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## SCHOOL 2.0

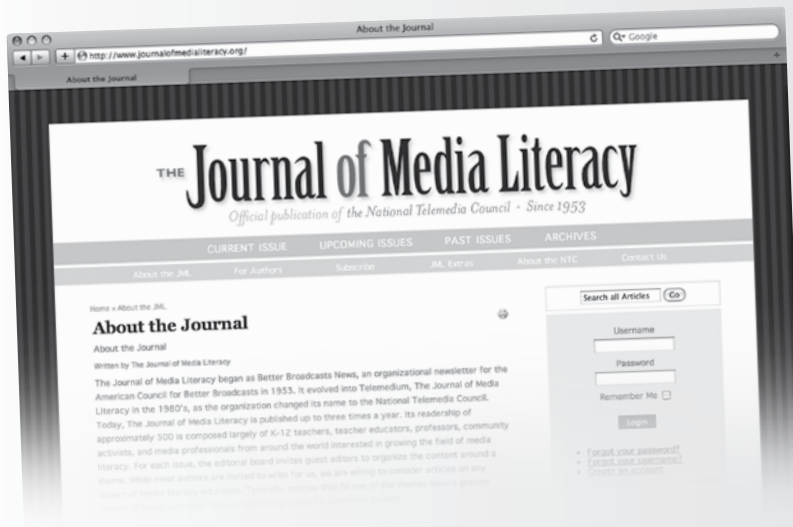
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



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...join us!

# The Journal of Media Literacy

National Telemedia Council, Inc.

1922 University Avenue  
Madison, Wisconsin 53726  
(608) 218-1182 • NTelemedia@aol.com

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# Where *IS* Education for the 21st Century?

## BUILDING AND REBUILDING OLD AND NEW BRIDGES

*Welcome* to this issue of *The Journal of Media Literacy*—our biggest ever—which seeks to build a bridge between the burgeoning New-Media literacies and a global perspective on education in the Media Age.

The inevitable link that new-media technology and critical thought must forge between education and our global society is daily growing more urgent. The need to recognize, acknowledge and champion this connection as an opportunity, and a necessity, is perhaps the single most significant guideline for Education in a 21st Century Society.

### “BEING LITERATE” IN A DIFFERENT WORLD

Educators at all levels, in all parts of the world are confronted with the challenge of preparing our children to be literate in a **DIFFERENT** world: a world that is, for better or worse, both individual and global, basic and diverse; where the classroom of Web 2.0 opens vast new frontiers, yet must begin for each learner where that learner—most likely the young child—is: physically, developmentally, socially, culturally—within the context of simultaneously traditional and “New-Age” environments.

Over the past seven or so decades, media literacy advocates, themselves a diverse group, have sought to open the mindsets of traditional institutions to “new media,” be they early

radio or the cyber world, and to change perceptions about what it really means “to be literate.” Along the way there have been hurdles and setbacks. Indeed today, in the face of much dissatisfaction about our schools, we find ourselves once again in a time where we must challenge institutions that are leaning toward more centralized control over education, top-down demands and test-based goals. All this in a “new media” environment of less control, open borders, collective intelligence, more interactivity and web-based social conversation.

### A VISIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL MEDIA EDUCATION

Understanding the global diversity in the cyber firmament of Nations goes well beyond knowing and seeing “what others are doing,” revealing as these are. Just think what could happen in a powerful new 21st century version of a pen pal culture! In an interview with author Henry Jenkins in these pages, Argentinean educator Inés Dussel suggests a “*common screen culture*” among the global community. “The presence of a common screen in the classroom, be it the blackboard, the smart board, or any other common point of attention... to help organize a common conversation” might be “the best contribution of schooling,” she says. Beyond this contribution, might the hope for a future in a media literate global society be the promise of a much more subtle, global evolution toward one humanity, even amidst diversity?



## IN PAST ISSUES...

...of the *Journal of Media Literacy*, and over the years, we have addressed many of the topics and issues that are at the forefront of the field. We have built other bridges and highlighted connections, such as between Media Literacy and The Arts; The Teaching of English; Understanding Cultures and Ourselves in a Multicultural Age; new approaches toward pedagogy into the Fantasy World of "Second Life"; connecting Learning and Games—and many more. After each issue, we realized there could have been much more. Not surprisingly, as we closed the recent issue on "School 2.0," it became obvious how much richer it needed to be, both in itself and with the important addition of a Global Perspective. Thus was born this large double issue. It is presented in three general sections addressing visions and pedagogies for the future, voices of practitioners from around the world, and a few examples of welcome new media literacy resources.

We bring together the voices of eminent thinkers, dynamic leaders, inspired practitioners—and new-generation enthusiasts who have generously contributed their best, to this issue. For all, it has been a labor of love and a passion. We are deeply grateful.

As always in the past, our *Journal* is a collaboration. This issue—the largest we have ever published—could not have come to be without the freely given time and expertise of many.

First, **the Authors**, too numerous to single out in this note, but all of them Key to this issue

A special word of appreciation goes to our distinguished **Editorial Board** whose individual members all have contributed their ideas, their expert advice, and inspiring articles.

And it is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge the extraordinary efforts and contributions of our two **Guest Editors**:

MARTIN RAYALA, prolific visionary future thinker who, when asked how he maintains his always "ten-steps-ahead" pace, modestly replied, "I read a lot."

BELINHA DE ABREU, world traveler, global ambassador and youthful pied piper whose dynamic and contagious enthusiasm elicited eager "yes" answers from all she invited to contribute; and whose tireless editor's role supported each author to his/her best, including translating an entire article from its native Spanish to the *Journal's* English.

*Finally, we are grateful to you, the Reader, for picking up this ambitious issue of The Journal of Media Literacy. We invite you to reflect on it and to continue The Quest.*



KAREN AMBROSH  
NTC PRESIDENT



MARIELI ROWE  
EDITOR &  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM GUEST EDITOR **MARTIN RAYALA, Ph.D.**

# *The Future of Education*

## MANY-TO-MANY COMMUNICATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The recent release of Davis Guggenheim's documentary film *Waiting for Superman* is prompting intense discussion about what to do with America's failing schools. Among 30 developing countries in the world, the U.S. ranks 25<sup>th</sup> in math and 21<sup>st</sup> in science. By focusing on students waiting to get a winning lottery number, the film seems to be saying the solution is to get out of public schools if you can. Who will be the *Superman* to save education in America?

It is difficult to predict the future but, as the saying goes, the best way to predict the future is to create it. In his recent book, Nick Bilton says "I live in the future and here's how it works." What he means is that much of the future has already been invented but it is just "unevenly distributed." Like other futurists, Bilton is in touch with the leading edge of innovation—the stuff that is in the research labs and R&D centers around the world—so he seems to us to be predicting startling new developments when he is simply telling us what already exists that we haven't yet heard about.

One of the major roadblocks to changing education is our fear of change in general. Most of us lack the ability to recognize significant positive change when we see it and tend to focus mainly on the fears we have about anything that changes the status quo. Bilton's book, *I Live in the Future and Here's How It Works*, examines how technology is creatively disrupting society, business and our brains. He says the current technology is as significant as the introduction of the Gutenberg press was in the 1400s. He also details how new technologies have always been met with fear of losing the traditions to which we had become accustomed. The

introduction of the printing press, for example, was seen as a threat to libraries because it meant everyone could have their own books.

One thing we already know is that there will not be a *Superman* who sweeps in to rescue education (or anything else). The future will be, and has always been, created by groups of people rather than a lone genius. Even Bill Gates, with his billions, can't do it alone. We are the leaders we have been waiting for.

The content and form of educational transformation will come not from experts and text-book authors but from anyone and everyone on the planet. Not unlike how Wikipedia has overtaken Encyclopedia Britannica in providing encyclopedic information about everything we would like to know, the control of education will no longer be teacher to student (one to one or one to many) but from many to many. Everyone on the planet, including students, will contribute their unique knowledge and experiences to the learning process.

In his presentation at the Technology, Entertainment, Design Conference (TED) on *How Web Video Powers Global Innovation*, conference curator, Chris Anderson, described the idea of *Crowd Accelerated Innovation* in which groups sharing online videos create a cycle of improvement that raises the bar for future innovation. We will see a growth in Crowd Accelerated Education that will accelerate advances in science, the humanities and design education.



Image from the official *Waiting for Superman* movie poster.

Anderson says education doesn't have to be this painful top-down process that exists today but he suggests it can be a self-fueling cycle in which we all can participate. This would require more teachers than we've ever had before, but they are out there he says—in the crowd. All that is needed is to have global technology shine a light on people we would otherwise never have met and create the desire to up our own game to meet and then exceed their examples. Anderson says this cycle will result in a smarter, wiser, more beautiful place.

In addition to the future of education coming from the work of the crowd, another thing we know is that the future of education will ultimately be more amazing and awe-inspiring than anything we have so far imagined. John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, in *This Will Change Everything* edited by John Brockman, say, "Eventually, conceptual education will become intense, compelling, searingly memorable, and ten times faster." The future of education will be an immersive, interactive, all-absorbing, and video game-like experience like *World of Warcraft* using Hollywood post-production techniques and the attention capturing properties of multi-player game designs.

The future of education they see is part of what I am calling **5D Education Design: Immersive Learning**. **2D** education includes the textbooks, interactive whiteboards and videos we currently use in schools. **3D** education includes the globes, models, manipulatives, and educational toys used in hands-on learning. **4D** education includes the school buildings, classrooms, museums, science labs, learning centers and other spaces and places where learning takes place. **5D**, which today consists of a largely disappointing interaction with a teacher standing at the front of a room, will soon be an immersive, interactive, game-like experience with a combination of all of the above.

At first, the form and content of this immersive learning experience will be crude and unsophisticated but it will grow in effectiveness as people are challenged to learn from each other and try to top what is currently available. The growth in sophistication will not be unlike the rapid evolution of computer games like *Super Mario Brothers* or *Halo* but it will be designed through input from millions of individuals similar to *Second Life* or *Farmville*.



A scene from the movie *Waiting for Superman*.

In her TED presentation, *Gaming Can Make a Better World*, game designer Jane McGonigal talks about an online gaming phenomenon known as the *Epic Win*, an outcome that is so extraordinarily positive you had no idea it was possible until you achieved it. An epic win is almost beyond the threshold of the imagination and when you get there you are shocked to discover what you are truly capable of. Using characteristics commonly found in the architecture of online games, like blissful productivity, urgent optimism, epic meaning, and the social fabric of games, we have the potential to have an *epic win* in education across the globe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. •

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MARTIN RAYALA, Ph.D. is an assistant professor at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. He is the Executive Director of International Design Education Alliance Schools (IDEAS), the former State Supervisor for art, media and design education at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and is an editor for *The Journal of Media Literacy*. He is also the editor of the online magazine andDESIGN at <http://andDESIGNmagazine.blogspot.com>. Martin can be reached at [Rayala@kutztown.edu](mailto:Rayala@kutztown.edu).



FROM GUEST EDITOR **BELINHA DE ABREU, Ph.D.**

# *Is the World Flat?*

The world is flat. This statement was made and written about by the author and Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Friedman when referring to how technology has changed our world and made us into a more global conglomerate society because we are connected via phone wires, internet lines, and much more. Is he wrong? No, not necessarily, but the issue is that many more connections still needs to be made, especially in the world of education. In schools across the United States, the recognition that more learning is needed is beginning to take shape through the induction of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. However, through my travels this summer it became quite clear that the U.S. is still working to catch up on this realm.

Traveling to Sweden via Iceland for the 2010 *World Summit on Media and Children* seeking authors for this special issue provided me with insight as to where other countries were in relation to media literacy education. In fact, the conversations brought to mind some of the same struggles over what to include and teach about the newest digital technologies as the pace of change is getting faster and faster. For me the obvious and eye-opening difference was the global awareness that many of the countries had because they in fact

lived next door to so many people of diverse cultures. This is the one area on which the U.S. needs to work because unlike these countries, we are separated from much of the world because of two huge bodies of water, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. When asking people from the U.S. why they thought we knew less about other countries than they did of us, the answer came quite quickly. It takes money to travel and the desire to learn about our world counterparts. The internet has provided a social avenue for where this connection is possible. Schools, on the other hand, tend to do it in a limited number of classes, but the perspective is still very American.

The opportunities for learning within our curriculum do exist. In late June, the International Society of Technology Education (ISTE) had their conference in Denver, Colorado. Alan November was presenting his ideas on empowering students with technology education and the focus was on the global aspect. November showed by just changing something very simple like Google to its international equivalent such as: <http://www.google.co.uk/> or <http://www.google.com.au/>, educators would be provided with resources that were unlike the ones seen in the U.S. In fact, this simple change would give learners varying and worldwide points of view on any given topic. How many of us actually make those changes and seek knowledge that is diverse from the standard curriculum placed in the classroom? I am not sure of the exact answer, but it is evident from the schools visited that not much of this is happening. In part, it is due to the lack of knowledge of educators and not understanding the importance of the technology itself or its function as an important literacy.



BELINHA DE ABREU, Ph.D. is a Media Literacy Educator. Her work focuses on new literacies which encompasses media, visual, and information literacy. Dr. De Abreu holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on media literacy from the University of Connecticut. She is the author of *Teaching Media Literacy, A How-To-Do-It Manual* and can be reached at [deabreu1@uno.com](mailto:deabreu1@uno.com) or [bdeabreu@newhaven.edu](mailto:bdeabreu@newhaven.edu).

Back on the international front, the same problems seem to be in evidence as well, principally in terms of how media and perception are not quite aligned. While watching the World Cup with people from South Africa, Portugal, Austria, and Sweden there were comments made that made me quite aware of my own lack of knowledge, but also of assumptions that people draw from watching American television. For example, questions of personal wealth and status were posed to me directly. This is not the first time I have been confronted with these types of inquiries when travelling overseas. By the same token, I made my own gaffe when watching the World Cup and noting that the people in the stands were wearing winter coats. How could that be? While Geography for me was years ago, it was a lack of knowledge on my part to think that South Africa gets so very cold. Yet, in my defense, American media never carries images of winter in Africa. In fact, every image I have ever seen was either of war, poverty, hot, heat, dry, desert, or safari. Never had I seen a South African wearing a winter coat until the World Cup. A lesson learned; one that made me clearly aware of the need for global media literacy education for myself and for students.

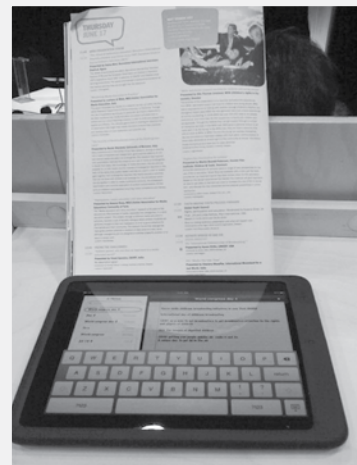
While media literacy education has always been considered to be more advanced in other countries, the sweep of the new digital technologies has created a shared apprehension or at the very least a demonstrated impasse as to how media literacy education is needed to be included within the context of these new tools. The articles in this journal will provide a glimpse of those struggles and successes when using digital technologies within the context of media literacy. It is an area of growth for all of us and one that will continue to be on the forefront of educators' minds as we progress into the future. •

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- November, A. (2009). *Empowering Students With Technology*. New York: Corwin Press. Glimpses of the World Summit conference



Glimpses from the 2010 World Summit in Karlstad, Sweden.



# *New Media and the Promise of School Change*

BY **KATHLEEN TYNER**

The design of educational systems and their relationship to emerging literacies echoes historical debates related to the social, political, cultural and economic contexts of traditional literacy practices and their relationship to schooling. On the one hand, literacy is assumed to be a pathway for enlightened personal growth, critical thinking, social capital, workforce development, civic participation and social justice. On the other hand, literacy has also been used throughout history as a form of social and political control, either through selectively offering literacy attainment to specific populations while denying it to others, or as a vehicle for values inculcation, censorship and propaganda. New media users routinely negotiate these conflicting purposes of literacy in informal learning environments, at home, with friends and in the community. But formal educational institutions—especially at the elementary and secondary level—have yet to develop widespread strategies for engagement with new media in a holistic and sophisticated way.

The marginalization and disregard of widespread literacy practices by schools is stunning. One exception is consensus around the need for educational technology, as defined by physical access to computers, networked, broadband digital content and presentation tools. In theory, these efforts have produced significant results, with 99% of US public schools reporting that they have access to the Internet (Digest of Education Statistics, 2009).

On closer inspection, glowing reports about huge inventories of networked computers in schools reveal problematic gaps. This is especially true in rural areas. Although 68 percent of US youth between the ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet at school, it is unclear that their use includes the full range of literacy practices that they use outside of school. Furthermore, this figure implies that 32% do not use the Internet at all (Hitlin & Rainie, 2005). This may be the result of a combination of old equipment, inaccessible computer labs, slow networks or issues related to security and teacher training. Furthermore, once access is resolved, strategies for the innovative uses of technology in the formal education sector remain confused and entrenched in established school systems and practices.

Concepts related to the integration of educational technologies often envision the uses of digital literacy tools in the same way that alphabetic literacies are used in the traditional learning environments—as vehicles for information and content delivery. But students' "every day" literacy practices go far beyond content delivery. In a 2002 study with a diverse set of US users aged 12–17, the majority students (78%) reported that they used the Internet and likened it to a locker, backpack, notebook, textbook and reference library. They expect unrestricted, high-speed access at all times; cross-platform access to content, the ability to both upload and download content, and more integration of digital media into their learning tasks (Arafeh, et. al.



2002). These restrictions have less to do with physical access and more to do with school rules and content filters, firewalls and other technologies that block user control of content. In a follow-up survey in the UK, students say that although they do understand the need for some control of Internet content, most feel that restrictive school policies go too far (Selwyn, 2006).

A 2009 study by the US-based Project Tomorrow surveyed nearly 300,000 US students, with 24 percent reporting that they were “advanced tech users.” The study also surveyed parents, teachers, school administrators and pre-service teachers. Results indicated that educators and students have different views of the value of digital media in schools. Only 10 percent of teachers said that they would like to include Web 2.0 technologies in the classroom, compared with 35 percent of students. Two-thirds of the principals reported that they thought their schools prepared students for jobs in the future, compared with fewer than 25 percent of the students. Respondents identified school blocks and filters as the major obstacle to their use of technology in schools. The study points to more opportunities for the use of mobile devices, gaming and online learning in the elementary and secondary learning environment (Prabhu, 2010, Project Tomorrow, 2010).

The divergence between the uses of digital media in formal and informal learning environments point to a system out of sync with its students’ informal and participatory literacy practices and the public’s expectation for relevant educational goals along the lines of personal growth, workforce preparation and civic participation. Julie Evans, CEO of the organization Project Tomorrow expresses the sense of urgency to leverage contemporary literacy practices in public schools to address a “crisis of relevancy”:

...today’s classroom environment, for most students, does not mirror the way they are living their lives outside of school or what they need to

be prepared for future jobs, and that this disconnect is actually creating a relevancy crisis in American education...while we may not have all of our “ducks in a row” right now, we can no longer afford to wait until the stars are aligned to enact transformative policies and programs. (eSchool News, 2010, p. 28).

## FROM TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION TO LITERACY INTEGRATION

The proliferation of new media challenges existing educational systems to navigate new tools and texts (Bauer & Kenton, 2005), yet educators are only beginning to understand that access to communication tools is only the first threshold to literacy. Opportunities to leverage the social capital attained through literacy begin with harder philosophical questions related to areas of consensus about the purposes of both education and literacy.

- Although traditional school settings increasingly offer media programs with access to digital networks and production equipment, they do so within the constraints of established school culture of routines, regulation and control (Cuban, et. al., 2001).
- As students engage with new media tools and texts in the wider social sphere, schools have come to represent rigid and entrenched factory models of efficiency for traditional literacy practices, school

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KATHLEEN TYNER is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas, Department of Radio-Television-Film. She is a researcher with significant experience in the uses of media, games and virtual worlds for social engagement and learning. Her latest book is *Media Literacy: New Agendas in Communication* (Routledge). Professor Tyner is a recipient of the 2000 Jessie McCauley Award for Individual Contribution to Media Literacy.



schedules and pedagogies. Tired assumptions about education's mission as an expert-driven, disciplinary, content delivery system are so entrenched, that the "educational" brand, as seen in qualified terms such as educational technology, educational games, or educational video, repels more students than it attracts. As a result, schools and publishing companies rush to create educational apps for emerging technologies—with mixed success.

Students who are experienced with new media prefer learning opportunities that challenge, provoke, create patterns of risk, promote problem solving and allow them to engage with both experts and their peers in participatory learning environments. As a result, they are increasingly bored and frustrated with the traditional learning environments.

Edward (not his real name), a sixteen-year old high school student is an avid gamer who is learning to create his own games in an after-school and summer program at the Miami Museum of Science in Florida. He is adept at using Maya software to create simulations and as part of the program, he regularly visits the Teen Second Life virtual world to learn about climatology, oceanography and other science concepts. He is animated when explaining the science concepts and technology skills that he learned at the Museum and wants to continue on to college to learn more—the first person in his family to do so. He is resigned to the routines of schooling and understands the benefit of formal education. When asked about the uses of educational games at school, he says:

"I'm used to games where you gotta think critically, like make sure every action comes with a reaction. Like, in *Call of Duty*, you've got to think quick, because if you shoot the guy in the head, and you miss his friend, his friend can kill you! And you've got to start all over... Believe it or not, you got to trick me into playing an educational game, be-

fore I actually know it. I mean, after a while, I'll catch on and if I like the game, I'm not going to stop playing just because it's educational. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you say, "Would you rather play an educational game, or an RPG game, or an action-adventure game, I'll pick the action adventure game before I pick the educational, because as soon as you say it, educational doesn't sound at all exciting. It sounds boring. Like listening to a teacher lecture or something."

In the culture clash between pop culture and school culture, the impact of digital media on school change is palpable. A more sophisticated approach goes beyond educational technology access and focuses on tools as only one design element in support of contemporary literacy practices. Instead of the focus on "boxes and wires," this approach moves from "technology integration" to "literacy integration," a concept that embraces a wider spectrum of reading and writing that includes new media analysis, production, viewing, representing, data visualization, assets management, programming and design skills (Tyner, 2003). It offers an opportunity to re-tool and refresh concepts of schooling that meet public expectations for a relevant and rewarding educational experience for every child.

## INFORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AS TESTBEDS OF INNOVATION

In the absence of relevant programs in public schools, students who want to improve their digital literacy skills gravitate toward US museums, and non-profit institutions in the arts, humanities and sciences. These organizations increasingly offer after school and summer programs that are focused on the creative uses of new media for learning, the arts, media production, workforce development, and community involvement. Informal learning environments of this type build on students' "hunger" to use their literacy skills and to learn more with peers in low-stakes, project-based and social spaces. As such, these informal learning

spaces are also important “test beds” or “proof of concept” laboratories that provide information about the impact of new media that could be integrated, scaled up and adopted in the context of public schooling. For example:

- In 2008, US non-profit El Cilanro worked with Chicago-based Open Youth Networks, a non-profit that helps youth activists use technology for civic involvement, education, art and activism to create Our Map of Environmental Justice. Young people across the globe collaborate locally and online to use Google Maps, online video and data visualization techniques to map and create online videos about the environmental landscape in their neighborhoods. In the process of identifying and mapping the toxic, green and social sphere, they can overlap demographic data related to environments around the world (El Cilanro & Open Youth Networks, 2008).
- The Miami Museum of Science works with underserved teens in Miami, Florida to teach issues related to climatology, earth science and the academic pathways for careers in science in programs such as Digital WAVE and Youth Expo. In these after-school and summer programs, teen learn to create game attributes, simulations and objects using Maya software. The technology skills they learn transfers to the creation of virtual world simulations in Teen Second Life. Working with their peers in Second life, their avatars can manipulate objects and data to visualize science concepts using a “hands-on” approach to learning. In the Museum programs, they engage with real-world scientists, visit Second Life sites of national science programs, and work with a cross-generational team that provides the design and context for rigorous science, engineering and technology learning. (Miami Museum of Science, 2009).

- GirlStart, a non-profit organization in Austin, TX, recognizes that girls and women are underrepresented in career and academic programs. They use a wide hybrid combination of digital tools, including mobile devices, web portals, gaming software, and global social networks to promote learning about science, engineering, technology and math (GirlStart, 2010).

Across the US, “knowledge labs” of this type offer opportunities for students to engage and interact globally and digitally with experts, tools and peers to create and critique motivating, creative, playful and fundamental learning forums. In the same way that research provides insights into the impact, best practices and lessons learned through digital literacy practices, research into the uses of digital media in informal education programs can be used to inform and shape the learning environments in formal educational institutions.

This is happening through partnerships with public school systems. For example, Quest to Learn, a 6-12th grade public school program opened in New York City in Fall 2009 in one prominent example. The school uses game-inspired methods to teach both traditional and critical 21st century skills and literacies. Created by the New Visions for Public Schools and the Institute of Play, a New York City-based not-for-profit organization that leverages games and play as transformative learning tools, the program is based on insights learned from gaming programs in informal education spaces (Institute of Play, 2009, Robison, 2009).

## EMERGING TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Emerging trends in public education demonstrate the impact of digital media practices on school change. Digital media tools and resources are forcing changes in the concept of schooling that are directly related to: a) teacher certification; b) design of the learning environment; and c) school schedules.



Each year, The New Media Consortium and Educause, professional organizations for university members, engages in dialogues with hundreds of technologists from industry and academia to publish the *Horizon Report*, an annual report on emerging technologies relevant to higher education. Published in several languages, the *2010 Horizon Report* predicted four key trends that will drive technology adoptions for the period 2010 through 2015 (The New Media Consortium and the Educause Learning Initiative, 2010):

1. The abundance of resources and relationships made easily accessible via the Internet is increasingly challenging us to revisit our roles as educators in sense-making, coaching, and credentialing.
2. People expect to be able to work, learn, and study whenever and wherever they want to.
3. The technologies we use are increasingly cloud-based, and our notions of IT support are decentralized.
4. The work of students is increasingly seen as collaborative by nature, and there is more cross-campus collaboration between departments (p. 3-4).

The *2010 Horizon Report* goes on to state that...“we are far from seeing digital media literacy as a norm. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that digital literacy is less about tools and more about thinking, and thus skills and standards based on tools and platforms have proven to be somewhat ephemeral” (p. 5).

Still, major obstacles to the integration of contemporary literacy practices in the formal education environment remain. Advocacy to prioritize digital literacy in state and national standards-based education and policy document over the last decade have shown progress, yet demonstrated mixed success in stimulating media literacy practices at the classroom level (Baker, 1999; Klipp, 2008;). On the national level, a 2010 National Education Technology Plan proposed

by the US Department of Education calls for more customized, relevant and flexible learning environments that are designed around digital literacy practices. However, as an indication of its importance to policy makers and politicians, the plan calls for radical changes at the state and local level—with no designated funding stream (eSchool News, 2010, p. 1; US Department of Education, 2010).

## DIGITAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS FOR TEACHERS

One of the major obstacles to new media literacy integration across the curriculum is the low priority and narrow range of literacy practices and technology skills offered in teacher preparation and professional development programs. Even though new teachers graduate with the same digital literacy practices as their peers in other areas of study, the uses of digital media in the classroom is stunted by traditional classroom pedagogies.

Institutions of higher education are still experimenting with the place for media education in pre-service teacher credentialing programs. Laptops are ubiquitous in college classrooms and there are many supportive programs for technical proficiency across the university. It is not as if content retrieval and delivery are not useful skills. But courses for tomorrow’s teachers are too often modeled on anachronistic audio-visual courses focused on proficiency with educational presentation tools, or other methods of transparent content delivery and information retrieval. In an analysis of US responses to a 2001 survey of media educators, researchers noted:

Whilst media production appears to be gaining credibility [in public schools] in terms of the skills and competencies required in such work, the quality of production and the amount of production continues to be inhibited by the limits of teacher education (Domaille & Buckingham, 2001).

The 2010 Horizon Report concurs:

Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession... The challenge is due to the fact that despite the widespread agreement on its importance, training in digital literacy skills and techniques is rare in teacher education programs (5).

Given the diversity and global reach of individual youth media efforts, a number of reports suggest that teacher capacity can be bolstered through strategic partnerships with professionals and practitioners from local institutions and industry, as well as through collective knowledge networks of teachers who can collaborate in a team-approach at the school site and online (eSchool News, 2010, p. 1; US Department of Education, 2010).

## PEDAGOGIES FOR A RELEVANT EDUCATION

More importantly, the culture of schooling is often in direct contrast to the kinds of collaborative, experimental and innovative literacy practices seen online, in popular culture, and even as a mainstay in contemporary public spaces ranging from cafes, museums, shopping malls, mass transit systems to government buildings). As a result, young people seek compatible outlets for relatively unfettered use of their digital literacy skills with friends, family and networks, beyond the traditional classroom. They prefer to use new media to actively engage in the social sphere, reinforcing norms of *participatory culture* (Jenkins, et. al., 2006).

The 2010 Horizon Report identifies the way that new media have altered the role of the academy and its ability to prepare students for their "future lives":

It is incumbent upon the academy to adapt teaching and learning practices to meet the needs of today's learners; to emphasize critical inquiry and mental flexibility, and provide students with nec-

essary tools for those tasks; to connect learners to broad social issues through civic engagement; and to encourage them to apply their learning to solve large-scale complex problems" (p. 4).

One pedagogical trend has been called *design curriculum*, a concept with roots in the studio-based approaches, apprenticeships and critique processes found in fine arts colleges and professional artistic practice. In public education design curriculum reinforces the importance of creativity and extends the concept of studio practice for individual artists to the kind of collaborative group projects found in workplaces in the creative technology sector.

In the process, design curriculum addresses the collaboration and challenge in participatory culture while at the same time providing a resource rich environment for the uses of new media in hands-on, project-based work (Mathews, 2010). More radically, design curriculum embraces the expanded concepts of time and space that are provoked by the ubiquitous presence of new media and provokes changes in architectural spaces and school schedules.

Design curriculum values portfolio assessment and rigorous critique that call into question the over reliance on standardized tests as the sole form of assessment in many US public schools. As such, it requires a creative, modular, flexible and customized vision for the use of physical and virtual space. The concept works best in the "built world," of physical, architectural spaces when as desks, auditorium seating and spaces designed for silent group instruction, give way to the needs of teamwork, talk and motion.

Digital, collaborative, and project-based work of this type also calls into question the need for historic school schedules based on the 8-hour workday and the nine-month school year, based in agricultural practices from the last century. Instead, digital media provides an opportunity to customize student curriculum for any place, any time learning. Although schools may serve as a social hub in the

community, their role as a rigidly scheduled meeting place could be decentralized to involved other sectors and space in the community. New visions for formal education see these environments as open centers for community involvement, digital access and social engagement with experts, internships and customized curriculum that enable students to work with the whole community to design their own curriculum, time frame, and pathways (Dillon, 2010).

A confluence of factors demonstrate a window of opportunity for a more radical approach to school change. The widespread uses and access to tools in every sector of society is one factor. But other debates about the need to improve systemic issues related to school time, student assessment, customized curricula, and teacher certification offer opportunities to approach these with contemporary literacy practices as the central organizing principle.

Each successive generation grapples with the meaning of literacy and the best way to teach it. In a 1981 paper, ethnographer John Szwed calls for more research into the “social meaning of literacy,” stating that “... the stunning fact is that we do not fully know what literacy is. The assumption that it is simply a matter of the skills of reading and writing does not even begin to approach the fundamental problem: what are reading and writing for?” (Szwed, 1981). A new generation of students is eager to engage with the question of literacy in all of its complexity. It is their turn to try. •

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# THE NEW MEDIA ECOLOGY

## *Toward a Taxonomy of the Web-Based Media*

BY R. MONTGOMERY LAWTON & CARLOS E. CORTÉS

*"The Past is a foreign country. They do things differently there."*

—L. P. HARTLEY, *The Go-Between*.

They talked differently, too. There was a time not too long ago, a less complicated time, when you could say "mail" and everybody knew it was stuff crammed down your mail slot. Or you could say "telephone" and everybody knew you were referring to that dialing device with a long cord.

And when you said "media," others would know what you meant. You meant the traditional mass media—the local daily newspaper, national magazines, broadcast networks, local TV and radio stations, and flicks in multiplexes or

at neighborhood theatres. The linguistic borders around media were part of our experience and casually taken for granted.

But times have changed, rapidly. Now media may refer to the traditional mass media, the new Web-based media, or both, depending upon who is speaking and who is listening.

The old media had a comfortable language and an agreed-upon taxonomy of its components—primarily newspapers,



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new media. Moreover, we hope it can advance the analysis of the new media as a complex, ever-changing teaching-learning system that raises conceptual and practical issues for media literacy.

## A PRELIMINARY TAXONOMY

The categorization of Web-based media is in constant flux. However, we propose five categories for the tentative envisioning of this new media spectrum.

### WEB-BASED TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Most obviously, there are Web-based forms that are primarily adaptations of the traditional media. These would include newspapers and magazines that publish on-line as well as in hard-copy format. It would also include Web-dedicated adaptations of traditional media forms, such as blogs (brief essays or opinion pieces) and online magazines.

### REFERENCE MEDIA

These are new media through which people search for information or outlets for their interests. These would include dedicated reference sources, such as Wikipedia, Google, and other websites including on-line shopping. They would also include diverse approaches to providing information, such as WikiLeaks, and diverse ways of trying to verify it, such as Scopes.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA

Such sites as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn provide a unique form of media. In the old days, the traditional media delivered stuff and recipients consumed it (while in some respects constructing meaning, with the delivered stuff the basis on which meaning was constructed). In the social networking media, participants serve simultaneously as media consumers and media creators.

magazines, radio, television, and motion pictures. Such consensus is not the case for the new media. In fact, when it comes to the Web, there is no agreement even about what constitutes the media and what should be excluded from that label. Consensus-building takes time and things are happening too fast.

We need to have a clear, robust, generation-spanning conversation about the media—an inclusive conversation that embraces both those who cut their teeth on the old media and those for whom the new media are the media. And we need such an inclusive conversation as it applies to media literacy—its challenges and its opportunities—in light of the new media ecology.

As a starting point, we would like to suggest a preliminary taxonomy for talking about the new media. We hope that this taxonomy, modified over time, can help build a conceptual and linguistic bridge between practitioners and specialists in the old media and those who live in the



## COMPUTER GAMING

While playing, participants exchange and share information, ideas, and experiences. They also learn, although what they learn and how deeply this learning penetrates are still the object of heated debate. For some avid users, this media avenue becomes a new, virtual community, distinct from social networking, much as sports are distinct from art.

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AS MEDIA

Such communication forms as e-mail, texting, and twittering have become a type of media. Take, for example, the receiving and sending of attachments or suggested links. By participating in this process of reception and re-dissemination, each individual media consumer can easily become a media gatekeeper. In a manner far beyond the capacity of traditional mass media, content can be rapidly re-disseminated with lightning speed and unprecedented pervasiveness.

## THE NEW MEDIA LITERACY

The rise of the new media has created a challenge to the field of media literacy. It has raised many questions that remain far from resolved.

In what respects do the principles of media literacy, grounded in the traditional mass media, apply to the new media and in what respects should they be modified or enriched? In what respects do the new media require different, maybe unique, approaches to and skills of media literacy? How do such traditional media literacy issues as source credibility play out differently in the new media as contrasted with the old?

Beyond media literacy itself there are broader issues, such as what should be included within or excluded from the category, media. In what respects are the new media qualitatively different from the old, with unique and enhanced characteristics? How do the new media affect the analysis of such topics as pornography, user intentionality, and media messages?

These and other issues provide fertile ground for discussion as the New Media continue to evolve and as scholars and practitioners reconceptualize media literacy in light of those changes. We hope that this dialogue will not only generate divergent thinking about the new media literacy, but hopefully will also lead to greater convergence, more robust bridge-building conversations about the media, and possibly even achieve some consensus about the concepts and language of that conversation. •



DR. CARLOS E. CORTÉS is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Riverside. Since 1990 he has served on the summer faculty of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, since 1995 has served on the faculty of the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, and since 1999 has been an adjunct faculty member of the Federal Executive Institute. His recent books include *The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach about Diversity* and *The Making—and Remaking—of a Multiculturalist*, published by Teachers College Press. He is co-author of the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies series, senior consultant for the McDougal Littell World History series, and Creative/Cultural Advisor for Nickelodeon's Peabody-award-winning children's television series, *Dora the Explorer*, and its sequel, *Go, Diego, Go!*, while he also performs his one-person autobiographical play, *A Conversation with Alana: One Boy's Multicultural Rite of Passage*. A consultant to many government agencies, school systems, universities, mass media, private businesses, and other organizations, Cortés has lectured widely throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Australia on the implications of diversity for education, government, private business, and the mass media.



R. MONTGOMERY LAWTON currently serves as Director of Communications for Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services in Los Angeles. He was awarded the Good Design Award with his design partner from the Chicago Athenaeum in 2000 for his Pocket Chair for IN HOUSE furniture. Monty's design works are part of the Permanent Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art, Bayer Plastics Museum, the Pasadena Museum of California Art, as well as others. Monty is currently developing an ebook format lifestyle magazine—RedCup, and furthering development of his Madpuss-uk animation project.

# DO WE REALLY NEED MEDIA EDUCATION 2.0?

## TEACHING MEDIA IN THE AGE OF PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

*Excerpted from a chapter published in Kirsten Drotner and Kim Schroder (eds.) Digital Content Creation (Peter Lang, 2010)*

BY **DAVID BUCKINGHAM**

The advent of digital media has been seen by many commentators to require new paradigms, in scholarship, in creative practice and in pedagogy. 'New' media are, according to some, so fundamentally different from 'old' media that they require different methods of analysis, different theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and different forms of intellectual and political engagement. In relation to education, the interactive, participatory possibilities of digital media are believed to transcend the limitations of hierarchical, top-down 'mass' media, and hence to undermine what are seen as the authoritarian 'knowledge politics' of traditional pedagogy. The potential they offer for learners to become creators—rather than merely 'consumers'—of knowledge has been seen by some as little short of revolutionary.

In the UK, media education has a long history, going back over sixty years. We have specialist examined courses in Media Studies, which students in most schools can follow from the age of 14; and media education is a dimension of mother tongue language teaching ('subject English') throughout the secondary school. While there has been less coherent provision in primary schools, there is now a growing recognition among policy makers that all children should be taught about media as a core element of literacy education in particular (Buckingham, 2003; Burn & Durran, 2007).

Some have claimed that contemporary changes in the wider media environment require us to rethink the fundamental aims and methods of media education – not just the content of the curriculum, but also our pedagogy and our teaching methods. But are such changes as fundamental as their advocates suggest? And is it necessarily the case that the age of 'Media 2.0' also requires 'Media Education 2.0'?

### MEDIA STUDIES 2.0 AND THE COMPLETE REINVENTION OF EVERYTHING

Many contemporary teenagers are now growing up with the ensemble of participatory media collectively known as 'Web 2.0'—social networking, photo- and video-sharing, blogging, podcasting, remixing and mashups, wikis, machinima, user-generated content, online games and social worlds, and so on. These new media have not replaced older media: on average, young people still spend much more time watching television than they spend online (Ofcom, 2008); and many of them even obstinately continue to read books. Nevertheless, if we base our teaching on forms of media that are, if not completely outmoded, then at least only part of the environment that young people are now experiencing, there is clearly a danger that what we do in the classroom will become irrelevant to their lives. This is not, I would argue, simply a question of *curriculum content*—of teaching students how to analyse websites as well as television ads, for

example. Enthusiasts for new media typically claim that they entail a distinctively different orientation towards information, a different phenomenology of use, a different politics of knowledge, and a different mode of learning. If this is the case, it has potentially far-reaching implications for *pedagogy*—not just for *what* we teach, but also for *how* we teach.

For William Merrin (2008), new media represent a fundamental challenge to our *right to teach*:

Our fear of technology often extends to our own personal use of it. Whereas in the broadcast-era we broadly understood the basic technical principles of the dominant media and we understood their use—sharing that use with our students—today lecturers are being left behind in their knowledge of what technologies are out there, of their technical possibilities, of how they even work, of how to use them and of what they are being used for. Again, we no longer share a common culture with our students. Unless we can keep up with these changing technologies and uses and unless they become as integral a part of our lives as they are to our students then we will lose both the ability and even the right to teach them. In an era in which we watched and studied TV we had a right to teach it: in the future, unless we're downloading, sharing, ripping, burning, messaging, networking, playing, building and producing then we'll lose that right (Merrin, 2008: n.p.).

Questions could certainly be raised about the historical narrative that is offered here—the notion that at some unspecified time in the past there used to be a 'common culture,'

a shared experience of media between teachers (or 'lecturers') and students, that has now been lost. However, the more challenging question is about the 'right to teach'—in effect, about the *legitimacy* of teaching in the age of Media 2.0.

The arguments developed by Merrin and Gauntlett across their various contributions hinge on a (rather old-fashioned, structuralist-style) binary opposition between '1.0' and '2.0'. A summary, drawing principally on Gauntlett (2007), would look roughly as follows (*at top of next page*).

Like many such binary models, this one suffers from the tendency to deal in absolute oppositions, and to conflate quite different issues. For example, the distinction between Western media and global media does not simply map onto the distinction between 'old' and 'new' media—particularly in a situation where the majority of the population of the global South does not even have access to electricity, let alone broadband internet. To some extent, Gauntlett is also replaying an old debate in academic Media Studies between political economy and audience research—a debate which, as Lawrence Grossberg (1995) and others have suggested, is itself unhelpfully polarized.

Even so, there are interesting pedagogical issues here, which go back to the point about the legitimacy of teaching. We might characterize this position as a kind of *pedagogical populism*. For example, Gauntlett is very dismissive of textual analysis. One key characteristic of Media Studies 1.0, he says, is 'a tendency to fetishize "experts", whose readings of popular culture are seen as more significant than those of other audience members (with corresponding faith in faux-expert non-procedures such as semiotics)'. By contrast, in



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DAVID BUCKINGHAM is Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, London University, where he directs the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media ([www.childrenyouthandmedia.org.uk](http://www.childrenyouthandmedia.org.uk)). His research focuses on children's and young people's interactions with electronic media, and on media education. He is currently directing a project on learning progression in media education; and has recently completed projects on childhood, 'sexualization' and consumer culture, and on young people, the internet and civic participation. He recently led an independent assessment for the UK government on 'the impact of the commercial world on children's well-being'. He has lectured in more than 30 countries around the world, and his work has been published in over 15 languages. He is the author, co-author or editor of 25 books, including most recently *Beyond Technology* (2007), *Youth, Identity and Digital Media* (2008) and *Video Cultures: Media Technology and Amateur Creativity* (2009). His next book *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* will be published by Polity Press in 2011.

## **MEDIA 1.0**

OLD (ANALOG) MEDIA  
CONSUMPTION  
HIERARCHY

## **MEDIA STUDIES 1.0**

THE MEDIA CANON  
WESTERN MEDIA  
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS &  
POLITICAL ECONOMY  
CONVENTIONAL RESEARCH  
METHODS  
EXPERT READERS  
PEOPLE NEED TO BE TAUGHT  
TO BE CRITICAL

## **MEDIA 2.0**

NEW (DIGITAL) MEDIA  
PRODUCTION/PARTICIPATION  
POPULAR DEMOCRACY

## **MEDIA STUDIES 2.0**

DIVERSIFICATION OF TASTES  
GLOBAL MEDIA  
AUDIENCE RESEARCH  
QUALITATIVE/CREATIVE  
RESEARCH METHODS  
ORDINARY AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
PEOPLE ARE ALREADY CRITICAL

Media Studies 2.0, this approach is 'replaced with a focus on the everyday meanings produced by the diverse array of audience members' (Gauntlett, 2007: 3). Likewise, Media Studies 1.0 is characterized by 'a belief that students should be taught how to "read" the media in an appropriate "critical" style'. In Media Studies 2.0, this is no longer necessary: 'The patronizing belief that students should be taught how to "read" the media is replaced by the recognition that media audiences in general are already extremely capable interpreters of media content, with a critical eye and an understanding of contemporary media techniques, thanks in large part to the large amount of coverage of this in popular media itself' (Gauntlett, 2007: 3). Obviously, there is an element of deliberate provocation here; but there are also interesting questions about learning. If ordinary people are already creating their own diverse meanings, participating and producing their own media, in the extremely capable and critical way Gauntlett is suggesting—and he is of course by no means alone in this—then what do they need to learn, and what do we have to teach them?

### **THE LIMITS OF MEDIA 2.0**

The advocates of Media Studies 2.0 are clearly subscribers to what Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron (1996) many years ago called 'the Californian ideology'—a kind of populist cyber-libertarianism which claims that ordinary people will somehow be empowered by technology, and that digital media are inherently liberating and counter-cultural. This approach is certainly apparent in the celebration of 'creativity' and 'participation' *for their own sake*; and in the valorizing of 'ordinary people' *as opposed to* the spurious critical procedures and patronizing attitudes of self-declared 'experts'.

The broader problems with this approach rests on a form of technological determinism—a view of technology as somehow autonomously producing social change. In this context, and in discussions of education more broadly, it is also implicated with the notion of the 'digital generation'—the idea

that technology has brought about fundamental and absolute generational change, and that young people today are somehow automatically technologically savvy or media literate. As several critics have argued, this approach embodies a kind of essentialism, an 'exoticizing' of youth, which ignores the diversity and the inequalities in young people's experiences, and the continuities across generations (Facer and Furlong, 2001; Buckingham, 2006; Herring, 2008).

The term 'Web 2.0' seems to have been coined by the digital marketing entrepreneur Tim O'Reilly and his associates in 2001 (O'Reilly, 2005). Indeed, it can be seen to reflect an attempt to rebrand the internet business after the bursting of the so-called 'dot.com bubble'. O'Reilly himself appears already to have tired of the idea; while others—including Tim Berners-Lee, widely identified as the inventor of the World Wide Web—have questioned whether Web 2.0 is actually any different from Web 1.0, because the basic technological infrastructure and many of the forms or genres of Web 2.0 have been around since the beginning of the internet (Anderson, 2006; *First Monday*, 2008).

Claims about the potential of new media in terms of democratization and empowerment are by no means new. One can look back to the arguments being made about cable TV in the 1970s (Streeter, 1987), or about portable video in the 1980s (Buckingham et al., 2007)—although in fact most new media technologies have arrived amid claims about their inherently radical potential (Marvin, 1988; Winston, 1998). This was certainly the case with the 'old' media of television and radio, but it was also true of the printing press (Eisenstein, 1979): all of these media were apparently going to bring power to the people, undermine the control of knowledge by elites, enable ordinary people to express themselves and have their voices heard, and create new forms of collaboration, in precisely the revolutionary ways that are now being seen as characteristic of digital media. And in each case, the ultimate effects were much more complex and equivocal than their advocates proclaimed.

One reason for this has been the uneven and indeed unequal diffusion of technological innovations. In the case of 'Web 2.0', statistics on patterns of use are not wholly reli-

able. For example, in a recent study by the Pew Foundation (Lenhart et al., 2007) 64% of US teens said that they had created or shared 'content' online. While this figure appears to include profiles on social networking sites, nevertheless 39% claimed to have posted artwork, creative writing, photographs or videos. On the other hand, figures from the market research agency Hitwise suggest that among users of You Tube — the most accessible online video-sharing site — only 0.16% actually upload material; and it is not clear how much of that material is originally produced, rather than pirated clips from commercial media (Auchard, 2007). The same study found that that 0.2% of Flickr visitors upload photos; while 4.6% of users edit or write for Wikipedia (a figure I would regard as suspiciously high).

One of the evident difficulties here is in defining what we mean by 'creating content'. When undertaking research in the mid-1990s—early days for 'digital creativity'—my colleague Julian Sefton-Green and I found surprisingly high numbers of young people claiming in a questionnaire survey that they engaged in creative multimedia activities on their computers; but when we probed more deeply via interviews and home visits, we found that very little of this was actually taking place (Sefton-Green and Buckingham, 1996). Most of these young people seemed to know what they could *potentially* be doing with the technology; but they mostly lacked the social or personal motivation to actually do it themselves. Even today, I would suggest that only a very small proportion of users are in fact generating original content: most are simply 'consuming' it as they always have done.

Furthermore, there is a danger here of misrepresenting what the majority of people are actually doing when they are 'creating content'. Jean Burgess (2006) has rightly criticized the participatory media enthusiasts for focusing on the more artistic avant-garde or postmodern manifestations of 'cool'—fan-produced mashups, or counter-cultural political critique—while neglecting the relatively banal domestic practices of the majority. Our research suggests that most amateur video-making, for example, continues to be dominated by what Richard Chalfen (1987) calls the 'home mode'—home movies of family life, children's birthday parties or holidays on the beach. This material is rarely



edited or shared, and is kept as a record that people imagine will be watched at some time in the future, even if it rarely is. While home video serves particular functions in terms of memory and family relationships, people rarely see it as having anything to do with what they watch in the mainstream media: it is a long way from the radical democratization of mediated communication proclaimed by some enthusiasts (Buckingham and Willett, 2009; Buckingham et al., in press).

Research also suggests that there are some striking social differences in levels of participation. Lenhart et al. (2007) suggest that young women are leading the way in areas like blogging, while young men tend to dominate video-sharing; although they also clearly show that suburban teens from high income families are most likely to be posting or sharing online. Hargittai and Walejko (2008) also point to a social class imbalance; while Warschauer (2003), in a slightly older study, points out that while people in disadvantaged communities may increasingly have computers, they are less likely to have the multimedia capabilities and bandwidth that are needed for more sophisticated content creation and sharing.

As this implies, 'digital divides' are still apparent; although we need to differentiate between different *types* of content and access, and take account of the skills or abilities (the forms of technological, cultural or educational capital) that are at stake. These inequalities in levels of participation are clearly related to wider forms of social inequality; and they largely coincide with other differences, for example in how families from different social classes use the educational dimensions of the internet or participate in creative or arts-related activities offline. To a large extent, the most active participants in the creative world of Web 2.0 are the 'usual suspects'. Indeed, if online participation is as socially, culturally and politically important as the enthusiasts suggest, it seems likely that, far from liquidating social inequality, it might actually accentuate it.

Finally, there is the question of the commercial interests that are at stake in these developments. One of the paradoxical characteristics of the Californian ideology is its appeal both

to libertarian political radicals and to contemporary business gurus. Here, for example, is the media magnate Rupert Murdoch (2006) expressing his egalitarian vision of the future of media: 'Technology is shifting power away from the editors, the publishers, the establishment, the media élite... now it's the people who are taking control.' In fact, the apparent explosion of democratic participation in the media is being accompanied by a growing concentration of power in the hands of a small number of global companies. The political economy of Web 2.0 is still evolving – at the time of writing, for example, YouTube has yet to generate a profit, despite being the second most frequently visited site online. Even so, the internet is an exceptionally efficient medium for niche marketing, not least because of its potential for the targeting and surveillance of individual consumers. Indeed, much of this marketing is itself 'user-generated' and 'interactive' (as in the case of viral advertising).

These issues also apply to what Soren Peterson (2008) has aptly called 'loser-generated content'. A great deal of unpaid labour goes into the production of blogs, for example, while most of the income remains with the big corporations. In the case of social networking, participants typically spend enormous amounts of time working on their profiles and building networks – accumulating social and cultural capital – which they are then unable to take with them if they want to migrate to another site. What they produce effectively becomes proprietary information, owned by the company – an issue that has recently come to the fore in legal disputes over copyright ownership of images on Yahoo's Flickr site (see 'Thoughts for Deletion', 2007).

It could be argued that, far from precipitating a democratic revolution in communications, these new media are merely part of much broader moves towards individualization, self-surveillance and self-promotion that are characteristic of how identities are formed and lived out in neo-liberal consumer societies. Despite the claims of some new media evangelists, digital media are not likely to result in a society of creative media producers, any more than the printing press resulted in a society of published authors. While there is certainly a democratic promise here, the realization of that promise will require more than technology alone.

## BEYOND CELEBRATION

With this rather more skeptical view of the contemporary media environment, how might we assess the implications for education – and specifically for media education? Here again, I want to caution against some of the more celebratory accounts that typically circulate here. The Californian ideology has its own manifestations in education, where technology is widely believed to be transforming learning, changing the power-relationships of classrooms, and creating autonomous, liberated learners. This form of cyber-utopianism is typically aligned with a range of fashionable but ill-defined concepts – of which ‘creativity’, ‘informal learning’ and (most recently) ‘personalization’ are among the most prominent (see Buckingham, 2007: Chapter 2). This rhetoric is strongly promoted by commercial technology companies, but it is also espoused by governments seeking to identify a ‘technological fix’ for what are seen as the problems of public education. In such discussions, it is often difficult to tell the difference between the over-excited claims of policy-makers (and some academics) and the sales pitches of the computer companies (Buckingham, 2007).

For some apparently ‘progressive’ educational thinkers, the technology-driven classroom is somehow the vindication of the child-centred learning theories of the 1960s and 1970s; although there are others who argue that digital technology has rendered the institution of the school redundant, and that the real learning is now taking place in children’s ‘informal’ engagements with games or online social worlds. This celebratory argument typically entails a wholly positive, uncritical stance towards popular uses of technology. For example, those who extol the benefits of computer games for learning tend to ignore the commercial dimensions of games, and avoid awkward questions about their values and ideologies (e.g. Gee, 2003). They also engage in a rather ill-defined valorization of ‘informal learning’, in which formal learning is seen as something inherently bad.

Another mode of celebration that is particularly apparent in relation to media education is that of vocationalism. In the UK over the past several decades, the curriculum for 14–19-year-olds has been the focus of a seemingly endless series of

innovations apparently designed to address the problem of work in a post-industrial ‘knowledge economy’. In the case of media, there has always been the hope that young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds would somehow be able to ‘cash in’ their cultural capital – to use vocational media courses as a way of turning their expertise with media and popular culture into something that can be accredited, and hence lead to employment (Cohen, 1990). In the UK, the latest of these innovations is a series of new Diplomas, qualifications that purport to cross the academic/vocational divide, and to prepare students for new kinds of working situations. At present, these courses are lavishly funded by government, although teachers are struggling to come to terms with new curriculum structures and modes of assessment, not to mention a plethora of new jargon. The courses I have seen thus far are very much aligned with ‘Media 2.0’: students are making websites, staging events in Second Life, creating photoblogs and machinima. However, the fact remains that such courses are likely to be perceived as alternative routes for those who are defined as ‘low achievers’: they will not replace the existing high-status examinations that will continue to be sought after by the elite universities.

Such courses offer these young people a promise of employment – a seductive fantasy of ‘cool’ jobs, the ‘no-collar’ jobs in the technology and cultural industries of the kind that Andrew Ross (2003) has described. Yet despite the mythology, there are very few instances of fans or amateur enthusiasts crossing the line from unpaid labour into paid employment – and as Ross outlines, the conditions of work for young people in the computer games industry or in web companies are often profoundly exploitative. Indeed, it is very much in the interests of the media industries to have a large cohort of fans aspiring to become professionals, not least because it allows them considerable freedom to exploit the people who do work for them (see also van Dijk, 2009).

## ADDRESSING DIGITAL DIVIDES

Rather than reducing schooling to a mere irrelevance, or indeed to a training ground for the new ‘digital economy’,

I would argue that the advent of digital technology points to a need to extend the traditional mission of the school as a public institution. In collaboration with other public institutions, schools exist partly in order to provide young people with social, intellectual and cultural experiences that they might not otherwise have. Of course, schools have always had functions in terms of the regulation of populations and the reproduction of social relations; but there is also a powerful modernist rhetoric about the school as an element of the public sphere that should be invoked here.

In the context of continuing digital divides, schools should play a key role in attempting to ameliorate inequalities in participation. As Henry Jenkins and others (2006) have argued, schools have to address the 'participation gap'—'the unequal access to the opportunities, experiences, skills and knowledge that will prepare youth for full participation in the world of tomorrow' (2006: 3). Like Jenkins, I would see this as being about much more than access to equipment: it is about cultural competencies, social skills and knowledge. Jenkins offers an extensive list, which includes skills to do with play, experimentation and problem-solving; skills in handling different media sources and modes of communication, and navigating across and between them; skills in networking and collaborating, locating information, and interacting with others; and skills to do with judgment and critical evaluation.

While some of the skills that Jenkins and others identify are certainly new, others are decidedly traditional. This has been confirmed by research I am currently conducting with colleagues on the role of the internet in promoting civic participation (*see* [www.civicweb.eu](http://www.civicweb.eu)). While some have looked to the internet as a means of re-engaging young people who are currently disaffected from civic and political organizations, we have found that such opportunities are again largely taken up by the 'usual suspects': those who already have an established interest in social/political issues, and the skills and motivation to engage in political debate, are more likely to participate than those who do not. To this extent, it is possible that the internet may accentuate existing inequalities rather than help to overcome them. If disaffected and disadvantaged young people are to be enabled

to participate, they need to develop relatively traditional skills in locating and evaluating information, constructing arguments and thinking critically; and these things depend in turn on fairly advanced forms of traditional literacy.

This is not to imply that nothing is changing—the internet may be fostering new forms and styles of civic engagement, that are at least potentially more inclusive. But participation, in this area as in many others, also requires relatively traditional forms of cultural and educational capital. Addressing the 'participation gap' therefore depends upon addressing broader inequalities: it will not disappear simply as a result of widening access to technology.

## THE PLACE OF CRITIQUE

The kinds of learning that are typically celebrated in discussions of digital technology in education tend to allow little space for critical reflection or the explicit development of critical skills. There seems to be an assumption that participation or creative production is a good thing in itself; and that it either stands in for, or automatically generates, critical understanding in its own right. Indeed, as we have seen, Gauntlett (2007) expresses a strong suspicion of critique, as though it necessarily represented a 'patronizing' imposition of pedagogic authority. Media audiences, he argues, are 'already extremely capable interpreters of media content': they do not need to be taught to be critical.

As I have argued elsewhere (e.g. Buckingham, 2003), there is some justification in this suspicion of critique. 'Critical' itself is very much an 'us and them' term: people who are critical are often simply people who happen to agree with us, whereas those we disagree with are hopelessly uncritical. This represents a version of what has been called the 'third person effect' in discussions of media influence (Perloff, 2002): it is always *other* people who are deemed to be lacking in critical competence. There is also a danger that 'being critical' becomes one of the standardized routines or language games of the media classroom — a game in which students simply give back to the teacher the forms of critical discourse they have been fed. The emphasis on critical

analysis can sanction a rather superficial, rationalistic approach to media – even a form of superficial cynicism – that belies the complex (and not least emotional) ways in which we actually relate to media.

However, none of this is to imply that audiences are always and already ‘extremely’ capable and critical—what they already know everything they need to know. Nor does it mean that we can throw out the critical tools and perspectives that we use to analyze media. We can accept that audiences can be active, discriminating, and indeed ‘critical’, while also recognizing that there are things that they generally do *not* know about media—and indeed that they need to learn. There is a body of knowledge here—about how the media work, about the media industries, about the history of media, about the uses and effects of media within society. It is a changing and contested body of knowledge, to be sure, but it is nevertheless a body of knowledge with shared criteria for determining what counts as truth. The danger here is in assuming that a focus on critique necessarily implies a negative effects model—that somehow criticism is about an illegitimate imposition of authority, or that it necessarily implies that ‘ordinary people’ are stupid or deluded. This seems in turn to imply a rather old-fashioned, narrow sense of criticism as necessarily negative, or at least a notion of criticism as merely a form of defense or inoculation against influence.

Again, Jenkins and his colleagues (2006) are correct to identify another ‘gap’ here, to do with critique. As they suggest, we need to enable young people to become active participants in media culture, but participation or creativity for its own sake is not enough. We also need them to be *critical* participants, and to develop a broader understanding of the economic, social and cultural dimensions of media. Such critical understanding does not follow automatically from the experience of creative production. As Carmen Luke (2000) argues in relation to literacy, learners do not develop critical literacy just through the experience of reading and writing: they have to step back from immediate experience, in order to reflect and to analyse.

This leads to the complex and time-honored question of how we integrate theory (critical analysis) and practice

(creative production). How does learning transfer from the domain of ‘reading’ media to the domain of ‘writing’, and vice-versa? How do we promote meaningful, rather than superficial, critical reflection on what students do as participants or creators of media? How do we help them to understand those experiences in the broader social and cultural context?

I believe that digital technology is offering us new ways of addressing this issue, and of bringing theory closer to practice. For example, in the case of digital editing and image manipulation, the technology can help to make explicit the processes of choice, selection, construction and manipulation, that often seem to be ‘locked away’ with analog forms. As students drag and drop shots onto the timeline in a digital editing program, the experience of drafting and re-drafting a sequence, and debating as they go along, makes a significant difference to the nature of the learning: the experience of editing is not just easier, but also more explicit, than was the case with older analog technology (Buckingham et al., 1999).

My colleague Andrew Burn (2000; Burn and Durran, 2006) has analysed how teachers can use the ‘remixing’ potential of digital media—a very 2.0 practice—to bring theory closer to practice. Quite well-established activities in media teaching, like making a trailer to market an existing movie to a new audience (*Psycho* and *Romeo + Juliet* are two of Burn’s examples), have become much more feasible and controllable than used to be the case with analog technology. This process also provides new opportunities for analysis and reflection, although this needs to be an explicit expectation that is built into the process. Indeed, Burn’s case studies show extensive evidence of students applying the ‘faux-expert non-procedures’ of semiotics and political economy analysis to inform such reflection.

Ole Erstad and his colleagues (2007) and Kirsten Drotner (2008) have also recently written about this re-mixing—looking at how students search out material on the internet for their digital design work, and then process and recombine it in various ways, using what they call ‘cut-and-paste literacy’. However, they also suggest that there is a danger in being se-

duced by the superficial professional 'gloss' of this kind of work, and by young people's apparent facility with the technology. Actually, there is a lot they don't know and a lot they can't do; and the activity of media-making needs to be accompanied by forms of analysis and theoretical conceptualization, and a set of clear curricular aims on the part of teachers.

Finally, our own recent research on digital game-making provides further instances of this connection between theory and practice (Buckingham and Burn, 2007; Pelletier, 2009). In this project, we worked with an educational software company and a group of schools to develop a game-authoring tool: the resulting package, MissionMaker, enables users to make three-dimensional games without the necessity of programming. One thing we learned quite quickly was that, even if students are very adept game-players, that does not automatically transfer to the ability to make games. Making games is very difficult: it involves computational thinking, logic, and an ability to imagine a user who is not just an audience (or a reader) but a player, interacting with the text. In order to move from being a player to being a maker of games, you need to take a step back from your immediate experience, and engage in some hard, systematic analysis.

## CONCLUSION

Do we really need Media Education 2.0? Perhaps we do; but we certainly still need Media Education 1.0 as well. The advocates of Media Studies 2.0 do identify some key imperatives here. I would not accept Merrin's claim that we lose 'the right to teach' if we are not ourselves actively participating in the whole range of contemporary media. However, I would agree that it is necessary to keep pace with our students' media experiences and their changing orientations towards media. Nevertheless, we also need to beware of assuming that those experiences are all the same (the 'digital generation' argument); and keeping up with our students does not mean we should automatically import the latest technological gimmicks into the classroom, let alone start pimping up our Facebook profiles in some hopeless desire to be 'down with the kids'.

New media can offer new opportunities for participation, for creative communication and for the generation of content, at least for some people in some contexts. However, the competencies that people need in order to take up those opportunities are not equally distributed, and they do not arise simply because people have access to technology. Furthermore, it would be wrong to assume that participation is always a good thing, or that it is necessarily democratic, counter-cultural or liberating. Creative production can be a powerful means of learning—whether it involves remixing of various kinds, appropriating and adapting existing texts, or creating wholly new ones, or simply exploiting the potential for networked communication. However, all of this needs critical reflection, and it needs to be combined with critical analysis—although how that combination happens is a genuinely difficult question.

More broadly, media education itself needs to adopt a stronger and more critical stance towards the celebration of technology in education, and the kind of market-driven techno-fetishism that is mistakenly seen by some as the cutting edge of educational change. There is a risk here that media education might be seen as just another way of importing computer technology into schools—or indeed as a sexy alternative to the wasteland of spreadsheets, file management and instrumental training that constitutes most 'information technology' courses in schools. There is an opportunity here, but it should not involve abandoning the traditional critical imperatives of media education—which are about much more than practical skills, or the sentimental appeal to 'creativity'. •

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# Cary Bazalgette & Idit Harel Caperton

## RECEIVE THE 2010 JESSIE McCANSE AWARD FOR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION TO MEDIA LITERACY

In a year when the *The Journal of Media Literacy* seeks to bridge the ideas of **School 2.0** with a global perspective, we at the National Telemedia Council are honored to present our cherished *Jessie McCanse Award for Individual Contribution to Media Literacy* to two leaders who are at the forefront of building 21<sup>st</sup> Century media education—**CARY BAZALGETTE**, pioneering educator, author, researcher and voice of the British Film Institute's Education Initiatives for many years—and **DR. IDIT HAREL CAPERTON**, visionary researcher, entrepreneur, and innovator of new-media learning projects.

### CARY BAZALGETTE

Noted pioneering British media educator, Cary has a distinguished career as a champion for the young child. She has a long history of bringing media education into the primary grades through the many faceted medium of film. Believing in the importance of media education as "an entitlement for all learners," she dedicated her career to institutionalizing this concept through her work with the British Film Institute (BFI) and into the British educational system. Cary continues to challenge herself and inspire others in developing the new, rigorous educational approaches that are imperative for today's children.

Beginning as a classroom teacher, creating and innovating her own materials, Cary became involved with the BFI where over almost three decades, she researched and developed curricula, criteria and standards, and teacher workshops, and was eventually named

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### DR. IDIT HAREL CAPERTON

Dr. Idit Harel Caperton is an innovator who bridges research and entrepreneurship, helping children to construct their own learning through new media. She works tirelessly to transform education, making meaningful learning for a global citizenry of tomorrow. Idit will not rest until she has unlocked the potential power of interactive media to break through the limitations of the traditional classroom.

In the past 20 years, Idit has published books, articles and essays, and won multiple awards for her publications and projects. She connected her ground breaking research work at MIT with her entrepreneurial business leadership to form MaMaMedia.com and the MaMaMedia Consulting Group, to give kids and parents direct access to technology-empowered learning experiences on the Internet and develop their 21st Century Learning Skills. She is also the Founder and President of the

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# About the Jessie McCanse Award

Jessie McCanse was co-founder of the National Telemedia Council (then the American Council for Better Broadcasts) and a life long leader, mentor and teacher.



The Jessie McCanse Award, established in 1987, honors Jessie McCanse for her steadfast dedication and leadership role in media literacy, her sixty years as leader of the organization with its positive philosophy, and a champion of the highest standards of excellence, fairness, ethics and innovation. In recognizing the example set by Mrs. McCanse, the award is given for individual contribution to the field of media literacy over a long sustained period of time of at least ten years. It honors individuals whose contributions exemplify her high principles and dedication.

More than seventy years ago, Jessie provided the initial impetus and inspiration which began the organization as a radio awareness committee of her local group of the American Association of University Women in Madison, Wisconsin. Together with Dr. Leslie Spence and other remarkable women, she gave leadership, wisdom and patience toward developing careful, critical, but positive listeners to the broadcasts of the 1930s. For fifteen years, her voice was heard weekly on WHA, the statewide Wisconsin Public Radio Station, as host of "Broadcast on Broadcasts." In this capacity, she worked closely with the early Wisconsin Pioneers of Public Broadcasting, building a mutual relationship of positive significance.

As a teacher, Mrs. McCanse brought to the fledgling group the sound, reasonable educational principles and practices that are today basic attitudes in media literacy. Her indefatigable dedication lasted through the decades of television, cable, satellites, new media and into the computer age. Jessie served actively on the NTC Board of Directors until her health failed her in her last months.

Mrs. McCanse was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, the daughter of Dr. A.R. Hill, a Canadian educator who served for 15 years as a President of University of Missouri. The family traveled extensively, spending a year in Munich and Paris. Jessie's studies included a year at the Sorbonne and a master's degree in history from Stanford University.

Teacher, educational broadcaster and civic leader, Jessie McCanse received numerous honors, including the national YWCA's Mother-of-the-Year Award.

To honor Jessie's inspiring leadership, NTC established the Jessie McCanse Award on the occasion of her 90th birthday in 1987. The award recognizes individuals whose contribution to media literacy exemplifies her high principles and dedication.

## PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE JESSIE MCCANSE AWARD

- 1987** SUSAN DREYFUS FOSDICK, *Past NTC President*
- 1988** MARY MOEN, *High School Speech/Communications Teacher*
- 1989** BARRY DUNCAN, *Association for Media Literacy (AML)*
- 1990** JOHN BRAMMALL, *University of Tasmania-Launceston*
- 1994** DAVID CONSIDINE, Ph.D., *Appalachian State University*  
MADLYN STEINHART, *Junior High School Teacher*  
LEE SHERMAN DREYFUS, Ph.D.,  
*Former Wisconsin Governor*
- 1995** JOHN PUNGENTE, *Canadian Assoc. of Media Education Orgs*
- 1996** JEAN PIERRE GOLAY, *Centre d'Initiation aux Comm., Switzerland*
- 2000** KATHLEEN TYNER, *University of Texas at Austin; Founder, Strategies for Media Literacy*
- 2001** NEIL ANDERSEN, *Toronto District School Board, Canada*
- 2003** LEN MASTERMAN, *University of Liverpool, England*
- 2004** RICH FEHLMAN, *Founder of the Assembly on Media Arts*
- 2005** DAVID BUCKINGHAM, *Institute of Education, London*
- 2007** CHRIS WORSNOP, *Pioneering Canadian Media Educator*  
SR. ROSE PACATTE, *Founding Director, Pauline Center for Media Studies*
- 2010** CARY BAZALGETTE & IDIT HAREL CAPERTON

# Cary Bazalgette

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BFI's Head of Education. Cary's impressive contributions attest to her passion for teaching and learning. Her most recent publication, *Teaching Media in Primary Schools*, (2010, Sage) is reviewed in this issue of *JML*. Over the years, she has published a long and varied collection that includes policy, pedagogy, and practice, beginning with BFI's *Primary Media Education Curriculum Statement* in 1989. Most recently, Cary has been actively instrumental in the creation of the Media Education Association in the UK, and is currently its Chair. Together with David Buckingham, she is co-director of the Media Literacy Conference 2010. She is a member of the European Commission's Media Literacy Experts Group, a Fellow of the **RSA**, and a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Education, University of London.



Cary and her granddaughter Connie looking at photos together—21st century-style.

In the spirit of Jessie McCaense, Cary is a charismatic, passionate, and powerful advocate for media education. She champions fairness, high standards of excellence, and innovation. She has long been a mentor for others, a collaborator on many levels, always working toward building bridges between the classroom and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Cary Reminisces...

I started to try and teach about film in the late 1960s when I was a young and inexperienced teacher in a tough South-East London girls' school (and anyone who thinks girls

aren't as challenging as boys should try teaching them). I soon found that there were others trying to do the same and that in London, teachers could get short films and classic film extracts on free loan from the British Film Institute. Soon I was on the editorial board of *Screen Education* magazine and attending BFI Summer Schools.

In 1979 after teaching for several years and having two children, I started work as an Education Officer at the BFI, creating teaching materials on image analysis, TV and film, and providing short courses for teachers in media education. In the early 1980s, when for a while it looked as though media education might get taken seriously by Government, it began to be clear to me that it made no sense to accept a marginal role for media education: it ought to be an entitlement for everyone.

It was exciting to work with others to try and define what media education might look like if it were to be embedded in the curriculum for all 5 – 14-year-olds as well as being offered as specialist courses for older students. But it was also a huge challenge to try and engage with politicians and with education policies that were becoming ever more centralised and authoritarian. In such a context, it was equally difficult to get media educators to look outside their own sectors and institutions, to think about bigger, more long-term issues such as learning progression, and to focus on learners rather than on departmental or subject interests.

There are some things I've done—or, more often, helped to do—over the last 30 years that I'm pleased with. The Primary Media Education Curriculum Statement in 1989; the first global conference on media education in Toulouse in 1990; the BFI/OU distance learning course on media education in 1992; the Commission of Inquiry into English in 1993; the Making Movies Matter report in 1999; the Reframing Literacy project at the BFI, 2001–2007; and of course the book I've just edited with 12 contributions from wise and brilliant colleagues: *Teaching Media in Primary Schools* (Sage).

There are lots of regrets too though, and I tend not to look back much. It's a real pleasure now to be part of the Media Education Association, a community of media education professionals which may be small and poor, but which is at

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# Idit Harel Caperton

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World Wide Workshop Foundation for Children's Media Technology & Learning, which partners with educational institutions to launch innovative digital applications for the enhancement of children's learning, and to transform education in the United States and around the world.

Idit's dedication to creating a media-wise, literate, global society through innovative new media experiences continues and expands the dream Jessie McCauley had from the beginning of our organization. Idit's imagination, willingness to take risks, and desire to open the walls of the classroom to the world will undoubtedly impact educational reform in this century.

## Personal Thoughts from Idit...

"I started the World Wide Workshop a few years ago to match the needs of young people with the educational and economic opportunities for this new century. We believe that contemporary education -- that is, learning to learn, think, create, invent, and lead with technology -- are essential skills for being able to participate and be competitive in the innovation economy.

By opening opportunities to the youth we serve, we help them realize their own potential, and master the technology tools and content they need to actively and smartly take part in the global knowledge economy.

I strongly believe that digital technologies, especially networked interactive environments, using Internet media technology, could have deeper consequences for education than is apparent in contemporary practice—or even recognized in most of the contemporary theoretical discourse as well as the in business world's discourse.

We live in a world where speed, agility, and flexibility are the qualities and learning skills (life skills) required for productivity and success. How and where can we learn/teach these skills if not through the implementation of student-centered, long-term, Internet-based learning projects?

In my work I attempt to answer questions like:

- What is the best culture for the formation of constructive and flexible attitudes that lead a person (i.e., a child, a

teacher, a parent, a leader, or a group of people) into having the courage to embrace change in education (vs. always making the "easy" choice to maintain status quo)?

- What type of intellectual courage is required of people in order to learn that certain uses of technology actually have the power to transform learning and lead to doing things differently (not just faster and more)?
- What learning activities can be designed and executed in order to further cultivate among learners (and educators) imagination, vision, original thought, ability for taking risks, and the talent of doing things differently than before?"

—Idit Harel Caperton, Ph.D.

## ALL ABOUT IDIT FROM HER COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS...

### FROM NICHOLAS NEGROPONTE

*MIT Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Idit is one of the first three PhD's in constructionism from the MIT Media Lab and set a very high bar for others. She contributed with passion and intensity that has not been exceeded. Her theory of children as designers remains a benchmark and guides many of us today. In fact, I was with Idit in China at the time we all came up with the name One Laptop per Child. She remains very close to me personally and knows more about children and Media Literacy than anybody else.

### FROM DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

*Author of Program or Be Programmed (2010)*

Idit is a living laboratory. Her research is as grounded in praxis as her practice is inspired by theory. She does not merely test hypotheses but transcends them in her never-ending quest to make interactive media experiences truly interactive.

Idit is one of the few people creating interactive media today who understands that the promotion of agency is not a default computer setting, but an ethos that must be

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# Cary Bazalgette

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least independent and does not have to toe anybody else's policy line. Our new web site, [www.themea.org](http://www.themea.org), should become a focus for information-seekers and debate, and what I hope will become our regular annual conference, starting this year with MLC2010, will be not only a forum for new encounters and ideas, but will also raise the profile of media education in the public sphere.

—Cary Bazalgette, *September 2010*

## ALL ABOUT CARY FROM HER COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS...

### FROM DAVID BUCKINGHAM

*Institute of Education, University of London*

Cary Bazalgette has been a tireless advocate for media education for more than 35 years, and has played a vitally influential role in the development of the field both in the UK and internationally. Her achievements have been in two main areas. Firstly, she has exercised a considerable influence on the development of national policy, not least through her persistent and indefatigable lobbying of key authorities in government. Secondly, she has focused our collective attention on the possibilities and challenges of media education with younger children, through conducting and sponsoring research, and through developing curriculum materials. In both areas, her work has been a model of rigour and clarity, and it has influenced a whole generation of teachers.

Responsibility for the development and evolution of the 'British Film Institute model' of media education was largely her responsibility; and this model has been the predominant influence on educational practice in other English-speaking countries, and across Europe. Despite retiring from the BFI, Cary continues to be amazingly active. In her current role as chair of the Media Education Association, she is helping to inject a new sense of dynamism and purpose in the field. No stranger to controversy and robust debate, she has 'kept the faith' with media education in rapidly changing times. A powerful speaker and lucid writer, Cary is well-known to colleagues internationally for her committed and critical approach, and she is a very worthy recipient of the Jessie McCansie award.

### FROM SARAH MUMFORD

*National Media Museum, Bradford, England*

Cary has led the strategy that has ensured that over the last 35 years media education has gained a foothold within the primary curriculum during both her time at the BFI and since going freelance in more recent years. She continues undeterred to advocate and demonstrate the importance of media literacy for children of all ages. In equal measure she acts as a mentor and leader, who has devoted a good part of her life to the cause of raising the profile of media education at all levels, and continues to be the catalyst for inspiring many others to join the cause. Thank you Cary.

### FROM DEDE SINCLAIR

*Educator, Elementary Schools, Toronto, Canada*

Over the years, Cary has been a leading member of an elite group of British scholars and educators who have embraced classroom research to form the basis of exciting and productive media education curricula.

The time is right to recognize her among the global leaders who are shaping the new foundations for education in the 21st Century.

### FROM BARRY DUNCAN

*Co-Founder, Association for Media Literacy, Toronto, Canada*

Through attending international conferences I came to know Cary Bazalgette, education officer at the British Film Institute. Representing the BFI is not an easy task. Under Cary's direction this grand institution has generally well served the needs of UK media teachers. While now retired from this position, she continues to write and participate on various committees developing curriculum and organizing conferences.

Over the past few decades, Cary has made an invaluable contribution to the field; justifiably demanding of her self and others, she cares passionately about the directions media education is taking. Her new book will help us make the best decisions.

**CONGRATULATIONS, CARY!**

# Idit Harel Caperton

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embedded into every stage of planning, development and implementation. And that's why everyone who has the opportunity to interact with Idit herself, about pretty much anything, ends up utterly empowered for it.

## FROM MARTIN RAYALA, Ph.D.

*Kutztown University of Pennsylvania*

Idit Harel Caperton has a distinguished intellectual pedigree having worked closely with the legendary Seymour Papert at MIT's Media Lab. She is part of a long list of former MIT graduate students who, influenced by Papert's pivotal explorations of children, learning and technology, have gone on to make significant contributions to the growing field of technology and education. Idit and her colleagues share some characteristics that make them unique. Along with keen native intelligence, solid scholarly preparation and a desire to help children learn, Idit is an entrepreneur. Lots of us can come up with good ideas but few of us have the knowledge, skills and determination to turn them into reality. Idit is a "serial entrepreneur" who has spun off ventures such as MaMaMedia, WorldWideWorkshop, and Globaloria. Any one of Idit's accomplishments would make

the rest of us proud to have done but she continues to fine-tune and reinvent herself with no sign of slowing down any time soon. Idit Harel Caperton has made a significant contribution to technology and education and continues to be a leader to keep an eye on for the near future."

## FROM KATHLEEN McCARTNEY

*Dean, Harvard Graduate School of Education*

There could be no more deserving recipient of the Jessie McCaule Award than Idit Harel Caperton. Idit has spent decades building and delivering curricula and learning initiatives for students from all backgrounds to develop critical thinking skills through technology. From MaMaMedia to the World Wide Workshop, Idit's approach to digital literacy has been innovative and successful. She is a leading educator whose work is closing the digital divide and equipping learners with 21st century skills. I am proud that she began her career in education as a graduate student here at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and I am privileged to call her a friend and colleague.

## CONGRATULATIONS, IDIT!

Idit and friends.



# Media & Information Literacy

## THE UNESCO PERSPECTIVE

BY ALTON GRIZZLE

### INTRODUCTION

Modern societies and information and knowledge societies are synonymous. We live in a world where, as opposed to the agricultural and industrial eras, abundance of information and knowledge, rather than scarcity, is the norm. This information and knowledge is the driving force that keeps economics, administrations, public life and personal relations going. Propelled by technological improvements on telecommunications over the last 50 years, there is also an abundance of the sources through which this vast amount of information is channeled. Adding to the super-abundance of information is the concern about freedom of expression, freedom of information, source reliability, misinformation and privacy. It is in this context that the need for **MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL)** cannot be overemphasized. This article considers a synoptic conceptualization of **MIL** from UNESCO's perspectives. It then offers the basis for UNESCO's decision to prioritize **MIL** and ends with a cursory description of some of UNESCO's key actions in this field.

### DELINEATING THE FIELD OF MIL

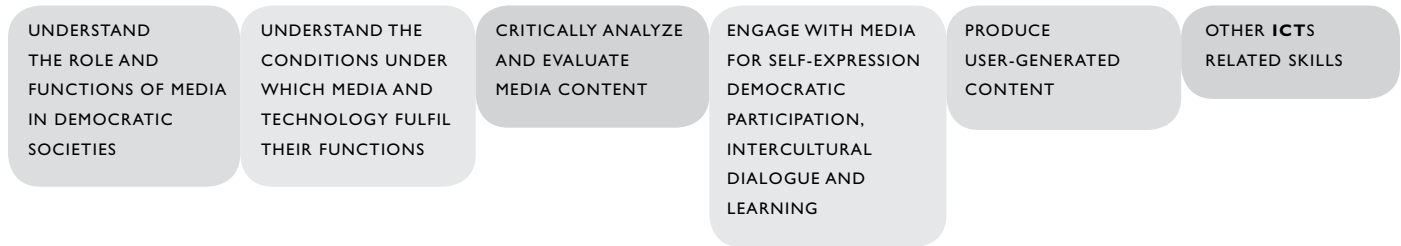
Media and information literacy seeks to bring together disciplines that were once separate and distinct. **MIL** recognizes the functions of media and information sources

in our personal lives and in democratic societies. It promotes the individual's right to communicate, express, to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. It encourages the evaluation of media and information based on how they are produced, the messages being conveyed, and the intended audience. *Figure 1* illustrates the primary elements of **MIL**.

There are two main schools of thought emerging about the relationship between these converging fields—media literacy and information literacy. Firstly, in some quarters information literacy is considered as the broader field of study, with media literacy subsumed into it. In other quarters, information literacy is merely a part of media literacy, which is seen as the broader field. However, an international expert group convened by UNESCO pointed out the distinctions as well as linkages between media and information. Consider the following terminologies being used by various actors around the world:

- Media Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Freedom of Expression & Freedom of Information Literacy
- Library Literacy
- News Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- Internet Literacy
- Digital Literacy
- Cinema Literacy
- Multimedia Literacy

## MEDIA LITERACY



## INFORMATION LITERACY



FIGURE 1 • KEY ELEMENTS OF MIL

Some organizations use the term media education and media literacy interchangeably. UNESCO's use of the term **MIL** seeks to harmonize these different notions in the light of converging delivery platforms and the importance to offer a clearer ecology of this emerging field to policy makers and educators.

As we seek to empower children, youth and citizens, in general, media and information literacy must be considered as a whole which includes a combination of skills competencies and attitudes.

### MIL A PRIORITY TO UNESCO

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds peoples' right to freedom of opinion and expression without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of borders. UNESCO takes the position that **MIL** equips citizens with the skills and competencies needed to seek and enjoy the full benefits of this fundamental human right.

People are living in a different and 'new world' today, whether or not they have access to or are participating in the new and emerging information and knowledge societ-

ies. This 'new world' requires that new forms of literacies be introduced into education systems.

Illustratively, the catalytic role of the mass media and other information sources in shaping values, shared ideas and perspectives is well-established. The presence of new forms of communications media has magnified that power, taking it to universal dimensions. There is widespread acceptance that media and information systems are channels through which people: a) make informed decisions, b) learn about the world around them, c) build a sense of community, d) maintain public discourse and, e) engage in lifelong learning. Therefore, it should be the goal of education systems to reflect these 'truths' by integrating media and information literacy at all levels of school curricula.



ALTON GRIZZLE works at the UNESCO HQ, Paris as Programme Specialist in Communication and Information. He is the co-manager of UNESCO's global actions on media and information literacy (MIL). Alton has diverse education and experience in the fields of education, management, information systems and media and communication. He has conceptualized and spearheaded many projects in media development, communication for development and MIL. Prior to UNESCO, he was an educator at secondary school and adult vocational training levels of the education systems in Jamaica for ten years.



The decision by UNESCO to prioritize **MIL** within its communication and information programme is to achieve this goal. If **MIL** is to be enhanced among students, this would require teachers themselves to become media and information literate. UNESCO's present focus on the training of teachers is a key strategy to capitalising on a potential multiplier effect: information literate teachers; information literate students and information literate societies.

## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CURRENT ACTIONS ON **MIL**

In implementing this strategy, UNESCO considers all forms of media and information sources regardless of technologies used. We regard teachers as key change agents. Our main activities include: 1) Preparation of a Model Curriculum on Media and Information Literacy for Teacher Education, 2) Development of a **MIL** Indicators and 3) Facilitation of networking among higher education institutions to promote research and knowledge exchange on **MIL**.

The preparation of the *Model Curriculum on Media and Information Literacy for Teacher Education* is one of the key actions of UNESCO's strategy to promote media and information literate societies and foster the development of free, independent and pluralistic media and universal access to information and knowledge. The curriculum for teachers is intended as a tool that will provide educators of all

UNESCO'S MISSION IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUILDING OF PEACE, THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE THROUGH EDUCATION, THE SCIENCES, CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION.



backgrounds with the main skills and competencies on **MIL**. We are now inviting expressions of interest from teacher training institutions to adapt and integrate the curriculum into teacher education systems.

Secondly, in-service teachers will not be excluded. UNESCO is now negotiating with partners to launch an online certificate course on **MIL**.

International cooperation is a necessary force to strengthen **MIL** initiatives around the world. With this in mind UNESCO is partnering with the UN Alliance of Civilization to establish the first international network of universities on media and information literacy.

The network will commence with 8-10 universities from different regions and will expand gradually.

As a catalyst for international cooperation, which is one of our five functions, UNESCO's thrust toward engendering media and information literate societies is carried out through partnerships. Some of our key partners include UN Alliance of Civilizations; NORDICOM/the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media; Göteborg University; the Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change, Association of Media Literacy—Ontario; World Summit on Media Children and Youth; Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and the Argentina Ministry of Education. •



# WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS?

BY **JORDI TORRENT**

*"A popular Government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy or perhaps both."* —**JAMES MADISON, 1822**

LAST JUNE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF A PANEL AT THE 6<sup>TH</sup> **WORLD SUMMIT ON MEDIA FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH** ASKED OURSELVES "WHY IS MEDIA LITERACY IMPORTANT?" WE ALL CAME UP WITH THE USUAL REPLIES, VARIATIONS OF THE GENERAL DISCOURSE THAT HAS FRAMED THE "MEDIA LITERACY" ISSUE FOR WELL OVER THREE DECADES BY NOW. BUT THE QUESTION IS RELEVANT BECAUSE IT ULTIMATELY READS AS "WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?" ACCOMPANIED

BY THE COROLLARY "WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY DO WE WANT FOR TODAY'S AND FUTURE GENERATIONS? AND "WHAT ETHICAL VALUES DO WE WANT TO PROMOTE?" WE, (THOSE BORN BEFORE 1970), PERCEIVE THAT THE WORLD WE USED TO KNOW AND TOOK FOR TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, (WHEN THE FACSIMILE MACHINE AND THE TELEPHONE BEEPER WERE THE

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNICATION TOOLS), IS RAPIDLY CHANGING. BUT WE DO NOT SEE THE "HOW" OR THE "WHAT" IS CHANGING, WE REALLY ONLY SEE THE SPEED OF THE CHANGE IN OURSELVES AND OUR COMMUNITIES. WE ARE AWARE OF THE CHANGE, BUT CAN'T REALLY PREDICT THE DEEP AND WIDE HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGE. COULD GUTENBERG PREDICT THE ROLE OF THE NEWSPAPER IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION? >>



**JORDI TORRENT** After obtaining a degree in Philosophy at the University of Barcelona, Jordi followed graduate studies in Paris at the Sorbonne University (Film Esthetics) and at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Anthropology Filmmaking).

From 1986 to 1990 he was Media Curator at Exit Art, a New York-based arts organization. From 1990 to 2006 he was a Media Consultant for the Department of Education of New York City. There he created a Media Literacy Education program that was implemented at over twenty five NYC schools, as well as conducted media education workshops for educators and parents. Jordi was co-director of *Media: Overseas Conversations*, a series of annual conferences on media, youth and education held in NYC from 2004 to 2008. He has published articles in a variety of newspapers and journals, including *El Pais*, *Liberation*, and *Video*

*Actualidad*. In addition, he has produced, written and directed feature films, documentaries, and TV commercials.

Currently he is Project Manager of Media Literacy Education initiatives of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and teaches a graduate course on International Media and Cinema at Fordham University, New York.

MOST LIKELY NEITHER WAS HE ABLE TO PREDICT THAT LESS THAN FIFTY YEARS AFTER CONCEIVING THE MOVABLE TYPE THERE WOULD BE MORE THAN 1,000 PRINTING SHOPS IN EUROPE HAVING PRODUCED 20 MILLION COPIES OF 35,000 TITLES. AND EVEN IF MOST OF THE FIRST PRINTED BOOKS WERE CONSERVATIVE IN CONTENT AND REPLICATED ALREADY EXISTING TEXTS AND IDEAS WITH LITTLE OR NO ROOM FOR NEW ONES, GUTENBERG AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES WERE PROBABLY ABLE TO PREDICT THAT PRINTING TECHNOLOGY WOULD OPEN A WHOLE NEW DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, GENERATING NEW SOCIAL AWARENESS IN INDIVIDUALS, AND PERHAPS UNSETTLING A BIT THE HIGHLY CONCENTRATED TOP-DOWN

DISTRIBUTION OF POWER OF THEIR TIME. SO ALTHOUGH WE CAN'T PREDICT THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE FUTURE PROPPED BY MUTATIONS OF WHAT WE NOW KNOW AS THE INTERNET AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, WE CAN PREDICT A FEW THINGS IF WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT MEDIA AND ITS IMPRINT IN SOCIETY.

TO PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION (AND ITS VARIANTS: INFORMATION LITERACY, NEWS LITERACY, DIGITAL LITERACY, EDUCATION, ETC.) IS IN FACT ADVOCATING FOR AN EDUCATION SYSTEM (A SOCIETY) THAT CREATIVELY EMPOWERS THE INDIVIDUAL ON HIS/HER ETHICAL (ECONOMIC, EMOTIONAL,

ETC) CHOICES WHILE FACILITATING HIS/HER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE "PARTICIPATORY CULTURE" THAT WE PERCEIVE IS EMERGING FROM THIS NEW SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPING OUT OF THE "NEW MEDIA." IN HIS LATEST BOOK, *PROGRAM OR BE PROGRAMMED*, DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF WARNS US, "IN THE EMERGING, HIGHLY PROGRAMMED LANDSCAPE AHEAD, YOU WILL EITHER CREATE THE SOFTWARE OR YOU WILL BE THE SOFTWARE (...) THAT'S WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS. WE ARE CREATING THE BLUEPRINT TOGETHER—A DESIGN OF OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE."•

### THAT'S WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS.



**United Nations Alliance of Civilizations**  
Many cultures. One humanity.



*The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is an initiative of the UN Secretary-General which aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. Working in partnership with governments, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector, the Alliance is supporting a range of projects and initiatives aimed at building bridges among a diversity of cultures and communities.*

**MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.UNAOC.ORG](http://WWW.UNAOC.ORG).**

# New Directions in Global Media Literacy

BY PAUL MIHAILIDIS, Ph.D.

## INTRODUCTION

This article highlights the birth, development, and growth of a dynamic educational program promoting global media literacy. *The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change*, a program born in summer 2007, annually gathers 50 students and a dozen faculty for three weeks to create educational and multimedia products around media literacy, global citizenship, and freedom of expression. With more than 200 student and 30 faculty alumni from 25 countries, the Salzburg Academy has created a curriculum that has been downloaded in more than 100 countries worldwide, and has enabled new forms of dialog across borders, across cultures, and across divides. Now in its fifth year, the program stands to benefit the future information societies by offering resources to help maintain active and participatory journalists and citizens of the digital age.

## GLOBAL MEDIA LITERACY: NO LONGER AN OPTION

Any conversation about globalization today must take into account the changing ways in which information is produced, transmitted, and received. New media technologies have allowed for wide and unfettered flow of information across borders, across cultures, and across platforms; influencing how individuals, societies, and nations use information to inform, interact, and persuade (see Shirky, 2010; Carr, 2010; Weinberger, 2008; Benkler, 2007; Jenkins, 2006). In response to this new global media environment, educators have increasingly adopted media literacy to help students understand the complex and multi-faceted roles and responsibilities of media in civil society.

While many media literacy initiatives have made significant strides over the last few decades to respond to the almost daily changes in the global media landscape and to address the roles media have come play in the globalized world, these initiatives do not always have the resources or infrastructure to incorporate global media literacy learning outcomes into their purview.

*The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change*, with a network of over 200 students and 30 faculty from over 25 countries worldwide, has transformed global media education by creating a program that brings together faculty and students from all over the world, and charges them to build products that characterize media and citizenship as inherently global, and representative of the cross-cultural media environments now occupied by a majority of individuals worldwide. Through an interdisciplinary and cross-border media literacy approach, the Academy has developed a new framework to teach students not only to think critically about media and media messages, but also to defend and appreciate the necessity of free and diverse media systems for free and diverse global communities.



PAUL MIHAILIDIS is an Assistant professor of Media studies in the Journalism, Media, and PR department at Hofstra University in New York, where he teaches media and politics, media literacy, social media, ethics, and media history/development. Mihailidis's research concerns the effectiveness of media education in teaching about media's roles and responsibilities in civil society. He has published widely on media literacy, global media and civil society, and on post-secondary learning outcomes in media programs. Mihailidis is also the Director of the Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change, and sits on the board of the National Association for Media Literacy Education.

## THE SALZBURG ACADEMY ON MEDIA & GLOBAL CHANGE

In 2007, fifty-two students from fourteen countries over five continents gathered at the Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria, for three weeks to create educational content around media, freedom of expression, democracy, and citizenship. The premise of this gathering—the inaugural Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change—was that a truly global collaborative effort is a prerequisite to creating a truly global media literacy educational experience.

In the four years since its birth, the primary outcome of the Salzburg Academy, in addition to the individual growth and transformation documented by those who participated, was a student-created curriculum on global media literacy. This curriculum reinforced critical inquiry and analytic skills with modules that emphasized the vital importance of free and independent media in building and supporting civil society (Mihailidis, 2009). Since its birth, the Academy has grown into a robust and dynamic laboratory for creating dynamic, diverse, and collaborative products to be shared with a global audience (see *Table 1*).

In its first year, the Academy participants created an analysis framework for the global media literacy curriculum built around five concepts. Known as the “5 A’s” of global media literacy (see *Table 2*), this model seeks to produce individuals who are aware of the world and their own role as a world citizen, respect and value diversity, understand how the world works [socially, culturally, politically, economically, technologically, environmentally], participate in and contribute to the community at both a local and global level, are willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place, and who take responsibility for their actions. The 5A’s are also designed to not think of media education in terms of content or media silos (TV, radio, print, internet) but to reflect a more holistic and integrated approach to media realities that are converging and increasingly borderless.

Building on the work of the first year of the program, the Academy in years two and three created a series of case study-driven lesson plans, available online as web pages and downloadable PDF documents. The lesson plans all include

**TABLE 1**

*Salzburg Academy Institutional Partners (2007–2010)*

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION	COUNTRY
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT	LEBANON
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN SHARJAH	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY	UNITED KINGDOM
HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY	USA
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY	UGANDA
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA	NAMIBIA
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA	ARGENTINA
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA	CHILE
QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERISTY	PAKISTAN
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY	SOUTH AFRICA
TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY	CHINA
UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA	MEXICO
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK	USA
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI	USA
UNIVERSITY OF ST. CYRIL & METHODIUS IN TRNAVA	SLOVAKIA
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN	USA
ZAYED UNIVERSITY	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**TABLE 2**

*The 5 As of Media Literacy*

- ACCESS** TO MEDIA AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- AWARENESS** OF MEDIA’S POWER
- ASSESSMENT** OF HOW MEDIA COVER INTERNATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL EVENTS AND ISSUES
- APPRECIATION** FOR MEDIA’S ROLE IN CREATING CIVIL SOCIETIES
- ACTION** TO ENCOURAGE BETER COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DIVIDES

an introductory case study, a set of classroom and homework exercises, and discussion questions modeled along the 5 A’s. The plans also list additional resources and credits. The consistent lesson plan format provides a familiar structure for teachers and students, and the separation of the lesson plan into parts gives educators an easy way to select those elements of the lesson plans are of greatest value to them in their classroom. The students worked in diverse



groups to collectively build, edit, and finalize each lesson plan, making sure the scope of each product was global in scope, collaborative in its development, and adaptable for diverse audiences.

In 2010, the Academy set out to diversify its media education platform. With the curriculum now in use in over 100 countries, the lesson plan approach was expanded to include six over-arching themes: two theoretical *agenda setting* and *framing*; two related to new media technologies: *social media*, and *civic participation* and two focused on topic of international concern: *covering conflict* and *freedom of expression*. Each of these thematic modules provides an overview to the content area, and offers a downloadable lesson plans, videos, exercises, online social maps, and resources. These six modules together represent topics that are global in scope but local in context and application. They can be taught across cultures and borders, and they each provide room for critical inquiry, theoretical exploration, and practical application: founding principals of the Academy model.

## CONCLUSION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN GLOBAL MEDIA LITERACY

The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change is a visionary effort to transform media education. If understanding media is a prerequisite for civic engagement in an information world, then media education programs must do more to help prepare citizens for lives of active participation through mediated platforms. This not only includes how to critically analyze and compose media messages, but also

how to empower civic voice, how to be tolerant of media cultures in other parts of the world, how to use media for better cross-cultural dialog and less stereotyping, and so on.

The Academy has been a success because it has built upon earlier notions of teaching and learning about media to create new dynamic platforms for civic growth in global contexts. Through a collaborative, ground-up approach to teaching and learning about global media, the Academy has created not only dynamic education products, but also a core group of future media practitioners that have gained invaluable insight into how media systems define cultures and identities in foreign nations. This involves thinking beyond borders, and beyond specific media, to understand the unique ways media defines civil society across the globe.

For more information on the Salzburg Academy, it's curriculum, and how to apply, please visit [www.salzburg.umd.edu](http://www.salzburg.umd.edu).

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# GAMES, NEW MEDIA & LEARNING IN ARGENTINA:

## *An Interview with Inés Dussel*

BY HENRY JENKINS

In the Summer of 2010, I spoke at the VI FORO LATINOAMERICANO DE EDUCACION, hosted by the Fundacion Santillana, an event attended by education ministers and educational researchers/policy makers from many of the Latin American countries. My host for the event was educator and public intellectual Inés Dussel, who co-wrote with Luis Alberto Quevedo a new white paper exploring the impact of new media on education in Latin America, *Educacion y nuevas tecnologias: los desafios pedagogicos ante el mundo digital*. Dussel is highly engaged with the debates taking place in South America around digital learning. I wanted to share her perspectives with English-language researchers and educators in hopes of brokering more conversations between the North and the South about how rapid media change is impacting education.

**HENRY:** EARLIER THIS YEAR, YOU RELEASED A SIGNIFICANT REPORT WHICH SOUGHT TO EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF NEW MEDIA ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN LATIN AMERICA. WHAT WERE YOUR MAJOR GOALS FOR THIS PROJECT?

**INÉS:** We wanted to provide a broad frame that helps organize a discussion around the different alternatives that are being explored either

by public policies or by the schools themselves in the introduction of IT. We talk about four major strategies: a) organizing computer labs in schools, b) getting one laptop to every child (1-to-1) either by joining the OLPC initiative or through major commercial firms, c) having portable carriages with laptops for planned, alternate usage in classrooms, and d) introducing electronic boards in each classroom. Each strategy has different assumptions about the extent to which IT should permeate the daily life of schools and of course imply different costs and mobilization of resources.

In the report, we were also interested in taking a look at the production of content, especially the work done by teachers with the use of blogs or video production for educational purposes, and by the Argentinean Ministry of Education, which has done an interesting TV series for rural schools called *Horizontes (Horizons)* whose impact on school practices we want to investigate. These schools usually have only one teacher with multi-grade classrooms, so IT technologies can be a great help in supporting teachers who usually exhaust themselves in their daily work.

**HENRY:** WHICH MODELS HAVE GOTTEN THE GREATEST TRACTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND WHY?

**INÉS:** So far, the most extended strategy in the region is to equip computer labs, but research shows that, while it was helpful in the 1990s to get at least some teachers interested in IT, today it tends to confine the novelty to a marginal place in the curriculum and does not contribute to a deeper discussion on the big changes brought about by digital culture. Also, it has been noted that computer labs usually get trapped in the micro-politics of schools, with power games around who's got the key or privileged access to the lab (the same can be said about any innovation in schools, of course, but the concentration of computers in one space contributes to a more centralized struggle around access and control).

There is also a particular Argentinean context that has to do with the scarcity of resources: the first reaction of school principals and teachers when they get computers or even books is to lock them off so that they are not lost or ruined by usage. This sounds absurd, but it has to do with an entrenched learning that in schools you don't get good things too often, so you better preserve them, even though this might mean not using them at all... So, as we all know but tend to forget, innovations and new

technologies in schools have to negotiate with multiple levels of adaptation and with different school dynamics that produce unexpected effects.

The second alternative, which is actually becoming the most common nowadays, is the I-to-I strategy of equipping every child with a netbook. In Uruguay the Plan Ceibal, effective since 2007 and based on OLPC, has been very successful in doing that with all elementary school children in public schools (around 320,000 students, ages 6 to 11). Uruguay is a relatively small country, with a flat land, and is one of the most socially egalitarian in the region, so in many respects it has not gone through the challenges of connectivity that other countries are undergoing right now, especially when there are high mountains with blind spots for telecommunication, lots of isolated villages,

or heavily marginalized groups with a predictable feeling of resentment towards State policies (which might derive in high levels of theft or destruction of equipment). Argentina's government has recently started a program called ConectarIgualdad (ConnectEquality) that will provide 3,000,000 secondary school students in public schools with netbooks manufactured by commercial firms. It is probably the largest single investment in the region, and we are all eager to see how it will work.

The third and fourth alternatives (portable carriages with laptops and smart boards) are being implemented in small scale, and more research is needed to understand their effects. Both seem interesting ways of making a smoother transition into the digital culture than the I-to-I strategy, because they are closer to the current organization of the classroom. But



Inés speaking at a recent conference.

apparently the I-to-I option is the route that the educational systems are taking in our region. It might be interesting, though, to keep these other possibilities in mind, as we don't know yet how effectively the I-to-I strategy is going to work, and also because we don't think this should be an "either/or" option: school systems are large conglomerates of people and institutions and they should be able to incorporate new media through many different strategies that might be useful for different purposes.

**HENRY:** WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS IN SEEKING TO EXPAND ACCESS TO NEW MEDIA?

**INÉS:** Our reading of initiatives like the I-to-I option is that they are great strategies for digital inclusion, and the main effects are not only to be seen on children's lives but on their families'. There's an ad from the Plan Ceibal in Uruguay that is rich in images about the social progress that rural children will make with their laptops. The song is performed by Jorge Drexler (Oscar winner with the film *The Motorcycle Diaries*, about Che Guevara's youthful journey across South America) and says something like this: "I want to be a sailor/ on the Austral sky/ without getting away from my haven/ under the shadow of my ceibal" (which is a common tree in the pampas). The symbolic aspect of

having an opportunity for growth and development without being forced to migrate to a big city or to a foreign country is something that is really strong in the Latin American context, and points to a transformation in the economy and the politics of our societies. I want to stress the complexity of the symbolism that is being mobilized: it is conceived as part of the rights of every citizen; it also has overtones of deep quests for social justice in Latin America and it implies an affirmation of local development not in a nostalgic mood but with hope for the future.

Surrounding these initiatives there is, however, a significant lack of discussion about what it will mean for schools and classrooms to have children connected to individual screens, presumably moving at their own pace in a rich environment with multiple alternatives and pathways to be followed. This sounds fantastic on one level, but is also terrifying for most teachers who have no clue about how to handle these new situations.

In Uruguay, two or more years after they started with the OLPC program, they are reporting problems with connectivity, software or hardware that can affect sometimes 50% of the class. At any rate teachers are not prepared to deal with them and do not have a technical aid at hand. When teachers encounter these problems, they cannot simply tell the students with failing equipment to shut up and let other children work (in fact they can, but this won't make things any better!). There are things to be done in these situa-

tions, but what I mean is that teachers should have a repertoire of alternatives that they don't have yet. The training they are receiving is on software and, as far as I know, there is no organized training or discussion about the pedagogical situations they are facing. This is something that could be dealt with if there were more concerns about pedagogical issues and about the skills and practices that are needed to implement these changes.

There is also lots of apologetic talks on the "School 2.0," most of the times in de-politicized terms, which propose an ideal of a direct (un-mediated) access to information and knowledge and that assume the model of the business websites for participation. In this view, with the Internet 2.0 children will (finally!) be free from the domination of the teacher and the institution of schooling, and the rhetoric promises that, instead of having ill-trained teachers, young people will be able to access any site and get all the expert advice that they want from top scientists and thinkers.

The mainstream rhetoric is no different, at least from what I've read, from that in the U.S. or in Europe. I have many problems with these arguments, among them, the derogatory view they have of actual schools and teachers and the uncritical privileging of expert knowledge, but probably the largest difference lies in the assumption that there is an access to knowledge that is un-mediated by existing social knowledge or institutions. I like very much Mimi Ito's

*Engineering Play*, because it shows all the nuances of media production in the case of videogames, the different genres, but also all the range of practices in media use or consumption by young people, that show several layers of mediation. What I want to stress is that the most likely outcome of this promise of “non-mediated” (which in fact means non-mediated by schools or teachers) access to new media will in fact mean that what will be predominant in classrooms is the mediation from young people’s experience with the media outside schools (with all its taints by social habits, class, gender, etc.).

**HENRY:** CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE CONTEXT OF THIS DEBATE IN YOUR COUNTRY? FOR EXAMPLE, HOW MUCH ACCESS DO STUDENTS HAVE TO NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL? HOW MUCH EXPOSURE DO TEACHERS AS A CLASS HAVE TO NEW MEDIA IN THE COURSE OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE?

**INÉS:** I would say that most students have access to technology, although the frequency and intensity is heavily dependent on socio-economic backgrounds. The main divide is between urban and rural/semi-rural populations, because even in low-income groups in big cities there is a push towards having multi-functional

cell phones that allow most of the operations one can do on the internet. Of course, the problem is the soaring costs of the broadband or the phone service, which are still terribly high in the region. To subsidize broadband connections to low-income populations might be a really democratic move in the near future in most of Latin American countries, but we are not there yet.

But the divide, as many people are arguing, is moving from access to use. In an on-going research on schools and visual culture at FLACSO, we find a clear distinction between the type of uses young people from middle and upper classes are doing, and the ones done by young people who come from low-income families, and especially those in semi-rural areas. The first ones are making sophisticated videos, have large collections of images and music, and produce multimedia reports for schools, while the latter make basic PowerPoints and have small collections of pictures and music, generally with less reflection on what it is, and what for, they are collecting. As always, there are exceptions, but this seems to be the trend. That is why I believe schools could make a difference by providing a wide range of experiences that enrich young people’s engagement with the media.

Teachers, on the other hand, do not have a special relationship to new media as a class, that is, because they are teachers. Quite the contrary: pre-service training has started to include it as a curricular content only in the

last two years, and it is still a marginal trend. One can see young teachers in low-income schools who do not have an email account or don’t even know about the possibilities that new media offer. I ask myself how it is that nobody in their training, which did not happen in the 1980’s but only three or five years ago, told them that having an email account and navigating the internet is important.

I think that this has to do with some prejudice on the part of the teacher training institutions that assume that new media is kind of a “sumptuous consumption” for low-income populations who are not getting the basics (decent employment, food, electricity or water) and so that it should not be included as a basic content. What they are overlooking is that today access and use of new media is part of the “basics,” of being a member of the local or global community, of getting to be informed and participate in a public culture, even of getting a job.

And children and young people know this better than the training institutions, which are falling behind. In our research, we found multiple examples of young people from low-income families whose relatively-poor use of IT is still pivotal for themselves and their parents in doing budgets for contract works, making a website for home repairs or other informal jobs, or connecting to family in other provinces or neighboring countries. These uses might not be as sophisticated as others, but are none the less very effective and important in

helping them get better material and emotional conditions.

**HENRY:** HOW HAS NEW MEDIA BEEN PERCEIVED BY THE ARGENTINIAN PUBLIC? IS IT STILL READ MOSTLY AS A THREAT OR IS THERE AN AWARENESS OF THE OPPORTUNITIES IT REPRESENTS?

**INÉS:** For some people, those in the middle classes, new media are a luxury that comes after some basic issues have been guaranteed for the society as a whole. And while this argument is sensible (you cannot think about the internet if you're not eating or have no electricity), it is not true that one thing can be solved without the other.

On the other hand, the public debate is still organized around opposing moral terms, and I would say that they tend to go for the pessimistic side of the dichotomy. Talks of threat, safety, danger, not only for the children but also for the Spanish language (fear of Anglo-influence) or for "the world as we know it," are visible in most of the media coverage on new media. Teachers tend to endorse this view, and complain about young people's poor writing and oral skills for which they blame new media.

But there are some perspectives that are trying to build a more balanced approach, which can point simultaneously to opportunities and challenges. I believe that a deeper discussion is needed that addresses

the profound changes brought about by new media. I particularly like Bernard Stiegler's discussion in *The YouTube Reader* on the breakdown of the synchronized access to a flux of programmed texts such as broadcast TV, and the emergence of a cardinal access that can be produced and controlled by the user. I think that there are many issues to be debated around the possibility of a common, public culture that goes beyond what each one of us chooses to look at, consume and produce in our individual screens and in our own time or pace; and that is why I also do not think we should give up on the presence of a common screen in the classroom, be it the blackboard, the smart board, or any other common point of attention. In that respect, I also align myself with the comments done by you and many others, i.e. the reports of the MacArthur Foundation initiative, which place the discussion of new media in the light of the production of a public culture. In an era of individualized screens, maybe the best contribution of schooling is to help organize a common conversation about what we see, feel, and think in and out of our screens.

**HENRY:** AS YOU DO SO, YOU SEEM TO BE VERY AWARE OF THE EXISTING VISUAL CULTURE OF SCHOOLS. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU TOLD ME ABOUT RESEARCH WHICH SUGGESTS STUDENTS ARE SOMETIMES OVERWHELMED BY FILMS THEY

SEE IN THE CLASSROOM AND DO NOT ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO TEACH. HOW CAN DESIGNERS OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES SIDESTEP THOSE PROBLEMS?

**INÉS:** In the research we are doing on the visual culture of schools, many students referred to their memories of remarkable activities organized by teachers using fiction films or documentaries, or asking them to bring pictures about social issues. Students liked them a lot, and valued them as great learning experiences. But when asked about what they thought they learned with those activities, they could not refer to any specific content. Students had vague memories about the concepts or processes involved, but all remembered the intensity of the feelings provoked by the viewing.

This is something that interests me a lot, and that I put along a series of readings I've been doing on visual studies, attention and learning. Historically, pedagogy has thought that there is a straight relationship between seeing and knowing, but psychology and our own historical experience shows that this connection is anything but simple. What are children learning when they "see" something in the classroom?

This relates to something that you've referred to in previous works: the "wow" effect, the emotional impact of media on people. When using



images in classrooms, we might get that “wow” feeling, as when students say, “wow, the teacher caught my attention,” but from that we cannot deduce that they learned what we tried to teach.

We don’t solve this by becoming more explicit of our message or the “content” we want to convey. On the contrary, my reading of some of the situations I’ve researched is that form and content tend to be divorced, and that “forms” tend to be more compelling and complex while “content” is more straightforward and unidimensional, and so young people’s attention is caught by the more complex and interesting stimuli and do not attend to the content. So, I would say we should struggle to produce better materials that are more consistent in their forms and contents.

**HENRY:** YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF GAMES AND LEARNING INITIATIVES. CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE WORK YOU ARE DOING AND EXPLAIN WHAT KINDS OF PEDAGOGICAL AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES ARE INFORMING THIS WORK?

**INÉS:** With our research team at Flacso, we started doing educational documentaries in 2002. We produced eight 30-minutes videos on discrimination and educational inclusion. We tried to build complex and subtle

plots, and time constraints and pedagogical problems of what to show and how to show it in a classroom were present from the very first sketches and storyboards.

But seen from today, I think that we were more aware of the conceptual and political dimensions of our work than about the aesthetic aspects of it. It was a great experience, because we learned a lot about the tensions between content and form. As soon as we started to work with teachers and students, we realized that there were many unexpected things in their reactions to our videos, and that they had to do with the context in which they were seen, with their prior experiences with these types of videos, and with our own pedagogy. And we had to learn to work through and with the emotions elicited by the documentaries.

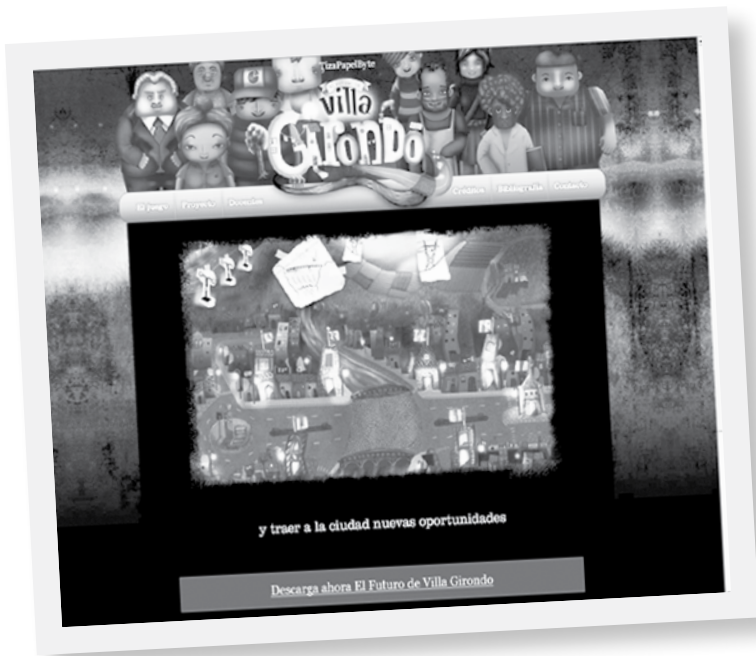
This drove us to media studies and also to visual studies, and this intersection is still very interesting to me. The question of which type of knowledge is produced by an image, as posed by the French historian Georges Didi-Huberman, remains a powerful, even a burning issue, as he says. Sometimes images touch us at a sensitive level and we are not able to put it into words, and yet they do produce important effects on us. Could these effects be called a learning or be considered as knowledge? I am not interested in measuring it, but in understanding what is it that they do to us. Will it last? Will it be attached in our memory to some meanings? Will we, as the students I found in our

recent research, just remember the intense emotion we felt without being able to conceptualize or rationalize anything about it? Maybe this is not a bad thing, but we should be aware of which kind of learning or effects some images produce on us.

We then moved to do an animation piece on global warming which was also very exciting, and since 2007 I’ve been engaged in a team run by Analía Segal, a colleague and friend of mine, that produces videogames. Analía had extensive experience on simulations and games in social studies, and some years ago she decided to experiment with new media, and I joined her. We wanted to explore the potentialities of videogames for learning: they can offer complex narratives, they use a visual language that is closer to young people’s visual culture than the schools’, they promote learning through immersion in a given situation and mobilize intuitive, bodily language that is scarcely mobilized by traditional schooling, among many other possibilities. The team includes people from different disciplines in the social sciences and young game designers who are key to the project. We know that educational materials are not magical solutions to anything, but believe that they can contribute to make classroom more interesting and more challenging. This might be a poor goal for an educational reformer but it is good enough for us as development team.

One of our principles was to produce materials that were not offered





A screen shot from the game, *Villa Girondo*.

by the cultural industries, neither by their topics nor by their aesthetics. We did research on alternative groups that are working on serious games, and decided to focus on sustainable development and produced three or four games on this subject. The first one is called "Urgent, Message" and is about a messenger in the near future who has to deliver different things to differ-

ent places, always considering time, cost, and environmental impact. The second one is called "Villa Girondo" and is a multi-player game. This one deals with the relocation of a village due to the planned construction of a water dam. Players are asked to assume different roles in the community and decide whether the village will be relocated or not. The tension between industrial progress and sustainability is explored, as well as the centrality and complexity of citizens' involvement on environmental issues.



INÉS DUSSEL graduated from the University of Buenos Aires in Educational Sciences and got her Ph.D. at the Dept of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a Principal Researcher at Flacso/Argentina, a centre for research and graduate teaching in the social sciences, and Educational Director of Sangari Argentina. She's currently interested in the intersections between schooling, new

media, and visual culture, and is doing research and producing materials for classroom teaching.



HENRY JENKINS is Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, and Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. He has written and edited more than a dozen books on media and popular culture, including *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). His other published works reflect the wide range of his research interests, touching on democracy and new media, the "wow

factor" of popular culture, science-fiction fan communities, and the early history of film comedy. As one of the first media scholars to chart the changing role of the audience in an environment of increasingly pervasive digital content, Jenkins has been at the forefront of understanding the effects of participatory media on society, politics, and culture. His research gives key insights to the success of social-networking Web sites, networked computer games, online fan communities, and other advocacy organizations, as well as emerging news media outlets. Prior to joining USC, Jenkins spent nearly two decades at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as the Peter de Florez Professor in the Humanities. While there, he directed MIT's Comparative Media Studies graduate degree program from 1999-2009, setting an innovative research agenda during a time of fundamental change in communication, journalism, and entertainment.

In the development of the videogames, we included a working group with teachers with whom we discuss and test the games at different stages. And we are doing research on the first developed prototypes to understand how they interact with the real dynamic of classrooms. The questions that interest us are both related to the design of the game and to the pedagogical skills needed to use it in classrooms. Which kinds of interactions are promoted by the rules of the game? How important and effective are teachers' interventions? What kind of strategies do young people use when playing the game? Are there constraints by playing the game at school? Which reflections are opened up by the game? Which ones are picked up by the teachers and which ones are left aside, and why? These are some of the questions we are investigating in schools these days. •



# THE STORY OF ONE COLLEGE IN ISRAEL

## *An Activist Critical Media Approach*

BY **DR. MIRA FEUERSTEIN**

*“In the press, in the media, even television, I see them moving towards pornography... And I think this is being done overtly or covertly... the moment a fact contradicts line, even if just a little, most of the journalists will not present it... Whatever makes them uncomfortable they won’t talk about and they’ll build some sort of ‘utopian’ picture of their attitude”*

—23 year-old student

The above quote was extracted from an interview conducted with the student at the end of a course in “Social Media Activism” which has been given for the past five years by the media department of the Oranim Academic College for Education in Israel.

The criticism aired in the quote reflects the rationale behind the activist approach to media studies that the college adopted in branding the training program for our students.

The course offers them original and experiential opportunities to create alternative media through various communication technologies, on social issues which they wish to improve in their daily lives.

The focus of this article will be the theoretical framework that guided us in adopting the media activism, students’ ability to function as involved and caring citizens in a democratic society, and the practical implications of all this—a story of one college in Israel.



DR. MIRA FEUERSTEIN, Ph.D. in critical media literacy education (CMLE). She is currently the head of the Media Studies department at Oranim Academic Educational College in Israel, and also responsible for teaching staff development and the training of pre-service teachers in media and critical thinking (CT) education.

Her fields of specialization are MLE and CT. She has engaged in media studies, research, material development and teaching for 30 years, and during that time she served for a period as national instructor in charge of developing curricula in CMLE for early childhood and training moderators and kindergarten teachers. To date, she has published text books on teaching ML for kindergarten and school teachers as well as for students, and has published articles and researches in scientific journals.

Broadly speaking, activist approaches emphasize engagement with the important issues of the day and participation in forming and reforming society at local, national and even global levels (Hebert & Sears, 2002). Given the battles for information in modern western society, the media are one empowering mechanism for constructing our images and understanding of the world. Thus, the media activism refers to alternatives to market driven media systems, a means of breaking the state's hegemony on information as a channel of democratization (Dahlgren, Miegel, & Olsson, 2007). A form of community media directed at creating or influencing media practices and strategies (Carrol & Hackett, 2006).

For students, this approach helps to sensitize them to the ways the media disregard their function as watchdogs in the service of the public, and how they, often closer to other centers of power (the economy and the state) than to the citizenry. In this way, students can learn how to approach citizenship in a mediated society, and to develop competent citizenship (Norris & Odugbemi, 2009).

The basis for all these ideas is the recognition of citizens' social responsibility, and their capacity to press the media to function properly and protect the quality of democracy. The need for such recognition is constantly growing, in light of the economic approach to the media in recent years, which creates a journalism marked by inertia and negligence instead of a critical media based on values and the good of the public (Barnea, 2008).

This can be seen, for example, in the findings of a recent survey about the status of journalism, which was conducted among 115 senior journalists in Europe, the Middle East and Africa; 40% of the journalists responded that hiring less experienced employees at lower salaries is the threat to quality journalism today, because fewer people devote time to research and to checking facts; 83% of the respondents said that PR people are a significant important factor in their work.

In addition, research about the role of newspapers and TV in stimulating young people to active civic engagement shows that the young are increasingly abandoning newspapers, and turning their backs on public service TV in favor of more entertainment-oriented commercial media. Disputes over these results have frequently centered on the putatively negative effects of this development on young people's political knowledge, interest, engagement and participation, and eventually on the very future of democracy (see, for instance, Milner, 2002).

These findings take on renewed significance in the new media age. With the extensive uses and interactions made possible by social technologies, the potential of civic competence in the private experiential domain of everyday life, and of participation become even stronger.

In this context, the critical media literacy (CML) empowering students through critical thinking inquiry of the media, deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this, alternative media production encourages students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives (Kellner & Share, 2007). Employing an activist media approach is to become media producers rather than remaining media consumers.

In the context of teacher training programs, such approaches followed one of the guidelines stated in Grunwald's declaration (1982): the importance of strengthening the public sphere by developing its citizens' CML. Students should become active citizens, capable of developing informed opinions, engaging in public debate, and taking possible actions. This requires us to view them as 'significant social actors in their own right, as "beings" and not simply as "becomings", who should be judged in terms of their projected futures' (Buckingham, 2008, 29).

As abstract or difficult to implement as these ideas may sound, they form an inseparable part of the educational concept that guides the training program of our students.

It provides opportunities to form professional teaching work, and to develop thinking individuals capable of coping with the complex problems of the changing media reality (Feuerstein, 2002; 2010), as can be seen in the following statement made by one of the students:

“...People who come to education are not people who stand by and watch. These are people who say ‘that’s not the way. This is how it should be.’”

The media activism approach is an essential component for the students to be more motivated and competent to participate in their society. The goal is to help students transform themselves into socially active citizens and at the same time transform society into a less oppressive and more egalitarian democracy (Kellner & Share, 2007).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The grassroots of the media activism approach spring largely from the insights gained through CML, that the media can both reinforce and resist the ideology of the dominant culture (Kellner, 1995). For young people, the media are generally conceptualized as a source of pleasure and of entertainment, that serve as a means for constructing knowledge about their own and others’ identities. Therefore, it is important to teach CML (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000).

Recent critical studies have indicated the ways in which media education and the production of alternative media can help create a healthy multiculturalism of diversity and a more robust democracy (Kellner & Share, 2005). CML develops students’ critical thinking and their conceptual understanding of the media (Feuerstein, 2002; 2010). In fact, media literacy research in western societies suggests that “an individual who has knowledge of the media will more easily acquire a well-founded opinion on societal issues/events and will thereby be better equipped to express his/her opinion, individually as well as collectively, in public and other social contexts”(Carlsson, 2008).

CML education plays a vital role in teaching students, how to use the media as instruments of social communication and change, and as modes of self-expression and social activism (Kellner 1995; 2004).

Media literate individuals become fully able to participate in a media-saturated society as critical consumers and citizens (Thoman & Jolls, 2004; Kubey, 2004; Claussen, 2004; Jackson & Jamieson, 2004; Tyner, 2003; Fisher-Keller, 1999; Buckingham, 2007). In this respect, the activism approach expands students’ dialogue with their community given the availability of digital media technologies, social networks, blogs and all the latest fads with their great potential to promote democratic self-expression, and social progress (i.e., project “CIVICWEB”).

These new social technologies offer more participatory forms of media culture that cultivate a civic culture, citizens’ participation, and engagement in the public sphere (Dahlgren, 2004; 2005; 2006). From this perspective CML underscores the meanings, practices, and identities of civic agents in their communication acts (Kellner, 1995; 2003).

Youngsters, like adults, differ in their technological skills. While some youngsters are actively engaged on the net, for others, the net is not an important channel for political engagement (Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Livingstone, Couldry & Markham, 2007).

Previous research shows that young people may adopt a civic identity of being a media activist. These are youngsters with issues of general interest that they wish to make public and so they find public spaces to communicate them (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2009; Livingstone, Bober & Helsper, 2004). They want to ensure that their voices are heard in the local public media sphere, as they address their questions of communication for social change with a spirit of empowerment ‘à la Freire’ (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006; Freire, 1973; 2001; Kotilainen & Suoranta, 2007).

Loader (2007) found that in most cases, young people seem to interact via the media, especially on local issues that are important to them, as two students remarked:

"... To bring about change you have to be a pioneer... Activism... fits in with my qualities. I'm a person who wants to lead. I know how to instigate action...." (25 year old female student).

"A person who contributes also enjoys. He also gains a lot from it... You also gain a certain amount of what I'd call...autonomy" (25 year old male student in the course).

Our activist program focuses the students not only on a critical understanding of the media, but also on initiating discussions on current matters in their local newspapers or the college radio station, and feeling that their voice is having an influence. The students engage in activities of their own choice, such as promoting the association for organ transplants, community policing of schools, the rights of rehabilitative teachers to organize, and much more.

Thus, students practice challenging social activities in their communities, using media skills and knowledge as civic agents who have learned how to participate in democracy. Such participation will grant them actual influence over issues that are crucial to their quality of life, and to justice in their communities, as part of their struggle to create a better society (Kellner & Share, 2007).

In this respect, the activist approach is close to what Ferguson (2001) calls critical solidarity: a means by which students acknowledge the social dimensions of their thinking and analysis. It is also a means through which they may develop their skills of analysis and relative autonomy.

To this end, CML offers an excellent framework for teaching critical solidarity that can challenge the social construction of information and communication (Kellner & Share, 2005). Such literacy is a necessary condition to equip people to participate in the local, national, and global econo-

my, culture, and polity (Luke, 2001). In this respect, our program helps them to understand the interrelationships and consequences of their actions and lifestyles in the context of the broader structures that influence their lives, and to feel that their voice is having an influence.

## MEDIA ACTIVISM AND CITIZENRY— AN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE

Passive disengagement and apathy among citizens are a threat to democracy. As social activist Miles Horton has argued, the danger lies in too little participation. This can be explained in part, by the inability of individuals to utilize media information flow for their own and their society's benefit (Norris, & Odugbemi, 2009).

In an age where mass media are perceived as a key social institution (Silverblatt, 2004), many scholars consider access to and an understanding of contemporary media as vital aspects of citizenship in general. For example, Lewis and Jhally (1998, 109-113) argue that "Media literacy should be about helping people to become sophisticated citizens." Likewise, Livingstone (2004, 11) emphasizes the importance of media literacy of positioning people "not only as selective, receptive, and accepting but also as participating, critical; in short, not merely as consumers but also as citizens."

Media literacy educates people about the power of media messages, and the role that the public can—and should—play in setting the public agenda. It teaches individuals that free and fair exchange of information is vital for establishing and sustaining civil society (Moller, 2008). In terms of democratic values, it means exercising citizens' rights to information and freedom of expression.

Kellner & Share (2005) tie CML to the radical democracy which depends on individuals caring about each other, involved in social issues intended to enhance democratization and participation. This view echoes an argument developed by Masterman (1997) who held that participatory democracy depends on citizen control of institutions and active involvement with the media.

On this basis, the media activist approach enabling young people to construct their civic identities in contemporary societies which are enmeshed with internet and other media (Kotilainen & Rantala, 2009; Dahlgren 2005; 2006). The social technologies provide great potential for encouraging young people to participate, to engage in intercultural dialogue, create new channels through which decisions can be made, and learn in intergenerational contexts (Mesch & Talmud, 2010).

As Livingstone (2004, 8) points out, content creation is easier than ever. ...many [pupils] are already content producers, developing complex literacy skills through the use of e-mail, chat, and games. The social consequences of these activities – participation, social capital, civic culture – serve to network (or exclude) today's younger generations. Thus, when students' social affiliations, participation and membership identities evolve collectively in relation to institutional agencies in society, these may reflect some of the dimensions of becoming citizens.

This is clearly visible in the late modern media milieu (Livingstone, 2005; Scheller & Urry, 2003), not least in the blending of politics and entertainment and other forms of popular culture (van Zoonen, 2005; Jones, 2005; Corner & Pels, 2003).

Viewed broadly, the media activism program engages our students in a participatory approach (Melkote, 1991) through active relationships with local governmental institutions, which entail personal meaningful involvement by having their voice reach the public sphere in their particular localities: 'Local ownership participation' (UNESCO, 2006, 7). Peter Levine (2008) calls this a strategy for building audiences, and considers it one of the main tasks in planning civic media education today.

In other words, this is a sort of public media participation which is akin to what philosopher Hannah Arendt (1958) conceptualized as "vita active": human life tied to public and political issues, and referring as well to the micro-

spheres of life. Students serve as central actors who make decisions and do things for themselves in the context of local relevant issues.

From an educational perspective, activist CML is a challenge to teacher training programs, as it tries to cultivate participants' virtues as individuals and as media educators, who are actively involved in their society. As Dewey argued (1997), education is necessary to enable people to participate in democracy, for without an educated, informed, and literate citizenry, strong democracy is impossible.

## THE MEDIA ACTIVISM PROGRAM

"Social Media Activism" is a compulsory year-long course for all students in the media department. The core concepts of CML are taught through a democratic approach utilizing critical pedagogy, with an emphasis on active learning, experimentation and problem solving. In the course of the learning, groups of students explore their concerns and create their own alternative media, critically reflecting together about which actions to take in order to deal with social issues that are problematic in their communities. In this respect, the programs' guiding principles are based on the ideas of progressive educators like Dewey (1916/1997) and Freire (1970), which connect between theory, practice and reflection to empower learners: "Learning about the world is directly linked to the possibility of changing it" (Goodman, 2003, 3).

At the conclusion of each group media project, students organize a press conference in which they themselves serve as PR people, text and message producers, and participating journalists. Among the subjects that students learn are: the stages of a public campaign, including recruiting community agents, practical workshop: how to implement a public campaign, etc.

The activism concept trickles down into all learning units, as is reflected in the production studies, such as broadcast-



ing on the college radio station, preparing articles for the local newspaper (some of which find their way to regional newspapers), writing blogs, activity in community forums, and producing short video films and clips for YouTube.

On the radio college station, students' broadcasts directly address the regional community's public domain and create public discourse about subjects and issues relevant to the residents' lives, with the intent of improving them. Pupils from local high schools sometimes participate in these broadcasts, bringing with them additional issues relevant to their school, such as: preserving the quality of adolescents' leisure and entertainment culture, community policing, etc.

The practical teaching application helps students to deepen their media consciousness, and to build – and to teach – CML. The act of teaching pupils further facilitates their own learning, and many students commented on the effect it had on building their own insights about the media. Because of the democratic pedagogical approach of the program, learning entails a sharing of power—dialogical communication (Freire, 1970)—between the college teachers and the students as they work to discredit myths and challenge hegemony; “There is a sense that the very act of studying media can help democratize the teacher-student relationship, because the act of critique is one of ‘reflection and dialogue’” (Masterman, 1997, 44).

Pedagogically, the course reflects a meaningful learning environment, based on: learning by doing, communities of learners interaction and reflection possibilities with peers (Brown, 1993, 1997).

This is a pedagogy that entails developing an awareness of one's identity and agency, in which learning about the world is directly linked to the possibility of changing it.

Students engaged in a civic activities, integrated by means of participatory activity in social inquiry through alternative media production. This is a bottom-up process of initiative

in which students learn to value the ways of using the media and popular culture to improve the quality of their self-expression. They acknowledge that their involvement may be meaningful and respected. To illustrate this, a 30-year old student had this to say:

“The issue of workers' rights, bothers me, as well as quality of the environment and in general how the media are conducted. I also write about them in the blog I started... I write all sorts of current events that happen, that bother me, that get under my skin... I suddenly feel some sort of desire to change.”

In the broadest sense, experiencing media activism expands students' understanding about media effects upon them as an audience—a democratic public—in creating stereotypes, world views, norms and values of hostility and aggression, changing approaches and manifesting empathy. In these respects, the critical media activism is a key prerequisite for creating active citizenship and media educators who are capable of contributing to changing the media-social reality, and to have their say in the local public sphere. •

## NOTES

1. Thanks to Dr. Arie Kizel, the chief orchestrator, the man who had the vision and the resolve to initiate media activism in our media studies department.
2. Nachum Barnea is a senior journalist in the Yediot Aharonot newspapers.
3. By the Burson-Marsteller company, media survey (May, 2010). <http://www.oursocial-media.com/brussels/bursonmarsteller-brussels/survey-of-journalists-across-emea/>

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# *Media Education in Portugal*

## **A BUILDING SITE**

BY **PROF. CRISTINA PONTE & ANA JORGE**

Media education in Portugal has been a dispersed field, composed of several efforts and absences, sometimes in contradictory directions; made up of “fragmentary and inconsistent experiences, unable to be articulated in a platform of political and educational action” (Pinto, 2003). Although the status of media education has progressed in the last few years, it has not managed to change substantially, and so this text aims to update the portrait of the Portuguese situation in regard to media education after the signature of The European Charter for Media Literacy.

In order to convey the condition of media education in Portugal, bearing in mind the international standards and tendencies, mainly those coming from European Union of which Portugal is a member state, this text identifies the main features of this area, highlighting agents, projects and guidelines, as well as the strengths and weaknesses to the new agendas in media education.

As Sonia Livingstone states, our discussion of media literacy should deal not only with the skills to access, analyse, evaluate and create content, but needs to transcend that meaning to consider the “knowledge arrangements of society” implied in their texts and technologies, in “its social and institutional uses” and in the ways they are “managed by media,

governmental, educational and commercial bodies” (2004: 11). Accordingly, we will try to analyse the concepts of media literacy that are promoted by or are underlying the actions of those bodies in the Portuguese context.

### **HERITAGES**

The historical, cultural and political context of the country helps us to frame the current situation in media education field in the country. The dictatorship that lasted over four decades in Portugal not only put economical development on embargo and refrained mass media, but also limited education to few school years and manipulated it away from the promotion of autonomy and critical thinking. From 1974 on, the country extended and made more consistent the fields of economy, media and education, among others, but is still struggling with heavy historical heritages.

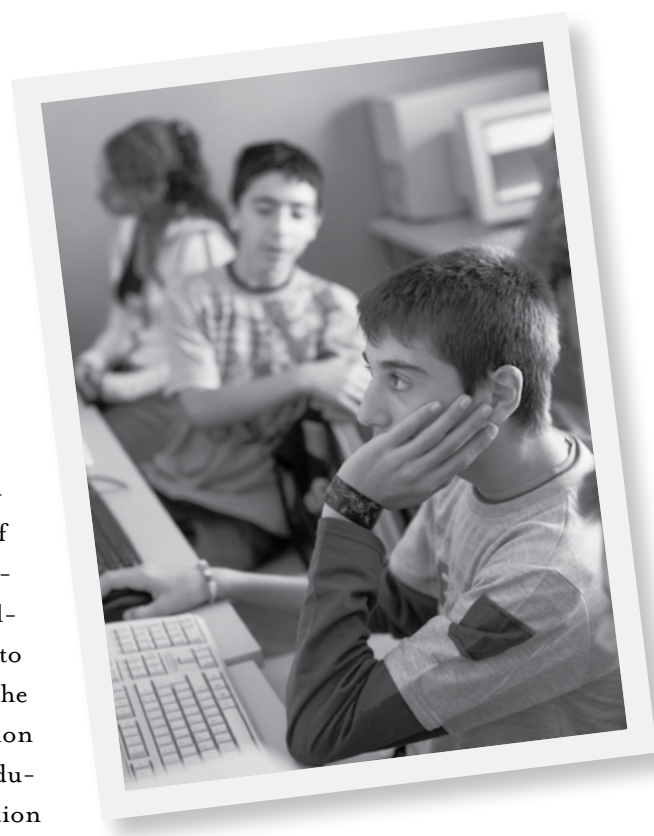
The press has never fully developed in Portugal, with very low circulation rates up to today (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). In a market with a small dimension, since the country has around 10.5 million inhabitants, the television easily became the main medium in national media culture, and it still holds that position despite the introduction of digital media (Rebelo, 2008). In fact, the use of digital media,

although they had a fast penetration, is still characterised by regional, economical, educational and/or generational inequality (Ponte and Cardoso, 2008).

In regard to education, Portugal is still in a disadvantaged position in relation to the rest of Europe, with a significant historical delay that still place the illiteracy around 9%, according to the Census in 2001. Although the generations after the revolution have had a growing access to education, the now active generation still born before April 25<sup>th</sup> 1974 has the lowest schooling years average in Europe, according to European Social Survey in 2006; and 60% of parents of children aged up to 14 have only the compulsory education of nine school years (Rebelo, 2008). This situation is drawn according to a generational gap in the use of new technologies and further places television medium in the centre of Portuguese society.

The implications of the generational gap to media education are that this process cannot rely on families as the only agents to promote it. However, in a country where the adults education and education throughout life are only now starting to be more debated, just as the incentives to literacy are still in motion (namely, the governmental "Reading+ Plan", to increase reading habits among the population, specially the youngest), media education does not seem to have earned its place in the agenda of education policy (Baptista in Tomé, 2008). Manuel Pinto (2003) states:

"In countries such as Portugal and others in the Iberian-American space that were deeply affected by authoritarian regimes and that have a democratic experience that is still insufficiently imbedded in everyday practices, sometimes it becomes difficult to earn spaces and horizons for the so-called media education".



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Indeed, the report, coordinated by Autónoma University of Barcelona, elaborated in the scope of Media Literacy program in 2007, showed a generally unfavoured reality in media literacy in Portugal (European Commission, 2007). The government was portrayed as the main stimulator of media literacy, especially for extend-

ing ICT education to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade on to the 10<sup>th</sup> and for launching and coordinating several projects to have computers and internet installed in schools, passing ICT training on to teachers and promoting media literacy campaigns. However, there was a weak teacher training in media literacy, and the pedagogical materials to support media education were scarce. Under state's field of action, the regulation in media literacy was also clearly insufficient.



CRISTINA PONTE, Ph.D. in Journalism Studies lectures Journalism, Communication and Children & Media Studies at New University of Lisbon. Leading the Portuguese team of EU Kids Online Project, she is also coordinating an International Project on Digital Inclusion and Participation, with the University of Texas, Austin. Her funded Project Children and Young People in the news (2005-2007) updates her previous research on media

representation of children (1970-2000) and it includes children and young people's perspectives on the news. Coming from Education and Media Studies, she worked in the Portuguese research team of *Sesame Street*, the RTP-CTW co-production (1989-1993), and in the first national project of using computers in the classrooms (1985-1989). Co-editor of *Media & Jornalismo*, a Journal from the Research Center on Media and Journalism (CIMJ).



ANA JORGE is a Communication Sciences Ph.D. student in New University of Lisbon, studying young people's relationship with celebrity culture. She has a masters on Sociology of Communication, after working as press agent. Ana participates on projects on digital inclusion and online safety, and took part on researches on women's representation in the newspapers and lifestyle magazines

Public and private media organizations had poor efforts to promote media education, and commercial communication and civil society associations were practically absent from this process. There was a reasonable observation and research in this field, and also a fair liaison to international initiatives. So families' participation in the media literacy effort seemed to try to compensate a lack of association and cooperation among institutions.

This whole picture resulted in a colonization of the debate around media education by "the overwhelmed discourse on technology" (Pinto, 2003). Generally, there is an underdevelopment situation in this field in the country, in which the state reclaims for itself a great part of the responsibility in promoting this side of education for citizenship. This is something that is consistent with a national culture that has a poor conscience of rights and participation, and that depends upon and delegates responsibility on the state in many other areas.

The retrogressions are, in a way, signs of how much this field is not yet among the priorities in education. The national Educational Innovation Institute, that had tried to incorporate media in educational practices and in the curriculum since 1997, was closed down in 2002 within a reform and a cut in budgets. There was also a drawback for

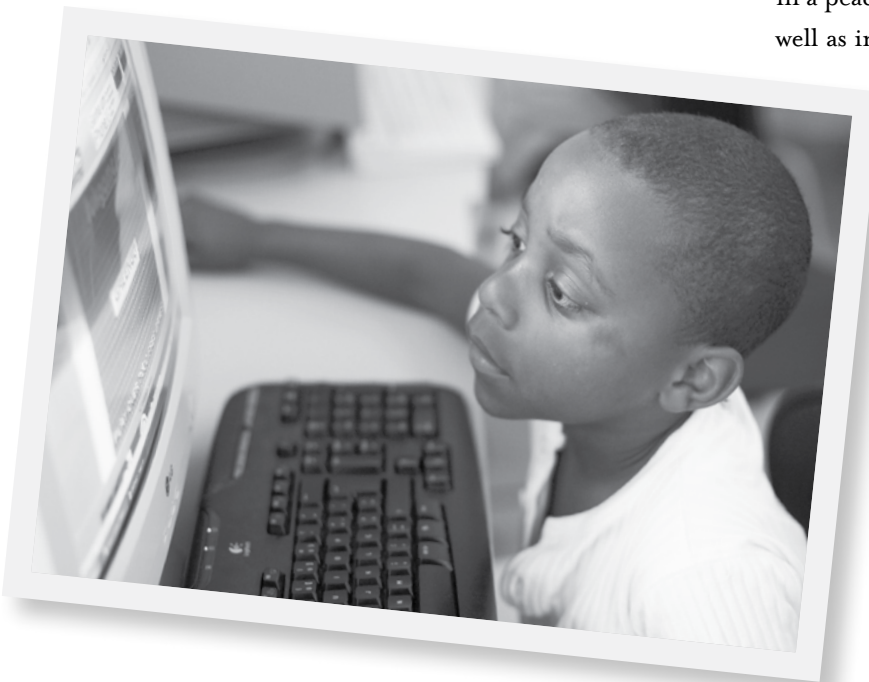
media education in the teacher training level, when it was sacrificed during the pedagogical restructuring imposed by the signing of Treaty of Boulogne (Tomé, 2008).

## MEDIA EDUCATION TODAY

In this section, we propose to scrutinize the tendencies of the actions taken by the political, educational, socio-cultural and market-media poles, according to what has been expressed above on Livingstone's view (2004). We believe that within these poles, or bodies, are the several relevant forces and institutions that concur to define a model of media literacy. These poles are not completely differentiated and isolated fields, and often relationships and fluxes are drawn between them.

Indeed, the government in power since 2005 has defined as its priority politics to transform the economy by strengthening the technological and educational capacity: after the schools were equipped with computers and broadband internet, programs of acquisition were promoted, symbolized in *Magellan*, the computers for children 6-10 of which over 300 thousand were distributed in the first year, in 2008/09. This program stems from a deterministic perspective in regard to technology, by not promoting a critical and autonomous education towards it and rather believing in a peaceful revolution of the teaching-learning process, as well as in a passing on of digital media into society through young people ("children bring parents to the internet world"), although the structural problem of the country's educational delay is not addressed.

Media education is still practically reduced to the inclusion of ICT training in the curriculum, as a subject of 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grades and as a transversal training to learn competencies for the learning process (in Project Area, Accompanied Study or Civic Education), but the perspective on ICT is also reducing them to their educational possibilities, by ignoring their capacity to promote autonomy and contact with the outside world. The inclusion of media literacy in





the education for citizenship did not gain expression, despite a forum held in 2006 between the Ministry of Education and Presidency of Ministers Council and experts in the field.

In regard to policy, we can see a delay also on the implementation of European guidelines in this field: the Office for the Media, competent in legislating on media, has not yet concluded the transposition to national Law of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2007/65/EC) that fixates that transposition until the end of 2009.

To this delay we can add a certain protectionist perspective, even though overall there is a scarce regulation which follows a liberal thinking. The national regulator for the media, ERC, has shown a growing concern for the relationship between children and media, be it through studies commissioned to universities (Ponte and Malho in Rebelo, 2008; Pereira, 2009), be it through deliberations on citizens complaints. Nevertheless, the spirit of this institution has been more of protecting children and young people rather than pressing for the application of guidelines of media education.

The market and media sectors are, in the Portuguese case, the strongest breath in the promotion of a media literacy that involves citizens' participation. The television being the hegemonic medium, we highlight the public broadcasting initiatives, especially the television and also radio ombudsmen. Since 2006, the ombudsmen weekly programs, produced from letters and emails from audience members, hearing other audience members, experts and the station staff, have brought to the screen and the radio a forum of critical reflection on the contents in relation to the public broadcasting responsibilities, that invites spectators to analyse special groups of the audience and the general interest, styles and languages.

Also the new Television Law (n. 27/2007) states that the public broadcaster should "participate in activities of media education, by guaranteeing, namely, the broadcasting of programs oriented to that purpose." Almost two years later, this legal statement has shown limited results on the screens, only for children, with a weekly newscast with children's participation, *A Thousand Gigas*. The production of original content is scarce, struggling with high production costs for



a small market, although *RTP2*, the second channel of public television, exhibits a recognisably quality programming. Public broadcasting is also not exploring the potential of online context for this purpose.

In the field of press, quality newspapers have ombudsmen: in 1997 *Diário de Notícias* and soon after also *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias* created their ombudsmen, although their activity has been interrupted several times. If this mechanism can be considered more elitist, since they have a low circulation rate, that is slightly compensated by the growing investment in news websites, especially by *Público* and *Expresso*, which has also opened up the opportunity for media users to participate in the media and even criticise the very journalism that is made through online comments. If they exist, these possibilities can be limited by the still unequal access to digital media.

The promotion of media literacy by private media and other market companies is based on a discourse of initiative and social responsibility that fits well with the weak regulation from political field, but works in isolated ways and



with a relative efficiency, and with a poor evaluation tradition. Several agents produce materials for media education, since these are scarce in the market – Porto Editora being an exception. The most outstanding is *Público in School*, from *Público*, a program running since 1990, with a newsletter and a website, both based on topic information and support materials, as well as a national contest of school newspapers. These materials are delivered for free to teachers who voluntarily ask for them.

School newspapers are still “the most meaningful and implemented tradition in Portuguese schools” (Pinto, 2003), but some companies are also running digital literacy projects. Portugal Telecom ran the *Sapo Challenge* contest for young pupils, in 2006 and 2007, first focused on information search and then on content production, involving the participation dimension. Multinational corporations are also agents here: Microsoft has a digital literacy program to provide online training, in cooperation with the government plan; and IBM supports several programs to improve technological and scientific literacy.

In the socio-cultural level, considering here initiatives from NGOs and universities, we can see several new signs of trying to put citizenship in the agenda of media education, beyond and against the reductionist educational and political discourses where only opportunities are talked about, raising awareness to risks and rights. However, they lack support to

fully lobby the main definers of the media education issues. Safe Internet Platform, for instance, joining several associations, public organisations and universities, seeks to promote digital literacy focused on critical access and use that empowers children and young people, but has been struggling with funding for programs based on peer training.

*Media Smart*, a non-profit program on advertising literacy for children aged 7-11, originally from United Kingdom, was launched in 2008 by the Portuguese Association of Advertisers with commercial sponsors and the support of the government. Like *Público na Escola*, it works on a voluntary basis, sending teachers pedagogic materials to help pupils to think advertising critically, in school and their everyday life. The program gets closer to children’s commercial cultures, inciting to autonomy and critical capacity.

In the academic field, there is a growing body of research that emphasises participation in the media as a citizenship issue and criticises the public policies of education, narrowly based on technology. Universities of Algarve, Minho and New of Lisbon have contributed widely to the field of media education literature and to train media professionals and teachers in media education, in degrees and masters as well as in free courses. Academy is connected with society, as happened in a conjoint PhD and government funded research project where a CD-R to produce print and online school newspapers was distributed to schools in a countryside area of the country, in association with a regional paper (Tomé, 2008).

## LOOKING FORWARD

The public debate is still centred in, if not dominated by, the possibilities of the new technology schools are delivering. The governmental and educational policy is built on an optimist determinism that not only looks at benefits (even if limited to children’s school performance) ignoring risks (also in a protectionist perspective) but also thinks that those benefits are necessary and sufficient. On the one hand, this means that media education for adults, urgent in a society still suffering from an educational gap, is pretty much excluded from the agenda, although lifelong learning



## The European Charter for Media Literacy

THE CHARTER EXISTS TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY ACROSS EUROPE. BY SIGNING THE CHARTER, ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ENDORSE A SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF MEDIA LITERACY, AND COMMIT TO ACTIONS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT. THE CHARTER THUS FACILITATES CONSENSUS AND NETWORKING AMONGST THOSE WORKING FOR MEDIA LITERACY IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ACROSS EUROPE. THIS WEBSITE HOLDS A DATABASE OF CHARTER SIGNATORIES, WHICH CAN BE SEARCHED BY COUNTRY, MEDIA SECTOR AND EDUCATION SECTOR. *The aims of the Charter are:*

TO FOSTER GREATER CLARITY AND WIDER CONSENSUS IN EUROPE  
ON MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA EDUCATION;

TO RAISE THE PUBLIC PROFILE OF MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA EDUCATION  
IN EACH EUROPEAN NATION, AND IN EUROPE AS A WHOLE.

TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERMANENT AND VOLUNTARY  
NETWORK OF MEDIA EDUCATORS IN EUROPE, BOUND TOGETHER BY THEIR  
COMMON AIMS, AND ENABLED BY THEIR INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT.

**MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT: [HTTP://WWW.EUROMEDIALITERACY.EU/](http://www.euromedialiteracy.eu/)**

is, ironically, included in Lisbon Strategy for an European knowledge economy. On the other hand, market and media agents' initiatives that try to influence the way media education is designed are still focused on young audiences, also through schools.

The voluntarist optimism of the policy, focused on a certain kind of opportunities, deliberately neglects the market inequality in provision and masks the scarce regulation that takes the form of a protectionist regulation, because it stems from an instrumental view on the media, that does not explore their opportunities for participation and its role in the civic process.

To conclude, there are several forces and voices, sometimes in different directions, that try to define media education in Portugal. We could say that we are somewhat in media education pre-history, in the sense that it does not exist by its own right and on its own, as an autonomous topic in the public agenda, as do the ICT's risks and opportunities that seem to dominate the media and political discourses, respectively. Therefore, the biggest challenge media education is facing right now in Portugal is that of rising up to a level of public awareness, associated with citizenship, social

inclusion and participation issues. The portrait that this text presents is, then, in a way a puzzle in which different entities, in isolation or punctual cooperation, try to define the reality of media education in Portugal. •

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# RUSSIAN MEDIA EDUCATION LITERACY CENTERS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

BY **PROF. DR. ALEXANDER FEDOROV**

The comparative analysis of the models and functions of Russian media education literacy centers in the 21st century (included wide specter of media—print, screen, TV, mobile, the Internet, new generation of video games and virtual worlds) showed that despite having some definite differences and peculiarities, they have the following common features:

- differentiated financing resources (public financing, grants, business organizations, etc.) and regional media information support;
- presence of famous Russian media teachers heading the media education centers;
- a target audience of a wide age-specific and professional range (with the predominance of students of different educational institutions, teachers, media experts);
- the chief aim of a media education centre is multi-aspect, as a rule, but in the whole, it can be generalized under a common assertion—

development of the audience's media competence. And under media competence of a person we mean "a sum-total of an individual's motives, knowledge, skills, abilities (indicators: motivation, contact, information, perception, interpretation/evaluation, activity, and creativity) to select, use, critically analyze, evaluate, create and spread media texts of different types, forms and genres, and to analyze complex phenomena of media functioning in the society" (Fedorov, 2007, p. 54).

- the objectives of the media education centers are also varied, but in the whole, there predominate the objectives aimed at developing media competence of different social groups: development of the audience's skills to find, transfer, accept, and create media information (media texts) using television, video, computer and multi-media technologies; teaching the audience to acquire and critically analyze media information; delivering courses in media education for teachers; support of festival, film club and amateur film movements and others.



Also one can point out some common functions of the media education centers:

- educational work, organization and realization of research projects, conferences, and publishing activities;
- as a working definition of media education they use either the definition given in the UNESCO documents or any other close terminology;
- as a key media education theory they refer to a synthesis of the practical and cultural studies media education theories, the theory of the audience's critical thinking development, or a theory similar to the practical theory including some elements of other theories, e.g. the theory of media activity;
- a basic media education model usually consists of the following components: the objective unit (development of the audience's media competence), the contents unit (theory: development of the audience's motivation, knowledge about media culture; practice: development of the audience's perception and analytical skills, and media creativity skills), the result unit (level enhancement of the key media competence indicators); and as for the diagnostic unit (level detection of the audience's media competence), it is not necessarily included but is often implied;
- the organizational forms are aimed at media education integration into educational, out-of-school and leisure activities of the audiences, media educational courses for teachers; organization of film/media clubs for school students and young people, support of school-youth Internet sites, print media, TV, etc.; holding of panel discussions, seminars, workshops, training courses, conferences, festivals, competitions on media education topics; publishing monographs and handbooks;

- the teaching methods are manifold both according to knowledge sources (*verbal, visual, practical methods*) and according to the level of cognitive activity (*explanatory-illustrative, reproductive, problem-solving, searching or heuristic, research methods*). Though practical methods are preferred;
- major areas of the media education program contents are in character with the above-mentioned objectives and aimed at the audience getting a wide range of knowledge about media culture, developing the abilities to percept, critically analyze, and comprehend media texts, encouraging media creation, mastering media educational skills;
- media education programs application fields normally cover a broad range of educational and cultural institutions (inclusive of the audience's self-education, e.g. with the help of media educational Internet sites).

Our analysis also showed that the media educational models offered by leading Russian media educators are similar to the ones of their foreign colleagues (Baran, 2002), however they definitely have some peculiarities, such as a more tolerant attitude to studying the aesthetic/artistic scope of media culture.

The Russian media literacy education centers (who have important role in media literacy teaching with new technologies in schools and communities) have a common aim to enhance the level of all the basic indicators of the audience's (for example, students') media competence: motivation, contact, information, perception, interpretation/evaluation, activity, and creativity.



PROF. DR. ALEXANDER FEDOROV is the president of Russian Association for Media Education, and vice-rector of Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute. He is the author of 20 books and more than 400 articles on the media education literacy topic. Since 1997, he has received many scientific research grants on media culture and media education topics from the President of the Russian Federation, Russian Foundation for Humanities, Russian Ministry of Education and foreign foundations.

Thus, a personality with a high level of media competence (though some scholars prefer to use the terms 'media culture level', 'media literacy', or 'media educational level' instead of the term 'media competence', it testifies a terminological pluralism characteristic of the media educational process) evinces the following media competence characteristics:

1. **MOTIVATION:** a wide range of genre, subject-based, emotional, epistemological, hedonistic, intellectual, psychological, creative, ethical, aesthetic motives to contact media flows, including:
  - ~ media texts genres and subject diversity, including non-entertaining genres;
  - ~ new information search;
  - ~ recreation, compensation, and entertainment (in moderation);
  - ~ identification and empathy;
  - ~ his/her own competence confirmation in various life activities and media culture;
  - ~ search of materials for educational, scientific, and research purposes;
  - ~ aesthetic impressions;
  - ~ readiness to apply efforts when reading, comprehending media contents; philosophic/intellectual, ethic, and aesthetic dispute/dialogue with media message authors, and critical estimate of their views;
  - ~ learning to create his/her own media texts by studying creation of professionals;
2. **CONTACT:** frequent contacts with various types of mass media and media texts.
3. **INFORMATION:** knowledge of basic terms, media communication and media education theories; media language peculiarities, genre conventions, essential facts from media culture history, media culture workers, clear understanding of mass communication functioning and media effects in the socio-cultural context, the difference between an emotional and well-grounded reaction to a media text.
4. **PERCEPTION:** identification with the media text author, basic components of the 'primary'

and 'secondary' identifications being preserved (excluding a naive identification of the reality with the media text contents), i.e. an ability to identify with the author's position which enables to anticipate the course of events in a media text.

5. **INTERPRETATION:** an ability to critically analyze media functions in the society with regard to varied factors based on highly developed critical thinking. Media text analysis based on the perceptive capability that is close to 'comprehensive identification', an ability to analyze and synthesize the spatiotemporal form of a media text; comprehension and interpretation implying comparison, abstraction, induction, deduction, synthesis, critical appraisal of the author's opinion in the historical and cultural context of the work (expressing reasonable agreement or disagreement with the author's point of view, critical assessment of the moral, emotional, aesthetic, and social value of a media text, an ability to correlate the emotional apprehension with conceptual judgment, extend this judgment to other media genres/types, connect the message with their own and other people's experience, etc.). This reveals the critical autonomy of a person (irrespective of public opinion on the media), his/her critical analysis of the message based on high-level information, motivation, and perception indicators.
6. **ACTIVITY:** practical skills connected with selecting, creating and spreading media texts (including individual and collaborative projects) of different types and genres; active self-training ability.
7. **CREATIVITY:** creativity in different activities (perception, game, art, research, etc.) connected with media.

The greater part of the indicators can be generalized under a common term of *activity* (perceptive, intellectual, practical) connected with mass media and media education.

The diversity of the media education models does not exclude a possibility to generalize them by building a certain compositive model with the objective, diagnostic, contents



units (theory and practice) and the result unit. A different matter is that not in every media education model one can distinguish all the units. For instance, in some Russian media education literacy centers created within the walls of 'houses of youth creation' and leisure centers of practical orientation, the theoretical and diagnostic aspects are given less attention than in the media education centers functioning within universities or research studies institutes.

Our generalized our model of media education is based on the cultural studies, practical, semiotic, ethic, and critical media education theories, that confirms the conclusion that modern teachers often synthesize different theories (e.g. a synthetic theory of media activity). As a matter of fact, this model represents a synthesis of the analyzed theories (Fedorov, 2007): socio-cultural, educational-informational and practical-utilitarian models, and reflects modern media educational approaches, offered both by Russian and foreign scholars.

Modern media education models lean towards making the best use of media education potentialities depending on their aims and objectives; they are varied and can be wholly or partially integrated into the educational process. Besides, they do not only observe the general didactic principles of education (upbringing and all-round development of a personality in studying, scientific and systematic approaches to teaching, knowledge availability, learning in doing, visual instruction, self-education encouragement, life-oriented education, long lasting and sound knowledge, positive emotional background, individual approach in teaching, etc.), but also some specific principles connected with media contents. Among them one can mention the unity of emotional and intellectual personality development, a person's creative and individual thinking development. Whereas the teaching methods are aimed at taking advantage of potential media culture opportunities, as the use of hedonistic, compensatory, therapeutic, cognitive-heuristic, creative and simulation media culture potentialities enables the teacher to involve the audience in perception and interpretation of media messages, spatial-temporal analysis and visual structural analysis of a media text. Moreover, reference to the present day media situation which alongside with



Students of Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute working on media education lessons.

some negative aspects (low-quality mass culture content, etc.) opens wide opportunities for teachers connected with using video recording, computers, and Internet that approximate a contemporary viewer to the status of a reader (personal, interactive communication with media).

The methods proposed for the realization of the modern media education models are usually based on units (blocks or modules) of creative and simulation activities which can be used by teachers both in class and out-of-school activities. A significant feature of the analyzed models is their wide integration: at schools, colleges, universities, additional training institutions, leisure centers. Moreover, media education



lessons can be conducted in the form of lessons, electives, special courses, either integrated with other school subjects, or used in clubs' activities.

For example, **Center "Media Education and Media Competence" in Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute** (Russia, head Prof. Dr. Alexander Fedorov):

#### **TARGET GROUP:**

Students, pupils, teachers;

#### **THE MAIN AIM:**

The development of media competence of a personality, its culture of communication with the media, creative abilities, critical thinking/autonomy, abilities to the full-fledged perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, self-expression with the help of media, preparation of future media educators for various institutions;

#### **THE MAIN TASKS:**

- creation of scientific and methodological basis for the development of media education and media competence of the growing-up generation;
- analysis of Russian and foreign experience in the field of media education;
- creation of the scientific basis of the monitoring of the levels of media competence of the audience of various age groups;
- during the process of basic and optional education to develop the following abilities: perceptive-creative (creative perception of media texts of various types and genres taking into consideration their connections with various arts etc.); practical-creative (creation of media texts of different types and genres); analytical (critical analysis of media texts of different types and genres); historical-theoretical (self-dependent use of the gained knowledge on theory and history of media/media culture); methodical (take-over methods and forms of media education; various technologies of self-expression with the help of); practical-pedagogical (use of gained knowledge and abilities in the field of media education during teaching practice);

- development of collaboration (including international collaboration) with the scientific and educational institutions related to media education and media competence;
- training of top-qualified, mediacompetent specialists and pedagogical cadres (candidates and doctors of science) on the basis of the newest pedagogical technologies in collaboration with the interested faculties;
- development of new progressive forms of innovation activities, scientific collaboration with scientific, educational organizations, foundations and other structures with the purpose of joint solution of the most important scientific and educational tasks in the field of media education;
- conducting of conferences, seminars, competitions on the subject of media education, media competence;
- development of publishing activities on the subject • development of the financial basis of the researches on the subject of media education and media competence attracting funds from various sources, usage of non-budget fund.

#### **THE MAIN THEORETICAL CONCEPTIONS ON WHICH THE ACTIVITY OF THE EDUCATION CENTER IS BASED:**

Cultural, socio-cultural, theory of the development of critical thinking, practical.

#### **BASIC SECTIONS OF THE MEDIA EDUCATION MODEL ACCEPTED IN THE EDUCATION CENTER:**

Basic sections of the media education model accepted in the education center:

1. **DIAGNOSTIC (STATING) COMPONENT:** stating of the levels of media competence and the development of critical thinking with respect to media and media texts of the given audience at the initial stage of education;
2. **CONTENTS-SPECIFIC COMPONENT:** theoretical component (the studies of history and theory

of media culture; the development of media educational motivation and technology; i.e. the studies about methods and forms of media education of the audience) and practical component (the creative activity on the material of media, i.e. the development of creative abilities to self-expression with the help of media; creatively apply the gained knowledge and skills; the perceptive-analytical activity, i.e. the development of abilities to critically perceive and analyze media texts of different types and genres);

3. RESULTING COMPONENT: final questionnaire, testing and creative works by the students; the analysis of the level of the development of critical thinking and media competence of the students at the final stage of education (Fedorov, 2007, pp.141-145).

The mastering of the audience's creative abilities on the material of media is connected above all with the new creative possibilities which appeared by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the spreading of video equipment and computers. It's clear that this stage provides for the tasks which are traditional for Russian media education as well (for example, writing articles for the Press, short scenarios, "screenings" of the abstracts from literary works, etc.). However the main thing is that cameras, DVD-players, computers and monitors allow to "identify" oneself with the authors of the pieces of media culture (journalists, producers, script writers, directors, actors, designers, animators, etc.) without any technical difficulties. This helps to develop not only creative abilities, imagination, fantasy but also by interaction to perfect perception and analysis of media texts (Fedorov, 2007).

I am sure that historical-theoretical section should not be necessarily placed in the first place of the whole structure of the model, it's better to get acquainted with the history and theory of media culture and media education when the audience has already developed perception, the ability to critically analyze media texts, creative approaches. The integrity of the process of media education is not violated, the section of the history and theory of media culture would rest upon the firm footing, and would not turn to a bulk of facts and names.

This section often is not present in the models of school media education. However it's important for the future and present teachers. I believe that without getting acquainted with the history and theory of media culture and the peculiarities of the present state of media a teacher's knowledge would be a lot like his students' so the teacher wouldn't be able to answer many questions, he would be unable to make out a qualified media education program, etc. At the same time it's not obligatory for a teacher to include all the gained knowledge on history and theory of media culture into his program of a school optional course, for instance. However such an informational stock would no doubt have positive influence on his general culture (Fedorov, 2007, p.141-145).

As to creative, game approaches their necessity is beyond any doubt as well because during a game personality continues to develop (psyche, intelligence, individual thinking, business-like character, communicativeness, etc.), the additional reserves of human abilities are being activated and mobilized. This deals with role-play, didactic games, special pedagogical games connected with the development of specific skills necessary for a teacher (Fedorov, 2007, p.141-145).

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS USED BY THE EDUCATION CENTER:**

- The development of media competence and critical thinking of the students within the bounds of the specialization for pedagogical institutes "Media Education" (state registration number 03.13.30), school media education studies (integrated and optional);
- long-term plan of subjects and determination of the working priorities of the education center, assisting young scientists who are researching media education;
- organization of examination in the field of media education, media literacy, media culture;
- realization of innovation projects concerned with media education, effective use and development of educational, scientific and experimental bases;
- conducting of scientific conferences and seminars (for instance in 2009 the Media Education Center

organized and conducted the All-Russian Scientific Schooling for the Youth with the financial support of the Special Federal Program "Scientific and pedagogical manpower of innovation Russia for 2009-2013" of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF, all the details at <http://edu.of.ru/mediacompetence>).

#### **METHODS USED BY THE EDUCATION CENTER:**

According to the source of the gained knowledge: *verbal, visual methods, practical methods*. According to the level of cognitive activity: *explanatory/illustratory, reproductive, problem, partially search or heuristic, research methods*. Practical, creative, tasks, role-playing games prevail during the studies. In scientific research the research methods prevail.

#### **MAIN SECTIONS OF THE MEDIA EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

Relative to the study of such key concepts of media education as "media agencies," "categories of media," "media technologies," "language of media," "media representation," "media audience":

- the place and the role of media and media education in contemporary world, types and genres, the language of media;
- main terms, theories, key conceptions, trends, models of media education;
- main stages of historical development of media education in Russia and abroad;
- the problems of media competence, critical analysis of media functioning in society and of media texts of different types and genres (content analysis, structural analysis, event analysis, analysis of stereotypes, analysis of cultural mythology, analysis of characters, autobiographical analysis, iconographic analysis, semiotic analysis, identification analysis, ideological and philosophical analysis, ethic analysis, aesthetic analysis, cultivation analysis, hermeneutical analysis of cultural context);

- technologies of media education studies (mainly creative tasks of different kinds: literary-imitating, theatrical-play, graphic-imitating, literary-analytical, etc.) (Fedorov, 2007).

#### **FIELD OF APPLICATION OF MEDIA EDUCATION PROGRAMS WORKED OUT BY THE MEDIA EDUCATION CENTER:**

institutions of higher education (pedagogical institutes first of all), normal schools, extension courses for teachers, schools, institutions of accessory. In particular a youth discussion film club has been working for several decades (nowadays attached to Taganrog State Pedagogical University, the leaders— A.V.Fedorov, E.V.Muryukina). A.P.Zhdanko, a post-graduate, runs a media education circle in Taganrog Secondary school №9. Another post-graduate A.S.Galchenkov organized a monthly magazine *Literary Media World* in 2009 on the basis of Secondary school №22. ([http://www.edu.of.ru/mediaeducation/default.asp?ob\\_no=57903](http://www.edu.of.ru/mediaeducation/default.asp?ob_no=57903)).

The team of Media Education Center works on the systematization and the analysis. On September, 2002 by the initiative of the head of the scientific school Ministry of Education of the RF registered the new specialization for pedagogical institutions of higher education—*Media Education*. I.09.2002 for the first time in Russia the experimental teaching on this specialization began in Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute.

In 2000 the members of the Media Education Center "Media Education and Media Competence" created and now supports several web-sites dedicated to media education, including a site on the federal portal of Ministry of Education and Science of the RF (<http://edu.of.ru/mediaeducation>). Since January, 2005 with the support of UNESCO bureau in Moscow the Media Education Center began issuing the Russian pedagogical magazine *Media Educatio*" (periodicity — 4 times a year, print and Internet versions [http://www.edu.of.ru/medialibrary/default.asp?ob\\_no=34437](http://www.edu.of.ru/medialibrary/default.asp?ob_no=34437)).•

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## FROM COMMUNICATION POWER SHIFT TO MEDIA EDUCATION PARADIGM CHANGE:

# THE CASE OF HONG KONG

BY ALICE Y. LEE

Media education has a close relationship with communication technologies. Its emergence and development can be considered an educational response to the concern about media's impact on individuals and society.

The recent advancement of the new media, particularly Web 2.0, has had a profound social impact. It is arguably the greatest communication revolution in human history. In the past, only media professionals had the power to produce media content. Now with the help of the new media, young people familiar with advanced technologies can also share this power. For example, many of them are active users of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. As the rules of the game for social communication have changed, the power structure is overturned.

Subsequently we have to ask the question: Are the young people well prepared to properly use their newly acquired communication power? Also, media content is not only produced by media professionals but also by the ordinary

people. From YouTube to blogs, information is being circulated without filtering and verification. Are the young people well equipped to select and evaluate media messages? In Hong Kong, media literacy educators are trying to address these two issues.

### USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN HONG KONG BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Hong Kong is a technologically advanced city. The household broadband penetration rate is 82.3% and the mobile



ALICE Y. L. LEE is an Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). She is serving as the Associate Director of the Institute for Journalism and Society at HKBU. She is also a member of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation at the Education Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government. Her major research interests include media

education, new communication technology, and news websites. She has been involved in promoting media education in Hong Kong and is now the vice-chairperson of the Hong Kong Association of Media Education.



Shak Chung Shan Memorial Catholic Primary School in Hong Kong teaches media literacy through information technology.

subscriber penetration rate is 180.6% (OFTA, 2010). Not surprisingly, a recent survey found that the lives of Hong Kong youth revolve around their digital gadgets (Fei, 2010). According to Synovate Research Agency, Hong Kong youngsters are ranked first in owning such products when compared to their counterparts surveyed across Asia. They possess an average of 4.1 devices (2 more than the regional average). Across 12 product categories, Hong Kong youngsters top other groups in having the most mobile phones (87% of Hong Kong youth have one), desktop computers (66%), digital still cameras (50%), hand held video games (40%), and TV game consoles (25%).

As ownership of desktop computers among Hong Kong youth is the highest in Asia, it is found that on average local young people spend three hours a day on the Internet. Young people in Hong Kong are also the second group across Asia who spend the most time talking on their mobile phones, close to one hour per day. The Nielsen report shows that local young people use the new technologies mainly for communication, information searching (music, movie and news), and entertainment (Nielsen, 2010).

Hong Kong youngsters are certainly highly engaged with the new media. On the one hand, they are socially well connected. They are also enthusiastic to express their views on facebook, YouTube and discussion forums. It is noteworthy that some of them even use the new media to mobilize social movements. For example, in early 2010 some of the Generation Y young people organized a demonstration through facebook and twitter to oppose the construction of the Hong Kong-Guangzhou Express Rail Link for conservation reason. Obviously, the new media have already become tools for their social and political participation in Hong Kong. Government officials and educators are paying close attention to this new development.

On the other hand, a local survey shows that many young people do not know how to behave appropriately or protect themselves when they go online (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 2009). Some of them are addicted to Internet surfing and online gaming. Others are involved with illegal downloading, online bullying, posting irresponsible opinions and transmitting pornographic pictures. During the celebrity Internet photo saga in 2008, hundreds of indecent nude photos of a group of local artistes were



circulated on the Internet. The incident lasted for a month and it clearly showed that Hong Kong young people are not well prepared to critically consume Web materials and use their communication power in a proper way.

### PARADIGM CHANGE: MEDIA EDUCATION RESPONSE TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

Hong Kong youngsters have rich access to new media and they are technologically sophisticated. Yet, they are not considered mature enough and need guidance on how to deal with new technologies. Local media literacy educators hold the belief that media education can help tackle the above mentioned socio-technological challenges. However, they are aware that the traditional way may not work well. In the Web 2.0 era, media education, in terms of its basic assumptions, tasks, goals, curricula and pedagogy, has to undergo a paradigm shift. Its task is not only to guide youngsters how to act as smart media consumers but also to cultivate them as responsible media producers.

The ultimate goal of media education is to achieve “reflective autonomy” and the curriculum content will have to focus more on the new media (Lee, 2008a).

### NEW DIRECTIONS OF MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING

Under the new paradigm, media literacy training in Hong Kong is expected to play a constructive role in young people’s digital lives. There are a number of **NEW INITIATIVES**:

- Integrating media literacy training with information technology education:

Two primary schools in Hong Kong are conducting a pioneering media education project which integrates well with information technology (Tsang, 2009).

- Teaching media literacy at a younger age:

The Net generation encounters new technologies from a very young age. In Hong Kong more emphasis has been put on primary school media



education programs recently. Non-government agencies are also interested in providing more media literacy activities for young children with the aim that they can build up a good relationship with the media in the early stage of their lives (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2009).

- Cultivate young people's reflective thinking skill:

Apart from teaching critical thinking, media education is to guide youngsters to be reflective on their motives of consuming and producing media content. They are also encouraged to think about the consequences of their media use.

- Including media ethics in media literacy curriculum:

In the past, media content was produced by media organizations and hence media ethics was a "professional concept". Nowadays, almost everyone can produce and publish media content and thus media ethics has become a "civic concept" (Lee, 2008b). As a result, young people need guidance on understanding and practicing media ethics.

- Encouraging creative media expression and experiential learning:

Various media organizations in Hong Kong have launched production-oriented media literacy activities in the community to promote young people's creative participation in the media (RTHK, 2010).



## PROMOTING FAMILY MEDIA EDUCATION

With the rise of new technologies, the home has become young people's entertainment center (e.g., going online and playing video games). Hong Kong parents are aware that they have the responsibility to provide timely media guidance at home, particularly about new media use (Wong, 2010). The *Yellow Bus*, a local children magazine, promotes family media education. The Education Bureau's Committee on Home-School Co-operation also supports the launch of the family media education campaign in the city.

As new communication technologies have provided the opportunity for Hong Kong young people to share the communication power with the media professionals, Hong Kong media literacy educators are eager to provide guidance to the young people with the hope that the youngsters can make good use of their power to enjoy democratic participation in the media as well as in the political arena. When educators work with the young people, they are encouraged to follow three principles: trust them, teach them, and talk to them. •

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## CHILDREN AND THE NEW MEDIA LITERACY FROM EGYPT AND FINLAND

# *A Comparative Study*

BY **SAMY TAYI** AND **IRMA HIRSJÄRVI**

### INTRODUCTION

This following is a brief review of a comparative study on Youth Media Participation (YMP) which was funded by the Academy of Finland and includes the following countries: Finland, Egypt, Argentina, and India. The main objective of the study was to find out about children's use of the new media (i.e. the internet and mobile phone) and their media participation.

### COUNTRY BACKGROUNDS

**EGYPT** lies in North East of Africa with part of it in Asia (Sinai). It has long borders on both the Red Sea in the East, and the Mediterranean in the North. Egypt is the largest country in the Arab World with respect to population which exceeds 80 million. Cairo is the Capital City of Egypt with a population of 18 million.

Of the 80 million in the country, 17 million attend schools and universities. Education is compulsory for all children until age 12. There are mainly two types of schools in Egypt; governmental and private schools. Governmental schools provide education for a small, affordable fee. Private schools

exist and are very expensive as they provide high quality education and a number of them follow the American, French, British or German educational system including taught curricula. Children have to spend 12 years at school before joining the university. After 12 years of education, they receive the General Secondary School Certificate which qualifies them to join the University.



Arab World. He also worked for some regional and international organizations including the UN.

SAMY TAYI is President of the Mentor International Association for Media Education, and professor in Mass Communication at Cairo University. His Main areas of interest include media education, social marketing, mass communication research methods and mass media and society. He published a few books and articles on the above-mentioned areas in Arabic and English. He also worked as visiting professor at many universities in the



IRMA HIRSJÄRVI has Ph.D. in Culture Studies, from Reseach Centre for Contemporary Culture, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She has several publications on fandom research, creative writing and media. She is a member of Youth Media Participation research team.

**FINLAND** has a population of 5.4 million, in a land between Russia and Sweden. The main languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish, the latter being a minority language of Finnish-Swedish people, who are mostly bilingual. School in Finland is obligatory and free to all 7-16 years old children. The basic levels (classes 1-9) give qualification to vocational school or college. Practically both of them offer gates to the possibility of broader education, also on to the university level. The Finnish school system still offers equal learning opportunities, also special education, though differentiation between areas and schools are already visible due to multiple actions of the latest economical situation.

## MEDIA LANDSCAPES

Egypt has a wide range of governmental and private media. Egyptian Radio and Television Union, which is a part of the Ministry of Information, supervises radio and television. There are three national TV channels as well as six local channels. Channel Two, which is a national channel, broadcasts mainly in English and French. There are also quite a few private TV channels.

Generally speaking the viewer in the Arab World is exposed to a great number of TV channels. In addition to the land TV channels, there are 696 satellite channels; 97 are owned by governments, and 599 are privately owned. They broadcast through 17 satellites working in the Arab World (Media Committee, 2010).

Among the governmental channels 49 are general channels and 48 are specialized whereas the private satellite channels are 161 general and 438 specialized.

Most channels broadcast in Arabic (76%) and English languages (20%). They also broadcast in other languages such as French, Persian, Spanish, Indian, Hebrew, and Urdu. Children in Egypt and other Arab countries are also exposed to other satellite channels coming from Europe, North America and other parts of the world.

It is estimated that 58 million (nearly 75%) have mobile phone services. The internet is widely spread in 65% of homes in Cairo and 40% of homes in other areas. There are seven radio networks which are listened to all over the country. One of them broadcasts in more than 40 languages, i.e. the Overseas Radio. Moreover, there are local radio stations in all parts of the country. Private radio stations (FM) exist and broadcast mainly light musical programs which are the most listened to by young people. There are three important governmental publishing houses which publish tens of newspapers and magazines, in Arabic, English, French and German. It is estimated that there are more than 600 newspapers and magazines in total in Egypt, privately and publicly owned (Higher Press Council, 2009). Lastly, the Egyptian film industry plays in the Arab World the same role of Hollywood in the west. Egyptian films and TV programs are very popular all over the Arab World.

In Finland 70% of homes have broadband internet. The users of internet come nowadays from all age groups. Almost 82% of 16-84 years old people have used internet during the last three months. Still reading has kept its position: 80% of over 12 years old read newspapers daily. Also libraries, movies and TV are all still popular. There are 21 million library users and 863 public libraries with their internet-connections, databases and services free to all. Most of the over 60 radio stations can be heard also in internet. Everyone seems to have several mobile phones; there are 8.1 million mobiles in use.

Not only literature but also the TV and film industry are supported by the state, especially the Swedish broadcasting for minority languages. The programs of the minority languages of the immigrants in Finland are rarely supported. Children are protected in special actions: programmes are regulated by age limits and scheduling. Children's programming is supported in all media. There are altogether 2 state TV channels, five national ones and 10 commercial TV channels, with lots of their substance found also in Internet. All satellites and cables are available in most of the parts of the country. Also from over 60 radio stations most are in internet. More than 200 newspapers and 3300 magazines are published.



A 16-year old boy from Cairo. He spends a great deal of his time while at home “on line” chatting to his friends and visiting sites. He and his freinds call each other “by mobile phone” regularly to check on sites.

## THE STUDY SAMPLE

For the Egyptian study, it was decided to interview a sample of children from Fayoum, a rural area outside of Cairo and the city itself. In total, 36 interviews were carried out in Cairo and Fayoum, with children from two age groups: 12-14 and 16 -18.

Interviews in Finland consisted of pilot interviews in fall 2009 and final interviews in spring 2010 (N 34) from the capital area and in the rural area. Girls and boys were interviewed mostly separately, 1 – 4 in each group.

The main question handled in these interviews was: **What kinds of media literacy are the children practicing and developing in different regions?**

## FINDINGS

Data collected from the interviews were classified into four main categories: access to the new media, meaning how and in what quantity the media was available, and also the uses of media; socioscape, the larger contexts of the media use; and genderscape, meaning the possible special differences between the media use due to a gender.

## ACCESS TO THE NEW MEDIA

It was found that children from Cairo have access to all media except one young boy who had access mainly to television and the internet. All the interviewed children from Cairo have access to the internet at their homes. Children’s parents subscribe to the net through DSL. The internet fees of subscription were mainly paid by parents.

In Fayoum, the rural area, only one female child interviewed mentioned that she did not have a mobile phone. It was also found that children from the rural area were using other traditional media, i.e. newspapers, magazines television and radio more than those of Cairo. This matches findings of a previous study (Asran, 1998). Television was more important than any other medium for children in the rural area. This supports findings of previous studies carried out on Egyptian children (Kamel, 1995; El Semary, 1995; El Sayed 1996).

A child of the rural areas’ heavy use of the traditional media is normal as he/she did not have much of out-door activities like the Cairo children. This finding does not contradict results of previous studies carried out on Egyptian children (Tayie, 2008).

Age factor emerged as an important factor with respect to children’s use of the new media. It was found that younger children were more interested in games and being visible on line. They were seeing this as a kind of prestige and showing off. They were even creating more stuff on line than the older children. Older children were mainly interested in listening to music, watching films and downloading them.

In Finland the children’s media use has shifted from listening to radio and watching TV into playing games and using the internet rapidly during the last two decades. The results of national surveys echo also in our interviews: belonging to the virtual communities and groups is common, specializa-





Finnish children benefiting from media education at their school.



tion starts in early phase and is many times completely separated from a child's school identity; chatting, sending text messages and playing are part of the everyday life.

## SOCIOSCAPE

The social background factor was also influential on Egyptian children's access and dealing with the media. Children from high-income families have access to all media, especially the new media, while some children from low-income families had limited access. It was observed that parents of children from low-income families were more involved in their children's use of the media. These children also mentioned that they discuss some contents of newspapers and magazines with their parents, mainly fathers. It was also noted that children from high income families were more open to talk about many things including the private and personal things they were doing with the mobile phone or the internet for instance.

In Finland, it can be said that the availability of media was understandably good amongst all children. Old and new, as well as social media were part of their everyday life. Generally the uses sounded quite similar; many children read some newspapers, practically all magazines. Almost all followed TV programs and watched movies, some listened to music from a radio; everyone used more than one device to listen to music. However, on closer look at the uses of new media one could see clear, big differences in individual level uses. Age factor became crucial. The mere playing and

learning by doing was a major factor in the age group of 10 years old and under, and the social factor was important. Still, the children 11-13 years old use new media mainly for pleasure in a classical sense; playing and being in contact with friends and the family. In the stories of the media use of older children, especially from the age 14 on begins a movement from sharing to private uses, specialization and gaining special skills. Pleasure is gained from the specialized media uses. However, communication and the major use of mobile phones rule in all age categories.

Additionally, the internet provided a special connection to the social situations of the families through shortening the distance between family members and relatives. That was seen in a special way in two different situations of children's lives: one is their parent's divorce and new family members—the other the situation of the children in the immigrant families. This was also seen in city areas and in the countryside. For the children of the immigrant families social media offers contacts to own culture and relatives a way of learning new culture and identity work. In Finland it has become very common that children stay with both of their parents, for example shifting the place every week. After the parents' divorce social media seem to offer a possibility for daily contacts and a neutral place for meetings of old and new siblings and parents.

International networks and meaning making processes seem to be connected in certain media user groups. Being a fan of something or having special hobbies seems to support finding international web sites. In the groups of football

fans and in Finland especially the fans of Japanese popular culture seem to skip the national web sites and go straight to the major English or Japanese sites. Also, gaming lowers the threshold of using the international sites and supports heavily the learning and using of English language. Thus it is clearly visible that global aspects of certain participatory cultures (Jenkins 2006a, 2006b) through media, especially in online communities, are interrelated into special personal interests in very special ways. Joining the international fan based communities is clearly something to be followed in international studies about children and young adults media use (Hirsjärvi 2010).

Surprisingly, participation in Finland—in a traditional sense of the term—seems to grow not through media, but in the local ground, in everyday social world, at school or community level activities. Also it seems that there is a connection between early heavy media use and participation with media.

## GENDERSCAPE

The gender factor also emerged as an important factor in the Egyptian study. It was noted that girls differ from boys in a few aspects. The geographical area was a contributing factor in children's use of the new media.

In Cairo girls did not vary a lot from boys with respect to their access to the new media, and media use. They were also heavy users of the net, iPod and the mobile phone. Only one girl mentioned that she did have a mobile phone because she thinks that she does need it now. It was a matter of principle rather than lack of money to buy it as she is from a high-income family. All girls mentioned that they mainly use the mobile phone to stay in touch with parents and to contact relatives and friends. The father pays for the line in all cases.

All boys from Cairo have the internet at home and paid for by their parents. The net was mainly used for playing or chatting with friends. FaceBook and YouTube were the most common sites with them. All girls have email addresses as from a few years ago. They also mentioned that they use the net to download music and movies. When asked about their sources of information about the net sites, friends were mentioned as their main source.

Among the traditional media, television was the most mentioned medium. This matches findings of previous studies (Reda 1994; El Shal, 1997, El Abd 988). All girls have satellite receivers and dishes at their homes. The most preferred TV programs were mainly films and serials. One girl also indicated that she likes the programs which encourage the viewers' participation. She added that she would like to see more programs open for viewers' participation through normal land telephone lines not the mobile phones only. This girl does have a mobile phone and it was clear that she has an anti-mobile phone attitude. Another girl mentioned that she likes religious programs which educate people on the right basics of religion. Radio and newspapers were hardly used by this group of girls.

When asked about their hopes or expectations from media, they said that they would like to see TV programs tailored for each age category and not only two categories of programs, for children and adults.

Though girls were free in terms of their use of the new media, they were controlled sometimes by their parents on what they should or should not see on television at home.

Girls from the rural area were, to a great extent, different and they were more conservative than those from Cairo. None of them has ever mentioned a single word about private and personal matters. Their use of media was mainly for education and informative purposes bearing in mind that they were using the traditional media especially television. It was also clear that girls from the rural area were using newspapers, magazines and television more than those from Cairo. They also mentioned that they talk frequently about media content with their parents. This was not the case for the Cairo girls who never talk with their parents about media content. Rural-area girls also mentioned that they watch television in most cases with other members of the family, i.e. parents, brothers and sisters.

When asked about their hopes and expectations from the media, they indicated that they expect more serious and educational programs. They also hope to see more programs which reflect the reality in their own geographical area.

Boys, in general, were heavy users of the new media, especially in Cairo. All boys have access to the internet. The



internet was mainly used for chatting. Only one boy indicated that he used the net for educational purposes to do his school assignments. Boys also indicated that they use the internet to download programs and films. For the younger child it was mainly chatting with his peers. One boy indicated that he combined the net with TV, so that he can watch films downloaded from the net on TV. FaceBook was the most visited net site. All boys indicated that they know about it, and other web sites to visit from their friends.

All Cairo boys indicated that they heavily use the mobile phone on a daily basis and at any time of the day. The young boy was not using the mobile phone as he has not got one. He said that he will have one when he grows older. He also mentioned that sometimes he calls some of his friends or his grandmother using his mother's mobile phone and that he knows how to use it. Generally speaking, boys were using the mobile phone more than girls. Boys from the rural area were more likely to abide by the school rules than boys from Cairo.

Though it was not allowed to use the mobile phone at the schools, according to the school rules, all children from Cairo indicated that they hide and use them during breaks. They all said that they put them on the silent mode while at school so that the teachers won't find out about them. Boys from the rural area said they never take their mobile phone to the school as it was not allowed.

Boys from Cairo also mentioned that they use the mobile phone for the internet. One boy indicated that he always sees films on his mobile phone. Girls were less users of the mobile phone, however, they were using the net more. Boys in the rural area use the mobile phone only for calling. A said: "I use it only in cases of emergency, the mobile phone was meant to be used only for these cases"

It was clear that the Cairo boys frequently use the mobile phone for messaging friends. So SMS was common among children. Through these SMS, as they mentioned, they agree on meetings and outgoings. Surprisingly, even when they are at home they never use the land lines, they mainly use their mobile phones. Boys from Fayoum were less users of SMS and they use the land phones when they are at homes.

Though boys from Cairo hardly mentioned newspapers, magazines and even televisions, in rural areas these media were frequently mentioned. The two boys from Fayoum also mentioned that they usually watch television together with other members of the family. That was also the case for girls from the rural area. The Cairo boys usually watch TV alone as all of them have TV sets in their own rooms.

All boys indicated that they listen to radio. For Cairo boys, musical programs were common through their mobile phones which all have radio and musical services on them. Boys from the rural area listen to radio too at home and not on their mobile phones. They like to listen to religious, educational and news programs. Boys in Cairo know and use the iPod, whereas boys from the rural area have never used it or even heard about it.

In sum, it was found that the social and geographical area factors emerged as important factors that influence children's new media literacy, their media use and participation in Egypt. In Finland the gender factor became most visible in the group of girls of the immigrant families. Especially some girls in the capital area were struggling with the quality of the media they were eager to achieve. It appears that in this particular group the social factor of owning a certain kind of mobile phone or game console is an important issue. They also had the least possibilities to affect their purchasing of media stuff, and their media use seemed to be more observed than the other girls in Finland.

However, in the capital area as well as in the rural area the differences in the skillful media use were clearly not so much connected to gender than the availability of media, the personal interests of the children and the support available in everyday media use. Similarly boys and girls alike spent a lot of time in using the media, as well as the internet.

## BUDGET FOR THE MEDIA

Girls from Cairo were allowed to use the mobile phones which were paid for by their parents. The situation for boys was a bit different. Some were given a certain amount of air time (paid by their fathers) and then they buy more air time (prepaid cards) from their pocket money. Other boys from Cairo were given a free use, paid for by their fathers. On the

other hand, boys and girls from rural area were only given limited time to talk on the mobile paid by their fathers. They have what they call “controlled lines”, meaning that they can use them to speak for a limited number of minutes per month. Then they did not bother about buying any credit when the allowed number of minutes is over. Newspaper and magazines were mainly bought by the parents.

Compared to the children of Egypt, the buying and using of mobile phones for children in Finland was usually supported by their families. Certain limits were set for use either by using pre-paid connections or by setting the limit that the parents would pay. It was very usual for children to gain more gadgets, games or programs they wished as a reward for good school grades or small house work. They usually also got the magazines they wanted, as well as books.

## CONCLUSION

The results achieved demonstrated that media in Egypt, especially the internet, set the agenda for children. The internet provides them with topics to talk about with peers and friends while mainly being used for chatting and entertainment. It was hardly used for educational purposes. Younger children were more active than older ones in creating materials and producing on the internet. The addiction to media was in evidence which is where media education could be useful.

Finnish results demonstrate the meaning of accessibility and availability of media in the welfare state. It also shows the positive results of media education, however, also the hidden differences in ability of media use. It also hints at the certain cultural differences—as in the case of the children of the immigrant families—and special individual uses—as in the cases of the children who are in contact with the other part(s) of the family after the parents’ divorce. These are factors that are usually not easily seen in statistics. It is also interesting to see how the use of international web sites, and activity in fandom-based groups, are seen in the statistical part of the study.

It seems that the internet has created some kind of popular culture among children all over the world. This is a phenomenon that could be seen world wide. We can see chil-

dren in Egypt as well as those from Finland and other countries doing the same things with the new media.

In sum, therefore, the new media is becoming a crucial and vital factor in children’s processes of meaning making. That is the reason why more attention needs to be paid to media literacy education. This also justifies the hard work done in this respect by scholars and with the support of international organization such as UNESCO, the United Nations’ Programme on the Alliance of Civilization, Academy of Finland, the International Clearing House on Children, Youth and Media and Mentor International Association for Media Education. It is also worth mentioning that there is an urgent need for more data from different parts of the world. More joint and comparative studies are needed. •

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# Media Arts, School 2.0 and the Australian National Curriculum

BY MICHAEL DEZUANNI

The introduction of the Arts component of the Australian National Curriculum (called The Australian Curriculum) will see literacy education become a mandatory aspect of curriculum for all Australian children from preschool to year 8. This will be the culmination of a decades-long endeavour on the part of Australia media literacy advocates to provide all Australian children with the opportunity to learn about media as a formal part of curriculum. It will also meet the current need for schools to effectively respond to the new media technologies young people use in their daily lives beyond the school gate. The curriculum will meet this need through providing students with opportunities to both creatively produce and critically respond using these technologies. This 'Media Arts' approach is underpinned by a conceptual framework in which deep knowledge and refined skills are developed that allow students to effectively participate in new media cultures.

Media literacy has had a significant presence in the curricula of most Australian states for several decades. A media literacy curriculum was developed in Tasmania in the late

1960s and early 1970s, with a focus on film and television appreciation and production and was represented in a book called *Learning the Liveliest Arts* (Perkins, 1972). In the state of Queensland, students in the final two years of secondary schooling were first offered a subject called *Film and Television* in 1981, which exists today as *Film, Television and New Media* (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005). Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia have also offered *Media Studies* as part of their official curricula for several decades. In most Australian states, the curriculum area *Media* has found a home in the broader Arts curriculum area and this has implications for how media literacy education is understood in Australia and how it is offered in schools. Most state based curricula also include aspects of media literacy education in *English* curriculum, and potentially within ICTs education. Indeed, the draft of the Australian Curriculum for English incorporates aspects of media literacy education (ACARA, 2009). Therefore, there is a question about how Media should be defined differently in the Arts from how it is defined in English and other parts of the curriculum.

There is also an ongoing debate within the media literacy education community about whether it is best to offer Media as a subject area in its own right, or to offer media education across the curriculum, where it is relevant in various subject areas (Buckingham, 2003). *Australian Teachers of Media*, the professional association that advocates for media literacy education in Australia, has lobbied for Media to be represented as a subject area in its own right with the view that is the best way for it to be taken seriously in schools, and to create a base of expertise from which cross curricular projects can emanate. The question, then, is why the Arts should be the main curriculum 'home' for a subject area dedicated to media literacy?



MICHAEL DEZUANNI lectures in Film and Media Curriculum studies at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. He is the Media Arts contributor to the writing team responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum, The Arts. Michael is an executive member of Australian Teachers of Media, Queensland. Prior to becoming an academic, he was a secondary school media educator

for thirteen years. He is the author (with Anita Jetnikoff) of *Media Remix: Digital Projects for Students* (Wiley, 2008).

Media educators involved with the development of Media Arts for the Australian Curriculum have identified three main ways that media literacy within the Arts can be distinguished from how it is approached in English and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). The first is that in Media curriculum, students use creative technologies to tell stories, where storytelling is broadly defined across narrative and non-narrative forms. This differs from the use of creative technologies in ICT where there is usually much more focus on the development of software based skills than there is on using media technologies for a purpose. The second difference is that in the Arts, Media curriculum requires students to use technologies to make media products as well as critically analyse them. This differs from English curriculum in Australia, where Media is usually studied as text. That is, textual analysis is generally applied to media products in English classrooms, but students rarely produce media. Where media is produced, this is generally confined to journalistic genres such as news reporting and magazine article production.

Finally, Media literacy in English and ICT curriculum rarely focuses on the contexts of production and use, such as the institutional and technological contexts of production, or the audience related aspects of how media texts are consumed. Media within the Arts in the Australian Curriculum will be underpinned by a 'key concepts' framework which aims to develop students' knowledge of five key concepts as they design, produce and critically respond to media: languages (the codes and conventions of media); audiences (the people who interact with media); representations (the way in which media construct portrayals of people, places and ideas); institutions (the people and organization that enable and constrain the production, distribution and use of media); and technologies (that are required for production, distribution and access).

The Media Arts area of the Australian Curriculum for the Arts will be uniquely placed to develop students' knowledge and skills in both 'traditional' areas like film, television, video and print media and in new media areas such as internet-based media, mobile media, digital animation and video games. It will be able to do this for all Australian children from pre-school to year 8 (the mandatory years

## AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA

(ATOM) is a professional organization of media educators and industry professionals who are dedicated to the ongoing development of an innovative and diverse screen and media culture in Australia by providing: debate and analysis through its various publications, both print and online, the ATOM Film TV and Multimedia Awards and a broad range of professional development and training opportunities. ATOM has a strong membership and an active client base of over 50,000 both nationally and internationally. ATOM provides a number of products and services including: publications, such as Metro and Screen Education magazines, online and printed study guides and curriculum material, etc.

for all of the Arts areas to be covered) and as an elective for students in years 9 to 12. Media Arts is the ideal curriculum to deal with digital media technologies because it incorporates a combination of creative production, communication and critical response. It is the only curriculum model that invites students to 'write with' a range of media forms within a framework that asks them to reflect on a range of critical questions about the content they (and others) are producing and the contexts within which they are producing it. Media Arts in the National Curriculum will build on the understandings developed by media literacy specialists over several decades and will enable students to respond in ways that are appropriate in a 'Web 2.0' world. •

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# Engaging of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Digital Student

## TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT ALIGN THE LEARNING MODES OF THE DIGITAL WORLD WITH THE MODERN CLASSROOM

BY **BRENT WRAGG**

It comes as no surprise that the frenetic pace of technology is bounding ahead of our current Canadian education system. Our school structure is increasingly being exposed as irrelevant, outdated and perhaps worst of all—*boring*. Technological advances such as social networking, collaborative online idea sharing and the advent of Web 2.0, have become normalized in popular culture and have become ‘mainstream’. Outside of our schools, kids network, multi-task, collaborate and personalize their experiences in interactive digital environments. *Inside* our classrooms, however, there is disconnect; students go into ‘sleep mode’ when they come through the doors of our schools. Increasingly, the highly interactive world that our students are experiencing through social media and interactive technology is becoming more at odds with the stagnant reality of lectures, memorized concepts, standardized test preparation, curriculum cramming and ‘drill and kill.’

There a tendency towards teaching our students in a linear fashion, where memorizing concepts take precedence over critical analysis, creativity and innovation. So often, we teach students what they should *know* instead of new ways to *thinking* and *doing*. Often, many teachers fear change and are hesitant to teach in the innovative ways needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century student

We are in the midst of a paradigm shift in education. The skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century student are being rendered *outside* of our schools; interactive, personalized multi-tasking environments where students can create and manage their experiences. For example, If we look at Marketing research for the “Tween” demographic (age 8–12) we see that great lengths have been taken to analyze how today’s youth think and act. Research tells us that Tweens are known to seek out new technology trends, enjoy interacting with peers in the context of digital environments. Most of all, Tweens enjoy sharing and building upon knowledge at a rapid pace.

This demographic seeks out acceptance and legitimacy from peers and is desperate for meaningful, ‘real’, authentic experiences—they also need to know *why* they are learning what they are learning.

What would happen if we applied the ideas about how Tweens interact in the personalized, interactive world of social media as of way of informing a new brand of instructional methodology inside our classrooms? What if we could teach in a way that maintains symmetry with what the demographics tell us and could align our teaching practices to the digital realities that we know engage our students?

As a literacy coach, I have the opportunity to experiment with new instructional strategies. A 6<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher and I wanted to gain insight into how increase student engagement by providing opportunities for the interactive, personalized learning that market research told us was typical of the 'Tween' demographic. We knew that the class was somewhat tech-savvy, and aware of the various Web 2.0 social media, but were largely unfamiliar with integrating technology and 'hands on' learning in a multi-modal approach on a regular basis.

We began with informing the students they were a 'target audience'. We shared some of the marketing research that we had discovered online. We then proceeded to tell them how they thought, how they acted, and how they learned. This of course, created an intense discussion on the validity of the information.

The hook of Critical literacy was magical. Our aim was to have students engage in thinking about what they saw as their real 'identity', and if it contrasted with what the research told them. From our initial discussions, we also took note of how familiar our students were with the tools of the digital age. We included an "interest inventory" in our initial sessions to diagnose the 'state of the class' in regards to technological proficiency. We sought to engage students further by diversifying our instructional strategies to mimic the digital environments that are prevalent in Web 2.0.

To start, we ensured that there were always opportunities for collaborative and authentic 'talk'. Many of our instructional strategies were based on 'active' learning strategies ( i.e "4 corners" activities, "Graffiti walls", "Value Lines", "Inside-Outside Circle") which allowed our students to discuss, refine and elaborate on ideas presented to them by their peers. We modeled effective collaborative strategies and always ensured that talk was 'on task' and productive.

We ensured that student discussions were structured and that each student was given a clearly defined role when they were sharing ideas and thinking. Groups of two and three were found to be most effective. Innovation and creativity was celebrated at all times and encouraged as part of the process.

The sharing of ideas and concepts aligned with peer to peer networking in the digital environment. Students valued their peers' opinions and ideas and worked diligently to



ensure their ideas built upon existing ideas. It seemed that the audience of peers stimulated increased thinking and creativity—a distinct about face from the traditional teacher as the sole audience.

As teachers, we acted as 'facilitators' of this process, conferencing and giving descriptive feedback as necessary. As well, we followed the "Gradual Release of Responsibility Model" as a basis for our instruction. Assessment of student skills emphasized the process of individual as well as group interaction. "Success Criteria" and co-construction of assessment criteria were discussed and displayed on visible 'anchor charts'. Students began to keep online journals as a way of reflecting upon their thinking and ideas.

At the end of class, we would engage in a 'sharing circle' to discuss new ideas, advancements and 'next steps'. Students began to keep 'digital portfolios' of their work and referred back to their work regularly.

During appropriate 'mini-lesson' time, we would demonstrate how to 'get started' on a variety of computer applications, production strategies and arts based interpretive strategies. For instance, we would demonstrate how to use Wiki's, Blogs and interactive, online sites such as "Glogster". The key to this process was allowing students to experiment



BRENT WRAGG looks for opportunities to integrate media literacy based instruction that engage the multi-modal learning styles of the 21st Century Student. He currently resides in Whitby Ontario, Canada and works as a K-6 Literacy/Numeracy Coach with the Durham District School Board.



with the technology and ideas. We intentionally limited our input to IO to get students to generate solutions and share ideas. There was never a need for us to know the applications backwards and forwards. We learned *with* the students, shared our expertise when needed and listened to innovative solutions when presented.

Following the philosophy of Web 2.0, we shared ideas and collaborated on ideas and built upon the traditional 'teacher as holder of the knowledge' to a dynamic of non-linear, distributive leadership model whereby students and teachers modified ideas, and innovated collectively.

We were explored how students learn from each other by networking and sharing ideas within the computer lab. We put in place a structure whereby students with 'aha' moments or 'new ideas' could share with the rest of the class. Students began to learn the applications quickly and efficiently because they began to multi-task organically. It was our plan to have 'less talk' (from us!) and 'more action' (from them!), and it worked. With the focus on 'hands on' learning, students seemed to be engaged in tasks whether it was an independent or collaborative task.

The emphasis on critical literacy surrounded our project. At every turn, we concentrated on providing students with opportunities to think through divergent perspectives, ideas and concepts. Through the online journals and portfolios, interactive websites and applications, students could explore a variety of different perspectives and viewpoints. The culminating assignment was to create a digital short video that explored how students perceived their identity after listening to what the 'marketers' thought, as a way of giving students an opportunity to express their perspective on being a 'Tween' target audience.

Throughout our project, we felt our intended alignment with the learning styles of interactive, digital environments accentuated and illuminated our students' strengths. It was clear that we engaged the class and awakened an intensity and flow of collaborative learning that was just waiting to be activated.

Students were engaged, inspired and relished the opportunity to integrate creative expression, personal opinion and 'hands on' learning. To them, the project allowed two worlds to collide; the learning of the digital age had made it inside into their classroom, and it made learning fun and meaningful, and most importantly of all—exciting.



Students direct their learning through collaborative discussion and building upon the ideas of others'.

Meeting the increasingly complex needs of our students is paramount to developing a generation of engaged, critically aware thinkers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Matching our instructional strategies with the realities of the digital world will go along way to helping us bring our education system up to speed with how our students learn.

## SOME 'ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS' AND OBSERVATIONS

Use technology to *enhance* learning, not *provide* learning; find a balance when integrating technology. Start small and teach with and through technology.

Students are social beings; tap into their strengths with structured, group tasks (groups of 2 or 3 work best). Mimic social media by creating learning environments through which students can share, reflect and create ideas "Sharing Circles" allow the class to reflect on innovative ideas, concepts and next steps.

Provide students opportunities for 'hands on' learning by 'doing'; Less 'talk' for teachers means more 'action' from students.

Assess students through digital portfolios, online blogs and anecdotal observations and reviews of final products; allow students to take 'ownership' of their work—have them assist in creating 'success criteria', and self-selecting their best work. Remember, you're still the professional, and structured guidance is needed!

You don't have to master a computer application to use it; give up the control and distribute leadership to your students!

Celebrate creativity and innovation.

Students that are exposed to technology and media aren't necessarily 'pros' at its uses. Be ready to find out your students need 'coaching' through many of the concepts you *assume* they know!

Provide opportunities for authentic audiences and authentic products. Allowing only the teacher to see student's work is irrelevant in the era of YouTube, Facebook, where the audience is in the millions.

Allowing students to personalize their learning, allows them to have a stake in their educational experience (something they are well used and have come to expect in the digital age of social media). It also allows teachers to differentiate learning to suit the individual needs of students. A win-win!

Engage students by using 'active' learning strategies. Get students *moving* in the classroom and collaborating. Allow students to share ideas in a forum where they can establish a 'comfort zone' with their peers.

Explain *why* students are learning what they are learning; co-construct success criteria and curriculum expectations.

"Critical Literacy" is key; exploring students' opinions and thoughts about their world engages their minds and promotes the discussion of new ideas and themes.

Integrated units that promote a multi-modal approach to learning engage students: Embedding the arts, technology, peer to peer interaction mimic the 'multi-tasking' environments of the digital age.

Provide opportunities for students to informally share their current 'comfort level' with technology by providing surveys or interest inventories. Initial lessons provide time for 'diagnostic' assessment to see what skills your students are starting with.

Embed the instructional strategies of peer to peer collaboration, 'hands on learning,' 'active learning,' technological integration, descriptive feedback, portfolios as part of your normal classroom practice—make the switch; teaching this way for one unit and then reverting back to traditional modes of teaching defeats the purpose of changing our teaching practice by addressing the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century student!

As educators, focusing our instructional strategies at where the kids 'are' means engaging them in the interactive, personalized modalities they are used to 'outside' of school. If we can synthesize and align learning styles and experiences from the digital world with the modern classroom, we will be closer to meeting the diverse needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century student. •



# **WEB 2.0 to SCHOOL 2.0 IN SPAIN**

## *The Transformation of Information and Communication (ICT) into Technologies for Learning and Knowledge (TAC)*

BY

**JOSÉ IGNACIO AGUADED, Ph.D.**

**ALFREDO MONTILLA, Ph.D.**

**ÁNGEL HERNANDO, Ph.D.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The integration of ICT into the Spanish curriculum programs and policies is a reality at all levels: compulsory education, vocational training, etc. This integration is intended to train students to function in the digital world and the knowledge society, while trying to bridge the digital divide in order to navigate the internet (Aguaded, 2003). Achieving the goal to integrate these technologies has enormous potential. It is evident that educational authorities at all levels are prepared for the introduction of the Internet in schools (Hervás, 2002), thus causing a significant change in the educational curriculum by creating new learning communities within existing schools. Further, there is likely to be greater organizational autonomy as the role of the teaching curriculum becomes redefined (Pérez Tornero, 2000).

Although, we must not forget the technological breakthrough in Spanish schools, "there has been a global revolution in the functioning of schools in terms of schedules, organization, and academic issues, etc... which has integrated nicely into the everyday life of schools" (Pérez Rodríguez, 2009: 11). While it is true that the advent of computers, (and especially their educational use), claim new organizational and curricular approaches, even among

teachers whose practice is more traditional, there exists a positive attitude towards the use of teaching strategies that make use of ICT. Teachers understand that the computer is a tool that facilitates the teaching-learning process and it is not possible to continue using only "pencil and paper" tasks, while students live within the context of a more intensive and continuous ICT (Hernando, 2009).

This educational reality is identified in Spain in three elements by Hidalgo (2008) when he said that there is a direct relationship between free software, Web 2.0 and education. The wider possibility of 'open source' as an element that belongs to everyone and that should be enhanced and changed by all, has led us to consider this tool as a form of construction, democratization, knowledge and thought which are the basic elements to promote change in the teaching and learning.

### **FREE SOFTWARE IN SPAIN**

Cabero and Llorente (2007) argue that the use of free software has achieved economic cost reduction. The distribution of free copies at the discretion of the suppliers facilitates the exchange of documents, creating communities and

favoring developmental research in educational settings. These possibilities have led the National Reference Center for the Application of ICT based on open sources to establish ten basic reasons to choose free software in education:

- Contributes to training free, independent, critical and autonomous persons,
- Allows teaching with tools adapted to students' lives,
- Creates a knowledge sharing community,
- Favors the individual freedom of choice of technology,
- Evolves rapidly and allows efficient solution of problems,
- Provides mature, successful experiences in the Spanish educational environment.
- Saves costs in the implementation, maintenance and management of schools,
- Facilitates students access to educational tools used in school at home
- Ensures safety,
- Promotes innovation of products and services through local businesses.

Therefore, the Spanish government (in state, regional and even local) has supported the creation of many developments based on different platforms.

## CHOOSING FREE SOFTWARE IN SPANISH EDUCATION

It seems clear that an appropriate and creative use of resources based on free software allows teachers to transform their educational models, change their traditional roles, and collapse the boundaries traditionally imposed by their curriculum (Gallego, 2005). Furthermore, Adell and Barnabas (2007) argued that free software is not just a software or a way to license software; it is a complex social and cultural phenomenon, which has a definite theoretical and practical interest for education because its importance lies in the freedom for citizens to develop and share their programs without infringing on legal boundaries subject to punishment.

However, this wide range of software available, does not mean that these tools are integrated within all curriculum areas, nor that the prevailing educational practices will change in all schools. As indicated by Sigalés (2004: 39), this is a first step, a clear need in order to advance the integration of this technology in education; and this is being done in different phases of implementation:

- The relationship further establishes a separation between ICT and literacy curriculum, in terms of space (computer rooms), time (computer course) and people (teachers of informatics).



J. IGNACIO AGUADED-GÓMEZ, Ph.D. is Vice-chancellor of the University of Huelva (Spain). Leads the fields of Technology and Innovation and is a Full Professor of the Department of Education. Chairman of Group Comunicar, in Andalusia, a veteran in Spain in Education through Mass Media. He is the manager of the Iberoamerican scientific magazine of Communication and Education, *Comunicar* (ISSN:1134-3478), which is distributed in Europe and America. He is also scientific advisor to several national and international magazines, as well as manager of *Agora* Investigation Group in the Andalusian Plan of Investigation, developing various investigation projects. He has participated in many educational/investigation activities in the didactic use of mass media and has been the organizer and chairman of several scientific committees of international academic events. E-mail: director@grupocomunicar.com or vicerrector:tecnologias@uhu.es



ÁNGEL HERNANDO-GÓMEZ, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Psychology and Education at the University of Huelva (Spain). Director of Service to the Community College of the University. Academically a Ph.D. in Psychology, Master and Bachelor of Psychology and Educational Psychology. Deputy Director of the Ibero-American journal of communication and education, *Communicating* and member of the Editorial

Board of *Psychology Notes*. "Has participated in numerous training and research activities in the field of school counseling, psychology, education, intervention on risk behaviors and promoting positive adolescent development. He is the author of many publications that address various topics, all related to the area of Psychology and Education. E-mail: angel.hernando@dpsi.uhu.es or direccion@sacu.uhu.es



ALFREDO MONTILLA CORONADO is a teacher, psychologist and professor at the University of Huelva. He has been a trainer of teachers in the School 2.0 Plan. He has participated in several research projects related to R & D of new technologies and their application in education. Teaches courses related to the School 2.0 in several masters at the University of Huelva.

- The complementary model involves the use of ICT in some areas or curricular activities, maintaining a differentiated instrumental aspects of ICT.
- The ICT curriculum integration implies full availability of the technology in the classroom for use when required by the teaching-learning process.
- The permeation of ICT in the curriculum is at the stage of full maturity in the adoption of technology. ICTs are invisible, permanently available to students and teachers as a tool for intellectual work, shared and creative construction from knowledge (Vivancos, 2008: 47).

This last phase is what Baeza (1999) called computer-assisted collaborative learning and understanding; a teaching-learning strategy by which two or more individuals interact to build learning through discussion, reflection and a decision-making process in which computer resources act as mediators, and as a resource for the mediation process emergent from Web 2.0.

## WEB 2.0 IN SPAIN

Web 2.0 is as stated by De la Torre (2006), a way of understanding the Internet, with the help of new cutting edge tools and computer technologies. This has promoted the organization and flow of information dependent on the



behavior of people working within it. This not only makes access and centralized content easier, but their own participation in its own construction, using tools with increasing ease and intuitively because "one of the main objectives that Web 2.0 raises is to go beyond the technical standards and find a real ability to share data and knowledge via the Web" (Hernandez, 2007). The following are characteristics that represent these thoughts:

- Publishing tools easily available on the web without the need to install software.
- Collaboration power through the various resources available; as in the case of sites like Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr, Delicious, Digg, MySpace, etc.
- Create new networks of collaboration between users through the means of communication and publication of information. (We have established virtual communities that enable sharing between users, creating new social networks on the web. An example is the construction of large communities or e-learning which has gained a boost in recent years).
- Transform products into services; a product can be a portal that has a goal either to communicate, integrate a community, etc.
- Rebuild of web design and this new version tries to be a meeting and collaboration between users, and working under an order in the publication of information.
- Convergence of media: Web sites designed under the concept of 2.0 are made under the precepts





of usability and under the idea of having on hand a large number of resources, such as video, chat, forums, sharing real-time files, podcasts, Internet radio stations, etc. in order to offer services to users.

Educational use in Spain, of resources based on Web 2.0 or School 2.0 will need to be analyzed in depth.

## SCHOOL 2.0

The Council of Ministers of Spain approved on July 31, 2009 a budget allocation to implement the program School 2.0 among the autonomous regions and established the criteria for implementation:

- It is a comprehensive program of educational innovation funded at 50% by the Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities.
- It provides for the transformation over the next four years of traditional classrooms where teaching to the final two years of primary education and the first two compulsory secondary education in digital classrooms equipped with whiteboards and wireless Internet, in which the teacher will have a fixed and a portable computer and in which each student will work with a PC netbook.
- The budget for equipment will amount to 93'5 million euros.
- They allocated approximately five million euros for the training of classroom teachers who join the program, School 2.0, as well as for developing and fostering the creation of digital educational materials and resources.

Since the adoption of this program, which aims to give every student a computer and fill classrooms with digital gadgets (Area, 2010), the various autonomous governments of the regions have signed participation agreements for the financing of it. (A review of how the situation differs in regions and specific plans and programs that have been created in each of the autonomies, can be found in Area, 2010). The overall aims and objectives: To deepen the quality of education and equal opportunities to get ICT training tools into

every classroom, improve educational practices to achieve greater skill development by the students and transform over the next four courses classes 5 and Primary 6 and 1<sup>o</sup> and 2<sup>o</sup> ESO, public schools, in classrooms with whiteboards and wireless Internet, while teachers and students have computer netbooks for personal networking.

Of all the autonomies, the Community of Andalusia has gathered a larger allocation of budgetary resources to implement this project. It is understood that the ICT School 2.0 is a new opportunity to strengthen the system of values in a society where digital competence is part of reality. Good use of ICT is a shared responsibility for it makes a connection between school and family.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN SPAIN

The future, in the short term, of the School 2.0 project passes through two significant changes: the program's inception in the 2010/11 academic year in schools of secondary education for freshmen, and the didactic digitizing of teacher resources.

Regarding the first point, there is the potential for reasonable doubt arising from the fact that there exist situations







where students have prior experiences in using computers, (as they started using them the year prior in the final year of primary grade), while for the teacher it is the first time they have used these tools.

In relation to the digitization of teaching resources it is expected that 80 public schools will be the first to use electronic books for the academic year 2010-2011. Of the total, 64 centers will work primarily with laptops in both online and offline, using materials developed by publishers. The remaining 16 will focus on developing teaching materials in electronic form.

All the above leads us to a reality in Spain in which we operate as information citizens providing valuable resources and tools to be explored in this formative process, which promises an exciting future.

In conclusion, we consider it necessary to insist on the fact that the mass introduction of computers and other digital items for very sophisticated use can be valuable in the schools, but the mere consumption of ICT does not guarantee intelligent understanding and ownership. Only to the extent that competent members of the educational community establish action plans to promote systematic and comprehensive intelligent interactions between citizens and the media can this succeed. The average daily consumption of audiovisual materials does not guarantee competence, but training is essential to critical media



literacy and media. This is defined as those skills, abilities, attitudes and minimum professional skills to interpret the barrage of images judiciously and telematic media content, visual, sound and audio, which are part and parcel of our daily surroundings. Only in this way will the transformation of ICT (information and communication) be enabled in the TAC (technologies for learning and knowledge). •

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# An American Perspective

## JUSTIFYING USES OF DIGITAL TOOLS TO FOSTER CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

BY **RICHARD BEACH**

As demonstrated by the other articles in this issue, digital tools—social networking/bookmarking, blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital storytelling, etc., are playing a major role in teaching critical media literacy in the United States. These tools are also redefining media literacy as consisting of the digital literacies of interactivity, connectivity/linking, multimodality, and social networking.

However, implementing use of these digital tools in American classrooms remains a challenge for American teachers. Faced with *No Child Left Behind* testing mandates, teachers are required to operate within a largely print-based literacy curriculum, particularly in grades 3–8 in which preparation for annual standardized reading tests. In contrast to the UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, who have well-developed media literacy curriculums and assessment, this focus on a print-based curriculum continues to marginalize media literacy instruction in America, as is evident in the development of the Common Core State Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org>) that have been adopted by most states and that make minimal reference to digital/media literacies. (States can add 15% to these standards; much of the 15% that has been added in my state of Minnesota refers to digital/media literacy missing from the Common Core State Standards).

### ADOPTING A "PARALLEL PEDAGOGY" APPROACH TO INTEGRATING DIGITAL TOOLS INTO THE CURRICULUM

Given the emphasis in American schools on a print-based curriculum, teachers need to be able to justify the inclusion of digital literacy activities in their classes in terms of how these activities contribute to both print and digital literacies. Infusing their curriculum with digital literacy instruction poses a challenge for teachers seeking to employ these tools in their classrooms. Kevin Leander (2009) has identified four stances teachers adopt related to using these tools: 1) «resistance» to using digital literacies, 2) «replacement» of old literacies with new, 3) using new litera-



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RICHARD BEACH is Professor of English Education at the University of Minnesota. He is author or co-author of 18 books, including *Teaching Writing Using Blogs, Wikis, and Other Digital Tools*, *Teachingmedialiteracy.com: A Web-based Guide to Links and Activities*, and *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*. He is also a member of the NCTE Commission on Media and Vice President elect of the Literacy Research Association.

cies to validate or «return» to older print literacies, and 4) «remediation» in which students use digital literacies to “re-mediate” or transform print literacies. Adopting a “re-mediation” approach involves use of what Leander describes as a “parallel pedagogy” approach, in which neither print or digital literacies are considered as exceptional. For example, students learn to employ the digital literacy of interactive revisions using wikis or Google Docs to engage in collaborative revisions of print texts. As documented by Renee Hobbs (2006), using these digital tools in a high school media literacy program improved students print-based reading/writing test scores.

In a “parallel pedagogy” approach, teachers determine which print or digital tools are best designed to achieve their learning objectives to justify use of these tools in their curriculum. This suggests the importance of defining these tool/purpose relationships. In Leander’s English methods course, a primary focus involves helping preservice teachers learn to reflect on the *purposes* for using both print and digital tools. In creating digital storytelling videos for the purpose of conveying a “big idea” to their audiences, preservice teachers learn to reflect on their uses of transitions in their writing of their storyboards to plan their videos—a set of print literacies having to do with making transitions in writing: introducing and concluding, providing examples, showing cause and effect relationships, or referencing the passage of time. Similarly, preservice teachers employ digital literacies in using visual transitions to edit videos with iMovie; for example, using a fade-in transition to introduce a scene or an overlap transition to show a cause/effect relationship. Through reflecting on their uses of these print and digital literacies, students in Leander’s class learn what and how certain tools are most likely to achieve certain purposes, acquiring a meta-language they can use as teachers to model purposes for using print or digital tools in their own classrooms.

A “parallel pedagogy” approach also avoids what David Buckingham (2010; this issue) describes as the over-selling of Web 2.0 tools as a means to transform media literacy instruction, in that it still honors the need for a focus on print literacies and does not idealize the uses of digital literacies. As Buckingham notes, the need to move quickly to

adopt digital literacies is often based on the assumption that most students are actively engaged in producing their own media. However, while most students are using digital tools, they are not necessarily creating digital content. A 2009 study found that 38% of adolescents share digital content and 21% report remixing content (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Moreover, what adolescents produce is not always of high quality or “inherently liberating and countercultural” (Buckingham, 2010, p. 291). And, while students may be using social networking/digital tools such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube for largely entertainment purposes, they also need to learn to use these tools for academic purposes (Beach, Anson, Kastman-Breuch, & Swiss, 2009a).

One explanation of adolescents’ lack of digital production, at least in American schools, is that while 66% of teachers reported employing digital media tools and 46% reported using digital resources in their teaching, this still means that students in one third of classrooms are not experiencing use of digital media tools and not using digital resources in about one half of classrooms (Project Tomorrow, 2010).

## DEFINING TOOL/PURPOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN A MEDIA LITERACY METHODS COURSE

All of this suggests that given the lack of integration of digital tools in a largely print-based curriculum, American teachers face the challenge of justifying how their use of digital tools will contribute to uses of *both* print and digital literacies. In my media literacy methods course for English teachers, many of whom are preservice teachers, I emphasize the importance of defining purposes for uses of digital tools to enhance *both* print literacies of text interpretation, argumentative/creative writing, verbal communication, etc., and digital literacies of interactivity, connectivity/linking, multimodality, and social networking (for the course wiki site: <http://teachingmedialiteracy.pbworks.com>; the course syllabus: <http://tinyurl.com/28ac7kb>; my *Teachingmedialiteracy.com* text site: <http://www.teachingmedialiteracy.com>, and my related sites on uses of digital tools: <http://digitalwriting.pbworks.com> and <http://tinyurl.com/2b7au8m>). In

this article, I describe some of the purposes driving the uses of digital tools in this course:

- building social relationships
- learning argumentative writing
- collaboratively constructing responses to media texts
- critically analyzing media representations
- analyzing genre conventions in print and media texts
- understanding how audiences construct meanings through media ethnographies

## PURPOSE: BUILDING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

One primary use of digital tools involves creating positive social relationships to build a supportive classroom community for fostering collaborative learning in which *how* members of that community contribute is equally important to *what* they contribute to the community. In my course, teachers post their critical responses to media texts in their blogs using Blogger as well as on a Ning social networking forum site. To foster interaction, teachers serve as “blog partners” who are required to provide comments to their peers (For examples of their blogs, see <http://teachingmedialiteracy.pbworks.com>). In these assignments, for example, teachers are asked to critically analyze media texts embedding a film clip in their posts, and analyzing the use of camera/editing techniques. They are also continually linking to, drawing on, and extending each others' ideas, acquiring ways of social networking to develop ideas for teaching media literacy.

In the beginning of the course, as a group process-tool teachers create their own vlog in which they post a video clip describing themselves to the class. We also use a course wiki (<http://teachingmedialiteracy.pbworks.com>) that serves as a repository for sharing links and material related to the course, so that teachers learn how to employ a wiki to foster social sharing of and collaborative revision of writing in their own classes.

As the instructor, I have students continually reflecting on how their use of these tools functions to build a classroom community so that they become accustomed to defining how uses of these tools serve the purpose of building collaborative, social relationships. And, we discuss the ways in which social digital networking has become an essential literacy for constructing one's identity in both social and school/workplace worlds.

## PURPOSE: LEARNING ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

We also use the Ning forum to engage in online role-play debates about issues addressed in the course, for example, whether use of the Internet is “dumbing us down” (Carr, 2008) as a culture. Students adopt pro-con roles, develop a fictional profile page to construct their ethos, and voice their positions on these issues, responding to claims by voicing counter-arguments. Rather than treating the debate in competitive terms, we attempt to engage in collaborative discussion designed to achieve some mutually formulated solutions to address these issues. Teachers then consider how they would employ online role-play to teach argumentative writing in their classrooms, to address, for example, the issue of websites being blocked in their schools (Beach & Doerr-Stevens, 2009b). We also use game sites such as the Evoke game (<http://www.urgentevoke.com>) or The Our Courts project site (<http://www.ourcourts.org/>), as well as sites that provide alternative perspectives on issues, such as Debatepedia (<http://wiki.idebate.org>) or CreateDebate (<http://www.createdebate.com/browse/debates>). Teachers then recognize how these digital tools serve the purpose of creating engaging rhetorical contexts for teaching argumentative writing, as well as how digital tools can actually serve to mediate open, public discussion of issues and resolution of those issues.

## PURPOSE: COLLABORATIVE SHARING OF RESPONSES TO MEDIA TEXTS

Another important purpose driving the uses of digital tools involves learning how to collaboratively share responses to media texts. I therefore have teachers employ a social book-

marking tool, Diigo.com (<http://www.diigo.com>) to share bookmarks and tags with other students in the class. When they select a site to bookmark, they add keyword tags to identify topics addressed in that site. They can also use tagging with blogs, wikis, and databases, as well as with Flickr, YouTube, or Facebook profiles, for example, joining Flickr groups based on tags shared by those groups.

Teachers then use Diigo to add a sticky note” annotations to share responses to the same online text, for example, the Barbie Doll site (<http://www.barbie.com>) or the free, downloadable, html version of Cory Doctorow's novel, *Little Brother* (<http://craphound.com/littlebrother/download>). I model question-asking strategies for adding annotations that can be employed with both print and digital texts, using the Critical Response Protocol questions: “What are you noticing?” “What did you see that makes you say that?” “What does it remind you of?” “How do you feel?” (Lerman & Borstel, 2007).

To share annotations of images and video, teachers then import images into the image annotation tool, VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com>) and add oral or written annotations to these images, or they use YouTube Annotations and VideoAnt (<http://ant.umn.edu>) to add annotations at specific places to YouTube videos. (For an example of use of VideoAnt to add annotations to a video produced by a group of high school students: [http://ki2online.ning.com/video/using-videoant-annotations-to?xg\\_source=activity](http://ki2online.ning.com/video/using-videoant-annotations-to?xg_source=activity).)



From sharing and building on each other's tags and annotations, teachers experience conflicting perspectives on the same text that lead to prompting development of annotations, leading them to value using digital bookmarking/annotation tools for fostering collaborative sharing of responses.

## PURPOSE: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

Another purpose involves fostering critical analysis of media representations of gender, race, class, age, spaces (urban, suburban, rural), schooling, fast-food, casino gambling, etc., through identifying consistent patterns that reflect certain ideological stances or attitudes. To model this process, my students view Jean Kilbourne's *Killing Us Softly 3* (<http://tinyurl.com/d37y5h>) that portrays patterns in representations of females, Jackson Katz's *Tough Guise* (<http://tinyurl.com/ye99q6h>) that portrays patterns in representations of males, and videos produced in Roberta Hammer's UCLA class on critical analysis of gender, race, and class media representations (<http://women.ucla.edu/faculty/hammer/cm178/>).

Teachers then collect online images from sites such as Flickr or Google Images or video from YouTube related to representations of certain topics, for example, how female athletes are typically portrayed in terms of their appearance as opposed to their athletic prowess as portrayed on the video *Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete* (<http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=208>). Collecting a range of different images and identifying patterns in these images requires that teachers step back and de-contextualize images or video by perceiving them as operating in different contexts. For example, ads for “off-road” SUV's typically portray them as lumbering through natural settings, equating SUV's with nature. However, placing SUV's in the context of polluted highways or cities now results in a more nega-

Screenshot from VoiceThread

tive equation of SUV's with pollution. Teachers can also de-contextualize images through creating remixes or parodies of these representations as illustrated by Adbuster parodies (<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/printad>) or remixes/parodies on YouTube.

Through critiquing media representations, teachers are learning critical analysis strategies that can also be applied to print texts, for example, learning to identify language patterns in novels reflecting characters' use of certain discourses of race, class, and gender to define their or other characters' identities.

### PURPOSE: ANALYZING GENRE CONVENTIONS IN PRINT AND MEDIA TEXTS

Teachers also analyze genre conventions in film or television genres: detective, mystery, science fiction, horror, romance, soap opera, musical, comedy, reality-TV shows, sports-talk shows, etc., referring to the Internet Movie Database to search for films or TV shows by genre (<http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Genres>). They identify prototypical roles, settings, language/discourses, storyline features what is the typical problem—"crime," who solves the problem—"the tough cop," with what means—"violence," towards what end—"show that crime doesn't pay," and value assumptions reflected in the problem—"we live in a crime-ridden world," who solves the problem ("cops need to be tough"), what means/tools ("eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth"), and themes ("criminals need to be locked up"). Teachers then reflect on having students create their own genre videos, for example, creating teen soap operas as illustrated by the example of My Pop Studio (<http://www.mypopstudio.com/magazines/index.php>).

From engaging in genre analysis and creating genre texts, teachers can then transfer these strategies to critical analysis of print genre texts, for example, analysis of prototypical characters, settings, storylines, and themes in the mystery, romance, adventure, comedy, or horror novels.

### PURPOSE: UNDERSTANDING HOW AUDIENCES CONSTRUCT UNIQUE MEANINGS

Another important purpose for media literacy instruction is to help students recognize how the meanings of print and media texts vary according to differences in readers/audiences unique experiences, needs, purposes, or stances within certain social/cultural contexts. In the course, teachers conduct mini-media ethnographies of their own or other audiences' responses to television programs, video games, rock concerts, reality TV shows, TV sports fans, online fan sites, comics/graphic novels, Facebook/MySpace, etc. To do so, they employ digital tools such as lurking on fan/video sites, digital note-taking, or video taping gamers playing video games. We discuss research strategies of observing, interviewing, adopting "insider" versus "outsider" perspectives, identifying cultural norms, etc., as illustrated by media ethnographies such as the PBS: *Digital Nation* program (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation>) and videos produced by the Digital Ethnography project at Kansas State University on audience experiences with YouTube (<http://mediatedcultures.net/youtube.htm>).

Teachers then conduct their own media ethnographies. For example, in my Fall, 2009 class, Laura Hammond conducted an analysis of fans of the television show, *Lost* (<http://tinyurl.com/2aflutf>). She found that fans viewed the show religiously, often viewing the same episode twice. They also preferred to view the show with other fans so that they did not need to respond to question from viewers not familiar with the show, and could vocalize their response to characters' actions without being ridiculed, particularly when they drew on the show to make judgments about people in their own lives. Elisabeth Charboneau studied Facebook users' responses to requests to become fans of companies or organizations (<http://e-charb.blogspot.com/2009/10/ethnography-study.html>). She found that their responses varied depending on the nature of the request, with some participants resisting attempts by companies or organizations to promote commercial products and others expressing willingness to support companies or organizations, particularly when they are familiar with people working in these compa-



nies or organizations. She also interviewed a small-business owner who was using Facebook to promote his business, who believed that he was providing his customers as Facebook users with useful information about his products.

By studying audiences and/or their own responses to these texts, teachers recognize how audiences adopt different practices and stances shaped by differences in their purposes, attitudes, and contexts. In doing so, they are recognizing the need to appreciate variations in how their students construct their own particular meanings of print and media texts. Then, when they solicit responses to print or media texts, they will be more likely to foster a range of different, competing responses that honor differences in what students bring to these texts.

In summary, given the marginalization of media literacy standards/curriculum in American schools, teachers need to be able to justify the inclusion of digital tools for teaching both print and digital literacies in their classrooms. It is therefore important that teachers, particularly new pre-service teachers entering the profession, learn to formulate purposes for use of digital tools to teach print and digital literacies. As teachers increasingly find that employing digi-

tal tools in their classrooms does enhance students' use of both print and digital literacies, they will have the evidence to push for further inclusion of digital tools for teaching media literacies in American schools. •

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS TO TEACH MEDIA LITERACY

ADOLESCENTS' ONLINE LITERACIES: CONNECTING CLASSROOMS, DIGITAL MEDIA, & POPULAR CULTURE

by D.E. Alvermann

2010. NEW YORK: PETER LANG

DIGITAL LITERACIES: SOCIAL LEARNING AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

eds. V. Carrington & M. Robinson

2009. LOS ANGELES, CA: SAGE

DIGITAL DIET: TODAY'S DIGITAL TOOLS IN SMALL BYTES

by A. Churches, L. Crockett, & I. Jukes

2010. LOS ANGELES: CORWIN PRESS

WEB 2.0 FOR SCHOOLS: LEARNING AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

by J. Davies & G. Merchant

2009. NEW YORK: PETER LANG

DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION: PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, AND PERSPECTIVES

eds. K. Drotner & K.C. Schroder

2010. NEW YORK: PETER LANG

DIY MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

by B. Guzzetti, K. Elliott & D. Welsch

2010. NEW YORK: TEACHERS COLLEGE PRESS

DIGITAL MEDIA CRITICISM

by A. Kavoori

2010. NEW YORK: PETER LANG

DIY MEDIA: CREATING, SHARING, AND LEARNING WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

eds. M. Knobel & C. Lankshear

NEW YORK: PETER LANG

DIGITAL STORYTELLING, MEDIATIZED STORIES: SELF-REPRESENTATIONS IN NEW MEDIA

by K. Lundby

2010. NEW YORK: PETER LANG

VIEWFINDING: PERSPECTIVES ON NEW MEDIA CURRICULUM IN THE ARTS

eds. C. Mullen & J. Rahns

NEW YORK: PETER LANG

TEACHING TECH-SAVVY KIDS: BRINGING DIGITAL MEDIA INTO THE CLASSROOM, GRADES 5-12

by J.K. Parker

2010. LOS ANGELES: CORWIN

MEDIA LITERACY: NEW AGENDAS IN COMMUNICATION

ed. K. Iyner

2010. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE



## BLOGGING FOR THE PEOPLE

### *Using Digital Media Tools to Cross New Borders with High School Students*

BY **ROB WILLIAMS, Ph.D.**

As a media literacy consultant, historian, and classroom educator for two decades, I am always trying to figure out how to balance so-called F2F (face-to-face) education—my weekly interactions with students in our classroom—with new media tools. Those of us who’ve been teaching a while may remember the days of filmstrips, textbooks, VCR video tapes, and even (for the wisest among us) mimeograph machines. The 21<sup>st</sup> century, of course, has ushered in a bewildering variety of “new media” communication tools collectively referred to as “Web 2.0 social media,” a term which describes the emerging web-iverse of personalized, networked, participatory digital media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, and YouTube are among the most well known.

Why should educators even consider using blogging, Facebook, or YouTube with our students in the classroom? Simply summarized, new Web 2.0 social media tools allow students to engage in cross-cultural conversations and projects in both F2F (face-to-face) and online settings, a potentially powerful blending of educational arenas simply not possible even just a few years ago. The most effective use of social media tools, as Clay Shirky points out in his widely-cited book *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, results from a fusion of the technological and

the social. “There is no [single] recipe for the successful use of social media tools,” Shirky explains. “Instead, every working system is a mix of social and technological factors.”

In other words, new media technologies like blogging can complement, reinforce and support more traditional face-to-face learning experiences, but only if teachers and students thoughtfully consider how to blend the technological and social in ways that make good pedagogical sense.

Having been a classroom teacher for twenty years, I am well aware that many thoughtful educators rightly regard any



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DR. ROB WILLIAMS ([www.robwilliamsmedia.com](http://www.robwilliamsmedia.com)) is a Vermont-based musician, historian, consultant, journalist, and media educator/maker who teaches F2F and online media and communications courses at Champlain College and Sacred Heart University; serves as (web) editor and publisher of *Vermont Commons: Voices of Independence* independent newspaper ([www.vtcommons.org](http://www.vtcommons.org)); and just retired as board co-president of the Action Coalition for Media Education after 8 years of service ([www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)). He also co-manages Vermont Yak Company ([www.vermontyak.com](http://www.vermontyak.com)) in Vermont’s Mad River Valley, a farm business raising grass-fed yaks for meat, fiber and agri-tourism, and performs with a pherocious phour-part “pholkgospel grassicana” band called the Phineas Gage Project (<http://phineasgageproject.blogspot.com>).

heavily-hyped new digital media technology with skepticism. On even-numbered days, I am among them. But I also recognize the reality that for most of my students, new social media tools are increasingly becoming an important part of their lives.

During the past few years, I've begun asking how educators might best fuse these social media tools with our own pedagogical and professional goals, driven, in no small measure, by the interests, questions and conclusions of my own students themselves. "Web 2.0 social media represents the future of democracy, and the future of information globally," stated one of my brightest high schoolers in a recent blog post. "Learning how to use Web 2.0 social media tools prepares us to be more active individuals as this media revolution unfolds."

This may seem like an exaggerated claim by an open-eyed if somewhat idealistic student.

After all, how can "social/digital media"—from the Googleverse on down—actually reinforce or support "democracy"? The answer lies in thoughtful social media pedagogy, fused with real face-to-face learning, if possible.

Many educators and media scholars such as *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* author Robert McChesney assert that for "democracy" as a political system to exist, a "democratic" society must have a free, vibrant and open media culture marked by equal access to journalism outlets, a diversity of voices (rich and poor, black and white, old and young, male and female) and a wide range of expressed opinion on important issues of the day.

American DOTCOM'ers David and Jacob visiting with Armenian DOTCOM'er Shahen in a downtown street market in Yerevan, Armenia's capital city. [Credit: Rob Williams]

In the United States, where the vast majority of our traditional mass media outlets are owned and operated by large for-profit commercially-focused corporations with "nothing to tell and everything to sell" (to quote George Gerbner), new digital media technologies help level the playing field, providing students with new authorship opportunities, and a chance to raise their voice in the service of their learning—about themselves, about the texts and experiences we as their teachers believe are important to their development, and about the larger 21<sup>st</sup> century world around them.

The foundation in fusing democratic practice with new digital media is the use of "blogs." A "Blog" is shorthand for "web log," a free multimedia online platform that gives any student with access to a computer and an Internet connection easy access to the explosion of articles, photos, music, and videos on the web. What makes blogs so democratic? A blog is free and simple to create; easy to edit and update; and provides an information-rich multimedia learning platform that is easily networked with other blogs to create participatory multi-way conversational and reflective platforms. Most importantly, blogs provide students with what I call "authorship ability," allowing them an almost unlimited opportunity to analyze texts, synthesize projects, and reflect on their learning. Finally, blogs can be rendered as



private or as public as the author and/or teacher requires, as well as providing public and visible accountability for any classroom learning experience.

During the past two years, I was granted a unique opportunity to push some educational boundaries using new social media tools with veteran Vermont-based non-profit PH International's DOTCOM program. Funded by the Educational and Cultural Affairs branch of the U.S. State Department, DOTCOM stands for "Developing Online Tools for Civic Outreach and Mobilization." Our DOTCOM cross-cultural teaching team recruited 30 students—10 each from 3 countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the United States)—to participate in our 16 month program, a pilot project that combined new, free, universally accessible social media tools with 2 face-to-face cross-cultural visits to the United States and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia), marked by immersive "host family" stays, educational touring, and visits to famous historical, religious and cultural sites, schools, and media organizations.

In January 2009, we formally launched DOTCOM. None of our thirty students had ever met one another before, so we created shared online YouTube, Netvibes, Facebook, and Twitter platforms, and asked our students to create and personalize individual blogs. At our blog platforms, we introduced ourselves online by building "Knowledge Trees"—describing our families, our communities, and what we valued in our lives. Once we shared our Knowledge Trees with one another, each of us created personal media inventories, where we constructed detailed "media maps" of our favorite books, magazines, newspapers, games, films, and music—and why we enjoyed each media experience.

By first "meeting" each other online as DOTCOM'ers, our students were able to use their individual blogs to learn about one another from afar, and find common connections among their varied interests. Such an approach is vital in a shared global media culture marked by ethnic, religious and political tension. Azerbaijan and Armenia, for example, are two countries with borders closed to one another,

having both emerged from Soviet control as independent republics in the early 1990s, only to fight for control over a contested region of land—the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Caucasus.

We asked the participants to introduce themselves to the group by shooting, editing, and uploading a creative and fun "90 second introductory video" using a simple digital video camera.

July 2009 saw us all gather together in the United States (Washington, D.C. and Vermont) for our first of two cross-cultural exchanges, complete with immersive host family stays, and, in groups of three, we completed our three week digital video REEL ACTION collaborative film projects, with "globalocal" topics as diverse as Peak Oil, human rights, stereotyping, media ownership, and climate change. In the Caucasus region, because Azerbaijan and Armenia are two countries at odds with one another, we found that getting these two groups of students in the same room together, let alone working with one another, proved provocative, challenging, and ultimately, a learning experience for all, even after our months of online social media conversations. As the mediating "third party" at the table, our American students helped broker conversations, find consensus, establish common ground, and provide laughter and a sense of perspective for all involved.

After early fall blog reflections on our intense DOTCOM summer together, and continued Web 2.0 dialogue, we launched a second digital video project within each of our three countries, called MOBILE EYES, designed to leverage the emerging media mojo of shared "smart phone" technology, and to test our thirty DOTCOM students to see if they could plan and produce Web 2.0 projects on their own in their own communities. Finally, we embarked on our second of two cross-cultural exchanges—traveling to the Caucasus region (Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia), where we launched a final digital video project asking DOTCOM students to produce and upload a short film reflecting on their experience, what they learned, and how



DOTCOM changed their outlook (if at all) on the world and their place in it.

Our DOTCOM results were promising. All thirty of our students are now adept at blogging, and producing and distributing digital videos. They can now go and teach these storytelling skills in their communities. And certainly, all of our DOTCOM students in all three countries have a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the power of media to shape their understandings of the world.

Maybe the most powerful pedagogical result, however, is the most difficult to measure: increased cross-cultural conversation among students conditioned to see their neighbors as the Other. Indeed, if there is to be greater understanding and potential peace between the citizens of Azerbaijan and Armenia (or any two nations or groups currently at odds), then social media, properly applied, can support this. As Armenian DOTCOM'er Sona observed: "Just because the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict exists, doesn't mean we can't have Azeri friends."

But like all media experiences, the use of social media and a program like DOTCOM can be a double-edged sword. "When I meet the Other face-to-face, I see how fragile he is, and I know that I can harm them," stated one DOTCOM student in an "offline" private email exchange. Another student finished her blogging on a more optimistic note. "DOTCOM has taught me that there is no one objective reality," summed up Danielle, one of our U.S. DOTCOM participants. "This is an important lesson and I find myself pondering other people's perspectives from other cultures."

"I think the greatest form of social media is face to face communication," one DOTCOM student joked. Indeed, if we could instantly be transported anywhere in the world to learn about another culture's history, politics, science, religion or daily folkways, we might come to better understandings of the world's complexity. In the meantime, however, at this unique historical moment for 21<sup>st</sup> century education, media tools may offer some our best opportunities to connect with other cultures. Our hope is that our

DOTCOM pilot program offered some insights into how educators might harness the power of new digital communications tools for meaningful educational work, blending the "social" and the "technological," as Clay Shirky suggests, in new ways. •



Azerbaijani and American DOTCOM'ers visiting in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital city, on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. [Credit: Rob Williams]



# MEDIA NARRATIVES FROM TURKMENISTAN

BY MELDA N. YILDIZ, Ed.D.

*Turkmenistan is one of the Turkic states located in Central Asia east of Caspian Sea neighboring Iran and Afghanistan in the south, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on the north. Turkmenistan became independent in 1991 after the collapse of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It has approximately 5 million people living in the area the size of California. Although wealthy in natural resources, 80 percent of the country is covered with Karakum desert.<sup>1</sup>*

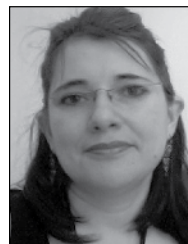
## INTRODUCTION

This article presents an outline of my experiences as a Fulbright scholar teaching and researching in Turkmenistan. I collaborated with English as Foreign Language teachers, and developed workshops on Educational Media to hundreds of high school and university students. This article provides strategies, possibilities, and struggles for integrating new technologies into the curriculum with limited resources and equipment. Further, it outlines the impact of technology such as Satellite TV Programming, Global Positioning System (GPS) and Social Interaction Software (SIS) in education while describing Turkmen students and teachers' discoveries and experiences with new media.

## WHY TURKMENISTAN?

In 2005–2008, I was part of a Department of Education grant focusing on integrating Asia into their school curriculum. At the Asia Society in New York City, I attended presentations, workshops, and collaborated with Newark Museum developing Media Literacy Projects<sup>2</sup> involving *Silk Road*<sup>\*</sup> and the myths and misconceptions about Asia, encouraging the teacher candidates to integrate Asia into their lesson plans. For the last three years, I personally grew my interest in Central Asia especially Turkmenistan.

Last year, for the first time, Turkmenistan opened its doors to Fulbright scholars. From August 2009 to January 2010, I had the privilege of living in Ashgabat, the capital city of Turkmenistan, with my 6 and 12-year old children. Going to Turkmenistan allowed for me to relive my childhood in Turkey when I had limited resources to further my education. I believe the Fulbright allowed me to see a new part of the world as an insider and forced me to alter my



MELDA YILDIZ is the first Fulbright Scholar to Turkmenistan. She is an associate professor at School for Global Education and Innovation, Kean University. Yildiz holds an Ed.D. in Math, Science and Instructional Technology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, an M.S. in Instructional Technology from Southern Connecticut State University and a B.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey.





Art project, US Public Affairs  
Turkmenistan, December 2009

teaching while developing new points of view. As I anticipated, I found many things both drastically different and strikingly similar.

I tried to explore and contact various universities in Turkmenistan and attempted to contribute as a lecturer in Educational Media and as an English as a Foreign Language educator. I found myself particularly drawn to the universities in the capital city that sit on the historic “Silk Road.” I served the community through curriculum development providing professional development workshops to school teachers in Turkmenistan.

## MEDIA PROJECTS

Initially, I proposed to lecture in an academic setting and collaborate with Turkmen colleagues on new media and technology issues. After waiting on an official assignment for over a month, I realized it was not possible for a foreigner to receive such a permit. Instead, I found myself organizing workshops as well as out of school activities for Turkmen students and teachers, conducting research using GPS devices, and exploring the power of mobile devices and SIS among Turkmen youth. I developed workshops related to new media and quickly discovered how difficult it was to design a lesson due to limited technology and Internet service. It took me hours to download a YouTube video clip. In fact, I had to put in a work order at the US Embassy in order to get permission to download videos.

After understanding the Internet limitations and the audience needs, I developed courses/workshops<sup>3</sup> and presented them at the US Public Affairs facility. I was especially inspired by my students who were using my digital camera and GPS device of which I knew very little.<sup>4</sup>

I decided to learn more about the GPS and Geographical Information System (GIS) by developing a workshop series called “Maps, Math and Media: Introduction to Global Positioning System and Interactive Map Making.”

After the formal introduction to the workshop and group activities, all participants explored a *Gallery Walk* that was designed for exploring Goggle Earth, and the role of different types of maps. *Gallery Walk*<sup>5</sup> for this project was a collection of artifacts (i.e. maps, pictures, posters, audio and video clips) designed to showcase the importance of geography across content areas and different projections. It also provided learning centers for each individual to interact and complete the tasks while in group discussions and writing responses. There were different maps available for participants to view and explore. The participants wrote their reactions next to these maps and discussed the significance and possibilities for incorporating these maps and technology across curriculum areas.

Second, I organized a *geocaching*<sup>6</sup> activity—a high-tech treasure hunting game using the GPS device. It was challenging to locate the given coordinates, but it was a great team building activity. After geocaching, the participants continued to explore GPS and SIS software such as Google Earth and Community Walk. Later my students came up with an idea to create a map of the capital city of Ashgabat, bus routes and historical sites. They started collecting data, downloading each day, and creating interactive maps and online projects of their own.

On numerous occasions, I was warned not to use the GPS device in public. It may be confiscated and I may find myself in trouble with the authorities. Instead, I was invited to present at many conferences to showcase the GPS device. For instance, I presented at the Disaster Management Institute which was working on developing a map for earthquake fault lines in Turkmenistan. With one shared GPS device, my students and many volunteer community members started an ongoing project. Even business people who attended my presentations were inspired to use the GPS to collect data on sales and locations. Publicly, even the taxi drivers had a chance to explore the GPS device while my students worked. This work created media attention and I was interviewed on national television by many journalists. Lastly, I had a chance to showcase my students' GPS work to the government officials, the Minister of Education, university faculty and administrators at the ICT Conference in Education sponsored by UNESCO/UNICEF. I am happy to report the GPS project is still in progress and the data continues being collected and documented. As one of my colleagues said, I was lucky to be on national TV as a star and not as a prisoner.

In fact, I am invited to go back to Ashgabat this fall. I am looking forward to finding out the current status of the GPS project and collecting data on workshop participants' reactions, reflections, and experiences with GPS and SIS. My

colleagues have been focusing on specific strategies utilizing Geographical Information System (GIS), and the reading and writing of interactive maps to facilitate multiple literacies. They have been collecting resources on Art in Geography, Cartography, Environmental Ethics, and GPS/GIS in Education. Their projects, such as the one found at [www.communitywalk.com](http://www.communitywalk.com) and the video narratives, reflect not only their experiences but also international issues and perspectives through their online contact to the global community. Their stories articulate the realities of conditions in their schools through their research, analysis, and dialog.

As new media technologies enter into new countries like Turkmenistan, whether it is a mobile technology, GPS, the Internet, or video games, they transform the lives of the people, economy and education system. As Turkmenistan integrates new media and technologies into the education and daily lives of its people; they were experiencing similar challenges we had in the US for preparing its generation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Other projects created were in digital storytelling where students created their own digital videos and shared stories. A number of students entered various international video competitions because of their endeavors. Students learned to research on the web and used video cameras and video editing software. Through digital storytelling, we questioned, rediscovered and shared cultural differences between

Turkmenistan and the US, gaining alternative points of view on historical events while renewing interest and commitment to global understanding. Another course developed was entitled, "I Can Dream American." There students deconstructed the American Dream, rediscovered American History, Culture, Religion and Media and dismantled many myths. Colleagues from the US were invited to join us through Skype which allowed students to share what they had learned in class.

Students working on GPS project in Old Nisa Historical Site, Turkmenistan.



Last, but not least, the “Multilingual Children’s Book” was another community project that involved many volunteers. It allowed me a connection to the National Library. I received generous help from the librarians, Turkmen scholars, translators and children. We shared stories, discussed and translated Turkmen proverbs and sayings in Turkish, English, and Russian. In addition to the Turkmen children, Turkish and American students also participated in the event by picking one or two proverbs and depicting it in a picture thereby contributing their art project for the book.

## MEDIA NARRATIVES

Looking back at the pictures taken, I questioned myself about what dominated my view of Turkmenistan. I have seen three media messages: 1) the picture of the current President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in the background of each event I attended or each building visited, 2) marvelous new white marble buildings and statues, and 3) people drinking Coca Cola products. Most American companies try to enter into Turkmen markets. The best selling company is Coca Cola. I have even seen ads in important intersections. I took a picture of a Coca Cola Billboard Ad while in a moving vehicle. It translates “For Turkmen People, Coca Cola, in new 1 and 2 Lt containers.”



A Coca Cola ad in the center of Ashgabat. Coca Cola is one of the few American companies in Turkmenistan. Coke’s bottling company is Turkish.

to drink Cola for a happy childhood. In the ad, a female child in traditional Turkmen dress is featured. Students agreed how this child may grow unhealthy and lose her teeth if her choice of drink continues to be soda.

to the classroom, students all remember seeing the ad. They deconstructed and identified how the ad was targeted to young people, how the ad used Turkmen colors and designs, how the message was

Although infrastructure for telecommunication services is at its infancy, the Ministry of Education recognizes the need for new media technologies in the classroom. Therefore, they not only work on building new schools for a growing educational community, but also provide new technologies for the classroom. There were common mistakes made in this process which were similar to ones experienced in the U.S. For instance, considering technology as hardware is problematic. New technologies must be seen as software that needs to be updated and revised as the instructional needs of the students change. Buying a computer device is different than buying a school furniture which can be used over time. At the UNESCO/UNICEF ICT conference I made an analogy between computers and pencils, ‘A computer is not like a table that can be used for a long time, it is like a pencil you use, sharpen and reuse until it is too small.’

Another common problem is teacher training. Most teachers I had a chance to work with told me they will never be able to use anything I had showed them due to fear of breaking a computer or fear of bringing controversial topics to their classroom. One faculty at the Academy of Science told me, “If you break a computer, one can lose his/her position.” It was discouraging to hear that everything I presented may be irrelevant. However, the growing access to mobile devices and Internet access at Internet Cafes will have a chance to liberate the curriculum slowly but surely. It is almost unstoppable. Most classrooms I visited did not have the necessary technology tools and media literacy education did not exist in their primary schools or within college level courses. Yet, every student and teacher I met and worked with were eager to learn more about new media literacies, and were open to multilingual and multicultural dialog and exploration.

Furthermore, I found out teaching languages are welcomed and encouraged, but on the other hand limited courses were offered in Political Science, Comparative Literature and Media Studies. As one colleague said, “Teaching languages are safe, teaching critical thinking is a question” in Turkmenistan. I met many impressive multilingual students. Many frequently came to attend workshops, English language lessons, and used the US Embassy’s Public Affairs facility which housed a computer lab allowing them online





Students attended the UNESCO/UNICEF conference in Turkmenbasy, Turkmenistan. Picture of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov is in the background.



access to resources. Just like their counterparts in the US, they found a way to connect to their peers on social media networks such as Facebook and chat with each other using MSN or Skype.

From my Turkmen students, I learned how to survive in Ashgabat with limited Internet access. Instead of trying to download media, I started to use national Turkmen TV channels, newspapers and magazines for media literacy instruction while sharing my point of view and perceptions of their media.

As for the country as a whole, it is my belief that there is no violence and crime in Ashgabat. It is considered one of the safest places to live in the world. National Turkmen television channels never showed any violence or crime related news. Usually new programs tended to carry highlights of the latest exhibits, new machines the country recently purchased, new buildings opened by the president, international conferences and activities that took place in Turkmenistan. However, while crime is not an apparent issue, how students are used to promote the country's message is another matter. I have seen many students shuffled from their schools to new openings of government buildings in order to serve, dance, and perform for officials and international guests. One parent told me she refused

to allow her daughter to participate in dancing, singing or playing an instrument in school because last year she lost so much of her instructional time being called to perform. This type of expectation was in evidence when I attended the ICT conference already mentioned earlier. During the last day of the conference, 100 students were waiting outside in the cold. They were only invited to sit at the conference when the national television journalists were in attendance. International participants were interviewed and students were videotaped. Once the news agencies obtained their footage, students left the conference room. At night, the TV aired the footage from the morning with International scholars thanking the president for providing such a great conference and showing the students attentively listening to the conference. This was not true. The students were used like a prop. Unfortunately, this type of propaganda happened quite often as Turkmenistan TV channels are controlled by the government.

Turkmens do receive international channels and are exposed to news and entertainment programming around the world via satellites. Through these international channels, they see the commercials for various products that do not exist in Turkmenistan such as the 3G phone system which was being advertised on Turkish channels last year. This week, one of my colleagues from Academy of Science used Skype.com to

call me using her 3G system that she recently purchased in Turkmenistan. As the new tools come into the populations everyday lives, I believe Turkmenistan will join the struggle we all experience as media educators around the world on how to educate our new generation to be more media savvy, not just consumers, but also producers of media.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Among many lessons I learned from Turkmenistan, the most important one is how to design innovative curriculum with limited resources, a slow Internet service, and in multiple languages. I had witnessed amazing scholarship, persistence, and hard work. What makes good teaching is not what technology you use, but instead how you use them. I learned Turkmen and Russian and started creating multilingual presentations. I realized learning another language brought me more insight in adopting my presentations and understanding Turkmen history, media, culture and people.

I had a chance to present a three-day intensive workshop to over 80 teachers in Turkish Turkmen schools in four different regions in Turkmenistan, presenting media literacy exercises, and sharing my GPS project. Teachers were extremely interested and involved in the activities and shared their media experiences. They argued the challenges and advantages of integrating new media into Turkmen curriculum; developed 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in researching and creating digital resources and media messages using ning, voicethread and community walk; examined the national curriculum and GPS/ SIS software in developing global understanding; experienced how a critical approach to the study of new media combines knowledge, reflection, and action to promote educational equity, and prepares new generations to be socially responsible members of a multi-cultural, global society.

Since leaving Turkmenistan, I was invited to join some of the Turkman teachers' social networking sites where they posted their students' video clips and multimedia projects. One participant said, "I am happy to have met you, because you have given me much more to think about than just the

content of this class." Another wrote, "More than learning new technologies, this course gave me a chance to reflect on my own Internet habits and learned something about myself." As one said, "I don't believe what you see on television or read on the Internet. All these statements are untrue, after producing my proud video; I believe one can do push ups with one finger (one needs to rotate the camera for 90 degree and video tape someone showing only half the body of a person doing push up on the wall instead of on the floor with one finger)." They found the media production activities and the resources engaging and helpful in understanding the role of media's unique characteristics.

The participants repeatedly said how much they were intimidated by the social software, but they eventually enjoyed being part of the world community. By actively involving participants in producing media (i.e. facebook, community-walk, toondoo, wikis, blogs and digital stories), they understood the conventions of the medium and gained alternative points of view on their environment and renewed interest and commitment to community service. As they became the producers of their own media projects, I believe they began to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills,<sup>7</sup> and became informed consumers and citizens of the world. •

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> CIA World Fact Book–Turkmenistan: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html>
- <sup>2</sup> Teach Asia webpage: <http://teach-asia.wikispaces.com/>
- <sup>3</sup> Links to resources, workshops and presentations developed: <http://kureselegitim.wikispaces.com/>
- <sup>4</sup> GPS device I used is at <https://buy.garmin.com/shop/shop.do?plID=310>
- <sup>5</sup> Gallery Walk is based on Museum approach to teaching: <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/index.html>  
Gallery Walk can be collection of artifacts (i.e. maps, pictures, posters, audio and video clips) designed to present the particular topic to the audience.
- <sup>6</sup> It is an outdoor activity in which the participants use a GPS device (called "geocaches" or "caches") by connecting people around the world.
- <sup>7</sup> Partnership for 21st Century Skills: <http://www.p21.org/>

\* Silk Road is an ancient transcontinental network of trade routes across the Asian continent connecting China, India, Central Asia as well as Africa and Europe.



# *A Glimpse at Qatar through a Broadband Lens*

BY **TESSA JOLLS**

The mix of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and 7<sup>th</sup> century customs seemed likely to clash, yet the Digital Communications Literacy Conference, held in Doha, Qatar in February 2010 and sponsored by the International Institute of Communications in association with ictQatar, was a highly successful forum for sharing, exploring and challenging best practices in the age of broadband.

The conference consisted of two meeting days: February 9 was devoted to digital communications literacy and Feb. 10 addressed broadband regulatory concerns. It was my privilege to address "The Educator's Role" and how media literacy fits into formal education during the first day of meetings along with presentations from Lisa Lidig (ictQatar) and Paolo Celot (EAVI, Belgium). (Presentations are available at <http://ict.gulstaging.net/output/page1569.asp>; YouTube videos for presentations on "The Educators Role" are at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEvZrPoZBFO&feature=related>)

The opening remarks of Dr. Hessa Al-Jaber, ictQatar's Secretary General, made it clear that she is no stranger to media literacy and educational issues related to 21<sup>st</sup> century

skills. As head of a governmental agency equivalent to our U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Dr. Al-Jaber has led an intense effort to introduce broadband and concurrent citizen education into Qatar.

Given that ictQatar was just established in 1994 by His Highness the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, it is nothing short of amazing to realize that Qatar has the highest mobile phone and broadband penetration rates in the Middle East. (It is also amazing that ictQatar now has more than 75 staff members, many recruited internationally.)



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TESSA JOLLS is President and CEO of the Center for Media Literacy, a position she has held since 1999. She is also Director of the Consortium for Media Literacy. Her primary focus is working in partnership to design and implement school and community-based implementation programs for media literacy education. She contributes to the field internationally through her speaking and

professional development workshops, with curriculum development and research projects, and through publishing and disseminating new curricular and training materials.



According to Euromonitor International's briefing report, mobile phone penetration in Qatar has grown 37.7 percent in five years, despite the fact that Qatar was the last country in the region to introduce competition in the mobile telephony market, which came in July 2009 when Vodafone launched its mobile phone services (Peninsula, 2010). In this highly verbal society, in 2008, cell phone users reached 121% of the population (this percent drops to 98% when foreign workers are counted). (openarab.net, 2010) Twitter is among the 100 most visited websites in Qatar, but internet usage in Qatar is somewhat hindered by the lack of Arabic content, as well as censorship.

The dominance of cellphone use was clear in the souks and the city streets of Doha: people everywhere were talking animatedly into their handsets. Against this backdrop, it was fascinating to learn more about how the U.S. compares with other countries in providing fast and cheap broadband services. For example, South Korea leads all countries in broadband service, followed by Hong Kong and Japan (and Hong Kong provides no government subsidies for its highly competitive broadband market) (Akamai, 2010). In Hong Kong, Taiwan and Sweden, broadband is available for under \$20 per month and even the fastest speeds in the U.S. are comparatively slow (Meinrath and Losey, 2010). But it is also revealing to note that the U.S. technology companies are still setting the pace in regards to content-related software innovation: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google were all names that were repeatedly mentioned by conference presenters in regards to driving the demand for broadband.

Yet, as we in the media literacy field have long known, preparing citizens for the broadband world is not just about having the technology available: it's about the critical thinking skills that are needed to use the technology wisely. In this arena, my informal conversations with conference representatives confirmed the discouraging perception that education systems everywhere are lagging when it comes to teaching media literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

An emphasis on rote learning and on acquiring content knowledge at the expense of information process skills continues to dominate the education landscape in Qatar (and in Kuwait, as well, where Dr. Barbara Walkosz, University of Colorado-Denver and I visited in fall 2007 to present at the first Kuwait Media Literacy Conference). Yet seeing the youth of Qatar—their ease with their cellphones and laptops; their westernized dress, with jeans and hijabs combined—it was evident that the imprint of international pop culture is making itself felt. Although the Middle East and the U.S. seem worlds apart in so many ways, we truly have much in common—especially the challenge of preparing our youth with media literacy skills for the global village. •

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## TEACHING MEDIA IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

EDITED BY CARY BAZALGETTE

[ J. SAGE PUBLICATIONS, LTD., LONDON, 2010 ]

*Reviewed by Dede Sinclair*

TORONTO, CANADA

*Teaching Media in Primary Schools* is a collection of essays and teaching strategies to help elementary teachers weave knowledge of many media forms, including print, into existing language programs so that students learn the necessary communication skills to function effectively in a digital world. Editor Cary Bazalgette has gathered together a group of experienced elementary teachers and academic researchers who have focused their attention on the acquisition of an expanded array of literacy skills for children ages four to eleven, who attend elementary schools across England.

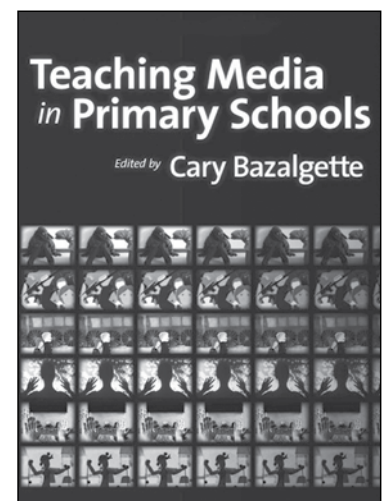
Bazalgette worked at the British Film Institute from 1979 to 2007 after teaching English and film-making at the secondary level in London. She is now Chair of the Media Education Association, a member of the European Commission's Media Literacy Experts' Group, and a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Education, University of London. Her personal entry point to Media Education is through film, the study of still and moving images. As it turns out, this is an ideal starting point for young children as well. As she states in her introduction to the

book, "Although primary-age children are the most avid consumers of media such as television, the idea that learning about this and other media might form part of their curriculum has continued to seem outlandish until very recently." She and several other contributors to this book have been instrumental in opening up the discussion to expand the definition of a 'text' to include still and moving images as well as multimedia platforms such as social networking sites.

As Geoff Dean states in his chapter, *Rethinking Literacy*, "Of the many anachronisms that still dominate our school systems, one of the biggest is the disproportionate privileging of the written word literacy as the centerpiece of educational success and communication." He goes on to say, "It is absolutely essential that all children are taught to read and write in conventional ways: that universal right is not in question. But just as children are taught to make meaning from the arrangement of sounds, words, sentences and paragraphs in traditional printed texts, so they need to... understand the arrangement of elements in non-print texts. Being literate today has to in-

clude the capacity to notice and understand the composition and framing of shots, the deployment of light, colour and movement, the arrangement of order and duration in aural and visual material; it also needs to include the skills of identifying the sources and reliability of non-print material, and understanding the kinds of truth—and untruth—that can be created through images and sounds.

As a primary teacher who helps children with the important rite of passage of learning to read, I see great value in "starting where the children are" as Bazalgette suggests. Children arrive in kindergarten having hundreds of hours of experience with TV, DVDs and other forms of sound and visual narratives,



created specifically for this age group. What a relief it would be for these children, to have their prior knowledge recognized and utilized. What a relief it would be for teachers, to be able to draw on a much broader range of stories to motivate and inspire students to love language in all its forms.

This handbook is organized into an accessible format. The introduction creates a context for the three major sections of the book, Cultural Learning, Critical Learning, and Creative Learning, the three interrelated strands of media learning, identified by the European Charter for Media Literacy. Each chapter begins with a little box containing the chapter objectives. This design feature is very useful to a teacher looking for material to meet a specific teaching goal.

The book is composed of essays written by nine different expert practitioners who have extensive classroom experience upon which to draw. Each chapter ends with a separate section, either Points for Practice, or Case Studies. These are practical guides for explicit classroom activities easily adaptable for a variety of primary/junior programs. As a Canadian, subject to both British and American cultural influences, some British 'isms' may be less apparent to me and more apparent to you. Skip over any cultural incongruities, and enjoy ideas that appeal to your own sense of purpose.

Each chapter has a brief list of references relevant to the topic. Many of the references direct the reader to the

work of British scholars, including the chapter authors, as well as David Buckingham. They have set the bar high for classroom research. The work of American scholars, including Anne Haas Dyson and Henry Jenkins are also referenced.

**PART 1: CULTURAL LEARNING,** contains three essays, which suggest ways in which teachers can learn what their students know about media, what they enjoy, and how they use this knowledge, before deciding how to help extend this cultural learning. Teachers can utilize knowledge about new media conventions at school, however the content is chosen at home. This section explores ways to bridge these two worlds.

As an elementary teacher, I know a lot about the codes and conventions of print, but little about the codes and conventions of still and moving images, so I am grateful for the clear descriptions and discussions of this topic which permeate the book.

**PART 2: CRITICAL LEARNING,** proposes strategies to help students gain the critical literacy skills to analyze multiple media forms and to talk and write about them confidently. As Bazalgette states "This kind of learning is important in its own right, but it needs to be embedded in the curriculum from the first years of schooling." Elementary teachers are already teaching elements of critical literacy related to print, as a component of reading and writing programs. These efforts are enhanced when students learn to apply critical literacy deconstruction

skills to a wider variety of texts, including visual imagery (e.g. advertising in its multiple forms).

Specific critical literacy skills for social media are developing and adapting to the exploding interest and participation in these media... In the essay "Social Media and Primary School Children," Guy Merchant identifies a difference in approach to social media between the United States and Europe. Jenkins regularly uses the term 'participatory culture'... suggesting the importance of audience engagement and collective intelligence in popular media, a culture in which members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another. On the other hand, the European Charter for Media literacy suggests a more reflective or critical producer and consumer, and is explicitly educational, describing its aims in terms of literacies while underscoring the importance of criticality. These differences will create interesting debates as we move forward.

**PART 3: CREATIVE LEARNING,** describes teaching units related to classroom production to "develop learner's creative skills in using multiple forms of digital media for expression, communication, and participation in public debate." This section of the book shines with the work of teachers who can clearly see a new vision for the ways in which students can use multiple media tools to express their ideas and communicate with others.

These early adopters of social networking in the classrooms are clearing the technical and ethical pathways so that followers can move ahead more smoothly. One of the most imaginative classroom projects is described in Case Study I *Alternative Reality in the Classroom*. Angela Colvert writes "A mysterious email arrives and is read aloud by the teacher to the class of 8- and 9-year-olds. It's from two secret agents, Onyx and Violet Linton. In it they explain that there's a beast on the loose and that they are in desperate need of help" Using information the students gained

from the web address on the message, they find clues and develop ideas using a wide range of modes and media (e.g. webcam diaries, community forums, the telephone) to solve the mystery. The surprising twist to this project is that the adventure was an alternate reality game created for the class by a group of 10- and 11-year-olds in the same school, who had spent most of the school year designing the game to include the necessary game elements and to meet the National Curriculum standards of each of the cross-curricular subjects required for the project.

While I see this book as a teaching handbook, overflowing with good ideas and practical advice, Cary Bazalgette sees it differently. "...this book cannot provide a simple template for classroom activity. It is more like an invitation: we invite you to join a movement that will, we hope not merely add another requirement to the curriculum, but transform our ideas about the very nature of literacy, and help us offer children more pleasurable, purposeful and successful learning experiences." On with the Revolution!

## MEDIA REMIX: Digital Projects for Students

EDITED BY MICHAEL DEZUANNI & ANITA JETNIKOFF

[ JOHN WILEY & SONS, AUSTRALIA, 2008 ]

*Reviewed by Neil Andersen*

TORONTO, CANADA

*Media Remix* presents 24 projects for years 5-9 students. Each project focuses on a different aspect of media study and collectively they provide a comprehensive view of media production as well as many media studies issues.

There are many ingenious strategies at work in *Media Remix*. One is its way of teaching media literacy through production. Another is its intentionally ambiguous meaning of 'remix.' Yet another is the online support that adds to its interactivity and scope.

### **SOME OF MEDIA REMIX'S MEDIA STUDIES ISSUES?**

Fandom, Celebrity, Audience and Representation issues that are key to any media studies curriculum. But they are not addressed through reception (readings or videos); they are addressed through student production, in units that involve planning, production, post-production and reflection. Students personalize each project, working in trios, pairs or solo. The projects are invitational and authentic, and because they involve student's per-

sonal lives and interests, plagiarism is unlikely, if not impossible.

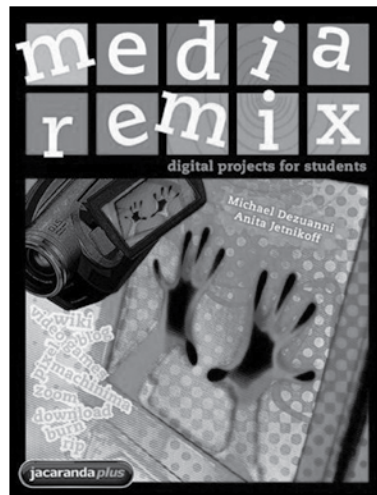
*Media Remix* provides scaffolding in many forms. The processes students will use are broken down into their logical stages. Forms and graphic organizers are provided to support the processes. Production tips are given that help students deal with equipment issues as well as respecting copyright and privacy.

The book presumes students will have ready access to video and digital cam-

eras, sound recorders and networked computers. Its projects include image, video and audio recording and editing, internet searches, downloads, uploads and multimedia presentations. The infrastructure needed to support these activities is available, or becoming available, in most schools. Teachers who might be concerned about the knowledge they and students need to execute the projects need not fear: they will find ready support either among their own students or from online tutorials.

The skills that students develop as they work through *Media Remix's* projects are not just skills needed by those wishing to enter media industries, but rather are skills needed by ALL students. It is hard to imagine a 21<sup>st</sup> century job that does not involve significant media savvy and some form of media production. It is also hard to imagine civic involvement that does not address the same skills.

Putting production first has some real benefits. Because students must have significant content knowledge before they can create significant media texts, *Media Remix's* projects force them to learn and assimilate both content and production knowledge. *Remixing Celebrity*, for example, asks students to imagine and represent themselves as celebrities. In order to do that, however, students must examine the celebrity phenomenon to understand its codes and conventions. They must also learn the codes and conventions of photography and green screen digital effects. *Remixing Celebrity*, therefore, involves students in understanding celebrity, photography and digital effects, all while producing a



text that teachers can use for assessment and evaluation.

“Remix” in *Media Remix* has several meanings: sometimes makeover, sometimes experiment, sometimes re-organize and sometimes make-your-own. Each of these fosters powerful learning, because as students manipulate ideas and textual elements, they are learning and remembering them for future reference and use. Brain theory tells us that manipulating ideas through active learning achieves much greater retention. Learning theory tells us that producing texts can be an excellent way for students to consolidate their knowledge. Whichever remixing students do, these learning goals are accomplished.

Some projects are more practically-driven than others. *Remixing with Composition* provides a short project within which students learn the elements of visual composition. Shot names and definitions are provided. This is the kind of lesson that many teachers might execute using a short commercial video to illustrate, but by having students learn and then use the visual language, students learn the language through their own practice.

*Media Remix* is accompanied by eBook*plus*, which provides a wide range of supports on the Jacaranda website. Each book comes with a unique registration number. Each registration number is a key to a store of online forms, graphic organizers and videos that support and extend the learning experience. You can even download a pdf of the entire student book. The supports are referenced on the relevant pages throughout the book.

The projects become increasingly sophisticated and complex as they proceed, with the last few projects having sufficient ambition that they could become culminating tasks for evaluation.

*Media Remix* meets the challenge of engaging and informing 21<sup>st</sup> century students about the languages and expressiveness of media. What it does not engage are issues of ownership and control, or the shift from mass media to multi-media (consumer to prosumer) that are occurring daily. But these are issues that teachers can easily explore in other ways or implicate as extensions of some of the *Media Remix* projects.

With 24 projects to choose from, *Media Remix* has something for everyone, novice and expert alike. In fact, I don't see why some of the projects could not be executed by students younger than year 5; and I don't see why many of the projects wouldn't be sufficiently compelling and challenging for students older than year 9.



# INSIDE PLATO'S CAVE

## Canada's Online Media Literacy Course

*Reviewed by David Considine*

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTH CAROLINA

Having taught media literacy online at the graduate level for a decade, it was both personally & professionally valuable for me to be given the opportunity to see what our Canadian colleagues have developed in the form of *Plato's Cave*, an online course offered by Athabasca University, to "fill a gap in media education." The 3-credit course has been "written, tested and endorsed by teachers."

Spear-heading the design and development of the course were John Pungente and Gary Marcuse, with organizational support coming from CAMEO (Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations), Citytv, CHUM Ltd., and the Virtual Teacher Center.

The course is designed for teachers, parents, and students of communication, recognizing that "although mass media have come to dominate many aspects of our society, children have few opportunities to develop media literacy skills in formal settings."

Of course for children to develop those skills, teachers have to be provided with opportunities to understand, practice, apply and revise the pedagogy associated with media literacy. It is that very need that *Plato's Cave* so effectively and creatively meets.

As one student noted, the faculty and course creators "seem to have an encyclopedic knowledge of film and commercial video clips that I marvel at." The creators are also aware of obstacles to media literacy, acknowledging that approaches to even traditional forms of communication have often been met with resistance or poor implementation. At the start of the film section of the 13-Unit course, for example, they note:

*"Despite the fact that the movie industry has been around for over 100 years, movies have made very little penetration into the Canadian high school curriculum. One of the challenges in teaching film is the decision about where it belongs in the curriculum."*

One could certainly make the same comment about film and the American classroom & curriculum.

So let's be clear from the start. This is a Canadian website and as one could and should expect it emphasizes Canadian content and context. For example Unit 2 addresses Media Literacy & The Curriculum. That context is the Canadian provincial curriculum documents in places such as British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick & Saskatchewan. But underlying an understanding of those documents are theories and principles



The course covers a wide range of media, from pop culture and social media to public service announcements, and newscasts.

of media literacy that American and many international media educators would be conversant with. This includes the media triangle (T.A.P.) attributed to Eddie Dick and integrated in the U.S. for example in undergraduate teacher preparation at Appalachian State University (CI 2300 Teaching & Learning in a Digital Age).

Another key concept of the Canadian course that would be familiar outside of that country is the emphasis they place on a constructivist model of education. In their own words: "Media education should be thought of as an approach that specifically includes engaging students in active inquiry and critical thinking with emphasis on exploring and questioning. Consequently, media education works well with an inquiry, project-based approach."



A still from the "Stop Racism" public service announcements (or PSA) campaign in Canada, one of the videos used in the course and in the classroom.

Unit 3 addresses Canadian Pop Culture. One student expressed reservations about this unit, suggesting that the content could have been integrated throughout the course rather than isolated. Having had the opportunity to visit Canada on numerous occasions



Media has been supplying role models for children for more than 50 years. An image from the teaching guide for *Scanning Television*, a resource used in the course"

and to present media literacy workshops, whether traveling for leisure or education, I doubt that I have ever visited that nation without experiencing the expression of some concern about the impact of America on Canadian identity. As an Australian (another Commonwealth nation), I am more than sympathetic to these feelings and fully understand the need for this component of the course. One notes a sense of pride and a little defensiveness in their introduction to the unit.

"While American pop culture dominates international markets Canadian artists also contribute a rich and multi-faceted array of popular films, videos, music, dramas and television series. These include the kids of *Degrassi High*, the stadium rock performances of Celine Dion and Alanis Morissette, K.D. Lang, and Avril Lavigne; the jazz music of Diana Krall and Michael Buble; rock groups like *The Guess Who* and *Blue Rodeo*; movies like *Water*, or *C.R.A.Z.Y.* and the films of David Cronenberg, Atom Egoyan, Claude Jutra, and Paul Haggis; or the success of the TV series *Corner Gas*. The

Canadian brand of humour reflects who we are, exploring our fears, desires and aspirations; ultimately, it serves as an excellent cultural barometer." The fact that my word processor wants to reject the English spelling of humour, in and of itself might be good reason for this component.

So what else is covered in the course? Other units address Persuasion, News, Audience, Ideology & Representation, Media Language, Popular Music and of course New[er] Technologies as well as others. The Units typically contain objectives, forums, video clips with questions and activities, links, and an extensive resource & reference section. The site provides an overview to the process & pedagogy of learning online and that crucial component, a troubleshooting guide for those little things that might go wrong, including technical information about browsers, plug-ins and a rather useful link to the HelpDesk at Athabasca University.

If the site designers have not thought of everything they have come very close to it in this comprehensive and clear-



On the PSA "Smart As You," a talking TV explains that kids are smarter than television.

ly needed online course. It may be a little too ambitious in its attempt to reach teachers, parents & students of communication but that may well be countered by the flexibility that allows

students to complete different units in the course. Based on what I was able to see and input provided by the designers and students, this is an exciting, rich and comprehensive resource,

thoroughly grounded in the principles of media literacy, with practical application and curriculum connections for classroom teachers.

## **RECORD ATTENDANCE & RECRUITMENT!** *at Appalachian State's Summer Institute* **JULY 26<sup>TH</sup>-30<sup>TH</sup>, 2010**

**BY DAVID CONSIDINE, PH.D.**

When teachers leave an event telling instructors their teaching has been 'revolutionized' and 'transformed,' then put their money where their mouth is by signing up for additional courses, one can only conclude that this approach to media literacy resonates. So it was this summer

in Boone North Carolina where The Graduate Program in media literacy hosted a free institute: *Linking the Literacies: Teaching & Learning in a Digital Age.*

Despite the fact that North

Carolina teachers could take the institute for free and out of state participants could pay just \$75, twenty participants paid regular summer tuition rates for 3 hours of graduate credit. Participants came from as far away as Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Arizona, Texas and elsewhere to work with

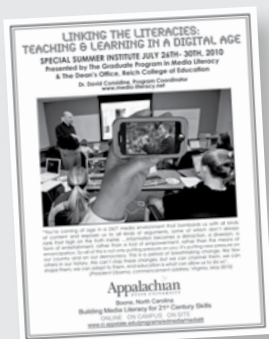
guest faculty including **William Brozo** (*To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader*), **Carol Santa**, former president of the International Reading Association, perennial favorite **Kathleen Tyner** (*Literacy in a Digital World*) and ASU faculty **John Spagnolo** and **David Considine**. You can access a description of each session in pdf format at <http://www.ced.appstate.edu/departments/ci/programs/edmedia/medialit>. Click on daily program & speakers.

While the previous institute had focused on media literacy within the context of Social Studies, the 2010 event targeted English Language Arts teachers working with middle grades and high school students, with a focus on engaging students critically and creatively with" texts that

are read, heard and viewed" a goal which aligned with state ELA standards. So did it work? Here's what some of the teachers had to say:

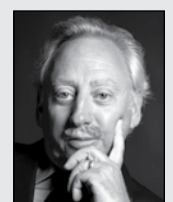
Mark is on the leadership team at his middle school. He kept a daily journal throughout the institute. One entry said: *"if everyone at my school could have this type of training I have no doubt that our readings scores would dramatically improve... I am amazed at the number of vocabulary words from North Carolina's Standard Course of Study in ELA that Dr. Considine is addressing... I am being given tools that will help my students become better thinkers and learners."*

Leanna is a national board certified 6th grade teacher of Social Studies and



The 2010 Summer Institute schedule.

From left to right: William Brozo, Kathleen Tyner, John Spagnolo, & David Considine.





ELA in Asheville. *"The summer institute strengthened my collaboration with teachers & scholars in the field of media literacy. It inspired me with a greater menu of media literacy strategies to implement in my classroom, and continues to provide me with ideas & resources through the social networking we began at the institute."*

Making the long trek up the mountain from coastal Carolina seemed worth the effort for Jane who said: *"As a high school English teacher anticipating an all-boy 10th grade class... I found the segments especially applicable and have gained more ways to enhance the 21st century skills of my students... I have already begun planning lessons that include more media and will enrich the curriculum for my students."*

Leigh teaches in the Charlotte Mecklenburg school system and found the program to be practical and pertinent. *"The institute was wonderfully broken up & focused on a variety of issues from boys & reading to proven strategies & methodologies for at-risk tier 1 students, ... so that any teacher in a Title 1 school would find it vital... not to mention the countless resources, techniques and lesson plans shared."*

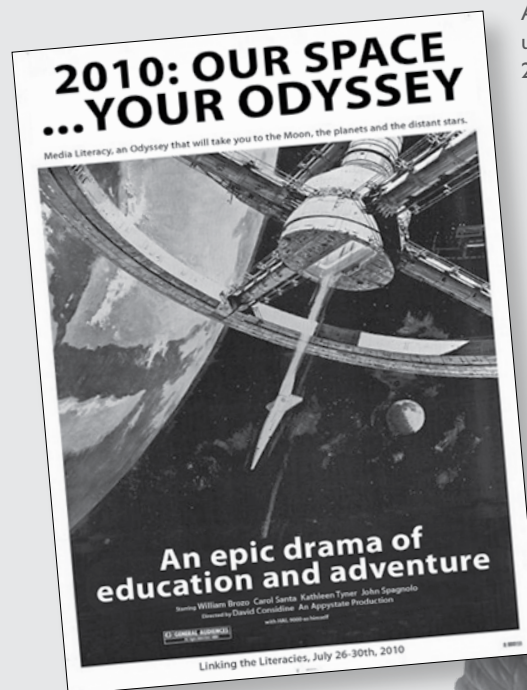
Seeking to build a bridge between the challenges of engaging students with printed texts and their ever increasing exposure to screen media texts the sessions carefully provided strategies for helping students comprehend a variety of texts. Considine's sessions addressed templates for analyzing & evaluating the language of film, advertising's form/content & intent and the structure and format of broadcast news. Dr. Brozo examined the research literature of underachievement by boys in reading followed by exploring the way in which blogs, YouTube, interac-

tive websites, digital story telling, graphic novels and video games could help engage some of these reluctant readers. Dr. Santa provided models of learning strategies that included teaching for understanding, vocabulary development, student-led-discussions and argumentative writing. Kathleen Tyner's contribution was to explore writing for screen media and the role of screen composition, camera movement and transition.

In the opening session Dr. Considine raised serious questions about ability of technology to transform schools, providing an extensive timeline of the history of technology in education and the failure of each successive wave of technology to transform education as promised. Estimates suggest that by 2013 schools will be spending \$29 billion on technology. But would it make a difference and could it possibly lead to transformed schools and the meaningful development of so-called 21st Century Skills? The presenter was skeptical. Until the barriers that have traditionally undermined tools once schools have actually acquired

them, had been recognized, he argued, they can never be rectified. One barrier he identified was the fact that 41 states had no technology requirements for school administrators, which might explain why teachers have consistently complained that they experience either little on site training or the wrong type of training—often a one-size-fits-all model.

In a somewhat humorous prelude to that opening session, Deodata's jazz version of the soundtrack to *2001 Space Odyssey* played. On screen a mock up of the movie poster declared *2010 Our Space: Your Odyssey*. Adding that *Media Literacy Would Take You on a Journey to the Moon, the Planets & Distant Stars*. Kubrick's black monolith floated into view followed by Considine in a space suit from the film and a caption noting that like the character in the movie (Dave) he had to battle technology that had run amuck. Having sounded a cautionary note about technology in teaching, the institute included afternoon labs intended to offer participants the opportunity to experience positive interactions with new software.



An advertisement (and unofficial mascot) for the 2010 Summer Institute.



The search for expertise in this area meant looking no further than ASU's own backyard in the person of John Spagnolo. Considine describes him as "an indispensable, creative and patient resource" and credits him with all the behind-the-scenes technical development & support that has enabled him to teach Media Literacy online for a decade.

For his part, Spagnolo who seems constantly excited and energized by the rapidly changing field of Instructional Technology, was more than happy to serve as guide and mentor introducing participants whose ages ranged from 20s to 50s, to the new social networking technologies. The main web-based point of contact was through a Moodle course that allowed for communication with the entire institute group and was used to inform and share resources. The presenters used this site for sharing their materials. The subset of participants involved in an afternoon "collaboratory" experience used Mahara to create an environment that leveraged the morning session goals with respect to emerging 21st century literacies. This was a response to a challenge in a recent NSB report that said "school districts may want to consider reexamining their policies and practices and explore ways in which they could use social networking for educational purposes."

Mahara is a social networked portfolio tool and Moodle is a course /workshop management tool. Used together they are often called "Mahoodle." Spagnolo said, "my goal as the social networking architect of this week-long afternoon collaboratory experience, was to prompt the participants to intentionally interact and to provide them with an opportunity to inquire into the



Detail of image from the 2010 Summer Institute's schedule cover.

social digital networked world and its fuzzy issues, do some learning tasks together and then talk about what we had done."

Personal profiles were built and shared; an individual reflective blog for daily entries was established and shared by the community members. Opportunities were provided to read, hear, and view examples of alternative digital text and new media as an invitation to explore personal and social influences in our teaching and learning contexts. One initial activity was to create a hyperlinked glossary in Moodle to illuminate the emerging vernacular of 21st century digital culture. Creative problem solving steps were encouraged with the hope that reflective action—research-oriented educators would explore together in a problem-based learning environment that promoted self-inquiry and a web-based "socially connected" community of practice.

As is always the case with new tools, there were occasional glitches and some uncertainty on the part of some participants. Mark's candid journal reflected his own anxieties. "Sometimes I think computers are like horses in that they sense my

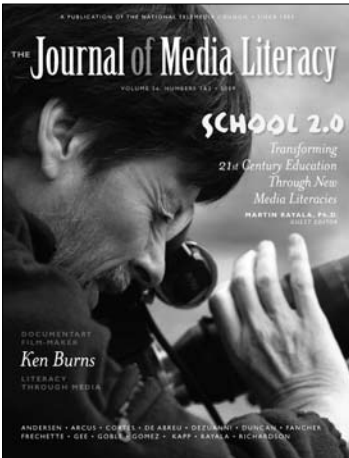
frustrations & refuse to do what I want. I never fully understood exactly how to incorporate new media technologies into my classroom before. The institute certainly changed my thoughts and will change my practices in the future." The experience was, he concluded, "liberating for me."

***THE GRADUATE PROGRAM AT ASU IS NOW MORE THAN A DECADE OLD AND CONTINUES TO ATTRACT STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE GATEWAY CLASS [MEDIA LITERACY] IS OFFERED ENTIRELY ONLINE EACH SPRING. TWO OTHER REQUIRED COURSES: MEDIA IMAGE AND INFLUENCE AND MEDIA LITERACY & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (FALL 2011) ARE CONVENIENTLY OFFERED IN HYBRID FORMAT WITH MOST WORK ONLINE & TWO CAMPUS SATURDAY SESSIONS.***



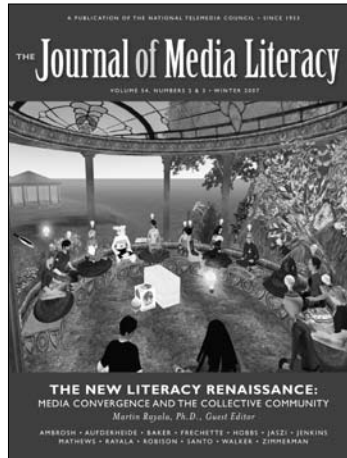
# Do you have these media literacy resources?

IF YOU MISSED THESE **JOURNAL OF MEDIA LITERACY** AND **TELEMEDIUM** ISSUES, THEY AND MANY OTHERS ARE STILL AVAILABLE. EACH ISSUE OF THE INDISPENSIBLE ARCHIVE OF MEDIA LITERACY CONTAINS USEFUL INFORMATION, USUALLY TARGETING A PERTINENT TOPIC. REVIEW OUR ISSUES BELOW AND FILL OUT THE ORDER FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE.



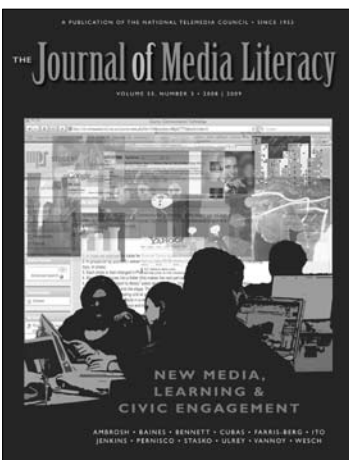
**SCHOOL 2.0**  
**Transforming 21st Century Education through New Media Literacies**  
 [v56, n1&2, 2009, 64 pgs]

Guest edited by Martin Rayala, this expanded issue examines the role of Media Literacy in the reform of schools in the 21st Century. The environment of instant interactive, global reach, social learning and personal media production, challenges schools toward a much more sophisticated approach to media literacy education.



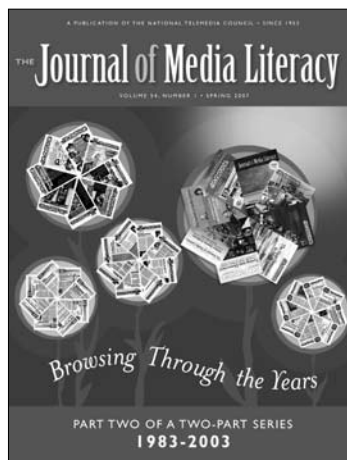
**THE NEW LITERACY RENAISSANCE**  
**Media Convergence and the Collective Community**  
 [v54, n2&3, 2007, 80 pgs]

Edited by Martin Rayala. This issue features some of today's most advanced thinkers in the frontiers of new media literacy and the virtual world. Among the major authors are: Henry Jenkins, Alice Robison, Eric Zimmerman, Julie Frechette, and Renée Hobbs.



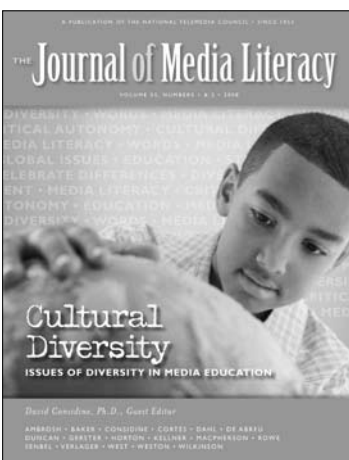
**NEW MEDIA, LEARNING & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**  
 [v55, n3, 2008/09, 52 pgs]

Edited by Karen Ambrosio, this issue grew out of a virtual Media Cafe between college and high school students, discussing the role of new media in education reform and civic engagement. Key authors include Nick Pernisico, Michael Wesch, Henry Jenkins, Mimi Ito, and Lance Bennett.



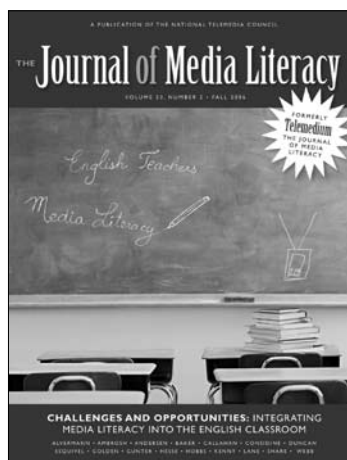
**BROWSING THROUGH THE YEARS: PART 2**  
 [v54, n1, 2007, 64 pgs]

Continues the retrospective from Part I: 50 years of Media Literacy as seen through the chronicles of the American Council for Better Broadcasts/National Telemedia Council; From early ACBB newsletters to the development of *Telemedium* and the *Journal of Media Literacy* (1983-2003).



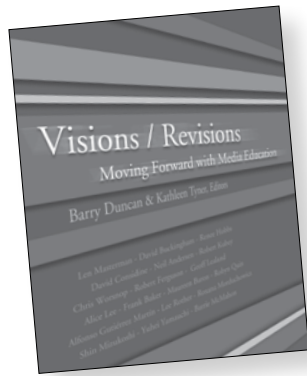
**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**  
**Issues of Diversity in Media Education**  
 [v55, n1&2, 2008, 80 pgs]

Guest edited by David Considine, this double-issue features articles regarding diversity in media education in light of the landmark election year in the U.S. Key authors include: Carlos Cortes, Cornell West, Cam Macpherson and others.



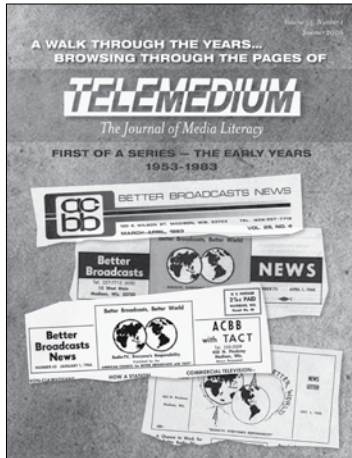
**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**  
**Integrating Media Literacy into the English Classroom**  
 [v53, n2, 2006, 88 pgs]

Karen Ambrosio & Marieli Rowe, Editors. Featured authors include Donna Alvermann, Neil Andersen, David Considine, Barry Duncan, John Golden, Renée Hobbs, Jeff Share, Allen Webb, and others.



**VISIONS/REVISIONS: Moving Forward with Media Education**  
 [ BOOK • ISBN: 0-9742043-0-7 • 2003 • 7x9" paperback, 182 pgs ]

Special 50th Anniversary publication, anthology of top authors from around the world, a virtual textbook of the key issues and ideas shaping media literacy education for the 21st Century.



**BROWSING THROUGH THE YEARS: PART I**  
 [v53, n1, 2006, 28 pgs]

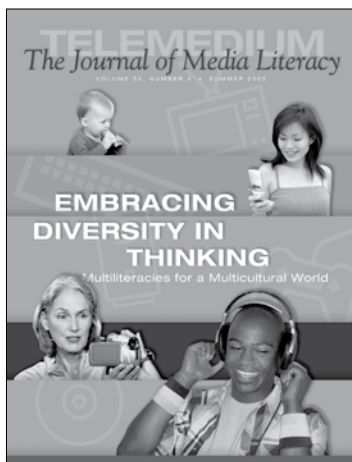
A retrospective of the first thirty years of Media Literacy as seen through the chronicles of the American Council for Better Broadcasts/National Telemedia Council; From early ACBB newsletters to the development of *Telemedium* and the *Journal of Media Literacy* (1953–1983).



**THE NEXT GENERATION IN MEDIA LITERACY**  
**Unsolved Issues**

[v51, n1, 2004, 52 pgs]

Edited by Martin Rayala and Marieli Rowe. Addresses key media literacy issues from the 2003 International Video Conference: New Media & Digital Culture; Testing the Limits of Democracy; Global Media Education; and Media Literacy in Theory & Practice.



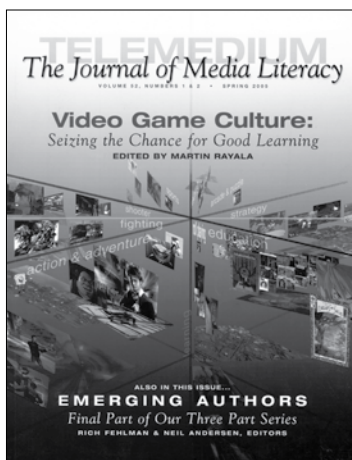
**EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN THINKING**  
**Multiliteracies for a Multicultural World**  
 [v52, n3, 2005, 24 pgs]

Edited by Karen Ambrosch. Features articles by David Buckingham, Carlos Cortés, Alan November, Kenneth Smith, Ronald Takaki.



**TUNING INTO DEMOCRACY** Citizenship, Media & Media Literacy  
 [v51, n2, 2004, 52 pgs]

Guest edited by David Considine and Frank Baker: With feature articles by Barry Duncan, David Buckingham, Robert McChesney. Also includes Part II (of three) of *Emerging Authors: New Voices in Media Literacy*.



**VIDEO GAME CULTURE**  
**Seizing the Chance for Good Learning**  
 [v52, n1&2, 2005, 104 pgs]

Edited by Martin Rayala. Opens the new educational connection between game culture and Media Literacy. Ten major authors in the field include James Paul Gee, Henry Jenkins, Idit Caperton, and Kurt Squire. Also includes Part III (of three) of *Emerging Authors: New Voices in Media Literacy*.



**MEDIA LITERACY AND THE ARTS**  
**Sounds, Images, Movement, Objects, Spaces, Experiences**  
 [v49/50, n1, 2003, 98 pgs]

Edited by Dr. Martin Rayala. A visionary, 100-page issue, building the innovative bridge between Media Literacy and the Arts. Five parts, with twenty-three authors.





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*The inevitable link that new-media technology and critical thought must forge between education and our global society is daily growing more urgent. The need to recognize, acknowledge and champion this connection as an opportunity, and a necessity, is perhaps the single most significant guideline for Education in a 21st Century Society.*

