

CAMmer in the Spotlight

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Getting to know... Lynn Schofield Clark

What are you currently working on? I'm very involved in a community engaged ethnographic research project that is the basis for a book I'm writing with Associate Professor Regina Marchi of Rutgers University. The book is tentatively titled, *Young People and the Future of News: Social Media and the Rise of Connective Journalism*. In it we investigate the news that urban high school aged young people are engaged in *producing* – as in producing + using, to employ Axel Bruns' (2008) term. We want to explore what news means, and which communities news is meant to serve, among youth of color and young people from new immigrant communities, which are two of the fastest-growing populations in the U.S. This year the students have chosen to focus on using their media efforts to

contribute toward better relationships between students of color and members of law enforcement, a timely topic in the U.S. They've been inter-viewing police and students, analyzing media coverage, and creating commentary on what they find. The city of Denver has an office that monitors law enforcement, and that office has been a key partner for the students, providing access to research and to key stakeholders. The research project is therefore contributing to an unfolding discussion about developing curriculum for both students and for law enforcement in Denver, and also exploring how students who are somewhat distanced

from the realms of news and politics come to be engaged with issues of concern in their community through storytelling. It's also evolving into an inter-disciplinary project



that includes colleagues from sociology, social work, communications, and psychology, and that's very exciting.

What has been your most memorable project, and why?

I have been fortunate to have many opportunities to collaborate on research, but the most formative of my projects included working with colleagues on the book Media, Home and Family. That work taught me how valuable it is to engage in long-term ongoing relationships with fellow researchers. A group of us met every week and talked through what we were reading in the scholarly literature and finding in interviews, and then we worked together to develop a theoretical framework for that book as well as a rationale for its inclusion of case studies. Today I'm not at a campus where I have a cadre of graduate students, so I work very hard at maintaining ongoing relationships with scholarly colleagues in various parts of the world so that we can talk about our projects in development. I think that we all tend to do a lot of our scholarly work in isolation in university settings, but it's really helpful to read the work of others as they develop their thinking and to allow others into our own projects in development. It takes trust to do this kind of sharing about work that's not quite ready for

publication, but it's definitely worth it for everyone involved. Thank goodness for Skype and email, as those have become key ways for me to keep in touch with colleagues.

Which achievement are you most proud of, and why?

I'm proud to be one of few female full professors at my university, and I've taken that status seriously, striving for opportunities to serve on a number of university committees that align with my university's commitment to inclusive excellence. It takes many people to work toward changing the culture of what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva calls a "Historically White College or University." I'm glad to be a part of that effort and proud of what we've accomplished so far. I feel incredibly lucky to have such a great position that affords me with opportunities to work with stellar colleagues in my own department and elsewhere, and I also feel a sense of responsibility about ensuring that others have similar opportunities in our field in the future.



What would be your work motto? Find a way to build time into your schedule to do the work that really matters to you. For me, that has meant making a commitment to show up every week at the nearby high school so that I know that at least once a week, I'm in touch with students whose life experiences are very different from my own. This makes a huge difference in how I think about my life as a researcher, and it keeps me abreast of how a changing media landscape continues to shape the lives of young people in specific and sometimes surprising ways. It also means that even though the constant busyness of faculty life always threatens to take over, I know that I'll continue to have ethnographic field notes to reflect on. I also set aside at least one full day a week for writing about research, and, much to the annoyance of those who have what they think of as urgent concerns, I do not read any email during that time.

Which of your publications is your favorite, and why? A chapter that I contributed for Gerard Goggins and Larissa Hjorth's book, The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media, is probably one of my favorites. The chapter is Mobile media in the emotional and moral economies of the household, and in it I bring

together reflections on Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley's concept of the "moral economy of the household" with Leonarda Fortunati and her colleagues' thoughts on emotions and ICTs, and I introduce an analysis of how power works in families in relation to mobile media by exploring my own ethnographic work through the lens of the anthropological work on the "gift" economy and with attention to Arlie Hochschild's reflections on familial emotion work. I wanted the essay to offer a reflection on some of the strengths and weaknesses of the domestication of technologies framework while also introducing the importance of familial power relations into the study of household media use. I make some of the same arguments in my book The Parent App: Understanding Families in a Digital Age, but writing this chapter gave me a chance to address some of the pertinent theoretical issues that I hope scholars in our field will continue to consider. The chapter's also an extension of theoretical work I started to do in the piece I wrote for *Communication Theory* called Parental Mediation Theory for the Digital Age, which also attempted to synthesize the differing theoretical approaches in our field. I tend to be most comfortable writing up data and writing about methods, and so these pieces

really stretched me. I hope that they will be the first of other pieces that I will write about the theoretical frameworks that shape our field, and so I see them less as finished than as openings to future conversations.

If you had to give one piece of advice to young CAM scholars, what would it be? I would say develop a deep appreciation for what you think is important, what you really love to do, and what you are good at doing, and continuously seek out opportunities to do research and teaching that brings these three things together in your life. In other words, seek meaning, joy, and competence in your work. I remember that early in my career I worried about becoming burned out or bored, and the truth is that you will be asked to do many things that do not seem to engender meaning, joy, or competence, especially early in your career. But if you can seek out ways to address even one of those things in each task, you'll find your work to be more rewarding and you'll start to develop an eye for identifying the work that will keep you refreshed, focused, and grounded. Today, I think that my work as a youth and media researcher has enabled me to be a much more effective teacher, parent, and citizen than I would otherwise be, and in turn

being a fully engaged participant in those avenues makes me a better researcher. For me, this has been a constant source of renewal and surprise, and has led me to have all kinds of friendships and opportunities that I probably would not have had otherwise.



Who would you like to put in the spotlight next, and why? I'd like to nominate Sonia Livingstone, as there is no one who has had more influence on my own work than Sonia, and I think that's true of many people in our field. She is not only a world-renowned scholar and critical media thinker, but also a generous mentor and friend, and I'd love to hear her answers to these questions.