

## The Educational Video Center's New Media Arts-Youth ReMixing History

By Laura Scheiber

Sonia<sup>i</sup> gasped before pausing the youth-produced documentary to jot down notes. This particular clip was from a 2005 anti-immigration rally that included an interview with an older white woman wearing bright pink lipstick. The woman had just passionately explained that she didn't care about immigrant culture and that they are betraying "our country." As per the teaching artist's instructions, Sonia noted the most memorable clips from the documentary and questions that she wanted to explore further about immigration. The questions that she and her peers generated after watching the EVC (Educational Video Center) documentary "[Alienated: Undocumented Immigrant Youth](#)" would serve as the backbone for their inquiry-based project, "[United for Immigrants](#)".



*EVC Youth Producer*

Sonia was one of 14 students who participated in the [EVC's New Media Arts-Youth Remixing History Workshop \(NMA\)](#). The workshop is an afterschool program that prepares high school students for college and a career in digital media arts, while granting them high school and early college credit. Students

learn industry standard digital media skills while creating interactive websites that explore a community issue of relevance to them. Students produce an archival documentary expressing their perspectives on current youth issues such as police relations, immigrant discrimination, or street harassment. This group of students chose the topic of immigration because of their deep concern about the changes in American immigration policy just after Trump became President. Of concern was the Muslim ban that had been put into effect (then ruled unconstitutional), and the possibility that sanctuary cities might be deprived of government funding.

### The Educational Video Center

The New Media Arts Workshop is a program of the Educational Video Center (EVC), a non-profit youth media organization dedicated to teaching media arts to develop the artistic, critical literacy, and career skills of young people, while nurturing their idealism and commitment to social change. For over 34 years, EVC has fostered youth's critical media and technology literacy, while also learning to harness the power of media to make their voices heard widely on social issues that are of vital importance to our civic life.



*New Media Arts Students at the 2017 Rise Up NY May Day Rally*

## Critical Literacy

Inspired by the work of scholarly and activist giants such as Maxine Greene, Paulo Freire and Myles Horton, EVC's pedagogical model is grounded in critical literacy. As Horton described this pedagogy at the Highlander Center's civil rights era Citizenship Schools, "Along with becoming

literate, they learned to organize, they learned to protest, they learned to demand their rights, because they also learned that you couldn't just read and write yourself into freedom."

At EVC, literacy is not just the act of reading and writing, but also the process of questioning socially and historically constructed power relations in the world. Students are encouraged to question how social structures, institutions and processes impact their lived experiences and to tap into their sense of agency to make social change. EVC students engage in dialogue, research, capture multiple voices and build upon the work of community activists.

## Spread and Scale

In the past, EVC's New Media Arts Workshop ran solely at EVC's home site, reaching approximately 45 students per year with support from ExpandedED Schools. In 2016, with generous funding from the Digital Media Learning Fund in the New York Community Trust, EVC embarked on an ambitious 18-month project to innovate, spread, and scale its New Media Arts model reaching over 200 youth across five afterschool workshop sites. EVC's new scaled- up program was created in partnership with the New York City Writing Project (NYCWP), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation RecYouth program (RecYouth NYCParks). The partners are all well-established institutions that complement and build on each other's strengths.



*2017 Spring New Media Arts Launch Party: Students from five sites*



## Early College Credit

New Media Arts students not only walk away with high-demand 21st century skills, but they also can earn high school and early college credit. At the end of each semester, each student presents a digital portfolio that demonstrates growth over time and mastery-of-skill outcomes. Students who successfully complete the program and portfolio presentation are eligible to earn three credits once their digital portfolio is approved by the Hostos College of CUNY's Design Program. They are also guaranteed enrollment in the school's design program upon graduating from high school.



*Spring 2017 New Media Arts students conducting street interviews in the Bronx*

## Moving Forward

To be successful in high school, college, and the 21st century world of work, students need critical media and technology literacy, and the ability to collaborate, problem solve, and explore their imagination. EVC is excited to be exploring a partnership with the Dimon Foundation, Dreamyard and Here To Here to expand the New Media Arts program for youth in the South Bronx. Through this partnership, EVC will be able to offer even more

young people, like Sonia from the Spring 2017 workshop, the necessary supports they need to get on a pathway to family-sustaining and choice-based career options in the field of digital arts. Sonia graduated from high school in June 2017. She will begin classes in design at CUNY's Borough of Manhattan Community College in 2018. In the meantime, she is keeping herself busy as the chief designer of an e-commerce business. She said that the New Media Arts program not only gave her a crucial foundation in web and logo design principals, but also prepared her to work collaboratively with a small team. She is excited about applying the skills she learned at EVC in video production towards potential future professional opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> All student names have been changed