to the classroom with, while helping them acquire skills in standard English for success in high-stakes testing and more. I then say: working-class parents’ approach to school involvement is not wrong, just different. To improve school outcomes for working-class students, rather than asking all families to adopt middle-class norms, we could identify skills and behaviors that best prepare students for school success. We should not judge students or families for the cultural capital they have; it is not inherently good or bad, just valued or not valued by our systems.

My students are more willing to take a systemic, structural, and cultural view of race/ethnic differences than of class differences. This is likely because Americans spend so little time talking about class as real and meaningful, and about class differences as anything other than barriers to be overcome.

It is a science fiction novel about a young man coming of age in a technologically saturated, panoptic society that no longer protects—or trusts—autonomy and individualism. The more the young man recognizes the control technology has on everything from emotions and opinions to life and death, the more he fights the system that works to confine him. The more he fights, the more he becomes disillusioned: Is it too late? Are we too invested in technology to think for ourselves? At its core, Doctorow’s novel attends to the ways in which society itself creates the complicated narratives surrounding teens and it asks citizens to be more critical of and thoughtful about the world around them. Through the novel’s implicit warning, the imagined reader—the savvy Generation Y’er, raised to accept technology as a natural part of life—is invited to re-evaluate the current moment through the framework of the protagonist’s world.

But while these issues are important to include, I already have a go-to novel that does all of these things: M.T. Anderson’s Feed, a science fiction novel about a young man coming of age in a technologically saturated, panoptic society that no longer protects... you get the picture.

At first glance, the two books serve too similar ends to both be included in one class. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized just how different the two books are. In Ideology and the Children’s Book, Peter Hollindale notes that in all texts there exist—sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory—surface and passive ideologies. Surface ideologies are the values and ideas that the author has attended to that the reader is supposed to understand (plot, theme, and lessons, for example). The passive ideologies are equally present, but are left unex-
examined by the author and easily ignored by the uncritical reader.

The surface ideologies of *Little Brother* and *Feed* would suggest that the two are very similar texts, but passively the two books speak to similar topics in fundamentally different ways. While both authors work from the premise that technology can be productive or destructive, Doctorow does not long for a time when we did not have technology. Instead, he considers how technology can corrupt, but how it can liberate, too, and it is technology-savvy teens who are the heroes of the story. Anderson’s “connected” teens are almost entirely vapid. *Feed* ends with the repeated sentiment, “Everything must go” (300), as if to say that starting from scratch is the only answer. While Anderson longs for a time without technology, Doctorow endeavors to promote a critical eye toward our technology-centered society.

Next semester I will teach both books in one class because central to building a critical toolbox is seeing beyond the surface of a text to the passive ideologies that inform it just as powerfully. When students can unpack the ideologies of a text, they are on their way to a more critical way of reading the rest of their world, literary and mediated alike.

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**Rocking the Schoolhouse: Re-reading “Schoolhouse Rock!” in the College Classroom**

**By Robert Ovetz**

“Schoolhouse Rock!” was a widely-viewed, long-running television series of educational animations for children. A number of the episodes (readily available on video and on line) are valuable resources for modeling analytical thinking skills to help students learn to deconstruct the founding myths of American history and our political system that are deeply embedded in the media and in textbooks. The animations are extremely short, colorful, fast moving, and musical, and they appear to have maintained a reputation for being “cool,” making them fun to watch and an appealing means to engage and keep the attention of students.

I use episodes of “Schoolhouse Rock!” in my community college U.S. history courses to complement Howard Zinn’s *People’s History of the United States* and in my political science courses to complement either Michael Parenti’s *Democracy for the Few* or William Grover and Joseph Peschek’s *Voices of Dissent*.

Typically, I will introduce a new topic and then ask my students to look out for certain themes in both the lyrics (I hand out printed lyrics) and images of the relevant “Schoolhouse Rock!” animation. “The Shot Heard ‘Round the World,” for example, is ideal for talking about the “two American Revolutions,” from above and from below. When I ask my students how the Revolution is portrayed in the animation, they immediately observe that it is like a game of tag, not bloody, deadly, and destructive. We discuss whether the Revolution was merely a series of battles or an ongoing cross-class social movement populated by what Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (in *The Many-Headed Hydra*) call the “motley crew” that sparked the Revolution.

We discuss not only whether the Revolution was just about fighting but also who did the fighting and what they were fighting for. Students often notice that the only role that women are shown