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Title of Submission: Literacy and Urban Adolescents: Reading and Writing Lives through Media Literacy

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Abstract: My dissertation research explores, describes and documents the literacy practices (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic 1997) of low-income, minority, urban adolescents as they pertain to the media texts students engage within an after school context (Hull & Schultz 2002). Student's voluntary, co-constructed responses to media texts, and correspondence of personal storytelling – which involve the social, political and personal awareness and meaning-making processes they nurture outside of regular school contexts with peers, family and friends – are centralized in this inquiry. The research works to foreground media literacy education, which historically seeks to teach students how to interpret, analyze and respond to media at the direction of an instructor. The knowledge of the students and their teacher/researcher, along with the processes of literacy teaching and learning they employ, are garnered through narrative inquiry, practitioner inquiry and critical feminist methodology. The inquiry offers thick descriptions of the processes students employ to create meaning and respond to media texts in an after school program. It offers examples of written and artful media literacy responses, and locates the practitioner as a teacher/researcher in the process. The dissertation has implications for theory and practice that are concerned with the literacy education of low-income, minority, urban adolescents, curriculum development and ideas about various teaching and learning contexts.