
TRANSMEDIA

Designing Transmedia: A Toolkit for Educators



Using the Toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to introduce transmedia to educators by providing practical recommendations for applying transmedia principles in educational settings. The toolkit isn't meant to be a lesson plan. Rather, it should be used as a framework for considering the application and potential barriers of transmedia to enhance learning outcomes.

What is Transmedia?

The term transmedia has become an influential word in the world of marketing, entertainment and commercial creation. Transmedia can create powerful and immersive experiences that increase engagement, encourage comprehension of narratives and utilize multiple literacies. The rich narratives and opportunities for participation across multiple channels also make transmedia a valuable tool for learning and play. It's no surprise then that educators, researchers and designers are keen to apply transmedia principles to innovate pedagogical approaches.

Key Terms

Transmedia means "across media", but is often confused with related terms such as media mix or multimedia.

Multimedia is when various types of media such as using text, audio and video are combined on one platform such as a website. Whereas transmedia combines multiple platforms and multiple media types to create a layered and distributed experience. Each medium used in a transmedia experience adds distinct elements to the overall story and leverages the affordances of each channel. For example books and movies can provide large volumes of information on plot and characters, websites can help the story evolve in real-time and social media gives the audience a space for sharing, discussing and even communicating directly with characters. The relevance of transmedia is not defined solely by the inclusion of new media technologies, but more so the development of new ways for students to engage with, share and learn information.

Building on the concept of transmedia is the term “transmedia play” which further involves experimentation with and participation in a transmedia experience. There are three key links between transmedia, learning and play as proposed by the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab:

1
PROMOTES
new approaches to learning by encouraging students to read broadly and deeply.

2
ENCOURAGES
learning through joint media engagement with peers and parents.

3
SUPPORTS
constructivist learning goals by emphasizing the active role of the student.

**“Transmedia is not the end of the book,
but the evolution of the book” - Melanie Hundley, Ph.D**

Transmedia in the classroom can:

- Offer new tools for both teacher and student
- Foster textual, visual and media literacies
- Balance creating and consuming content
- Extend experience of traditional texts beyond reading
- Provide collaborative and social activities for peers
- Promote inquiry and analysis as students search out dispersed content and reconstruct it into cohesive narratives



Poetry Example



YouTube

Introduce the topic by showing a video clip that discusses the poem.



Read Text

Ask students to read and study the poem in its original format.



Create a video reflection

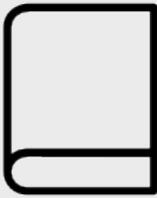
Students create their own videos to represent the poem's meaning.

Getting Started

There is no right or wrong way to incorporate transmedia into a learning environment. The following sections provide suggestions and questions to reflect upon as you build your educational transmedia experience.

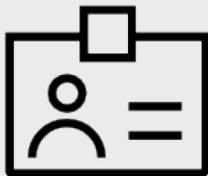
- Each medium should contribute to building the overall “world”. Consider how all the elements fit together. Does it duplicate the previous experience? Or does it add another layer to create a complex narrative?
- Some experts say transmedia experiences use at least three mediums or channels. How many mediums will you use to form the basis of the transmedia experience? Will you expect your students to create content and fill in the gaps?
- Transmedia experiences are deepened when multiple character perspectives are included. Is each element of the experience told from one characters point of view? How can you encourage students to think about multiple versions of the story? Do they evolve in a linear way or jump around in time?
- Traditional texts can be sandwiched into the experience. Consider when the traditional text will be introduced (if applicable)? Will you include the text at the beginning to give an overview of characters and plot? Or spark excitement through alternative mediums first?
- Consider providing opportunities for sharing. How will students showcase their work? Will you expect students to view the work of their peers to further expand the experience?
- Transmedia presents opportunities for individual reflection or group collaboration. Consider if the assignment promotes collaboration? Are students

Fiction Example



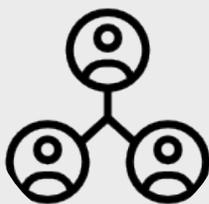
Read Text

Students individually read text in original form.



Design Trading Cards

Ask students to create a trading card based on their favourite character.



Mini Game

Students create choose-your-own-adventure style game to alter plot outcomes. Play and test other students games too.

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encouraged to consume and create media jointly with their peers and/or parents?

- Transmedia can develop visual, textual and media literacies. What are the expected learning outcomes for your students? Will students be graded on their comprehension and application of the information? Or will the students also be graded on the quality of production in the chosen media? Consider what skills are required to create media and how you support students who have not yet developed technical skills.
- Transmedia is often associated with high tech media creation. However, educators can easily adjust to create low- and no-tech options. Does your school have the resources needed for students to complete the project?

High-tech Activities:

Fan-fiction podcast
Video remix/reflection
Stop-motion animation
Mini video games
Puzzles

Low-tech Activities:

Design trading cards
Cast a movie
Imagine deleted scenes
Puppet show sequel
Rewrite from different POV

It is important to think through the logistics of implementing transmedia learning. Even so, transmedia is flexible, scalable and with a little planning can fit into any classroom.

References

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