

Visions / Revisions

Moving Forward with Media Education

Barry Duncan & Kathleen Tyner, Editors

Len Masterman - David Buckingham - Renee Hobbs
David Considine - Neil Andersen - Robert Kubey
Chris Worsnop - Robert Ferguson - Geoff Lealand
Alice Lee - Frank Baker - Maureen Baron - Robyn Quin
Alfonso Gutiérrez Martín - Lee Rother - Roxana Morduchowicz
Shin Mizukoshi - Yuhei Yamauchi - Barrie McMahon

Visions/Revisions:

Moving Forward with Media Education

Barry Duncan and Kathleen Tyner, *Editors*

A special publication of
Telemedium, the Journal of Media Literacy
for the 50th Anniversary of the
NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL

Copyright © 2003 National Telemedia Council

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the National Telemedia Council.

ISBN 0-9742043-0-7

Designed by Kristyn Kalnes

For more information contact:

NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL

1922 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53726

Printed in the United States

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	v
Introduction	vii
About the Editors	ix

PART ONE

WELCOMING THE NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL CULTURE	I
---	---

<i>David Buckingham</i> Digital Literacies: Media Education and New Media Technologies	2
---	---

<i>Alfonso Gutiérrez Martín</i> Multimedia Authoring as a Fundamental Principle of Literacy and Teacher Training in the Information Age	12
--	----

PART TWO

TESTING THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY	23
---------------------------------	----

<i>David Considine</i> Weapons of Mass Distraction? Media Literacy, Social Studies and Citizenship	24
---	----

<i>Robert Ferguson</i> Democracy and Media Literacy	46
---	----

<i>Len Masterman</i> Visions of Media Education: The Road from Dystopia	55
---	----

<i>Roxana Morduchowicz</i> Media Education is Education for Democracy	64
---	----

PART THREE

MEDIA EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE	73
<i>Neil Andersen</i> Ten Plus One Identity Crises	74
<i>Frank Baker</i> Is There A Place For Media Literacy in Tobacco Prevention Efforts?	85
<i>Maureen Baron and Lee Rother</i> Media Education: An Agent of Change	91
<i>Renée Hobbs</i> The Micropolitics of Media Literacy Education	100
<i>Robert Kubey</i> Now is the Time for Research in Media Education: Moving the Field Forward	109
<i>Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahon</i> Relevance and Rigour in Media Education: A Path to Reflection on Our Identity	122

PART FOUR

MEDIA EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD	144
<i>Geoff Lealand</i> From the Margins, Come Great Things: Media Teaching in New Zealand	142
<i>Dr. Alice Lee</i> The Media Education Network in Hong Kong and the Key Trends of World Communication	149
<i>Shin Mizukoshi and Yuhei Yamauchi</i> Perspectives on Japan's Media Environment and the MELL Project	159
<i>Chris M. Worsnop</i> The Future of Media Education	179

PREFACE

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the National Telemedia Council, we have taken the opportunity to produce this “Festschrift” presenting the most current thinking by some of the top media literacy authors in the world.

Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education is intended to be useful to scholars, educators, media literacy classes at universities, colleges and high schools, and anyone in the English-speaking world who is a citizen of the global society at the turn of the century. It captures the best thinking about media literacy education. We hope this book will be a springboard for new ideas to come and that it will encourage the ongoing development of a new generation of reflective young media users and producers who are able to be mindful, critical thinkers and consumers of the media.

The authors represented in this volume reflect a considered distinction between the goals and purposes of media literacy education and the equally important but distinct work of scholars in the field of media reform advocacy. Our co-editors, noted media literacy professionals Barry Duncan, from Toronto, Canada, and Kathleen Tyner, from San Francisco, two of the most influential leaders in the field, have brought together the exciting and trend-setting thinkers, doers, the leaders and the key visionaries who have had a hand in shaping the intellectual foundation of media literacy and are today at the forefront of media education around the world. Many of these authors are regular contributors to *Telemedium, the Journal of Media Literacy*, but the articles that follow represent the authors' latest thinking. In the 16 essays, 19 authors address the major issues that comprise the field. They give us their best thoughts and inspire us with eloquent essays on the challenges that lie ahead for Education in the Twenty-first Century. Their insights are a vision for the future. We are indebted to them all for the generous, freely shared gift of their knowledge and experience.

Telemedium, The Journal of Media Literacy, holds a philosophy that takes a positive, non-judgmental approach to media literacy education as an essential life skill. The publisher, the National Telemedia Council, encourages free expression of views on all aspects of media literacy, intended to increase learning and growth toward a media wise society.

It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge the extraordinary efforts and contributions of Kathleen Tyner and Barry Duncan, and of the outstanding contributors to this publication.

MARIELI ROWE

Editor of *Telemedium, The Journal of Media Literacy*

DR. MARTIN RAYALA

President of The National Telemedia Council

INTRODUCTION

Kathleen Tyner A N D *Barry Duncan*

This special issue of *Telemedium* coincides with the National Telemedia Council's 50th anniversary of service to media educators. *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education* represents a diverse collection of articles intended as an “environmental scan” of the field from international media education scholars and practitioners. The result is a range of perspectives, reflections and emerging theories about media education from leaders in the field.

The editors by no means agree with all the theories and practices put forth in this volume. Instead, we did our best to ensure that each author's authentic voice came through with fidelity. For this reason, you will see occasional British spellings and quirky metaphors that other American journals may have edited for consistency. We also struggled with ideas that we found decidedly out of sync with our own. For example, just when media educators declare inoculation theories for media education finally dead, new authors emerge to embrace it anew. And other authors step up with counter arguments. In the end, we were guided by the spirit of media education, that is, the belief that our readers would negotiate meaning for themselves and place each article in its proper context.

The authors were invited to work with topics of their choosing and the articles can be organized around overlapping topics that explore the relationship of media education to digital technologies and culture, media literacy and democracy, and the theory and practice of media education. In addition, media educators from Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Spain and New Zealand present case studies for media education as it is introduced and implemented internationally.

Suffice to say, dichotomies and tensions in the media education field are alive and well. We did not set out to resolve them. As readers will discover, *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education* attests to the fact that the more things change, the more they remain the same. More importantly, fresh trends and insights emerge in these articles to push the theory and practice of media education forward. These shifts in thinking and lessons learned from leaders in the field of media education represent both subtle and substantial progress that we hope will inform media education efforts around the world.

WELCOMING THE NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL CULTURE

Discussion of the use of digital media tools for learning by many of the authors in this volume represent a much-needed bridge between media analysis and practice. Nonetheless, integrating digital technologies with learning leaves many media educators in a sea of doubt and the articles reflect that anxiety. Experienced author, David Buckingham, rescues us by making the case for an enlightened pedagogy which addresses areas such as audience and representation.

Digital culture also implies an expanded concept of literacy. Alfonso Gutiérrez Martín describes “multimedia literacy” as concerned with skills and attitudes which foster “personal autonomy and a critical spirit.” Gutiérrez details the way that new media technologies can transform the aims and practices of media education.

TESTING THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY

It is no coincidence that several of our authors are concerned about the connection between media and democracy. Inevitably, media education raises issues about the purposes of schooling and related classroom practices. Ferguson addresses the way that media education links important issues of schooling and democracy. He helps media educators to clarify their use of the term ‘democracy’ by raising key questions about its application in contemporary schooling. Alfonso Gutiérrez Martín makes a direct connection between his work with media educators in Spain and offers practical ways to strengthen democratic institutions through the study of media.

The role of media education in democracy is especially powerful when argued from the context of fledgling democracies. Media education advocate Alice Lee is concerned about democratic access to the media because of the conservative strictures imposed by the relatively new government in Hong Kong. Democracy is also a fragile process in Latin American countries, as Argentinean media educator Roxana Morduchowicz reminds us. Furthermore, writers demonstrate that the interplay between media and democracy is complex, raising questions about the uses of media education as a protective factor against egregious human rights abuses. Len Masterman chronicles the use of government propaganda to stage systematic genocide in Rwanda and to wage war around the globe. In a quirky synchronicity, Masterman and Morduchowicz find similar patterns in media coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas War between England and Argentina from both sides of the firing line.

Less dramatic but still crucial is the US news media's reluctance to cover the protest movement which David Considine judges as a blow for a vigilant democracy. David Considine presents strategies for social studies teachers to incorporate media education skills and content as a way to reinvigorate "civics" education. These articles alone could form the basis of a lively multidisciplinary forum.

MEDIA EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

There are many controversies and sites of struggle in the field of media education which Neil Andersen labels as a series of "identity crises" and concludes that all are resolvable. In spite of divergent views, there is consensus that media education should be grounded in sound learning theory and viable classroom practices.

Geoff Lealand, Maureen Baron and Lee Rother see these elements in the service of critical autonomy, the ultimate goal of media education. Lealand makes the case for student-centered media courses where flexibility and critical thinking are encouraged.

However idealistic and elusive our pursuit, Robert Kubey reminds us that good intentions are no substitute for hard evidence of successful outcomes. Kubey insists that the field needs more demanding research to guide our practice. Along these lines, Australian authors Robyn Quin

and Barrie McMahon lay out a sophisticated model for the way that rigorous and thoughtful approaches can be used to support students as they make sense of diverse social identities and media representations. American educator and researcher Renee Hobbs offers insight and examples from her significant experience in the field as teachers struggle to integrate media education across the curriculum. Frank Baker offers practical advice and relevant research for those who hope to use media education in health prevention efforts.

MEDIA EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

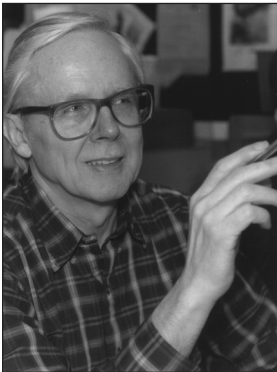
Although media education is global, successful efforts are customized for local conditions and authors reflect their geographical contexts. Geoff Leland's article about media education in New Zealand is an inspirational breath of fresh air as he celebrates the recent growth and optimism about media literacy in New Zealand. In contrast, Alice Lee details the struggle for media education as a flexible, socially-relevant pedagogy in Hong Kong. She relates educator fear about youth's uses of the Internet—a communication medium which recognizes no social, geographical or political borders. Lee concludes that only through professional development networks will teachers find ways of using media education to cope with these changes.

Shin Mizukoshi and Yuhei Yamauchi describe an ambitious media literacy project in Japan known as MELL (Media Expression, Learning and Literacy Project). Interdisciplinary in nature, MELL responds to the excessively centralized nature of Japanese mass communications. Mizukoshi and Yamauchi detail the MELL model for media education and describe field-tested strategies for introducing media analysis and practice into the classroom.

Canadian Chris Worsnop concludes *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education* with a rallying cry. His heartfelt polemic squares off against the mind-numbing limitations imposed on media education by academic "effects models" and the standardized testing trend. Worsnop cautions media educators to rise above their perverse media bashing tendencies. Instead, he encourages media educators to embrace life enhancing and progressive pedagogies to ensure successful media teaching and learning for generations to come.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

KATHLEEN TYNER is Chief Executive Officer of Hi-Beam Consulting, (www.hbconsulting.net) an information-based company that provides development, technical assistance and evaluation services to educational institutions, governmental agencies, museums, non-profit organizations and universities. Ms. Tyner speaks and publishes in international forums, journals and popular press about media, digital literacy and information technologies. She regularly teaches as adjunct faculty at a number of universities. Ms. Tyner is co-author of the award-winning *Scanning Television II* and author of *Literacy in a Digital World: Teaching and Learning in the Age of Information*.



BARRY DUNCAN is an award-winning teacher, author, consultant and founder and past president of the Ontario based Association for Media Literacy. Co-author of the best selling text book, *Mass Media and Popular Culture*, (Harcourt - Canada) he has presented workshops and keynote addresses to over 10,000 teachers in Canada and the United States and at international conferences in the UK, Brazil and Spain.

PART ONE

WELCOMING THE NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL CULTURE

DIGITAL LITERACIES

MEDIA EDUCATION AND NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

David Buckingham

The advent of digital technologies has presented significant new opportunities and challenges for media educators. In many countries, there has been a massive investment in providing information and communication technologies in schools. To date, however, much of the debate has been concerned with providing *access*: it still seems to be assumed that ‘wiring up’ schools will produce automatic benefits, irrespective of how these technologies are actually used. Yet now that the initial euphoria is beginning to wear thin, we need to look more closely at what and how children can actually *learn* with digital media. This is a debate in which media educators may have a great deal to offer.

On one level, these technologies provide us with a new set of objects and processes for study. Self-evidently, one cannot teach about the contemporary media without taking account of the role of the Internet, computer games and the convergence between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media. These technologies also offer significant potential for media production: they make several aspects of production much more accessible for students, and offer a degree of control over the process that helps to bring ‘theory’ closer to ‘practice’. Yet in capitalising on the potential of digital technology, media educators also need to be insisting on some fundamental questions and principles.

DAVID BUCKINGHAM IS PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, WHERE HE DIRECTS THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND MEDIA (www.ccsonline.org.uk/mediacentre). HE IS THE AUTHOR OR EDITOR OF FIFTEEN BOOKS, INCLUDING *CHILDREN TALKING TELEVISION* (1993), *MOVING IMAGES* (1996), *THE MAKING OF CITIZENS* (2000) AND *AFTER THE DEATH OF CHILDHOOD* (2000). HIS LATEST BOOK, *MEDIA EDUCATION: LITERACY, LEARNING AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE* HAS JUST BEEN PUBLISHED BY POLITY PRESS.

NEW MEDIA, NEW STYLES OF LEARNING

For most children, computers are no longer primarily an educational medium, as they were ten or fifteen years ago. On the contrary, they are now a significant part of children's popular culture. Uses of computers in the home are massively dominated by video games; and leisure uses of the Internet (for example in the form of chat rooms and entertainment sites) are becoming increasingly significant.

Of course, these new media must to some extent teach the skills that are needed to use and interpret them – just as books teach readers about how to read. Children's everyday uses of computer games or the internet involve a range of informal learning processes, in which participants are simultaneously 'teachers' and 'learners'. Children learn to use these media largely through trial and error - through exploration, experimentation and play; and collaboration with others - both in face-to-face and virtual forms - is an essential element of the process. Traditional forms of teaching, which involve the transmission of a fixed body of information, are largely irrelevant here.

Playing a computer game, for example, involves an extensive series of cognitive processes: remembering, hypothesis testing, predicting and strategic planning. Players generally agree that the best computer games are those which offer the greatest cognitive challenges, and which precisely refuse to position them as 'children'. While game players are often deeply immersed in the virtual world of the game, dialogue and exchange with others is crucial. And game playing is also a 'multi-literate' activity: it involves interpreting complex three-dimensional visual environments, reading both on-screen and off-screen texts (such as games magazines) and processing auditory information.

Likewise, participation in chat rooms requires very specific skills in language and interpersonal communication. Young people have to learn to 'read' subtle nuances, often on the basis of minimal cues. They have to learn the rules and etiquette of on-line communication, and to shift quickly between genres or language registers. Provided they are sensible about divulging personal information, chat rooms provide young people with a safe arena for rehearsing and exploring aspects of identity and personal relationships that may not be available elsewhere. Here again, much of the learning is carried out without explicit teaching: it involves active exploration, 'learning by doing', apprenticeship rather than direct instruction. Above all, it is profoundly social: it arises through immersion in a 'community of practice'.

Compared with the demanding multi-media experiences many children have outside school, much classroom work is bound to appear unexciting. Even where they do use computers and other media in schools, many children complain that this is far too limited and restrictive. Children who use the Internet at home have a strong sense of their own autonomy and authority as learners, and they want to contribute rather than simply consume. Yet this is precisely what is so often denied to them in school.

In this respect, we may be seeing a widening gulf between the *styles of learning* that are cultivated by formal schooling and those that characterise children's out-of-school experiences. Children are now immersed in a consumer culture that positions them as active and autonomous; yet in school, a great deal of their learning is passive and teacher-directed. Indeed, some have argued that this situation is potentially explosive – perhaps particularly for boys, who may be highly self-confident users of technology but who are increasingly perceived as failures in the context of school learning. If the provision of technology in schools remains as restricted as it currently is, disaffection may simply become more widespread.

TOWARDS DIGITAL LITERACIES

However, it would be quite false to pretend that young people are already competent users of these new media, or that they necessarily know all they need to know. As in other areas, young people may have the advantage of a kind of wild confidence in their dealings with technology. Yet the majority of young people are far from being autonomous 'cyber kids': they are uncertain, they lack information, and they are often frustrated by the failure of the technology to achieve what it promises.

At present, there is a lack of easily available support and advice that might enable young people to use these media critically and creatively. For example, the anonymity and ease of access afforded by the Web permits the dissemination of a whole range of false or unreliable information. In the case of health information or political news, for instance, the web offers unprecedented opportunities for disseminating rumours and lies – with potentially very far-reaching consequences. There is a need for much more independent consumer advice and public information on these issues; although ultimately schools will have to play a central role in developing the 'digital literacies' that will enable young people to deal with the challenges of the new media world.

The skills that children need in relation to digital media are not confined to those of information retrieval. They need more than lessons in how to use word processors or search engines. As with print, children also need to be able to evaluate and use information critically if they are to transform it into knowledge. Furthermore, digital literacy is more than simply a matter of protecting children from the dangers of digital media. As with older media, children need to be empowered to make informed choices on their own behalf, and to protect and regulate themselves.

Digital literacy therefore needs to address the more ‘critical’ questions - for example, about production and representation - with which media educators have traditionally been concerned. Rather than seeing the Web as a neutral source of ‘information’, students need to be asking questions about the sources of that information, the interests of its producers, and the ways in which it represents the world. They also need to understand that these technological developments are related to broader social and economic changes. They are largely driven, not by a neutral process of technological change, but by a much more general move towards a market-led media system, in which the maximising of profit increasingly takes precedence over public service imperatives.

The box below shows how the basic conceptual framework of media education might be applied specifically to the World Wide Web. Readers might well be able to think of additional issues; and consider how similar questions might be applied to other new media such as computer games or chat rooms.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB: ISSUES FOR STUDY

Production

The technologies that are used to generate and disseminate material on the Web.

The importance of commercial influences, and the role of advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

The use of the Internet by individuals or interest groups as a means of persuasion and influence.

The relationships between the Web and other media such as television and computer games.

Representation

The ways in which Web sites claim to 'tell the truth', and establish their authenticity and authority.

The presence or absence of particular viewpoints or aspects of experience.

How readers can make judgments about reliability, bias and accuracy, for example by comparing Web sites with each other or with other sources.

Language

The use of visual and verbal 'rhetorics' in the design of Web sites.

How Web sites are structured in order to encourage users to navigate in particular ways.

How users are addressed: for example, in terms of formality and 'user-friendliness'.

The kinds of 'interactivity' that are on offer, and the degrees of control and feedback they afford to the user.

Audience

The ways in which users can be targeted by commercial appeals, both visibly and invisibly.

How the Web is used to gather information about consumers.

How different groups of people use the Internet in their daily lives, and for what purposes.

How individuals or groups interpret particular sites, and the pleasures they gain from using them.

MODELS OF DIGITAL PRODUCTION

Of course, literacy involves writing as well as reading; and several of these understandings can be developed - in some instances, more effectively and enjoyably - through the experience of creative production. With digital technology, quite young children can easily produce multimedia texts, and even interactive hypermedia. Some children at least are likely to have access to such technology in their homes; and some may be using it for creative purposes, for example for video editing, manipulating images or creating music. It is in this area that some of the more exciting educational possibilities of digital technology may be found.

As with older media, multimedia authoring packages are now increasingly being used as a means of assisting subject learning in a range of curriculum areas. Here, students produce their own multimedia texts in the form of Web sites or CD-ROMs, often combining written text, visual

images, simple animation, audio and video material. Vivi Lachs (2000), for example, describes a range of production activities undertaken with primary school students in learning about science, geography or history. These projects generally involve children 're-presenting' their learning for an audience of younger children in the form of multimedia teaching materials. One of the most challenging aspects of this work is precisely the interactivity: the students have to think hard about how different users might interpret and use what they produce, and how they will navigate their way around. Yet although such productions frequently draw on elements of popular culture (such as computer games), the content of the productions is primarily factual and informational – and in this sense, the preferred genre is that of 'edu-tainment'.

It is important to differentiate here between education *through* media and education *about* media – or in other words, between the use of media as a teaching aid and the study of media in their own right. Of course, it is perfectly valid to use media production to assist subject learning, or to develop more generalised qualities such as motivation and collaboration. But media education is primarily concerned to develop a more conceptual awareness of the media themselves.

Other potential uses of digital media have emerged from art education (for accounts of such work, see Sefton-Green, 1999a). The primary emphasis here is on the use of media for self-expression and creative exploration. Thus, students will experiment with the possibilities of different art forms, and the ways in which they can be combined and manipulated using the computer, in exploring themes such as 'identity' and 'memory'. The implicit model here is that of the avant-garde multimedia art work, although (here again) students tend to 'import' elements of popular culture. This work can also involve an element of critical reflection, particularly where it involves communication with a wider audience.

Nevertheless, there are two factors that distinguish the use of digital production in the context of media education. The first is the explicit focus on popular culture: media education means engaging with students' everyday experiences of digital media, rather than attempting to impose an alien 'artistic' or 'educational' practice. The second is the element of theoretical reflection – the dynamic relationship between making and critical understanding that is crucial to the development of 'critical literacy'. In the context of media education, the aim is not primarily to develop technical skills, or to promote 'self-expression', but to encourage a more systematic understanding of how the media operate, and to encourage more reflective use of the media.

BEYOND ‘ACCESS’

In these latter respects, digital technology does make a significant difference when compared with the analogue technology that preceded it; although it also raises some new questions. One of the key issues here is that students will come to digital production with very different experiences of technology outside the classroom. It would be quite romantic to assume that young people have some kind of automatic expertise with technology, or that they will necessarily be able to use it easily and quickly. Indeed, the majority of software programs students might use are designed for professionals, and are very time-consuming to learn. The ‘digital divide’ places more wealthy children at a significant advantage here, not just because of their greater access to technology, but also because of the greater ‘cultural capital’ at their disposal – for example, their parents’ greater experience of computers at work and their involvement in other social networks.

Research on young people’s media production (e.g. Jones, 1999; Sefton-Green, 1999b) suggests that getting ‘hands on’ experience with digital technology is only the beginning. *Access* needs to be seen not merely in terms of access to technology or to technical skills, but also to *cultural forms of expression and communication*; and it must be acknowledged that students’ access to (and familiarity with) those cultural forms is likely to be quite variable. For example, students who are less familiar with the web will see the creative possibilities of this medium in a very different way from those who are using it all the time at home; and students will inevitably find it easier to work with genres or media forms (such as computer games) with which they are more familiar. These differences have challenging implications in terms of how we teach, particularly in settings that are culturally and socially diverse.

To some extent, digital image manipulation or video editing represent more efficient ways of doing the things that used to be done with analogue technology. They are certainly simpler and more flexible to use; and they enable students to achieve a ‘professional’ result much more easily. Yet there are some significant differences in the *process* of production that have much broader implications for students’ learning. Digital technology can make overt and visible some key aspects of the production process that often remain ‘locked away’ when using analogue technologies.

This happens, firstly, at the point of generating images. For example, being able to take a series of shots on a digital camera, view them in the monitor and choose the ones you need, can raise questions about the selection and construction of images that might otherwise have been mere theoretical exhortations on the part of the teacher. It is possible to learn through trial-and-error, without worrying about the possibility of losing or erasing images; and this can allow you to look back at earlier versions of your work, and reflect upon how and why your ideas have changed. In effect, the technology makes it much easier for students to engage in a process of drafting and redrafting - and, in the process, of critical self-evaluation - that is similar to contemporary approaches to the teaching of writing.

This argument also applies to 'post-production'. Here again, complex issues about the selection, manipulation and combination of images (and, in the case of video, of sounds) can be addressed in a much more accessible way than was possible using analogue technology. This is not simply a matter of the ease of operating the software, or of the range of choices available - for example, the number of effects or shot transitions. (Indeed, the proliferation of such choices can become a distraction, particularly for relative beginners.) Software packages for image manipulation such as *Photoshop* make the process of constructing imagery (for example for film posters or adverts) much quicker and simpler than with the montage tools of the past (glue and scissors); and in the process, they can also quickly demonstrate the problematic status of photographs as evidence. Likewise, the benefit of digital editing programs such as *Premiere* or *Final Cut Pro* is that they make the process of constructing meaning - and the choices that it entails - clearly visible. As a result, they may enable students to *conceptualise* the process in much more powerful ways. In the process, the boundaries between critical analysis and practical production - or between 'theory' and 'practice' - are likely to become increasingly blurred.

These issues are now beginning to be addressed in empirical research. Andrew Burn's work shows how using a digital package to 'grab' and then manipulate frames from films enables students to achieve greater analytical understanding of elements that might otherwise only be noticed in a much more condensed or subliminal way (Burn, 1999). In another study, students' digital editing of a film trailer is seen to offer a degree of flexibility and control - through reordering the shots, experimenting with shot transitions, stretching and condensing sequences, speeding up and slowing down - which is comparable to that afforded by writing (Burn and Reed, 1999). Editing and

manipulating media images in this way, Burn argues, somehow mimics the infinite flexibility of the process of mental image-making or ‘visual thinking’; and as the software develops, this process is likely to become increasingly intuitive.

As Burn and others have argued, digital technology truly does enable students to become writers as well as readers of visual and audio-visual media – and indeed, begins to blur these settled distinctions. The ability to manipulate and edit moving images in digital format can offer a degree of flexibility and control that particularly lends itself to the kind of self-conscious reflection that is essential to media education and to ‘critical literacy’ more broadly.

Yet whether or not this potential is realised is not simply a matter of the technology: it is primarily a question of pedagogy. There remains a need for reflection, deliberation and dialogue; and opportunities and requirements for these things need to be systematically built in to the process, even if they seem like a distraction from it. In this respect, it seems particularly important to insist on the need for *collaboration* in digital production. The use of digital technology often tends to individualise the process. A computer room, even one set up for creative art work, tends to involve students working individually at screens. Attempts to build in group work often appear somewhat artificial; and students will sometimes seek to avoid dialogue and debate by dividing their labour into specialised functions that can be taken on by individuals. Particularly where there is a high level of access to the technology, the benefits of working together need to be made explicit and actively promoted.

THE END OF MEDIA EDUCATION?

Ultimately, digital technologies may result in a broader rethinking of the aims and practices of media education, and of literacy education more broadly. As the media converge, the logic for separating verbal and visual media, or electronic technologies and non-electronic technologies, will come under increasing pressure. In the process, the boundaries between previously discrete areas of the curriculum – and particularly those which are broadly concerned with culture and communication – may come to seem quite obsolete.

Yet in the medium term, complete revolution seems unlikely. New technologies will continue to sit alongside old technologies, and the system will continue to evolve in the same piecemeal, uneven way it has always done. As young people have greater access to technology in schools, we need to think in a more focused way about the kinds of *learning* that are most appropriate for the digital age. It is to a discussion of this issue - rather than to further excited speculation about the wonders of technology - that future attention needs to be directed.

NOTE

This article incorporates material shortly to be published in David Buckingham's book *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

REFERENCES

- Burn, A. (1999). Grabbing the werewolf: Digital freeze-frames, the cinematic still and technologies of the social. *Convergence* 5(4): 80-101.
- Burn, A. and Reed, K. (1999). Digiteens: Media literacies and digital technologies in the secondary classroom. *English in Education*, 33(2): 5-20.
- Jones, A. (1999). Translocations: From media to multimedia education. In J. Sefton-Green, (ed.) *Young People, Creativity and New Technologies*. London: Routledge.
- Lachs, V. (2000). *Making multimedia in the classroom: A practical guide*. London: Routledge.
- Sefton-Green, J. (ed.) (1999a). *Young people, creativity and new technologies*. London: Routledge.
- Sefton-Green, J. (1999b). Media education, but not as we know it: Digital technology and the end of media studies? *English and Media Magazine*, 40, 28-34.

MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING AS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF LITERACY AND TEACHER TRAINING IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Alfonso Gutiérrez Martín

Translated from Spanish by Curtis Draves

The convergence of telematics, mass media and computer technology increases the amount of information as it accelerates the speed and distribution of information processing. Convergence is also advantageous for the biggest information providers, increasing the capacity targeted, discriminating distribution, interactive and individualized reception, and accelerated ideological exchange.

As users are flooded with information, educational systems list the development of the individual's ability for self-expression and communication through writing, music, sculpture, etc., among their primary objectives. However, by all evidence, comprehension skills carry more weight in formal education than do skills related to personal expression. For students, success in school is based on understanding teachers' messages, and teachers' professional success, as well as the success of the educational system itself, is based on their interpretation of policy.

ALFONSO GUTIÉRREZ MARTÍN IS A LEADING SCHOLAR WHO WRITES AND SPEAKS WIDELY ABOUT THE WAY THAT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES CAN BE USED TO TRANSFORM LEARNING. DR. GUTIÉRREZ MARTÍN IS PROFESSOR OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION AND THE THEORY OF EDUCATION AT THE TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE OF SEGOVIA (UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID). HE ALSO COLLABORATES WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER UNIVERSITIES IN SPAIN AND SOUTH AMERICA. HE IS AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING HIS LATEST BOOKS, *EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES* AND *TEACHER TRAINING IN THE INFORMATION AGE*.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MULTIMEDIA LITERACY?

The concept of literacy, initially centered exclusively on alphabetic language and on the mechanical procedures of encoding and decoding texts, has evolved substantially in recent decades. Surpassing the merely utilitarian nature of reading and writing, more attention is being paid to literacy's implications for both the individual and for society. In that regard, the convergence of literacies also changes its influence on the transformation of social models.

In keeping with this distinction between comprehension and expression, as well as individual and social uses of literacy, UNESCO defines the *functionally* illiterate person as one who cannot undertake those activities in which literacy (knowing how to read and write) is necessary to function effectively within the group or community. (UNESCO (1993))

Concepts related to the social nature of literacy shifts with the introduction of new literacy tools. With the appearance of new and sophisticated techniques for the creation of multimedia texts, combined with diverse symbolic systems, educators run the risk of once again focusing attention on the study of 'form' to the detriment of 'content'. This is akin to dwelling on the study of the 'means' without reaching the 'ends'.

A proposal for multimedia literacy hopes to overcome the purely mechanical skill of encoding and decoding texts in different languages in favor of concentrating on the personal and social implications of its creation, distribution, interpretation, use, etc. At the least, functional literacy entails having the faculty of communication at one's disposal. To the extent that predominant forms of communication continue to change (from oral to print, from print to audiovisual, and from audiovisual to multimedia), the concept of literacy must change with them. In the multimedia society in which we coexist with an infinite number of audiovisual documents, interactive or not, it is logical to think that literacy in this environment involves the ability to confront various texts in relation to their encoding and their medium.

In the next millennium multimedia literacy will be that which prepares people to utilize appropriate procedures when critically viewing different kinds of texts (different in function or system of symbolic representation), and to assess what happens in the world and improve it to the extent that they can.

IN SEARCH OF A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION

Within the overall concept of *multimedia literacy* we incorporate various *literacies*, the diverse (conceptual, procedural and attitudinal) contents of which have been deemed basic and essential for the communication and representation of messages using different languages and media. Tyner (1998: 92-97) accounts for six different *multiliteracies* that cover what for us constitute the ingredients of a basic multimedia education.

She lists three *tool literacies* and three other *literacies of representation*. The first three are related to basic knowledge about computers (*computer literacy*), networks (*network literacy*) and technology (*technology literacy*). The remaining three deal more with the analysis of messages and how meaning is produced, and focus on information (*information literacy*), visual images (*visual literacy*) and the media (*media literacy*). There are clear interrelationships between these *literacies*, and the characteristics they share prevent us from discussing any one in isolation.

We consider it necessary to bring together the objectives and fundamentals of all the above mentioned literacies under the umbrella of what we call *multimedia literacy*.

If for strictly formal reasons we were to distinguish between previous literacies (like alphabetic, audiovisual, computer, telematic, musical, artistic, etc.) and multimedia literacy, perhaps the latter would not be defined first and foremost by the fact that it is ‘multimedia’ in the strictest sense of the word: the integration of text, sound and image.

Actually, as Lemke (1997) points out, *all literacy is multimedia literacy: you can never make meaning with language alone, there must always be a visual or vocal realization of linguistic signs that also carries non-linguistic meaning (e.g. tone of voice, or style of orthography)*. According to Lemke, therefore, for signs to function as such they have to have some kind of material reality or medium, a ‘way of being real’ that opens the way to meanings encoded with more than a code. “All semiotics”, he says, “are multimedia semiotics, and all literacy is multimedia literacy.”

Paradoxically, then, the most defining characteristic of new multimedia documents is not the fact that they are *multimedia*, but rather their hypermedia structure and their interactivity, which determine a modality of presenting information that differs from the traditional. Where alpha-

betic and audiovisual discourses are linear, new products present information in a *networked* structure. While alphabetically and audiovisually encoded documents offer only one trajectory to negotiate, multimedia documents present different alternatives for the *navigation* of information, all of them equally valid.

The symbiosis between media and languages in order to produce and transmit messages is not new. Throughout history different modes of representation (text, sound, image, gesture) have been combined for communication purposes. Good orators convey more, and in a different way, than their written discourses would convey when read. The speaker's intonation, gesture, expression, posture, attitude, etc. combine with verbal language to produce meaning. As previously mentioned, various historical periods witnessed technological developments that allowed us to record texts, sounds and images (writing, print, phonograph, photography, film, etc.) for later reproduction. In recent decades different media (slides, books, transparencies, audio and video cassettes) were frequently combined in the preparation of materials destined for educational environments, as *multimedia packages*. Each medium possessed its own particular mode of producing, storing, transporting, structuring and reproducing content—and they all were then combined *after the fact* to form a whole. In other words, in a *multimedia package*, the parts are interdependent and work together with a common goal—to represent and communicate.

Digitalization could be considered another fundamental characteristic of multimedia documents and environments. Digitalization overcomes the difficulties of mixed media and to a large degree facilitates the integration of languages. Text, graphics, sounds and images (still and moving), once digitized, can be modified, edited and easily intermixed. There are infinite possible combinations of languages that can arrange themselves in different ways—to make exact copies of the original, create indices that help locate information, etc. Digitizing information also immensely facilitates its transmission via communication networks, such as the practically immediate access to a document from any part of the world (the connected world, of course), and the *navigation* through cyberspace from one information source to another.

The ability to navigate and the hyperlinked structure of information allow us to move beyond the idea of a document as a finite object that exists in one time and place. Paraphrasing the Spanish poet Antonio Machado, we could say that, in the same way a path is created by walking, a docu-

ment in a network is constructed by *information-jumping* from one linked space to another, leaving behind the many other options that another user might have chosen, thereby ‘constructing’ a different document. In an immense information network, where each fragment is linked to others which in turn connect with many others, we could also speak of a *single document*, impossible to experience in its entirety, of which each user only processes the parts of interest or those within reach of their navigation skills. This single, fragmented document has multiple locations, distributed throughout computers all over the world. It can be found in *cyberspace* and is accessed from any point of connection. Each one of the fragments could follow the linear logic of traditional alphabetic and audiovisual texts, while at the same time serves as a point of entry or exit for various hyperdocuments.

The first level of multimedia literacy gives the individual the ability to construct meaning from new modes of presenting and representing the world that emerge with the development of new technologies, new communication networks and diverse symbolic systems. It naturally follows that even the most rudimentary form of multimedia literacy, that is, the ability to read and write these new hyperdocuments, multimedia literacy requires other literacies (alphabetic, audiovisual and computer) to both process and meaningfully utilize the components of multimedia: text, sound and image.

Multimedia literacy is not simply an addition to alphabetic or audiovisual literacy. Instead, it integrates them while also contributing characteristics of its own derived from interactivity, namely those of interpretation and association. On the one hand it produces the convergence of languages and media, and on the other it substantially changes the context and conditions of reception/absorption.

This concept of multimedia literacy should not be taken as the decontextualized acquisition of the aforementioned skills and knowledge that, once acquired, can be used to interpret “reality.” Instead we might understand multimedia literacy as a process that is an integral part of the social interaction by which individuals develop their identities.

In other words, when a code or message is interpreted, the interpretation is partly subjective, but also a reflection of the place we hold in a particular society: our age group, gender, purchasing power, interests, traditions, family, etc. Multimedia literacy, like any other, will always be a social

process with repercussions for the transformation of society itself. It is a literacy that Gimeno Sacristán (1999: 38) labels “*enlightened*.” Sacristán tells us that “effective literacy will place the subject at the gates of power, symbol of the possession of knowledge attained through a command of the language.” “Enlightened literacy” (which thanks to Freire we might now call “critical literacy”) is above all the ability to participate in the reconstruction of society and culture.

Its degree of development in different parts of the world will increase or diminish the differences between the *info-rich* and *info-poor*. The inability to critically negotiate different types of texts in different situations will determine who is literate in the third millennium—those capable of participating in the reconstruction of culture and society in their environment.

OBJECTIVES OF MULTIMEDIA LITERACY AS A MEANS OF TEACHER TRAINING

Both the integration of alphabetic language in multimedia contexts and the appearance of new technologies for processing information require a modification of the minimum competency requirements for functional literacy. The complexity of current communications systems could reduce those minimum requirements to those of information management and its corresponding technology skills without fostering knowledge or interpersonal communication. To this effect, Gutiérrez Martín (1997: 12) refers to “*multimedia education*” as “*that which, making use of prevailing technologies of the day, allows students to achieve those skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to:*

- *communicate (interpret and produce messages) utilizing different languages and media;*
- *develop personal autonomy and a critical spirit, which gives them the ability to*
- *form a just and multicultural society in which to live side by side with the technological innovations of the day.”*

This goal prescribed to *multimedia education* (which could just as easily be the goal of any kind of education) of *forming a just and multicultural society of critical people* can only be achieved if we consider as literacy the ability to transform information into knowledge and use that knowledge as a tool to contribute to and transform society. More immediate objectives of multimedia literacy include the ability to:

- provide knowledge of the languages that shape interactive multimedia documents and the way they are constructed.
- provide knowledge and use of the most prevalent devices and techniques for processing information.
- provide knowledge and facilitate the assessment of the social and cultural implications of new multimedia technologies.
- foster an attitude of critical media reception and responsible behavior in the public sphere.

Although they may be general and broad, these objectives provide some guidelines for more critical, sophisticated and relevant literacy competencies instead of approaches to multimedia literacy that relegate it to the acquisition of a purely utilitarian skill sets for wielding multimedia devices and documents.

It is interesting to note that when *multimedia literacy* is mentioned, the creation of applications and documents tends to be considered a priority objective. This is in contrast to previous concepts of audiovisual and media literacy, which predominantly center on critical media reception. If concepts of multimedia literacy pave the way for something more than learning to operate computer-based tools, it represents a large qualitative jump from reception to emission, from alleged passivity, typical of large-scale mass media, to the active creation made possible by interpersonal media.

The huge gap between the number of messages we receive and the number we send via communication networks will probably increase in the future. Even if focused on the creation of messages and documents, multimedia literacy should not leave out the teaching of critical reception, while at the same time privileging creation and expression, active participation in the processes of communication, and the appropriation of media by the user. *Critical reception* refers to the viewer's ability to "interpret the ways in which the media actively construct reality...appreciation and aesthetic understanding of the media... decode media products... identify, interpret..techniques used to create media products; etc (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, 7). Nevertheless, anyone capable of handling text, sounds and graphics in order to create a presentation-enough to be considered *multimedia literate* according to some publications-exhibits nothing more than the equivalent of mechanical reading and writing in traditional literacy.

MULTIMEDIA AUTHORIZING AS A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF LITERACY FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Multimedia literacy can better meet its objectives if both teacher training and student learning are formulated around the creation of documents, authoring and distributing messages. Multimedia literacy will contribute to cultivating free citizens if students overcome the bounds of simple reception and move on to creation, if we teach them critical reception by way of authoring their own multimedia documents. Our proposal for a multimedia literacy that gives the ability to participate freely in the society of the third millennium, and ultimately to transform it, stems from students and teachers authoring multimedia.

Alphabetic literacy will undoubtedly maintain its status as a dominant communication form for some time. Its privileged place in formal education is irrefutable. Nevertheless, the systematic learning of reading and writing does not take into account the relation between alphabetic language (oral and written) with other types of representations and/or symbologies, an omission by which alphabetic language is still studied in the contexts and according to the presentation modes predominant in the time of Gutenberg. These are changing day by day. In school environments the medium of the printed page and book continues to be the most commonplace, and its linearity and structuring into successive paragraphs and pages is still clearly the dominant presentation style. When text is accompanied by images, the images usually function to provide secondary and merely illustrative meaning.

What we would consider “computer literacy”, for its part, usually consists of a collection of knowledge and skills for using the most common, general-purpose software programs. It is necessary to point out how curricula for this purely tool-based computer literacy are dictated by commercial interests. It is evident, for example, that Microsoft has imposed the Windows environment as an essential requirement of computer training and is following the same policy with programs like *Word*, *Access*, *Power Point*, *Excel* and all the components of the *Office* suite, just as with its web browser *Internet Explorer*—all of which are intended to establish as standards while at the same time suppressing competition.

It is safe to assume that the objectives of computer literacy are in line with the tool-centered curriculum concepts of literacy and center on training teachers and students to *acritically* use new technologies in the most rudimentary ways. Training for this type of literacy is viewed as purely practical and essential for competing professionally in the job market.

A computer education approach based on students and teachers as multimedia authors is a viable alternative to the norm. While the practical approach envisions learners as users of general purpose programs, the critical approach aligns the use of computers to alphabetic and audiovisual literacies and is more congruent with the world of multimedia communication in which the modern day individual will have to perform.

The teacher training proposed for this more expansive view of multimedia literacy logically includes learning the operation of equipment and general-purpose software, such as word processors, graphics editors, databases, etc. However, these subjects must be approached with predetermined objectives, with the intent of using them as tools, and with an idea of what we want to do with those tools. In other words, their uses are thoughtful, purposeful and contextualized. In this way will we prevent the means from becoming the ends.

It is unnecessary to warn that teacher training in information communication technologies (ICT) goes beyond what we consider basic knowledge in multimedia literacy. This basic knowledge is part of teachers' *scientific training*, in which they learn about technological developments, their characteristics and influences, particularly as they relate to education. In addition to the *scientific training* common to other professionals, the educator needs *educational training* about ICTs, to analyse their potential as educational resources, and the advantages and disadvantages of new media in teaching. Gutiérrez Martín (1998), argues that teachers in the third millennium will need training not only in *the educational potential of ICTs*, but also in their *educative influence* (the ability of new media to influence how citizens learn), and in school and social contexts as spheres of influence of ICTs.

This dominant technological discourse, which influences us all as individuals and education professionals, implicitly assumes the acritical educational model centered on the operation and use of equipment as the main concern. As the technological discourse increasingly offers new media as

the panacea for society becomes increasingly hyperbolic and strident, it becomes all the more to promote a more expansive and balanced view of multimedia literacy and teacher training.

Literacy is usually considered to be a rite of passage in the first years of life and achieved its inclusion in the curricula throughout organized education. As a result, literacy attainment is thought to be the pursuit of children. As social groups began to recognize alphabetic literacy as a basic realm of human knowledge to which we all have a right, the usefulness of this child-centered view of literacy was already under question as obsolete. This is even more evident in an information society, where the rapid evolution of communication forms precludes the notion that education occupies the first stage of life and prepares you for all the rest. Instead, the only realistic option is to think of education in a pluralistic society as an ongoing process that helps the individual develop fully throughout every stage of life.

As understanding of the necessity and usefulness of reading and writing grew, so did strategies to achieve adult literacy. The same thing is happening now with multimedia literacy, which leads us to discussions literacy in the educational environment, that is, *teacher literacy*, textbook presentation styles, etc. Multimedia education, therefore, cannot be limited to *formal* education, of which it is a primary objective throughout. We must continue to equip *informal* educational environments to give meaning and structure, analyse, assign value and broaden the knowledge acquired by living in constant contact with continually evolving multimedia messages and systems.

Due to the neoliberal trend against government intervention that seems to prevail at this time, there is a credible danger that education and literacy will become the responsibility of each individual or a service to be privatized and offered by various private institutions and organizations. Nonetheless, literacy—or in contemporary terms, literacies—are still the basis for informed, democratic decision-making. As a result, it is clear that governments, as those responsible for the social order, continue to have an obligation to guarantee critical literacy for all—literacy that will allow us to live with dignity in the Information Age as free and responsible citizens.

REFERENCES

- Gimeno, J. (1999). La educación que tenemos, la educación que queremos, in Imbernón, F. (coord.) (1999). *La educación en el siglo XXI. Los retos del futuro inmediato*. Barcelona: Graó. Biblioteca de Aula.
- Gutiérrez, A. (1997). *Educación multimedia y nuevas tecnologías*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Gutiérrez, A. (coord.) (1998). *Formación del profesorado en la sociedad de la información*. Segovia: E.U. Magisterio de Segovia (UVA).
- Lemke, J.L. (1997). Metamedia literacy: Transforming meanings and media, in D. Reinking et al. (Eds.), *Literacy for the 21st century: Technological transformation in a post-typographic world*. New York: Erlbaum.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (1989). *Media literacy resource guide*. Toronto, Ontario. Ministry of Education.
- Tyner, K. (1998). *Literacy in a digital world: Teaching and learning in the age of information*. Mahwah, New Jersey: LEA.
- UNESCO (1993). *World education report*. Paris.

PART TWO

TESTING THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY

WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION?

MEDIA LITERACY, SOCIAL STUDIES & CITIZENSHIP

David M. Considine

“WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO ENTRUST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WITH UNPLEASANT FACTS, FOREIGN IDEAS, ALIEN PHILOSOPHIES, AND COMPETITIVE VALUES. FOR A NATION THAT IS AFRAID TO LET ITS PEOPLE JUDGE THE TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD IN AN OPEN MARKET IS A NATION THAT IS AFRAID OF ITS PEOPLE...”

President John F. Kennedy

“STUDENTS SHOULD BE HELPED TO CONSTRUCT A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ... AN ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE AND ... A PLURALISTIC PERSPECTIVE BASED ON DIVERSITY ... THIS INVOLVES RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AND PREFERENCE; OF RACE, RELIGION AND GENDER; OF CLASS AND ETHNICITY ... STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN THAT THE EXISTENCE OF CULTURAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES ARE NOT PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED, RATHER THEY ARE HEALTHY AND DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY LIFE ...”

(Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Expectations of Excellence)

“THERE HAS BEEN TREMENDOUS MEDIA CONSOLIDATION ...THE LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED...THIS HAS HAD SOME UNFORTUNATE EFFECTS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE HOMOGENIZING OF PROGRAMMING, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF STIFLING CREATIVITY IN THE ARTS...IT’S HAD A DEBILITATING EFFECT ON THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN THIS COUNTRY BY STIFLING DIVERSITY AND LOCALISM ..WHAT’S AT STAKE GOES TO THE ROOT OF WHAT THIS COUNTRY IS ABOUT...”

FCC commissioner, Michael Copps (Democracy Now. 1.16.03)

When more than 100,000 anti-war protestors assembled in the nation's capital on October 26, 2002, the protest, as CBS NEWS later admitted, was "largely ignored by mainstream press." One of the major offenders was *The New York Times*. When they were subsequently flooded with emails and calls of complaint from across the country, the publication which claims to cover "all the news that's fit to print," re-worked their story under the heading, "Rally in Washington is Said to Invigorate Anti War Movement." The paper originally said that turnout for the protest was "below expectations." National Public Radio was also forced to revise their coverage, stating that "we erroneously reported on "All Things Considered" that the size of the crowd was fewer than 100,000." The following February, with more than 6 million people joining anti war protests on 5 continents, the media finally had to notice. *The Washington Post* declared it, "an extraordinary display of global coordination." In London, *The Daily Mirror* actively sponsored the protest.

December 2002, also saw the mainstream media failing to recognize the significance of the Trent Lott story. Republican, and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, had made unfortunate remarks at a birthday celebration for Senator Strom Thurmond, that suggested the nation would have been better off if segregationist Thurmond had been elected president. As Howard Kurtz put it in his "Media Notes" column of *The Washington Post* (12/10/02), "most major newspapers...hadn't done squat on the story." This, he said, was particularly hard to understand given the fact that "there were cameras rolling. It's on tape; it was on C-SPAN, for crying out loud. If a Democrat had made this kind of inflammatory comment, it would be the buzz of talk radio and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page would be calling for tarring and feathering."

In the United Kingdom, *The Economist* not only recognized that the media failed to grasp the significance of the story, but also recognized and identified the forces that compelled the media to take a closer look. "The mainstream media," they wrote, "were initially blind to his (Lott's

DAVID CONSIDINE COMPLETED ONE OF THE FIRST MEDIA EDUCATION DEGREES IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA BEFORE MOVING TO THE U.S. IN THE 1970S. HE UNDERTOOK A MASTERS DEGREE IN LIBRARY SCIENCE AND A PH.D IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. DR. CONSIDINE IS THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS BOOKS AND ARTICLES ABOUT MEDIA AND YOUTH INCLUDING *THE CINEMA OF ADOLESCENCE*, AND *VISUAL MESSAGES: INTEGRATING IMAGERY INTO INSTRUCTION*. HE HAS SERVED ON THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL AND THE ALLIANCE FOR A MEDIA LITERATE AMERICA. HE COORDINATES THE MASTERS PROGRAMS IN MEDIA LITERACY AT NORTH CAROLINA'S APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY. CONTACT HIM AT CONSINEDM@APPSTATE.EDU.

) remarks...but the *Blogosphere*—websites of opinion and news, first known as web logs—denounced the remarks vigorously and would not let up, finally forcing others to take notice” (December 21, 25).

The previous year, most U.S. and international media coverage of the demonstrations at the global trade conference in Italy, uniformly condemned the protestors and their tactics, as they had done in their coverage of previous trade meetings and demonstrations in Melbourne, Australia and in Washington State (e.g., “The Battle of Seattle”). One needed to be very patient and very vigilant to see the press re-visit their initial construction of the event and the issues that generated such activism.

In August 2001 for example, *The Times* in London reported that the Italian government’s inquiry into the handling of the Genoa summit riots concluded that “the police had made tactical errors and used excessive force” (August 1).

WINDOW ON THE WORLD?

The way the news media function, the stories they select, the ones they reject, their spin, point of view and bias, whether blatant or subtle, are crucial to the functioning of a healthy democracy. When young people feel sufficiently concerned about a social or political issue that they wish to take to the streets in peaceful protest, they are exercising one of their most basic rights.

Not only are they exercising their rights, such citizens are exercising their responsibility and expressing what *Sojourners* magazine called “the duty of dissent.” What motivates them, their cause, philosophy and principles however, are often kept from public understanding. While the news media nightly parade a panel of experts who favor military action for example, (e.g., politicians, generals, consultants) little attention is given to those who oppose war but also believe they are patriots who love their country.

Nowhere is this perhaps more obvious than in media disregard for religious opposition to the proposed war in Iraq. Reverend Peter Gomes, Professor of Christian Morals, argues compellingly that these dissenters are following their conscience. He also recognizes the challenge they face in a democracy: “How can we have an intelligent conversation on the most dangerous policy topic

of the day, without being branded traitors, south-loathing Americans, anti-patriotic or soft on democracy? ... Must the first casualty of patriotism be dissent, debate and discussion? ... We hear much talk of 'moral clarity' but it sounds more to me like moral arrogance and it must not be met with moral silence" (2003, 20).

Negative media coverage, news stories that trivialize, or marginalize their concerns and cause, are anti-democratic in nature may well ultimately discourage youth engagement with both the news media and citizenship. Statistical evidence already points to a declining number of young voters as well as to shrinking viewers for TV news and newspaper readers.

Pat Mitchell, CEO of The Public Broadcasting Service has said that the media pander to youth, giving them what they want rather than what they need. The result is a generation, more concerned about their role as consumers than their role as citizens. 'They'd rather be entertained than informed ... most in this age group (18- 34) don't care much about government, politics, foreign countries or serious journalism" (Mitchell, June 12, 2002, 13A).

Reporters and publishers alike are not unaware of these concerns. When pressed however, they can be extraordinarily disingenuous. Take for example the appearance of NBC news anchor, Tom Brokaw on MSNBC's Donahue in January of this year. Asked by Donahue if network news was "getting softer" the anchor replied that they were not and argued that they were in fact "spending more time on fewer subjects." The incidentals, he suggested could be obtained from other news sources. I found myself wondering just exactly how he defined "incidental."

When an audience member asked if the public distrust of the news media was based on the fact that reporters were less objective, Brokaw replied, "We bring you news that's unsettling. Almost anything I report is going to make someone unhappy and they're going to think we've got some vested interest. Or, why are we doing it? They're only doing it to sell newspapers or get ratings" (January 3, 03).

Oh come now Mr. Brokaw! Fellow anchor Dan Rather (of CBS) told CNN's Larry King that "fear runs rampant in the newsroom," in what he characterized as "the volcanic age" of journalism. Rather said ratings and economics drive coverage along with a fear, that if they don't cover the story, their competition will. The associate editor and executive editor at the *Washington Post* put

it this way: “Too much of what has been offered as news in recent years has been untrustworthy, irresponsible, misleading and incomplete ... Too many of those who own and lead the nation’s news media have cynically underestimated or ignored America’s need for good journalism, and evaded their responsibility to provide it” (Downie and Kaiser, 2002, 9).

Columbia Journalism Review told readers that the Project for Excellence in Journalism had concluded that “local television news is driving Americans away from what was long the most popular and trusted source of information in the country” (Rosenstiel, Gottlieb, Brady, 2000, 84). The following year, CJR reported that more than half of the local news directors admit that “advertisers try to tell them what to air and not to air-and they say the problem is getting worse”(Nov./Dec 2001).

THE PRESS, POLITICS AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Although the press generally received good grades from the public for their coverage of the events and aftermath of 9/11, it didn’t last long. Within a year, media critic Howard Kurtz would report that the solemnity and somber tone had been replaced by “familiar fluff.” *Time* magazine, he noted, had done cover stories on Tom Cruise, Star Wars, Spider Man and Bruce Springsteen.

The Pew Research Center expressed the shifting attitudes in numbers. In November of 2001, 73% of the public regarded the media as “highly professional.” By summer 2002, it had dropped to 49%. Those regarding the media as “moral” had declined from 53% to 39%. At the same time, The Brookings Institution’s Center for Public Service reported that 40% of Americans trusted the federal government, a 17% decline since October of 2001.

While Tom Brokaw wants us to believe that bias only exists in the eyes and ears of the television audience, that the news media simply report facts from a neutral perspective, not all of his colleagues agree. Former CBS insider Bernard Golberg put it this way: “Dan and Peter and Tom and a lot of their foot soldiers don’t deliver the news straight...they have a liberal bias...and no matter how often the networks deny it, it is true” (2002, 12). That perspective is dismissed in Eric Alterman’s, *What Liberal Media?: The Truth about Bias and the News* (2002).

Media mogul and modern-day Citizen Kane, Rupert Murdoch, has never been shy about expressing his own opinions or using his international media outlets to reflect them. Recently for example he praised Prime Minister Blair's Iraq policy as "full of guts" and "extraordinarily courageous," while slamming Blair's Labour Party as "knee jerk anti-Americanism and sort of pacifist" (Day, 2/11/03). Even more tellingly perhaps, Murdoch's economic interests surfaced front and center when he stated that "the greatest thing to come out of this (Iraq conflict) for the world economy ... would be \$20 barrel for oil ... We're keeping our heads down, managing the businesses, keeping our profits up."

Another important bias operative in many news organizations is neither liberal nor conservative but a bias for sales, which in a television era means a preference for pictures, sensationalism and the elevation of emotional coverage over logic and reason. *The Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* documented "a marked increase in embedded sensationalism/human interest" in TV news, noting that "a sizeable proportion of public affairs stories ... incorporated elements of crime, violence, disasters, sexual impropriety and other emotionally arousing content" (Slattery, Doremus & Marcus, 2001, 298).

The routine and everyday are often ignored while the sensational is over-hyped. Occasionally what is ignored one day, comes back to haunt us another. When the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon re-entry in February of this year, we received the type of saturation coverage that accompanies crisis *du jour*. In April of the previous year, the outgoing chair of NASA's advisory board told Congress, "I have never been as concerned for space shuttle safety as I am right now. The current approach is planting the seeds for future danger." His testimony was reported only by *The Orlando Sentinel*, A.P Wire Service and Gannett News Service.

The framing of the stories, the sequence in which they are told, and the words used all contribute to public perception. The Bush administration like most political organizations was aware of this when in an Orwellian move they began to refer to Palestinian suicide bombers as "homicide bombers." Was it mere coincidence that this phrase, while ignored by most newsrooms, was picked up by Fox, where former Nixon, Reagan and Bush operative Roger Ailes was at the helm? Ironically Fox News packages itself as above bias, calling itself "fair and balanced" and proclaiming "We report. You decide"—as if the nature of the coverage in no way contributed to that decision making.

The Press Effect written by the director and associate director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, studied press coverage of the disputed presidential election of 2000. It concluded that Al Gore and his spokespeople were twice as likely to be challenged as was George Bush or his representatives in the wake of the Florida recount. “The presumption that Mr. Bush was the president-elect and not simply one of two parties in a lawsuit, they say, created the atmosphere that emboldened the Supreme Court to take the election in hand and rule in Mr. Bush’s favor” (Stille, 1/8/03).

Perhaps the most pervasive and destructive relationship between the media and the political process however is the sheer cost; the amount of money necessary to both launch and sustain a campaign, whether successfully or unsuccessfully. Two decades ago historian Theodore White observed that “American television and politics are now so completely locked together, that it is impossible to tell the story of one without the other” (1982, 165). At the most basic level the political process has become an advertising process. The cost of air time particularly in those large markets that also carry the biggest bonanza in the Electoral College (e.g., Texas, Florida, California and New York) is so prohibitive that for the most part only millionaires or those in debt to special interest can even consider running.

As the 108th Congress was about to be sworn in January of 2003, a study of the previous year’s election concluded “many qualified, credible candidates for federal office lose elections, drop out of races, or decide never to run ... because of the role of big money in our political system” (PIRG). What this means statistically is that 93.4% of candidates who spent the most money, were elected. Beyond that, advertising reduces the political dialogue and discourse to sound bites and emotional pictures rather than reasoned debate and logical decision making.

CITIZENS, NETIZENS OR COUCH POTATOES?

Of course, advertising, as we have already seen, is only part of the picture. Whether addressing presidential elections, global tensions, the nation’s economy, crime and punishment, business and ethics, the state of our schools, foreign policy, or the environment, the mass media including the news media, play a pivotal role in the way we see ourselves and our relationship with others, both domestically and internationally.

While quality television news may be going the way of the dinosaur perhaps it is being replaced in an evolutionary cycle by the emergence of alternate news sources that will better serve democracy. Despite concerns about the digital divide and digital disconnect, *Wired* magazine reported a study that revealed high levels of engagement among internet users. These users, they said, are “startlingly close to the Jeffersonian ideal—they are informed, outspoken, participatory, passionate about freedom, proud of their culture and committed to the free nation in which it has evolved”(Katz, 1997, 2).

But access to media and technology does not in and of itself guarantee that it will serve us well. The process by which we encounter the media will be just as crucial as the programs they present. Denee Mattioli, president-elect of The National Council for the Social Studies is well aware of this. In a statement of support for The 2003 National Media Education Conference in Baltimore, she wrote; “Our Founding Fathers ...understood that a democratic republic could not survive without an informed and participatory citizenry...it is essential in our citizenship role to view critically, analyze, ask powerful questions and draw our own conclusions...Media Literacy then, is essential to the citizenship role.”

Social Studies teachers should also note that this view is shared by the White House. In a paper released for comment at the National Media Education Conference (Austin, 2001), the Office of National Drug Control Policy stated that: “media literacy may ...offer young people positive, ‘preparatory’ skills for responsible citizenship. For example, media literacy can empower youth to be positive contributors to society, to challenge cynicism and apathy and to serve as agents of social change’ (ONDCP, 8) .

During the last decade, media literacy has shown substantial growth in several areas of the curriculum including health, English and Language Arts. Recently the draft document for English Language Arts Standards developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002) included a detailed section on viewing and producing media texts.

One major area however, where media literacy has failed to make significant inroads, has been Social Studies. While some states like Wisconsin now include media literacy in their social studies standards, the national standards make scant reference to television, computers, the Internet, music, radio or the movies, despite the fact that they represent one of the most profitable and visible American products and exports.

Intended to foster “civic competence”, the “development of intellectual and ethical student-citizens,” the National Social Studies Standards in the United States argues that it is “our responsibility to respect and support the dignity of the individual, the health of the community, and the common good for all”(1994, 6).

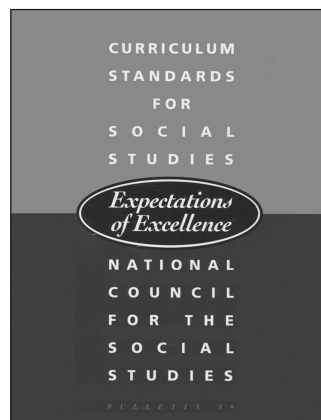
The media clearly have the capacity to hurt or help, support or subvert adolescent engagement in the democratic process. MTV’s, ‘Rock the Vote’ campaign designed to register and engage young voters in the 1992 campaign was certainly one example of the media being used positively.

Rather than relying on the media’s good will however, it is now a matter of some urgency for Social Studies teachers to integrate media literacy into their classrooms in order to help students better comprehend and command what the NCSS standards characterize as a “world of baffling complexity.” This becomes increasingly important as media convergence and consolidation in this nation seems to be taking the public airwaves further and further away from the public.

SOCIAL STUDIES STRANDS AND STANDARDS

Rather than attempting to push media literacy into Social Studies, it is perhaps more useful to examine the national standards to ascertain how media literacy is compatible with their 10 thematic strands. What will then become necessary for those who validate these connections, is the design, development and delivery of credible pre-service and in-service workshops that model this relationship and available resources, so teachers can begin to incorporate it in their classrooms.

One of the first steps towards that will occur at the NCSS national conference, scheduled for Chicago in November 2003. An all-day, pre-conference session will provide a systematic approach to integrating media literacy and social studies, with emphasis upon 10 strands:



1. CULTURE. “In a democratic and multicultural society, students need to understand multiple perspectives” (p 21). Critical analysis of media, particularly news media provides an opportunity to recognize stereotyping, the dominant discourse, and to evaluate how accurately and fairly race, class and gender are depicted both in the stories covered, and in the faces and races of those presenting the stories. Numerous studies have demonstrated bias when covering issues of minorities, youth and crime. (Males 1999), (Dorman et al., 2001). (Header, 2000) Given adolescent idealism, here’s a real opportunity to get our students to think critically about how the media depict and represent youth.

Inviting local news media to our schools and arranging site visits to newspaper offices and television stations, can become an important way to facilitate dialogue between young people and the media in a mutually beneficial way. Whether the media hurt or help the way we see ourselves as individuals and as members of communities are well worth considering. In some circles these days, one no longer talks about broadcasting but refers instead to narrowcasting. In *Breaking Up America*, Joseph Turow describes the shift in advertising from “society making media that have acted out concerns and connections that people ought to share in a larger community” (3) to segment making media in which people focus on themselves. A similar trend has been identified in the news media, where it has been noted that ‘the real hallmark of our age is the fragmentation of the American public” (Downie and Kaiser, 2002, 249).

2. TIME CONTINUITY AND CHANGE. This theme seeks to help students “understand their historical roots...locate themselves in time...develop a historical perspective’ and realize how they are connected to “those in the past.” While this can be achieved by talking with their parents and grandparents, exploring family photograph albums or looking at old letters and newspapers, it is important that we understand just how powerful the media is, in shaping the way our students see the past.

Writing in *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, Sam Wineburg describes this influence as his interviews with students and their families revealed: ‘John turned neither to something learned in school nor to formal knowledge of economics. His proof text came from Steven Spielberg’s, *Schindler’s List*, a movie based not on a piece of history but on a piece of historical fiction ... John calls upon the past but it is a filmic past that he remembers ... a past that blurs fact and fiction and that ultimately in John’s reasoning , provides warrant for historical claim”(2001, 240) .

In *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* (Carnes, 1995) Mark Carnes makes it quite clear, why any attempt to get students to conceptualize time, continuity and change, must take into account the history they have learned from the media. “Television’s continuous old movies”, he writes, “function as a night school, a great repository of historical consciousness in these United States of Amnesia” (9).

The Patriot, Amistad, Forrest Gump, 13 Days, Saving Private Ryan, Blackhawk Down, The Gathering Storm, The Path to War and *Live from Baghdad* are just a few of the recent films or TV movies that are capable of permanently shaping the way our students conceive of everything from the Revolutionary War to the Cuban missile crisis and U.S. involvement in Somalia. Unquestioned and unchallenged they will become reality for many of our students. Armed with the skills of media literacy however, these same students can be critically and creatively engaged as they compare and contrast, separate fact from fiction, and real people from composite characters.

3. PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS. This theme assists students as they “develop geographic perspectives of the world”(x). Unfortunately for too many students this is a rather skewed perspective. Last year for example, 1 in 10 young Americans could not find their own nation on a world map and only 13% could find Iraq (Associated Press, 11/20/02) .The NCSS standards also report that students “speak in stereotypes about Arab people and the religion of Islam” (103). Even when they believe they are getting a world perspective from say, CNN, or ABC’s “World News Tonight,” such stories are always filtered through an American lens.

The Internet however, provides students with the opportunity to encounter, first hand, the stories of another country and culture told through their own media in their own words and images. WWW.NEWSLINK.ORG for example opens up a menu of newspapers from across the country and around the world. Now students can compare and contrast accounts of conflicts as they are covered in the U.S. press compared for example to *The Mid East Times*. U.S. reports of Prime Minister Blair’s support for President Bush’s “war on terrorism” can be contrasted to how that is covered in domestic U.K. newspapers like *The Guardian* or *The Times*. *Free Speech TV* and *Democracy Now* also offer alternative voices and visions, frequently covering the perspective of activists in other nations rather than simply the official government line.

4. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY. This theme argues that “personal identity is shaped by one’s culture” and “by institutional influences.”
5. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS. The examples of institutional influences offered in the NCSS standards make specific reference to “schools, church, families, government agencies and the courts” (xi). What’s missing, of course, is the institution of the mass media, with its ability to influence each and every one of the institutions named in the standards.

What for example is the relationship between the Catholic Church and press coverage of the sexual abuse scandals? How has television including the sit-com, historically depicted the composition and concerns of the American family and how have these media representation of families related to the nature of real American families at the time the shows were produced and consumed? Much more than mere entertainment, such programs are cultural products and artifacts that can tell us much about the era that produced and consumed them, including the regulatory guides and assumptions about audiences (Leibman 1995).

Those who think that such study is somehow wasting time on popular culture, might be interested to learn that sitcoms actually contribute to ‘images of America’ in terms of ‘what youth do know about the United States.’ While some students accept media depictions, others “discounted ... or reacted against ... sitcoms depicting the perfect American family” (Cornbleth, 2002, 539).

Two very useful teaching tools, for teachers interested in this theme are *Enlightened Racism* (Jhally and Lewis) which focuses on Black and white audiences’ readings of “The Cosby Show,” and *Color Adjustment*, a video tracing television’s depiction of African Americans by the late Marlon Riggs.

Finally, one of the most potentially significant aspects of this strand is expressed this way: ‘How am I influenced by institutions? How do institutions change? What is my role in institutional change? (xi) This is enormously important if the public is to grasp the concept of the public airwaves and the responsibility the broadcast industry has to serve the needs of a democratic society.

6. POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE. In developing civic competence, students are asked to consider the issue of power, including ‘Who holds it? How is it gained, used and justified?’ This includes “the dynamic relationships among individual rights and responsibilities’ and ‘addressing the persistent issues and social problems encountered in public life” (26).

In the post 9/11 environment Americans are asked to consider the relationship between national security and individual rights. One is reminded of Ben Franklin’s observation that those who are prepared to give up a little liberty for security will achieve neither.

Beyond the issue of government agencies like the Office of Homeland Security and the rights of individuals, there is also the issue of institutional relationships.

In January 2003, for example, a poll indicated that 28% of the American public believed that even in peacetime the government should have the right to control what the media reports. In time of war, that figure increased to two-thirds.

Frank Blethen, publisher and CEO of *The Seattle Times* has cautioned against “jeopardizing the press’s role of preserving the American system of checks and balances,” noting that ‘the watchdog has been replaced by the lapdog” (September 2002).

In terms of study, both state and federal politics, policy and process, teachers could utilize TV series like *The West Wing* and *Mr. Sterling* to help students understand the role of the President, the Senate and the system of checks and balances. In the case of *The West Wing*, the first season episode “Five Votes Down,” explores the pressures and the process as the president and his team attempt to rally enough votes to secure passage of the gun bill they favor. Chief of Staff, Leo McGarry observes, “there are two things in the world you never want to let people see how you make’em—laws and sausages.”

7. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION. The standards note that “young learners begin by differentiating between wants and needs” (27). In a culture of conspicuous consumption young people often confuse wants and needs, assailed as they are by the slick pitches of the advertising industry and the constant encouragement to ‘biggie size it.”

One approach that has proved successful in energizing many young people is the so called “unbranding of our schools.” Aligned with a movement to make schools commercial free environments, the approach is perhaps best articulated in Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*. Whether battling vending machines in the hallways or corporate intrusion into the curriculum, the approach engages many young people and provides them with the opportunity to influence policy in their own schools, which serves as a lesson in grassroots activism and democracy.

However, as the bumper sticker says, in addition to acting locally we need to think globally. American materialism, including the love affair with the automobile and the mobility it offers, has implications for us domestically and internationally as the shrinking rain forests, global warming and other environmental developments indicate.

A useful starting point for teachers addressing this issue at the secondary level is *Consuming Environments: Television and Commercial Culture* (Budd, Craig, Steinman, 1999). The book explores the role of media in the production consumption cycle and the environmental impact of this cycle. It also warns, “we cannot avert this crisis as individuals, only as engaged participants in an interdependent world” (5).

Closely aligned to the concept of interdependence, is our understanding of public and private space and the role of information in those spheres. Lawrence Lessig argues that we are already witnessing an assault on the revolutionary nature of the Internet, an assault which has implications for our entire understanding of freedom of information. In *The Future of Ideas*, he writes: “Our single overriding view of the world is that only property matters; our systematic blindness is to the lesson of our tradition- that property flourishes best in an environment of freedom, both freedom from state control and freedom from private control” (2001, 236).

8. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY. This theme presents challenging and relevant questions that are particularly pertinent to media literacy. Technology, the standards note, “bring changes that surprise us and even challenge our beliefs” (28). These technologies often result in unanticipated social change. Two examples offered in the standards include a consideration of how ‘the transistor radio altered the course of history’ and the way ‘values beliefs and attitudes’ were influenced by the invention of the printing press.

How might these discussions then be applied to television, computers and the Internet? In what way are our notions of laws and jurisdiction rendered irrelevant or obsolete by global developments like the World Wide Web? This strand also challenges us to think about: How we can manage technology so the greatest number of people benefit from it? And, how can we preserve our fundamental values and beliefs in a world that is rapidly becoming one technology-linked village? (p 28). For example, how might media coverage of a controversy like cloning (the birth and death of Dolly the sheep) shape public attitudes and government policy?

These questions can certainly be applied to an examination of the role information and entertainment technologies (e.g., computers, television, videogames, music) could or should play in our schools, communities and families. Do they serve as agents of enlightenment and engagement or have they become distractions that signify the breakdown of the family into distinct demographic groups, blocks and generations, each retreating to the privacy of their own wired world and cabled cocoon?

9. GLOBAL CONNECTIONS. This area of the social studies strands states that students need to “be able to think systematically about personal, national, and global decisions, interactions and consequences...including peace, human rights, trade and global ecology” (29). Benjamin Barber describes two competing global forces, tribalism and globalism each operative at the same time.

The forces of Jihad and the forces of McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets ... neither offers much hope for citizens looking for practical ways to govern themselves democratically (1992).

Beyond the view of most Americans—though not the media that serves them—globalisation is producing some potentially destructive effects. A recent UNESCO report, *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation*, put it this way: “There is a risk that globalisation has a homogenizing effect, that totally foreign countries may soon be a thing of the past, as dominant cultural patterns set global standards...the institutions and enterprises that control globalized mass culture do have such a standardizing effect” (Carlsson, 2002, 11).

The social studies standards also state that “through exposure to various media, students become aware of, and are affected by events on a global scale. The global protests against war with Iraq were described by *The Age* in Melbourne, Australia, as “the biggest coordinated anti war march in history.” However, seeing and understanding are not necessarily synonymous.

Do U.S. media help Americans understand how their nation, its people, its government and its policies are perceived throughout the world and just as importantly, why? While most Americans are conditioned to see their nation as a champion of human rights, it is increasingly true that on a range of issues, their country is frequently at odds with much of the world, particularly the western world.

In the case of Australia, for example, the U.S. has a strong and loyal ally whose people fought and died alongside Americans in Vietnam at a time when the rest of the western world turned their back on the U.S. Most Americans that I have met in my quarter century in this country, express admiration and affection for the land “down under.” They also uniformly have absolutely no idea about policy differences between the two nations.

In the case of unfair trade policies, farmers marched on parliament house in Canberra when the first President Bush spoke there a decade ago. Last year with a new Bush in the White House, former conservative Australian prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, penned a piece which he called, “The United States of Hypocrisy.”

Whether challenging the authority of the World Court, continuing capital punishment, questioning the relevance of the United Nations, being penalized by the World Trade Organization, distancing its engagement in Earth Summit 11, or rejecting the Kyoto proposals on the environment, the U.S. often appears out of step and out of touch with other nations including our nearest neighbors.

The cumulative nature of these differences and the resentment it has fostered outside of the U.S. was somewhat belatedly addressed by *U.S.A Today* (“French See Bush as The Ugly American”, 2/14/03). That was also the day when the French representative on the U.N. Security Council received unprecedented applause in the chamber when he challenged the U.S. interpretation of the Inspector Hans Blix’s report on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

In April 2002 the *Globe and Mail* in Canada reported that “a majority (75%) of citizens feel George W. Bush doesn’t understand Canada or its people” (A12). The context for that poll was the friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in which American fliers accidentally killed four Canadian soldiers. Many Canadians, including the Canadian media, felt President Bush was slow to express condolences, especially given the Canadians high degree of support after 9/11. Bush also failed to name Canada, in a speech that thanked other countries for their help in the aftermath of 9/11.

In December of 2002, *The International Herald Tribune* wrote that “the global image of the United States has suffered a dramatic bruising in the past two years, most seriously in Muslim countries, but also to a surprising extent among many traditional allies.” While America’s favorability ratings had increased in Russia, “anti –American sentiment was striking in Egypt, one of the largest recipients of U.S foreign aid.”

Over half (54%) of Canadians said that “the spread of American ideas and customs was bad.” In Britain and France, as *The Economist* reported in early 2003, those sentiments were shared by half and three-quarters of the populations, respectively.

A recent global study reported “The Next Generation’s Image of Americans: Attitudes and Beliefs Held by Teenagers in 12 Countries” revealed that with the exception of Argentina, the teens in the other 11 nations studied “appear to hold consistently negative attitudes toward Americans as people” (DeFleur and DeFleur, 2003, 2).

Let me be perfectly candid and acknowledge that a danger clearly exists, that excessive consideration of international criticism of the U.S. could leave teachers open to misguided charges of anti-Americanism. There is however, another danger: the danger of downplaying. It is the danger of both global and domestic disconnection which can only be damaging for a democracy.

In her study of “Images of America” held by U.S. youth, Catherine Cornbleth found that the students were aware of “inequities associated with race, gender, socioeconomic status or disability” (519). She also reported that many young people viewed their nation as “imperfect but best.”

Of particular significance, especially as we consider engaging young people in their communities, was that fact that one third of the students surveyed voiced “an incipient critique and/or activism.” This group of young people constitutes a potential pool of citizens who see wrongs and try to right them. Recognizing and responding to their concerns and criticism is a means of engaging them.

Ignoring that criticism in our classrooms by stressing “traditional patriotic mythology and symbolism” says Cornbleth, may well backfire. This is likely to happen “when students’ own experiences or sources they trust provide counter evidence.” The danger then, she warns, is that these young people become “unnecessarily cynical ... distrustful of the nation ... joining the growing ranks of apathetic nonvoters or followers of extremist gurus” (548).

10. CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES. This final theme focuses on civic “participation” and “involvement.” It asks students to examine the role of citizens in the community, nation and world, including “community service” and “political activities.” Its goals are perhaps complicated by the conduct of politicians and by the way the press covers the political process.

In his study of American and British youth, David Buckingham found their attitudes decidedly negative; “politicians were often condemned, not merely as boring, but also as corrupt, uncaring, insincere and self-interested; and politics was widely dismissed as a kind of dishonest game, which had little relevance to their everyday lives and concerns” (2000, 176).

Shifting this group from apathy, alienation and cynicism to healthy skepticism and activism is not going to be an easy task. They will need to be provided with opportunities and meaningful experiences that validate their opinions and give them the opportunity to facilitate change.

Whatever the media tells them about elections, voting, legislatures or the political process, the opportunities for change and commitment will have to be provided in the schools, classrooms and communities. Talking about democracy without actually allowing students to share in decision-making breeds cynicism and readily exposes the credibility gap between rhetoric and reality. Just watch the young candidates addressing their high school classmates in the movie, *Election*, and you’ll get some sense of this disdain and disconnect.

Writing in *Educational Leadership* magazine, Frieberg argued for more democratic classrooms: “Tourists simply pass through without any involvement, commitment or belonging.” The alternative, he said, is to “turn tourists into citizens by helping educators create active classrooms, where cooperation, participation and support are the cornerstone” (1996, 32).

CONCLUSIONS & CONNECTIONS: THE NEED FOR NARRATIVE

Sam Wineburg tells us that “history teaches us to make choices...balance opinions, tell stories and to become uneasy, when necessary about the stories we tell” (ix) He recognizes the need to engage students in the past by helping them empathize with the period and the people so they may ‘see through the eyes of the people who were there’ (e.g., Patton, Nixon, Gandhi, JFK, Malcolm X). Textbooks, he says, offer little opportunity for such empathy, consisting as they do of “a compendia of names and dates” compiled by “a corporate author who speaks from a position of transcendence, a position of knowing from on high”(12-13).

Not so with movies and television. With three dimensional characters, plot, conflict, resolution, and point of view, they construct powerful narratives, sometimes accurate, sometimes not, but always capable of bringing the past to life with more power than the printed page. And yet, like the printed page, particularly the novel, film and television depictions of the past are populated not simply with dead white men, (e.g., Horatio Hornblower, Benedict Arnold) but with characters we might connect with.

Ayn Rand, who gave us *The Fountain Head* and *Atlas Shrugged*, not to mention the controversial philosophy of objectivism, knew the power and the purpose of the narrative: “My basic test for any story is—would I want to meet these characters and observe these events in real life? Is this story an experience worth living through for its own sake? Is the pleasure of contemplating these characters an end in itself?” (1963).

The American film and television industry affords teachers an extraordinary opportunity to engage students in a contemplation of their nations past, present and future. This February as part of Black History Month, they could access the films *Boycott* and *The Long Walk Home*, two outstanding accounts of the Alabama bus protests and the courageous actions of Dr. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

Also available that same month, was HBO's compelling and creative documentary *Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives*.

Teachers looking for a global perspective, for an international view of human prejudice, institutional intolerance and personal courage could draw upon movies that address these shameful episodes in the history of other nations: *The Power of One* (South Africa) *Gandhi* (India) and the new offering from Australia, *Rabbit Proof Fence*.

Although we tend to be rightly suspicious of Hollywood history, the movie industry is capable of getting it right and when it does so, it makes policy meaningful by showing us the people who implemented it (HBO's *Conspiracy*) or suffered from it. Historian Robert Manne says *Rabbit Proof Fence* is a "simple story of the seizure and capture of 3 young half-caste girls ... a sober, historically accurate account of the racial fantasies and phobias, as well as the frankly genocidal thoughts that masqueraded as policies promoting Aboriginal welfare in Australia's interwar years" (2003, B4).

Approach history this way, with resources and criteria like this, and we build a bridge not only between the past and the present but also to human nature that transcends time in great works of literature and in real life. This was recognized 15 years ago in The First National Assessment of History and Literature. *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know* (Ravish and Finn 1987) wrote that "this generation...has been weaned on television and movies. It takes more than a textbook and a lecture to awaken their interest and grab their attention" (241).

The report argued that teachers needed to integrate media, technology, art and literature into the teaching of history. But teaching *with* media and technology is not the same as teaching *about* media and technology. Media literacy provides the principles, frameworks and context for fostering critical inquiry about the form, content, style, ideology, ownership and impact of media in our society.

While some educators are genuinely distrustful of pop culture, lamenting the impact of mass media on everything from concentration spans to student perceptions of the past, leaving mass media outside of our classrooms does nothing to prepare students to think critically about its impact on their own lives and their worldview.

In the conclusion of *Historical Thinking: And Other Unnatural Acts*, Sam Wineburg argues that the time has come, once and for all, to engage kids with media culture. “Rather than pretending that we can do away with popular culture, confiscate videos, banish rap music, ... unplug MTV and the Movie Channel, we might try instead to understand how these forces shape historical consciousness, and how they might be used rather than spurned, or worse, simply ignored, to advance students’ historical understanding” (250).

REFERENCES

- Alterman, E. (2002). *What liberal media: The truth about bias and news*. New York: Basic Books.
- Barber, B. R. (1992). Jihad vs. mcworld. *The Atlantic*. (March).
- Buckingham, D. (2000). *After the death of childhood: Growing up in the age of electronic media*. London: Polity Press.
- Budd, M., Craig, S. & Steinman, C. (1999). *Consuming environments: Television and commercial culture*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cappella, J. & Jamieson K. H. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carlsson, U. & von Feilitzen, C. (2002). *Children, young people and media globalisation*. Goteburg: UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media.
- Carnes, Mark (1995). *Past imperfect: History according to the movies*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Cornbleth, C. (2002). Images of America. What youth do know about the United States. *American Educational Research Journal*. 39 (2), 552-553.
- Day, J. (2003). Murdoch backs courageous Blair over Iraq. *The Guardian*. (February 11).
- DeFleur, M. & DeFleur, M. (2003). *The next generation's image of Americans: Attitudes and beliefs held by teenagers in twelve countries*. Boston: College of Communication, Boston University.
- Downie, L. & Kaiser, R. (2002). *The news about the news: American journalism in peril*. New York: Knopf.
- The Economist*. (2002) Mississippi burning. (December 21, January 3), p. 25.
- Entman, R. (1989). *Democracy without citizens: Media and the decay of American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fraser, M. (2002). United States of hypocrisy. *The Age*. (March 7).

- Freiberg, H J. (1996). From tourists to citizens in the classroom. *Educational Leadership*. (Sept. 32-36).
- Gitlin, T. (2002). *Media unlimited: How the torrent of images and sounds overwhelms our lives*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Golberg, B. (2002). *Bias: A CBS insider exposes how the media distort the news*. Washington D.C.: Regnery.
- Gomes, Rev. P. (2003). Patriotism is not enough: Christian conscience in time of war. *Sojourners*. (January/February), p. 20- 24.
- Heider, D. (2000). *White news: Why local news programs don't cover people of color*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Jhally, S. & Lewis, J. (1992). *Enlightened racism: The cosby show, audiences and the myth of the american dream*. Boulder CO.: Westview Press.
- Katz, J. (1997). The digital citizen. *Wired*. (December).
- Kellner, D. (1990). *Television and the crisis of democracy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Klein, N. (2000). *No logo: Taking aim at the brand bullies*. Vintage, Canada.
- Leibman, N. (1995). *Livingroom lectures: The 50s family in film and television*. Austin: University Texas Press.
- Lessig, L. (2001). *The future of ideas: The fate of the commons in a connected world*. New York. Random House.
- McChesney, R. (1999). *Rich media: Poor democracy communication politics in dubious times*. New York: New Press.
- Manne, R. (2003). A long trek to the truth. *The Washington Post*. (February 2).
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2002). *Adolescence and youth adulthood english language arts standards*. Southfield, MI.
- National Council for the Social Studies. (1994). *Expectations of excellence: Curriculum standards for social studies*. Washington, DC: NCSS.
- Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2001). *Helping youth navigate the media age: A new approach to drug prevention*. Washington D.C.: ONDCP.
- PIRG. (2003). *Look who's not coming to Washington: Qualified candidates who won't be sworn in next week because of big money in politics*. Washington D.C.: Public Interest Research Groups.
- Rand, A. (1963). Address at Lewis Clark College. (October).
- Shogan, R. (2001). *Bad news: Where the press goes wrong in the making of the president*. Chicago: Ivan Dee.
- Scheuer, J. (1999). *The sound bite society: Television and the american mind*. New York: Four Walls, Eight Windows.
- White, T. (1982). *America in search of itself: The making of the president 1956- 1980*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts: Charting the future of teaching the past*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

DEMOCRACY AND MEDIA LITERACY

Bob Ferguson

Can you have media literacy without democracy, or democracy without media literacy? In the recent past the mention of democracy and media literacy would not necessarily have turned many heads in the fields of either education or the media. Both might have been thought of as mildly interesting topics, but hardly worth more than a passing nod. Well, times change. Those of us who have argued for many years for the importance of media education need to be united with those who are just coming to the field and recognising its significance. Related to this is the question of citizenship education and approaches to democracy. This too has been thought of by many as worthy but relatively inconsequential. Citizenship education was considered something that you did to teach good manners and a number of other well meaning but lightweight topics to apathetic or recalcitrant youth. It is time for any of us who were tempted to think that way to do some serious rethinking.

“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.” *Reinhold Niebuhr*

“Democracy encourages the majority to decide things about which the majority is blissfully ignorant.” *John Simon*

ROBERT FERGUSON IS COURSE LEADER IN THE MA MEDIA, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. HE TRAINED AS A PAINTER AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND GRADUALLY MOVED INTO TEACHING ABOUT MEDIA. ROBERT FERGUSON HAS PUBLISHED IN A WIDE RANGE OF JOURNALS ON MATTERS RELATING TO IDEOLOGY, EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA AND LECTURES INTERNATIONALLY ON A RANGE OF MEDIA-RELATED ISSUES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE REPRESENTATION OF ‘RACE’ AND RACISM. HE HAS ALSO WORKED AS A SCRIPT CONSULTANT, WRITER AND DIRECTOR, CONTRIBUTING CENTRALLY TO THE BBC’S *BLACK AND WHITE MEDIA SHOW*.

“If you want to understand democracy, spend less time in the library with Plato and more time on the buses with people.” *Simeon Strunsky*

“If voting changed anything, they’d abolish it.” *Anonymous*

I begin with these four quotations, because I think they typify some of the problems associated with a practice which is fraught with contradictions and tensions. Perhaps it is one of the important characteristics of a successful democracy that it should be uncomfortable. This should be particularly the case for those in power in a democracy. Indeed, one might go as far as to suggest that it is the responsibility of all citizens in a democracy to participate in this uncomfortableness and to work for productive change. Complacency, apathy and cynicism are the enemies of democracy. Scepticism and the will to action are its friends.

Why is all this important in relation to media education? There are many answers to this question. In order to address the range of issues before us I will take them one at a time. This is a convenience for this short piece, for we all know that in the material world things have a nasty habit of happening in bunches and of overlapping. I will begin, however, with the concepts of literacy and media literacy, then move on to a discussion of democracy and finally try to make some sense of the two in relation to approaches to media education and pedagogy. This is a tall task, but I am concerned here with a modest mapping of a field that still needs considerable research and development.

THINKING ABOUT LITERACIES

The concept of literacy has an interesting history. Many years ago there were the eminent thinkers who were worried about the spread of literacy. Plato is the most often cited. There was likely to be a problem, they thought, if the common people learned to read and write. But what exactly would the problem be? Could it have something to do with the telling suggestion that people might develop ‘ideas above their station’ if they could read and write? Remember, the aim to retain power is a great spur to the encouragement of ignorance in others. Nevertheless literacy developed into a concept which allowed that it might be a good idea if *some* people could read and write. It was, in the main, a functional notion of literacy. It seldom had much to do with the reading and writing of those who would be running the show. *They* (the leaders) could develop their concept of literacy into a subtle, well-honed instrument for understanding, analysing, describing, and creating meaning.

The ordinary person was expected to develop a form of literacy that enabled them to write a letter of application, to enter records in books, all according to conventional rules of spelling and grammar. Sometimes the ordinary person might also read a newspaper. The more advanced were encouraged to read highly selected works from the 'masters'. In all this there was seldom any notion of critical thinking, of analysis, and above all, of any possibility of exercising autonomous critical judgement. Literacy usually meant acquiring the skills necessary in order for us to interpret the world in the ways our masters or mistresses thought best.

All this changed when some organisations concerned with workers decided that literacy was linked with knowledge. Long before Michel Foucault came on the scene, some organisations went as far as carving in stone above the entry to their education centres 'Knowledge is Power'. Then there was the literacy associated with Liberation Theologists or those like Paulo Freire, who pointed out that underdevelopment was a transitive verb - someone had to do it to someone else. When literacy took a turn towards action in the material world, rather than being a means of drilling the compliant, it became a very different concept indeed. Literacy could then become a means to several possible ends. These included the capacity to read and understand, but also the capacity to act in and on the world. Whenever literacy has become a concept allied to forms of intellectual or other liberations, it has always been guided back to a more benign form.

I want to make just a few more observations about developments in the concept of literacy, and in doing so to move towards identifying aspects of multimodal communication and media literacy. The reason for doing this is that both these concepts, still in their relative infancy, require serious consideration by all educators. For those interested in media education and democracy they are of central significance. The term *multimodal* has been associated recently with the work of a colleague at the Institute of Education, Gunther Kress and his writing partner Theo van Leeuwen. As the subtitle to their recent book suggests, they are concerned with the modes and media of contemporary communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). Recognising that communication takes place in more than one mode most of the time is not entirely new. But what is perhaps a novel development is the manner in which the screens we read for much of our lives are changing. They now carry the written word, convey the spoken word, play us melodies or cacophonies, show us

slow motion or time-lapse photography, and split the screen into two or three or four designated areas from which we have to choose what to read, watch or listen to first. Indeed we are often developing our capacities to take in several messages at the same time.

For the more traditional literacy teacher this can sound somewhere between absurd and insane. The security of learning to read and write seems under threat. The even greater security of being able to teach reading and writing is, it seems, being eroded or removed from the teacher. I am deliberately overstating the case, but I do think there are many, and not only professional educators, who feel this way. So how should we address the situation and how should we develop our understanding of media literacy?

We are certainly living in a period of significant transition in the ways in which communication occurs. Whether it is with our mobile phones or our palmtops or laptops, changes are taking place. Some written communication is becoming telegraphic, abbreviated. But we should remember that this is the case only for specific generic forms of communication. The written word still holds considerable sway and there are many millions of people on this planet for whom a computer is the tool of the rich, the dominator, the 'other.' The key point I wish to emphasise is that we need to conceptualise literacy as both a process and a tool. Our understanding of literacy has to move beyond the narrow, nervous definitions to which so many governments adhere. Literacy is about more than policing what I will call the 'unreader' and 'unwriter'. Literacy is about more than the written word. It is, in short, about *multi* modality.

But recognising that communication is multimodal is only a beginning. We have to ask, as well, just what kind of literacy we expect in our school students, in young people, in citizens and future citizens. There is, of course, the possibility of erecting a new multimodal literacy which is just as deadening as that which has been associated with some conventional reading and writing. If we use a concept of literacy which works on a kind of deficit model - trying to give people what they regrettably do not have - this will not work. Let me put it as plainly as I can. *Literacy needs to be a by-product of the educational process, not its main goal.* I will return to this point when I consider pedagogy at the end of this piece.

DEMOCRACY, MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA EDUCATION

If media literacy is related to understandings of democracy, we have to ask some serious questions about the nature of that relationship. Are we concerned with education *about* democracy or education *for* democracy? Are we able to practice any of the principles of democracy in any part of our engagement with media education and media literacy? The key realisation we have to arrive at is that such matters are much more than academic. The attitude towards an understanding of democracy in our young people is likely to be of central importance for the future of our societies. At the moment the belief in democracy is hardly a burning issue in many quarters. There is much evidence of apathy or even downright hostility to the practices of what we call democratic government. It is easy for teachers who believe in the democratic process to find the nearest soapbox (usually in the classroom), climb on to it and berate their audience (the children) for their apathy and ignorance. This may work wonders for the teacher, but it tends to confirm in the children their antipathy to the whole issue.

My focus, for the moment, is on the relationship between media literacy and democracy. Here is a short list of questions, on which I will offer a brief commentary. My suggestion is that we should be involved, in our schools and colleges in drawing up such lists, questions and commentaries. The lists and the questions may well form the basis for our engagement in the field. Posing such questions is also something which should, in schools at least, involve the children. It is something which we should do together with them rather than for them.

Should we concentrate on developing the children's understanding of the way the media produce their messages - whether it be television or the press, etc.?

Should we attempt to simulate the experience of working in the media?

Should we attempt to develop analytical skills in children by teaching them basic semiotics - questions of denotation and connotation? If they were more advanced should we move into the realms of Barthesian *myth*?

Should we encourage children to examine different forms of democracy **and** the way in which democracy is represented in the media?

How critical can we be and still believe in democracy?

How much can we teach about democracy and the media without becoming involved in other curriculum subjects such as history?

What would be an appropriate pedagogy for approaching media literacy and issues of 'democracy'?

I have raised seven questions here, and I am sure there are many, many more that could be formulated. The questions, of course, represent my points of entry into the subject. They are loaded questions. But I would argue that they should be loaded, and furthermore that formulating loaded questions is a way of formulating critical discourses.

Let me briefly go over each question and make one or two comments. The first question asks media educators to ponder the relationship between developing the children's understanding of the way print, moving image and digital media produce their messages and democratic principles. This is not particularly new to any media educator. Media literacy certainly requires us to be able to recognise how a message is structured. We can learn, over time, to ask more questions about a given message, such as who made it, why they made it the way they did, and who their intended audience might be. If we come to be a little more critical, we might ask whether the message works in anyone's interest or to the detriment of anyone's interest. By the time we get to these kinds of questions, we are just about ready to consider the ways in which democracy works - or doesn't work.

Of course, the way in which we can turn these musings into something concrete is to look at a specific headline or story in a newspaper, or to take a particular story in the television news and see how it is put together. Our questions, then, stop being an abstract exercise and may take on an urgency because they refer to our lived experience, to the very material world in which we live.

My second question asked whether we should simulate the experience of working in the media. The answer to this question is likely to be a qualified 'yes'. Qualified because it is not so easy to simulate everything in the media. We can, however, simulate a news programme, if we have the equipment and the will. We can discover in a modest way the pressures under which those in the media have to make decisions and decide what is newsworthy. What we will learn about the media if we simulate their practices is that they are not particularly democratic! In saying this, I do not seek to offend any broadcasters who may read this. Quite the reverse. When working with stu-

dents on virtually any production, I have found that they are willing to renounce democracy after a while, in the name of simply getting something done. They find that most production processes that involve the delivery of a pre-scripted or structured message are intensely authoritarian. It is not an accident that we have directors, producers and floor managers. There is something almost military about certain forms of media production. Discovering this can help us to become media literate in a particular and critical way. We can learn that the media in a democracy have to work in ways which are often the antithesis of the system they are there to champion.

My third question asked whether we should attempt to develop analytical skills in children by teaching them basic semiotics. Once again my answer would be a qualified 'yes'. Semiotics is, or wants to be, a science of signs. This is not the place to go into it in any detail. I would only note that teaching semiotics is something which we are still learning about. We have, many of us, made some mistakes in that we have turned what was an exciting and critical activity into a mechanical and boring one for the children. Semiotics is something which allows us to question the ways in which meanings are made and the ways in which we and others make sense of messages. It does not matter whether we are studying the news, soap operas, advertisements or any number of different media. But if we turn it into an arid set of skills it does not inspire our students. It might be better if we reconsidered semiotics as a way of questioning the power interests and relationships within democracies. If we did this, we would not be telling our students simply that they are lucky to live in democracies, or that they have to become serious and responsible citizens because we adults say so. Instead, we would be turning to questions of power, influence and signification. We would be asking how democratic institutions and democratic decisions are re-presented in the media. Such an approach wants to establish why we are told that the world is the way it is. It would also want to know if there are ways in which we can check the representations we see and hear against something else. Perhaps, flying in the face of postmodern doubt, we might ask about returning to the referent. That means we would have to check what we are told in the media against every other means we have of making sense of the world. It would mean that we would be likely to become *involved*.

My fourth question is two-fold. Should we encourage children to examine different forms of democracy, as well as the way in which democracy is represented in the media? Here my answer is an unequivocal yes. We need to be studying the ways in which political parties, elections, politicians and a host of political issues are reported on in the media. We need to consider the ways

in which democracy in the trade unions takes place - and is represented. We need to consider carefully the ways in which democracy takes its place in the family, the school, the church - and how it is represented in the media. Remember that this would include reference to dramatisation as well as news and documentary. The challenge we face is how to do this in a way which involves the children/students in a process, an investigation in which they are players, not merely observers.

My fifth question asks, "How much can we teach about democracy and the media without becoming involved in other curriculum subjects such as history?" This question relates to media literacy and the rest of the curriculum, as well as to the relationship between media literacy and democracy. I want to argue that there is no way that you can approach issues of democracy without getting involved in history. It does not matter which country you live in, questions of history will be crucial if you are going to attempt to understand the nature and purpose of your own and other people's democracies. Media literacy and democracy are hollow concepts without history.

Finally, I asked what might be an appropriate pedagogy for media literacy and issues of democracy. In other words, how do you teach about democracy and combine it with the development of media literacy? This is really too much to address in one short piece, so I am going to offer just one out of many possible answers here. *My answer is to develop strategies where what you are teaching is not immediately apparent!* This would seem to flatly contradict those who say that we must have objectives and be able to predict our learning outcomes. But it is, I argue, a strategy which pays dividends and ensures that education is a continuous process rather than a mechanical accumulation of information and skills.

There is a need, if we wish to understand democracy, to understand what the rules of democracy might be. And we need to ask who writes the rules of democracy and in whose interests they are designed to operate. But we also need to consider a host of other questions which might make democracy an important issue for our children. We can do this both through the media we study and the messages we create. But the topic is either potentially boring (too many rulebooks, laws and political broadcasts) or potentially irrelevant (teachers pontificating about things which they say young people should know to be better people). A way to avoid this unproductive situation is to learn to think, to analyse and to make messages with more creativity. We have to bring the academic and intellectual tools of media education back to life - to restore their relevance.

One way of doing this is to consider topics by approaching them obliquely - not preaching but enquiring. We need to produce fearless investigators. We need to provide them with the tools and confidence to undertake their work. We need, therefore, to enable our students to formulate questions about that which they study. We need to use the concept of multimodal communication as our guide for one important reason. In multimodal communication there are many things going on at once. Children are already capable of coping with a multiplicity of communicative modalities. They can relate with relative ease to multimodal communication. We need to adopt what might be called a multimodal approach to our teaching in this field. We need several disciplines to grow together if our concept of media literacy is to be relevant in our democracies. It has been noted that history is crucial here, as are the skills more conventionally associated with media education.

Why should we bother with all this? Because working through media literacy and democracy is a means to generate thought, creativity and responsible action. This is something about which much more needs to be said. But we ignore these issues at our peril and the peril of future generations. No kidding.

REFERENCE

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal Discourse*, London: Edward Arnold.

VISIONS OF MEDIA EDUCATION: THE ROAD FROM DYSTOPIA

Len Masterman

The editors of this journal have asked me to write on my ‘vision’ of media education in the 21st century. Unfortunately I am to vision what President Bush is to statesmanship or Elizabeth Taylor is to matrimony. At the recent Summit 2000 conference in Toronto I found myself fraudulently sitting with a panel of experts discussing the future of media literacy. I had to excuse myself by saying that as the father of a two-year old daughter I was unaware of what had been happening in the wider world since 1998. I don’t own a computer or use either the internet or e-mail. I have never used a mobile phone. Whilst I understand the benefits of the new technologies in enabling people to do more things more quickly, the quality of my own life is entirely dependent upon my doing fewer things more slowly. Anyone reading this, therefore, would be quite entitled to respond in a similar way to the American cinema manager, fed up with costume dramas, who said to his distributor, “Send me no more movies where the guy writes with a feather”.

I have been emboldened to write this piece only because the future is so unpredictable, so unknowable. The world is dangerously unstable, and as I sit at my desk here in England on New Year’s Eve, 2002, I fear for the events which may unfold even in the short gap between my words being written and their being read. I am old enough to remember the time when the function of politicians was to resolve conflicts and avert war. Now Bush and Blair are casting around for a credible

LEN MASTERMAN IS CURRENTLY A SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW IN MEDIA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL. HE TAUGHT FOR MANY YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM AND IS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS PRESENTATIONS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. LEN MASTERMAN IS AUTHOR OF SEMINAL WORKS IN MEDIA EDUCATION, INCLUDING *TEACHING ABOUT TELEVISION* (1980), *TEACHING THE MEDIA* (1985), AND *DOWN CEMETERY ROAD* (2002). HE HAS ALSO BEEN CHIEF EXAMINER FOR “A” LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES IN ENGLAND.

reason to justify aggression. We appear to be on the cusp of war, more terrorist attacks and suicide bombings, and the possible use of chemical and biological weapons, with all of the pain and misery which these things will bring to innocent men, women and children. Both the British and American governments are currently engaged in a vigorous propaganda war against widespread public scepticism about the necessity for war with Iraq. Once the war begins and lives are being lost the media will be under pressure to adopt a propagandist role as the space for dissent rapidly closes down. This process will take place on all sides of the conflict. It is a process which will be bolstered by lies, misinformation, distortion, and the vilification, stereotyping and demonisation of 'the other', the enemy. Its contribution to the total sum of the human misery will be incalculable. Could the need in all societies for a critical mass of knowledgeable and sceptical citizens who can understand, see through and oppose this process be clearer?

It was ever thus. The visions which have fuelled media education's progress in the past have not been futuristic, utopian or technological. They have been, if anything, anti-technological, dystopian, and rooted in the past. They can be summed up in two words which history has repeatedly proved to be over-optimistic, but which those determined to learn the lessons of human catastrophe have to utter: 'Never again'.

The father of media education in the English-speaking world, F R Leavis, was also the father of contemporary literary criticism, the man who turned the study of literature from an elegant dabbling in belles-lettres into not simply a serious academic discipline but one which could be seen by the 1930s as "the supremely civilising pursuit"ⁱ. Leavis's interest in promoting media education in schools presents us with a puzzle. Why should the most influential, rigorous and irascible literary critic of the day take an interest in, let alone encourage, the classroom analysis of magazines, advertisements, newspapers, and other ephemera?ⁱⁱ After all, Oxbridge dons do not generally bother themselves with such apparently trivial classroom minutiae. One answer to this enigma may lie in what must have been a transformative experience for Leavis, but which he nowhere mentions anywhere in his published work. During the Great War he had served as an ambulance worker and stretcher-bearer on the battlefields of Europe. The horrors and depredations which he witnessed must have been deeply traumatising and had a profound influence upon the young Leavis. What he was witness to were the flesh-and-blood consequences of the breakdown of

humane and civilised values, in which men's lives were regarded, even by their own commanding officers, mechanistically, as being simply disposable. Leavis would also, of course, have seen the effects of the contemporary campaigns of mass persuasion which were necessary before an entire generation of young men would be prepared, often voluntarily, to face death and serious injury. And, as the war progressed, the necessity of keeping the truth about the scale and magnitude of the slaughter from the people was acknowledged by the leading politicians of the day. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister said to CP Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, "If people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But, of course, they don't know and can't know. The correspondents don't write, and the censorship would not pass, the truth"ⁱⁱⁱ.

Whilst there is no direct evidence to support it, it is difficult not to make a connection between Leavis's personal witnessing of the slaughter of his generation, his subsequent analysis of the mass media, and his conviction of the importance of media education in schools. He had seen for himself the consequences of the media's promotion of what he called "the herd instinct", a conformity of tastes and ideas which was necessary both for the consumption of mass-produced goods and the governance of mass societies. Education, for Leavis, had to provide a counter-influence to this conformist, levelled-down environment and encourage resistance to it through the development of discrimination and critical judgement. In the words of Leavis's co-author, Denys Thompson, - and the choice of analogy is significant - the purpose of education "should be to turn out misfits, not spare parts"^{iv}.

Whilst Leavis was beginning his educational work on the mass media in Britain, the leading exponents of media study in continental Europe were the Frankfurt School of theorists. Once again, the political context could scarcely have been more personally traumatic. The rise of Nazi-ism compelled the School to leave Germany in the 1930s and move to the USA. The success of Nazi-ism was scarcely separable from the effectiveness of its propaganda machine, and this in turn was made possible by the growth and development of the mass media during the 1930s. In particular what the Nazis created was a mass-audience for its state-run broadcasting system. As early as 1933 German radio manufacturers had been encouraged to produce a cheap uniform set, so that by 1939 Germany had a higher percentage of households owning a wireless set (some 70%) than any other country in the world. Even this was not enough for the Nazi propagandists. Compulsory listening was introduced by putting loudspeakers into factories and even installing loudspeaker

pillars in the streets^v. In attempting to analyse and explore the rise of fascism (and later the lack of support for radical ideas in the USA) the Frankfurt group gave some centrality to the ideological function of the mass media, and their role in shaping public opinion, a role which they saw as essential to the success of the Nazis in the 1930s, the prosecution of war, and ultimately to the practice of genocide.

I was fortunate to be born of a generation which did not directly experience these horrors. And when I began teaching in 1963 I knew little of the Frankfurt school or Leavis's media work. The previous year, however, I had had a "never again" experience of my own. I was a graduate student at Rice University in Houston when the world came close to nuclear catastrophe during the Cuban Missile crisis. As we now know, it was a cataclysm which was averted as much by luck as by political judgement. However, no less shocking to me than the probability of a nuclear holocaust was the fact that as far as I could tell most of the population of the USA seemed to be revelling in the possibility of a final 'showdown' and 'shoot-out' with the Russians. Texans, for example seemed to be almost uniformly gung-ho. But this was not simply a Southern conservative response. My fellow graduate-students in English, intelligent, liberal, and from all parts of the USA, all backed Kennedy to the hilt.

Media coverage of the crisis and most of the discussions taking place in the USA at the time seemed to me to be based upon a crazy assumption: that a nuclear war was actually winnable. And that it was worth winning. Overnight I attained the uncomfortable and unsought-after status of "outsider", someone completely out-of-synch with what appeared to be well-nigh unanimous public opinion. My Britishness was, of course, part of the reason for this. Whilst it may have been just crazily feasible that some semblance of civilisation might possibly survive a nuclear war in a country as vast as the USA, in Britain a mere half-dozen bombs would be enough to blow my far-away family, friends and fellow-countrymen off the map. And in 1961 Britain, as one of the most important strategic bases from which American nuclear weapons would be dispatched to Russia, was a primary first-strike target.

This, then, was my own traumatic experience, from which grew the first stirrings of a consciousness of the importance of a critical media education. Sadly the “never again” experience was repeated. In 1982, in order to pursue the Falklands War, Margaret Thatcher’s government had to persuade the British people that it was worthwhile losing British lives for the future of some small distant islands of whose very existence they had been blissfully unaware just a few weeks earlier. The transformation of public opinion was remarkable. Even after the Task Force had sailed, 60% of the British people still opposed the taking of military action. Yet a few weeks later to have expressed such a view could easily have provoked physical confrontation, and charges of being a “traitor”. Clearly an enormous amount of ideological work was necessary to achieve this movement of public opinion. To that end a whole battery of news management techniques was employed to ensure that this would be a “good news war”. These included both direct and voluntary censorship, the political intimidation of broadcasters, and pressure upon all journalists to become propagandists. Journalists from favoured newspapers were specially selected to accompany the Task Force in return for which they were expected to (and did) connive at the government’s censorship and misinformation strategies. This, the press-pool system, was Margaret Thatcher’s pioneering contribution to political control of the media, and was subsequently adopted by the Pentagon in Grenada, Panama and the war against Iraq, and by Russia in the second Chechnya war.^{vi}

Living through the Falklands conflict was, for me, a dramatic confirmation of the need to develop a widespread critical understanding of the media, not simply in schools, but throughout society. As a result I was motivated to do my bit by writing my own book, *Teaching the Media*, in which I used media coverage of the Falklands conflict and the miners’ strike of 1983/4 as key examples. But the book was not the product of any vision. Like my much more distinguished predecessors, I was simply trying to absorb the lessons of contemporary events.

These ‘lessons’ are now deeply unfashionable. The thrust of much media theory and research over the past twenty years has been to play down notions of more general media influences and effects in favour of a representation of audiences as active meaning-makers who use the media for their own purposes and pleasures. This is sensible enough. Indeed it is the very function of media education to stimulate and support these kinds of active readings. Unfortunately the views of ear-

lier theorists have too frequently been caricatured as postulating the idea of audiences as passive “dupes”. This is not an interpretation which can be substantiated by direct reference to the work of the theorists themselves. Indeed Canadian scholar Dallas Smythe, a mass-society theorist if ever there was one, who was noted for his work on the media as Consciousness Industries, could write nearly fifty years ago, in 1954, that

“It is important to understand that audience members act on the programme content. They take it and hold it in the image of their individual needs and values”.^{vii}

In fact reader-response theories are neither as new nor as revolutionary as many of their exponents would have it. But because audiences can and do make their own meanings from, (and even set up their own resistances to) media messages we should not draw from this the quite unwarranted conclusion (as some have) that the media themselves may not be of any great ideological influence or significance. That is to fly in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary.

Whatever view one takes of earlier mass communication theorists such as Leavis and the Frankfurt School, the phenomenon they were trying to understand and explain still has to be accounted for. It haunts us today.

The twentieth century was disfigured by every conceivable kind of barbarity – and barbarity on a grand scale: wars; national, religious and ethnic conflicts; the wholesale murder and extermination of civilian populations; genocide; apartheid; and crimes against humanity which have transgressed taboos which have existed in all societies, such as the torture or murder of adults and the killing of children. The scale and magnitude of these atrocities is only explicable in terms of the existence of effective channels for the widespread dissemination of propaganda, disinformation, stereotyping, hatred and lies. As Cees Hamelink has put it:

“The exercise of gross violence on a grand scale needs motivating beliefs. In order to get people to commit such crimes, they need to believe that the violent acts are right. In situations where crimes against humanity are committed one normally finds systematic distribution of hate propaganda and disinformation. The purpose of this is the promotion and justification of the social and/or physical elimination of certain social groups. Members of such groups are first targeted as ‘socially

undesirable'; they are publicly ridiculed, insulted and provoked (often in the media) and when the harassments become physical, the victims are indeed beaten up and killed. The elimination beliefs that motivate people to kill each other are not part of the human genetic constitution. They are social constructs, which need social institutions for their dissemination. Such institutions include religious communities, schools, families and the mass media."^{viii}

Hamelink was writing in 2002 with recent evidence from the Balkans and Rwanda in the forefront of his mind. He is certainly right to place the role of media within the context of a network of other influences upon human consciousness. No one would argue – and I am certainly not – that the media have been the root cause of the conflicts and problems I have been describing. But their scale and ferocity is scarcely explicable without recourse to the power and effectiveness of contemporary media.

The role of hate radio in the Rwanda massacres, for example, has now been well documented. This was no stoking of age-old animosities between rival ethnic groups. Until 1959 there had never been systematic political violence recorded between Hutus and Tutsis anywhere.^{ix} In 1994 800,000 Tutsis were killed by Hutus in just one hundred days: that is five and a half lives terminated every minute.^x Neighbours who had lived in peace for years were killed by people they considered to be their friends. "Ordinary people turned into crazed killing machines" – and all of this orchestrated by RTML Hutu extremist radio who referred to Tutsis as "cockroaches." and recited the names, addresses and vehicle numbers of prominent targets, so that they could be murdered. Philip Gourevitch's classic study of the Rwandan genocide makes a crucial point: "In 1994, Rwanda was regarded in much of the rest of the world as an exemplary instance of the chaos and anarchy associated with collapsed states. In fact, genocide was the product of order, authoritarianism, decades of modern political theorising and indoctrination and one of the most meticulously administered states in history."^{xi}

In Rwanda national radio was used "to prepare the ground for slaughter and to ratchet up the suggestive message of us against them to the categorically compelling kill or be killed."^{xii} In a historic legal judgment in 2002, the mass media were recognised for the first time as being complicit in war crimes. The Belgian broadcaster Georges Ruggiu was given a 12 year prison sentence for the war crime of inciting people to commit genocide in his broadcasts for Rwandan radio.

As we stand at the very beginnings of a new century in a world more unstable and insecure than it has been within the living memory of most of us, who would dare to predict that the horrors which await us will not exceed even those of the past hundred years? Philip Knightley, author of that classic history of war reporting, *The First Casualty*^{xiii} said recently that war reporting is now dead: "The war correspondent now has only two choices. He must become part of the government and military's propaganda machine or he must quit." What is clear is that the control and manipulation of the media by state, political, military and commercial interests particularly at times of crisis have never been more cohesive or sophisticated.

H.G. Wells almost a hundred years ago described civilisation as a "race between education and catastrophe." Has that race now been definitively lost? Given the power of the forces lined up against us, what influence can we possibly have as puny media teachers? Perhaps little. But there may be grounds for at least a glimmer of hope. In 1976 media education as we know it now did not exist. Today it is represented by an international movement which has active networks in many countries and at least a foothold in perhaps a majority of countries in the world. It represents a resource for hope, one to which any media teacher can connect, and it has already made an important contribution to the creation of media-literate citizens in many countries across the world. In a time-span of less than thirty years, this has been no mean achievement.

This paper has attempted to demonstrate the links which may exist between the 'visions' of some of the founding fathers of our movement and our own. These visions are neither utopian nor technological, but grounded in an analysis of the grim realities of contemporary conflicts and crises. They are visions which can help us place our own, often mundane day-to-day activities within the context of an international movement which, in the long run, may turn out to be of more significance than we can yet imagine. One thing is for certain. The work of the distinguished pioneers of our movement, and of thousands of media teachers and academics across the globe attest to the belief that these are visions to which it is worth devoting a professional life. And, in a grim world, that offers at least some grounds for hope. It may or may not amount to much. But it is what we can do.

REFERENCES

- Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary Theory*. Blackwell.
- Downing, J. (2002). Issues for Media Theory. *Media Development*. (January).
- Gourevitch, P. (1998). We wish to inform you . . . *Picador*, p. 59.
- Hamelink, C.J. (2002). Communication may not build peace, but it can certainly contribute to war. *Media Development 2*.
- Harris, R. (1983). *Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis*, Faber and Faber.
- Knightley, P. (1975). The First Casualty. *Quartet*.
- Leavis, F.R. & Thompson, D. (1933). *Culture and Environment*. Chatto and Windus.
- Smythe, D. Reality as presented by Television. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18:2, pp. 143-56. cited in J. Corner (1999), *Critical Ideas in Television Studies*, Clarendon Press, p. 81.
- Thompson, D. (1932). Advertising God. *Scrutiny* 1:3 (December).
- Zeman, Z.A.B. (1964). Nazi Propaganda. *OUP*.

NOTES

- ⁱ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, Blackwell, 1983 p.82.
- ⁱⁱ F. R. Leavis and D. Thompson, *Culture and Environment*, Chatto and Windus, 1933.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty*, Quartet, 1975, P.93.
- ^{iv} D. Thompson, 'Advertising God', *Scrutiny* 1, 3, December 1932.
- ^v See Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda*, OUP, 1964.
- ^{vi} See R. Harris, *Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis*, Faber and Faber, 1983, and John Downing, 'Issues for Media Theory', *Media Development*, 1/2002.
- ^{vii} Dallas Smythe, 'Reality as presented by Television', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18.2: 143-56. cited in J Corner, *Critical Ideas in Television Studies*, Clarendon Press, 1999, p.81.
- ^{viii} Cees J. Hamelink, 'Communication may not build peace, but it can certainly contribute to war', *Media Development 2*, 2002.
- ^{ix} P. Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you . . .*, Picador, 1998. p.59.
- ^x Ibid. p. 133.
- ^{xi} Ibid p. 95.
- ^{xii} Ibid.
- ^{xiii} P. Knightley, *The First Casualty*, Deutsch, 1975.

MEDIA EDUCATION IS EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Roxana Morduchowicz

1982

During the Malvinas (Falklands) war in 1982 mass media in Argentina were strictly controlled by the military government. Television and radio channels promoted a strong feeling of victory and triumph. “Argentineans to win” was the main and repeated slogan in television campaigns. This slogan immediately complemented the previous “Argentineans are human and right” on the TV screens since 1976. This was meant to imply human rights as well as being on the right side. The military spoke of the same human rights they themselves violated: tens of people were kidnapped and “disappeared” everyday.

Argentina and England both claimed these two islands located in the south of Argentina, for centuries. The war, declared by the Argentine military dictatorship, was the military’s last attempt to stay in power and to increase their low credibility with the populace. Argentina lost the war, and more than a thousand young people. That was the beginning of the end for the Argentine dictatorship.

ROXANA MORDUCHOWICZ IS A PROFESSOR IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AT THE BUENOS AIRES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN ARGENTINA AND DIRECTOR OF THE MEDIA EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE BUENOS AIRES CITY GOVERNMENT. DR. MORDUCHOWICZ IS ALSO KNOWN FOR HER WORK AS GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE ELEVEN NATIONAL CONFERENCE “NEWSPAPER IN THE SCHOOL” ATTENDED EACH YEAR BY 1000 ARGENTINEAN EDUCATORS. SHE SPEAKS AND PUBLISHES WIDELY ABOUT THE ROLE OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES. HER LATEST BOOK IS *COMUNICACIÓN, MEDIOS Y EDUCACIÓN: UN DEBATE PARA LA EDUCACIÓN EN DEMOCRACIA* (COMMUNICATION, MEDIA AND EDUCATION: A DEBATE ABOUT EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY) FROM OCTAEDRO PRESS IN BARCELONA, SPAIN.

During the Malvinas war, the media campaign, controlled by the military regime, was organized on three axes: a feeling of triumph, a rejection for anything English, and a strong feeling of nationalism. Thus, only British casualties were broadcast on TV news, it was suggested schools should not teach about Shakespeare and record stores should not sell the Beatles' music. After sixty days, *the same media* would announce the Argentinian defeat and the hundreds of Argentine casualties.

Thousands of kilometers from Buenos Aires, in England, the media also covered the Malvinas war. Within a few days, it was already necessary to convince the British society that it was worthwhile to offer their lives (or others' lives) for the future of some faraway islands, the very existence of which had been ignored by most of them only a few weeks before. A huge ideological work (through the media, mainly) was necessary to revert the public opinion and to convince them of the uprightness of the government's cause. (Masterman, 1993)

The Malvinas war experience, either in a democratic or a dictatorial country, confirms the deep democratic dimension of a media education program. *Democracy is the main reason for media education.*

The process of redemocratization in Latin America since the early 1980's has sparked considerable interest in ways to consolidate the new democratic institutions in the region. Issues of citizenship and democratic education are regarded as crucial for the consolidation of democratic regimes in Latin America. Much effort has been devoted to educational interventions and programs to strengthen democratic values among children and young people.

Empirical work (Catterberg, 1989) supports the deep-rooted, anti-democratic elements in the Argentine political culture. The findings also cast doubt on the socializing power of political democracy *per se*. Apparently, growing up in a democracy does not by itself guarantee the reproduction of a democratic political culture. (Ichilov, 1990)

In Argentina, as a new democracy, transmission of democratic values from one generation to the next cannot be assumed. Schools do not necessarily promote democratic orientations, nor provide students with the critical skills necessary to participate in the public sphere. (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, 1997; Morduchowicz, Niemi, 1994). Furthermore, *the media reduced the public sphere*, by defining the public agenda. In Argentina, during almost a decade, the military used the media to de-politicize the social debate and to de-socialize politics. (Landi 1984)

Media education in the new Argentine democracy was meant to teach students *to face and oppose any reduction of the public sphere*. Media education was meant to analyze the public agenda offered by the media and to deconstruct and question media messages (unquestioned during the previous years). Media education was meant to reinforce a democratic citizenship, understood as more than passive compliance. Media education was oriented to build citizens who would know how to *challenge and use information*, to make choices, decisions and judgements, to criticize, to object and to participate in a new free society. Media education is education for democracy. Media education means the capacity to read, the possibility of exercising autonomous and critical thinking and the opportunity *to act in and on the real world*.

Media education is concerned with the way the world is represented and mediated. It addresses how messages are put together, by whom, and in whose interests. Above all, media education is *an endless inquiry on the way we make sense of the world and the way others make sense of the world for us*. (Ferguson 1998).

Media education is about being informed through the media and about the media. Media education is about democracy. It is a way of questioning how democracy is represented in the media. Media education is about knowledge and power within democracies. Media education is about participation. It is about giving a voice to the ones represented in the media, who are affected by these representations and usually silenced. *Media education is education for democracy*.

In Argentina, as in other Latin American countries, support for democracy as a political system seems to depend heavily on its perceived capacity to meet immediate individual economic demands (Catterberg, 1989). Democratic orientations are less widespread and less stable among those who bear most the impact of recurrent economic crises. This is not a surprising finding in a country characterized by a polarization of wealth as many Latin American countries are.

Argentina and Brazil are among the most unequal countries in the world in terms of their distribution of income. The poorest 20 percent of the population in Argentina receive 3.8 percent of national income. The richest 20 percent receive 54.25 percent. The Latin American region is particularly unequal when compared to other areas of the world. (Levin, 2001)

More than 40 percent of the population in Latin America live in extremely poor conditions. During the last twenty years, this number increased from 136 million in 1980, to 204 million in 1997 and the number of people living in extreme and absolute poverty (lack of income necessary to satisfy basic food needs) increased from 62 million to 90 million, during the same period. (CEPAL, 1998)

Since 2001, Argentina entered the deepest crisis in its history. The economic situation can't be worse: four years of recession, a foreign debt of 140,000 million dollars, the highest unemployment in its history (21 percent); five million people sub-employed (who work less than 30 hours a week) and 50 percent of the population in poverty (earns an average of 70 US dollars a month). The financial system reflected its weak situation when the people's savings in all banks were frozen by the government. No one could have his money back, and savings earned during a lifetime could not be used. This decision made the middle class in Buenos Aires go out to the streets and protest. Two weeks after the freezing issue, the president at that time had to leave. The decision still continues at the time this paper is written (8 months later) and it further strengthened the recession. Banks are not trusted, the industry does not get any credit and new jobs cannot be created.

This crisis especially affects children. Out of the 16 million people living in poverty in Argentina today, half of them are under 18. Eight million young people live in poor families. In Argentina, *half of all children are poor and half of the poor are children*. In this context, any educational program in Latin America needs to consider the social context when defining its objectives.

Social structure is a key factor to consider when evaluating any field intervention aimed at citizenship education in such a setting. If pro-democratic norms are strengthened in the upper socioeconomic families, yet remain weak further down the socioeconomic ladders, this widened gap could undermine support for the entire regime during times of trouble.

There exists in Latin America a strong relationship between economic conditions and schooling. Poverty and education are linked. Families with low levels of education are more likely to be impoverished than those with higher levels of education. The poorest groups are precisely those for whom the school is an essential (and probably unique) source for access to knowledge, even if the quality of education they get is often second rate.

To eliminate poverty means to offer to the poorest students *new educational opportunities* through *specific interventions* and *programs* in schools, always considering the students' economic and social context.

A universal curriculum for everyone does not usually consider the children's social background and it is often used to promote "homogenisation" and inequalities. It often ignores (or even condemns) the lower class children's experiences and their own culture, in which the media (particularly television) play an important role. *When the school condemns the lower class student's relationship with the media, it also condemns the student's culture.*

Quite frequently, schools tend to value some cultural experiences and to ignore others. Schools do not place theater and bricolage at the same level. Cartoons and classic literature, books and television are not considered equal (Bourdieu 1993).

Media education in Argentina (and in Latin America as well), then, is not only about the media. *It is also about the students' lives, their social context and their interaction with culture.* To understand the particular relationship lower class children establish with the media (what they watch, what they think, what they learn, what they say) is an essential part of media education in Argentina and throughout Latin America.

Media education is about media representations. It is intended to train students to be critically reflective. Recognising contradictions in media messages is a key element in media education. Nevertheless, the identification of dilemmas and contradictions in the media cannot be separated from contradictions and dilemmas in *the students' own lives*. Media education is about life beyond the classroom in relation to media representations. And this relationship needs constant critical exploration. (Ferguson, 1998)

Lower class students' relationships and experiences with the media, far from being ignored or condemned by the school, need to be analysed and questioned by the students and the teachers in the classroom. The particular relationship that lower class children establish with the media affects the way they perceive the world. This is precisely why it should be critically explored.

Students have to be able to ask “what if” questions about media representations and the societies to which such representations refer. Students have to believe that change is possible and that they may have some role to play. (Ferguson, 1999).

Children construct widely different meanings from their cultural experiences based on their socio- economic class and on the social context in which these experiences occur. Every child is an individual marked by his personal history. But, at the same time and no less important, s/he is also a member of a social class. This fact strongly conditions his opportunities for social success (Chombart de Lauwe, Bellan 1979). The social context does not (and cannot) directly model or determine a person, but it is certainly the *universe of meaning* from which a person builds up his own world and his perception of reality.

Family expectations, unequal cultural possibilities and inequitable access to educational opportunities also generate a particular relationship between children and the media. Media consumption is strongly marked by socio-cultural contexts. Appropriation of media messages will certainly be different between children from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Social and economic restrictions and cultural inequalities are reflected in the media practices and experiences of low income families (Danos, Dionisio 1986).

The fact that lower class children are heavier viewers than their peers from middle class, less selective in their choices, and mainly consumers of fictional programs, needs to be explored. The fact that television plays an essential compensation role in the children’s lives because it allows them to learn from the programming, knowledge and social practices they would not get from anywhere else, is also important. The fact that the television, placed on the table in the middle of the unique room where they live, is used as an object of conversation, as a meeting point and as a family reunion every night, needs to be explored. The fact that there is no guilt in what they watch and the positive way they talk about television, needs further investigation (Morduchowicz, 2001).

Consumption and pleasure gained from the media has ideological significance. It may depend upon a relatively stable relationship and dynamic between audience and texts. Media education has to involve questions of *pleasure, power and politics*. So, what lower class children understand as pleasure needs to be analyzed. Not just as mere information. *Problematising pleasure* is one of the key functions of media education.

2012

Ten years from now, media education in Latin America will certainly face the challenge of working on one main direction: to *strengthen democracy*, especially the new and still weak democracies in this part of the world. To reinforce democracy through media education means questioning its representation in the media and, certainly more, in the real world.

In Latin America, especially, students need to believe that change is possible and that, as we said before, they may have some role to play. The future of media education has to be built around the recognition that media education is about the real world in which we all live and upon which the students may have a *democratic impact*.

This is why *media education is education for democracy*. This is what media education stands for, for the next ten years: to challenge media representations, to relate them to the children's lives, to widen the public sphere, and to give a voice to the most vulnerable and often silenced students.

Popular culture is one of the few places where young people make sense of themselves and others. They feel they can speak for themselves and produce alternative public spheres and represent their own interests. The central threat to childhood innocence lies in the diminishing public spheres available for children to experience themselves as critical agents. (Giroux, 2000)

Media education in the next 10 years will mean taking seriously how popular culture teaches children to think about themselves, through the representations, values, and languages offered to them. It will also mean teaching them how to be cultural producers capable of creating texts that critically engage their experiences.

The challenge for media education in 2010 is to transform popular public spheres into sites that address social problems, within a real (and not just formal) participatory democracy.

The curriculum needs to be organized around knowledge that relates to the communities, cultures and traditions of students, which in turn provide them opportunities to critically engage a sense of history, identity and place. Media education should help students to understand how power is organized through an extensive number of popular cultural spheres. (Giroux, 1996)

Media education in Latin America must be, now and in the future, a space for a critical analysis and, at the same time, a site that allows students to move beyond the school towards their social engagement in the public life.

REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *La misere du monde*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Catterberg, E. (1989). *Argentina confront politics*. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers.
- CEPAL, (1998). *Panorama social*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.
- Chaffee, S., Morduchowicz R. (1990). *Communication and political socialization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Charlot, B. (1997). *Du rapport au savoir*. Paris: Poche.
- Chombart de Lauwe, M.J., Bellan, C. (1979). *Enfants de l'image*. Paris: Payot.
- Ferguson, R. (1998). *Culture representations in the media*. Buenos Aires: British Council Argentina.
- Ferguson, R. (1998). *Culture, communication and contradiction: Media education and the pursuit of productive unease*. (Paper not in print).
- Ferguson, R. (1998). *Technology, multiculturalism and media education*. Paper presented at the V Congreso Internacional de Pedagogía da Imaxe. Spain.
- Giroux, H. (1996). *Fugitive cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Giroux, H. (2000). *Stealing innocence*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Ichilov, O. (1990). *Political socialization, citizenship education and democracy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Landi, O. (1984). *Cultura política en la transición a la democracia*. Caracas: Revista Nueva Sociedad.
- Levin, H. (2001). *Notes on education and poverty in Argentina and Brazil*. Presentation for the UNESCO Seminar "The role of journalism in education", Buenos Aires.
- Masterman, L. (1993). *La enseñanza de los medios de comunicación*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Morduchowicz, R., Catterberg E., Niemi R. (1994). *Teaching political information and values in a new democracy: An Argentine experiment*. XVI World Congress IPSA. Berlin.
- Morduchowicz, R. (2001). *A mí la tele me enseña muchas cosas*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Projecto, N., Banco M., UNICEF. (1997). *Brazil: a call to action, combating school failure in the Northeast of Brazil*. Brasília.
- Schramm, W. (1961). *Television in the lives of our children*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

PART THREE

MEDIA EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

TEN PLUS ONE IDENTITY CRISES

Neil Andersen

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2003

Who am I?

Why am I here?

Where am I going?

What is to become of me and how much control will I have over that process?

Heady questions. Questions which are quite familiar to those among us who are involved in the transformation from child to adult — adolescents. But now, we are ALL asking those questions, and frequently. Teachers, students and their parents are all facing identity crises, as are males, females, nations, and media organizations.

NEIL ANDERSEN CURRENTLY A CONSULTANT WITH THE TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD, NEIL ANDERSEN HAS TAUGHT FILM AND/OR MEDIA STUDIES AT FIVE HIGH SCHOOLS AND WORKED TO HELP TEACHERS INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY INTO THEIR CURRICULA FOR FOUR YEARS. HE HAS GIVEN NUMEROUS EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS IN CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND EUROPE. HE HAS MADE MOVIES AND VIDEOS AND DESIGNED COMPUTER PROGRAMS, WEBSITES, AND CD-ROMS. MR. ANDERSEN HAS AUTHORED OR CO-AUTHORED 10 STUDENT TEXTS AND TEACHER RESOURCE BOOKS, AMONG THEM THE AWARD-WINNING TEACHERS' GUIDES FOR SCANNING TELEVISION. HIS WEBSITE, MEDIA LAUNCHPAD, HELPS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS STUDY MEDIA ON THE INTERNET, AND IS NOW PART OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA LITERACY WEBSITE ([WWW.AML.CA](http://www.aml.ca)). HE RECEIVED THE JESSE MCCANSE AWARD IN 2001 AND THE MAGIC LANTERN AWARD IN 2002, BOTH FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEDIA EDUCATION.

Change has made coming-of-age a continual predicament among all of us in the Information Age. New technologies have created environments which constantly force us to question and re-define ourselves. They have contributed to the evolution from the Modern to the Post-Modern Era, and by virtue of their integrating nature, have simultaneously blurred those once-comfortable boundaries that made it easy to navigate the social and information landscape.

The Modern Age saw truth as finite, knowable, definable, quantifiable. There were absolutes that people might not always have liked, but which they could count upon when making decisions because they were common truths. In the Post-Modern Age, truth is negotiable, and depends on point-of-view. The Post-Modern Age views the truths of the Modern Age as constructions, often perpetrated by the powerful in order to maintain their dominance. While the Modern Age saw significant distinctions between its national newspapers and tabloids – respectable vs. yellow journalism – the Post-Modern Age sees them as more similar than different – both constructions that are promoting the political agendas of their owners, confirming their audiences' prejudices, or both.

We live in a global village where, in just minutes, the actions of one group impact another group half-a-world away. We are told that, according to Chaos Theory, an African butterfly's flight can send a hurricane to Central America; that our buying decisions may have far-reaching consequences; that a popular food has been determined carcinogenic; and that allergies might be responsible for an epidemic of autism. When every move, every small decision, can have global implications, we vacillate about crossing the street for a cup of coffee with soy or lactose-free.

And so, in my day-to-day interactions with the teachers with whom I consult, I meet people who are earnestly, tenuously negotiating their functions as teachers (and often as parents and consumers) in this brave new world. It is exciting to see the range of positions, the struggles, the debates that form their evolving identities. It is especially exciting and privileging to be able to witness and, in some cases, influence that evolution. Following are ten plus one identity crises that I have observed, and reflections that I hope may help to resolve, or at least better understand them. As we come to terms with the crises and sort out our new identities, goals and strategies, may we become more comfortable and effective as media educators.

IDENTITY CRISIS #1: TRANSCENDING PRINT DOMINANCE

Many teachers want their students to be able to read and write, but within a range that seldom exceeds words on paper. They read and reference newspapers frequently, but fail to consider that many of their students rarely read newspapers (if they read them at all), but acquire their news from TV and radio, as do more than 80% of North Americans. They do not believe that the demands of functional literacy in the Western World now include a familiarity with email and web searches and an acuity with icons and images.

These teachers need to consider their students' need for a facility with multiple sources, modes and languages – an ability to cross-reference and synthesize information. As well as their subject content, be it geography, business or technology, they must consider including explanations of information forms and languages within their formal instruction if their students are to truly succeed in their learnings. They need to consider that students learn and process information differently, not just because of their learning preferences, but because of the ways that the information is represented — print, audio, video, etc. They need to consider the multiplicity of information forms their students use daily.

IDENTITY CRISIS #2: ACCEPTING VULGAR MEDIA

Some teachers believe that media study, because it often involves popular culture, is lowly and occurs at the expense of literary appreciation. They see media works as low culture, and resent having to spend precious time studying them when higher quality, more meaningful, literature languishes unexamined.

These teachers need to consider that Shakespeare's plays were the television of their time – they occurred during the day, were performed in repertory, and were not taken seriously by their audiences. It is teachers who have sanctified Shakespearean texts as the pinnacle of literature,

ensuring them life everlasting by virtue of teaching them each year. It is impossible to know, but Shakespeare's talent for re-processing the popular culture of his day into entertaining dramas, combined with his business sense, would suggest that today he would be writing for television or movies, or designing role-playing games. Teachers might find it extremely useful and remarkable to study the work of some of the 21st century's most talented screenwriters and game designers. Many of these people have, like teachers, completed extensive literary study and have included literary qualities in their work. Like Shakespeare, they mine the language and images of popular culture and weave them into compelling narratives. Like Shakespeare, they articulate and re-affirm our personal and social fears and desires.

IDENTITY CRISIS #3: TRANSCENDING MEDIA STUDY AS ANTI-LITERATE

Some believe that media study is anti-literate – that it prevents students from improving their thinking skills. Several educators have suggested that little or no training is needed, for instance, for watching television. “You just sit there and it washes over you: no thinking required.” They believe that the thinking skills required to understand the printed word are much more sophisticated than those required by the obvious sound and image of television, and that the undemanding time spent watching television impairs student thinking skills.

These teachers need to consider the multiplexity and simultaneity of video communications, which include text, camera angle, camera distance, camera movement, editing, exposure, lighting, sound effects, voice over, music, genre and organization. Marshall McLuhan observed that new media contain old media. With this in mind, making sense of new media requires all the skills needed to understand each medium they contain, PLUS the interactions that occur between them. Such demands distinguish print literacy and new media literacy, each with complex demands, but do not privilege either.

IDENTITY CRISIS #4: ACCEPTING MEDIA STUDY WITHIN ENGLISH

Some teachers concede that media study is an essential skill, but that the English classroom is not the appropriate place for it to occur. They suggest that reading and writing are so crucial and students' skills so often weak that there is no time to study media. Standardized testing, which focuses on reading and writing skills while ignoring the equally-important skills of listening, speaking, viewing and representing, has distorted the English curriculum and privileged two skill sets above the others. This pressure has made it increasingly difficult for teachers to portion class time equally, and media study is usually the loser in the shuffle.

These teachers need to consider that literacy skills are neither learned nor practiced in isolation from one another. People read, speak, listen, view, etc. seamlessly in the course of each day, not pausing to note which activity they are doing, but just doing it. Students need to learn the skills in the same fashion, using their viewing to enhance their speaking, their listening to enhance their writing, in a constant rotation of skills development that mirror real-world demands. Portioning activities into different classrooms and times creates boundaries that prevent rather than encourage integrated skills development. Helping students see that all communications have patterns and conventions makes it easier to learn and understand each of them.

IDENTITY CRISIS #5: BELIEVING THEY CAN DO IT

Other teachers agree that media literacy is an essential skill and that the English classroom is a good place to include it, but have no confidence that they can help their students develop it. This is an entirely understandable position when so many have had neither pre-service nor in-service training in teaching media. (It is particularly ironic that some provinces/states mandate media education in their schools while their pre-service programs spend little, if any, time preparing new teachers to teach it.)

These teachers need to research what education, both formal and informal, is available to them to support their media teaching. In some cases, they will find one-time workshops, short courses provided by support groups, and formal classroom or online university courses. There are many books that explicate media education theory and others which provide teaching strategies. The internet provides a wealth of both theory and practice supports, often in the form of lesson plans and study guides.

Some school districts have consultants who can offer useful in-service support. Where consultants do not exist, or where they cannot provide support, teachers might identify one among them who has more expertise or is having success and ask for help. Some teachers have previous career experience working for media organizations and can offer resources. It may be possible to invite current media workers to speak to teacher groups or, even better, to meet them during a tour of their studios.

IDENTITY CRISIS #6: SUCCESS IN THE FACE OF TECHNOPOVERTY

Some teachers are eager to teach media and have achieved significant levels of professional development, but are frustrated by the lack of infrastructure they believe is necessary for them to provide quality education. They have little equipment (i.e., video cameras, sound recorders) and have to fight for scarce computer time. These teachers acknowledge the need for production to complete students' media education ("we need to write as well as read") but feel stymied by the political and geographical barriers created by the departmental and budgetary environments that often exist, especially in secondary schools. Their curriculum leaders may be of the "Print Dominance," "Vulgar Media" or "Anti-literate" point of view described above, and provide little support or encouragement. School principals are under great pressure to attract or sustain students, and often focus on standardized test scores, which have already been identified as agents that discourage media education by privileging reading and writing skills.

These teachers need to broaden their definitions of what constitutes media works. If video production facilities are unavailable, they need to inventory their technological environments and take advantage of whatever they can access. If nothing is available, they need to lobby for equipment, increased computer time and concentrate on the planning stages of production.

IDENTITY CRISIS #7: TRANSCENDING GOOD & BAD LABELS

Many teachers take a good media/bad media approach in their teaching. This approach might be attributed to their undergraduate education, where they were constantly reading literature that was considered the best, and found few courses that acknowledged popular fiction as anything but vulgar. In their teaching lives, they often work and socialize with teachers who are enthusiastic about good literature, theatre, film, etc. which might perpetuate this good/bad approach to culture. They often see good media as an extension of good literature, so that the best in film or TV are adaptations of good novels and plays or which mimic their qualities. This approach creates unfortunate traps. It often promotes a content-only examination, where the values of particular media works are judged according to how well they reproduce the styles of established literary works, promote a “healthy” lifestyle or provide the least challenges to the points of view promoted within the school environment.

These teachers need to consider the fact that openly exploring the notions of good and bad can provide their classrooms with opportunities to examine values, aesthetic and technical qualities within media works as well as cultural differences between audience groups. Dismissing particular works for subjective reasons might lose opportunities for discussion and deeper understanding between students and teachers. Asking students to defend the qualities of their preferred media works might help them to exercise their critical thinking skills and their abilities to support their opinions. The word “critical” includes the ability to recognize and appreciate the POSITIVE qualities of a media work.

IDENTITY CRISIS #8: WHO’S THE TEACHER? WHERE’S THE STUDENT?

Media education often alters the traditional student-teacher roles, making some teachers uncomfortable. Content-heavy courses such as science or geography, or less-familiar literary topics such as Shakespeare (or even Hemingway) often define student-teacher relationships so that the teacher is the expert. As they rarely study such

content independently, students defer to the teacher's content authority, and in turn will often defer to the teacher's behavioral authority. In media studies, teachers almost never have as broad or intimate content knowledge as their students, so the expertise ratio is significantly different. Some teachers are so discomforted by this disequilibrium that they avoid media studies not because they have anything against media works per se, but because they are unsure of how to share the power during the learning.

These teachers need to concede that they will likely never attain the content knowledge held by their students, but that this might be a strength. Just as they might consult with colleagues or a reference book for background before teaching a new play, they can now consult with their students. Honoring student knowledge and inviting students to become co-learners can be a very exciting aspect of media studies. While students may be the content experts, they are not often the process experts. They might know facts about TV, music, games, celebrities, etc., but not the mythic, historical or structural backgrounds or analytic methods that will help make sense of them. By combining students' content knowledge with teachers' processing knowledge, new student-teacher relationships are possible that will help both learn and become more effective information processors.

This co-learning environment is also an opportunity for students to be co-teachers, where they are more often at the front or center of the classroom, providing facts and supported opinions that support everyone's education while they strengthen their communication skills and self-confidence.

IDENTITY CRISIS #9: DANGEROUS LIAISONS

Many teachers believe that associations of any kind between media corporations and media educators is a mistake – that liaising is tantamount to fraternizing. They believe such teachers have been co-opted into the promotion of the media works or corporations, or that they have voluntarily withdrawn their criticisms of the corporations. They believe that media education should be commercial-free, where no students should be exposed to sales pressures, and they do not want to be seen as agents of media corporations.

Teachers are right to be concerned, and should be vigilant and thoughtful when using commercial materials in their media teaching – many of them are exploitative. To alienate themselves from media organizations completely, however, might do students' educations more harm than good. There are several models of successful partnerships between media corporations and educators which can be examined for those qualities that have made them succeed without exploitation. One size does not fit all, and considering the relative benefits and hazards on a case-by-case basis is a more realistic approach, and will allow teachers to select the best from the range of offerings. Ultimately, teachers need access to quality media productions that interest their students. Attacking media producers or media corporations sends the message that educators are their enemy, and an us/them relationship is one that will neither encourage corporations to support media education nor advance students' learning. These goals might be met if corporations and teachers work together to provide or improve learning opportunities. Such cooperation (which might allow educators to directly influence corporations) can only be achieved if the lines of communication are open.

IDENTITY CRISIS #10: HOW DO YOU SPELL 'ACTIVISM?'

The increased concentration of ownership and aggressive marketing that has occurred as media organizations proliferate and expand into previously non-commercial spaces have caused many educators to become alarmed. They feel a sense of attack, both personally and on behalf of their students, which they are compelled to call into question and advocate against. They recognize the political ramifications of concentrated ownership and want to work to preserve the freedom of expression that they see at risk.

Other teachers feel uncomfortable about suggesting that students become politically active, particularly if that places students at risk. They believe that such activities go beyond the mandate of education.

Teachers need to consider where they are comfortable on the spectrum of activism. There is a well-established media education progression from awareness to reflection, then to action, but we need

to consider what we want ‘action’ to mean. On one end, it might mean personal change, where students’ values or consumption patterns are modified; on the other, it might mean participation in the political process to advocate for a change in legislation or policy; for some, it might mean civil disobedience, in the form of culture jamming or hacking. Teachers might also make a distinction between how they are personally active and how they might more safely channel their students’ activism – journeying to a protest themselves, but not inviting their students to join them.

IDENTITY CRISIS #11: VALUE-ADDED MEDIA EDUCATION

Some educators use media education strategies to promote specific social agendas. They might be health educators who are concerned with the rise in youth obesity or social workers concerned with the ravages that occur with family break ups. These people often find that there is a connection between children’s media experiences and their lifestyles or outlooks. They use an examination of the relationship between children and media to analyze and promote healthier attitudes. By placing their social agendas ahead of media education, these educators create a distortion, a narrowing of the definition of media literacy, which might then be described as ‘civil defense against media fallout.’ This narrowing of the definition of media literacy provides a disservice to students, media education AND media educators because its discourse omits many of the complexities and benefits of media literacy while suggesting potentially-confusing connections.

Educators need to disclose their true agendas. They need to explain that they are health educators or social workers who use media education strategies, but that media education is a larger, more complex and richer field of study. Just as advertisers might use entertainment to sell products first and entertain second, these people need to admit that they are interested in healthy children first, media literate children second, and that their workshops or publications utilize media education strategies, but do not address the full palette of media literacy.

CONCLUSION

Some of these crises are newer than others, some do not apply in all cases, and some are more easily resolved. All of them, however, are resolvable, and their resolutions will define the evolution of media education in North America. Naming them may be a start to their resolution, with much dialogue and struggles, both personal and institutional, needed to advance the process. Whether their challenges are met will be a question of personal, governmental, commercial and collective wills. Why ten plus one? Because for each of us one is more imperative, troubling or larger than the others, but which one depends on the individual and/or the local context.

Media education is the most crucial education for students in the Information Age; media literacy the most crucial skill set. Students, parents, teachers and organizations need to examine their positions, pick their challenges, form whichever alliances are appropriate, then seek solutions. Ten plus one crises might be ten too many, so pick your one, then proceed. As the crises are resolved, one by one, our education and our collective health will improve.

IS THERE A PLACE FOR MEDIA LITERACY IN TOBACCO PREVENTION EFFORTS?

Frank Baker

HUGE AND POWERFUL INDUSTRIES — ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, JUNK FOOD, GUNS,
DIET — DEPEND UPON A MEDIA-ILLITERATE POPULATION. INDEED THEY
DEPEND UPON A POPULATION THAT IS DISEMPOWERED AND ADDICTED.
THESE INDUSTRIES WILL AND DO FIGHT OUR EFFORTS WITH ALL THEIR MIGHTY
RESOURCES. AND WE WILL FIGHT BACK, USING THE TOOLS OF MEDIA EDUCA-
TION WHICH ENABLE US TO UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, INTERPRET, TO EXPOSE
HIDDEN AGENDAS AND MANIPULATION, TO BRING ABOUT CONSTRUCTIVE
CHANGE, AND TO FURTHER POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE MEDIA...

media analyst Jean Kilbourne in Telemedium

“Media Education and Public Health,” *Telemedium, The Journal of Media Literacy*,
Volume 44, Number 2. pp 3-4)

The phrase “media illiterate population” is one that has stuck with me ever since I read this quote. How is it possible that so many people, including teens, are taken in by advertising’s persuasive and sometimes destructive messages? Are they really so “media illiterate?” At what stage in development can youth begin to be discriminating, questioning consumers of information?

FRANK BAKER IS PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ALLIANCE FOR A MEDIA LITERATE AMERICA (AMLA). HE CONDUCTS WORKSHOPS, BOTH IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND AROUND THE COUNTRY, ON INTEGRATING MEDIA LITERACY INTO K12 INSTRUCTION. HE MAINTAINS THE MEDIA LITERACY CLEARINGHOUSE, A WEBSITE DESIGNED TO ASSIST EDUCATORS. HE IS ALSO THE WEBMASTER FOR THE NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL. FRANK WORKS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA ETV, THE PBS NETWORK, IN COLUMBIA SC.

As media educators, we must be concerned with not only how these messages are conveyed, but also how they are received. Central core principles of media literacy which educators will recognize here are:

- how media messages are constructed
- how do messages convey meaning
- who profits from or benefits from the message
- what is left out of the message and why

Currently, this author is using these core media education principles in a series of workshops designed to increase student awareness of tobacco advertising and how media literacy can be an effective strategy for educating students about marketing and promotion practices. Because this issue is included in the majority of U.S. state teaching standards, educators welcome the opportunity to explore “media literacy” in their classrooms. Additionally, current textbooks don’t adequately provide the necessary media education background teachers are seeking. As well, current professional teacher development in media literacy is almost non-existent. Presented here are some background issues which may be helpful to the reader:

HOW TOBACCO COMPANIES TARGET AND READ THEIR AUDIENCES

Currently, the most advertised brand of cigarettes is the best selling brand with young people (Marlboro). Studies continue to point to advertising as an important influencing factor in young people’s purchase decisions. Despite limitations on tobacco marketing imposed by the 1999 federal tobacco settlement, magazines with high youth readership continue to advertise tobacco products. Leading women’s magazines, which accept tobacco advertising, rarely include lung cancer warnings in their articles about women’s health. Recent studies of popular movies show that the depiction of smoking by actors/actresses is higher than ever, despite a voluntary promise by the motion picture industry to cease such “product placement.”

The health and prevention communities have recognized the critical importance of using the media to communicate about healthy messages and media education. In the past 5 years, the following federal agencies have included “media literacy” in their recommended approaches to educators, trainers and parents:

- Centers for Disease Control; Prevention—Tobacco Control
- White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
- Department of Health; Human Services, Substance Abuse; Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MEDIA LITERACY/TOBACCO CURRICULUM

In the past decade, a number of media education curricula have become available to health educators and others who want to address tobacco and media messages. In the 1990’s Weekly Reader, in collaboration with SAMHSA, published *Media Literacy Skills as a Substance Abuse Prevention Strategy*, which was distributed to thousands of schools. In 1991, the Center for Media and Values (CMV) marketed “Selling Addiction,” a curriculum kit about alcohol and tobacco advertising. In 1992, the *Pack of Lies* videotape was produced by the Media Education Foundation, featuring Jean Kilbourne. In 1993, the Scott Newman Center (based near Los Angeles) produced *Ad Smarts: Media, Alcohol and Tobacco Advertising*, a curriculum of print and video. It was disseminated by CMV (now called the Center for Media Literacy). In 1995, Dr. Victor Strasburger authored *Media and Adolescents*, the first of many such volumes for SAGE, which summarized known research. In the mid 1990s, a number of other curriculum kits were marketed: MediaSharp (CDC); Media Literacy for Health (New Mexico Media Literacy Project); Smoke and Mirrors (National Institute for Media and The Family); and SmokeScreeners (CDC).

In a study of state teaching standards in the U.S. (*Kubey & Baker, 1999, 56*), 75% of the states were found to include elements of media literacy. To read various states’ exact wording for media literacy-related health strands, go to [HTTP://WWW.MED.SC.EDU/MEDIALIT/STATELIT.HTM](http://www.med.sc.edu/MEDIALIT/STATELIT.HTM). The majority of states have adopted teaching standards which follow National (U.S.) Health Education recommendations such as:

STANDARD 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services. Performance indicators focus on identification of valid health information, products, and services including advertisements, health insurance and treatment options, and food labels.

STANDARD 4: Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Performance indicators are related to describing and analyzing how one's cultural background, messages from the media, technology, and one's friends influence health.

RESEARCH ABOUT COUNTER ADVERTISING

One promising approach, being used by advertising agencies and educators alike is counter-advertising. Results from counter ad campaigns in Massachusetts, Florida and elsewhere have led researchers to recommend counter advertising as one of the integrated strategies designed to get youth to change their attitudes and behavior when it comes to smoking.

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 1997), these counter advertising messages come in the form of:

- an integrated, multi-media approach (using billboards, radio, TV, posters, magazines)
- a mass media campaign linked to school based prevention intervention
- broadcast of anti-tobacco media campaigns on prime time television

It should be noted, though, that the federal government has been criticized, after a study of its expensive anti-drug media campaign revealed an increase in drug use by teens who saw the ads. It was not immediately clear if other factors played a role in the increase. Despite this, in July 2002, the ad agency won a \$152 million contract to run the ad program for at least another year

MEDIA LITERACY AND TOBACCO ADVERTISING ACTIVITY

This author has initiated many tobacco/media literacy workshops in middle schools. These workshops take the form of teaching students how to recognize the pervasive nature of tobacco

advertising in their communities. Students survey their neighborhoods for placement of tobacco messages in convenience stores, gas stations, athletic stadiums, etc. In addition, popular teen magazines (in plentiful supply, thanks to the school library media specialist) are explored for placement of tobacco advertising. Students are taught how to read “sub-text” and how to identify specific “techniques of persuasion” used in tobacco advertising (such as rebellion, independence, etc). In groups, students analyze a print ad. They are encouraged to look at each ad as if it were a story. (For example, a man sitting on a deck looking out on a lake at sunset might be explained as: it is the end of the day, he’s tired and goes out on the deck to relax and so he lights up. Here, we learn that relaxation is one message the tobacco industry wants to convey to its target markets). I encourage students to read every word (even the smallest words) in their ads and to determine what is omitted. One student in each group explores the story in the ad, sharing it with the others in the class.

Next, tobacco counter-advertising parody is introduced through video and print examples. The popular Canadian organization, AdBusters, is a good place for educators to start. Students enjoy seeing Joe Camel sitting in a hospital bed, hooked up to an IV. In another example, instead of KOOL, the smoker in another ad is a FOOL. By changing a letter, phrase, or the image itself, the original meaning has been altered, or “countered.”

Because media literacy also involves production, I involve students in hands-on activities. I distribute scissors, glue stick, crayons and markers and encourage them to work as a group to change the message in their original print ad. One enterprising student took a haystack in a cigarette ad and immediately changed it to look like a tombstone. Again, after some time of production work, students share their new counter ads with the class. (Educators who wish to download anti-tobacco activities, with the accompanying handouts, are invited to log onto <http://www.med.sc.edu/medialit/smoking.htm>).

I also use some video examples, courtesy of the California-based AnimAction organization. One tape features students’ own original hand-drawn animation for anti-tobacco public service announcements (PSAs). Students enjoy seeing other student-produced media and are surprised at the sophistication and quality of the animation. More than once, I’ve heard students say “we can do that,” and they are encouraged to do so. In addition, the national TRUTH campaign provides educators with videotapes of their nationally produced spots. Its web site also provides examples of the counter ads currently running in many youth oriented magazines. (www.thetruth.com).

Currently, almost every state in the U.S. has some kind of youth tobacco prevention initiative underway. The study of cigarette advertising in the community, as well as the integration of media literacy education in the classroom, should, in my opinion become strong components of these initiatives.

REFERENCES

- Kilbourne, J. (1998). "Media education and public health," *Telemedium: The Journal of Media Literacy*, 44:2, (pp. 3-4).
- Kubey, R. & Baker, F. (1999, Oct. 27). Has media literacy found a curricular foothold? *Education Week*, p. 56.
- SAMHSA. (1997). *Reducing tobacco use among youth: Community-based approaches: A guideline for prevention practitioners*. Washington, DC: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

MEDIA EDUCATION – AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Maureen Baron A N D *Lee Rother*

TEACHERS OF TODAY JUST GO ON REPEATING THINGS IN A RIGMAROLE
FASHION, ANNOY THE STUDENTS WITH QUESTIONS, AND SAY THE SAME THINGS
OVER AND OVER AGAIN. THEY DO NOT TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT THE
STUDENTS' NATURAL INCLINATIONS ARE, NOR DO THEY TRY TO BRING OUT THE
BEST IN THEIR TALENTS. ONLY THROUGH EDUCATION DOES ONE COME TO
REALIZE THE UNCOMFORTABLE INADEQUACY OF HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE...

Paraphrased text attributed to Confucius and written over 2400 years ago.

MAUREEN BARON WAS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER BEFORE FINISHING A MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FROM CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY. SHE WORKED AS A PEDAGOGICAL CONSULTANT FOR RADIO-QUEBEC AND THEN FOR THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA. TODAY, MAUREEN BARON IS THE MANAGER FOR LIBRARY AND MULTIMEDIA SERVICES AT THE ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD IN MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA, WHERE SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MEDIA LITERACY INTO THE CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY.

LEE ROTHER. DR. ROTHER IS A MULTI-AWARD-WINNING EDUCATOR. CURRENTLY, DR. ROTHER IS HEAD TEACHER/COORDINATOR OF THE ALTERNATIVE CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM, LAKE OF TWO MOUNTAINS HIGH SCHOOL, DEUX MONTAGNES, QUEBEC. DR. ROTHER IS ALSO CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA EDUCATION IN QUEBEC. DR. ROTHER IS A LECTURER AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY. HIS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION EXPLORED THE IMPACT OF MEDIA LITERACY CURRICULUM ON THE LITERATE BEHAVIOR OF AT-RISK ADOLESCENTS.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

This paper is, in a broad sense, about change in the education system; and more specifically, about a vision regarding the role of Media Education in changing how we understand and practice the profession of educator. In one sense, this paper will include a brief critique of education, past and present. In another, this paper will suggest what many might consider as idealistic, and indeed, a romantic image of education, in which Media Education is an essential and key element. At the same time, this paper will also provide a practical, concrete rationale for Media Education, as a valid and crucial part of what and how we should be teaching today's students so that they can be successful in tomorrow's world.

In the 1950's, and as a result of Sputnik, the West turned the focus of education to mathematics and science. In the 60's, the social revolution brought in the era of affective and moral education. In the 70's we saw walls broken down to create open area classrooms, as well as initiatives to integrate popular media into classrooms. In the 80's schools raced to install computers, while in the 90's schools were wired and connected to the Internet. In this decade, accountability and standardized testing are the key initiatives for many educational systems, both in Canada and the United States.

So real changes in education have taken place in the last fifty years, or have they? The quote that begins this article could be applied to education today. In fact, it could have been written by a number of high school students, and/or some of their teachers. Traditionally, and sadly, education's claim at adapting to the world has in fact resulted in disparate and ill-conceived changes in curriculum that play catch up rather than plan and prepare for the future. Fundamentally, there have been few real changes in day-to-day learning and teaching practices, especially in high school classrooms. In fact, the schedules, methods, approaches and physical classroom layouts are almost indistinguishable from a generation ago. Frankly, none of the changes in the last several decades seem to have changed high school education to any great extent, unless you consider larger class sizes, reduced support services, lack of books, decline in public support, salary cutbacks and lower teacher morale, as change.

In essence, changes in education are like a toy train set that is constantly going in circles with some spur lines, and in the long run, goes nowhere. The struggle to reform education is cyclical, occurring with changes in governments, and/or education ministers, and/or educational

fads. Remember Cuisinaire Rods, the International Reading Alphabet, U.S.S.R. - not Russia but Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading, Logo.

But why is it that real reform in education is rare or sustainable? There are many reasons, and we offer but a very few here. Not too long ago a group of teachers were asked by a guest speaker whether they felt there was a need to change the way they were teaching. One teacher replied, “No it’s working fine for me”. Since when is teaching about the teacher?

While such teachers are the exception, too often they lead the way whenever someone mentions change.

Another reason may be misconceptions about education in the past, and/or what we believe were and are its goals. Many parents, politicians and educators complain that ‘schooling is failing our children and demand a return to ‘the good old days and a focus on the basics’, meaning such skills as reading, spelling, writing, and math. Phillip Schlechty, (1997), questions the idea of the good old days in schooling. He quotes Phelps, who, in 1870, wrote,

They (elementary schools) are mainly in the hands of ignorant unskilled teachers. The children are fed upon mere husks of knowledge. They leave the school for the broad theatre of life without discipline; without mental power or moral stamina. Poor schools and poor teachers are a majority throughout the country, (and might as well be closed).

As with most issues related to education, rationales for or against change in schooling are, in the final analysis, attributed to economics, politics, will and power.

MEDIA EDUCATION AND A VISION OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Perhaps if real change in education is to be given a chance to happen and take hold, we need to forget the romantic notions of the good old days. Perhaps we need to stop trying to create an idea of schooling based on fitting young people into economic and political realities which they neither see as immediately relevant nor comprehensible. Rather - and keeping in mind that we are dealing with an idealistic view of education here - we begin to envision an education system that is designed to acknowledge and meet the needs of the world that children and young people live in today and, more importantly, will live in tomorrow. We need to build upon the foundations of the past while

keeping one eye facing forward. For example the notion that ‘basic skills’ need not be limited to reading and writing print, but rather the idea that print and non-print texts are complementary, rather than exclusive. We need to look at skills that reflect the twenty-first century realities and provide scalable competencies and skills for life long learning and the future life of today’s students.

And let us state that Media Education is but one part of a child’s basic education, which has the goal of providing each and every child with the abilities, competencies, knowledge and skills to successfully live, prosper, contribute and adapt to society in the 21st century. It is not our intent to suggest that Media Education is the central component to educational change, nor is it a panacea that will cure all that ails education. Rather, the addition of Media Education to the basic curriculum is an important part of a vision of education which invites children of all abilities and levels to fully participate in the learning experience and which provides children with the competencies, skills, tools and processes to succeed in a world which will be very different from the one that is educating them. That is, Media Education as an approach which:

- acts as a leveler without dumbing down the classroom
- encourages expression through “reading & writing” all forms of discourse - oral, aural, print & visual
- motivates through issues immediately relevant to students
- encourages critical thinking
- promotes co-operative learning
- promotes academic risk- taking with peers and teachers
- builds self-esteem through empowerment and success.

We also believe that Media Education is an approach to learning in which the learning environment changes the learner and the learner changes the environment, and that learning which is constantly changing, is interactive, evolving and adapting. In addition, we believe that in doing Media Education, students and teachers learn from one another and thus each in turn is changed. Following from this, teaching and learning are interchangeable, and each is dependent on the other.

For over thirty years media educators, educators from various disciplines and educational theorists from Australia, Britain, Canada, and many other countries, have been arguing the case for ME in the curriculum. Many of the arguments for Media Education can be summarized under the head-

ings: pedagogical, ideological, protectionist, and social. One argument group against the inclusion of Media education in the curriculum is political.

We briefly summarize some of these:

Pedagogical

- Students need to develop the ability to read - construct and deconstruct the media as a communication vehicle
- Students need to develop the ability to use media as a learning tool

Ideological

- Students need to understand the economics, values, ideologies and cultural contexts of the media
- Students need to recognize and understand the mediated content of the media

Social

- Students need to understand the place and role of media in their lives and in the society as a whole
- Students need skills and abilities to become informed and literate members of, and workers in, society.

Protectionist

In the past, popular mass media, such as comic books and films were brought into schools in order to inoculate, or protect, students against the evils of so-called low culture texts. Of course, authentic Media Education in its earliest genesis rejected such an approach. Still, the current political, social and ideological climate in some countries has seen a return to such protectionist pedagogy.

- Students need to be protected from the evil, amoral, immoral and inappropriate influences of the media,
- Students need to be inoculated against the artificially created consumer needs and wants of the profit-making media.

Political

- Education and curriculum policy makers have allocated the Educational funding to other subjects such as science or mathematics because of the pressure from the job market and economics
- In the search for educational accountability, policy makers have determined that Media Education cannot be tested with a standardized test and therefore does not warrant sustainable funding, teacher training or curricular emphasis

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF QUEBEC'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND MEDIA EDUCATION

Quebec is currently reforming, or re-forming, its curriculum, and Media Education, or more exactly Media Literacy as it is referred to in much of North America, is included in what is called the Broad Areas of Learning. The new curriculum is divided into three sections:

- Cross curricular competencies that must be developed and utilized by the students in all other areas of the curriculum
- Subject areas of Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, The Arts
- Broad Areas of Learning, which includes Media Literacy

For a full description of these areas please see:

[HTTP://WWW2.QESNRECIT.QC.CA/REFORM/FMPro](http://www2.quesnrecit.qc.ca/reform/FMPro)

An impetus for this latest reform was a political and sociological admission that Quebec had one of the highest high school dropout rates in Canada and an acknowledgement that the last reform of the curriculum had taken place before the arrival of computers into the classroom and in fact before the arrival of many modern day elements and items into the world and common linguistic use - VCR, Internet, AIDS, global warming, and video games, just to name a few.

During the development phase of the curriculum reform components, the government sponsored Estates-Generals, conferences, think tanks and committees to gather information, review research, survey the stakeholders' perceived needs, and develop programs. A key complaint / comment /critique that emerged from the students was that they saw no relevance and/or relationship between what they were taught in school and their life outside of school. The education system prepared them for their parents' world, which would not be there when they graduated. As well, the system did not acknowledge or value what they already had learned outside of the classroom nor how they had learned it. Hence their disassociation from the system – they dropped out - legally, psychologically, cognitively, and sociologically.

The result is a curriculum with a mission that will:

- provide instruction through the development of cognition and mastery of knowledge
- socialize students for life in a pluralistic and democratic society
- provide graduation qualifications through a variety of program options.

The reformed educational system will provide the instruction and tools for all students to experience success while acknowledging that success will be defined differently for different students. Upon closer examination, the Reform initiative advocates many of the practices that are associated with Media Education:

- cross-curricular approaches,
- learning that is active,
- a curriculum that is based on the development of competencies rather than on the regurgitation of data,
- group collaboration,
- inclusiveness and a respect for diverse learners,
- inquiry and critical thinking,
- expanded notions of literacy that include reading/analyzing as well as writing/producing print and non-print texts,
- teacher as co-learner, and generally a focus on learning rather than teaching.

Each year the number of speeches, workshops, books, symposiums, conventions, seminars, in-service sessions, web sites and articles about the great things that Media Education has to offer students and educators increases. As a result, Media Education has indeed made headway into many classrooms in various parts of the world. And yet in many major educational jurisdictions it is still struggling to be recognized as a valid part of an overall and basic education. In some countries it has been scaled back or eliminated from the curriculum all together. Even in those provinces in Canada where some form of Media Education has been mandated for years, the number of educators actually doing media education, versus education with media, is less than many would hope.

Many of us in education talk a good talk, but it seems we have difficulty walking at the same time as talking, as if both can not be done simultaneously. Some oppose change arguing that, “things look good in theory, but ...”. They forget that theory is an essential foundation for educational change, and that if we do not build upon it and integrate these principles and practices, then all that is left is a huge and expensive experiment. Ironically, many major educational jurisdictions lack a vision regarding the meaning and purpose of education for students who will live, work and age in the 21st century and beyond.

TO BOLDLY GO...AND ABOUT TIME

Taxpayers and politicians are currently questioning an investment in an educational system that has been unable to stop a high rate of drop-outs, low literacy levels and young people ill-equipped for the work force and society. At the same time, they are demanding that the education system take on the role of reversing the increase in violent behaviour by young people, as well as negative attitudes and behaviours regarding race relations, gender, sex, and drugs. The education system has had to augment its academic mandate to include those areas once considered the responsibility of family and community, such as the development of pre-reading skills and vocabulary as well as the development of socially appropriate attitudes and behaviours such as respect, politeness and cooperation. That is, instilling positive attitudes and behaviours that characterize a positive and productive member of society.

At the same time, the world is just beginning its bold journey into the twenty-first century. And, there is no question that we are experiencing an information explosion. Technology and the new media have transformed not only the way we communicate, the workplace and leisure activities, but also our images of ourselves, our roles, our relationships and responsibilities.

If the educational system is going to answer public and corporate criticism, and acknowledge the place and impact of electronic media and technology, it must provide a curriculum and a pedagogy that addresses the basic competencies, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed for information processing and utilization, communication, employability, media utilization and leisure activities; in other words, the basic curriculum must include Media Education. Quebec has started this with the curriculum reform. But the next step is to train the teachers to teach Media Education as co-learners with the students. As the media is always evolving, no teacher can ever learn it all, but must instead be a life long co-learner with the students. The curriculum that includes Media Education must also create and sustain a learning environment that understands, responds, supports and validates the diverse needs of the diverse student body, as well as society as a whole.

Media Education offers a visionary, and some would argue idealistic, view of education. But to lose one's sense of vision and idealism, and the willingness to act on these, amounts to the same thing as losing one's hope that things can and will be better.

UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH MEDIA LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

Renée Hobbs

Teachers experience an enormous range of unique challenges and enjoy particular kinds of satisfactions when they bring popular music, TV commercials, a soap opera or a movie scene into the classroom. Several typical types of classroom activity are commonly used in media literacy education: content analysis, textual analysis, case study, simulation, practical activities and production. Of course, just watching a film, reading a work of contemporary fiction or listening to popular music in school does not constitute media literacy. The critical dimension of media literacy depends on students' ability to collectively reflect on their own interpretations and investigate how meanings have been constructed, with appreciation for the full range of social, cultural and political contexts in which such meanings circulate.

The stories that teachers share about "what works" vary enormously from region to region, as Bazalgette, Bevort and Savino (1992) have described through an analysis of international case studies in media education. The social intimacy in schools, the ritualistic and cyclic quality of activities, the well-defined rules which all are expected to understand and obey all require the use of adaptive strategies on the part of both students and teachers (Jackson, 1990). The institutional limitations of schooling force teachers to discover the particular kinds of strategies that will be

RENÉE HOBBS IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION AND DIRECTOR OF THE MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT AT BABSON COLLEGE. HER INTERESTS FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA LITERACY AND ACADEMIC SKILL DEVELOPMENT, AND STRATEGIES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN MEDIA LITERACY.

effective in order to accomplish this work. As a result, how teachers use popular culture in the classroom will depend on their judgments about what is possible within the unique and complex institutional settings in which they work.

A review of the case study literature reveals three themes that surface repeatedly in teachers' reflections about their uses of media and popular culture in the classroom: 1) changes in the quality of student communication; 2) the increased need for collaboration with other adults (inside and outside the school); and 3) the sometimes subversive interface between teachers, their colleagues, and school leaders about issues concerning the appropriateness of the content of popular culture texts for use in school. These themes, which are not generally acknowledged by media education theorists, provide some powerful insights on the real-world pleasures and tensions that teachers experience in the areas in which learning and teaching about media and popular culture must take place.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

Because students spend nearly eight hours with mass media (viewing nearly three hours of television per day), they are highly knowledgeable about the minutiae of popular culture. Many are familiar with the details of musicians' new recordings, celebrity fashion trends, athletes' legal troubles, the upcoming films of new directors, and even the box office grosses of new films or the ratings of popular television programming. Teachers who use popular culture to motivate students find that, as expected, students are indeed more talkative when video, film and popular music are connected to classroom lessons, as Stevens (2001, 550) writes:

...[T]his lesson benefited from the inclusion of popular culture clips. Students' demeanors were visibly transformed as the movie clips were introduced, leading to a higher level of engagement that was maintained throughout the lesson. While the topic could have been explored without the inclusion of the clips, the lesson took on dynamic dimensions as students engaged in discussions and writing responses.

As students activate prior knowledge, they take pleasure in learning. Since many have specific information, ideas, questions, and theories to share, teachers can more easily step into the role of facilitating inquiry.

When I have observed teachers in the initial phases of using media texts in the classroom, it is clear that the high levels of student knowledge and interest can be unnerving to many teachers, their professional colleagues and their supervisors. Sometimes the classroom descends into a cacophony of excited comments, laughter, and side conversations as a teacher uses a video clip of professional wrestling to compare and contrast the role of entertainment warriors in contemporary society to that of ancient Rome. Students have a lot to say about professional wrestling and they want to say it.

In some schools, classrooms that are too noisy may attract unwanted attention from colleagues and supervisors; in these settings, teachers must work especially hard when using popular culture texts to manage student discourse in an acceptably structured and orderly fashion. In other settings, there is a higher comfort level with the dynamism of student engagement.

Teachers report that student-to-student communication is also enhanced through the study of popular texts (Sommer, 2000). Students may be more likely to listen carefully to the contributions of others in the classroom, because in sharing interpretations, they actively discover the diversity of plausible alternative readings and recognize the “constructedness” of meaning-making. These particular concepts may be difficult to explore when reading works from the traditional literary canon, where students have considerably less prior knowledge or expertise. And Wei (2002) urges us not to neglect the importance of the powerful emotional context of film viewing, which can enhance meaningful learning, even while creating a certain amount of unpredictability in the classroom.

However, in classrooms where teachers are motivated primarily by an interest in exposing the oppressive aspects of media culture by emphasizing its negative influence on cultural identity formation, patterns of student-teacher communication can become more problematic. In all educational settings, students quickly learn “what counts” as interesting and appropriate, what can be said and how to say it (Williamson, 1981). In literature, for example, students’ independent responses to texts quite quickly begin to conform to the critical perspectives in which their teachers have been trained (Applebee, 1996). When media education is seen as a covert (or overt) means of political activism or a way for teachers to control children’s media use habits to mitigate potentially harmful effects, students can perceive this as “an invasion of privacy and a manifestation of teachers’ prejudices” (Buckingham, 1992, 106). Some students may even discover the pleasure of resisting the teacher’s interpretive stance about popular culture not because they disagree with the teacher’s political stance, but simply because they enjoy challenging the teacher’s power. This can be particularly frustrating for teachers.

In an email, a high school teacher once shared her experiences teaching media literacy by describing how difficult it was to get students to talk about media – she explained that, in her class, most were sullen and silent and only two or three students spoke at all. Not knowing the teacher or the setting, I could only imagine the situation as students struggled to guess “what the teacher wanted.” The silences in the classroom suggested that students simply did not comprehend the discourse or had already discovered what kinds of comments were not acceptable. Perhaps these students had not yet learned to conform their perspectives about the media to those of the teacher; only those who could play the game using a particular discourse stance towards popular culture felt comfortable enough to participate.

INCREASED NEED FOR ADULT COLLABORATION

As teachers explore the use of popular culture in the classroom, they frequently incorporate various types of media production into course assignments, including the construction of dramatic scenes, documentaries, public service announcements, short newscasts, graphic arts projects, music videos, web sites and other types of media work. While there has been considerable debate in the United States about whether or not media production must be central to media literacy education and whether educators should make use of the resources of professional media organizations (Hobbs, 1998a), scholars reviewing the first generation of media education internationally report that in many countries, new practices for using media and popular culture in the schools depend greatly upon outside support of one kind or another, either from independent agencies, government, or media industries themselves. A UNESCO-sponsored colloquy drew up a list of many different types of collaboration between educators, government agencies, non-profit organizations and media organizations which could be valuable (Bazalgette, Bevort & Savino, 1992). While there are some media educators who scoff at enlisting media professionals in supporting (and paying for) this work, there are many examples of successful collaboration that results in measurable, direct benefits for students, teachers, parents and communities.

In local practice, teachers often discover that student media productions, especially when designed to be integrated into one of the core subject areas such as language arts or social studies, are more manageably accomplished through a collaborative effort involving other educators inside the building, media professionals in the community, or parents and community volunteers (Hobbs, 1998b). Feree (2001, 19) describes how teachers working together as a team inspired a sense of

shared ownership that students appreciated:

The two teachers worked enthusiastically with these young adolescents, sharing their pleasure and sense of accomplishment without controlling the proceedings. They encouraged, monitored, and provided guidance as needed. This wasn't student-centered practice as much as learning-centered practice. Student-teacher conversations took place daily as participants reviewed progress to date and worked through the steps of the unit.

Such practices depend on excellent management skills on the part of the teacher, as well as high levels of support from school leaders. For example, Feree goes on to describe how students needed to practice their scenes by rehearsing in any space that they could find available – indeed, casts often asked to “borrow” the teachers’ lounge to rehearse. Zill (2002) describes an increasingly common approach to media production in K-12 classrooms, one that relies on the enthusiastic support of media professionals in the local community to support, organize and provide resources to enhance both the quality of the learning experience and the quality of the student-generated media productions.

FLYING BELOW THE RADAR SCREEN—OR NOT

Educators have long recognized that teaching with and about media and popular culture is both subversive and conservative (Postman, 1969). But teachers can and do use film, television, and music in the classroom in sometimes inappropriate ways, including to substitute for poor preparation, to reward students for good behavior, or to prop up students who lack print literacy skills (Hobbs, 1993). School districts have adopted materials-use policies to minimize the possibility of parental disapproval and to encourage teachers to reflect carefully on their specific educational goals when using contemporary media forms in the classroom (Zirkel, 1999). Across the nation, school districts have instituted policies that place substantial limits on teachers’ use of popular films, television programs and music. Some districts have a “controversial learning resources” policy that defined such materials as those “not included in the approved learning resources of the district and which are subject to disagreement as to appropriateness because they relate to controversial issues or present material in a manner or context which is itself controversial” (Zirkel, 1999, 70).

To my knowledge, research has not yet examined or evaluated the range of district-level policies (and actual implementation of these policies) which now define the appropriate uses of film,

video, or popular media in the classroom. Some school districts have highly restrictive policies, as in the example described by Stevens (2001), who reports that to use a clip from a PG-rated film with middle-school students, district policy required permission slips from all students' parents for the viewing of the clips. In other districts, teachers report that requirements may include: submitting video clips for principal's approval twenty days before screening or providing copies of videos to be used to a district-level administrator for approval at the beginning of each semester. In my own work with teachers, they have reported that in some schools, principals communicate their disapproval of district-level policies and do not require teachers to adhere to materials-use policies; in other communities, principals establish and enforce even more stringent informal policies (including prohibiting the use of videotape or popular music) than district-level policies proscribe.

Veteran teachers are aware that the (perceived) misuse of film, video or popular media can have profound and often unimagined career consequences. In one recent case, a high school history teacher used films to help stimulate discussion about his selected themes of fascism, socialism, feudalism, democracy, and individual freedom. Although he had sent home permission slips at the beginning of the year for his students to watch R-rated movies, he cautioned them about the graphic realism of a particular film and asked students after the opening 15 to 20-minute segment whether they wanted to continue viewing the video. He also told students who felt uncomfortable or embarrassed that they could put their heads down or be excused to do an alternate assignment in the library.

Although the school district's policy about controversial materials had been published and placed in each school's library, the school principal had not included it in the school's teacher handbook, nor had it been mentioned at faculty meetings or in memoranda to staff members. But when the parent of one of the students in the class complained about the video, the principal discussed the matter with the history teacher, viewed portions of the video with both assistant principals, and concluded with them that administrative approval should have been obtained. The district subsequently provided the teacher with the notice and hearing required under state law for teacher termination, charging him with "neglect of duty, insubordination, and/or other ... just cause." The Colorado Supreme Court upheld the district's decision to terminate the teacher in a 1998 ruling (Zirkel, 1999, 73).

Younger teachers often discover from their teaching colleagues the opprobrium that may result in some schools when controversial but popular media materials are used in the classroom. For

example, when one young urban teacher asked students to bring in multiple copies of popular song lyrics for a classroom activity, he was stunned when another teacher discovered an extra copy of a students' selected song lyric in the nearby Xerox machine. His colleague vented her disgust at the idea of the use of such a song lyric in the classroom. The printed lyric, full of negative references to women and descriptions of painful sexual practices, was offensive to both of them, but as a novice teacher, he hadn't imagined that his students would challenge his authority by selecting such material for the class assignment. He writes: "I never imagined that anyone would be so bold or sneaky or just plain comatose to bring in something this overtly foul. ...I had to go back and change my libertarian tune: You know what, guys? As it turns out, any song is not okay" (Michie, 1999, 100). Not surprisingly, this teacher felt stung as much by the colleague's negative reaction to the printed lyric as by his student's selection of it.

Teachers who are determined to use popular culture in the classroom may develop elaborate strategies to "fly below the radar screen," finding creative ways to use media and popular culture texts in the classroom without attracting the attention from colleagues or supervisors that could call these materials into question. For example, Callahan (2001) reports on a teacher who developed a high school elective course entitled "Media and Culture" who ordered copies of his book selection for students (*We the Media* by Hazen & Winokur, 1997) as a workbook instead of as a textbook to avoid having to get the book approved through the district's curriculum materials committee.

Feree (2001, 23) describes how cultural factors may influence perceptions of whether or not contemporary media and controversial social issues are appropriate in particular classrooms. In describing a British teacher who involved her students in scripting and producing soap operas with 12-year olds, she writes: "Their soap operas contained provocative topics, not only of unemployment, racism, and theft, but also of teen relations, pregnancy, and abortion...I was surprised that [the teacher] censured nothing and wondered if teachers in the United States would be comfortable allowing students to dramatize teen pregnancy and drugs." Scholars who champion the use of popular culture rarely (if ever) refer to the genuine risks that some teachers take when their curriculum choices do not reflect the normative values of the communities in which they work.

RECONCILING THE MULTIPLE REALITIES OF MEDIA EDUCATION

There is no shortage of theories about the promise of media and popular culture in education, but as Bazalgette, Bevort and Savino (1992, 3) point out, “the realities of teaching and learning are harder to define and share.” In reviewing accounts of practice of media education in more than a dozen countries, they emphasize that what is institutionally appropriate in one setting may not be so in another. It has been argued that such enormous diversity of philosophies and approaches towards classroom implementation of media literacy, like Solomon’s beard, is a prime source of strength for the future of the field (Hobbs, 1998a). However, those who include popular culture into the classroom must be responsive to what Masterman (1985, 24) has identified as the central objective: to “develop in pupils enough self-confidence and critical maturity to be able to apply critical judgments to media texts *which they will encounter in the future*” (italics in original). Teachers must design learning experiences that help students, as quickly as possible, to stand on their own two feet.

Media literacy privileges students’ ability to collectively reflect on their own interpretations and investigate how meanings are constructed through both analysis and practical production work. But the institutional nature of schooling proscribes a relationship between teacher and student that may encourage students to “play the game” and offer only those contributions deemed acceptable to the teacher’s world view and expectations. The institutional nature of schooling may demand that teachers adapt and modify this work to fit with the normative values of school culture and community values. As a result, teachers may encounter situations and experiences in using popular culture in the classroom that are not described in the scholarly academic literature, whose voices “demand that the repertoire of acceptable cultural objects be expanded” (Giroux & Aronowitz, 1991, 182).

The use of media and popular culture in the real-world arenas of classrooms is not for the faint of heart. Such work vitally depends on the courage and perseverance of the individual teachers who care about this work and recognize its value for students. While being inspired and motivated by a wide range of different understandings about the role of the mass media and popular culture in society, it is these dedicated professionals who, collectively, have the imagination and creativity to translate the possibilities of media education into meaningful educational realities for the students in their classrooms.

REFERENCES

- Applebee, A. (1996). *Curriculum as conversation: Transforming traditions of teaching and learning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. (1991). *Postmodern education: Politics, culture and social criticism*.

- Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Bazalgette, C., Bevort, J. & Savino, J. (Eds). (1992). *New directions: Media education worldwide*. London: British Film Institute.
- Buckingham, D. (1992). Media studies and media education. In M. Alvarado & O. Boyd Barrett (Eds.) *Media education: An introduction*. London: British Film Institute.
- Callahan, J. (2001). Teaching and learning of critical media literacy in secondary English classrooms. Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo.
- Feree, A. (2001). Soaps and suspicious activity: Dramatic experiences in British classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 45(1): 16-23.
- Hazen, D. & Winokur, J. (1997). *We the media: A citizen's guide to fighting for media democracy*. New York: New Press.
- Hobbs, R. (1998a). The seven great debates in media literacy education, *Journal of Communication* 48 (2): 9-29.
- Hobbs, R. (1998b). Media literacy in Massachusetts. In A. Hart (Ed.) *Teaching the media: International perspectives*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, (pps. 127 -144).
- Hobbs, R. (1993). How to use TV in class— Not! *Cable in the Classroom*, April: 12.
- Jackson, P. (1990). *Life in classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Masterman, L. (1990). *Teaching the media*. London: Routledge.
- Michie, G. (1999). *Holler if you hear me: The education of a teacher and his students*. Teaching for Social Justice Series. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Postman, N. (1969). *Teaching as a subversive activity*. New York: Doubleday.
- Sommer, P. (2001). Using film in the English classroom: Why and how. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 44(5):485-487.
- Stevens, L. (2001). *South Park* and society: Instructional and curricular implications of popular culture in the classroom. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 44(6): 548-555.
- Wei, D. (2002). Video in the classroom. National Video Resources. Accessed 27 September 2002. Available: <http://www.viewingrace.org/content.php?sec=essay&sub=4c>
- Williamson, J. (1981, Winter). How does girl number twenty understand ideology? *Screen Education* 40, Winter 1981: 83-84.
- Zill, K. (2002). Media literacy: Television meets the internet. *Multimedia Schools* 9(2): 24 – 28.
- Zirkel, P. (May, 1999). Showing R-rated videos in school. *NASSP Bulletin* 83(607):69 –73.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR RESEARCH IN MEDIA EDUCATION: MOVING OUR FIELD FORWARD

Robert Kubey, Ph.D.

Media literacy is at a critical point in its history, a time when research into our practice and the efficacy of media education is more important than ever. This is particularly true in the United States, where increasing numbers of citizens have at least now *heard* the term media literacy.

In 1999, Frank Baker and I were able to demonstrate that nearly all of the United States now have *some* media literacy elements in their Core Curricular Content Standards (Kubey & Baker, 1999). In other words, nearly all states now call on students to be able to analyze media messages, and not only in print, as was long the case.

As a result of these and many other developments in the U.S., the field is increasingly at the point where media education leaders are being asked by state educational leaders and legislators to dem-

ROBERT KUBEY is DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR MEDIA STUDIES AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM & MEDIA STUDIES, at RUTGERS UNIVERSITY in NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY. HE IS AUTHOR AND EDITOR OF NUMEROUS SCHOLARLY AND POPULAR PUBLICATIONS ABOUT MEDIA EDUCATION. HIS LATEST BOOKS INCLUDE *MEDIA LITERACY IN THE INFORMATION AGE: CURRENT PERSPECTIVES* AND *CREATING TELEVISION: THE FIRST 50 YEARS* TO BE PUBLISHED BY LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES IN 2003. DR. KUBEY HAS SPOKEN BEFORE, OR SERVED AS A CONSULTANT TO, MANY GROUPS INCLUDING THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL, CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP, THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY, THE FCC, BANFF INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FESTIVAL, SIP ITALIAN TELEPHONE, GETTY CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION, NICKELODEON AND MTV NETWORKS, AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES.

onstrate to the state's Department of Education or to testify to legislators in committee hearings about the efficacy and value of media literacy. In political and policy venues of this type, advocates for media education are expected to know what research evidence exists. My experience in the policy area has shown that although evidence exists, we must be able to confidently present data that supports our own well-established confidence that media literacy education is a boon to students.

A review of the research literature on the efficacy of media education has demonstrated to me that media educators have not done an adequate job in two critical areas. First, to my knowledge, we are not routinely collecting, updating, and sharing what research evidence *does* exist on the efficacy of media education. Indeed, I believe that this is a weakness in the field internationally as well, but nowhere is it more of an impediment than in the United States. If a good and comprehensive compilation of research evidence on the value and impact of media education has been collected, I am unaware of it.

Second, and closely related to the first point, is that I believe we need to be doing much more research on the effectiveness of media education than we are at present. As I proceed, I will suggest some of the topics that we might research. They aren't just about direct outcomes in the classroom. They also relate to what students, parents, and teachers think and feel about media education, and what their experiences have been.

Our field is still young and so some of these limitations are understandable. Fortunately, we are becoming increasingly successful in bringing media education to our schools. But as media education becomes better integrated into the curriculum, we will increasingly need to move to a more mature stage that draws on an established and evolving research base to guide programs and practices.

I will grant that educational practice, in general, often changes in the United States without an adequate basis in research. Whole language is only one of many examples that could be cited. It is not that whole language is either a good or not good way to teach reading and writing. The point is that many school districts adopted whole language approaches even though the data on its efficacy were scant at the time. Subsequently, many schools abandoned whole language, perhaps as hastily as they adopted it, again with limited research evidence.

But I believe that the nature of educational practice in the United States, and the many forms of resistance to media education, means that we have a special situation in the United States (Kubey, 1998), one that I believe demands even more research evidence than has been the experience in other English-speaking countries where media education has developed more successfully. Many of the same avenues and strategies that were successfully employed, particularly in Australia and Canada, can be successfully replicated in the United States. However, in my assessment of the U.S. situation, I have long believed that outcome research can play a particularly significant role in how well, how broadly, and how quickly media education diffuses here.

THE NEED FOR MORE AND BETTER EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The forms and nature of resistance to media education in the United States are greater than they are in many, or most, other countries. As Len Masterman has said, “In America, TV is seen to be a sort of infection, something that isn’t part of serious discourse. It would be more difficult to convince parents in the U.S.A. of the need and value of media literacy than in any other country. . . In American culture, I would find myself blocked off at every turn” (L. Masterman, personal communication, May 1992).

In my view, parents are more receptive now than they were 11 years ago when Masterman first shared his view with me. But the conditions remain different in the United States, and while a great deal of what has worked in developing media education in other countries ought to be tried here, I believe the U.S. education culture will be particularly persuaded by clear and compelling outcome data. Thus, we need more people working toward generating and disseminating such data.

We have more of an uphill battle here in the U.S. than elsewhere, and one of the critical moves we need to make is to strengthen our commitment to rigorous media education research, and to become more mature and strategic in how we present, disseminate and share our research findings.

Toward these ends, I believe a critical step that the National Telemedia Council might soon take—and this also can be an important task for the Alliance for a Media Literate America and other organizations—is to compile and publish a list of media literacy outcome studies on our

organizations' websites. This simple step would ensure that evidence of successful media education outcomes would be "at the ready" for our friends and colleagues, as well as for the various constituencies that we need to work with.

I assembled the beginnings of such materials four years ago as a bill was beginning to make its way through the Assembly and Senate here in New Jersey. The legislation calls (it's technically still alive) for media literacy teacher training in the state and once passed would fund the Center for Media Studies at Rutgers University to engage in that teacher training.

We produced "Media Literacy Fact Sheets" that we shared with legislators and our partners in supporting the bill. These fact sheets included citations to research articles. But in all honesty, it was not as comprehensively done as it would have been had there been more supportive evidence available. Some of what I compiled was distilled for more general consumption and can be seen at the "Youth, Media Education and Health" link on Center for Media Studies' website www.MEDIASTUDIES.RUTGERS.EDU and has also been included in our fliers for the New Jersey Media Literacy Project.

The legislation passed by unanimous vote through both the Education and Budget and Appropriations Committees of the New Jersey State Senate. I testified before both groups and filed the fact sheets with committee staff and referred to them in my testimony. But just as the bill came out of committee in early 2000, the country's economy began to falter. As happened elsewhere, a huge budget surplus in the state quickly became a multi-billion dollar deficit.

Timing is key to legislative success. As our bill worked its way through the legislature, the state capitol was also in turmoil because of personal financial allegations against the then acting-Governor. The scent of scandal led him to drop his bid for his party's nomination, something that he had a lock on only weeks before. During this time of financial and political turmoil, a great deal of legislation involving funding was held from the floor of the state Assembly and Senate. A bill advocating media literacy teacher training *did* pass the Assembly by a unanimous vote—but for one or two abstentions. However, appropriation of funding for the bill was stalled.

On a more positive note, the words "media literacy" have been added to the word "viewing" as the fifth area in our state's Language Arts Literacy Core Curricular Standards that call for students

to receive education and demonstrate proficiency (in “Viewing and Media Literacy”). The Center for Media Studies, in consultation with the state Department of Education, helped write the cumulative process indicators.

Today, many states are experiencing similar budget situations. Some states have the worst budgetary outlook they’ve had in 40 years; some, since the end of the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II. In this climate, it behooves those of us promoting educational reform and innovations in teaching to get our houses in even greater order than would have been the case just a few years back when the economic picture was more rosy, and “exuberant.”

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

A number of critical questions suggest hypotheses and guide inquiry into the nature and efficacy of media education. Does media literacy work? What proof is there that students are helped by it and learn from the instruction they receive, that they can do the many things that media literacy advocates promise it can accomplish?

Then there is the question of “curriculum displacement.” To convince parents, educators, legislators, and others that children need to learn how to analyze and criticize popular culture material from television, radio, film, newspapers, advertising and the Internet, is not always so simple. What will be left out of the curriculum they ask, what will media literacy replace? Many of us explain that nothing will be left out. Media literacy will be integrated with the existing curricula. But some skeptical folks will raise an eyebrow.

We must begin to address their legitimate concerns, ideally with data, when they ask, “Will media education undermine the traditional curriculum, with students analyzing advertising or moments from television shows in their English or Social Studies classes?” Media educators know from experience that media literacy instruction doesn’t pose such a threat. To the contrary, we know that media literacy education enhances teaching efforts in other areas, that it can be inspiring, life changing, and a general boon to education in myriad ways. But we need to more frequently ask ourselves *how* we know these things, and then find effective ways to communicate to others that what we know is verifiable and demonstrable via research.

So far the evidence is largely anecdotal. If media literacy education is going to move further ahead in the United States, and build on the successes we have already made, we must have a more comprehensive array of confirmatory research studies and lessons learned in the field that organize and compile what too often remain now as isolated, personal anecdotes. When called upon by a principal, a school superintendent, or a state educational policymaker, what will we deliver as proof beyond our passion and personal experience? We need to use research to document, across greater numbers of us (across greater numbers of cases), these sorts of experiences so that these experiences become compelling to those outside the field.

As the field of media education matures, we must also be increasingly prepared to share and publish findings that show the occasional holes in our armor. In other words, we must begin to test and share with greater frequency what hasn't worked. If we don't do this, we won't move ahead. We must become more public with our outcome research and what it tells us about the efficacy of our practice.

Admittedly, one of the biggest stumbling blocks is the lack of research funding for such studies. But we have to do what we can within our limited budgets, and find ways to pool resources, share data, and move ahead.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO MEASURING OUTCOMES

I know that well-meaning, dedicated media literacy educators have more than once called in an outside evaluator who brought in his or her own agenda of what should be learned, knowing precious little about the true goals of media education, and a less than positive report resulted than might have otherwise been the case.

It is completely understandable that if one has worked for months, and certainly for a number of years, on developing and refining a media literacy course or curriculum, that one will be reluctant to have an outside educational evaluation researcher come in, and potentially ask the wrong questions, evaluate the wrong processes, and come up with a conclusion that our media literacy curriculum did not work.

This needn't happen. There are an increasing number of researchers in the field who have demonstrated the knowledge base necessary to do a proper, authentic, assessment of media education practice. But the field needs many more individuals like this. There is a corresponding need for our professional organizations to commit themselves to helping interested practitioners find independent evaluators who know the ropes in media education. This, in my view, is another possible role for NTC and AMLA and other professional organizations to play. And there is also the role for those of us in college and university settings to train more masters and doctoral students coming out of education, media, and communication programs to know how to conduct authentic and meaningful outcome research in our field.

Professional researchers can provide the facts and figures we need as we move forward. Many people in the United States, both within and outside of education circles, are particularly keen on seeing evidence of results. This is not always a good thing, as we all know, particularly when education focuses around teaching-to-the-test *instead* of teaching with and for what students need and want to know. But measurement—including the measures used for standards-based education— isn't all bad. I realized this with regard to media literacy when I first visited a number of media literacy sites in England in 1993. I remember the late Andrew Hart explaining the positive impact he believed testing had had on media studies in Britain. In essence, Andrew reported—and I later corroborated this with other British media literacy advocates—that having testable standards had helped validate media studies and contributed to the legitimacy of media literacy work in the U.K.

MEASURING MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

I know first hand that media education phenomena *are* hard to measure, but it can be done. Consider what some people outside of media education circles think if they hear, as they might, that the outcomes that we seek to obtain with media education can't be measured? It makes what we do sound softer than it in fact is, and as a result, in some instances, we will not receive the support and funding that we are asking for. Mainstays of media studies such as critical thinking and questioning, student-centered production, and articulation of cultural theories involve complex skills and concepts, but are measurable nonetheless.

What are some of the testable phenomena that would tell us more about our own success rate and

practice? What study, or studies, would you cite to demonstrate the following:

- Do students understand more about media phenomena after they've received media education than before?
- Are students more able to critically analyze the media after receiving instruction?

And, perhaps most importantly for some constituencies—and this could be a gold mine in media education—does critical thinking around media phenomena *transfer* to critical thinking around non-media phenomena? It has long been my sense that if we can show that media literacy advances students' general ability to think critically we would be able to persuade others with much greater ease.

Certainly, since media literacy enhances critical thinking about the media and since most kids are spending upward of 5-6 hours a day in contact with television, film, radio, and the Internet, if they are thinking more critically during at least some, or a good deal, of that time then we are vastly increasing their practice at critical thinking in general.

THE NEED FOR QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

Dr. Renee Hobbs of the Media Literacy Project at Babson College (MA) and I launched a media education research book series with Lawrence Erlbaum Associates some years ago. To date we have published books (by Maire Messenger Davies, Andrew Hart, Kathleen Tyner, and by Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill) and we have a couple more books in the pipeline. But good as these books are, as much as they present serious, in-depth and very useful research in media education, I am disappointed that the field has not produced more articles in refereed media studies and education journals by this date, research based in empirical—and dare I say it—positivist methods that document the efficacy of media literacy practices. In short, if we are certain that media education works so well, we ought to have better data than we have with which to argue our point.

For years, I have heard from media literacy colleagues throughout the world that media literacy classes, especially ones that involve collaborative production work, are a transformative experience for many students, especially some of those who are close to dropping out of school around the ages of 13-15 or so. I hear, over and over again, and I believe it is true, that sometimes a student who has an unusual ability to analyze and/or produce media texts—whether they be television ads,

music lyrics, or movie images—suddenly has an opportunity to demonstrate his or her ability at age 15 perhaps, and for the first time receives accolades from her teacher and classmates for her intelligence and talent. This praise and recognition can be nearly life-saving to the student—that the student finally feels appreciated for an intellectual skill and ability when perhaps for the previous 10 years of schooling she has felt like a failure.

Some of this is documented in qualitative reports, but we don't have nearly enough of it. And we don't know how often it happens. And we could know much more about this both qualitatively and quantitatively. (Additional researchable areas assembled in 2000 by a group of media education and health education researchers and practitioners from a number of different countries and within the realm of media literacy and health education, are catalogued in a report entitled "Setting Research Directions for Media Literacy and Health Education" <http://www.mediaudies.rutgers.edu/mh_conference/index.html >.)

Here's another researchable question. What percentage of teachers, after delivering a media education class or course, report that their students responded positively, or that they observed that their students took a greater interest in other subjects as well, or that their attitude toward learning improved? These are all things that I've heard media literacy teachers from around the world remark upon. But how often or how broadly does this happen?

Nor do we know how often a language arts, health, or social studies teacher has a transformative experience as they engage in media education. I've certainly heard moving stories of how a teacher has become reinvigorated in his or her teaching upon infusing just one class with media literacy ideas and approaches. We need to document more of these stories, and learn how often they happen. And as importantly, even if they are not "transformed" (however we would want to document or measure that), what proportion of teachers would simply report that they have had very positive and rewarding experiences teaching media literacy?

It would be a powerful fact to have available, that across, say, five studies, with over 400 teachers, on average, 68% of new media literacy teachers reported having had good or very good experiences, or that 65% believed that their students had learned important lessons. And that this finding was supplemented with data that showed, say, that 70% of the students in these classes reported on anonymous surveys that they had had positive experiences or 72% believed that the

had learned valuable things. Better still would be data that documented actual improvement on a set of measures that showed that they indeed knew more about media production, media texts, and media audiences than they did, say, six months earlier.

In the evaluation that Gina Marcello Serafin and I did of the *Assignment: Media Literacy* curriculum that Renee Hobbs developed for The Discovery Channel, we found that 77% of the Maryland middle schoolers we studied agreed that they thought more critically about the media than they did at the beginning of the year (32.6% strongly agreed). Ability to give one or more correct answers assessing the target audience for a specific ad increased from 31% in fall to 60% in the spring (Kubey & Serafin, 2001).

All but one of 41 teachers surveyed, in an anonymous mailback survey, reported that they believed their students had become better critical thinkers. Eighty-five percent of teachers reported that they believed their students had become more enthusiastic about learning as a result of the introduction of media literacy. But, of course, this is only one study, with a particular group of teachers with a particular curriculum. We will want to increasingly show in detail that these changes indeed occur.

We certainly could quantitatively document much more than we do. How often, for example, do students believe that their media education activities in school have affected their thinking years later? We've all had the experience of a student telling us at the end of class, or a few months or years later, that they don't watch television, or movies, or ads, the same way after taking our course.

But with what percentage of students does this occur, and to what degree? I don't know, and I haven't seen attempts to document this. It deserves documentation.

We could also quantitatively document, much more than we do, how often parents report that their child is critiquing what he or she sees on television, that he or she tells them about camera angles, fades, dissolves, segues, teases, two-shots, slant and bias, stereotyping, foreshadowing, symbolism, target audience, market share, and so on. We need to more frequently and precisely document the very good results of our practice and use, in appropriate instances, standard social science techniques to do so.

Let me be clear. Qualitative methods are important, and incredibly useful and often the better way

to understand educational processes. Most of my media studies doctoral students at Rutgers use qualitative methods and not quantitative methods. And I believe in the spirit behind and the goals of authentic assessment, but I wish to debunk the notion held by some that qualitative research and authentic assessment can't also involve quantitative techniques or measurement.

When I was a graduate student in the social sciences at the University of Chicago back in the 1970s, we never made what I believe is largely a false distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. We were taught to know how to use and apply a wide variety of methods, whatever methods helped us understand, examine, analyze, and explore the phenomenon under study. We all knew that so called qualitative phenomena could also be studied quantitatively, and vice versa. There's nothing inherently wrong about using numbers, percentages, and statistics in trying to understand or describe something. The resistance to employing numbers in research is nearly tantamount to saying that one ought not to use particular letters or punctuation in writing up a research report. Numbers are merely symbols. Yes, they can be powerful symbols and yes, they can be misused, but so can language.

There's nothing inherently wrong with counting things, or looking for percentages. What percentage of students, after taking a media literacy course, say, at age 8 or 16, can answer a particular set of questions correctly after the course vs. how many could answer that same set of questions at the beginning? Yes, one can get into all manner of arguments about how we're going to operationalize what is a correct answer, and yes, it's a mistake to assume that there are always, or even very often, specific correct answers in the work we do in media literacy education. But to extend that to believing that there is absolutely nothing that could ever be counted or measured, or tested as to being correct or not correct, flies in the face of logic and reality.

Numbers and percentages, in the right hands—and, yes, in the wrong hands also—are powerful things. When data is only couched in case study, qualitative terms, policymakers in particular, legislators, and school administrators, at least in my experience in the U.S. context, will sometimes dismiss the study as not being more generalizable or true beyond the particular case. Case studies have their place and are critical, don't get me wrong. Both Piaget and Freud based virtually all their research in qualitative observation and not much at all in quantitative measurement, but that doesn't mean that there is never an appropriate time or place for quantitative methods that can supplement qualitative work.

For example, many of us are teaching students to recognize stereotypes or foreshadow-

ing or to think about target audience. Can't we assess whether the class understood these concepts after being taught about them? Would it be in-authentic to learn that none of the students or all of the students grasped the concept of foreshadowing or representation? Australian media educators Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahon have designed research methods for collecting and measuring such phenomena. U.S. researchers can as well.

We can measure what percentage of students could correctly identify one media production or media analysis technique in September when school began, then could do so in December or later, in June, as school is letting out. We can measure whether students can accurately identify target audience, techniques of persuasion, or the economic motivation lying behind particular approaches and techniques. We can measure whether our students can identify genre, slant, bias, or how one television or newspaper news story frames a story one way vs. another.

It's not as if no methods exist to clarify whether our students are truly learning certain concepts or that they are able to apply them. To claim to policymakers and funders that media literacy education cannot be assessed is inaccurate in my view and weakens our position, especially in the context of U.S. education practice.

I've spoken with legislators, to legislative and executive office staff, to foundation folks, and others and many of them want to see facts and figures and I try to give them to them, but I could do a better job at this, and so could others, I believe, if a handful of us in the field put our minds toward assembling, compiling, and reviewing research on a regular basis.

We have not begun to demonstrate the rich evidence of successful media education practice. There is a need to train graduate students in media studies and in education to do research and for practitioners in the field to collect and share facts and figures with greater frequency. The development of our field also critically needs greater acceptance and understanding within education schools, many of which are still only dimly aware of media literacy practice in this country or beyond. Once again, among the things that will help move education deans and faculty to take us more seriously is impressive outcome research that shows that media literacy works, is effective both in pure media education terms, but also in terms of stimulating interest in other subjects or improving students' abilities and skills to analyze non-media phenomena.

I'll be the first to admit that it is not easy to measure the efficacy of media education. And often,

in media literacy there is no right answer. Media education is often not about finding the right answer. But sometimes there is a right answer and we ought not to hesitate to evaluate and measure whether or not our students, after receiving instruction, can do what we say they can do.

We can begin by simply demonstrating that students are energized by media education and that classrooms become more exciting places and teaching becomes more relevant and fulfilling when media literacy work is being done. And that the students themselves and parents both notice positive changes as a result of media education practice. It is past time to more frequently collect these data and sing our own praises with the kind of evidence that will win us new allies, support, and acceptance in education circles and the broader society we wish to serve through our efforts in media education.

REFERENCES

- Kubey, R. (1998). Obstacles to the development of media education in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 48, 58-69.
- Kubey, R. & Baker, F. (1999, Oct. 27). Has media literacy found a curricular foothold? *Education Week*, p. 56.
- Kubey, R. & Serafin, G. M. (2001). Final evaluation of *Assignment: Media Literacy*: A Report to the Discovery Channel.

RELEVANCE AND RIGOUR IN MEDIA EDUCATION: A PATH TO REFLECTION ON OUR IDENTITY

Robyn Quin AND *Barrie McMahon*

“I LOVE A SUNBURNED COUNTRY,
A LAND OF SWEEPING PLAINS,
OF RUGGED MOUNTAIN RANGES,
OF DROUGHTS AND FLOODING RAINS.
I LOVE HER FAR HORIZONS,
I LOVE HER JEWELLED SEA,
HER BEAUTY AND HER TERROR
THE WIDE BROWN LAND FOR ME.”

(From My Country, a poem by Dorothea McKellar)

These words are recited in kindergartens and primary schools all over Australia. They are chanted by children who have never seen “the wide brown land” of the outback that is so central to the construction of the Australian identity. Poets, songwriters, novelists, artists, teachers, families, the

ROBYN QUIN IS PROFESSOR OF MEDIA STUDIES AND EXECUTIVE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AT EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

BARRIE MCMAHON IS AN ADJUNCT SENIOR LECTURER AT EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND CURRICULUM MANAGER, POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

QUIN AND MCMAHON HAVE CO-AUTHORED SEVERAL BOOKS ON MEDIA EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS.

clergy, journalists are all influential in constructing our sense of who we are, our sense of identity. However, it is the media which is the most active and arguably the most influential in forming, or attempting to form cultural identities.

Questions of identity and difference have become more and more prevalent in debates about the media and culture. This is because identity is problematic. The once secure concept of individual identity is, as a result of social, political and philosophical upheavals, under threat. Identity whether at the individual or national level, has become much more fragile now than in previous generations.

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not so sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural lifestyles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around you would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. "Identity" is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty. (1. Bauman, 1996. p. 19)

WHAT IS IDENTITY?

It is possible to think of the issue of identity in three phases.

In traditional, premodern societies, the identity of a person was fixed, solid and stable. Identity in such societies was a product of predefined social roles and a traditional system of myths which provided orientation and sanctions to define one's place in the world, while at the same time rigorously circumscribing thought and behaviour. In such societies identity was unproblematic and not subject to reflection or discussion. You knew your identity and it was unchanging. Moreover your identity was strongly linked to the group – the tribe, the clan, the family.

In modernity, identity becomes more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive and subject to change and innovation. Modernity is an epoch of rapid change, innovation, negation of the old and creation of the new. It is a process bound up with industrial capitalism, the democratic revolutions, urbanisation, and social and cultural differentiation. The forms of identity in modernity are still relatively substantial and fixed. Identity comes from a circumscribed set of roles and norms – father, son, professional, Australian, atheist, heterosexual and combinations of these.

Although the boundaries are continually expanding and there exists the possibility of creating new

identities they are still relatively fixed and limited. Nevertheless one can choose or remake identity in response to changes in life possibilities. The modern self is aware of the constructed nature of identity and that one can change or modify one's identity at will. Anxiety about identity therefore is a constituent of identity within modernity. How do you know you have chosen the right identity for yourself? Do others recognise and validate your identity? An identity crisis is only possible if you can conceive of alternative identities. Furthermore your identity in modernity is strongly linked to individuality – your own look, style, image.

In postmodernity identity becomes more and more unstable, more and more fragile. The discourses of postmodernity problematise the very notion of identity, claiming that it is a myth, an illusion. Postmodern theorists like Baudrillard argue that the autonomous, self constituting subject is fragmenting and disappearing in the face of a rationalised, bureaucratised and consumerised mass society and media culture.

Integral to questions of identity are issues of power. The ways in which relations of power and subordination are signified with media representations of sexuality, gender, race, and disability need to be set alongside questions of individual and cultural identity. Power is implicated too in questions about who or what groups have the power to define specific issues of identity whether this be the power of the news editor to include or exclude a story or the power of the film director to selectively represent heroes as white males.

Questions of power, identity and the media's role in the construction of identity have never been as critical as they are today. At the time of writing the preoccupation of Australians, as indeed most of the world, is terror. On 12 October, 2002, terror changed from being something that happened in other parts of the world, to something that happened in our own children's playground. Bombs tore through clubs in Kuta, Bali, the Mecca of young Australians who undertake an annual migration for end of season football trips, initiations into adulthood or simply to enjoy a place of cheap food, beer and funny mushrooms. About two hundred people died, including eighty eight Australians. The exact number of deaths will never be known. Like the attacks a year earlier in America, the terrorists had selected a target that had high symbolic significance for Australians and being a country with a small population, everyone (particularly in Western Australia) knew someone who was in Bali at that time.

If body counts are an indication of the size of a tragedy then Bali did not top the list in 2002. Earlier in the year a boat full of refugees on their way to Australia from the countries torn apart by terror, was sabotaged and sank drowning over 350 people. The extent to which Australian government agencies were involved in the sabotage is still unresolved. That story sank from the media as quickly as the children on the boat.

But Bali has meant more than the death of eighty eight individuals. It has produced insecurity, anxiety and prejudice in the populace. Many of the phrases that one heard immediately after the blast must have been similar to those that were heard by Americans immediately after 11 September:

“The world (or Australia) will never be the same again.”

“Howard (the Prime Minister) is to blame for putting us in jeopardy through his toadying relationship with America.”

“What are the next targets here at home?”

“Where is it safe to go for a holiday?”

“They (the terrorists) just need to take a good hard look at themselves.”

“Muslims just can’t be trusted.”

Bali is a cipher for fear, affront and outrage, grief and the premise for re-affirming our national identity. The poem about the sunburned country was read at memorial services by Bryan Brown, an Australian actor whose image captures the stereotype of the Aussie bloke – tall lean, flat accent and spare with his words. When he read *My Country*, there was no top or tail. The poem spoke for itself representing the identity we shared. The affirmation of the traditional and mythical Australian identity seemed to offer some comfort to those grieving the loss of the youthful victims.

MEDIA REACTIONS

There was of course, media saturation of the event. Like the terrorists who masterminded the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Bali bombers had done their ideological homework. They attacked symbols of western decadence in the Sari nightclub and symbols of Western hope – its

youth. The newspapers had eight to ten page wrap-arounds for all of the first week after the blast and the television news bulletins carried few other stories. Even now, three months later, the Bali bombings and their aftermath, dominate the front pages. Our experience of Bali, just as our experiences of September 11, indeed our understanding of the world, is 'mediated'. Just as the Australian media coverage of September 11 focussed on victims' shock, fatherless children and bereaved widows, the coverage of Bali has been largely restricted to the victims and the search for the arsonists. Just as the media seemed to have decided that critical analysis of the events leading to and from 9-11 was not only un-American, but potentially anti-American they have decided that critical analysis of Bali is un-Australian. This behaviour is neither new nor limited to the Australian media. Michael Galvin commenting on the Gulf War said:

Given the sophisticated military and mass communications technology made startlingly apparent during the Gulf War ... it is disturbing that some of the most important issues and events in that war went virtually unnoticed and that media distortions of historical reality occurred which would normally have been considered blatant propaganda ... One would have looked in vain in most of the Western media during the crisis to have found any sense that the conflict was any more complicated than a straightforward case of a belligerent bully picking on a defenceless and innocent neighbour, and thereby deserving to be thrown out violently regardless of how many lives might be lost in the process (Galvin, 1994, p. 184—5).

Despite these prior warnings that distorted news reporting is common in times of tension, however, there was little critical comment or self-reflection from the press and broadcasters about their coverage. As media educators we have to point out yet again that the media has constructed an enemy we can all attack in uncomplicated terms, the demon Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. But something else is going on in the Australian media wherein we have two enemies, two groups which generate fear and insecurity, Al Qaeda and Afghan refugees, those same people we were meant to be rescuing from terror.

Mainstream media coverage of Afghan refugees seeking asylum in Australia is a demonstration that if truth is the first casualty of war, dissent is the first casualty of terrorism (Green, 2002, p. 2). Dissent exists but it is stifled and the voices of those who support the Afghan refugees are not heard within the media. Far from being in a changed world as a result of firstly September 11 and later Bali, Australia appears to be rediscovering a very old version of its 1950s White Australia

Policy. The newspapers depict ASIO (our equivalent of the CIA) raids on local Muslim households, with guns held to the heads of young children. In the streets people are polarised by the tensions between human rights and national security. The role of the media in feeding and negotiating this tension is central. It is the forum that connects our agendas with those of others, that gives a loud voice to those with power and space to their views on what it is like to be Australian (and scant attention to other perspectives). Those with influence are the politicians, media stars, occasionally church leaders and the business tycoons.

The recent events have made the notion of what Australia is, what it stands for, what it will be, more pertinent now than perhaps ever before. The interaction between the people's historical perception of what it means to be Australian, their own experiences, their own historical cultural roots and the media representation of the events will result in a changed understanding of what it means to be an Australian. That instant reaction of people, that the country will never be the same again, is true in every sense, politically and culturally as well as in terms of security.

Our future, perhaps our survival, depends on how we respond to the challenge that is before us; to construct our identity in the post September 11, post Bali world. What sort of relationship do we want with America? With Indonesia? With religions, particularly Islam? Do we want an ethos of acceptance or will we settle for tolerance or regress into bigotry and hostility? Can we question our relationship with the United States without being accused of being Un-Australian?

In this context a priority for media education is to equip students with the appropriate tools to enter into the debate about the Australian identity. Some possible approaches to the issue of media education are discussed in the next section.

AN INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

An Outcomes Approach

The need is to develop an instructional model that will equip the student to make sense of her or his society and to be able to take an active part in that sense making process. At this point in our history we can focus this further by giving priority to the question of our identity – who we are, what we stand for and what we do to realise what we want to be.

This does not mean that our classroom lessons are forms of direct instruction on nationhood, citizenship, identity or catastrophic events. The transformation that is needed does not rest in the lesson content so much as with the concept development that lies behind the tasks.

Assessment Driven Instruction

The proposed instructional model is outcomes based and this means it is important to prioritise student assessment. If one is striving for explicit educational outcomes it is necessary to be able to identify the intended result and recognise its attainment. The assessment needs to be rigorous and true to the concepts that are inherent in the outcomes rather than focussed on the specific lesson content. Assessment models that emphasise content above conceptual outcomes and are content dependent run the risk of taking students on tangents that may or may not achieve the required outcomes.

The second important reason for ensuring that the outcomes approach is underpinned by quality assessment is to provide some assurance that the outcomes that are attained in a given classroom task give the student the types of transferable skills the student will need if there is to be an engagement in the types of debate that have been described. It is one thing to engage in the politics of a school media production, another to transfer the understandings gained into debate about one's own society.

Current Models

The media study activities that we currently undertake may well be the appropriate topics or content, but not all of the approaches that we debate in forums such as this, will help to address the issue that is currently paramount. It is worth encapsulating which approaches we currently use in media literacy, then considering which may be more appropriate if we are to equip young people with the wherewithal to engage in the debate about our culture and our society.

Media education developments, both across the world and within countries, have various aims and approaches. The various emphases include:

- an effects approach which assumes the media have a direct and observable effect upon consumers. Such an approach tends to focus on issues of media violence.

- a values based approach which assumes the media to be an agent antithetical to the development of moral values.
- A representational approach which assumes the media to communicate through complex symbolic systems.

Each of the approaches employs to various extents textual analysis, content analysis and media production though for different purposes. A methodology that will lead us to the sort of media criticism needed to assist in the formulation this new definition of the national self cannot embrace all of the approaches described above. It is proposed to use an approach that foregrounds critical skill development rather than one which prioritises a values or effects approach. Central to the approach is the question: How does the reader (viewer) make meaning? As it applies to media education this means a focus on:

- the media text,
- the context in which it occurs (including political, economic and policy contexts) and
- the positions that the reader brings to the text.

Text

Much of the application of textual analysis assumes that there are inscribed meanings in media texts and these are constructed according to given codes and conventions. Work in the classroom typically identifies and analyses the codes and conventions employed in new media.

A limitation of textual analysis is that the approach implies meaning resides within the text and only needs to be deciphered. The task for the student then is to follow the path created by the teacher in order to arrive at a predetermined meaning. The case for textual analysis gains strength in the study of advertisements. There is obviously an intention and the purpose is to lead the viewer to a predetermined end. However, even when there are such overt intentions, to ignore the positions that the viewer brings to the text denies the obvious – that the reader's attitudes to the advertised product, for example to a whisky commercial, will affect the meaning that is made.

Context

Study of the context will provide an added dimension to analysis. Though it is true that the text offers some preferred meanings, the context will affect the way in which the reader makes sense of the text. Contextual studies include the examination of the contexts of both time and space of production and consumption, including the historical, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

The historical takes into account the time, place and people associated with the text and what the reader knows about these. This will influence the meaning the reader makes of the text. The social includes the cultural references, justifications, and mythologies surrounding the text thus affecting the meaning the reader makes. By political we mean the extent to which the student connects with implied ideologies generated through the point of view, suggestions of competing ideologies, the value systems associated with portrayals of hero figures, stars and villains affects the meanings in media texts. The economic context includes student perception of the economic processes behind both the medium and text and the broader processes, such as globalisation, in which they occur.

Reader

The reader is also part of the sense making process. If one assumed it to be all there was to the process, that the reader can make any sense she wishes, there could be no effective communication, nor indeed media education. Texts are constructed to give preferred meanings. They occur in a given place at a given time but then it is the reader who negotiates the eventual meanings to her or him. Ethnographic analysis involves studies of the reader and his or her life and history necessary to understand the role of the reader in the construction of meaning.

The reader's cultural experiences will bear upon the meaning that is made. These will include outcomes associated with cultural mediation. They draw student attention to the range of cultural experiences, those deeply ingrained, which they draw from when they make meaning from media texts. The cultural experiences are likely to be most visible during contact with different groups such as play or sporting groups, family groupings, pastimes that are common, other media experiences.

The reading situation affects meaning. The student's own context at the time of reading the text

affects the meaning. For example, meaning may vary for the same text if it is read as part of a disciplinary school task than if it is read as part of Saturday morning viewing on television.

What the reader intends doing with the text, whether this is known or not, may affect the meaning that is made of the text. For example the meaning made by a student who finds some information on the web for a school assignment may vary if the same information was found on a random search of the web.

Negotiated Meaning

The concept of negotiated meaning is critical for the task that we have set which is to develop an approach to media education that engages in debates about our identity at a time when this is sorely needed. The fundamental purpose given the debate that we have prioritised is to develop in students this understanding of negotiated meaning so that they in turn are better able to take part in the process of negotiation about their own society. It is a sophisticated concept but if the pedagogy is appropriate can assist younger as well as senior school students.

A student who is able to use this approach will have an understanding of the process of sense making and the capacity to use this understanding in everyday engagement with the media. It is believed that there is sufficient flexibility in the proposed approach to accommodate many but not all of the approaches that exist to some extent in schools across the world.

The negotiated approach that is proposed, therefore, embraces textual analysis, contextual analysis and ethnographic analysis. Given the emphasis that has been placed on textual analysis over many years, it is not proposed here to elaborate on the classroom approaches that are used so effectively. Instead, we will elaborate on the other aspects of negotiated meaning, the context and reader.

When the student has an understanding of the processes that occur in the negotiation of meaning and can apply these processes in daily life there will be a greater capacity to constructively engage in the debate about our identity. This does not mean that every classroom activity in every day will be about cultural identity. The commonplace activities of media literacy programs will do the job. It is the methodology that sometimes will need to change, not necessarily the lesson content.

The issue in using the established approaches to address the new imperatives will be that of

concept transferability. Will the understanding that emerges from an analysis of a film, a media production activity, a visit to a newspaper, a journey through websites or exercises in audience analysis lead to some transferable skills that students can apply as they negotiate meanings and contribute as active citizens in the negotiations about the meaning of their own society? Providing the approach is consistent with the concept of negotiated meaning.

Application of the Approach

If concept transferability is the issue then we need a clear picture of the end point so that we know how to get there. An outcomes based approach, now generally accepted around the world as a pedagogical step forward will help. This approach still leaves a lot to chance. In our country, the constant plea of teachers, irrespective of their discipline, is for more help about getting to this end point, “How do I know it when I see it?”.

We therefore propose to go a step further. We will identify the outcomes that we are seeking then some indicators towards the achievement of those outcomes and provide examples of some assessment tools on specific activities for students that will illustrate some student progress towards the achievement of the outcomes.

There is a broad educational purpose and a specific media education reason for the additional focus on assessment instruments. In general terms we feel that assessment is the sometimes ignored dimension of the teaching, learning, monitoring and feedback cycle. In our experience, so often have we rushed to “get through the course”, that the reflective elements have been ignored. Assessment as we envisage it, has all of the dimensions, formative, summative, teacher, self and peer assessment. If the tools are well designed, then they will be understandable to all and can be used for all of these purposes.

The specific reason for focussing on assessment as part of media education takes us back to the different approaches that were referred to earlier. The richness of media study opens up the possibility of many tangents, some exciting, most worthwhile and all part of the learning process. Both during and after the learning journey, we need check points, some indicators of what our focus is and how we are progressing. Good assessment instruments, known by all in advance, will provide that direction.

A small international group has been working to develop a Media Literacy Learning Continuum

that in the first instance is for use by teachers, but then its content can be broken down into assessment instruments for classroom use. The approach identifies the broad educational outcomes then describes some indicators that can be used to gauge the achievement of the outcomes. The following is an overview of the Media Literacy Learning Continuum:

THE TEXT OUTCOMES

	IDENTIFICATION	INTERPRETATION	TRANSPPOSITION
ORGANISERS	THE STUDENT:	THE STUDENT:	THE STUDENT:
NARRATIVE	Identifies the narrative elements such as character, plot, setting	Demonstrates the variations in narrative patterns in different media	Connects narrative and cultural practice
DISCOURSE	Identifies codes and conventions used in media narratives	Demonstrates how codes and conventions shape the narrative	Uses codes and conventions to construct or deconstruct media texts
POINT-OF-VIEW	Identifies from whose point of view the construction is occurring	Shows how point of view is constructed and recognises changes to point of view	Connects the point-of-view and the preferred position it implies to own position on the subject matter
MEDIUM	Identifies key characteristics of a medium, such as television's potential for immediacy, computers potential for interactivity	Provides examples of how different media emphasise different narrative elements and use different codes and conventions	Takes into account a medium's characteristics in constructing or deconstructing

THE CONTEXT

	IDENTIFICATION	INTERPRETATION	TRANSPPOSITION AND REFLECTION
HISTORICAL	Is able to source texts and connect to related events	Connects history and text, to both content and medium	Uses historical understandings in understanding the process of making meaning
SOCIAL	Makes the connection between the construction of texts, their contexts and the societies in which they are produced and consumed	Demonstrates an understanding of the complex and overlapping social or cultural groupings which affect the generation of texts and the ways in which they are read	Draws from knowledge of social and cultural groupings and one's own complex social situation in analysing the meaning that s/he constructs
POLITICAL	Recognises that media texts comment on and are part of our political processes	Explains one's own political position and the contextual influences on that position	Uses a political analysis as part of the sense making process
ECONOMIC	Knows what type of organisation produced the text and for what purpose	Demonstrates an understanding of the ways in which media interconnect nationally and globally	Uses knowledge of local and global politics and economics to understand the process of making meaning

THE READER

	IDENTIFICATION	INTERPRETATION	TRANSPPOSITION AND REFLECTION
CULTURAL EXPERIENCES	Identifies some experiences that are brought to the text	Explains how own cultural experiences have affected the construction of meaning in given	Uses knowledge of the interplay of own cultural experiences as reader and the text when making sense
THE READING SITUATION	Describes different reading situations and hypothesises how these may affect the reading of a text	Provides examples of ways in which different reading situations have affected their meanings	Takes into account the reading situation when making sense of texts
INTENDED USE	Identifies how the text will be used	Provides examples of how different uses will affect the meaning	Takes into account the intended use of a text when making meaning

The three phases that are used in the Media Literacy Learning Continuum of identification, interpretation and transformation and reflection are considered to be the stepping stones that students will use through their various educational journeys. This world map of the journey is then broken down into the regional maps, the indicators. There are three levels of indicators each identification, interpretation and transformation. The assessment model that follows provides examples of these indicators.

ASSESSING A MEDIA TASK

No matter how sound a conceptual model may be, unless it can be built into everyday classroom use, it will be of no value to media education. The following provides an example of the above model that is being used in one Western Australian classroom. It is intended for use by the year 11 class (16 year olds) at North Lake Senior Campus, Western Australia (see endnote). The students' achievement contributes towards their State accredited Senior School Certificate. The example has been chosen because it is an exercise that would be common in many classrooms in many countries.

The Production Task

Students will work in small groups to plan, script and produce a short video documentary. The focus is on an issue that is topical and suited to a school audience. The task will address the outcomes in the new Course of Study known as Media Production and Analysis. This Course of Study specifies that the work must address the following outcomes:

- Students use critical awareness and cultural understanding to generate media that communicate ideas, meet human needs and realise opportunities.
- Students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies to create media works appropriate to audience, purpose and context.
- Students use their critical, social, cultural and aesthetic understandings to respond to, reflect on, evaluate and develop their media works.
- Students understand the role of media in society when generating and responding to media.

These Course of Study outcomes are a synthesis of the outcomes outlined in the Instructional Model described in this paper. The Course of Study outcomes connect in at the higher levels to the mandatory Curriculum Framework for the State of Western Australia.

The key knowledge to be developed in this student exercise covers form, narrative, codes and conventions, point of view, representation and values, reader's cultural experiences, cultural context, institutions and constraints. Drawing from the Media Literacy Learning Continuum in the instructional model described, indicators at the top end of the Media Literacy Learning Continuum scale, levels 4 to 8, were described. As a test of their classroom applicability, these were framed as "I can..." statements; statements that could be understood and used by students for their self assessment, peer assessment or for assessment by the teacher. The intention is that these are part of the students' portfolios so that they can be used as a monitoring tool by the students as they progress on the task. For the sake of brevity, only levels 4 and 8 are shown in this paper, to illustrate the range in sophistication expected across the levels 4 to 8.

INDICATORS FOR TEXT

Narrative, Discourse and Point of View

Level 4:

I can edit a sequence involving images, sound and text

Level 8:

I can manipulate images and sound to suit my purpose, to persuade the audience to accept my point of view

Medium and Narrative

Level 4:

I can use established documentary techniques

Level 8:

I can recognise various styles of documentary and choose and adapt what is best for my purpose

Medium and Narrative

Level 4:

I can plan a documentary for a particular target audience and choose techniques that will create meaning

Level 8:

I know how to attract particular audiences and am sensitive to how the audiences' cultural experiences shape their response

INDICATORS FOR CONTEXT

Historical

Level 4

I can connect historical events to the time and place a text was produced

Level 8

I can use my knowledge of social and cultural history to make personal sense of a text

Socio-Cultural

Level 4

I can explain some of the social and cultural influences that help me make meaning of a given text

Level 8

I can identify socio-cultural contexts that add to the complexity of the meanings I construct

Political/Economic

Level 4

I can explain the functions, purposes and costs of organisations

Level 8

I can recognise the political and economic constraints on a media production and use my knowledge of power relationships to enhance my own influence

INDICATORS FOR THE READER

Cultural Experiences

Level 4

I can identify how my own cultural experiences help me to make sense of a text and recognise that other people's meanings may be different

Level 8

I can recognise factors that influence how other people make meaning and can draw from my own cultural experiences to generate my preferred meaning

Reading Situation and Intended Use

Level 4

I can identify the purpose of a text and how meaning is shaped by where it is experienced

Level 5

I can demonstrate how I can change meaning by changing the purpose of a text

Level 8

I can illustrate how my knowledge of texts and their purposes can be connected to make my own meaning and their influence of production

CONCLUSIONS

The real test of media education program is whether the theory behind the course design can be translated into recognisable student understandings. The understandings that students gain need to be transferable from the immediate task before them to other tasks and situations. The immediate task may be quite local, perhaps inconsequential in a world view but what the student gains from the task needs to be usable by the student as she or he engages with the bigger issues in society, for example the cultural fallout from a trauma such as Bali.

It would be inappropriate in most classroom situations to launch immediately into a media analysis of a tragedy such as Bali, the conflation of this with other significant events such as Australia's treatment of refugees then to connect this to the struggle about our identity. Our children are still mourning the losses as most would know someone who was killed or injured there or the teachers who were killed and there were also many students in Bali at the time. Without some analytical skills such as those that have been described, the lessons would degenerate into some of the worst forms of textual analysis in which the task is to recognise the teacher's perspective on Australia's identity.

These analytical skills can be developed by adjusting the commonplace media activities which already have relevance so that they become rigorous in the outcomes they pursue and the assessment that provides evidence of those outcomes. If this is to occur, we must be clear about the intended outcomes and be clear and precise about our assessment and monitoring processes. The expected end result is a student who is an active participant in the dialogue with the media and who is able to see what is at stake in that dialogue. The model proposed addresses the types of skills that will be needed at stages of development from identification, interpretation towards transformation. The question of the effectiveness of these transferable skills when they are applied to matters of great national moment, has not been addressed and it is felt that this is a worthy topic for further investigation.

NOTE

Annette Tomov, a media studies teacher at North Lake Senior Campus, Western Australia, worked with Barrie McMahon and Jan McMahon to develop the indicators that are most appropriate for the media activity in her classroom.

REFERENCES

- Bauman, Z. (1996). *From pilgrim to tourist*. In S. Hall and P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity*. London:Sage.
- Galvin, M. (1994). Victory in the gulf: Technology, communications and war. In L. Green & R. Guinery (Eds.), *Framing Technology: society, choice and change* (pp. 176-190). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Green, L. (2002). Did the world really change on 11 September 2001? *Australian Journal of Communication*, 29 (2), 1-14.

PART FOUR

MEDIA EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

FROM THE MARGINS COME GREAT THINGS:

MEDIA TEACHING IN NEW ZEALAND

Geoff Lealand

In 2002 the citizens of New Zealand (3.9 million of them) basked in the glow of unprecedented international attention. In the past, the gaze of the world has occasionally been drawn the way of this isolated, Pacific Island nation. Usually it has been in the result of sporting successes, but unfortunately the pride of the nation can no longer always rely on our rugby heroes, the All Blacks. They have lost too many international matches recently—worse still, most of them to our closest neighbour, Australia.

This time, it has been a consequence of the remarkable global success of a trilogy of films shot in New Zealand. The three films of *The Lord of the Rings* (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, released in November 2001; *The Two Towers*, released in November 2002; *The Return of the King*, to be released in November 2003) are now returning a box office in excess of \$US one billion made in a country whose annual GDP is around \$NZ 75 billion (or around \$US40 billion, in January 2003). The *LOTR* trilogy, directed by New Zealand film-maker Peter Jackson and shot exclusively against New Zealand backdrops (or computer-manipulated versions of landscapes created by Jackson's Weta Productions) now occupy a central place in the New Zealand consciousness. The global success of the films is a matter of great national pride.

GEOFF LEALAND TEACHES IN SCREEN & MEDIA STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO, IN THE NORTH ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND. HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE CHILDREN AND MEDIA, TELEVISION STUDIES, MEDIA EDUCATION, THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK (WITH HELEN MARTIN) IS *IT'S ALL DONE WITH MIRRORS: ABOUT TELEVISION* AND HE IS NOW WRITING ABOUT RUNAWAY PRODUCTIONS (FILM AND TV) IN NEW ZEALAND.

It seems almost irrelevant that in respect of the conventions of national cinema (narratives of national identity, local accents, familiar local faces), the *LOTR* films are not New Zealand films. They are financed by New Line Cinema, the lead roles are taken by British, American and Australian actors, and the food-chain ends at the doorstep of the media giant AOL Time Warner, the parent company of New Line. Nevertheless, Jackson is ensured of a good cut of the profits and is using some of these to build a large film studio in his home city, Wellington. New Zealanders are now looking to others to repeat the success of *LOTR*, but these are likely to be few and less momentous (for example, the New Zealand film *Whale Rider* winning the People's Choice Award at the 2002 Toronto Film Festival). More and more 'runaway' productions are using New Zealand as backdrops; Tom Cruise's new film *The Last Samurai* began shooting in Taranaki, on the west coast of the North Island, in January 2003.

For all this international success, making New Zealand films (modest efforts, not funded offshore) remains a very risky business, as they capture only a sliver of the New Zealand b.o. and some fail completely. At the same time, state-owned Television New Zealand is being instructed to reconsider the commercial imperatives which have prevailed for the past fifteen years (maximising audiences and financial dividends) to return to clearer 'public service' objectives to television. But what 'public service' television means these days is poorly articulated and significant change is still to be realised.

This state of flux and change allows media teaching in New Zealand to thrive. The media environment in New Zealand is all about balancing one demand against another: the global against the local; social objectives against commercial pressures; the new against the old; observing the partnership between Pakeha and Maori (and an emerging multiculturalism); and finding a space for media teaching amid other curriculum demands. In recent years, teachers of media in New Zealand have been greatly advantaged through well-planned, official policy developments. There are the well-established Visual Language strand of the National English Curriculum, Media Studies as Unit Standards on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and the new National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). In addition to these formal structures, there are support systems for teachers (professional development workshops, for example), evidence of political support (the current Minister of Broadcasting is a former Media Studies lecturer), and more locally-developed resources.

Media teaching in New Zealand is in a period of vigorous growth, across all sectors of the education system, and may well be unique in the world in providing national guidelines for media teaching in secondary schools. With some legitimacy, New Zealand can claim leadership in equipping students for the new millennium, helping them find their place as both members of global culture networks and citizens of a particular place in the world. There are still significant problems, such as the neglect of media teaching training in schools of education, extra work for over-stretched teachers, and the absence of a national media education curriculum. But the latter does not deter teachers from developing their own teaching programmes and sharing experiences. In many ways too, the national assessment frameworks (Unit Standards and NCEA) provide a 'virtual' national curriculum.

Those New Zealand teachers who have developed Media Studies programmes most often model their programmes on the British Film Institute key concepts, or variations of these—as in the MIGRAIN mnemonic provided in the UK English and Media Centre *Media Magazine* December 2002:

Media Language

Institution

Genre

Representation

Audience

Ideology

Narrative

Examples of teaching are also drawn from Australia and Canada, and leading media texts from these countries are widely used, but media education developments in the United States offer very little for New Zealand teachers. Teaching programmes there are too scattered or under-developed, with little sign of a common purpose in the ideological warfare which rages amongst the various factions. Since September 11, the United States also seems to have become more insular and less willing to take guidance from abroad; it continues to export the stuff (films, TV programmes, computer games, popular music, magazines and books) which provide the material for media analysis, but very little advice on how to teach about it.

In addition to developments in New Zealand secondary schooling, there has been considerable growth in media-related courses and qualifications in the tertiary sector, variously called Media Studies, Film Studies, Communication Studies or Broadcasting. The connections with initiatives in secondary schooling are not always seamless, but there is a good level of informal interaction between sectors, through the National Association of Media Educators (NAME). University and polytechnics are recruiting new staff and more students. In my own Department of Screen and Media Studies at the University of Waikato, we are experiencing exponential growth in student numbers (from a total student body of 12,000) and increased retention. Our motto is “Creativity and Criticism in the 21st Century”, and we place great weight on integrating ‘old’ and ‘new’ media, balancing hands-on experience and theoretical understanding, and providing both space for the prior learning of our students, whilst providing them with new ways of seeing and understanding.

I speak from the experience of ten years teaching in this department, which has grown from 2.5 staff when I joined in 1992, to more than 13 in 2003. I have also spent these years working closely with colleagues in other institutions, and with teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. What advice can I offer, based on these experiences?

I can, for example, draw on recent encounters with students new to the game (first year students) and graduate students who have acquired varying degrees of knowledge. I coordinate our large first-year course *The Media in Society*, with 260 students in 2002. One incident in this course in 2002 provides a cautionary tale about the occasional perils of media teaching, when one of my colleagues provided a lecture in *The Media in Society* on the political and social history of the internet. Along the way, he described the attempts by the Chinese Government to filter and censor internet traffic. At the end of the lecture, he was assailed by a cluster of Chinese students, who were shaking in rage that he could speak of ‘our government’ in these terms. The non-foreign students who observed this incident looked very bemused and I was left a little dumb-founded.

On other occasions, some students have regarded my take on the media as radical, and perhaps a little dangerous. I do think it is a mistake to assume that students will always come to media analysis with an open and generous spirit; they are just as likely to display a range of set or banal attitudes e.g. *Films are just entertainment* or *The news is an objective report of what is happening in*

the world. The ‘media savvy’ teenager certainly exists, but there are just as many ‘media naive’ teens who end up in our classes. It is a source of great pleasure to begin to see these students open up during the weeks of the course, and begin to think in different ways. There is a danger, however, that they can swap one set of fixed beliefs (the prejudices of their peers and parents) for another set of beliefs (those which will ‘please teacher’). This can happen but, more frequently, students begin to follow the recommended route of developing their own critical awareness, using established frameworks of analysis and explanation. From the very first lecture, they are told “There are *no* right answers in this course”, even though there are a set of ‘rules’. These include;

STUDENT RULE 1: Because there are no ‘right answers’, teaching is about encouraging understanding the so-called ‘natural’ structures, processes and products of the media. *Analysis* and *interpretation* are the key words.

STUDENT RULE 2: Understanding and interpreting the media demands special skills and sustained intellectual effort. Students need to be able to cope with complex theory and practical skills, and appreciate the connections between the two.

STUDENT RULE 3: Talking about and writing about the media requires the use of appropriate language. This implies a familiarity with the technical and specialised language of the media, but also the avoidance of *inappropriate* language. We tell students to avoid words like *rubbish* or *crap*, or phrases such as *lowest common denominator*. Such language says more about the writer or speaker than anything instructive about the media. I am also thinking of banishing *cool*, a word that says everything but says nothing!

STUDENT RULE 4: Critical analysis of the media should be the primary purpose of media teaching, but critical does not mean always trying to find fault. It also means pursuing increased appreciation and sophisticated understanding—and the intense pleasure which can result from such understanding.

These rules (not a complete list) determine the purpose and outcomes of media teaching as it should be. There ought to be some rules for teachers, too, and these would include:

TEACHER RULE 1: Regularly reflect on your own prejudices, biases and predispositions, and

how these might shape your teaching. Media teaching is seldom value-free and can often be deeply political. Your role is not to propagandise, inoculate nor protect; it is to lead students to greater understanding and appreciation. There is little point, for example, in teaching about television if you don't watch much, or have very fixed ideas about its cultural value (keeping in mind Roland Barthe's dictum that *To be a critic, you also have to be a fan*).

TEACHER RULE 2: Introduce your students to the unfamiliar (difficult media texts, foreign language films, the sacred and the profane), but also constantly engage with the familiar (the media your students derive pleasure from). This will mean there will be learning on both sides if the 'prior learning' of students is given the respect it deserves. You should introduce students to the ideas of Chomsky and McChesney, but also confront the pleasures of Eminem and Ozzy Osbourne.

TEACHER RULE 3: Accept the likelihood that students will often be more adept with new technology (computer editing, the Internet, text messaging) than you, and that conventional teacher-student power relationships will sometimes be reversed.

These general rules serve well to ensure media teaching that will be satisfying for all participants. They also provide a good structure for studying and understanding media as we know it now (terrestrial and satellite television, feature films, the internet, computer games, the compact disk) but also whatever might come along in the near or distant future. This is because the style of media teaching I favour addresses, in equal proportions, the *how* questions (Where does such technology come from? How does it work?), the *why* questions (Why is such technology needed? Why is it centred in the Western world?), the *who* questions (Who owns it? Who uses it?) and the *what* questions (What impact does such technology have? What does it all mean for us as individuals, and society?). There must always be a careful balance between practice (hands-on training) and theory. Practice must inform theory; theory must inform practice.

One of the greatest pleasures of media teaching is that it demands an agile and highly flexible attitude to life and learning. Modern media is very 'slippery' —ever-changing and fluid—and media teachers need to constantly unpack and re-pack their cultural baggage. What you taught last year may not work this year. You will doubtless encounter many moments when students will fail to share your passion or concerns about aspects of the media. You need, for example, to teach

why knowing about media ownership is vitally important, as well as enlightening them about the complex networks of ownership. Furthermore, I believe the future is very bright, and the need for media teaching will grow and not diminish, as media concentration accelerates and technology becomes even more intrusive. Such knowledge is more powerful than strategies of prohibition or censorship.

I also believe there will be some wonderful students along in the coming years. In 2002, I revisited my research on New Zealand students aged 8-14 year olds and their use of media in their homes. We surveyed and talked to more than 800 children in twelve local schools, and in one of these (a lower income, inner-city school), we recorded the following conversation between two Maori girls, both aged eleven:

Researcher: If there was anything you could change about the media (film, TV, computers), what would it be?

Girl 1: I'd change all those things that give me nightmares.

Girl 2: You'd have to change the world, not just TV!

I look forward to having these two thoughtful girls, and others like them, in my lecture theatres and tutorials in a few years' time!

THE MEDIA EDUCATION NETWORK IN HONG KONG AND KEY TRENDS OF WORLD COMMUNICATION

Dr. Alice Y. L. Lee

In 1997, Hong Kong was returned to China and was transformed into a Special Administrative Region under the “one country, two systems” model. As a post-colonial society, Hong Kong is characterized by social displacement, confusion over cultural identity, and struggle for political, economic and cultural liberation. With all these upheavals, the media environment has been rapidly deteriorating. The changing media environment fostered the development of media education. In a very short period of time, media education has gained momentum in this former British colony and by 2003, more than 200 schools and organizations in Hong Kong have conducted media education programs.

Comparing with other countries, Hong Kong is unique in its development of media education. In some countries such as Argentina and Israel, media education is encouraged by the educational authority and takes the form of a vertical “top-down pattern.” In other countries such as Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines, media education is advocated by one or two enthusiastic organizations and its development pattern resembles a “spoke wheel,” which means that media education programs

ALICE Y. L. LEE IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM OF THE HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY. HER RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE MEDIA EDUCATION, ONLINE NEWS MEDIA, NEW MEDIA AND SOCIETY, AND INFOMEDIA LITERACY. IN THE PAST TEN YEARS SHE HAS CONDUCTED MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH IN CANADA AND HONG KONG. DR. LEE HAS PUBLISHED JOURNAL ARTICLES ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE. SHE WAS ALSO A CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR FOR SEVERAL LOCAL MEDIA EDUCATION CURRICULUM KITS. SHE IS NOW THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF MEDIA EDUCATION.

are generated and promoted by a powerful center. However, media education in Hong Kong is a multi-source voluntary grassroots movement and it expands more like a network. The development of media education in Hong Kong takes the form of what I call a “networking pattern” (Lee, 2002).

From the screen education in the 1960s to the media literacy training in the 2000s, media education has developed for more than 40 years. So far there have been a lot of discussions on ‘why’ and ‘how’ media education should be taught in classrooms and communities. However, few studies were conducted from a macro perspective to see the developmental pattern of media education in a particular region or country. This article attempts to achieve two objectives. The first is to put forward a conceptual framework of “networking model” to describe the development of media education movement in Hong Kong. The second objective is to examine how the media education network in Hong Kong responds to the challenges imposed by the three key trends in world communication, namely digitalization, commodification and globalization.

THE NETWORKING MODEL OF MEDIA EDUCATION

Like the environmental movement, feminist movement, human rights movement and consumer movement, the media education movement in Hong Kong is a new social movement that puts emphasis on bringing about change in social values and developing alternative life-styles. The media education movement stresses informal networking and grassroots participation (Dufour, 1990). Similar to other new social movements, its organizational structure is usually described as loose, informal, ad hoc, discontinuous, small-scale and decentralized. This tendency is due to its anti-authoritarian ideology and its close proximity to the grassroots. Mobilization of a new social movement depends heavily upon preexisting private social networks. Strong friendship ties are especially important to help motivate commitment and sustain membership (Lee, 1997). In Hong Kong, the bottom-up media education movement shares the characteristics of other new social movements, particularly their networking organizational structure.

In Hong Kong, media education initiatives come from different sectors of the society. Institutions that are interested in promoting media education include primary and secondary schools, universities, youth organizations, religious organizations, media professional groups, social welfare organizations, media concern groups, educational institutions, government departments, legislators’ offices and media organizations. All the interested organizations interact with each other and have

formed an informal network of media education, like casting a net. Each organization serves as one of the nodes of the net. For those organizations that are richer in media education experience or resources (such as the Hong Kong Association of Media Education, the Breakthrough Youth Organization, the Society of Truth and Light and the government-supported EduCity), they become the hubs of the network. These hubs are responsible for leading the movement and giving support to other smaller organizations to launch individual media education programs.

To understand how the media education network functions, we can analyze the following aspects: (1) The laying of the network (the social forces and agency efforts); (2) The status of the network (the nature and size of the participating organizations); (3) The hubs of the network (the leadership and support); (4) The communication of the network (the linkages among participating organizations and the sharing of resources); and (5) The expansion of the network.

After the 1997 handover, Hong Kong has faced unprecedented economic crisis. There are basically no direct official resources allocated to the development of media education while indirect supports through various educational funds are also limited. The effective launching of the media education movement depended very much on how to maximize the available funding for teacher training and curriculum development. Therefore, the informal media education network formed by academics, social activists, schools and representatives from various organizations becomes essential to the development of media education program in the territory. Through the linkages among the organizations and individuals, media educators can share information, curriculum materials, ideas, resources and expertise. The network enables media education to flourish with limited financial and human resources.

THE DIGITALIZATION OF WORLD COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA EDUCATION

Since the 1990s, digital communication technologies have rapidly changed the communication landscape of human society. The emergence of the Internet fosters the convergence of the old and new media and we can now watch television and read newspapers online. The younger generation is basically born with computers, and the new digital media will very soon become what Marshall McLuhan called the “the dominant medium” of the epoch.

In the new millennium, following the world trend, Hong Kong has entered the digital age. A recent study finds that 90% of the youth between 10 to 29 years old have access to the Internet (Breakthrough, 2003). This group of young Internet users spends an average of three hours daily online. Even for very young children, the new media are moving to the center of their daily entertainment. A survey on primary school students' media use indicates that playing computer games and going online just comes second to watching television (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002). It is expected that in a few years, the digital media will replace television and become the primary media consumed by children and youth in Hong Kong.

As youth people in Hong Kong have dived into the digital world, there is growing concern about their use of the new media. Survey results indicate that 70% of the Hong Kong parents do not have the information needed to help their children make appropriate choices on the Web (Ming Pao Daily News, 2000). Moreover, the phenomenon of "Internet addiction" also exists in Hong Kong. Researchers in the United States and Korea have been examining the "addiction" problems that include cybersex, cyber-relation, information overload, online game, net compulsion on gambling or shopping. In Hong Kong, a survey shows that around 15% of young people have the tendency of "Internet addiction." Among all kinds of "Internet addiction," online "game addiction" is the most prevalent one (Breakthrough, 2003). Other studies also find that local school students become less interested in interpersonal communications and group games (Sing Tao Daily, 1999). Moreover, more and more young people are going to cyber cafés to spend their spare time (Wan, 2002). In fact, a number of international studies on computer games have pointed out that most of the online games contain violence and they cultivate aggressive behavior in children (Funk & Buchman, 1996; Karl, 2001). There are also calls for cultivating young people's digital literacy and Web wisdom which guide them to better use the online media and critically evaluate Web information (Alexander & Tate, 1999; Gilster, 1997).

Media educators in Hong Kong fully realize that children are now growing up in a changing media environment. As communication technology goes digital, media education should also expand its scope to cover online media. Therefore, local media education advocates are eager to develop young people's "infomedia literacy" (Lee, 1999). However, since most school teachers, parents and even media education advocates are inexperienced in handling the new media, they depend on the informal media education network to exchange information, share resources and establish partnership to promote infomedia literacy.

Early in 1999, nine local secondary schools joined together to develop three volumes of media education textbooks in which Internet literacy was one of the key topics. The textbooks were put into classroom practice in these nine schools. University professors also joined this textbook project by sharing their knowledge on the Internet and conducting a survey on students' ICQ behavior. They also contributed by developing curriculum materials to teach students how to critically consume their idols' websites. The Hong Kong Association of Media Education (HKAME) then did a follow-up ICQ workshop to further update school teachers' knowledge on new media usage. In 2000, the Breakthrough, a local youth organization, launched a two-year large scale media education program called "Media and Information Literacy Education" (MILE). Apart from cultivating traditional media literacy, the MILE put great emphasis on information literacy. First of all, Breakthrough lined up university professors to give lectures on information literacy for school teachers. Then they developed a media education kit entitled "Media and Information Literacy Education Guidebook." Breakthrough established partnership with 16 secondary schools to use the kit in the classrooms to enhance school children's infomedia literacy. Copies of the kit are also distributed to more than 150 schools that affiliate with Breakthrough.

Liu Po Shan Memorial College is one of the secondary schools that joined the partnership network program to use the kit. A total of 200 Grade 9 students from this school participated in the project and learned how to collect and evaluate information, mostly from the Web. The methods included the mind map exercises and the START (Scope, Treatment, Authority, Relevance, Timeliness) Information Evaluation Program. Teresa Shiu, the school teacher who was responsible for introducing the teaching kit to the Liu Po Shan Memorial College, said her students realized that there was so much information on the Web and they understood that it was necessary to develop strategies to discriminate the good from the bad (Shiu 2003).

Breakthrough established a youth website like Uzone21.com to help students better use the Web. Breakthrough also linked up with the Society for Truth and Light, a local religious organization, to set up a resource center on Media and Information Literacy Education. In fact, the Society for Truth and Light has also established partnership with 122 schools to conduct 280 workshops for their students' parents (Chan, 2003). A large number of the workshops are about cyberrisk. The staff members of the Society teach parents how to handle their children's Internet consumption.

Media education advocates in Hong Kong strongly believe that in the digital age, it is important to address the need of cultivating young people's healthy consumption habit of the new media. The

infomedia literacy programs are conducted not only for students and teachers but also for parents. As home entertainment has gradually played a central role in local people's leisure activities, family becomes a new site of struggle for media education. Grounded in classroom realities and family realities, local media educators will continue to use the local media education network to explore future strategies in response to new communication technologies.

THE COMMODIFICATION OF MASS MEDIA AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR MEDIA EDUCATION

In the early 20th century, Adorno and his Frankfurt School peers had already paid attention to the commodification of cultural products including the media. His classic work *The Culture Industry* (Adorno, 1991) is still widely read by media educators. Over the decades, the trend of commodification has not stopped but accelerated. After Habermas' (1989) lament of the erosion of the public sphere due to the increasing commercialization of the mass media, Bourdieu (1998) accuses commercial television of contributing to the deterioration of civilization.

The mass media in Hong Kong can hardly escape from the tyranny of commodification. After the handover in 1997, the Hong Kong media turned apolitical and market-driven journalism took over. While profit-making becomes the primary goal of media organizations and media products are viewed as purely commercial products, the media environment is seriously polluted with sensational news, crime stories, entertainment features and bad-taste information. Family newspapers and adolescents' comic books are flooded with messages of sex and violence. Social responsibility of the media has been swept aside and media ethics is evaporating.

Facing the challenge of increasing commodification of media products, media educators and scholars with cultural studies background differ greatly from the moral concern groups with religious background in developing strategies of media education. The informal media education network was divided into two blocs regarding this issue. The moral concern group includes teacher federations, parent-teacher associations, religious organizations and non-government agencies on youth and community service. They have close-knit ties among themselves and have formed a united front called the "Anti-Sex and Violent Information Movement" that includes more than 15 educational and social welfare organizations. The united front holds media education work-

shops to teach school children how to critically assess negative media messages. It organizes media education forums and exhibitions. It even mobilizes teachers, social workers, parents and readers to hold demonstrations against indecent media coverage.

Another group of media education activists who favor creative expression and media production occupies another half of the media education network. They oppose any harsh criticism on the popular press and call for media empowerment. They also hold talks, seminars and write articles on media education. They raise strong objections to the “moral oppression” on the popular media, regardless of whether these media are market-driven or not.

The Hong Kong Association of Media Education is trying to resolve the differences between these two groups and strengthen the local media education network by proposing a “social participatory model” of media education which stresses on cultivating local young people’s civil consciousness (Lee, 1996). While the Association rejects the “inoculation model” of media education, it also has reservations about the “media empowerment model.” The Association proposes that media educators should not limit the use of media literacy to “self-defense” or “self-enjoyment” at the individual level and neglects the social functions of media education. The social participatory model encourages media education students to learn to understand the media, analyze the media, use the media and influence the media. Special emphasis is put on enhancing young people’s ability to express their opinions and monitor the media. Only when the students are trained to be competent media users can we call for reform in the media industry and improve the tainted media environment.

The “social participatory model” seems to be accepted by both the moral concern group and the liberal media educators. In many media education programs, media monitoring becomes an important element, and discussion of values of media messages is also encouraged.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE ISSUE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

After the unification with China, young people in Hong Kong are faced with an identity problem. Their shaky Hong Kong identity has been further over-shadowed by the demand for recognizing their Chinese status. Youth magazines, television programs and local films are still in many ways shaping young people’s local identity while the news media begin to foster Hong Kong’s integration with China and promote a sense of belonging to the greater Chinese community. The

new digital communication technologies are blurring the boundaries among nation states and geographic regions. Young people, who are major consumers of the new media, are at the same time being socialized as global consumers and global citizens.

The concept of cultural identity contains two components, namely social identity and political identity. The former refers to the life styles, common interests and a general sense of belonging to a community, while the latter refers to the political commitment to a political entity and the sharing of common political values.

Before the handover, the Hong Kong media, particularly television and local magazines, were only successful in promoting the social identity of the Hong Kong people such as the way of life and living standard. However, they failed to cultivate local people's political identity. Therefore, in the post-colonial period, Hong Kong people are very clumsy in practicing the concept of "one country, two systems" because Hong Kong people have never established their independent political identity. After the handover, the propaganda media of the Chinese authority and the Hong Kong SAR government have tried very hard to promote the Chinese identity of the Hong Kong people. Even the news media join the trend of advocating cultural integration with and understanding about the "motherland." However, they are not very successful in promoting the political component of the Chinese identity and simply fail in shaping the social component of the Chinese identity. The news media basically stress the benefit on the political and economic integration with China and put emphasis on the importance of unification. They are not yet able to help the Hong Kong audience better understand the values of mainland Chinese people and their ways of living, not to mention the enhancement of the common interest between the mainland Chinese people and the Hong Kong people.

Therefore, although a recent survey indicates that the number of young people identify themselves as Chinese is on the rise (Hong Kong Economic Times, 2002), in fact most of the Hong Kong people are still reluctant to call themselves Chinese. As to the global media such as the global television networks and the online media, they contribute more to the promotion of the social component of global identity that stressed life style and habits of consumption instead of the advocacy of civic responsibility.

One role of media education is to identify the inadequacy of the media in addressing Hong Kong people's identity issue. However, in Hong Kong many media educators are too inexperienced to handle this topic. In order to help young people learn about the relevancy of the issue, teachers and parents definitely need the support of the media education network. One of the "hubs" of the network, Breakthrough, lined up academics to conduct a seminar on "News Media and National Consciousness" for teachers. In fact, the issue of cultural identity involves a strong sense of commitment. No matter that one identifies oneself as Hongkonger, Chinese or global citizen, what is important is for him/her to be willing to contribute to Hong Kong society, the Chinese community or the international community. Therefore, there should be plans for Hong Kong media educators to gather civic education teachers, media professionals and academics to formulate curriculum materials on the topic of cultural identity. Influenced by the trend of globalization, in post-colonial Hong Kong, media will no longer limit its influence on shaping a local identity. How to help Hong Kong young people integrate the identities of Hongkonger, Chinese and global citizen has become a pressing issue.

FUTURE ROLE OF THE MEDIA EDUCATION NETWORK

The informal media education network in Hong Kong contributes a great deal to the development of media education and helps local media educators steadily respond to the key trends of world communication. Over the years, the network keeps on growing. Recently the network has been expanding from secondary schools to primary schools, from institutions to families, from extra-curricular activities to classroom teaching, from traditional media to new media, from media analysis to media production and from the individual level to the societal.

At present, the local media education network still limits its role to the promotion of media education movement in Hong Kong. However, there is great potential for its extension to China. After China's entry to WTO there are increasing concerns about the role of commercial media in mainland China. The Hong Kong media education network can play such a meaningful role both locally and regionally.

In addition, instead of only promoting the media education movement, the network can also be used to help establish media education as a worthy field of study in the academic arena. In fact, local academics have already fostering linkages with individual media education units as well as

media education “hubs” to conduct research on media education. Media education has existed for more than four decades. It is time to consolidate our knowledge on this fascinating subject. The Hong Kong media education activists are preparing themselves to join hands with their overseas counterparts in this future endeavor.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W. (1991). *The culture industry*. London: Routledge.
- Alexander, J. E., & Tate, M. A. (1999). *Web wisdom: How to evaluate and create information quality on the Web*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). *On television*. New York: New Press.
- Breakthrough (2003). *Survey on adolescent's cyberrisk*. Hong Kong: Breakthrough.
- Chan, M. (2003). Program officer (Education and Action) of the Society for Truth and Light. Personal interview on January 1, 2003.
- Dufour, B. (Ed.) (1990). *The new social curriculum: A guide to cross-curricular issues*. Cambridge University Press.
- Funk, J. B., & Buchman, D. D. (1996). Playing violent video and computer games and adolescent self-concept. *Journal of Communication*, 46(2): 19-32.
- Guster, P. (1997). *Digital literacy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *Structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hong Kong Christian Service (2002). Survey on primary school students' media use. Newsroom of the Hong Kong Christian Service. www.hkcs.org
- Hong Kong Economic Times (2002). More Hong Kong people identify themselves as Chinese. *Hong Kong Economic Times*, p. A32.
- Karl, E. M. (2001). Video games, TV and aggressive behavior in kids. *American Family Physician*, 64(5): 863.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (1996). Media technology perspectives and their curriculum implications for media education. *Canadian Journal of Educational Communication*, 25(3): 209-234.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (1997). Legitimizing media education: From social movement to the formation of a new social curriculum. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (1999). Infomedia literacy: An educational basic for young people in the new information age. *Information, Communication & Society*, 2(2): 134-155.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (2002). Media education movement in Hong Kong: A networking model. *Mass Communication Research*, 71: 107-131.
- Ming Pao Daily News (2000, July 14). Survey shows that only 10% of Hong Kong parents go online. *Ming Pao Daily News*, p. A1
- Sing Tao Daily (1999, April 4). School children are no longer interested in group games. *Sing Tao Daily*, p. A14.
- Shui, T. (2003). School teacher of the Liu Po Shan Memorial College, personal interview on January 29, 2003.
- Wan, K. W. (2002). Cyber café and online games. *Candle Light Network*, 5(5): 2-3.

PERSPECTIVES ON JAPAN'S MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND THE MELL PROJECT

Shin Mizukoshi A N D *Yuhei Yamauchi*

ABOUT THE MELL PROJECT

The MELL (Media Expression, Learning and Literacy) Project is a loosely knit, networked research project intended to conduct practical research into expression and learning via the media, and research into media literacy.

In the information society of East Asia, which continues to present a chaotic face as digitalization and globalization both advance simultaneously, how should people gain an understanding of media literacy? How should expression and learning via the media be developed? How should citizens independently design their own diverse modal media systems? To take on topics such as these, the MELL Project began as a cooperative research project of a brand new type of graduate

SHIN MIZUKOSHI IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MEDIA STUDIES IN THE INTERFACULTY INITIATIVE IN INFORMATION STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO. A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO AND PROJECT B.S., LEADER OF THE MELL PROJECT, PROFESSOR MIZUKOSHI IS ALSO AUTHOR OF *TELEPHONE AS MEDIA* (1992), *THE FORMATION OF MEDIA: A DYNAMIC HISTORY OF RADIO IN AMERICA* (1993), *DIGITAL MEDIA SOCIETY* (2002), AND *MEDIA BIOTOPE* (2003).

YUHEI YAMAUCHI IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE INTERFACULTY INITIATIVE IN INFORMATION STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO. A GRADUATE OF OSAKA UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR YAMAUCHI IS PROJECT LEADER OF THE MELL PROJECT AND AUTHOR OF *LITERACY IN DIGITAL SOCIETY* (2003).

school, the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, which was established in the 2000 school year at the University of Tokyo to fuse the areas of information studies in liberal arts, social science, natural science, art and design. Activities of the project, which officially began in January 2001, are taking place over a time frame of five years.

The MELL Project is simultaneously advancing on several fronts, through several subprojects and more loosely related affiliated projects. The primary subprojects and affiliated projects are introduced below.

The first project is the Media Literacy Project of the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan (NAB). This project links commercial broadcasters with children in their areas, enabling children to produce their own television programs. Through activities that enable studying media literacy and media expression together, conducted by creators and viewers in these regions, this project is enjoying wide-ranging success. Pilot projects are underway in four regions: Miyagi, Nagano, Aichi, and Fukuoka. The next project is the Tokyo project. This project is progressing in all areas of Tokyo, preparing a media literacy program that can be conducted using community centers and museums instead of schools.

Other activities cover a wide range of subjects, including the Book Building and Media Literacy Project; the Asia Image Network, for practical research into the Asian media; the play “NEWS NEWS: What are they Saying on TV?,” which covers the themes of inaccurate reporting in the mass media and human rights issues; the Media Expression Research Conferences, which conduct theoretical research into the new area of media expression; and others. Members of the MELL Project may be classified into three types, based on their degrees of connection to the project.

The first group of members is made up of the founding members, the project leaders who manage the project overall: Katsumi Ichikawa (television producer), Mariko Sakai (museum director), Akiko Sugaya (journalist), Naoya Hayashi (high-school teacher), Shin Mizukoshi (media studies researcher), and Yuhei Yamauchi (education researcher). Although they come from different fields, all six founding members came to the project with the same objectives.

The next group of members is made up of those who conduct research as part of the project (approximately fifty members). Primarily staff and graduate students of the Interfaculty Initiative

in Information Studies, this group is made up of schoolteachers, persons involved in the mass media, journalists, persons involved in social education, information designers, citizen activists, librarians, museum curators, persons involved in online industries, and others.

The final group of members includes supporters of the project who receive project information via the project mailing list and other means. As of April 2003, this group numbers approximately 350 members. This wide-ranging community of members shares and discusses information in multiple ways such as through the project web site and the e-mail magazine *MELL no Wa (the MELL Loop)*, distributed monthly. In addition, operational meetings and research announcement meetings are held monthly, and a summer seminar including lodging and a symposium are held annually, among other events.

In addition, although these educational research projects take place within a system separate from the MELL Project (a cooperative research project), the courses we teach at the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, Information Literacy Studies and Media Expression Studies are both deeply linked with the research practiced in the MELL Project. The Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies graduate students participating in these courses come from diverse backgrounds and have rich levels of work experience, and they also work to substantively promote the MELL Project. This is an element of the project-based education characteristic of the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPAN'S MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND MEDIA LITERACY TOPICS

The genesis of the MELL Project is intimately linked with the characteristics of Japan's media environment and topics connected with media literacy in Japan. Without an understanding of this background, it may be impossible for readers in North America and other countries to understand fully the significance of the MELL Project. These topics are briefly explained below:

A Massive and Systemized Mass-Media and a Frail Citizens' Media

In the mass media that developed in Japan following World War II, newspapers and television particularly have flourished, becoming extremely large-scale industries and developing intricate

systems. For example, *Yomiuri Shimbun* boasts the world's largest daily circulation, more than 10 million. Circulation figures of six other newspapers exceed 2 million. These are delivered throughout the nation through an intricate delivery network, staffed by working students and homemakers and foreign workers. Japan's rate of newspaper delivery is the second highest in the world.

Although a public broadcaster, NHK, with 12,000 employees and annual revenue of 700 billion yen, is the largest broadcasting organization in the world. Television is overwhelmingly influential, with NHK and the five commercial broadcasting networks centered in Tokyo covering the entire nation in detail. What's more, the five major national newspapers are members of the same business groups as the five commercial networks. In addition, two large advertising agencies, Dentsu and Hakuhodo, who have strongly supported the flourishing of newspapers and broadcasters, have taken the lead in the advertising market.

Similar tendencies can be seen in the U.S., the U.K., and many other developed countries. However, Japan perhaps has the most centralized national mass-media system of these countries. The beginnings of this system can be seen in the policies for suppression of speech enacted from the early 20th century through World War II. These policies encouraged the *oligopolization* of the media business. This system became settled in postwar industry developments.

On the other hand, Japanese citizens' media and regional media are, broadly speaking, weak. A major reason for this situation is the establishment of the centralized national media since the Meiji Era, as part of the process of Japan's modernization as a nation. This involved the gradual elimination of regional, indigenous, and anti-Tokyo media

For example, the level of small community newspapers covering cities, towns, and villages is extremely thin. Currently, public access via cable television and community radio is not a legal right. Since alternative media is not very active, freelance journalists are also few in number. Japan's modernization process clearly separated the small number of people who work for the mass media from the consumers of the information produced by that media. In particular, since the high economic growth of the 1960s, during which mass consumption and the media culture both grew, most people were content to be plentiful consumers of the media, and could not even conceive of any other way of interacting with the media. Citizens had no opportunities to express themselves by becoming independent providers of information on their own, and no media through which to do so.

Japanese became passive consumers enjoying a mass media that had developed domestically in peace, without open cultural encroachments from overseas or any major changes to the nation's political system. In these kinds of circumstances, it would be pointless for example to introduce Canadian-style media literacy studies as-is. However, discussing and putting into practice media literacy studies in Japan's historical and social contexts is no simple task.

Media Literacy Movements: Difficult To Link

Education and practice regarding the media and literacy may be classified into three lineages. The first of these is traditional media literacy studies, conducted through critical analysis of the popular culture arising from the mass media. This has primarily developed in the fields of social education, adult education, and citizens' movements. The second of these lineages is that of media education in the field of school education. This has developed continually from pre-World War II radio education and film education through today's computer education. The primary goal of such education is effective utilization of the media to promote many aspects of children's education. The third is the field of information education and computer literacy, intended to develop technical skills for using information devices, in line with recent advances in information technology (IT). The background for this field involves the state and the IT industry, both of which see a need for workers for new industries.

Although this situation may be found in all countries to some degree, these three lineages have not been well linked in Japan. For example, Japanese schools have tried to exclude popular culture, so that activities such as popular cultural criticism are generally not conducted in the classroom. Many reach the hasty conclusion that media and information are subjects of technical education. Many elementary schools prohibit students from bringing Pokemon games into the classroom, but teachers welcome unappealing educational computer software. Schools try to block out from the classroom the mass culture that elsewhere touches children like the air. Pokemon provides opportunities to study media literacy, such as what kinds of values are incorporated into the game, what kinds of industrial purposes are behind it, and criticism of the story structure of the game. However, very few schools attempt to teach these matters.

On the other hand, traditional media literacy studies, which have emphasized the analysis of the media primarily through critical thinking, have been introduced in Japan largely through somewhat hysterical anti-television movements, strongly rooted in enlightenment ideologies. These have not been fully reconciled with the rich understanding of popular cultural criticism influenced by cultural studies. In light of the interconnectedness between Japan's political culture and the media in around 1990, this movement was in danger of a careless connection with the movement to restrict speech for the cause of protecting youth, promoted by groups such as the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the inherently conservative national PTA.

Let's examine the various perspectives using broad caricatures. Imagine a schoolteacher who feels that citizens' movements for media literacy are extremist political movements. The teacher realizes that IT technical education must be necessary in light of national demands, but is fearful that he or she does not have the necessary skills. Next, imagine a citizen activist who has determined that the school, which thoroughly implements bureaucratic education and provides no opportunities for intellectual freedom, is not suited to media literacy studies. The activist also has no interest in IT technical education. Finally, imagine a technical educator who originally is unaware of the critical thinking involved in media literacy studies and views the school as an undeveloped area technologically, because of its failure to introduce computers and computer networks. This has been the situation in Japan until recently.

PERSPECTIVES OF THE MELL PROJECT

Obviously, such broad-ranging views are not easy to reconcile. With these kinds of difficulties, how feasible are the continual development of media literacy studies and citizens' expression through the media in Japan? The MELL Project was born in response to this question.

Media Literacy: The Cycle of Expression and Reception

In today's Japan, where citizens' media is frail and school culture is strictly controlled, we believe that putting into practice one-sided media literacy that leans toward critical reception of the media will likely not take root, but will be welcomed by the establishment as a simple anti-mass media

movement. In order to fully train citizens' critical thinking, a program that activates the dormant communication abilities of citizens and actively promotes lively expression is required.

The two aspects of expression and reception have not been sufficiently linked in media literacy practice in the past. Those who emphasize critical analysis have insisted that education in critical methods is more effective than media creation. Those who emphasize expression have tended to place little importance on critical thinking and to teach only techniques of expression.

However, in the end these two purposes need to be unified. The vital topic in education is not which of these aspects to learn, but how to create an interconnectedness between the two. To this end, we have created the expression-reception spiral model, a learning model intended to unify these two aspects.

In this model, students experience the ways in which one's intent is formulated above all through expression. Although emphasis is placed on processes and techniques, learning is coordinated to gradually shift awareness to the correspondence between intent and expression. This allows students to understand firsthand the fact that the media is made up of human beings.

Based on this first-hand understanding, students proceed to criticize their own works and those of others, and to review their own activities. Next, activities shift to discerning the intent of the person who has made an expression. At first, the students find it difficult to critically read intents constructed from points of view different from their own. However, as the points of view of others gradually become internalized through discussion, the connection between intent and expression deepens.

By repeating this expression-reception loop numerous times, enabling students to move up the expression-reception spiral, the students gradually learn to analyze and express themselves, taking into consideration higher-level content, such as cultural, social, and economic factors. This enables deeply critical thinking backed up by practical expressive activities, and strong, high-level media expression supported by critical thinking.

Media Play as the Foundation for Media Literacy

Media literacy evokes the image of “correct ways” of reading the media and media expression. This may be related to the enlightenment tinge of the word *literacy*. Of course, the fact that media expression includes various overlapping codes fostered by human beings over many years must not be ignored. It is vital to study what kinds of expressions to make, and what meanings will be attached to these expressions by receivers.

However, these must not be taken as absolute, fixed matters. Since such codes have been created by human beings, they may change independently in response to various circumstances. Adherence to canonical, inflexible codes is an act not of literacy, but of propaganda.

In Japan, the state of the mass media and the educational system are currently uniform and regional, and accordingly, people tend to show these characteristics as well. It is difficult to convey the fact that media literacy possesses critical aspects that are playful and “hard fun”, such as satire, humor, and parody. In addition, since the beginning of the modern era almost all Japanese media has increased after being imported or transplanted from the developed nations of Europe and the Americas. Japan does not have a history of independently designing its own media and developing its own codes. This background has led to the tendency to interpret the interconnectedness of media and human beings as an absolute, fixed relationship.

In these kinds of circumstances, the MELL Project has emphasized the importance of media play as well as media literacy, as means of enabling citizens to learn the variability of media codes. *Play*, as used here, does not refer to the mass entertainment offered as products by the media. It refers to experimental trials conducted by encouraging the human imagination, such as freely creating and interpreting media codes and readjusting the interconnectedness between the media and human beings. This is the play described by Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* as the basis of all culture, and the “alienation effect” described by Bertolt Brecht. In Japan, this kind of media play leading to a dynamism that generates new meaning for the media must be considered a basis for supporting media literacy, and promoted as such.

Media Practice as an Intent of Media Literacy

Media literacy itself is not the goal. Rather, like the larva for the butterfly, media literacy results in media practice. Through media practices, such as promotion of public access, bridging the digital divide, extension of information technology to depopulated areas, and workshops using museums and community centers, citizens must be able to enrich their own communication activities and change the information society. If not, then learning about the media serves no purpose.

In Japan in recent years, media literacy has become a kind of fad. However, many of these movements have proceeded without adequate curricula and teaching materials, leading them to become simple criticisms of newspaper articles, criticisms of television programs, and vague criticisms of the information society (such as statements that information technology will lead to a breakdown of humanity). For example, many of the students in our university courses conclude their papers in the following manner: “I believe it is vital to take an active stance in life, recognizing the dangers of the media, picking and choosing from overflowing amounts of information.”

That may be a good way to conclude a paper. But for this student to take a truly active stance in life, he or she needs not only to receive knowledge concerning media literacy, but also to get to work in society himself or herself, to gain practical experience opening up new roads of communication. This is especially vital in Japan, where citizens’ media is frail.

Media literacy and media practice are considered separate fields, and exchange between participants in these two fields has been rare. The MELL Project considers media literacy and media practice to lead to one another, and is implementing activities to connect the two. In other words, the MELL Project operates within a wide framework to activate the whole of Japan’s information society, by connecting media-related citizens’ activities, including alternative media and public access, to media literacy programs. As described above, media literacy, media play, and media practice share a cyclical relationship. Restoring this cycle in Japan’s media environment is the perspective of the MELL Project.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAB PROJECT

The National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan (NAB) is an industrial organization of Japan's commercial broadcasters. Traditionally it has acted to promote stabilization of the business of commercial broadcasters and development of the industry. In some sense, it is an organization that has been in diametrical opposition to the promotion of media literacy. However, the organization felt the need to respond to criticism from authorities and from citizens over scandals that have occurred in succession among member broadcasters since about 1990. In addition, it became aware of the danger posed by the development of digital television, which had been proceeding with its focus mostly on technology. For these reasons, the NAB has recognized the importance of media literacy as a means of building bridges connecting the media with citizens. This is an epochal change, even when compared with the situation of the organization's American partner, the National Association of Broadcasters. Since 1999, the NAB has produced a series of programs that even contain content critical of broadcasting, under the title *Terebi Kizzu Tanteidan: Terebi to no Jozu na Tsukiaikata* (*TV Kids' Detective Agency: Keeping Good Company with Television*). The series is broadcast on all member stations, and distributed on videocassette.

In order to develop activities on a fuller scale, the MELL Project conducted practical research on behalf of the NAB Project over the two-year period beginning in the 2001 academic year. The goal of the NAB project was to enable local broadcasters and schools to learn about media literacy, through the process of producing television programs. These programs are actually broadcast on NAB member stations as segments of evening variety programs.

Through producing television programs together with local broadcasters, schools can learn about the characteristics of broadcast media and the processes of constructing a television program. The local broadcasters can attain media literacy from the creators' side, through rethinking their own impact by reviewing the media expression process in putting their activities into words.

Even in the past, broadcasters gave their viewers short lessons in video techniques and broadcast videos produced by their viewers. However, these recent trials are original in that they combine these activities to study media literacy.



FIGURE 1 STUDENTS OF NAGANO NISHI HIGH SCHOOL IN A CLASSROOM AND ON THE AIR.

In the 2001 academic year, the two regions of Nagano and Aichi prefectures were chosen as locations of field studies for realizing these goals. These two regions were chosen because the practical foundations were already in place on both the broadcasters' and the schools' sides, since broadcasters and schools had both already been taking part in media literacy projects for several years.

Nagano Prefecture Pilot Study

In Nagano prefecture, TV Shinshu Broadcasting Co., Ltd. and Suzaka High School, Nagano Nishi High School, Misato Junior High School, and the Shimizu Students' Club have cooperated for practical study. The Nagano program is a sort of leadership development program, targeted at teachers (who serve as producers) and several students, who primarily create the television programs (and serve as directors). Producers and directors are assigned at both the broadcasters and the schools. Four people produce a three-minute introductory television program, utilizing the characteristics of their own positions in an equal relationship.

On the school side, students and teachers prepare the introductory program by arranging the content they would like to introduce and studying various methods to use to express this content. The broadcasters provide practical lectures on the means of visual expression and support the production of the program. In addition, the broadcaster interviews participants throughout the process of producing the program, resulting in video clips about the process of learning to understand television expression and following the changes in the participants' thinking with regard to the broadcaster.

The complete television program runs approximately ten minutes. During the broadcast, participants from the school appear as guests and describe their impressions, as well as changes in their feelings about television. The introductory program and its production process are aired, and participants from the broadcaster's side describe changes in their own thinking along with their own impressions.

The school is not the only partner in this educational program to learn from the production process. The know-how necessary for making a television program is a craft that is said to be difficult to put down in a manual. If a television reporter were forced to attempt to explain the visual grammar of television in front of a viewer who has never produced a television program, what would he or she think to say? Being forced to translate into words something normally understood through feelings makes a person conscious of his or her own job. In addition, the fixed conceptions held by creators concerning visual expression sometimes break down when giving lessons directly to viewers. This program leads to a reversal of positions between creators and viewers.

Mr. Imamura, the news director who served as an instructor for four communities in this project, said the following in an interview we conducted:

The other day, I gave an on-site lecture in media literacy to elementary-school students for the first time, at Matsumoto's Shimizu Students' Club. After nine students ranging from the fourth through sixth grades listened to my lecture, we practiced interviewing and editing. When we were playing and editing a video tape prepared in advance, the words of a fifth-grade boy surprised me: "That's (the video clip) a little long!" He said this just as I had been thinking the same thing. That's when I truly realized the strength of children's video sense.

Although television is the media form closest to the people, the internal conditions of television are rarely made public. This gap between creator and viewer can only be bridged by the creators. As competition within the media intensifies, creating a wide, strong pipeline with viewers is vital to survival. I thought of this when I was asked by the NAB to participate this program. A teacher, Mr. Naoya Hayashi, provided a lot of support and encouragement. When I made the rounds of Suzaka Senior High School, Nagano Nishi High School, and Misato Junior High School, I realized the difficulty of explaining something one usually does without thinking, and the hard work done by teachers who stand in front of a classroom every day. On the other hand, I felt anew the wonderful characteristics and bright future of television.

What did the teachers who formed partnerships with the broadcasters think? Mr. Kobayashi of Misato Junior High School said the following:

I already understood as common knowledge the fact that programs broadcast on television were made by linking clips cut from large amounts of footage taken. I wasn't sure what to make of it. Watching NHK, for example, I felt a little suspicious that they were showing us only the good parts. After this experience and talking about it, that feeling has become stronger.

I want this kind of activity to teach children that they need to watch television more carefully. The students haven't understood this yet. I think the students now understand how difficult it is to make a television program. However, in order to understand the deep background to the television broadcast, I think this process needs to repeat several more times.

Since the Nagano program was conducted over a limited period of three hours, not all students were able to participate on the same level. This program was intended only to develop teacher and student leaders, and to lead to further experiments in media literacy. In this sense, we think that if it has encouraged participants to want to continue to the next step, and enabled them to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and relationships, then it has been successful as a leadership development model.



FIGURE 2. STUDENTS OF HARUHIGAOKA HIGH SCHOOL AND STAFF OF TOKAI TELEVISION

Aichi Prefecture Pilot Study

In Aichi prefecture, Tokai Television and Haruhigaoka High School worked together to produce a three-minute news program. The Aichi program was a hands-on education and support program, in which broadcaster staff and students worked together over a long period to produce a single program.

The program was conducted from September through December as an integrated learning course. Sixteen tenth-grade students participated. The plan was for the program to be completed over nine class periods of fifty minutes each, once per week. However, in reality several more hours were needed for off-campus interviews and editing.

In this program, students were separated into four teams of four members each. Each team came up with a plan for a news video approximately three minutes long, covering news from a high school student's perspective. Planning a television news program intended to convey the facts of

the news, the students were puzzled at first over how to go about making their plans. They had to determine the content and structure of each plan — what topic to choose, how to gather relevant information, and how to express it — through discussions with each other. After getting advice from the Tokai Television's editor, Mr. Haruda and others concerning how to plan and put together their television program, they asked questions about the issues they had come up with.

This way, by getting the opinions of Tokai Television staff, the students learned what is necessary when planning the news. Is the purpose of the plan clear? Which viewers do you have in mind? Is production practical? How should you approach issues with sponsors? Students learned both the difficulty of preparing a realistic plan and the necessity of visual expression to a television program.

The chosen topics of the final news proposals from the four groups were “High School Students and Money,” “High School Students and Fads,” “High School Students and Hobbies”, and “The High School Student's Image.” After the students announced their completed proposals in presentations, they discussed the proposals with participants from the broadcaster. Through this process, they selected the topic “High School Students and Money” for actual production.

From the fourth hour of the course, the students worked to turn the proposal they had selected into a television program. The students structured the program, divided their responsibilities, gathered information and filmed the program. The structure they selected: (1) Introduction and overall explanation, (2) Presenting the results of a survey, (3) Interviewing high school students, (4) Interviewing the students' parents for their opinions, and (5) Conclusion.

Each group discussed ideas for shooting its own video footage. The team in charge of the first segment decided to shoot scenes of money being spent in a busy area near a train station in Kasugai, where there are some stores popular with high school students. Other teams thought of ways to express survey results and planned on-campus interviews of students and guardians.

Finally, the students began gathering video footage for the program. The team that had planned to shoot footage of high school students spending money near the station had difficulty getting permission to shoot inside the stores because they had not made appointments in advance. Even after they somehow managed to get permission, no high-school students showed up at the right time.

The team that tallied survey results had a different problem. At first, in gathering information on high school students and money, they had anticipated results showing the economic recession having an effect on students' spending money. However, when they tallied survey responses they saw no such result. At this point, since results showed that the most common use for money the students received from their parents was paying mobile phone charges, they decided to revise the content of the survey to focus on the relationship between mobile phones and students' money. From their own experiences, students suspected that ways of spending money had changed massively since the introduction of the mobile phone, and they treated this as an assumption in their survey.

However, when they actually took the survey they found that this assumption was also incorrect. The survey results showed that, since most mobile phone charges for the majority of students were paid by their parents, mobile phones did not have a major effect on students' uses of money. The students, who had been thinking up text and images in expectation of the conclusion that mobile phones had changed high school students' uses of money, were confused. At this rate, they were afraid they would not be able to write their conclusion. They discussed the matter with Mr. Haruda until late at night, trying to figure out how to pull their report together. Finally, they reached the following conclusion: "When we conducted interviews, we saw that parents and students were making efforts to use mobile phones well. Maybe using the mobile phone well leads to effective use of money." After reshooting and editing their footage in line with this concept, they were able, after much difficulty, to complete their three-minute news story.

At the end of the course, the students participated in a discussion class to review the entire process of producing the television program. In this discussion, the students debated the difference between reshooting and manipulation of images, and how intentional construction of a program differs from manipulation.

What Did the Students Learn?

The following is an analysis of what the students learned in this program, based on what they wrote on the evaluation sheets collected after each class.

Learning at the Planning Stage

STUDENT A: “Since a one percent viewership rate means about 94,000 people watching a program, TV dramas and other shows that draw more than 30% viewership are seen by an enormous number of people.”

Although words like “viewer” and “viewership” are used commonly, few students can picture in practical terms just how many people these terms involve. Understanding the concept of the viewer is vital to understanding the socio-economic background of broadcasting.

STUDENT B: “I felt that what the people from Tokai Television talked about today in many places touched on the academic subject of Japanese language. I can’t really explain the similarities, but I felt the subjects were extremely close.”

Making a plan is a manifestation of the knowledge of structure. Structure is the act of moving from intent to expression, and as such, it is very closely related to language. It is no coincidence that media literacy is included in English language courses in Canada. It is because the subject takes on this relationship between expression and intent. Although this course was conducted during a period of integrated learning, it was overseen by a Japanese-language teacher. The subjects of intent and structure cannot be separated from media literacy. Realizing this link between types of knowledge is vital.

Learning at the Video Shooting Stage

STUDENT C: “A cameraman must place great importance on each shot, anticipating the various edits that will be made, so that all the images he or she shoots will be usable.”

Many other students also observed that video footage does not just occur randomly but is conducted through simulating the intentions of structure and editing and observed the interaction between practical video techniques and intent.

STUDENT D: "I think whether the person making the video can express to the viewer what he or she wants to express depends greatly on the images used."

As a visual medium, a television message cannot be structured without visual expression. Various efforts can be made to express formless things such as feelings and abstract concepts, but the message delivered by the image depends greatly on the means chosen. Many students realized this as they pondered how to visually express parts of their plan that did not easily lend themselves to images.

Learning at the Editing Stage

STUDENT E: "If we show the decision on what to purchase before the purchasing scene, it will be easier for the viewers to understand what is actually going on in the scene."

By simulating the editing process together with editing professionals, students learned how ways of arranging images chosen in editing can affect the meaning of a piece. Since they used a nonlinear editing system, they were able to rearrange images on the spot, to see immediately how the appearance of the video changed.

STUDENT F: "I really understood how the way of using images can have a giant effect on the viewer. The same image may be understood in many different ways, depending on how it is used."

In arranging video images, the students realized that changing the arrangement can send a very different message. They seem to have really felt the large impact of editing on the viewers of television, which they had watched everyday without thinking much about it.

Awareness of Media Studies

STUDENT G: "If we conduct all our interviews in the same place, it will make viewers suspi-

cious when the program is broadcast (manipulation?).”

Since the program they were making would be viewed by tens of thousands of people, the students were forced to realize their responsibility as creators. A reversal took place, where students, who had previously been viewers, now saw things from the point of view of the broadcasters. In this way, students saw media manipulation not as other peoples’ problem but as a topic thrust upon their own activities. They were forced to consider the problems of visual structure and manipulation.

CREATING A MEDIA BIOTOPE: FUTURE TOPICS AND PROSPECTS

The projects conducted in Nagano and Aichi in the 2001 academic year developed further in the 2002 academic year. In addition, in Miyagi and Fukuoka, a new pilot study advanced, not through the schools but through relationships with local children and NPOs. Although we do not have room to discuss these in detail here, the MELL Project is currently receiving a great number of requests to continue these types of activities, not only from commercial broadcasters but also from public broadcaster NHK, from local cable television providers, and from other media organizations, as well as from schools and social education institutions nationwide.

The success of the NAB Project was in providing a strong feel for the possibilities of media literacy studies conducted in cooperation between media creators and educational organizations. However, at the same time many issues remain. Here we will look at three of these issues, and provide an indication of the future directions of our projects.

Repeating the Expression-Reception Loop

In this year’s projects in both Nagano and Aichi, due to time constraints we were able to look at only the expression stage of the expression-reception loop. From the expression stage alone, students were able to learn many of the basic concepts of media literacy such as the fact that the media constructs its own messages. However, this is not enough. The final discussion was prototypical of the reception stage. We decided that we would like to try a richer, deeper project interweaving critical thinking and active expression, by consciously introducing more time for dis-

cussion and self-examination with regard to creative works — repeating the expression-reception loop many times.

Connecting with Journalism Education

The NAB Project aimed to enable learning on both the school and broadcaster sides. However, in this year's projects learning on the broadcaster's side was not systematic. It relied on the sensitivity and awareness of broadcaster staff.

However, for this kind of project to have a lasting impact, systems must be developed for both sides. Since the project is systematic on the school's side as an educational project, we would like to create the same kind of system for the broadcaster's side as well.

An affiliated project connected with the MELL Project is the J-Workshop, a journalism education program. We would like to examine what is required to incorporate the know-how from this affiliated project into further refining and systematizing learning on the broadcasters' side.

Increasing the Diversity of the Media and Education Organizations

The experiments conducted in the 2001 academic year were conducted by cooperation between local television stations and schools. However, this is not the only possible combination of media and education organizations. Beginning in the next academic year, we plan to increase the diversity of these arrangements by including social education institutions such as media centers as candidates, considering radio stations as media partners in addition to television, and other means. Over the long term, publishers, newspapers, and Internet media concerns in addition to broadcast media will likely join the ranks of candidates, and the candidates for educational members should include educational NPOs and other organizations.

The ideal goal for the NAB Project is construction of a type of media biotope, redefining the currently divided groups of media creators and receivers into media practitioners and media expressers who live together in a diverse culture, and connecting these groups in a cycle. A biotope is a small, man-made ecosystem. Learning media literacy is one of the cyclical principles of this media biotope.

THE FUTURE OF MEDIA EDUCATION

Chris M. Worsnop

“What do you think the future of media education will be like?” they asked. I suppose the unspoken part of the question, since this is a U.S. publication, would be that it applied to media education in the USA. Much of the work I do in media education is done now in the context of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), and many of the media educators I meet are from countries outside North America. The issues in media education that they raise are not always the same ones that dominate discussion in the USA.

For instance, I have rarely heard a media educator from Europe, New Zealand, Australia, South Asia or Africa ask a media education question based on assumptions of what US media educators refer to as “effects” or “prevention,” other than a question based in disbelief, such as, “Do the Americans really . . .?” The closest these media educators might come to asking an effects-based question might be one like: “What are you doing in your country to make sure that students get to study their own culture and cultures of countries other than the USA in their media courses?” One answer can be found in the requirement in the new IBO Film course, that students must study films (and TV) from cultures other than their own, and must perform work in which they treat films (and TV) from more than one culture.

CHRIS M. WORSNOP IS THE AUTHOR OF *SCREENING IMAGES: IDEAS FOR MEDIA EDUCATION* (2ND ED., 1999) AND *ASSESSING MEDIA WORK: AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN MEDIA EDUCATION* (1996) AS WELL AS ARTICLES ON MEDIA EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT IN RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS AND PERIODICALS. HIS MEDIA EDUCATION CREDENTIALS GO BACK TO THE 1960S WHEN HE TAUGHT MEDIA IN AN OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL. HE WORKS AS A FREELANCE WRITER, CONSULTANT AND TRAINER IN MEDIA EDUCATION AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A NEW IB DIPLOMA ARTS COURSE, “FILM.”

So, let me sing the same old song about media education that has been sung so many times before.

Using media education exclusively or even principally as a vehicle or behavior-modifying instrument for some other set of purposes, such as:

- Health concerns like drug, tobacco and alcohol use, body image
- Social concerns like violence and gun crimes
- Moral concerns such as teen sexuality
- Ideological concerns such as the influence of commercial interests
- Political concerns such as nationalism or patriotism
- Elitist concerns such as “good taste” vs. “bad taste”

is a forlorn enterprise, an educational blind alley.

If media education is seen exclusively – or even principally – as an instrument to cure things that are seen as being wrong with today’s media or with today’s students, or with today’s society, it won’t work. And when it is seen not to be working, it will fail as a subject in the curriculum. At the very least, the research funds will dry up, media education will get itself a bad reputation, and many of the individuals who led the way down this path will disappear in pursuit of the departing funds.

However, if media education in the future does not include aspects of all the items in the list above (plus a few others of equal importance) as incidental rather than primary components of media study, then it, too, is likely to fail. It’s a wicked path that media educators tread. They can’t take on board all the responsibility of keeping kids off drugs, booze, violence and sex, but they can’t hide their heads either and pretend that the media aren’t involved in setting trends that might be one influence in social mores. The treacherous ground between these two extreme stances is the important territory of media education for the future.

The problem with instrumental approaches to media education is that they are subject to students’ crap detectors. Students quickly see through their aims and decide either to play the game for marks, or for laughs - maybe both. Puritanism, censorship and prohibition have been common but unsuccessful ways of trying to handle social problems. The media need to be studied because they form a large part of the culture we live in, and we need to understand our culture as much as we need to understand our history or our atmosphere. The imperative, though, is one of human and cultural understanding rather than of medical or social fixing.

People who have been teaching media for some time have already learned that bashing teenage tastes and behaviour just doesn't work. Teens will render unto us what is due to us on the tests and exams and go on smilingly making their own decisions regardless of the social engineering we have tried to build into our programs. Put more bluntly, the kids will cheerfully manufacture test results for us showing we are succeeding in changing their attitudes and behaviour, without actually changing their attitudes and behaviour. If you want to see where social engineering can lead, consider Orwell's *1984*, or Burgess' (Kubrick) *A Clockwork Orange*.

The Brits, the Anzacs and the Europeans tried all this a while ago and found that it didn't work. This piece of news is most remarkable for the consistency with which it has been rejected in the shaping of US approaches to media education, sometimes with accompanying invitations for the messenger to make an involuntary journey.

Media education courses of the future need to have as their chief objective: "to make students autonomous in their understanding and consumption of the media." More – this autonomy must be one that the students have constructed for themselves, out of understandings they have gained from the courses we offer. If social and health advantages follow from this, so much the better. They can be bonuses, attributable to wisdom rather than conditioning. Attempting to lead all students to some "standard" autonomy or the same set of conclusions about the media is futile. Human individuality is bound to intervene, heaven be praised! We can try to produce the template media student, with textbook-learning, "rigorous and sequential curriculum" and "frequent testing". But that is just playing the game of going to school and generating test results to put in the newspaper. It's scarcely education at all - just schooling.

Nevertheless, my sad prediction is that this is the direction that a major portion of US (and Canadian) media education will take. It will be the direction of minutely prescribed behavioral standards, picayunely assessed by state testing systems whose chief objectives are related to comparing test results from one site to another, without much care for where the best teaching and learning is taking place. Furthermore, these tests, being of the machine-markable variety, will convince good teachers that the progressive teaching approaches they actually believe in and would prefer to practice are not the ones encouraged by those who wield all the political power in education. The result will be for media education to become an ossified school "subject" like all the others.

Another fear I have is that media education in the USA (but not in Canada) is already breaking into factions similar to the ones that emerged from the International Reading Association in the 1970s and 1980s. US education seems to be always riven by political forces that push unwanted choices on unwilling teachers. The choices seem always to be “either/or” rather than “both/and”. And the careers of powerful people always seem to hang on which choice comes out on top. It’s either phonics or whole language, grammar or creative writing. Don’t ask why, just do it. And be accountable for the results.

Education looks for panaceas - the simpler the better. Complexity is taboo. It can be frustratingly anti-intellectual. Prevention and effects approaches to media education are alarmingly close to the panacea approach, and panaceas always fail. The media education that follows the modern fashion of regimentation through standards and testing regimes in which everyone marches in step towards a preordained conclusion will eventually collapse under its own weight or suffocate - it does not matter which.

Good teachers, I predict, will abandon media education in search of the next curriculum vehicle to promise a chance of practicing enlightened pedagogy. Check with the ones who are in media education now to count how many came from drama, creative writing, and language arts after those subject areas became systematized beyond endurance. You can’t keep good teachers down, but you can chase them out of your subject.

So the best future hope for media education, it seems to me, is for it to flee from the traps of instrumentalism and behaviorism and to stake out its territory in the realms of student autonomy, progressive pedagogy, authentic assessment and cultural studies. Wish yourself luck!

Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education represents a diverse collection of articles intended as an “environmental scan” of the field from international media education scholars and practitioners. The result is a range of perspectives, reflections and emerging theories about media education from leaders in the field.

— Barry Duncan and Kathleen Tyner, *Editors*

The most current thinking by some of the top media literacy authors in the world, *Visions/Revisions: Moving Forward with Media Education*, is intended to be useful to scholars, educators, and anyone (in the English speaking world) who is a citizen of the global society of the twenty-first century. It captures the best thinking about media literacy education. This book is a springboard for new ideas to come and encourages the ongoing development of a new generation of reflective, young media users and producers who are able to be mindful, critical thinkers and consumers of the media.

The National Telemedia Council presents this unique collection in its 50th Anniversary year as a tribute to what began so many decades ago and what is yet to be.

National Telemedia Council
Cover design by Kristyn Kalnes

