannot speak differently, they are marginalized and denied access to the clubs of power in the communities, schools, and society.

This is illustrated in the work of Sarah Michaels (1981), who observed kindergartners at story time. She observed that where Black children had different narrative styles, White teachers encountered difficulty with the Black children's process of narrating. The style these children used in telling their stories was nonlinear and therefore different from what their teachers expected. As a result, the Black children were marginalized because their language
was judged as inferior in school, while it was highly proficient at home.

Perry and Delpit (1998) state “the rules Black children needed to learn in order to access the discourse of power in schools remained invisible... and the best course of action is to teach standard English.”

They further state:

While having access to the politically mandated language form will not, by any means, guarantee economic success (witness the growing numbers of unemployed African Americans holding doctorates), not having access will almost certainly guarantee failure. So what must teachers do? Should they spend their time relentlessly "correcting" their Ebonics-speaking children's language so that it might conform to what we have learned to refer to as Standard English? (Perry & Delpit, 1998, p. 17)

Perry and Delpit recognize teachers are in a
quandary by trying to teach Black students how to speak proper English by correcting their language of home, which ultimately devalues the primary discourse of these children and impacts their identity.

Labov (1972) was particularly, and justifiably, critical of the linguistic and cultural deficit views, seeing such approaches as hindering the self-development of Black children:

There is no reason to believe that any nonstandard vernacular is in itself an obstacle to learning. The chief problem is ignorance of language on the part of all concerned. . . . That children should be the victims of this ignorance is intolerable. (pp. 239-240; Chimombo & Roseberry, 1998, p. 203)

Ebonics (African American vernacular English) is recognized by linguists as a valid discourse and carries some power in the literacy clubs where it is spoken, but it is not a discourse of power in school or in the business world. In chapter 6, “Learning in a
Discourse of Technology," I tell of writing an Educational Psychology paper using words I would be able to share with my family and that my friends would be able to understand. I was corrected by the professor when I submitted my first draft, however, and told that the language used was not appropriate and was therefore unacceptable.

My argument in this critical reflective autobiography is that there are discourse differences, and it is important to recognize that they are cultural. Some discourses are specifically used for access to discourses of power, and for this reason, students must know how to gain access to the social and economic benefits of the discourse club.

Many of these discourses are oral and visual discourses that meet the requirements of print literacy discourse. Ironically, the Educational Psychology paper I wrote both empowered and disempowered me at the same time. Successfully writing the paper using the language of the discourse was empowering. At the same
time, losing my voice, my self, my identity in the discourse of the paper was disempowering.

Frank Smith (1988) states in *Joining the Literacy Club*:

Membership in the literacy club offers the same advantages as the spoken language club . . . and all the other clubs children might join. Children in the literacy club have opportunities to see what written language can do, they are encouraged and helped to do those things themselves, and they are not at risk of exclusion if they make mistakes or display a passing lack of interest. (Smith, 1994, p. 217)

The literacy club is the first club students must enter that will enable them to join other clubs. One of the first clubs I joined was the “father and son club” where my father would quiz me on the Word Power section of the *Readers Digest*, which also earned me money for providing the correct answer. However, this print literacy discourse at home did not help me join literacy clubs at school, nor did it prevent problems I
encountered later in life with tests for Air Traffic
Control and in writing at the university. What did
give me access to the literacy club as a route to power
was my expertise with technology.

The argument that I am putting forth in this
dissertation is that technology is the new literacy
club replacing the all important primary membership in
the print literacy club suggested by Smith. In fact,
the acquisition of print, visual, and spoken literacy
is becoming more and more dependent on first joining
the technology literacy club. From my personal
reflection and an examination of my experiences in this
technological era, I have become convinced that in many
discourse communities it is more important to join the
technology literacy club than to pursue the traditional
means of gaining access to the ever important literacy
club and inclusion in the clubs of power.

While not ignoring the value of the discourses of
school, the discourses of print, and other discourses
of power, I believe that joining the technology
literacy club is an alternative method (perhaps even an
essential method) to access a discourse of power in today’s world. I view joining the technology literacy club as an alternative because even though I encountered many obstacles joining the traditional literacy club, once I became a member of the technology literacy club, it allowed me the opportunity to gain access into the traditional literacy clubs of the higher education discourse community.

**Conclusion**

In my autobiography you will see that I entered into multiple discourses of power and was silenced. It was difficult to access the school literacy club, and I felt voiceless. This feeling of not having a voice led to a condition of learned helplessness in which I became passively dependent on authority figures to tell me what to learn. In my Master’s degree paper, to adequately express my ideas about learned helplessness, I had to use the accepted language/discourse of the Educational Psychology community. Yet, to truly understand learned helplessness, I had to translate the
text into my primary discourse, translate it into the secondary standard English discourse, and then rewrite the paper in the Educational Psychology discourse. I now have a deeper appreciation for international students who enroll in classes in the United States, because they must first express their ideas in their primary discourse, then translate them into both English discourse and academic discourse to succeed. The entire process was difficult and time consuming.

I was not always able to translate text into my primary discourse. In my high school years, it was the printed text of classic novels such as *Silas Marner* and *A Tale of Two Cities* which initially introduced me to a discourse that became debilitating, because the language and ideas were abstract without a reference to my community or home discourses. I did not have the academic tools at the time to translate the text into a discourse context I could comprehend.

I was later able to find my voice in oral and visual discourses such as the discourse of music, the physical discourse of drumming, and the visual
discourse of television, which was subsequently followed by other forms of technology as my access point to belonging in the literacy club. As technology became a more important part of my life, I began to realize that technology allowed my oral and visual discourses to be validated and accepted in the school literacy club. My ability to create multimedia projects using computer technology empowered me to express important ideas about experiences that I struggled to create in written papers. My varied discourses exemplify the pathway to the discourses of power that I was able to find most successfully through the technology literacy club.

My autobiography is about my journey into the technology literacy club and shows the importance in my own upward mobility and, as a teacher, of my students' future opportunities as a consequence of their also being able to join the technology literacy club.

In chapter 2, “Technology in the Projects,” the stories about my early experiences in the 1950s and 1960s explore my learning of the discourses of home and
the early forms of technology. In chapter 3, “Literacy at Home,” I share stories of my initial transition into the discourse of school and the impact of more advanced technology in the 1960s. In chapter 4, “A Tale of Two Communities,” I present stories showing how I related to two separate discourse communities—one in which I was accepted and the other in which I was denied power. In chapter 5, “Discovering the Flow,” stories of my initial contact with computer technology in the United States Air Force illustrate how I gained power in a military discourse community. In Chapter 6, “Learning in a Discourse of Technology,” stories from my time of study at the Pennsylvania State University show me negotiating and surviving in multiple discourses simultaneously, while at the same time building a powerful identity around and through a technology discourse. In Chapter 7, “Resistance Is Futile,” stories of resistance to technology by faculty and students at Norfolk State University illuminate my methodology or approach to introducing the technology
literacy club in order to empower others through my teaching and professional activity.
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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this book in memory of my father, Rev. Ernest N. Ferguson. Thank you for the life lessons on race, class, and women. Your wisdom has helped me to be the man I am today.

I also dedicate this book in memory of my other father, Reverend James Oliver Allen Sr. You touched my life in so many ways and I hope you are proud of me today.
Chapter 1

Introduction

For this qualitative study, I reflect upon the issue of voice and power as it relates to the impact of technology on my life. I present myself as the subject of this case study, aware that “a case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents or one particular event.” (Merriam, 1988, cited in Bogden and Biklen, 1992, p 62)

In this autobiography, I examine my awakening to the ways my life has been affected by technology in general and computers specifically. The impact has been one of empowerment, both as an individual and as a technology authority.

By examining my lived experiences with technology, I hope to learn how I came to value and become intrinsically motivated to learn all there is to know about technology as a pedagogical tool. I also want to understand more fully and share with others how
technology gave me voice in a society where initially I had been voiceless.

Why Feminist Theory and Autobiography as Methodology?

Why are these old memories and newly recalled memories important? And what part does a feminist approach play in my methodology? Spender (1982) has provided this explanation:

"At the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method, which leads to the production of pure knowledge... feminist knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of all human beings is valid and must not be excluded from our understandings." (p.6)

Spender was making the point that a society needs all voices to be heard, not only the voice of one dominant group that speaks out the loudest and claims a right to hold all the power.

Similarly, Schaef (1985) has written about what she calls the "white male system," a view of the world
that has been presented as the only system or the “right” system. The perceptions and experiences of other groups, such as women or African Americans, are then disregarded. Feminist theory calls attention to the problems in such attitudes, which are based on notions of dominance and subordination.

My life has been a mystery to me as a Black male with experiences that are unique to me. However, I had not on a conscious level critically reflected on events that I now consider “significant emotional events” in trying to make sense of my world. Nor had I analyzed my experiences in the larger context reflected in the statements of feminist theorists such as Spender and Schaef. One reason for my lack of such critical reflection, I believe, was because I realized it would take an enormous amount of effort to recall the past. And until now, I did not have a purpose, reason, or the necessary tools to effectively and logically synthesize and analyze these events.

Marcia Wright (1989) contends that
"Autobiography entails the telling of the story to convey what was important in a person's development, arranging and restating events to prepare for a climax or denouement. It is retrospective, in effect making a case. The life story, on the other hand, is ambiguously authored, and may be more or less actively composed by a mediator who arranges the testimony and quietly supplies explanatory interventions. Resulting frequently from interrogation, life stories are structured to serve the ultimate purposes of ethnography, or of a court case, or simply of soliciting the common and uncommon experience of ordinary people, in the mode of new social history. ... the line between autobiography and life stories is subtle.... people who may begin their recording of experience their response to questions may develop their own agenda and convert the enterprise from life story to autobiography, discovered a drama and their own life's, so to speak.... (p.30)

I am using part of my life history and autobiography because, in the words of Reinharz (1992, p.130), "the subtle lines ... among oral history, interviews, biographies, and autobiographies means that features of each method are shared by others...

Also, according to Reinharz (1992),

...oral history, in contrast to written history, is useful for getting information about people less likely to be engaged in creating written records and for creating historical accounts or phenomenon less likely to have produced archival material. Relatively powerless groups are
therefore especially good candidates for history research. (p.8)

The Importance of Voice

However, Reinharz (1992) stressed another point as well, namely, that "some feminist autobiographical/life history is done among people who are literate and highly educated but who have experiences that have remained hidden....These products do not 'give voice to the voiceless,' but rather allow a different voice within some person to emerge" (p.143).

Miller (1976) has shown that when those who have been voiceless begin to speak out, the dominant group may not wish to listen to their voice, because the dominant group has considered itself to have the power to define the truth about the lives of those it considers to be subordinate and to know what is best for them, as well as for members of its own group.

When I write about voice, therefore, it is from a socio-political perspective, which was defined for me at an early age by my family and
later in life by society. One’s voice provides opportunities that can open doors to success. I have learned from my experiences that having voice in our society is necessary for being socially accepted or not accepted. My experiences in the predominantly White Maury High School in 1969, led to an absence of voice in the English classroom community in chapter 4, “A Tale of Two Communities.” My voice became like that of many other little Black kids--unheard or not taken seriously.

My autobiography is a deliberately subjective approach to examining my life with technology and how it gave me a voice. My appreciation for and curiosity about technology in the early 1950s (the telephone, radio, television etc.), the 1960s (space travel), and from the 1980s to the present (computers), are in many ways unexplainable. The interest has simply been there from the beginning, providing a foundation on which I could later build.
My life experiences with technology have not only been an important part of my own development, but they have greatly influenced my pedagogical practices. As I seek out new software, such as Story Space by Eastgate, Adobe Premier by Adobe, and Visual Communicator Studio by Serious Magic, I begin a three-step process. In step one, I systematically evaluate the software by visualizing how I can incorporate the software into my curriculum. In step two, I must see the value and how students can benefit from using these applications. Then, I begin the third step in the process, which is learning how to use the software. Using technology as a tool is a very important part of my pedagogical beliefs and practices. It is my personal choice. The subjectivity of this study and autobiography provides the reason for my concern that technology be recognized for the possibilities it offers students.
Goodson states:

There is no clear way into the inner life of a person, for any window is always filtered through the glaze of language, signs, and the process of signification. And language, in both its written and spoken forms, is always in flux, currently unstable, and made up of the traces of other signs and symbolic statements. Hence there can never be a clear, unambiguous statement of anything, including an intention or a meaning. (Goodson, 1992, p. 237)

In writing this autobiographical study, with its emphasis on voice, power, and technology, I write with an awareness the autobiographical view can be cloudy rather than transparent. For this reason, I will try to be as clear in my writing as possible.

I will uncover how voice and power are synonymous. I will show how, as a child, I had no voice due to the very strict cultural beliefs of my parents that "children should be seen and not heard." In contrast, I am aware of the way colleagues and coworkers acknowledge my comments about technology. There is an E. F. Hutton
affect: "When Larry Ferguson talks about technology, people listen."

Goodson (1992) has stated that acceptance of the autobiography and the case study as an acceptable form of qualitative research "will require a major reconceptualization of educational research paradigms" (p. 15). I believe, however, that this method will shed light on how my experience need not be considered unique to me but can show how what I am calling the "Technology Literacy Club" can be a valid means of mobility for others as well.

Much of my autobiography will focus on home, school, and the military (United States Air Force). In my home, there were rules that all children in the house had to follow. Rule one: "Do as you are told, or there will be consequences and repercussions." As stated earlier, rule two was this, "Children should be seen and not heard."
If you violate this rule, there will be consequences and repercussions.”

In school, there were likewise many rules to follow; and as a Black male, throughout my elementary and secondary experiences, I learned that violating those rules had consequences and repercussions as well. In the military (the United States Air Force), there were many rules that were stated in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and breaking any of these rules could easily cost you your freedom. No voice, no power.

I have found, at 52 years of age, that it is becoming more difficult to remember events that I have spent most of my life trying to forget. I used several different techniques to recall events that occurred more than a half century ago. Talking to my mother and siblings was helpful because they were able to jog memories long since forgotten. (My father is now deceased so was not an available resource.) One example
my family helped me recall was the time I almost burned the house down by playing with matches when I was 6 years old.

I also talked with teachers from my elementary and high school years. One particular teacher, my junior high school band director, stated, "You were a good student, but you were always at the wrong place at the wrong time." The teacher subsequently began to recall specific examples of times I was in trouble. Actually, he was able to recall too many examples that I had forgotten--and for good reason!

The direction that I have chosen to approach this dissertation will obviously point out how technology has impacted my life--if done correctly. This thesis will show a relationship between technology, curriculum, literacy, power and the student’s ability to learn in a highly technological world that seems to be in a constant state of evolution, becoming ever more dependent on technology.
Chapter 2

Technology in the Projects

My father often gave me mini-lessons about life. The words he often chose echoed the message that nothing was guaranteed to me based on the color of my skin. I was too young to really understand what he was referring to, but I listened. As he constantly stated, education is just the beginning.

A 1950s/60s Reflection

My first exposure to formal education was in the 1950s when I went to school with my sister Helen, who is eleven months and one day older than I am. I would stay there from early in the morning until noon. I was too young to enroll in kindergarten, but the teacher and students tolerated my independent 3-year-old behavior. I would sit in the back of the class. The teacher would give me a coloring book and crayon or a pencil and a piece of paper to keep me occupied. I would color or write for hours and for some reason, I
did not present a problem or distraction for the teacher or other students. Precisely at 12 o’clock (after lunch), I would walk out of class and proceed home. Even today, my sister tells me how upset she was because I could just walk out of the classroom and she would have to stay for the rest of the day.

My first opportunity to give power to my voice came in the form of Helen’s teacher’s willingness to let me preview a world that I would soon have to participate in. The act of giving me tools (the pen and paper), allowing me to imitate the act of penning my voice in this advanced class, gave me some power that I had never had before this experience.

My father’s voice.

I also remember another important experience that gave me a glimpse of power, the memory of sitting on my father’s lap as he read the newspaper. Though in those early years of my life I did not understand what he was talking about, I did enjoy feeling the vibration in his chest as he read. Having my father read to me about current events provided another avenue for learning.
Just the strength in his voice and his inviting me to share the news events (though I was not aware of their meaning), gave me a sense of power that my father’s voice was the link between my minute abilities and the larger powerful world in which I lived.

I realize that my first memories began with storytelling. Even though my parents read to me when I was younger and shared stories about my maternal grandparents and great grandparents, the memories I enjoy best come not from stories read or told by my parents; they are my memories of the stories that came from a now antiquated technological piece of equipment called the Philco radio.

Learning through the radio.

During the 1950s, our family would sit in our living room and look at our huge radio while we listened to the popular western series Gunsmoke. This family event was considered quality time at its best. Usually, after coming from church and eating Sunday dinner, we (my mother, father, sister, and I) would sit
in the living room and listen to Marshall Matt Dillon save the town of Dodge from outlaws.

The main characters on Gunsmoke were Marshall Dillon (the sheriff); Chester, the deputy; Doc, the town doctor; and Miss Kitty, the bar owner. However, each week new guest stars were present as well.

Figure 1 Gunsmoke

HOWARD McNEAR..................Charles "Doc" Adams
WILLIAM CONRAD..................Matt Dillon
PARLEY BEAR......................Chester Wesley Proudfoot
GEORGIA ELLIS....................Kitty Russell

Gunsmoke was broadcast on the CBS Radio Network
First Broadcast: April 26, 1952 ("Billy the Kid")
Last First Run Broadcast: June 11, 1961 ("Doc's Visitor")
Last Broadcast: June 18, 1961 (a rerun of "Letter of the Law")
http://comp.uark.edu/~tsnyder/gunsmoke/gun-radio.html
I remember the room in which we listened to the radio as being small with dimmed lights from a tall pole lamp in the corner of the room. A circular rug covered the floor with several circular patterns. (I used to imagine the circular patterns as my race track for my imaginary race cars.)

Around 7 o’clock each evening, my parents were on the sofa, and my sister was on the circular-patterned rug with me. We usually stared at the lights on the huge radio with the big knobs and the tan cloth that covered the one big speaker.
Radio, as a form of story telling, was quite memorable because I used my imagination to visualize the towns and characters, which were accentuated by the sound effects and vocal tones of the characters.

I could imagine a small portion of the town with each scene: for example, the saloon scenes with the masterly constructed wooden bar, complete with step rail, spittoons, and lots of round tables with chairs to accommodate the shady characters of the week. Men sat at round wooden tables to play cards and smoke thin
cigars in the smoke-filled room. The scene captured my imagination. It was as though I was right there.

The skilled sound effects crew left little to the imagination as the acoustics included people talking, a piano playing familiar tunes, and other sounds that added to the lifelikeness of each *Gunsmoke* episode. It put the listener in a happy/festive mood.

I was unable to determine one aspect of sound effect until much later when I saw Chester, the deputy, walk on television. The difference that I noticed was only because the sound of walking by the other characters was different from the sound that Chester made when he walked. Later, I learned that Chester walked with a limp.

Marshall Dillon’s radio voice was strong and confident, which led me to believe he was larger than life, yet human. Now that I reflect on the voice of Chester, I realize that Chester’s voice wasn’t as pronounced as Mr. Dillon’s. Chester’s voice was not as deep or heavy as Marshall Dillon’s voice.
Miss Kitty’s voice was different from most women’s voices, because it was stronger, yet undeniably female. I was used to hearing Black female voices, but her voice was different in rate, pitch, articulation, and enunciation.

The remaining sound elements, including the narrator’s voice, were necessary to set up each scene, which added to my enjoyment of the stories. Visualizing the dirt roads, horses, gunshots, sun and moon, wooden steps, jail with bars, all went into creating a western world.

Staring at that old radio and listening to the western stories on Sunday evenings brought some of the best entertainment that money could not buy. Our huge, old living room radio was the first technological medium that brought our family together on a weekly basis and helped solidify a family connectedness through a shared experience. Even more important was the development of my visualization of speech and sound through technology.
The power and influence of my sense of a medium that not only expanded my family’s intimacy with each other, but also functioned as a welcomed voice to the outside imaginary world of make believe, seamlessly passed down to me an acceptable conduit for the idea that technology was friendly and fun.

**Television makes its first appearance.**

Based on information from my mother and my siblings, I have learned that my family purchased their first television (also a Philco) in the early 1950s about a year before I was born. The purchase of this high ticket item was major for my family. Not only was the television purchased brand new, but it also represented (for them) status. Such a high class, technologically advanced item like a television was understood to be out of the price range of most people living in my community. The payments were $2.00 a month, and usually the television broke down after approximately 18 months. Ultimately, it was repossessed by the company that sold the television to my parents.
The party line telephone.

The next piece of technology my family used in the mid 1950s was the telephone.

Figure 3 Telephone
http://www.oldphones.com/WE302.html

The telephone was very simple and plain and the phone with services cost $1.00 a month. Our connection was on a party line with three other people in the neighborhood, which meant that if you wanted to use the phone, you had to ensure that no one else was on the line. My older siblings shared with me much of the information about the telephone and even though I remember the phone, what my parents stressed to me was “don’t touch it.”
The ultimate tool of technology that gave voice to an up and coming age for advancement was the telephone. The marvel of voice-to-voice communication from across the city, the state, the world was one of the ultimate devices that stood out as both powerful and empowering. The idea of an intimate interaction between people who did not have to see each other but could talk to each other was the most useful of all technological advancements. It opened the possibility that poor and Black folk, those who were given little or no voice in a world that was large and powerful, could now speak out in that world, just as those who had always been privileged to enjoy more avenues of communication.

**Television returns to my home.**

My parents finally purchased a used black and white television in the early 1960s. It was huge and broke down on numerous occasions. We were fortunate, because our next-door neighbor was very knowledgeable on television repair and would come and repair our television at little cost to us.
Television in my home meant that I would now have the opportunity to see what I had previously listened to on the radio. I especially enjoyed seeing the characters on *Gunsmoke*.

The main characters are Marshall Dillon (the Sheriff),

![Figure 4 Matt Dillon](image)

Chester the Deputy,

![Figure 5 Chester](image)
and Miss Kitty the bar owner (the local bar owner).

Figure 6 Miss Kitty

**Shifting interests, changing heroes.**

Once I began watching television in the early 1960s, however, my boyhood idols began to change from cowboys to astronauts, a topic I will discuss at greater length in the next chapter.

The space race was on once the Russians had launched Sputnik. I began to read articles about the seven original Mercury Astronauts, and was totally fascinated by them. At 7 years old, I marveled at the white space suits worn by the astronauts and the rockets with long streaks of fire that streamed from the rocket’s tail. Such a spectacular change in what
had seized the attention of the government and public alike forced me to forget about cowboys and Indians indefinitely. Reading about the astronauts’ personal lives gave me a new perspective about how I wanted to live my life when I got older. Curiously, what I did not notice while I was engrossed in the image making of technological characters was the fact that all of the astronauts and cowboys were White or simply did not look like me.

![Figure 7 Original Mercury Astronauts](image)

**Figure 7 Original Mercury Astronauts**

America's original seven astronauts pose next to a Project Mercury space capsule at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas. Pictured from
left to right are: Leroy Gordon Cooper Jr., Walter M. Wally Schirra, Alan B. Shepard Jr., Virgil I. Gus Grissom, John H. Glenn Jr., Donald K. Deke Slayton and M. Scott Carpenter.

http://www.mach1collectibles.com/original_7_astronauts_with_mercury_capsule_8x10_photograph.html

Figure 8 Gemini Astronauts


The heroes that television presented also shaped my life at a very early age by exposing me to what I believed were possibilities for myself. Although I was unaware of the cultural differences between their lives and mine, ultimately my life was expanded.

In just the span of 12 years, technology had progressed to the point of commanding the airwaves and opening up the potential for conquering outer space. Even though my life seemed in many ways to be insignificant, technology was opening up new possibilities and indirectly influencing my access to power, including the future power of my own voice as an educator.

Television images of home and family life.

In addition to being so intensely interested in the western and astronaut images presented to me, I was further captivated by what I saw on several other
shows. These programs not only fascinated me but eventually caused me to rethink my personal beliefs about family.

Figure 9 The Donna Reed Show

Figure 10 The Donna Reed Show

Figure 11 Father Knows Best
Figure 12 Leave It to Beaver

The *Donna Reed Show*, *Father Knows Best*, and *Leave It to Beaver* television programs played a very important part in my life for reasons that were both positive and negative. If I behaved like the Reed, Anderson, or Cleaver children, my parents would have immediately known that television was having a negative impact on me culturally. However, I took from these shows an image of the roles I wanted both my future wife and me to play in the household I expected to have some day, roles that would be identical to the adult characters in these shows. I would be the sole provider, and my wife would be a stay-at-home mom. I do not believe my parents ever knew the impact these shows had on my life.
Building on radio’s contributions to my life.

I have already mentioned some of radio shows that had earlier piqued my interest in other ways that helped strengthen my imagination. My visualization of each scene in *The Shadow*, "*Gunsmoke*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *Amos and Andy*, as I listened to the old Philco with my family, strengthened my imagination even as a very young boy. Though television carried these same shows, during the years before we owned a television set, we believed ourselves to be fortunate to be able to listen to these shows in the convenience of our living room as a family. When we were eventually able to have television in our home, the visual stimulation of these shows enhanced my imagination further as I watched and learned of another world beyond the low socioeconomic *Lamberts Point* development in Norfolk, Virginia. The world of television presented a world that I believed was possible for me. It never occurred to me I could not live in a world similar to the one depicted by the actors, even though they were not like me (Black and poor).
Technology moves forward.

For most of my life, I have seen a constant progression of movement from the physical (manual technology) to the mental (computer technology). Though my humble beginnings may not have included my culture’s direct participation in developing technology; people of color could not, and still cannot be excluded from these advances. From the first time I heard a sonic boom, witnessed a telecast of the landing of a man on the moon; observed the development of bigger, better (and more destructive) instruments of war; saw the development of ever smarter machines (from calculators to computers) to help with mental tasks, I knew that I had a place -- a place through which I could have social and economic power, a place where my voice could be heard -- a place of opportunity that technology makes possible.

That one progressive piece of technology called the television, which presented me with images that had such an impact on my life in the 1960s, continues to impact generations now through digital cable
programming. The programming has certainly become more advanced since the Gunsmoke and Shadow days of my childhood. The advent of television offered so much more than radio had offered, although radio, too, had been one of those progressive forms of technology. Going from audio alone to audio/visual made all the difference in the world. Now that technology has gone from audio/visual to interactive through computers, it is even more dramatic.

Conclusion

During the 1950s and 1960s, a prominent characteristic of technology was its goal of improving people’s lives through better cars, more efficient household appliances, and numerous new gadgets that had not previously been imagined. Technology was constantly changing, improving, evolving. Perhaps, at the time, my generation did not consider these progressive inventions as “technology”; but for those of us in the “baby boomer” generation, these modern inventions were the “norm” and accepted as such, even
if one happened to be a person who did not have direct access to these technological advances.

The developing technologies of communication, however, contributed to creating the belief that everyone has access to the new products and activities of all new technologies. Yet, this chapter calls attention to a problem or contradiction, namely that even children who had no means to access many of these developing technologies nevertheless assumed these technologies to be universal, normal, and therefore available to them. Television made them aware of vast new possibilities through technology, and they expected to participate in the kind of life such technologies promised. Only later, as I grew up through many marginalizing experiences, would I learn that automatic access was not guaranteed and in fact would often be blocked or hindered. Such access would be something that I would have to work hard to achieve.
Fifty years ago, in October 1957, Russia launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite; and in 1962, it launched the first human space flight. These events set into motion a catch-up position in the United States that had a major impact on our education system. There was an increased focus on the math and sciences that would prepare more and better future scientists and mathematicians.

But at the beginning of the 1960s, I had no idea of the impact these events would have on my world. At age 5, I was fascinated with cowboys and Indians.
There were more cowboys on the scene now, and my heroes became the Lone Ranger, Audie Murphy, and the greatest two heroes of them all, John Wayne and Randolph Scott.

It was difficult to choose which I liked better, listening to Gunsmoke on the radio with my family or watching western shows on Saturday mornings with my big brother, who lived elsewhere and would return home occasionally. Being with him was a joy, because I looked up to my big brother and wanted to do everything he did in life.

At age 6, however, I began a transition from playing Cowboys and Indians to listening and learning more about space and technology. I began to read books and articles about astronauts and their spacecraft, because they were exciting and I wanted to know more about the people and their method of space travel. This was apparently my first natural and instinctive form of in-depth, self-motivated research. I started with learning as much as I could about the first seven United States astronauts, starting with Alan Sheppard. I then went on to build my first Mercury 7 space
capsule model. To this day, I have no idea where I was able to get the funds for this purchase other than through expressing my desire to my parents who apparently bought it for me. I remember reading not only the directions of how to build the Mercury 7 model but also reading the specifications and capabilities of the actual spacecraft.

It is ironic that even at this time, I was on my way to failing\repeating the second grade at J. J. Smallwood Elementary School in the all-Black Lamberts Point section of Norfolk, Virginia.

Retention

In June 1961, I became a statistic of grade retention when, at age 7, I repeated the second grade. After my parents had conferred with the teacher, they explained to me that I had been described by the teacher as a “little slow” in math skills and small for my age. My parents attempted to relieve the burden of my repeating the second grade by stating that my first grade teacher had not adequately prepared me for second
grade. Their intention supposedly was to absolve me of the responsibility of unsatisfactory performance. However, I later learned from my parents that I had not failed math, but I was simply slow in completing the assignments.

Being absolved of responsibility helped ease the initial frustration of discovering, for the first time, that I had not succeeded in school, I was not good enough, and/or I was not as intelligent as my schoolmates.

The full effect of repeating the second grade occurred on the first day of school in the fall of 1962, when I saw my classmates from the previous year as they entered the third grade. My first instinct was to avoid them, because I was ashamed and did not want to talk about being in the second grade again. However, it was inevitable that I would run into them as I went to lunch and also saw them on the playground, where they did not let me into their community. I was ignored as though I were invisible, until one of my old classmates told me to go back with the other 2nd
graders. It was at that moment I felt the full impact of my retention in the 2nd grade. Kids can be cruel.

To repeat the second grade was an awful experience in itself, but it was how the pattern of events transpired that especially hurt. I had been allowed no voice in the action that would have an impact on me for the rest of my life. No voice, no choice, and no power.

Children should be seen and not heard, was the belief of many Black families during that time and my family ascribed to that belief. I often wondered why my parents did not ask me for my opinion about repeating the second grade. Now I know. The belief that children should have no say, but simply acquiesce to those in authority, lay at the root of it.

Although the remaining elementary school years proceeded without further academic problems, social issues that accompanied peer pressure that pointed out my failure in second grade were always evident. My sister, who was originally one year ahead of me in school, has now moved ahead of me by two years. In
addition to my peers’ teasing, I was constantly reminded of my failure in taunts by my sister at home whenever she was angry or upset with me. Sisters can be cruel, too.

If there was any time that I would know the meaning of powerlessness, it could certainly be marked during these initial formal educational years in grade school. Failure always seems to be a precursor to voicelessness, thus, wearing away self-esteem. It was my sense of having failed that usurped my power as a child.

Looking Forward

Throughout my academic career, there was always an awareness of possible failure. This awareness became most evident years later in the first two weeks of technical training in the Air Force’s Air Traffic Control course. After taking the Federal Aviation Certification Test, I received a score of 68% where the minimum passing score required is 70%. The initial choice given to me was academic removal from the school
without prejudice. The second option was to repeat the two-week preparation for the section of the course failed and retake the certification test, with an understanding that another failure would result in immediate removal from the course. The same feelings resurfaced from repeating the second grade, with more emphasis this time on feeling inadequate, substandard, and other adjectives that describe being inferior. I learned that time does not heal all wounds. I realize that some researchers feel that retention is necessary and helpful. I can only speak from my own experience.

One thing that repeating the second grade did not do, however, was dampen my spirit for wanting to keep up with space exploration and space travel. No doubt because of this, there was a shift in priorities that I began to learn more about what would help me to successfully pass the second grade. I learned quickly that school was not all fun and began to concentrate more on math.

In taking my power back, I found that I had to legitimate myself in a positive way by passing and
never failing again. My power could only be restored by completing what I began. Therefore, I determined never to fail or allow my power to be usurped because I was lacking something or anything, especially intelligence.

I took tours to Jamestown, Yorktown, and Williamsburg three years in a row. As a child, I enjoyed getting out of the classroom, riding a bus with my classmates, and just enjoying the field trips. But, what I saw on television mirrored what I saw in Jamestown, Yorktown and Williamsburg—White people. But again, as in my television watching, I did not notice an absence of people like me. These field trips never addressed issues of slavery. (Although that has been changing in Williamsburg in recent years, it was not the case when I was a young student). What did Blacks or people like me do or accomplish during this time frame in history? I did not ask these questions during my grade school days, either because watching television, visiting these historical places, and not knowing who I was at that particular moment made me
feel as though I was either White or that being part of this history included me somehow and was a part of who I was. It gave me the unquestioned feeling of belonging and access to knowledge.

Color blindness and classlessness for children were the elements that enabled me to assume that I, too was a part of America’s proud legacy. I did not have to see anyone who looked like me in Jamestown; my presence in historic Virginia qualified me as a part of America.

**Family History**

As time passed, my parents began to tell me several stories. These stories were about my great grandparents, grandparents, and my parents’ early lives as children growing up in Virginia and North Carolina. My attempt to recall these stories has been difficult, but progress is being made in remembering these important and almost forgotten historical events. I have learned that my parents were acting as *griots*, those who, in the African tradition pass on historical
data in the form of oral story telling. These shared stories of my families’ past, during the periods that my parents called “the Jim Crow years” and “the Depression,” provided several stories of survival and relationships.

One particular story, told by my father on several occasions, involved my parents struggle to survive during the depression years (1929-39). I remember him always saying “I was hungry from 29-39.” For a long time, I did not know what he was talking about. I remember saying to myself as a child “That’s a long time to be hungry.”

Even though my father stressed the importance of friends and family, I was more fascinated with his description of fish head soup and how he would go to the fish market and ask for the fish heads. Fish head soup may have been one of his culinary specials, but I could not visualize eating a soup with the head of a fish looking at me. He used to say that he would make some for us, but I am thankful that he never did put my sister and me through that ordeal. However, if he had
prepared the meal, I would have eaten the meal, because I had no voice on that issue.

**Television and Exposure to Different Cultures**

I enjoyed watching television for the first time in 1958. It was a huge used black and white television (it may have looked big to me because I was small). One of the first television shows that I watched was *Amos and Andy*. I only watched it twice, because for some reason, I did not think the actors were funny.

When I watched the *Amos and Andy Show*, I did not quite understand the humor, and everything (the characters, the house, even the television screen) seemed dark. The *Amos and Andy Show* could not compare to the *Donna Reed Show, Father Knows Best*, or any of the other White sitcoms that I used to love and enjoy. Even at this very early age, I began to compare White sitcoms and Black sitcoms and clearly saw myself associated with the White situation comedies, because even though I knew I was Black, I felt as though I could be just as good as the White characters in the
White sitcoms. Given a choice at this very early age; I would have preferred to be White, I often wondered why my parents enjoyed watching the Amos and Andy Show.

More evident than not was the power of acculturation on me as a youth of a disadvantaged minority group, disassociation from my blackness was much better than association with what was familiar.

The television shows I enjoyed watching, were *Father Knows Best, Leave It To Beaver, The Donna Reed Show, Danny Thomas Show, The Andy Griffith Show, Leave It To Beaver, Hazel, Bewitched, Dennis The Menace,* "Courtship of Eddie's Father, Dick Van Dyke Show, Flipper, and Family Affair,* to name a few. I would not miss an episode of *Father Knows Best,* and *Leave It to Beaver,* because the father roles for both shows were phenomenal to me as a child. They were always fair and would admit when they made mistakes, and they always had a positive response for whatever dilemma happened to arise. The fathers were "cool" because they knew everything, they were always in flow, they were always on top of all the technologies, and so on. The father
image was firm but fair. I used to think that when I grew up, I wanted to be just like them, and my wife would not have to work outside the home. I would be the head of the household, and my wife would stay home and raise the kids. I also enjoyed watching westerns such as *Wagon Train*, *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, *Rawhide*, *The Virginian*, *Bonanza*, and *Daniel Boone*. In each of these westerns, the stars appeared able to handle just about any adverse situation. They earned the respect of those who worked for them. For example, in *Bonanza*, the father had to raise four sons without a mother figure. All of these characters had both voice and power.

**Back to Reality**

In the mid 1960s, my father accepted the role of teacher in our household. We, my sister and I, were in constant competition to win anywhere from 25 cents to 50 cents for answering questions correctly. My father, being a deacon in the church, and eventually becoming a minister, would quiz my sister and me on passages in
the Bible. I always won. My sister would get the consolation prize, which would be a nickel or a dime.

My sister and I also read the Reader’s Digest, specifically, the “Word Power Made Easy” section and occasionally, a short story like Jack London’s “Call of the Wild.” The words in the “Word Power” section were very difficult for 7- and 8-year-old children. We would look at each word for about 30 minutes. We would then give the book to our father and he would read the word, and then read the four possible choices for the answer. Again, I always won.

Even though I was aware of the words and most of the meanings, I was never able to use the words that I had learned. There was no reinforcement of the use of the words, because they were not a part of my discourse community. If, as a young child, I had used even one of those words I had learned, I would have to fight, because someone in my primary discourse community would have challenged me with the accusation that I thought I was “better than everyone else.” I learned that words are tools giving access to a social and economic world
not accepted in all communities but sought by members as normal on television.

My favorite game was Who’s Who in Greek or Roman Mythology. (I had an unfair advantage over my sister, because I would read comic books that were short adventures of Greek and Roman gods.) My father probably knew what I was reading, but may have assumed it was a typical Superman, Batman, or Spiderman comic book. However, I knew my sister had no idea what I was reading, because she was not interested in anything that I was doing. She was in her own world, and I was in mine.

For the mythology game, my father would start by opening the Readers Digest book about ancient people and their mythological gods. We could read or glimpse through the text. Thank goodness for the pictures with the names and titles of the gods. Once I read the name, I would recall some adventure I read in a comic book and the rest was easy. However, for my sister, it took a little longer. I remember telling her, “Take your time, slow poke.” (Maybe that is why she kept
reminding me about repeating the second grade.) She would then give me the evil eye and continue. My father would then ask, “Who is Zeus?” I would look at my sister, with the wrinkle in her forehead, which later turned to a blank look on her face. After a short pause I would blurt out, “King of the gods.” My father said. “Right!” “Who is the goddess of the moon?” Without delay, I shouted, “Diana!” Now I was starting to have fun. Venus, Apollo, Mars, and Jupiter would follow. Fortunately, my sister knew Venus was the goddess of love, but she missed the rest.

These games were wonderful, especially because I was winning. However, there was no place for me to share or reinforce the information gained from Dad’s educational question and answer games. I used one of the “Word Power Made Easy” words while I was outside playing with my friends. They were quick to remind me of who I was and that to be a part of this community, I would have to use the language of this community.

“Huh? What? So you think you are better than we are?” I very quickly came back to reality with the response,
“I was just kidding.” To explain to them where I learned this word would have been a lost cause or would have further complicated the situation.

It was nice to receive the money from learning these new words, but the experience produced no long-term gains except that I would hear and use some of these words in my university undergraduate and graduate experience, 20 to 25 years later.

The Illusion

One of my favorite shows in the mid 60s became Star Trek.

Figure 14 Star Trek
Each week, *Star Trek* adventures presented different worlds, cultures, languages, beliefs, and ways of manipulating through each awkward “faux pas” that the *Star Trek* characters found themselves in. Through the wonderful world of television, *Star Trek* led me to believe that differences could be worked out negotiated, plus everything hinged on seamless use of technology. It was very much apparent that the futuristic technologies—for example, the transporters, the warp engines, the replicators, the scanners, and the like—must be fully functional for the Starship Enterprise to accomplish its goals and missions. The appeal of the program to me was its showing the possibility that differences could be worked out.

"Let that be your last battlefield"

I used to watch the original *Star Trek* series every week. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, from my earliest childhood memories I realize I was always fascinated with space travel, stars, and technology. *Star Trek* seemed to make these ideas a
reality, or a possible imaginary reality. There were several shows in the series that I watched with much intensity and curiosity.

One of the shows titled “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” was an episode that I watched over and over again, each time with great anticipation and intensity. There were several ideas and issues I remembered about the show. The colors, for one-- not only the crew’s uniforms, but the colors in the ship’s decor, which complemented the crews’ uniform were impressive. The colors of red, gray, gold, and blue are the four primary colors throughout every scene. But more importantly, the issues in this episode went beyond color and introduced race to me. For the first time, I began to see race as an issue. The two guest stars were a part of cultures that were at war with each other, and the key issue was difference. I was at a loss the first time I watched the show because I could not see the difference. The characters were both white on one side and black on the other. It was not until close to the end of the show where the audience
was informed that one character was white on one side and the other character was black on the same side. I was at a loss and truly needed to see this show again, because I was shocked that they both looked alike. Just because one individual was black on the left side of his body and the other was white on the left side of his body, why was that a problem? It became such an enigma to me.

I did not make the connection at that time, but now, upon reflection, I see race as a controversial issue. The crew of the USS Enterprise was already diverse, but these mirror-image black-and-white characters raised diversity to an all new level for me. Unfortunately, I did not follow up on the issue of race and society. I did not connect the issue of race to my own visions of identity and access, or to my own experiences of success and failure in using the technologies and discourse of school and community.

The amazing cinematography of television and movies gave me and my generation tools, through technology, that enabled us to live better lives. The
literacy experience provided by my father helped build my confidence in believing that I was just as smart, or smarter than the next person, or that I was at least smarter than my sister.

Eventually, power came through a self-confidence nurtured and developed through my interactions with my father. My father guided me with his positive reinforcement to the notion that to be better, and thus powerful, meant to succeed in whatever I chose for myself.
I suppose my ease with joining the Naval Junior ROTC at Maury High School in Norfolk, Va., and joining the United States Air Force, and meeting people of different cultures was easily embraced because of my belief that differences did not have to matter.

**Conclusion**

Technology during this period became a priority impelled by the Russian launching of Sputnik, which led
to the United States’ creation of the Mercury and Gemini Programs. The space programs were further enhanced by the television *Star Trek* series. Space technology became a major part of my life and helped raise my awareness, both consciously and subconsciously, of the value and potential of technology for making a difference in the world. On another level, I became fascinated with the White sitcom secondary discourse community and developed a total distaste of Black humor and what the *Amos and Andy Show* depicted, which meant rejection of my primary discourse community. Unfortunately, my parents forced me to watch *Amos and Andy*, and I had no voice in the selection of television programs. Having no input in repeating the second grade further reiterates the absence of my voice in both home and school discourses.

My father's efforts to prepare my entry into the secondary discourse of school demonstrated to me both the positive and negative aspects of using language, because I quickly became aware of the problems of transferring language from the secondary discourse
community into my primary discourse community. In a positive way, my father’s efforts had given me access to discourse that was invaluable and laid a foundation for future experiences in communities of power. But the negative side was the incompleteness of his efforts (through no fault of his but because of a system rooted in history). Thus, I did not know when to code switch or understand the rules of when to use what language and in which discourse community. My experience in those early years was not the last such experience. Essentially, the same issue would occur in the future when I left Penn State and returned home to my friends in Norfolk Virginia. Fortunately, by then, I had acquired the ability to switch between two or more discourses.
Believe, Hope, Faith, Dream, and Imagine: These are the words that resonate through my mind when my father talked about my future path in life. Nothing in life is guaranteed.

My sister and I often laugh about the fact that neither of us can ever remember seeing a new textbook until our first year at Maury High School. My sister attended Maury from 1967 to 1970, and I attended Maury from 1969 to 1972. Although we appreciated the newness of the books, our feelings were ambivalent. We were happy with them on the one hand, but we also felt slighted because we had become so accustomed to seeing other people’s notes and ideas from previous classes that had used the text books. My sister and I did not realize at the time that we had been stifled in the development of our own new ideas by our earlier practice of following the highlighting and marginal notes left by previous textbook owners.
My first day of high school was memorable. As the semester opened in September of 1969, I was very excited to finally be able to say, "I am in high school." But this was a very different experience for me, because I had never seen so many White people around me before. Immediately, at the start of the day, I felt a little out of place in some of my classes. Not only did I not know the White children, but I did not know the majority of the Black students either. They must have attended some of the other junior high schools in the local area.

As I walked down the hallways from class to class, I could not help but notice that this school was enormous. Maybe it was because I was 4ft. 9in. tall. I have always been short for my age, so maybe it looked so enormous because I was vertically challenged. The main hallway was filled with trophies encased in a glass wall unit. Many of the trophies had dates from 1930 through 1960 for district and state championships in baseball, football, swimming, golf, and so forth.
Hanging on the walls at the main entrance were pictures of the previous principals (all White), looking very prestigious and ominously gazing down on those who walked through these hallways.

I finally made it to my English classroom. I chose a seat in the middle of the room on the left side. I felt very much out of place in that English classroom, but I remember that I wanted to belong and be a part of the class. I have always had a positive attitude, except for this first day at a different school in which most of my classmates from Madison Jr. High School were no longer with me in class. I remember the teacher very well. Her name was Mrs. Conway, and I could not forget her because her hair was different from that of any of the other teachers I had ever had before. I later learned that you could describe her hair color as not just blonde but really blonde. She looked very young and very pretty. However, there was something about her voice that commanded authority, while there was a melodiousness in her voice as well. She was very confusing to me. I
was probably perplexed because of my concept of White women that I had formed from watching television. The White teachers I observed on television were very proper and soft-spoken. The majority of them fit the Barbie image. I had a beautiful English teacher with blonde hair, and a firm yet subtle voice. Later, I learned that this would be one of the classes that would have a negative impact on my academic experience at Maury High School. (This will be explained later in this chapter)

There were several students in my class that I did not know, regardless of race or culture; it was interesting to me that by the end of the semester and school year, I did not know the majority of the White students in my English class. We traveled in different circles. These White students were members of several clubs which maintained an all-White membership,
and after school hours, they lived in communities in which I did not visit or traverse.

In this English class, I would struggle because I did not have a clue about what was going on in reference to what was required in the class. I believe the teacher told us what was expected, but in a manner
or language that was totally foreign to me. There could be several reasons why I did not understand her instructions, and quite possibly technology (or lack of access to technology) could have been an issue. At that particular time, a visual reference other than the text could have brought some clarity to the story. I knew we would have to read a book called Silas Marner and A Tale of Two Cities. What I noticed most of all about these two books was absolutely nothing. I did not possess the technology tools to access the ideas and visions of this school’s programs.

I remember reading Silas Marner at home, and I could not visualize what was going on in the text. The same was true of my reading it at school. The environment in which I read the text had little to nothing to do with how I associated the text with my life.

For example:

In the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses -- and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak -- there might be seen in districts far away among the
lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny countryfolk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag? -- and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. From Silas Marner Chapter 1 (1st Paragraph)

And,

But while opinion concerning him had remained nearly stationary, and his daily habits had presented scarcely any visible change, Marner's inward life had been a history and a metamorphosis, as that of every fervid nature must be when it has fled, or been condemned, to solitude. His life, before he came to Raveloe, had been filled with the movement, the mental activity, and the close fellowship, which, in that day as in this, marked the life of an artisan early incorporated in a narrow religious sect, where the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech, and has, at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community. From Silas Marner Chapter 1

http://www.online-literature.com/george_eliot/silas_marner/
Also, I remember opening Charles Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, and reading this paragraph:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

From *A Tale of Two Cities*

[http://www.bookrags.com/books/2city/PART1.htm](http://www.bookrags.com/books/2city/PART1.htm)

I selected these passages because, at age 16, many of these words meant absolutely nothing to me as a young Black male student. In reading the other books, I was able to visualize and, for the most part, could imagine myself as being a part of the story. In reading the first chapter and first paragraph of *Silas*
Marner, the words and key phrases made it difficult for me to grasp. As I read it over and over again, just the first paragraph, I felt like a car whose engine would not start.

I now know these texts are considered classics, but not for a young Black male who had previously attended an all-Black elementary school and junior high school. I recall having access to several books at home and at school, but I did not have a “technology” for reading and understanding them (in the sense of feeling equipped to process what they offered). I had not been prepared in either vocabulary or experience in a way that would have enabled me to visualize what was happening in these stories or how they might relate to my life.

I recall having to take several tests on books we were required to read, and I scored very low on all of the written tests. We even read the books in class and it was very apparent to me that quite a few other people had a better grasp or understanding of the books. For instance, I did not or could not associate
with the characters in the book. Their White foreignness became more obvious than the cowboys or astronauts. I had no idea of what either book was saying, even after the teacher gave us a synopsis of what the book was about. I did not have any idea about what to expect out of the text or the course. However, the majority of my (White) classmates knew what to expect and picked up the storyline.

Not knowing what to expect in this environment became extremely frustrating to me, because I had a teacher who was different from me and classmates whom I did not know how to approach and ask for help. I cannot remember a time, even though I sat very close to the front, that the teacher ever called on me. I remember the discussions and other students raising their hands and her calling on them. Even though I wanted to participate in the discussion, I felt as though I had nothing to offer to the discussion. I felt totally hopelessness.

As the semester went along, I became more and more separated from the class and the teacher. I could not
and did not participate in the classroom discussion about any of the texts or novels that we read in the classroom. So I effectively (intentionally or unintentionally) remained behind the rest of the class and was not an effective member of my 10th grade English community.

But the story was altogether different when I became a member of another discourse community, the Maury High School Band. Here I would find my niche.

The Band Classroom Community

The Maury High School Band had a very proud and exceptional history. It consistently received Superior (Top Level, I) ratings at the district music festival. This was far different from my Madison Junior High School Band experience where at the district music festival, we consistently received only Good (Third Level, III) ratings. I remember the day after my last Junior High School Festival where I was very disappointed that we had received only a III and strongly thought we deserved a I. My father, in an
attempt to make me feel better, told me, “It wasn’t that you all didn’t play good, but if you Black kids wore confederate [gray] uniforms and played ‘When Johnny Comes Marching Home,’ then you all would’ve gotten the highest grade.” I knew what he was trying to tell me, but I always thought music transcended race. Moreover, if Black kids, playing White music, thinking White dreams, and not aware of barriers in gaining access to becoming users of White technology to achieve White goals like space travel, can’t be judged on only their musical ability in a music competition, it is a travesty.
However, as a member of the Maury High School Band, I hoped that being a part of this [predominantly White] community would give me the opportunity to experience the receiving of a Superior rating at the district music festival. In the band community, I felt acceptance because I had passed a rigorous audition and

Figure 18 Larry Playing Snare Drum
received compliments from other members of the band who observed my performance. However, my problems in the academic community remained.

The Academic Community

Needless to say, when I received my first report card, I really didn't want to take it home with me. I was in big trouble. I failed English, math, and biology. I received exceptional grades in band, physical education, military science, and a passing grade in history. But that was not enough to keep me from getting into trouble when I got home.

My parents were very angry and disappointed in me and upset with the school. My mother came to school the very next day. She talked to each of the teachers in hopes that she could turn my behavior into something that was more productive and constructive. The good news: all my teachers spoke very highly of me. (This later raised the question for me of why did the teachers praise me, while I was failing their classes? Were their expectations that low for me or people like
me so that they felt I was doing the best I could do?)

Their comments were one of my saving graces. But it was not enough to keep my mother from trying to have me removed from the band. Mr. Ricardo, the band director at that time, made a very passionate plea with my mother not to have me removed from the band. He explained to her that I was very talented and shared with her how much I enjoyed playing the drums. My love and passion for playing

![Figure 19 Larry Playing Timpani](image)
drums (snare drum and timpani) was no secret to my mother, family, or anyone else who knew me. Though my mother’s intentions were good, removing me from the band could possibly have had a catastrophic affect. Without being a part of the community in which I was accepted, I would have had no reason to remain in school and I may have become a statistic (dropout).

My mother's trip to my classes and conversing with my teachers helped me to a certain degree. (It was still embarrassing that my mother visited each and every one of my classes; my classmates teased me about that for quite some time.) In the following marking period, I received two F(s) and one D in my primary courses.

Many experiences in my biology class, which I actually enjoyed, are very faint in my memory. I enjoyed reading the text and dissecting and labeling different animals and animal parts. However, one comment by the teacher stands out more than any other comments that she ever made. I remember her saying, "You all should be very proud of yourselves, because
everyone in here has at least a 95 IQ." I had no idea what that meant, but I believed that was a compliment at that particular time. I thought, because of our grading system, that her statement was a compliment.

By the end of the school year, I had failed English and Math. I was going to summer school.

What I Learned from My Two School Communities

From my experience in the English classroom and Band classroom, I learned a lot about communities. In comparing the two environments, I learned that in the English community I was ignored, not accepted, and though I spoke the language of the community, I did not understand the language in a manner that I would feel comfortable using it. Again, I did not gain access to the literacy club which the English class discourse community represented and which Frank Smith has stressed is so important for success.

In the band community I felt a sense of belonging and connectedness which made me feel I belonged amongst this community. I knew the language
(music) and I was able to make a considerable contribution by being a member of the group. Interestingly enough, even though the band community was divided into several sections or subgroups (the woodwinds, brass, percussion, and sometimes strings), and even though there were further divisions in each group (first, second, third, and sometimes fourth chair), we all made valuable contributions to our community. Everyone was a part of one unit and dedicated to one goal, the success of the band.

Acceptance-Rejection, Visible-Invisible, Acknowledged-Ignored, Support-Non-Support are key elements which I found to be different in the two communities. In one community, I was destined for success, and in the other for failure.

Even though I was failing and felt hopelessness in the one community, I was not viewed as a threat, I possessed a good attitude, I was non-confrontational, I was docile, and I accepted the oppressive practices in the English classroom.
In the English Classroom community, I had not mastered the language of the community which ultimately created a barrier between myself and the other participants. As a result, I became invisible to the other participants. In contrast, as a member of the Band Classroom community, I knew the language, could read the music, could hear the rhythms, and was therefore validated, accepted, and acknowledged as an active participant in the band community because I knew and comprehended the community discourse.

12th grade

I thought I was in control of my destiny; however, the most problematic class for me was U.S. History. It was not because I did not have the tools to participate in the classroom; it was because what was being taught was redundant information that I already had from several other history classes.

Throughout my academic career thus far, I felt comfortable and did well in my previous social studies, history, geography, and related classes. I received a
B in the 8th grade, a C in the 9th grade. In the 10th grade I did not take a history/government class, and earned a C in the 11th grade.

After attending class for approximately one week at the beginning of my senior year, I stopped going for the remaining semester and a large portion of the final semester. The class was extremely boring. The lessons were a mere repeat of what I had learned in junior high school without adding anything to the course to make it interesting. Every day, several students were selected to read information from a chapter in the book and the teacher gave her interpretation of what was read. I could not take another semester of this teaching style. So, I taught driver education during the time I was supposed to be in my History class.

Towards the end of the school year, I realized this was my senior year and I was suppose to graduate. I went back to history class with three and a half weeks remaining in the school year. The teacher greeted me with “welcome back.” She further went on to tell me, "You have to get an A on the final exam if you
want to pass this course." I got an A on the final exam, but it was an enormous amount of pressure on me. This was a situation that never should have developed.

The teacher was 25 years old with limited interaction with Black students, and she made no contact with the administration or my home about my absence from class. I believe this can be attributed to her low expectations and lack of vision that any of the Black students could have had high career aspirations or the ability to become history makers themselves, such as astronauts. The world of achievement that lay ahead for students after high school was only for the responsible elite students—in other words, students who were like her. The thought of skipping classes in elementary or junior high school had not been an option. Students’ absence and maladaptive behavior there would have prompted an immediate call or contact with the student’s home. Yet, this high school teacher had simply ignored my absence. To me, it seemed that she did not care.
Conclusion

I was living in an illusion that I could live and participate in any community. From my early years of watching White sitcoms, I still lived in a imaginary world where subconsciously I really believed I was White, totally dismissing the shocking reality that I was black as a tar baby. Entering into a White community and learning that I was different from the majority of my classmates, and learning I was really Black, was a traumatic experience. As I knew the language of the secondary discourse community of the English classroom from TV sitcoms, I soon realized my knowledge of the language was at a surface level. I required a deeper level of understanding the language if I were to comprehend all facets that would allow me to participate at a higher level and be more fully a part of the larger society.

In the history class, I elected not to participate in the community and thereby learned that there are consequences when we elect not to participate in discourses of power that can have negative long term
effects on our future. My choice not to participate could have resulted in my not graduating.

Acceptance or rejection in any discourse community relies partly on the ability to participate in that community. I was able to belong in the band community because I had the discourse tools to play music with the group. However, I lacked the discourse tools of the high school academic classroom, thus was marginalized from those literacy clubs. Prior to high school, I was unconscious of this difference, believing I was White and able to use that secondary discourse successfully as I participated with radio and television discourses.

Becoming conscious of my discourse memberships made me conscious of my lack of power and access to the traditional literacy clubs, and I pursued what power was available in my primary discourses outside of school, and the secondary discourse of music within school.

This marginalization and division in my identity followed me into the next stage of my life, and its
problems remained until I overcame them by joining The Technology Literacy Club.
Chapter 5

Discovering the Flow

Military Years

My basic military training experience was based on fear. “Imposed discipline leads to self-discipline.” These words would resonate throughout my military career.

The first three years in the United States Air Force posed no challenge to me. I accomplished the job of being a Non-Destructive Inspection Specialist (NDI), which is to detect microscopic cracks and metal fatigue in aircraft parts, using five different inspection methods: X-Ray, Ultrasound, Penetrant, Eddy Current, and Bond Testing. Another subsection of this job was titled Spectrometric Oil Analysis Operator or SOAP. The SOAP job was a little more interesting than the NDI job, because I would burn oil samples from jet aircraft using an electronic spectrometer. As the oil would ignite, a light beam would penetrate the fire and measure the metal contents in the fire. After
receiving the numbers, I could determine which part of the aircraft engine would fail. I found this job fascinating and rewarding up until the time I mastered the process. After that, it was no longer rewarding because it had become routine and was no longer a challenge.

I elected to retrain into air traffic control. For the remaining 17 years of my military service, I was challenged with something new (different situations) every day, and I understood why air traffic control was the number one most stressful job.

However, issues of race, class, and gender surfaced for me in the air traffic control field just as they do in so many other fields. The air traffic control school is divided into five units of instruction. The first portion is called the FAA certification. After one week in the course, I failed the first block of instruction. I was counseled by the block supervisor who asked me, "Are you ready to give up? You people cannot do this job. Why don't you just go back to your old job." "No, I am not ready to give
up," was my response. He replied, "OK, but if you fail another portion of the school, I will have you eliminated."

A fear of failure still haunted me from my second grade experience. I began to subconsciously question my ability to even be an air traffic controller. Prior to my failure in the first block of instruction, I was overconfident and believed there was no Air Force or other military school that I could not successfully complete.

I completed the course without another failure. Again, I encountered stress and pressure similar to my 12th grade history course. However, as a final slap in the face, I was told by another White instructor at the end of the course, "You will not make it in the air traffic control career field." I was determined not to let his prophecy come true. His statement became a motivating factor for me to succeed.

I did not think of my race as an issue relevant to my learning or success in accessing a new technology or discourse. From early in my Air Force career, I was
told by my drill sergeant that we were all the same color (Blue Suiter.) If I had thought about the statement, I would have raised a question about why, if we were all the same color, every military base had an office whose primary job was race relations. But I did not raise such a question.

After successfully being an air traffic controller in the field (the real world), I returned to the Air Traffic Control School seven years later, via Berlin, Germany, and became an instructor, determined to examine if the cultural bias was still present. My goal was to teach and assess students fairly regardless of their race, class, or gender.

Berlin, Germany

In 1983, I received a 2-year special duty assignment to Tempelhof Central Airport, Berlin, Germany.
Because that part of Berlin was in East/Communist Germany, to receive this assignment, my military record had to be spotless. Since the location was behind the Iron Curtain, this assignment was politically sensitive. At the end of World War II, Germany was divided amongst Russia, France, England, and the United States. Berlin, being the capital and in central Germany, was divided into sections also. There were two legal ways to gain access to the American sector of
Berlin, which was by flying through East Germany via one of three corridors or taking an overnight train from Frankfurt, Germany. Deviating outside of the corridor without authorization or approval could result in an aircraft being shot down.

My first placement was in the RADAR Approach Control (RAPCON), where I went through my initial indoctrination training for 2 weeks. There I learned and memorized the airport traffic area (including the three adjacent airports to Tempelhof), important
procedures about the three corridors, the air traffic equipment, and other important information. The majority of the equipment was familiar to me, except that Tempelhof was using a very new, state of the art, computerized aircraft tracking system called FLIPCO or Flight Program Coordination. What was unique about FLIPCO was that outside of the normal method of following the flight of an aircraft, FLIPCO allowed air traffic controllers to utilize a computerized monitor with a touch screen. For example, when an aircraft was ready to depart, it would flash on the monitor and the controller would touch the aircraft call sign on the monitor and then hit DEPART, and when the aircraft would be transferred to another facility, the controller would touch the aircraft call sign and then touch HANDOFF. The aircraft’s call sign would start to flash or blink until the other facility would accept the handoff, indicating reception by touching the aircraft call sign on their monitor and then touching ACCEPT.
Even though the technology associated with FLIPCO was state of the art, the only difference was that the touch screen eliminated writing the information on a flight progress strip, and no verbal communication was required. This saved time for a procedure that normally took from 15 to 30 seconds—or more, if there were adverse circumstances. As with change from one method to another, there was resistance from some of the ATC personnel who were opposed to change, even if the change were for the better.

I saw the improvement and possibilities of FLIPCO and, as I tried to do with most new and innovative ideas, looked for connections between how we used to perform our tasks and the new and improved way of performing our job. Looking at it from this perspective (by asking myself, “What is it, and how does it relate to what I have used in the past?”) reduced the complexity of completing the learning process of how this touch screen apparatus worked.
After learning the complexities and nuances of FLIPCO, I wondered, “How did we ever live without it?” At the same time as new technology was introduced on the job, I began to buy computers for myself. The first computer I purchased was a Texas Instrument TI-99a first generation computer for $149. The purchase was an impulse buy, and the computer was designed for typing and playing games only. I had to load programs through a cassette tape, which was slow because the system had no hard drive, which meant that all software had to be loaded and run from the short-term memory of the computer. I sold the Texas Instrument computer before I left Germany, because it had rapidly become outdated.

Movie as a Medium, a Reality

The Movie War Games, starring Matthew Broderick, had the single most significant and powerful impact on me from a “this is real” perspective. During this time (1984), I had no idea the technology shown in this
In the movie, David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) is described as a typical young White male high school student, who is just starting to discover girls, yet he has a greater passion for technology than for the young girl (Ally Sheedy.) He is categorized as an under-achiever in high school; yet, he is capable of accomplishing more with technology than any of his peers, and is far more on the level with the academic scholars in higher education.

Broderick uses his home personal computer to access his high school computer (to change his grades), to access company computers, to download and play new computer games before they are sold on the open market, to access telephone company computers and change/reduce his phone bills (he has to amass large long distance bills calling other states to connect to their computers), and even to access the airline computer to add his name for a flight to Paris, France.
All is well until he accidentally accesses a highly sensitive and secure government computer. After an unsuccessful initial attempt at logging on to the system, he realizes research is required to learn everything about the maker of the system to discover "the back door password to log on to the system." He accomplishes an enormous amount of research to discover the password. David’s research is thorough and intense although his ultimate goal is to play a seemingly harmless game called "Global Thermal Nuclear War." However, this seemingly harmless game nearly starts World War III.

After his extensive research, and several unsuccessful attempts to log on to the WOPR computer, David, by using logic, deduction, and luck, learns the system’s back door password. The password is "Joshua," the first name of the program creator’s deceased son.

**Movie’s Impact on Me**

Of all the movies that had an impact on my fascination with technology, *War Games* affected me
most. It opened my eyes to what appeared to be the most current innovations and possibilities in the world of computer technology. I wanted to have the ability to access these places and explore this new world in which there was so much to discover. The newness, the complexity, and the power to gain knowledge of what I was not supposed to know (as a young Black male), made it seem even more fascinating.

Even though this was a movie, I could see and feel the reality of how *War Games* exposed technology as constantly changing. It had evolved from an idea to accessible reality.

**Air Traffic Control**

Air traffic control is one of the most stressful jobs in the world, with teaching coming in a close second. As one of the most prestigious jobs in the military, it is attractive to every recruit who enters the military.

After returning to the ATC School in Mississippi as an instructor, I was introduced to the Programmable
Information Data Program (PIDP), which allowed controllers to assign a 4-digit code to each aircraft and also to be able to see the aircraft’s call sign. This helped controllers (us) not to have to rely on our memory of where each and every primary target (blip) on our radar scope (under our control) was located.

Many of the supervisors were resistive to this new technology. They were constantly asking “What’s wrong with the old way?” The argument continued with complaints about the cost to make the upgrade, or the claim that the new system was not safe and stable and was therefore, in their opinion, unreliable. It was true that there was nothing wrong with the old way, but the new way was better and opened the door to a safer air traffic control system.

I, on the other hand, took to the new system like a duck to water. The new system compared to the old system was considerably better and was easy to use. I had struggled with the old system of trying to remember where each and every aircraft was located under my control, whereas the new system not only gave me a 4
digit code, but also gave me the aircraft identification (name) and altitude (elevation). The advancement with this system could allow virtually anyone to be an air traffic controller. My thought on the upgrade was, “How did we ever live without it?”

I was technology hungry because, with each new set of tools, there came a strong sense of control over the world and a sense of achieving positions that had been part of my childhood dreams--positions that made me a part of the world that had been populated by my television idols long ago, as I had watched astronauts and the *Father Knows Best* images. I felt as though I was now claiming a part of the American Dream.

**How I learned**

My First Encounter with using a desktop computer was in 1987. I was an air traffic control instructor at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.
Prior to 1987, the instructors used old electronic typewriters that maintained short-term memory to write appraisals and evaluations of students and other instructors. As time went on, we made a transition to using an 8086 computer. Initially, we used the DOS operating system, and the main program that we used was called WordPerfect 4.0. The software was very reliable, compatible, dependable, and stable. We eventually moved or upgraded to Windows 3.1, which was a stable operating system, and later to Windows 95. Doing evaluations and appraisals on computers eventually became a very easy task as compared to the long boring task on the typewriter.
First Hacking Experience

My first and only hacking experience involved gaining access to my supervisor's floppy disk, which actually contained a password that would not allow anyone to gain access to his files on the floppy disk. On one afternoon, my colleagues and I gained access to the floppy disks. I started the computer up in DOS and began to read the system files on the disk. I noticed the machine language, but also was able to see two words that were very important; the words were Password: caramel. I rebooted the computer, inserted the floppy disk, and when I was in Windows 95, I double clicked on the floppy disk, and I was asked what was the password. I typed in caramel, and gained access to all of the files on his floppy disk. When I explained to my supervisor what I had done, I was shocked that he was not angry but was more amazed that I had been able to gain access to what he had thought was secure, his password-protected floppy disk. After showing my supervisor, step by step, how I was able to gain access to his floppy disk, he was even more amazed at how easy
the process was and how insecure all of the floppy
disks were for all the individuals who were using the
same practice as he to secure highly sensitive and
confidential files on floppy disks. He informed his
peers and superiors of the flaw in using floppy disks
as a secure method of storing confidential information.

Conclusion

My Air Force career touches on all key themes of
my thesis. The Air Force basic training experience
clearly explained the hierarchical caste system from
top to bottom. As the minorities make up the majority
of the lower level of the system, we were obligated to
follow the instructions of those in the higher echelons
without question. In other words, we had no voice.
Absence of voice leads to absence of power. From a
technological perspective, the air traffic control
career field provided an access to a totally different
discourse community that would affect even my academic
career. Air traffic control discourse is short,
direct, and requires no explanation. It is a language
that is unique to pilots and controllers and is not accepted or used in other communities.

From a discourse perspective, all branches of the military have their own basic mother discourse and each job specialty has its own individual sub-discourse. By mastering the technology of these discourses, I also gained power through the spoken and print literacies that were part of these discourses. Through my military experiences, all of the literacies came together for me, giving me access to social and economic mobility.
In 1994, my wife and I relocated to State College, Pennsylvania, to attend Penn State University. We quickly learned, after our first year, that our Hewlett-Packard 486 computer purchased one-year prior was already outdated and slow. This, we learned, would be an ongoing trend/cycle because technology was constantly changing. So, we made what turned out to be a major decision to purchase two custom-built Pentium 200 MHz computer. My wife’s computer arrived in excellent condition with a 17” monitor (which was the largest size for a home PC at that time.) Unfortunately, my computer was visibly damaged and inoperable. Instinctively, I opened the case and saw the damage to the intricate parts of the computer. The only two parts that I could identify at that time were the CD-Rom drive and the floppy drive. But what I noticed shortly after seeing the inner workings of the
$1,000 system I had purchased was that there was nothing complicated or complex about its construction. There was a motherboard with three items attached, a video card, modem, and sound card. There were two cables that connected from the motherboard to the hard drive, the cd-rom drive, and the floppy disk drive. Finally, there was one cord that connected the motherboard to the power supply.

I returned the system to be repaired. But by taking the initiative to open the computer case, I had removed the fear of the unknown and opened a realm of possibilities. I had seen that there was nothing complex or complicated about the computer’s basic components, which caused me to wonder if I could build something this simple myself.

I started making frequent visits to the Penn State salvage store and purchased an old computer for $25. I removed the case and began to remove the parts (deconstruct), learning the names of each part and their function as I took them out. This turned out to
be easy because there were not many parts. In addition to the motherboard, to which everything was connected, the computer contained a video card, processor and fan (the fan was used to keep the processor cool), Random Access Memory (RAM), sound card, hard drive, and power supply. After taking them all apart, examining them, and putting them back together again (reconstruct), I applied power to the system and was amazed to learn that it worked. I took the system apart several times and practiced putting it back together again and then moved on to the next step, which was to go online and purchase each part individually. Not just the old computer parts, but I dared to venture into purchasing the latest and best computer parts.

After the parts arrived, I installed them and again, much to my surprise, they worked. I went through the same process of taking it apart and putting it back together again. From this process, I learned a new word that is still with me and anyone else who uses a computer. The word is upgrade, and it applies not only to hardware but also to software.
But, there was much more for me to learn about software. I needed to know more about operating systems and application software. I knew I could learn that, too. We often fear what we cannot see, but I was fortunate enough to have taken the risk of opening the computer case. That simple act actually opened for me much more than a computer case. It opened a whole new realm of technology. Because of that, I was introduced to a whole new language and discourse: motherboard, processor (CPU), Random Access Memory (RAM), Mega Hertz (MHz), bytes, hard drive, and more.

The Classroom Experience

Classes I enjoyed the most at the Pennsylvania State University were those that in some way included technology. Any class titled “Curriculum and the Internet” was for me. In these classes, I was introduced to web page design, creating multimedia projects, and virtually anything else that would enhance the classroom learning experience through the tools technology offered.
I created several multimedia projects using Adobe Premiere Software. As I began to use the software, I also began to create ideas on how to use this software as a tool to help students to improve their writing skills and share their ideas. To prepare students for the project, I asked them to create a theme, idea, or issue. Once they had selected their theme, they would find images to support the theme. Finally, they would have to find music or an audio file that would support or connect with the theme. This process was a precursor for students creating thematic teaching units.

As time moved on, I yearned for newer forms of technology. I always wanted the latest and greatest technology available on the market.

In 1996, I met another student in the computer lab who shared with me information about a new program call Dragon Dictate. He explained that it was new and was designed so that a person could talk to it, and it (the program) would type what was said. I immediately
became excited and could see the possibilities in using this software. The gentleman let me borrow his eleven floppy disks and I immediately went home to load the software. Loading the software was long and tedious, but all eleven discs loaded successfully.

As I inserted my headset into the computer, and clicked on the icon to start the program, I was so excited about seeing the possibility of being able to talk to my computer. I began the training process, speaking clearly and enunciating each word. The training process took me one hour to complete and I was totally exhausted by the end. I took a short break and then started the speaking process. As I started speaking, I could see that the program was recognizing some of my words, but not all of them. I believe the ratio of correct to incorrect words was 50%, and what was most noticeable was that I began to start to sound like a robot. This new version of speech software was now more of a problem than it was worth. I became frustrated and stopped using the program.
Through the years, I monitored the speech-to-text software, and I began to notice improvements in the program that I could see would be beneficial to me. The training time was reduced to 5 minutes and the accuracy rate for me is now 98%. I find it very useful.

In 1998, I discovered the importance of the process in creating a multimedia project. I teamed with a classmate, and we selected the issue of power and position in the children’s movie *The Lion King*. As we created our project, we documented what we were thinking as we constructed it, and then we documented our reflection on the literacy process of making the movie.

Through creating this multimedia project, I learned the importance of integrating technology into the curriculum. If this lesson were taught via lecture, I would write a paper and once the class activity was complete, the paper would be quickly forgotten. However, using Adobe Premiere, I was able
for the first time to give a visual representation of my issue. This became a deeply rewarding experience.

**Computer Anxiety or Technophobia**

Learning everything—or as much as I can—about technology comes naturally to me, but I discovered that not everyone shared my passion for technology. I began to research information on “learned helplessness,” “computer anxiety,” and “technophobia”. This area of study is fascinating to me because I began encountering several classmates who were having problems that I did not see as problems. One example: A graduate student had some computer experience with WordPerfect (WP) 5.1 for DOS, but had failed to master many of the program’s command functions. The advanced version of the word processor program, WordPerfect 6.0 for Windows is classified as user friendly because of several help commands that accompany the program along with online demonstrations. The student viewed the program as complicated, however, and described the manual for operation as “immobilizing and frustrating.” The
program had several command buttons that the operator did not understand. Attempting to learn the new program caused the student to experience a sense of failure. The student gave up on WP 6.0, because it was considered stressful and frustrating.

In such a situation, the student could have taken one of two possible courses of action. The first would have been to try to learn the program and possibly obtain positive results (which, in this case, the student believed would be highly unlikely). The second approach would be to conclude that, because peers use the program successfully, there is possibly something wrong with him or her, such as a lack of ability and the necessary comprehension to complete the task of learning WP 6.0. Taking this second approach to the situation, the student gave up trying and reverted back to WP 5.1.

I wrote a paper in my educational psychology class on “learned helplessness.” My first attempt was returned with several comments that ultimately resulted in a major rewrite. The comments were positive in
relation to the ideas, organization, and construction of the paper. However, the area I had to correct was the language. Because I was taking an educational psychology class, it was unacceptable to submit a paper using standard English which was not the language of the discourse used in the discipline. When the paper was rewritten using the psychological terms, even I was impressed. However, after reading the paper for the third time, I realized I lost my voice in the discourse.

**Conclusion**

Technology is ever changing, as I pointed out in this chapter in describing my early years at Penn State. I was able to enter into the computer discourse community with relative ease and found the discovery of information and ideas relating to computer software and hardware fascinating. As I began to build on this knowledge as it was evolving, faculty members and students began to notice and listen to these ideas and technological experiences. This was the beginning of
my developing and gaining a voice in the technology discourse community.
Chapter 7

Resistance Is Futile

After completing my course work at Penn State, I accepted a teaching position at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia. This institution of higher learning is among the nation's leading historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

About Norfolk State University

Norfolk State University had begun as the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University and was founded in 1935 in the midst of the Great Depression, a time that offered little hope for most people, but especially for persons of color. The new Norfolk institution could provide opportunities for African-American youth of the region to continue their education, while at the same time serving as a center of social and economic development for Blacks in the area. In 1942, the college became the independent Norfolk Polytechnic College, and in 1944, the Virginia General Assembly
mandated that it become a part of Virginia State College. In 1956, the institution offered its first bachelor’s degree, and in 1969, Norfolk State became fully independent, no longer affiliated with Virginia State College. From 1975 to 1976, Norfolk State University offered 4 graduate programs in which 191 students were enrolled.

In 1979, Norfolk State College was granted university status. It is the only HBCU in the Commonwealth of Virginia that has a nationally-accredited School of Business and Entrepreneurship and is one of only eight in the nation with this distinction. Norfolk State is also one of only four HBCUs with an accredited program in computer science.

From 1996 to 1997 there were 14 master’s programs and one doctoral program with 1110 students enrolled.

**First Attendance**

When I began my teaching position at Norfolk State, it was not my first introduction to the campus.
I had been an undergraduate student there for a short time many years earlier.

In September of 1972, I had received an $850 academic scholarship to attend Norfolk State University. I successfully auditioned for the band and truly enjoyed the musical experience. Norfolk State University Band provided a totally different band experience (in terms of culture) than what I received at the predominantly White Maury High School. I moved portions of my body that I had never moved before, while playing music that I was very much familiar with or the music of home, such as Earth, Wind & Fire, Friends of Distinction, and many more.

Even though I was academically prepared to attend Norfolk State University, I was mentally and financially unprepared. A lack of sufficient finances showed up in my first semester.

My world was centered entirely around music at that time. In the band/music community, my voice found its expression through playing my musical instrument, and my peers accepted me in this community. However,
two months into the Fall semester of 1972, I broke my glasses. Neither I nor my parents had the funds to have them replaced, so I purchased a pair of $1 sunglasses and wore them constantly throughout the semester. The other band members thought I was trying to be “cool” and gave me the name of “Hollywood.” Little did they know; if I had had a choice and the finances, I would have gladly purchased another pair of glasses.

This promising educational experience at Norfolk State only lasted one school year. And I ultimately enlisted in the military after the spring semester of 1973.

**Back Again - August 2001**

In August of 2001, I returned to Norfolk State University. This time I was mentally mature and was academically and financially prepared to enter into the higher education academic arena. I would be entering it in a different role--that of a faculty member.
At the interview, I was very much aware of two situations at Norfolk State University’s School of Education. These two situations would directly affect me and my teaching practices. The first situation centered around the need to prepare for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (NCATE), whose representatives were scheduled to visit within the next eight months. The second situation directly connected with the first, which was to assist in raising the technological competency of both faculty and students in the School of Education, specifically the Department of Secondary Education and School Leadership. Both of these challenges were very demanding, or as we say at home, "a tall order."

**Faculty Meeting**

After being introduced to the faculty by the head of the department, my expanded duties and responsibilities were shared with the other faculty members. The emphasis on my technological background was highly noted; and it was stressed that sharing my
technological experience with the other faculty, in preparation for NCATE, was just as high a priority as teaching.

A suggestion was made for me to visit other faculty classes to see how I could help assist them in integrating technology into their curriculum. This idea was not received very well. I remember hearing one faculty member declare emphatically, "He's not coming in my class." I began to feel and hear the initial resistance to enhancing faculty pedagogical practice by integrating technology. I immediately remembered how teachers can be very protective of their classroom environment. Oftentimes it is a closed community that is well protected from outside interference, much less to be intruded upon by the new kid on the block.

I realized that as far as they could see, I had not yet proven myself. And even though I was hired into the community, I was not yet officially accepted into the community. So the department head and I devised a new plan.
The New Plan

I discovered the School of Education had purchased a highly advanced piece of technology that I had never encountered before. In the resource room was a $15,000 piece of equipment called the Nomad Multimedia Cart or Nomad Multimedia Station. The multimedia cart was the latest in mobile technological tools for the classroom environment. The Nomad Multimedia Cart was a complete multimedia center that included a computer, a flat-panel monitor, a VCR, and Whiteboard, along with a document camera, a connection for a laptop, an extension for a zip drive, a projector, a set of Bose speakers, remote controls for the VCR and projector, and a simplicity pad. No one was using it.

Someone not familiar with technology who looked at the Nomad could consider it very overwhelming. I found it to be the most organized and efficient piece of equipment I had ever seen since leaving Penn State. As I began to play with it, I began to see how each part worked individually. Once I learned that this equipment was designed in such a way that each piece
worked independently of the other parts or with only the projector was important. In other words, a user of the equipment did not have to use the entire package but could use only one of the pieces of equipment at a time with the projector. This knowledge would make it less intimidating to new users who might not be familiar with many of its components. I was not intimidated by this piece of equipment because I knew how to operate a computer, I knew how to operate a VCR, and the only thing I had not yet learned how to use was the document camera. That was not a problem. Learning how to use the document camera took me approximately 15 minutes. It was only after I had my initial experience of playing with the Nomad Multimedia Cart that I read the instructions. I had already learned most of what I needed to know through my hands-on experience.

In less than two hours, I became totally proficient at using the Nomad Multimedia Station. The new plan for assisting the other faculty members to integrate technology within their curriculum would be by sharing with them how to operate the Nomad Multimedia Station.
Our lessons would be conducted immediately following our weekly faculty meeting. There were five modules that demonstrated how to use each component on the multimedia cart. This idea was embraced because up until then, no one in the entire School of Education had seen the value and usefulness in using the multimedia cart.

I created a PowerPoint that provided step by step instructions.

"The Nomad Mobile Presentation Station!"
http://www.nomadonline.com

A cost effective alternative for all your presentation needs, from the boardroom to the classroom. Simply wheel it in -- plug and play!

Figure 23 Nomad Multimedia
Once I became knowledgeable of the equipment, my next goal was to determine ways for my peers to embrace the notion of integrating technology into the curriculum. In my department, the Department of Secondary Education and School Leadership, I encountered nothing but resistance. So one day, I selected two of the senior faculty and secured a private room where I demonstrated to them how to use one item on the Nomad Multimedia Cart. I gave them written instructions on how to use other items on the Nomad. The instructions were written in plain and simple terms and were easily grasped and understood by the two senior faculty members. I watched as they began to demonstrate to me what they had learned. It was a wonderful experience watching two faculty members, with over 60 years of teaching experience combined, making a transition from using transparencies and overhead projectors to seeing the possibilities of using the latest in technology presentation systems. This later opened up an opportunity to share with the other faculty in our department, and they began to use
the Nomad Multimedia Cart. There was a change in attitude about technology with increased knowledge and skills, which eventually lead to acceptance.

The Students

In teaching my first class at Norfolk State University, I encountered resistance to technology from the students, just as I had experienced it from the faculty. The students were comfortable with presenting by using note cards, transparencies, and overhead projectors. I informed them in my syllabus they would have to prepare three classroom presentations related to technology and their discipline, and that their presentations would have to be created with Microsoft PowerPoint. There was an overwhelming response of resistance, because they had never used Microsoft PowerPoint before in any of their classes.

This turned into a teachable moment for me, as I proceeded to create a three-step process on creating a PowerPoint presentation. Step one: Open Microsoft PowerPoint on your computer. Step two: Type Text. And
step three: Insert New Slide and repeat steps two and three. Students then successfully created ten basic PowerPoint slides. Then, I instructed them to click on “Slide Show,” and “View Show.” They were fascinated with the ease of creating a basic black and white PowerPoint presentation. I learned from this experience something even more important: the value in allowing students to discover additional steps in a process for themselves can be a confidence builder. Upon reflection, I allowed my students to discover, on their own, steps 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. This included such functions as adding background colors, inserting music and sound, custom animations, and other innovations.

Students who had taken my classes now began to take what they had learned about using technology (specifically, Microsoft PowerPoint) into other classes. Like the faculty, students began to embrace the initial phase of integrating technology into their educational practices and experiences. They began the preliminary phase of technological empowerment.
With each class, I began to introduce additional technologies that would enhance presentations. With little resources, I purchased The Dazzle Digital Video Creator, which allows students to digitize video clips and insert them into Microsoft PowerPoint. We digitized VHS tapes and DVDs that would connect and support issues they would like to explore and share with their classmates.

One particular presentation transcended the traditional academic presentation and reached a level not encountered previously. It had a great emotional impact and engaged each and every student in the class in a way I never seen in a class before. The student who gave the presentation had been given a task to select a video clip that supported or explained the issue of needs assessment.
Chapter 7
Needs Assessment

Figure 24 Needs Assessment
She briefly explained her objectives:

**Objectives:**

- Identify major sources of content.
- Outline student levels and needs.
- Know needs of society.
- Conduct a needs assessment.
- Design needs instrument.
- Identify needs from structure/discipline.

Figure 25 Needs Assessment
She then shared the categories of needs by making this point: Needs assessment should include learners, society, and the subject matter.

Categories of Needs

- Content was taught according to grade level at the beginning of the century grades k-11th.
- Needs assessment should include learners, society along with subject matter.

Figure 26 Needs Assessment
She elaborated on the needs of society, the needs of particular students and the needs of a particular community. This would later connect with her video clip.

Attention should be given to:

- The needs of students in general.
- The needs of society.
- Needs of particular students.
- Needs of a particular community.
- Needs derived from the subject matter.

Figure 27 Needs Assessment
She briefly explained the needs of person/society and literacy/individual needs.

A classification Scheme:

- What are the needs of person/society?
- Wealth should benefit society-e.g.lottery.
- Physical fitness promotes a healthy society.
- Less chronic illnesses.
- Literacy/individual need.
- Students interests/wants should be in plan.

Figure 28 Needs Assessment
The student proceeded with a video clip she recorded from the *Ricki Lake Show* where a guest on the program shared with the audience that he could not read.

Figure 29 Needs Assessment
In this video clip, the guest shares with his wife that he could not read and that this was the reason he needed her to complete his job application for him. He also shares with the audience how he was able to survive in school and in society without being able to read.

Figure 30 Needs Assessment
In this scene, his wife responds to his confession.

Figure 31 Needs Assessment
As my student continued her presentation, the class constantly referred back to the video clips to make connections throughout her presentation.

**Level of Needs**

- Human needs are universal among society.
- National-literacy essential to read and write.
- 1 in 5 Americans cannot read affects growth.
- Regional needs of a community
- Agricultural
- Industrial
- Healthcare
- Remedial reading, ESL, magnet schools.
- Services for mentally challenged, gifted etc.

Figure 32 Needs Assessment
The class was able to make connections in reference to the video clip to each bullet on the slide.

Needs of Students: Types

- Physical-health/nutrition, medical, growth development.
- Socio-psychological-affections, acceptance approval, belonging, needs of exceptional children.
- Educational-primary needs based on societal changes.
- Developmental tasks-social/emotional growth.
State and Community Needs:

- Community restorations/ crime solving programs, job training, drought, influx of immigrants.
- Neighborhood programs, child care, recreational and community organizations.
Social Processes in Virginia

- Protecting life and health.
- Making a home for family.
- Meeting educational needs.
- Cooperating in social and civic action.
- Engaging in recreation.
- Expression of religious impulses.

Figure 35 Needs Assessment
Jerome S. Bruner;

- Refers to the structure of a subject as the basic ideas (learning how things are related) by sequencing order of skills.
- Changes in the school’s Discipline- are inevitable such as new math and the whole-language approach. In Virginia’s School System, student must meet SOL’S standards.
Curriculum Needs Assessment:

- Assessment is a process for identifying programmatic needs that must be addressed by curriculum planners.
- Collected data should serve as a background to survey and audit goals.
- Post Needs: conduct diagnostic planning in order to implement strategies that will meet needs effectively.


This was by far, the most powerful, impressive, and classroom-engaging presentation I have ever evaluated. The student acknowledged she had been at home looking at TV and thinking about what video she could use in her presentation. And while watching her
television, the *Ricki Lake Show* came on. In the introduction, she learned the show would have a guest who could not read or write, and she immediately made the connection with her class presentation on needs assessment.

From this presentation I learned the powerful influence of inserting digital video into a Microsoft PowerPoint slide show presentation. Choosing the best video clip that relates to a topic on a humanistic level can enhance the classroom experience beyond imagination. My student who created the PowerPoint and digitized the video clip became empowered from the knowledge gained in learning the process of digitizing and the sense of mastery in having selected the best video clips to enhance a presentation for maximum effect and participation.

As Norfolk State University proceeds to move forward with infusing/integrating technology into the curriculum, there is still more to do, because technology is still in a state of flux and constantly evolving.
Conclusion

Initially, my transition from Penn State University to Norfolk State University was a tale of two different worlds. The Pennsylvania State University being a prestigious predominantly White institution and Norfolk State University being a historically Black institution seemed perhaps to indicate they were two contrasting discursive communities, in terms of representation (those attending) and in terms of technology (the extent of its usage).

The initial resistance I encountered among the faculty at Norfolk State could simply be because of basic resistance to change. Or it could mean that the faculty members just did not want to participate in another discourse community where the inequality that technology brings becomes evident among those who have so often been denied equal access to these new technologies.

As I questioned why no one had utilized the NOMAD Multimedia Cart and Microsoft PowerPoint, I began to
understand there was an attitude where no one had the vision to foresee the importance of these new technologies and the impact that utilizing them would have on student learning. As students from my classes began to share the ease of using technology and the excitement of entering into this new discourse community via using Microsoft PowerPoint and the Dazzle Digital Video Creator, it became apparent how a change in pedagogical practice was needed and required to successfully progress in a digital world.
Chapter 8

Teaching In The Technology Literacy Club

Joining the Technology Literacy Club gave me access to the certain clubs of voice and power in today’s world. These communities include the military discourse community (US Air Force), academia (Penn State University and Norfolk State University) in which these discourse communities have higher social status and power.

It was not until my initial experience with building computers, without formal training, that I began the process of joining The Technology Literacy Club. As my interest piqued from this autonomous learning experience, I was able to continue my growth and compliment my studies at The Pennsylvania State University where further studies about literacy, computer software, webpage design, and integrating technology into the curriculum allowed me to participate in a discourse community of power.
Understanding the power of The Technology Literacy Club to accessing of the discourses of power became central to my work as a teacher, particularly with black students at Norfolk State University who were marginalized from many discourses of power. The power of joining The Technology Literacy Club is best illustrated by the following few stories about my students.

**Norfolk State University**

My first semester at Norfolk State University (NSU) in 2001, students were using note cards, overhead projectors, and transparencies to give presentations. This was considered the standard use of technology. I informed the students we would use Microsoft PowerPoint. Students were resistant and did not want to transition to this new technology because they felt it was too complex. I convinced the students to try a 3 step process to creating a PowerPoint presentation. I modeled the process, Step 1. Open PowerPoint, Step 2 Type Text, Step 3, Insert New Slide, and repeat Steps 2
and 3 to create 10 slides. The students felt confident and to my surprise they autonomously discovered steps 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. They were fascinated with their discovery. During the presentations, I could hear and see the confidence and excitement with each presentation. Alice, a graduate student was so excited that she was able to create a professional PowerPoint presentation, she giggled with excitement as she advanced each slide. I asked why are you so happy? Her response described how this was the first time she was able to create something of this nature. She shared how proud she was of herself. Her high degree of confidence illustrated the power of becoming a member of The Technology Literacy Club.

Norfolk State University

In 2005, I introduced the electronic portfolio format using Microsoft PowerPoint to all of my classes. Sherry was familiar with PowerPoint but did not know she could hyperlink. Sherry was a counselor working on an administration degree. She was applying for a job
and wanted to interview as a technologically savvy person. So, she created her electronic portfolio, hyperlinked all of her assignments, and used Microsoft Producer and a videocam to create a video introduction to explain her electronic portfolio. She demonstrated her electronic portfolio at the interview, and was hired as an administrator in the local school district. The interviewer never experienced anything so professionally designed as her electronic portfolio before. Sherry’s membership in The Technology Literacy Club, help her move into a more important and rewarding position of power.

Woosong University

During the summer of 2007, I was invited to teach education and technology classes at Woosong University in South Korea. I introduced the electronic portfolio format and computer-generated table of contents to the students. The students had never created an electronic portfolio, and never heard of the idea of a paperless semester. I encountered a major barrier on my first
day. All of my instructions and modeling was using Microsoft Office 2003, and the software installed on the computers in the lab was Microsoft Office 2007. Both programs are totally different. Plus, all of the computers commands and software were written in Korean. During the demonstration, I worked with the students and we taught each other how to use Microsoft Office 2007 together.

The next activity was to create a computer generated table of contents. This activity became very important because these graduate students did not have a thesis template. Students were constantly having problems with page numbers changing. I systematically demonstrated the process of creating a computer-generated table of contents using Microsoft Word. I created a document and the students created their own computer-generated table of contents. The students were elated and viewed this activity as a blessing. They were happy that the Technology Literacy Club gave them new powers to be more successful in the print literacy club.
Norfolk State University

Angela is an administration student at Norfolk State University. Angela was excited to be a member of the Curriculum Development And Technology class, because she had heard the class was very interesting, had seen some of the presentations in other classes by students who had taken my class, and she was very impressed. Angela was excited about learning how to create an electronic portfolio, computer-generated table of contents, and how to evaluate software and evaluate web sites. However, Angela had not heard of the multimedia project activity. The multimedia project is an activity where students create a movie using Windows Movie Maker. The activity is interest centered and inquiry based. Students are to find 25 pictures from the Internet that relate to their hobby or interest. Once they find the images, they must find music that supports their theme. Angela selected the theme of family. Instead of using pictures from the Internet, she elected to scan her images for her moviemaker project. Angela used pictures of her
husband and children that included her wedding, her children, and her extended family. She chose the music "Wind beneath My Wing". Angela meticulously inserted the pictures, added text, inserted transitions, and added the song. Her final project was displayed on the last day of class, and she was very proud and excited that she was able to create a professional movie. She immediately began to plan how to incorporate the multimedia project into her second-grade curriculum. At the end of the semester she thanked me for allowing her to be a member of the best class she had ever taken. Angela is a proud member of The Technology Literacy Club, and envisioned why her own students should join.

**Final Thought**

The stories of my students illustrate the importance of joining The Technology Literacy Club for students to be successful in today's technology rich world. While many discourses continue to be critical for students to master, it is more and more obvious
that technology has become a pathway into multiple discourse communities and their consequent power. For me (as a Black Male), this pathway led from the projects in Norfolk, Va. to a Ph.D. at The Pennsylvania State University.
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Nasa’s Gemini Astronaughts.


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EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Norfolk State University
2002-2007 Teaching Leadership and Counseling courses. Technology component allows students to create web based multimedia projects.

The Pennsylvania State University
2001 Pre-Doctoral Lecturer: Taught Secondary Education English students how to incorporate technology into a teaching unit. Software used: Adobe Premiere, Adobe PageMill, Microsoft FrontPage, Microsoft PowerPoint.

FELLOWSHIPS
Holmes Fellowship, The Pennsylvania State University 1998-2000 Title: Holmes Scholar

PUBLICATIONS/BOOKS


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2003-Present Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
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