The Impact of a Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate
Behaviour of At-Risk Adolescents

by

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ABSTRACT

The struggle for literacy is, at the same time, a struggle for development, justice and equality, respect of cultures and recognition of the human dignity of all claims of each to an economic, social and political stake in society and the fruits which derive therefrom (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4).

Over the last several years this inquiry has focused on the impact of a media literacy curriculum on the literate behaviour of several groups of at-risk high school students. One of the characteristics of many of these students is that they possess low levels of literacy, in addition to being unmotivated to engage in the academic activity of schools. These characteristics result, in a large part, from assessment practices based almost exclusively on the ability to generate certain forms of print texts. Because at-risk students have not been particularly successful in these contexts, assumptions are made as to their intellectual abilities, prescription are made for drill and practice exercises to promote "correct" language use. As a result, at-risk students often find themselves engaged in the struggle for literacy described in the quote above. In many instances they give up the struggle.

Using a re-conceptualisation of literacy, I devised a curriculum in which the students produced (wrote) and analysed (read) popular media texts. I examined the behaviour of these groups of students as they participated in the reading and writing activities. Through this investigation, I gained insights into the literate abilities and behaviours that the at-risk students possess and can demonstrate, which traditional measures of literacy were unable to uncover. I also developed pedagogical approaches which enable the literacy of not only at-risk students, but also all students. The results of this inquiry suggest that the consideration of Media Education within a conceptual framework of literacy holds considerable promise for research, curriculum development and pedagogy.

RÉSUMÉ

"La lutte pour l'alphabétisation est, en même temps, une lutte pour le développement, la justice, l'égalité, le respect des cultures et la reconnaissance de la dignité humaine de tous, et la revendicatios de chacun en vue d'obtenir un statut économique, social et politique et les bienfaits qui en résulte" (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4).

La recherche que nous poursuivons, depuis quelques années, porte sur l'impact d'un curriculum d'éducation aux médias sur les comportements en matière d'alphabétisation (*literacy*) de plusieurs groupes d'élèves dits à risques de décrochage scolaire de niveau secondaire.

Une caractéristique majeure de bon nombre de ces élèves est le fait qu'ils possèdent un bas niveau d'alphabétisation, auquel s'ajoute une faible motivation à s'engager dans les activités scolaires. Ces caractéristiques sont le résultat, en grande partie, des pratiques d'évaluation auxquelles ils sont soumis et qui reposent presque exclusivement sur leurs habiletés à produire certains types de textes écrits. Du fait qu'ils réussissent mal dans ce domaine, on met en doute leurs capacités intellectuelles et on leur impose un entraînement systématique à l'utilisation "correcte" de la langue, via des exercices pratiques. Les élèves à risques se retrouvent donc, eux aussi, engagés dans cette lutte à l'alphabétisation qu'évoque la citation de l'Unesco, et force nous est de constater, qu'à maints égards, ces élèves abandonnent la lutte.

Nous appuyant sur une reconceptualisation de l'alphabétisation, nous avons élaboré un curriculum dans lequel les élèves produisent (écrivent) et analysent (lisent) des messages (textes) de médias populaires. Nous avons examiné le comportement de ces groupes d'élèves engagés dans ces activités de lecture et d'écriture. Nos observations nous ont permis de développer une compréhension sur les habiletés et les comportements que ces élèves acquièrent, et qu'ils peuvent exprimer, mais que les méthodes d'évaluation traditionnelles ne permettent pas de révéler. Nous

avons, en outre, développer des approches pédagogiques qui contribuent à l'alphabétisation, non seulement des élèves à risques, mais de tous les élèves.

Les résultats de notre étude laissent entrevoir le grand potentiel d'une éducation aux médias envisagée dans le cadre d'une conceptualisation de l'alphabétisation et ce, aussi bien au niveau de la recherche qu'à celui du développement curriculaire et pédagogique.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this inquiry to my wife Lucie. Lucie's love and strength has nourished me over many years. She has been, and is, as the song goes, "the wind beneath my wings." I also dedicate this inquiry to my sons, David and Jesse, who sacrificed "quality time." Unwittingly, they have sustained the energy that enabled me to complete this dissertation. I hope the results of my exploration will make a difference to them, as well as to other young people, as they progress in their education.

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INTRODUCTION

Tone and Form of My Inquiry

Early on in my inquiry, it was apparent to Professor Winston Emery, my thesis advisor, and myself that the voice I was most comfortable using and through which I could best communicate my ideas was that of a teacher talking to another teacher.

What I have learned in this inquiry comes from reading academic texts, observing my own teaching and the students I teach, talking to myself in journals, as well as face to face with professors at McGill University, and teaching colleagues at my school and/or at workshops. In other words, much of what I have come to understand in this inquiry has been the result of dialogue. For the reasons stated above, I have decided to use a conversational tone.

You will notice that each chapter is referred to as a "Tape." The reason for this is that early on I had considered writing my dissertation as a screen play for a docudrama on a group of at-risk students. I had come to realise that this would be a major undertaking, requiring an enormous amount of time - more than I had available to me as a full time teacher, parent and graduate student. I decided that for the purpose of the dissertation, I would write in a more or less narrative form, in the hope that one day I would realise my grand project. In *The End of Education*, Postman (1995) states that, "the

purpose of a narrative is to give meaning to the world, not to describe it scientifically" (p. 7). My intent was to tell the story of the students and myself in the ACE Program (which I will describe later in the chapter) over several years as they participated in a Media Literacy curriculum which I designed. With this in mind, my inquiry can therefore be described as a narrative, written from the first person point of view. In using this form and view point I hope to accomplish several things.

First, I hope that a narrative/storytelling style will appeal to teacher/practitioners interested in literacy, Media Literacy and at-risk students. Second, by writing this inquiry in the first person, I aspire to create for the reader a personal, empathetic portrayal of the people, setting and situations involved in my research. Finally, I anticipate that a somewhat informal tone will bring a sense of authenticity and relevancy to those reading it. This narrative is written with a number of audiences in mind. Its immediate audiences are, of course, my thesis advisor and committee. It is also aimed at teachers/practitioners. I hope that in the near future, it will, through professional development, benefit educators/practitioners.

I too am an audience for this inquiry. That is, I am writing to and for myself. Dewey (1929) reminds us that inquiry starts with self-doubt and moves toward resolving these doubts. Indeed, I had, and admittedly still have, doubts about my own teaching, as well as the impact of my Media Education Curriculum on the literate behaviour of the ACE students. Fortunately, this inquiry has lessened many of these insecurities. In this sense, experience and reflection create growth. Dewey goes on to say that reflective thinking liberates us from impetuous and routine activities. I realised early in my career that if I were to grow as a teacher, I would need to break away from traditional practices

which, frankly, bored me as a high school student and frustrated me as a teacher. In many ways, in conducting my inquiry, I hoped to challenge traditional teaching practices and beliefs, while supporting non-traditional approaches, such as Media Education Curriculum and Pedagogy.

Background to the Inquiry

Setting: Rosemere High School, 1977-1986
As is the case in all narratives, this one begins with an establishing scene, the purpose of which is to enable you, the reader, to more fully understand what motivated me to undertake this inquiry in the first place.

In 1977, graduates of faculties of education in the province of Quebec were fairly optimistic of finding a teaching position; that is, unless you were an art major, as I was. After several months and numerous interviews, I became painfully aware that art was not a priority in schooling in Quebec. However, Special Education was in its infancy during the mid to late 1970s, and the demand for trained teachers in this area was growing.

On one hand, I had only a vague notion what Special Education was about. On the other hand, I was determined not to let three years of teacher education fade away. Consequently, I soon found myself enrolled in a Special Education diploma program at McGill University. Within a week of registering, a teaching position for a Special Education teacher opened at Rosemere High School (RHS). RHS is a medium sized comprehensive high school in a middle class suburb, approximately thirty kilometres north of Montreal. The only requirement was that the candidate had to be trained,

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or in the process of being trained to teach Special Education. From 1977 until 1990, I taught Special Education, as well as "regular" students at Rosemere High School.

However, the novelty of teaching soon wore off. By 1979, I was beginning to become disillusioned with traditional teaching. While I still had the desire to teach, I considered the methods, materials and evaluation procedures I was using in my Special Education English Language Arts Programs little more than repackaging and reformatting learning materials which the students had experienced in previous years, and which for the most part did little to excite them about their own learning.

The methods I used were no different from any other Special Education class I had observed. I stood at the front of the room, barking out questions, writing on the black board, while the students sat in rows, draped over their desks, mechanically copying what I had written. The reading materials I used were of the "high interest, low vocabulary" nature, although they rarely seemed to be of real interest to the students. The written material was something I usually had watered down from a teacher's text book and mimeographed for the students, or which they copied from the blackboard. The audio-visual resources I used, on rare occasions, were most often of the documentary genre. I administered a standardised reading text at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. In retrospect, it seems there was an incongruity between the intended goals of my remedial English Program, designed to improve basic literacy skills, and the student scores reflected in standardised reading tests. I learned to rationalise my students' results on a standardised reading test. I congratulated myself when a student's score improved, even minimally, and ignored scores when the students did not improve, or worse, seemed to slip backward.

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What I could not ignore was the lack of student involvement in my classes. At first, I accepted their apathy as a traditional dislike of schooling. However, the issue that finally bubbled up inside of me, and which I could not ignore, was that they seemed to have lost that natural sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They really did not seem to feel a part of what was going on in the classroom. I recall becoming annoyed that they were talking to each other about the latest television soap opera, situation comedy or fiction program when they should have been concentrating on the work that I had assigned. It seemed that not a day went by that they were not discussing the latest episode, of not just one but several programs.

"Worthless Chatter?"

And yet, the more I listened to this "worthless" chatter, the more I began to realise that there was something unexpected and exciting in the way they were talking about the television programs they watched. They knew the characters and plots well. But what was really interesting was the sophistication of their conjectures, something which did not appear when they were asked to analyze the short, paperback novels I assigned.

Maybe in and of itself, their ability to recall and infer issues related to their television viewing was not so unique, but as a relatively novice teacher, the level of their discussions took me off guard.

My Master's Thesis

During the school year 1985-1986 I was in the final stages of my Master's thesis, *Using Video as a Process Tool with Learning Disabled and Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents* (Rother, 1986).

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Although I did not realise it until now, my Master's thesis was a pilot study for this current inquiry, having triggered the purpose, theoretical framework and research questions.

My Master's thesis presented the format for the design and production of student- produced video material, as a means of increasing the special education students' understanding of themselves and their interpersonal relationships. While the results of my master's research were statistically significant - the students' negative feelings of self were reduced - it was the unexpected foreshadowed problems which I found most exciting and which led me to this present inquiry.

"I can't watch TV anymore!"

In the last few weeks of collecting my data for my Master's thesis, I began to question the often-labelled "low level of literacy" characteristic of my students. My students and I had been using a portable, two camera, television studio to reenact specific incidents in their lives. One of them, R.L., a seventeen-year-old boy, reading supposedly at a grade three level, had the task of switcher. During one of our taping sessions in May of 1986, the following conversation, paraphrased below, occurred:

> R.L.: Since we started taping, I can't watch television anymore! It's not the same.
> Me: I don't understand.
> R.L.: I mean, I was watching a program last night and... It was all wrong!
> Me: How?
> R.L.: OK, they had this girl crying and they used a long shot.
> Me: So? What's wrong with that?
> R.L.: She was crying. It was emotional.
> Me: What kind of shot would you have used?
> R.L.: A close up. Then you could see her face.

R.L. went on to graphically critique the television program in great detail and explain how he would

have shot and edited it. What is even more surprising is that beyond a fundamental understanding of some basic television production vocabulary, I had not taught the students television grammar or production techniques. That is, R.L.'s rather sophisticated learning came from his own "reading" of a television program. As incredible as it now seems, and as inexcusable as it feels, I am not sure I ever seriously considered what students learned about media outside of my class as having much relevance to what we did in school. If anything, I probably considered such "distractions" an "interference" to what I was attempting to teach them.

It was not just what R.L. said, but how he said it that intrigued me. He was excited and eager to show what he understood. The conversation with R.L prompted me to ask other students in the class about their understandings of the media texts they watched. Like R.L., many of his classmates were able to orally convey their analyses of the visual-verbal language of television at a level that seemed better than their scores on standardised reading tests indicated. I recall being excited by this insight, although I was not yet sure why. Further, several questions ensued:

- could I use media and technology as a springboard to help my students develop their print literacy?

- would using media help to create a learning environment that invites and enables students, regardless of traditional literacy skills to participate equally in the educational experience?

- how might I find evidence of the value of using media with these students?

- what would media and media technology offer me to improve my teaching?

- would teaching and studying about media rekindle my enthusiasm for teaching?

My Insights and Concerns

In light of my Master's thesis, I was troubled by schooling's taken-for-granted and narrow notion of literacy linked exclusively to decoding and encoding paper-based, printed texts within a classroom setting. I was aggravated that literacy teaching in schools did not include the use of visual language of film, television, video, photographs, advertising, and other mass media. It frustrated me to think that schooling ignored the kinds of literacy about media which students, like those I taught, brought to a classroom. It angered me that schooling often linked a student's literacy abilities, as determined on standardised reading tests, to his/her cognitive skills, and consequently determined his/her placement in mainstream or special education. Indeed, I became very annoyed that Special Education students were being denied a position in mainstream education based on this seemingly inadequate view of literacy.

My Early Use of Media and Technology with At-risk Students

I must admit that my initial use of media and technology in the classroom was naive and crude. Initially, I used television to attend to the traditional literary analysis processes of identifying plot, setting, character and theme(s). In fact, my use of television was more or less a gimmick, intended to motivate the students. But it worked! The students seemed to get involved in analysing television texts in ways that they had not with print texts.

Rather than being uncomfortably subdued, my classes were "noisy." The students were animated, discussing, conferring, and arguing about issues related to some aspect of the programs. Even more exciting was that getting my students to put their ideas onto paper required less coercion. Indeed,

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rather than having to ask them to show me what they had written, I found that they were voluntarily coming to me for advice on how to spell a word, or the best way to express an idea. It seemed as if they now had a message they wanted to clearly convey to an unknown audience. Indeed, they were becoming more critical of their own writing.

Collaborations with Colleagues

Over the next couple of years, I continued to include mainstream media and production work with Special Education students and regular students. However, I did not have a real sense of direction. I was acting on my concerns and intuitions, which followed from my Master's thesis.

In 1989, I was fortunate to become acquainted with several academics and educators, in Quebec and Ontario, involved in teaching English Language Arts and Media Education at the secondary and post-secondary level. Also, in 1990, I attended the *First Canadian International Media Literacy Conference* in Guelph, Ontario. At this conference, Eddie Dick of Scotland introduced a *Conceptual Framework for Media Education*. As well, Len Masterman, of England, presented his notions of the *Key Concepts of Media Education*. I began to see how I might go about answering questions and concerns which arose from my Master's thesis.

In 1991, I approached Professor Emery, in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the Faculty of Education, McGill University. We discussed some of my ideas and beliefs, Over the next several months, we developed a proposal, which evolved into the present inquiry.

It was decided that my inquiry should make the invisible, visible. That is, to:

- begin from where I was (i.e., my own classroom), teaching at-risk students, an area in which I had some knowledge and experience.

- ask questions which could, hopefully, improve my teaching practices, and consequently, improve the quality of my students' learning.

THE CONTEXT AND SETTING FOR MY INQUIRY

Cooperative Education: 16 + Programs

In the late 1980s the Quebec Ministry of Education implemented 16+ *Cooperative Education Programs* for sixteen to eighteen-year-old students who experience below grade level academic performance in a traditional high school program. While each school board is free to structure these programs to meet the specific needs of its students, as well as to tailor it to its specific logistical specifications, the primary objective of all *16 + Cooperative Programs* is to help at-risk students make a successful transition from school to work or further education.

These Cooperative Education Programs include both an in-school component, focusing on English, Math, French, The World of Work, and Life Skills, and an out-of-school component, in which students participate in On-the-Job Training in the business community. The in-school subject work is covered progressively in a spiral curriculum over two years. It is expected that the students will attain some of the skills, such as job-searching techniques. The instructional approach advocated by the Quebec Ministry of Education is based on the "students' potential and his/her own ability to develop according to his/her own creativity" (Quebec Service Generale des Communications du

Ministere de l'Education, *The Schools of Quebec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action 1979*, p. 82). Individual and group evaluation is based on formative and summative analysis of what a student has accomplished in relation to his/her individual needs.

In 1989 Laurenval School Board had two *16 + Cooperative Programs*. They were both called Job Opportunities. One was located at Western Laval High School in Laval, and the other, approximately ten kilometres away, at Rosemere High School. I taught at the latter - at least until June of 1990.

Lake of Two Mountains High School

In 1990, I was transferred from Rosemere High School to Lake of Two Mountains High School (LTMHS) in Deux Montagnes, the research site for this inquiry. The number of students registering for the Job Opportunities Program at Rosemere High School was dwindling, while the need for such a program was growing in the Deux Montagnes and adjacent communities. Thus, I was mandated to develop a Cooperative Education Program at LTMHS, which became the *Alternative Career Education Program* or The ACE Program.

The student population of LTMHS fluctuates between 480 and 550. Teaching staff numbers between 35 and 40. Grade levels are secondary one to five. While all students in LTMHS speak English, a large number are French first language.

The town of Deux Montagnes is a semi-rural, middle to low socio-economic community

approximately thirty kilometres from downtown Montreal. Most LTMHS students live in Deux

Montagnes or adjacent Ste.Eustache; many live in communities outside of the immediate vicinity.

These are mainly farming and/or industrial communities. They include Ste. Joseph Du Lac, Oka,

Ste.Therese, Rosemere, Laval, Repentigny, Mascouche and Terrebone.

Introducing The ACE Program at LTMHS

The Alternative Career Education Program (ACE) has been an important part of Lake of Two

Mountains High School and The Laurenval School Board since I implemented it in 1990. Over the

last nine years, I have developed the ACE Program from a fairly traditional teacher-directed program

to a student-centered, multi-media learning environment which is relevant, motivating and which

provides opportunities for at-risk students to become involved in their education.

Initially, The ACE Program was very similar to the Job Opportunity Program I taught at RHS.

Students participated in English, Math, French, The World of Work, and Life Skills and experienced

two sessions of On-the-Job Training outside of the school environment. As well, like other

programs for at-risk students, the ACE Program assists at-risk students, who struggle with

conventional educational approaches, to:

  * stay in school.
  * develop work habits required in the work place
  * develop communication, information and personal management skills
  * develop traditional and non-traditional literacy abilities
  * develop a positive self image
  * learn about careers
  * formulate career goals
  * provide an opportunity for attaining the work and employability skills toward a Quebec
  Attestation of Skills Certificate.
  * provide an opportunity to acquire the work and employability skills necessary to gain and

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keep a job.

However, by the beginning of 1991, my changing understanding of literacy and what I had learned about Media Education led me to propose changes in the program to my school board. When I presented my proposal to my school board, I assumed that they probably held traditional notions of literacy and as yet did not see the value of Media Education, so I phrased my "pitch" to the school board as follows:

As an alternative to traditional, print dominated schooling, ACE is a teen literacy program which incorporates oral, print and electronic discourse.

Approaches and methodologies include:

1. process skills

2. information skills

3. print and non-print literacy skills

4. reality based learning

5. relevant course content.

6. media technology, Internet skills

ACE students develop and extend skills which enable them to integrate into the mainstream of society, including the workplace. These skills are:

1. orientation to the workplace.

2. employability skills.

3. communication skills.

4. entrepreneurial and vocational skills.

5. specific job skills which have been identified by the employer, student, the A.C.E. Work Study Coordinator and teachers.

6. ability to move to more complex skill areas.

7. recognising the need for information skills, locating, selecting, accessing, organising, synthesising, evaluating information, and using the information to problem solve.

8. health and safety information.

9. conflict resolution, goal setting, problem solving and travel training.

History of The ACE Program

August 1990 to June 1991

In August, 1990, the ACE Program occupied one large classroom, originally the location of the Adult Education Business Program, divided by a partitioned wall, with an arched opening. Entering the ACE Program during 1990-1991 was not dissimilar to entering any other area or classroom of LTMHS. There were the usual rows of wooden and plastic chairs and desks, with a teacher's desk at the front. Course texts and educational magazines filled a few shelves along one wall. One of the bonuses was large windows, although these were and remain to be protected by metal screens. There were a few posters covering the grey walls. Most were motivational or educational. There was no audio-visual equipment except for an overhead projector. In order to examine media texts, we borrowed audio-visual equipment from the school library.

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As the ACE Program developed over the next year, I had the rows of chairs and desks rearranged into clusters of four desks (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1

Figure 2

I invited students to bring in posters to make the environment more inviting. The walls were soon covered with images of their favourite movies and rock groups. We began to acquire audio visual equipment of our own. Near the end of the 1991 school year, the Quebec Ministry of Education provided assistance for innovative teaching approaches. I wrote a proposal and received a grant of approximately $17,000 with which I purchased equipment. We acquired a video toaster, a camcorder, monitors and vcr's.

In the first few months of the ACE Program (i.e., August to October 1990), the ACE Program operated in similar fashion to the rest of LTMHS structure. That is, the program had a structured schedule of six, fifty-minute classes per day. Until 1995, the ACE students had the same class breaks and lunch hour as the rest of the school. ACE courses included English Language Arts, French, Math, Moral Education, World of Work, and Life Skills, rotating on a six-day cycle. The only difference was that twice a year, for approximately eight to ten weeks, students participated in On-the-Job Training sessions. The only indications which gave the hint that the ACE Program was distinct from the other areas of LTMHS were two sets of double doors at the entrance to the ACE area.

October 1992 - June 1996

In October of 1992, it occurred to me that since the ACE students were not integrated into the regular stream for any of their academic courses, I had the opportunity to design the ACE Program around its specific objectives and the needs of the students. I decided that the first change needed was to the curriculum itself.

The English Language Arts Curriculum

The global objective of the English Language Arts for 16+ Programs is the same as for the traditional Secondary English Language Arts Programs. "The Secondary English Language Arts Program leads students to realise that effective use of language in formulating their ideas, and effective participation in the communication process are essential to their intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic growth, and to their development as contributing members of society" (Quebec, Ministere

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de l'Education, *English Language Arts I-V*, 1982, p. 19).

While I felt the objective, stated here, compatible with my objectives for a Media Education Program for ACE students, the 16+ curriculum program is almost entirely print oriented, except for one small section on advertising. ACE students, as with most learning disabled students, have difficulty with print, and often consider it a threat. Indeed, it seemed to me that the 16+ Program, as originally designed, offered the students and myself nothing more than a repackaged curriculum, similar to the Special Education Programs which I had found to be of little benefit in my earlier years of teaching.

The ACE Integrated English Language Arts/Media Program

In redesigning the original *16+ Program* , I tried to provide a curriculum that was both relevant and interesting to my students This meant including learning about the mass media and the technologies associated with it. It meant using and studying popular culture texts in the classroom. It also meant having students create their own media texts.

I adapted the original, print oriented 16+ Program objectives to include teaching strategies which incorporate both print and non-print media sources and media technologies.

I based my program themes around two core topics in the 16+ Program: The "World of Work" and "Life Skills," illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

THEORY	PRACTICAL
	The World of Work
popular culture	exploring a popular text
	multi-media advertising
media ownership	small business operation
	print & electronic journalism
cultural environment	schools, leisure, workplace
	Life Skills
media representation	Examining representations of teens, gender, minorities, family

The design enabled me to integrate the separate subjects of the ACE students' curriculum. I saw how we could meet the objectives of the English, French, Math, World of Work and Life Skills courses simultaneously.

I experimented with alternative teaching strategies. Students worked in groups doing collaborative projects, which involved individually-oriented activities. Projects required the use of various computer and media technologies. The focus was on developing student autonomy in the process of carrying out the project. Using the inquiry approach, students were required to explore, select, organise, evaluate and reflect on information they acquired. Furthermore, they could present what they learned in a variety of ways: written reports, oral presentations, videos, audio tapes, posters, photographs, etc.

Soon after I implemented the program, I realised that the schedule of fifty minute periods was not suited to the integrated Language Arts/Media Program I had developed. Therefore, in late October

1992, I eliminated the rigid, rotating class schedule used in the rest of LTMHS and replaced it with the following schedule:

        8:00 - 9:30 Media/Life Skills
        9:30 - 9:45 Break
        9:45 - 10:45 Media/Life Skills
        10:45 - 11:30 Lunch
        11:30 - 1:00 World of Work/Media
        1:00 - 1:15 Break
        1:15 - 2:15 World of Work/Media

In January, 1992, I decided to try an experiment. Upon their return from Christmas holidays, I told the students that we were going to return to the initial fifty minute period schedule. Fortunately, their reaction, annoyance, was what I had hoped. There was a chorus of:

        "Why do you want to change it? We like the longer times."
        " Just when we get into something, you make us stop!"

Naturally, I backed off reimplementing the fifty minute class periods. This was my first indication that at-risk students, and I am convinced most students, can function in a less fragmented, more holistic and flexible learning schedule.

1996 to Present

In the latter part of the school year, 1995-1996, The *Laurenval School Board* was compelled, due to financial constraints, to close the board's media center. We had been using the Center to obtain video resources since the ACE Program commenced. The closing of the *Laurenval Education Media*

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Center presented a real problem to teachers like me.

So I developed a proposal that the ACE students take over operation of the media center. It became known as The mediACEnter Project. In a way it enabled the students to meet the objectives of the 16+ Program without leaving school. We were creating a workplace environment in the classroom. Each of the following services is operated by the ACE students, supervised by an ACE staff member.

These services include:

* booking, packaging and distributing media materials according to teacher requests.

* copying non-copyright videotapes for educational use.

* pre and post video production.

* recording, cataloguing, promoting and distributing *Cable in the Classroom Programs*.

* graphic work and laminating.

* repairing and servicing of audiovisual hardware.

* in-house audio visual deliveries.

Beginning in August, 1996, the ACE Program has been occupying an entire wing in LTMHS, including the original classrooms. The mediACEnter houses the video loan library and audio-visual repairs, a school supply/snack bar, erACErs, ACE video production and editing studio, and a classroom.

There are presently three components to the ACE Program. These are:

1) the in-school businesses (i.e., The mediACEnter, erACErs and ACE Video Productions).

2) On-the-Job Training, which occurs twice a year for eight weeks in actual industries in the local communities.

3) class work. During the regular school day, half of the students work the in-school businesses until lunch, while the remainder are in classes. The latest schedule is outlined below.

8:00 - 9:30 English/Media & Math, French/In-School Businesses

9:30 - 9:45 Break

9:45 - 10:45 English/Media & Math, French/In-School Businesses

10:45 - 11:30 Lunch

11:30 - 1:00 English/Media & Math, French/In-School Businesses

1:00 - 1:15 Break

1:15 - 2:15 English/Media & Math, French / In-School Businesses

Recognition

Over the last six years, the ACE Program has been:

1. documented in several local and national journals and newspapers.

2. recognised by the Canadian Association of Principals as one of seventeen Stay-In- School Initiatives from across Canada.

3. chosen by The Canadian Association of Principals and Josten's of Canada to attend the

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first Stay-In-School Conference in Edmonton, Alberta.

4. highlighted on C.F.C.F.'s television program *Fighting Back & Buzzone*.

5. Quebec Award for Excellence in Partnerships, by the Conference Board of Canada and The Royal Bank, 1995-1996; 1998-1999.

6. Award of Excellence in Education by The Learning Channel and Videotron, 1997.

7. Sony of Canada Award of Achievement for Outstanding Use of Creative Development of Educational Media in K -12.

SUPPORTING CAST: AT-RISK STUDENTS

I have taken many undergraduate and graduate courses, and have reviewed literature which focuses on students like those in the ACE Program. If I have learned anything it is that defining and characterising students as at-risk is problematic and perhaps dangerous. In the process, the descriptions and categories into which these students have been placed have shifted constantly over the last twenty years that I have been studying about them. When I first started teaching, the term used for my students was special education, which soon changed to exceptional children, then to high-risk and now to at-risk students. As well, some students were given specific labels such as emotionally and behaviourally disturbed. In fact, my argument is not with the labels but with the ambiguities created by these labels. The ambiguities are not a recent phenomenon, but rather are founded in the historical split between education and society. Before describing my image of the ACE students, I will explain the origins of the stereotypical image of at-risk students.

The Historical Image of At-Risk Students

Many of education's routines are founded in history, beginning in England, during the reign of Henry VIII. At the age of four, children were sent to schools to become literate so that they could earn "the word of God." Postman (1982) writes in *The Disappearance of Childhood*, "Where literacy was valued highly and persistently, there were schools and where there were schools, the concept of childhood developed rapidly" (p. 39). Unfortunately, for many children, schooling was something "unnatural," and consequently they resisted its restrictive measures. (Postman, 1982). For these children, becoming literate was easier "read" than done.

Beginning in the middle ages, education has, with the best of intentions, operated on a system of inclusion and exclusion. Those included go on to higher levels of education; those excluded do not. Seems simple enough, and yet . . . . In his book, *School, Subjects and Curriculum Change* (1987), Ivor Goodson reminds us that the idea of a "classroom" is a response to an early concept of social "class."

In the Nineteenth century, students' ability, and therefore status within the educational system and society, was to a degree predetermined according to one's social class. Upper class children were instructed to go on to university. Lower class students were prepared for vocations. This does not mean that lower class children did not have instruction in the finer points of society. Standardised English and writing invitation cards, which on the surface seems like an inappropriate task for children from poor neighbourhoods, were part of the curriculum for these children.

At-Risk Students: The Stereotypical Image

November 1990

I asked Mr. L how John B was doing in his math class. (John had been integrated into a regular math class at the end of term 1.) The conversation went something like this:

Me:	So how's John doing?
Mr. L:	Is John from Special Ed.?
Me:	Ya, why? Is there a problem?
Mr. L.:	I'm not sure.
Me:	What's wrong?
Mr. L:	Well he's doing o.k, he's cooperating and...but, is he on medication or taking dope?
Me:	Not that I know of, why? What's he doing?
Mr. L.:	Nothing's wrong. I just didn't know he was from Special Ed. and I figured if he's doing well then he must be on medication.
Me:	You know what, I was kidding. John was never in Special Ed.

I include this conversation not as a critique of teachers, but rather as an example of how stereotyping of students who are, or were placed, in non-mainstreamed classes has continued down through history.

The stereotypical image of the low achieving students constructed over the last thirty five years is one who:

- has difficulty with classmates

- is disturbing and uncooperative

- has a short attention span

- is activity oriented

- lacks higher reasoning skills

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- is unable to work with abstract concepts

- is afraid to take risks

- is not goal oriented

During the 1960s, students who came from visible minority groups, single parent families and/or ow income families were considered to be culturally deprived, lacking in parental support and, consequently, did poorly in school. It was assumed that culturally deprived students were unable to attain basic skills, the perquisites for higher order skills, and therefore could not meet hierarchical curriculum standards (Means, Chelemer and Knapp, 1991). They thus tended to drop out of school earlier than most students.

More recently, studies by Means, Chelemer and Knapp, (1991) have found that students experiencing difficulty attaining basic skills in school include those who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- mostly males

- history of family related problems

- substance abuse

- early pregnancies

- single parent families

- poorly educated mothers

- limited ability in the English language.

Typically, such students were, and are considered today, to display one or more of the following behaviours:

- do not participate and/or identify with their school

- disciplinary problems

- high rate of truancy

- impulsive behaviours

- poor peer relationships,

- low self-esteem

- emotional problems

- communicate most often through actions, rather than words

- externally-oriented rather than introspective

- content-oriented rather than form-centered

Perhaps the most misleading description of students alternatively schooled comes from The *Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook* (Beard and Cerf, 1993). Students, who are placed outside of mainstream education are considered "uneducated; illiterate" (p. 6).

A federal study, reported in one of Canada's newspapers counters the stereotypical notion that low achievers are the most at-risk of dropping out of school. According to the report, 77% of 18 to 20 year olds who had dropped out of school had passing grades. Thirty seven percent had A or B averages, 40% had C's. At the opposite end, 33% of students who graduated had backgrounds that were considered high risk: low income and/or single parent families, or were themselves married

/ith children, but had family or other influences which discouraged educational success.

You're Either Included or Excluded

iune 20, 1996 was hot and muggy. The last place I felt like being was in my high school staff room

alculating students' marks. As I thumbed through the stack of papers, I listened to some of my

olleagues discussing the frustrating state of education. For many teachers, exam time is often the

:atalyst for the ritual of bashing the educational system, and more specifically, for commenting on

tudents who, through their own fault, have not done well during the school year and/or on the

:xams.

Owing to the high humidity and end of year exhaustion, I had little energy to enter into a discourse

in critical pedagogy. That is, until the discussion turned toward the notion that there are those

students "who are academics and go onto university and there are those who don't go to university

because they can't learn, can't remember, aren't motivated."

My colleagues' discussion in the staff room was not deliberately meant to be derogatory. Still, the

children they were focusing on are those for whom education has failed to provide an environment

that invites them into the learning process. My colleagues' discussion points to the ideological

nature of their conceptualisation of literacy, which sees two solitudes in education: one for students

who are considered literate and one for those who are considered illiterate.

In fact, I do not argue with the notion that all children can or should go onto higher education, or the

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need for alternative programs for some students, nor with the idea that each student has strengths and weaknesses. Admittedly, early on in my teaching, I had followed the latest educational trends and referred to my students as: low achieving, general, special education, disadvantaged, educationally deprived, exceptional, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, at-risk, drop-outs and most recently, educationally challenged. As well, over the last twenty-one years, I have taught a number of remedial programs. These include: Short Vocation, Special Education, Individualised Learning Continuous, Individualised Learning Temporary, Cooperative Education, 16+ and of course Alternative Education. For the purposes of this inquiry, I will be using the terms, "at-risk students" and "alternative program."

Indeed, I welcome students' individual abilities. However, at the risk of sounding like a "born again" educator, over the last nineteen years I have realised that my students can learn, remember and be motivated. Consequently, I become irritated when my students, and others like them, are described in ways which positions them on the fringes of education. I am often told by colleagues that students who are "having trouble," the code phrase for disruptive behaviour, "would be better off in the ACE Program," which demonstrates the taken for granted notion of alternative programs such as ACE.

Perhaps The *Education Indicators for the Elementary and Secondary Levels* (Ministere de l'education: Direction des etudes economiques et demographiques, 1993) best illustrates the point I have made here regarding inclusionary and exclusionary schooling. The document states (the italics are mine):

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Some students who are *intellectually challenged* leave secondary school *without a diploma after having attended school until 21*. Other students enrolled in "continuous individualised path for learning" enter a life skills or work skills program at the age of 16. The latter students may obtain an Attestation of Skills issued by the school board. *Although this certificate recognises a certain level of achievement , it is not formally issued by the Ministere, nor is it equivalent to a diploma awarded by the Ministere* (p. 42).

While the report goes on to say that, *"Strictly speaking, students described above cannot be considered drop-outs"* (p. 42), it does state that 32.2 per cent of "early school leavers," who are students eligible for high school graduation, dropped out of school in the school year 1991 -1992. This was an increase from 27 percent in the mid 1980s. The report suggests that the increase was due to *intellectually challenged students* leaving school without a diploma. Stricter graduation requirements and the move to transfer students over the age of eighteen to the adult education sector were the triggers.

My Image of At-risk Students: The ACE Students

Demographically, some ACE students do fit many of the behavioural, social, economic and family characteristics of at-risk students described earlier by Means, Chelemer and Knapp (1991). However, for most students the opposite is true. In fact, characterising the "average" ACE student is as problematic as defining at-risk students. ACE students represent young people whose demographics include the typical two-parent family.

The ACE students vary in age from sixteen to nineteen years. Most are English speaking mother tongue, many are French, bilingual. They are physically and socially indistinguishable from typical high school students. They aspire to be successful academically and vocationally, and most are

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actually quite capable learners.

Furthermore, while there are some ACE students who display negative behaviours and attitudes associated with the stereotypical idea of at risk students, for the most part ACE students are capable of cooperative learning. They want to succeed. They want to learn. They do not want to drop out of school. They are naturally curious. They are adaptable to new situations. They are capable of higher level thinking. Indeed, they are not unlike the typical LTMHS "regular students."

Still, there are attributes which only ACE students share:

- They have previously enrolled in regular, special education or Individual Paths for Learning (IPL) classes.

- Their average reading levels according to their school records are between grade four and grade seven, placing them well below grade nine, the norm for students aged sixteen years.

- At the extreme, there are ACE students who are reading and writing at the pre-high school level.

- They have been denied access to a high school diploma within the structures, as they now exist in Quebec high schools.

- They have very few high school credits, some have none.

- They cannot complete the required courses in the allotted amount of time, using approaches and methods of evaluation. Indeed, some never will.

- The result of their negative experiences in school, and at home, have left many students "turned off" to schooling.

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Here are some comments taken from ACE students' journals that highlight some of the above characteristics. They were written in response to a general class discussion about schooling and how they felt about it.

> Even though I haven't dropped out, I have thought about it quite a bit. I did and am going through difficult times. These problems, weither family related or school related doesn't make a difference. I messed up my high school years. I have been put back for the past two years.
>
> **stu.art**/September 16, 1991

> Yes, I have thought of dropping out. I was doing nothing in my classes. I would walk in my sleep.
>
> **stu.art**/September, 1990

> The thing is that you blame yourself and also the proces is very hard and long one and that really hurts.
>
> **stu.art**/October 6, 1991

Some ACE students have dropped out of school, returning discouraged at being unable to find employment. Asked why she wanted to enter the ACE Program, one student wrote:

> To learn and when your finished school you take your degree and you try to find a job and most times you find one but now with the economy falling in Quebec its harder to find a job. Ther's a lot of people unimployed in this provincence and if theres a lot of people out of work well the chances of me finding a job is very slim.
>
> **stu.art**/September 5, 1991

Still another student wrote:

> i was put in the ACE Program in 92 because the traditional school was not working for me. The traditional school was to fast for me i needed some kind of program that wold not be so fast and it could help me do up some of my potential. I was thinking i was not getting any younger and i needed some kind of work experience because i knew that i couldn't get my

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diploma as fast as the regular students. ACE seemed like my best chances.

stu.art/No specific date

Over the last three years, I have noticed an interesting phenomenon developing. More and more students in the mainstream are inquiring about ACE on their own (i.e., without referrals). Those already in the program have been recommending it friends and peers. At the end of the school year 1996, three students voluntarily applied to the ACE Program. As of June, 1997, the director of student services reported that seven students have made direct, unsolicited, inquiries. Previously, administrators and educators "selected" students for the program. It seems to me that, at least in part, this is an indication of the success of the Media Education-based curriculum I developed.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

For the past six years I investigated what happened as the ACE students followed the Media Education Curriculum I developed with and for them. I was particularly interested in learning what they knew about the media already and what they learned about it in my classes. I was also interested in seeing to what extent their understanding of media and traditional forms of language were exploited and developed by my teaching.

In designing the curriculum for the ACE students, I saw connections between the English Language Arts Program I was teaching and what I learned about Media Education. The courses I took at McGill and my review of the literature regarding English Language Arts and Media Education strengthened these connections. I think English Language Arts Education and Media Education both have Literacy as their primary goal. I think that this is the reason why English Language Arts

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eachers are primarily the ones teaching Media Education and why the principal theorists in Media Education are mostly former English teachers. Thus my orientation in this inquiry will be toward articulating the connections between English Language Arts Education and Media Education, and using these connections to describe literate behaviour. In other words I am interested in my students' literate behaviour which, as I have come to understand it is, "a conscious use of new or expanding repertoires as readers and writers" (Emery, Anderson, Rother, Tiseo, Mitchell, & Brandeis, 1995).

My primary question is: what kinds of *literate behaviours* do ACE students demonstrate following the Media Education Curriculum I developed?

Associated with this question are the following considerations:

* how are these kinds of literate behaviours consistent with and/or are inconsistent with formal schoolings' notion of literacy?

* what aspects of the Media Education Curriculum contributed to the ACE students' literate behaviours?

* what kinds of knowledge do ACE students bring to bear as producers and consumers of media, following participation in a Media Education Curriculum?

* does my Media Education Curriculum assist ACE students' understanding of traditional print texts?

* what kind of teaching approaches and principles seem to be appropriate?

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PLAN FOR THE REST OF THE NARRATIVE

In Tape Three I describe how I designed and undertook my inquiry. In Tape Four, I describe and discuss the literate behaviours of the ACE students, and in Tape Five I discuss what I learned about the connections between English Language Arts Education and Media Education, as well as reflect on the need for schools to change their conceptualisation of literacy and pedagogy. But, before doing so I must attend to the requirement of reviewing pertinent literature. This follows in Tape Two.

TAPE TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

PREAMBLE

The first thing I would like you to know about this Tape, the Review of the Literature, is that I will not be using the same conversational tone which characterises the other chapters in my dissertation. The reason for this is that this chapter was submitted as a partial requirement for my comprehensive examination. Therefore, the prose I used was more academic in nature.

Since Media Education derives most of its theory and energy from the English Education community, the Review of the Literature looks at theory from this community, with a special focus on what I refer to in this inquiry as "literate behaviour." As well as looking at the evolution of English Education into English Language Arts, I also trace the evolution of Media Education theory, curriculum and pedagogical approaches in Canada and around the world. I do this because these have informed my own teaching and curriculum development with the ACE students. Keep in mind, however, that the Review of the Literature was written over two years ago and since that time there have been developments in researching the effectiveness of Media Education programs. Recently, Hart and Benson(1994) have undertaken a large scale International study and Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) have been investigating a variety of contexts in which young people interact with media. As far as I know, though, no one has done an in-depth investigation of (media) literate behaviour among at-risk adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

This inquiry uses recently developed models (e.g., Dick, 1992; Masterman, 1985; Willinsky, 1991) of Media Education as a lens with which to view the literate behaviour of a group of at-risk adolescents. Its purpose is to describe at-risk students' Media Literacy after following a Media Education program based on the models.

While considerable progress has been made in the development and implementation of Media Education Curricula and materials, very little has been written about the adequacy of the theory to describe the literate behaviour of students or the effectiveness of the curricula in eliciting it. In 1988, UNESCO stated that, as regards literacy, there was a lack of systematic studies on the use of media in this area.

McMahon and Quin's (1992) study attempted to investigate whether Australian curricula in Media Literacy provided students with the knowledge of the media specified in the curricula. This large scale study was conducted with "regular stream" elementary and secondary students and relied on a pen and paper test requiring the students to analyse a sitcom and three different print advertisements. McMahon and Quin found the pen and paper method of data collection inadequate in helping them determine the extent to which the Australian Media Literacy curricula enabled students to demonstrate their understanding of media texts (here media texts are meant to be print and audio-visual). Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) have conducted an in-depth analysis of students' production, analysis and use of media in a large secondary school in North London. The focus of the study was on the relationships between young people's involvement in popular culture

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outside of school and their experiences of Media Education within a formal school curriculum. While much could be inferred from the descriptions of the students' work, the study did not address explicitly their literate behaviour. I shall refer to this study in more detail in the discussion of the Results. The present inquiry appears to be the only study of media literate behaviour as a result of direct instructional intervention.

Media Education theory and curricula in schools in North America, Britain and Australia, have evolved out of what is now called English Language Arts. While the field of Media Education borrows considerably from communications, sociology and cultural studies, it holds many of the assumptions of the nature of language and its relationship to literacy and approaches to pedagogy that were developed in Language Arts Education in the 1970s and 80s. The literature review seeks to support a broader notion of literacy which it will use to describe at-risk students' media literate behaviour in an alternative career education secondary school class.

The first part of the literature review traces the evolution of notions of literacy in English studies in order to establish its current connections to Media Education and, hence, to Media Education curricula. The literature review also explores recent theories of pedagogy which endorse the view that a dimension of literacy requires students to operate autonomously, collaboratively, and critically within educational settings. The second part of the literature review examines the theoretical framework and key concepts that inform the development of Media Education curricula.

DEFINITIONS

Media Education, Media Studies and Media Literacy

The British publication *Media Education in Britain: An Outline* (1989) defines Media Education:

> as any progressive development of critical understanding which seeks to extend pupils'
> knowledge of the media and to develop their analytical and creative skills through critical
> and practical work. (p. 2)

This definition includes television, film, radio, books and all the new media.

Over the last decade the terms Media Education, Media Studies and Media Literacy have been used almost interchangeably by media educators in North America, Britain and Australia. The following distinctions have been adapted from Buckingham (1993b), Lusted (1991), Masterman (1985), *Media Education in Britain: An Outline* (1989), Moore (1991), Silverblatt (1995), and Worsnop (1994):

Media Education includes:

* media-across-the-curriculum application

* a topic within another subject

* critical understanding of media through analytical and practical work

* teaching about the forms, conventions and technologies

* teaching about media institutions, and their social, political and cultural roles

* emphasis upon students' experience of the media and their relevance to their own lives

* themes and project work

* approaches from audio-visual literacy and English Language Arts

* North American influence

Media Studies includes:

* a cross-media application

* a theoretical application of the media

* a conceptual framework

* analysis of a message delivered by the media and the techniques used to create that

message

* elements of communication, film and cultural studies

* British, Australian and European influence

Media Literacy builds on the following outcomes of Media Education and Media Studies:

* an awareness of the impact of media on the individual and society

* an understanding of the process of mass communication

* the ability to analyse and discuss media messages

* an awareness of media context as a text that provides recognition of culture

* production and analysis skills

* traditional and non-traditional literacy skills

* an enriched enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of media content.

The definition of Media Literacy according to the *Ontario Department of Education Resource Guide: Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1989) is:

> Media Literacy is concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. More specifically, it is education that aims to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of how the media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organised, and how they construct reality. Media Literacy also aims to provide students with the ability to create media products. (pp. 6 -7)

In *Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*, a basic definition of Media Literacy is stated as: The ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes (Aufderheide, 1993, p. V).

Media Literacy: Teaching Through/About Media

There has also been confusion about teaching through media and teaching about media. Duncan 1993) states that teaching through the media, while concerned with the language of media, primarily focuses on using media as a vehicle to initiate discussion or as a motivator for Language Arts classes. In other words, in teaching through the media, teachers use the media as a delivery system for subject content. No attempt to examine the delivery system itself is made.

In teaching about the media, the delivery system (i.e., the medium and the message) is examined. Teaching about the media stems from the notion that media shape the world in which we live and

therefore it is becoming increasingly important for students to understand the infrastructures of society. Media Education explores the media within a socio-political framework through analysis and production. This includes preparing students to understand the production and dissemination of information, the growth of media industry, the development of commercially based media, the role of advertising, and audience negotiation of print and non-print text.

In 1972, a meeting of Member Organisations, UNESCO, defined Media Education as:

> .... the study, learning and teaching of, and about the modern media of communication and expression as a specific and autonomous area of knowledge within educational theory and practice, distinct from their own use as aids for teaching and learning of other areas of knowledge, such as mathematics, science and geography.

This definition describes the relationship between Media Education and aspects of communication studies, literary criticism, journalism, social science, and technology. It points out that Media Education is a means of understanding the media within various disciplines. This inquiry is concerned with teaching about media.

Since the present research examines teaching about the media within the context of an alternative career education program for at-risk students, and since the focus of this research is on the media literate behaviour of at-risk students after being exposed to elements of Media Education and Media Studies, I use the term Media Education to describe the program the students were exposed to. Their literate behaviour indicates Media Literacy and traditional literacy.

A Postmodern Definition of Literacy

Willinsky (1991) provides a set of principles that accommodates a view of Media Education, as well as supports a notion of an expanded definition of literacy adopted in this inquiry. His principles are summarised as:

1. What counts in postmodern literacy is the use of language rather than the medium or technology that produces it.

2. Texts in postmodern literacy are not fixed creations but develop through collaboration and appropriation of texts which already exist.

3. Postmodern literacy embraces notions of literacy that all texts, oral, written and visual are dependent on the socio-cultural meaning of signs (i.e., semiotics).

4. Postmodern literacy broadens our concept of texts beyond the symbolic nature of language to include man-made environments. In Willinsky's terms postmodern literacy promotes reading of "arche(texture)" (p. 67).

5. By "finding a place for one's story and a form to make it stick" (p. 60), we are able to make meaning of the world.

6. Postmodern literacy operates on a series of distinctions between production of meaning, publication, originality, economic and moral obligations.

7. Postmodern literacy acknowledges the contribution of mainstream popular culture forms as sites for exploring the relationship between one's position in society and the socio-political ideologies in society.

8. Postmodern literacy acknowledges oppositional texts found in popular culture forms and encourages the reading and writing of alternative texts.

9. Postmodern literacy recognises the juxtaposition of sign systems, specifically art and economics found in advertising.

10. Postmodern literacy endorses the theoretical and production aspects of Media Studies in order to help students demystify media texts.

11. Postmodern literacy acknowledges that it is not the panacea for dealing with all the social and ideological issues in the world. Nor does postmodern literacy claim to be the answer to assist those who do not meet the demands of traditional schooling.

12. Postmodern literacy is critical literacy that, through the use of language, promotes public consciousness of social, cultural and economic ideologies.

Willinsky's description of postmodern literacy represents the changes in conceptualisations of literacy that have occurred recently in the evolution of English Language Arts Education. The evolution I am referring to has taken place over the last century.

EVOLVING NOTIONS OF LITERACY IN ENGLISH STUDIES

The Harvard Influence

The relationship between English teaching and the communication media has a long history. Early notions of English Teaching in North American schools ranged from instructing students to read great authors as a means to teach composition (Applebee, 1974) to reading the Bible and using literature to improve morality (Gere, 1992; Shayer, 1972). During the late nineteenth century,

English teaching in North America was concerned with teaching literature. Applebee (1974) cites the example of entrance requirements for Harvard University of 1873-74 which set the standard for all tertiary education in the United States as well as the rest of North America. Candidates were required to, "write a short English composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression, the subject to be taken from such works of standard authors as well, as shall be announced from time to time" (Harvard University, 1873, in Applebee, 1974, p. 30). In 1899 university entrance requirements specified that high school students be exposed to "classics" such as: *Ivanhoe, Silas Marner, Idylls of the King, A Tale of Two Cities and Julius Caesar.*

Shayer (1972) refers to the "classical fallacy" of English teaching that lasted until the thirties:

> Its origins lie in the uneasy transition from the almost exclusive study of the classics as the one true literary discipline to the acceptance of English at the turn of the century, with the belief that despite its pale substitute nature it (English) could be respectable - providing and only providing it was treated classically. While it was regarded by many as an upstart, its advocates were anxious to prove its integrity by distorting its real nature, a somewhat ironic capitulation when one considers that the classical studies themselves were exclusively biased on the grammatical-linguistic side at the time. The situation was not helped by the fact that the early teacher of English (certainly in the secondary school) was more likely than not a converted classicist and prone to fall back upon the methods of the Classical curriculum in which he had been trained. (p. 6)

The real objective of early English teaching was to have a student write grammatically correct prose

composition. Literature was considered purely as a subject matter for composition, the imitation of models and mastering of a set of rules. There was no attempt to involve the knowledge or experience that a student brought to the learning. Shayer (1972) states:

> What is so false in such an approach is the assumption that writing in one's own language is purely a matter of externals, the confronting of a mental obstacle course that the writer will best get through if he keeps his personal feelings in abeyance. (p. 7)

The emphasis was on reading classical texts as models of good composition in order to imitate, copy or reproduce them. Shayer again notes that:

> composition becomes the expansion of predetermined notes, the teacher's or the textbook writer's, not the child's, and the final mark awarded will depend as much on the pupil's ability to keep to the straight and narrow of the imposed framework as on spelling, punctuation and handwriting. (p. 11)

The almost exclusive focus on literature, which stemmed from the requirements for entrance into university, drove secondary school curricula.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, psychologists interested in learning and pedagogy argued against the idea that adult models of English should be imposed on children. They developed notions of instruction based on the individual characteristics of a learner.

At the forefront of such thinking were G. Stanley Hall and John Dewey. Hall and Mansfield (1886) stressed the need for curriculum to reflect the stages of a child's development. They argued that texts

be selected according to students' reading ability and their psychological development. The texts should be selected on the basis of whether they would be of interest to students rather than purely on their literary merit.

Further, Hall's interest in the psychological development of a child also included a child's moral development. Texts such as the Bible were to be studied for the values they expressed as well as for their content. His thinking in this area proved to be significant since it essentially asked students to respond to the meaning of a text. Hall influenced not only which texts should be chosen but also influenced a shift in English instruction based on the characteristics of a child (Applebee, 1974).

The Progressive Movement

Hall's writing influenced the thinking of John Dewey, who in 1889 emphasised the relationships among a child, his/her community and school. Dewey was concerned with a child's social awareness of society and the importance of imaginative experience (Shayer, 1972). According to Applebee (1974), Dewey's ideas mitigated the influences of the university on high school curricula. Dewey rejected the belief that literature and history were the sole determinants of culture. Dewey also disputed the idea of a cultural elite in education. He envisioned a democratising of the educational system in which a child grew within a social environment stressing cooperation and group work. That is, Dewey made the connection between a child-centered notion of English teaching and literacy. Dewey's work is important for Media Education since it advocates a hands-on experiential, inquiry-based approach to learning.

The Committee Of Ten

The Progressive movement posed a serious challenge to the Harvard model of literacy and its concomitant approach to Language English teaching regarding not only which texts should be studied in secondary schools but also the teaching approaches that were appropriate.

The confusion among teachers about how to incorporate the Harvard and Progressive style of English teaching was further complicated by the number of texts used in secondary school English classes. Literary texts for secondary schools varied from university to university. Each university decided which texts they would use to examine secondary students for university entrance. Problems such as this, along with the variations in university entrance requirements in other areas of the secondary curriculum, prompted The National Education Council of the United States to form a Committee of Ten in 1892 to deal with the difficulties (Applebee, 1974). Half of the Committee of Ten members came from secondary schools, while the other half were from universities.

The Committee of Ten organised a series of nine conferences, each based on a different area of the curriculum, including one for English. Each conference organised their own commissions and were required to report their findings about how to deal with the difficulties in entrance requirements to the main body of the Committee of Ten.

The commission charged with dealing with English teaching reported that the purpose of English is to:

1. enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression to

thoughts of his own.

2. to cultivate a taste for reading, to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature,

and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance. (Applebee, 1974, p. 33)

The Committee of Ten's report of 1894 was significant in establishing English as a valid subject.

It gave full recognition to English teaching by recommending that it be taught to all students at the

four levels of secondary school. Also, it placed literature at the centre of the English Program,

suggesting that by the first year of secondary school, students should be exposed to poetry and

narrative.

However, the report's emphasis on literature resulted in a uniform list of classical texts, as well as

a large number of annotated series, which were to be used for university entrance requirements. The

establishment of a uniform canon of classical texts resulted in a backlash among many English

teachers. It raised the question as to what and who determines a classical text. The other concern

was who should be determining university requirements, the secondary schools or the universities.

Indeed, while the final report of the Committee of Ten and the subsequent National Conference on

Uniform Entrance Requirements entrenched English in the secondary school curriculum, its

conception of English was counter to the progressive notions of Dewey since it ignored the interest

and ability of a child.

Early Twentieth Century Developments: The Introduction of Popular Texts

The Committee of Ten's approach to literature, which focused on the rhetoric, narration, description and exposition of a uniform list of classical texts (Applebee, 1974, p. 49), invoked resistance by secondary school English teachers. They rejected the idea that they had no input in how to prepare students for university entrance. The dissatisfaction led to the formation of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1911.

While the NCTE maintained that there needed to be an established level of English competency, it realised that not all students were bound for university and therefore the curriculum should be adapted to accommodate those students as well. The NCTE helped to democratise English teaching. It addressed the needs of children from various backgrounds by including books in the list of classical texts approved by the Committee of Ten which could be read at home. It also contributed by supporting and sustaining the expansion of school libraries to include all types of books and not just "classical" texts.

The 1914 *Handbook of Suggestions* (cited in Shayer, 1972) advocated that junior classes should include fairy tales, legends and myths, animal stories, adventures and children experiences. *The Handbook* also urged that children should be freed from the stress of making mistakes in their writing; teachers should help students to become autonomous in finding their own errors (Shayer, 1972).

In 1916 the actions of the NCTE pressured the National Conference on Uniform Entrance

Requirements to offer secondary schools the option of providing students with a "restrictive" examination based on the uniform list or a "comprehensive" examination which tested a student's comprehension and appreciation of a variety of different literature. In other words, control of preparation for university entrance exams was slowly relinquished to the level of the secondary school. By 1931 the uniform list was discarded (Applebee, 1974).

The slow transition at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century to accommodate the perceived interests of the students prompted teachers to utilize modern writings which appealed to the students to motivate them. This was true especially for those students not bound for post-secondary education. In early twentieth century English classrooms, newspapers, magazines and comics were tolerated by teachers as means by which they might assist lower class children to develop an interest in common mainstream texts and transfer it to classical literature Applebee, 1974). "Modern texts" were used to demonstrate to students the advantages of higher levels of culture (i.e., classical canons of literature) over lower culture (i.e., mass media texts).

Practical Literacy

The period immediately proceeding, during and following the first world war saw a movement towards a view of English teaching which emphasized producing good citizens (Gere, 1992). Educators believed that if the economy of the 1920s was to improve, it would require a population that was literate enough to acquire employment. Since it was expected that all adults were to be gainfully employed, the notion was that being able to read and write was a basic skill not just for those destined for post-secondary education. With this in mind, there was an attempt to improve the

communication skills and socially useful skills of lower class students. However, many of the skills that were taught (such as writing invitations and thank you notes) were foreign to lower class citizens.

Two levels of literacy were thus developing: a lower level and a higher level. The lower level of literacy included basic skills of reading and writing for those who are not bound for post-secondary education but who could acquire employment and maintain the economy of society. The implication was that some students were less capable of higher level reasoning and therefore less capable of analysis of classical literature and proper composition. The higher level of literacy was for the academic intellectual, bound for post-secondary education, who could direct the political, social and economic structures. In other words, notions of literacy during the 1920s, 30s and 40s were based on a socio-cultural hierarchy made up of a work force who could maintain the economic base of society and an academic force who could manage the socio-political affairs of the population. This notion existed well into the 50s. For instance, Bantock (1952) argues against progressive student-centered notions of education such as that advocated by Dewey. He commented that the majority of students had no real place in the traditional grammar school since they lacked the mental abilities and discipline.

U.N.E.S.C.O 's Definition of Literacy

Following World War II, English curricula continued to reflect practical and academic emphases and their concomitant views of literacy. Again, there were swings of the pendulum from progressive pedagogical approaches and selection of texts that reflected students' life experiences and interest

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to more traditional teacher-centred pedagogy and the selection of classical texts (Applebee, 1974).

The preceding descriptions of early notions of literacy have focused on events in North America, particularly the United States. From an examination of the history of Media Education (to which I shall refer to in a later section of the review), similar notions appear to have been held in Britain (see for example, Leavis and Thompson, 1933).

In the 1950s the newly formed UNESCO, undertook to define literacy. The definition reflected, to some extent, the stance of the key member nations, largely English-speaking, incorporating the "practical" conceptualisation of literacy. In 1951, for example, the organisation considered that, "A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life" (cited in Department of Education and Science, 1975). This definition reflects a minimal requirement of literacy that is characteristic of a lower level of literacy described earlier. Five years later, UNESCO modified their definition of literacy to, "A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community" (Gray, 1956, p. 21). This definition moves beyond linking literacy with the work place. It acknowledges the relationship of literacy to a public as well as economic context.

UNESCO's definition of literacy, which included a socio-political context, was overshadowed with the launching of Sputnik in 1957 by the Soviet Union. The Western world became concerned that it was falling behind in the pursuit of education excellence which was linked to levels of literacy.

The thinking was, and still is, that if you raise the levels of literacy, from lower levels to higher levels, then academic levels are also raised. This notion resulted in an even further division between a lower and a higher level of literacy. In 1962, UNESCO clarified functional literacy even further:

> Literacy is the possession by an individual of the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to use these skills toward his own and the community's development. (UNESCO, 1962)

1960s

English teaching during the 1950s and into the early 1960s emphasized language, literature and composition (Gere, 1992). For the most part the social and cultural aspects of a child were ignored, just as they had been at the beginning of the century. Well into the 1960s and 70s in education, a child's background including their everyday language, was considered an irritant. Students were expected to conform to a Standard of English which enabled them to properly carry on their daily affairs in writing and speech, and which reflected an educated individual. In other words, people at higher levels of literacy should use Standard English. Those who did not use Standard English were considered illiterate and anomalies who had to be righted. It was commonly held that Standard English was to be acquired by some students in school and never by others.

Unfortunately, during the 1960s, cultural and social differences, such as race and place of origin, were seen as partially responsible for differences in language ability. Remedial programs were

lesigned to assist students with language difficulties. English teaching until the early 1970s ignored he language gains many children made before coming to school. It is interesting to note that .ccording to *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary Handbook* (Beard & Cerf, 1993), those lternatively schooled are considered uneducated or illiterate.

1970s: The Dartmouth Conference

The late 1960s and early 70s were years of tremendous tension and change in schooling as well as n society. Social and political unrest, which challenged traditional beliefs and values, had its affect on the teaching of English in North America and Britain. Teachers began to consider new approaches to the teaching of English, such as classroom drama, small group discussion, and ncorporating topics that would be relevant to students (Applebee, 1977).

The social and educational concerns led to a dialogue about the teaching of English. In 1966, fifty elementary, secondary and university educators from England, the United States, and a single representative from Canada, met at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire at the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English. The objective of the conference was to explore international opinions about what was right and wrong with how English was being taught, particularly in elementary and secondary schools. Each of the Dartmouth participants came to the conference with views about the nature of English and how it should be taught in schools.

Literacy prior to the Dartmouth Conference was based on the previously discussed notions of an elitist, higher level of literacy for students bound for post-secondary school and a purely, functional

ower level of literacy for those who were bound to enter directly into the work force. These models of literacy were handed down to schools. In other words, students who fit into the higher level of literacy model were part of a literate world. While the literature I have researched indicates that this elitist form of literacy was prevalent at the high school level, it seems fair to say that it also existed at the elementary school level.

Dixon (1969) summarises the main points of agreement about language education developed at the Dartmouth Conference. These are:

1. language is learned by doing, not by practice exercises.

2. students must share life experiences through dialogue, monologue, talk, literature, drama, and writing.

3. using shared experience, students construct their own understanding of reality.

4. students learn how to write well as they begin to understand the role of the writing process in message design.

5. the role of a teacher is to navigate a student through the writing process.

6. students may also seek assistance in the writing process from their classmates.

7. students develop new insights through active participation with the symbolic nature of language.

8. children learn language prior to coming to school from parents, family and their neighbourhoods.

9. language use and development prior to coming to school is limited by the degree of social interaction experienced by a child.

10. the teaching of English begins with and builds upon the recognition of a child's unique language background and experience.

11. the role of English teaching is to help a student move successfully and confidently from the spoken to the written, from dialect to standard and from dialogue to monologue (Dixon, 1969).

The above main points of the Dartmouth Conference have several important implications for an expanded notion of literacy subscribed to in this inquiry. For the first time in the development of English teaching, the importance of student knowledge and use of language prior to coming to school were acknowledged. Second, participants at Dartmouth generally agreed that there does not exist one way to teach English, since no one child's language development is the same (Muller, 1967, p. 53). Third, teachers at Dartmouth recognised the role of language in the everyday experiences of a child and that meaningful writing occurs when a student can negotiate and share his or her own experiences. That is, they conceived of literacy as an active process that involves the everyday experiences of students. The Dartmouth Conference also marked a change in the use of the term English teaching to Language Arts education. Finally, and most significant for this research, the main points of the Dartmouth Conference, previously outlined, illustrate that schooling needed to provide more opportunities for students to use language for their own purposes, in different contexts according to different functions.

James Britton: The Functions of Language

Prior to Dartmouth, the language that students used with family and in the community, its purposes

and its context were of little importance. The only form of language that was of concern to teachers was Standard English. Gere and Smith (1979) describe the myths which constitute notions of Standard English:

1. Standard English is the kind of language which people should use for all occasions. Standard means most serviceable and negotiable and therefore most correct.

2. Standard English is a clearly definable set of correct pronunciations, grammatical structures, and word choices. It is standard because it represents the widest usage and because it has been refined to be the most versatile and acceptable form of English.

3. Standard English is necessary for success in school and therefore in employment. One of the principal reasons for having schools is to equip young people with the skills necessary to improve their chances offer social and financial rewards. Conformity to certain ways of using language obviously underlies several of those skills.

4. Standard English is the best version of English for the expression of logical and abstract thought. Because all of the great English and American writers use this form of English and because much of the business of our society is conducted with this form, it must be the form best suited to the expression of precise and sophisticated thought (p. 8).

These notions of a singular, proper Standard English changed after Dartmouth. Major contributors to this shift were James Britton et al. (1975). They examined the writing development of children between the ages of eleven and eighteen. Their research examined "the demands that different tasks make upon the writer [i.e., functions] and the writer's expectations with regard to the reader - usually the teacher [i.e., audience]" (p. 10).

Participants and Spectators

Britton et al.'s concept of participant and spectator provide a framework that focuses on why a person writes and includes how language is used to represent our experiences (p. 79). According to Britton et al., we understand our world by being both a participant and a spectator. As participants

we are required to evaluate experiences so that we may be able to act in one way or another. Our evaluations of the experiences act as triggers for action. For a participant, content is more significant than the form and the emotional or affective nature of language.

A spectator, on the other hand, is afforded the luxury of making value judgments without necessarily having to act upon those judgments. A writer, as a spectator, understands the world by evaluating his/her emotional responses to experiences. Language for a spectator becomes a means through which to reflect and express an understanding of the world. Britton et al. stresse that a child must be able to operate in the role of spectator using his knowledge of language that he has built before coming to school as well as in school as a participant. Literacy that includes the concept of participants and spectators is something that we develop as generators and interpreters of language. The differences between participant and spectator provide a framework for the functions of written language.

The Functions of Language: The Expressive Function

For Britton et al., the expressive use of language is the most important function of language. They describe expressive language both in terms of spoken and written. Expressive language that is spoken includes expressions of emotions, expressions of inner thoughts, expressions of emotional needs, and expressions of moods. Expressive language in written form includes thinking aloud on paper, journal writing, letter writing to a friend, writing to more than one audience who share common values and experiences (Britton et al., 1975). Expressive language fulfils the basic needs of individuals to use language in order to articulate their own world to themselves and to others.

Expressive language is affective in nature since the author spontaneously includes his /her own emotional responses to a situation. Britton et al. argue that teachers should be providing more opportunities for students to use expressive language. They also stresses that early writing in schools must begin with expressive language so that children are able to move into what he refers to as the transactional and poetic functions of language.

Transactional and Poetic Functions

Participants use the transactional function of language to inform, persuade and advise. The function of transactional language is to fulfil an outcome. The form of the transactional language is organised so that the writer needs only to make sure that a reader is able to make connections about what is expected. In other words, transactional language is characterised by its practicality. Examples of the transactional function are: business reports, recording of information and radio or television scripts.

On the other hand, spectators use poetic language to recreate experience or to entertain. That is, poetic language serves a primary function to give pleasure to an author and an audience. As a result, form and context are essential in the poetic function of language if a reader is to understand and appreciate meaning.

Britton et al. note that expressive language is always at play in both transactional and poetic functions. Expressive language operates within the transactional function when the reader is coerced into performing or responding to a task. Expressive language moves into the poetic function when a reader is asked to make meaning of experience.

Audience and Schooling

The ability to modify one's writing for different functions acknowledges the notion of audience. Britton and his colleagues observe that writing for an audience is a difficult concept for novice writers since it involves understanding how to address the needs of different audiences in specific contexts. Writing is also difficult for beginning writers since they must become what Britton et al. refer to as, " performers of a social act in the arena of context, or situation" (p. 60). Their analogy implies that writing for an audience, which one may or may not know, moves beyond writing for the self (i.e., expressive language) and into a social relationship between a writer and a reader (i.e., transactional or poetic language). Writers must always keep in mind who they are writing for, the purpose of the writing and under what circumstances their writing will be read (i.e., the function and context).

While Britton et al. acknowledge the importance of student understanding of the role of audience in the development and process of writing, they also recognise the difficulties that teaching audience presents in schools. A student sees his/her own writing development not only determined by the teacher's standards but also the teacher's socio-cultural values. They state: "The messages which flow from the pupil-writer to teacher-audience will be affected by the extent to which they share common cultural assumptions and also by the extent to which the pupil is aware of how matters stand" (p. 63). As a result, young writers will unfortunately often consider their own pleasure or insights as secondary (p. 6) and will write for the teacher rather than for themselves.

Britton et al.'s work is significant for Media Education since it breaks away from the notion of singular form of Standard English as described earlier. They argue for a use of language as a valid form of communication, spoken and written to please oneself as well as for an audience and in more than one function and context. This includes language typically used in films, television and radio programs.

Douglas Barnes: Classroom Language and Communication

While Britton et al. have contributed the notion of the expressive function of language as being the base from which transactional and poetic functions develop, Barnes (1992) considers how opportunities may be generated in classrooms in order to develop children's expressive abilities. His work brings into focus the changing pedagogical practices implicit in the student-centered considerations of post-Dartmouth conceptualisation of the English Language Arts.

"In his study of third year classes in eleven schools, Barnes asked teachers to respond to the following questions: 1. why they set written work, 2. what they kept in mind when they set it, 3. what they did in marking pupils' writings, and 4. what uses, if any, they made of it after marking" (p. 139). From their responses he was able to identify what he refers to as transmission and interpretation views of teaching.

In the transmission view of teaching, student writing is a means to an end product. Writing is an exercise through which teachers correct errors in content or grammar. Marking is used for assessment purposes only. The resulting tendency is that teachers point out problems rather than

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progress. The transmission teacher's objective is to provide students with knowledge which can then be tested. This type of teaching produces what Barnes refers to as school knowledge.

School knowledge is presented by the teacher as knowledge which requires that students have enough of an understanding which will enable them to correctly fulfil examination questions. It therefore has no reference points from which students can relate the information to their own experiences (i.e., understandings and values). School knowledge is never the property of students. It is knowledge hidden between pages of books or in a teacher's mind. Barnes argues that knowledge loses its value and is often forgotten if a student cannot see its relevance.

In the interpretative view of teaching, the role of teachers is to assist students in making their own judgments through language and reflections. This requires ongoing dialogue between teachers and students that builds on the specific contexts for language which encourages each others responses. What Barnes calls meaningful communication in a classroom occurs when teachers and students talk, argue and model each other's language and gestures in the process of exchanging meanings. In these terms, meaningful communication requires an environment in which students are encouraged to offer a perspective different from and perhaps, counter, to a teacher's. In this way students are able to clarify their own ideas. Barnes attempts to bridge the gap between teacher language and student language by advocating teachers shift from transmission to interpretation.

An interpretation approach to teaching considers writing part of a child's cognitive and personal development. It places the child at the centre of the writing process. Writing is considered as a

reflective process in which students shape and reshape their understanding of their world. Interpretive teachers support student writing development and knowledge by responding directly to the student in the form of questions and comments. Knowledge acquired through the interpretive approach to writing becomes something gained through socially created dialogue between the teacher and the student.

Knowledge that is socially created produces what Barnes calls "action knowledge," which students incorporate into their own ideas about reality. It recognises that learning occurs when students are asked questions by the teacher, or ask themselves questions, and then proceed with their own inquiry. Action knowledge is not the type of learning reported by teachers in such judgments as, "Johnny is doing well in English." Rather, it is the type of knowledge which escapes numerical assessment. Action knowledge considers what processes students use in knowledge acquisition and what students do with new understandings.

Action Knowledge and Exploratory Talk

Action knowledge, according to Barnes, comes from exploratory talk which students use in the acquisition of knowledge. Exploratory talk is not "rapping" but, instead, dialogic in nature and not judged by standards external to a student, such as examinations. Students' use of oral or written language in exploratory talk is never seen as esoteric. Exploratory talk does not have a prescribed conclusion in mind. The role of teachers in exploratory talk is to help students articulate their speech or writing. Exploratory talk according to Barnes allows a student to test out drafts of their oral and written language. Barnes notes that exploratory talk is negated by teachers since students are often

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asked for final drafts.

Barnes' notion of English Language as communication contributes to Media Education since it acknowledges a language learner as involved in learning how to communicate meaningful messages. It encourages students to talk about how they understand and interpret different types of discourse on their own. The teacher's role is to assist students in active exchanges with one another.

Moffett and Discourse

Moffett's definition of discourse builds on Britton et al.'s functions of language and Barnes' idea of communication. According to Moffett and Wagner (1976), communication builds on the disparity between sender and receiver in an exchange of information. They introduce the concept of discourse which they define as:

> discourse is any communication having a sender, receiver, and a message bound by a purpose. A discourse, for example, would be a conversation, a lecture, a letter, or journal, a poem or short story, ad or label. (p. 12)

Penfield (1987) states that for successful language users communication occurs in discourse events. She describes discourse events as:

> defined by custom or cultural convention, by the flow of topics or events within them, by social setting, by the social and personal relationships of the speakers involved in using them, and by many other variables as well (p. 13).

Moffett (1968) describes four different types of discourse: reflective discourse (i.e., conversation with oneself), interpersonal communication (i.e., between two people within speaking range), correspondence (i.e., discourse between acquaintances), and publication (i.e. impersonal

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communication to an unknown audience over an extended time and space). Each consecutive discourse is more selective and public than the previous one. The focus shifts from reflective and interpersonal to a larger, unknown subject. Communication abilities develop as a student moves through different discourses. Moffett suggests that experiences with different types of discourse enables students to discriminate between different forms of messages and their sources, to determine the value of a message based upon its origin, and to become familiar with composing for audiences they might or might not know. Students need opportunities to encounter, explore and practice how to use language to express experiences, through what he refers to as the universe of discourse. Children's use of discourse naturally moves from reflective to interpersonal. Moffett states that Language Arts curriculum should assist students in moving beyond those discourses to include correspondence and publication.

Language Arts and Media

English Language teaching as practised in schools was counter to Moffett and Wagner's (1976) conceptualisation of discourse. Moffett and Wagner, who defined literacy as being able to compose and comprehend in a variety of discourses, viewed English as a disjointed curriculum that confused literacy with ad-hoc courses in the "art" of reading skills and word recognition (i.e., decoding), writing skills, listening skills and speaking skills (i.e., encoding). They criticised many of the practices in English teaching as limited to helping students acquire "high standards" in writing skills, instead of providing opportunities for students to use various types of discourse and forms of communication.

The focus on high standards led English teaching to favour what Moffett and Wagner described as the particle approach. The particle approach breaks language into sequential units including words, sentences and paragraphs. Students are then taught how to receive and reproduce these units in order to improve grammar, void of purpose and meaning. Moffett and Wagner believe that Language Arts teaching confuses grammar (i.e., errors in punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) with producing discourse in a relevant, realistic, imaginative and meaningful fashion through effective expression. They recommended that effective expression is best taught through involvement with active discourse such as conversing with others, role playing, choral reading and participating in theatre. Moffett and Wagner refer to "raw experience" as a motivator for using language to express experiences for ourselves and for those with whom we wish to communicate. This is similar to Britton et al.'s notion of expressive language. Raw experience recognises student experience outside of school.

Discourse is any communication having a sender, receiver and subject bound by a purpose and can occur through oral, written and visual language. Moffett provides a framework for analysing different forms of discourse: oral, written and visual discourse includes song lyrics and slide-tape narrations, poems or a story, a sculpture and a film. Moffett's concept of discourse and its different types enables us to make the link between the Language Arts and media. For the first time in our discussion, language (i.e., discourse) includes more than just reading and writing print. Moffett argues students should learn discourse abilities through moving from interior dialogue to socialised speech, to language recording and reporting, to generalising, to theorising, and through manipulation of various symbols systems, including speech, writing, gestures, music, and images.

For students to be literate in the different types of discourses, using various forms of media, they need to be given occasions to listen, speak, read and compose through oral, written and visual discourse. The ability to compose in one form of communication enables a student to transfer language abilities to another. Through composing, students are able to understand the nature of language, find out what various media are able to do as well as how various media complement each other.

Acquisition and Learning: Primary and Secondary Discourse

Gee (1996) amplifies Moffett's notion of discourse using the terms primary and secondary discourse to distinguish what students already know from what they might be taught. Primary discourse is the basis for the acquisition and learning of other discourses later in life. As such, primary discourse is specific to the socio-economic experience of a child.

Secondary discourse, "involves uses of language, either written or oral, or both, as well as ways of thinking, valuing and behaving and go beyond the uses of language of primary discourse, no matter what group we may belong to" (p. 152). Secondary discourses are acquired and learned through social institutions outside of a home (i.e., schools, the workplace and religious institutions). To this list we may add the mass media, the world of advertisements and popular culture. Gee's notion of secondary discourses recognises that discourse is embedded within specific socio-political institutions, which he calls "props" (p. 143). Props have the following implications for discourse:

1. discourse is ideological in nature, involving dominant values and viewpoints.

2. criticism comes from outside of dominant discourse.

3. discourse is often opposing.

4. discourse is empowering.

Gee's description of discourse is significant since it extends Moffet's notion of discourse and reflects some of Willinsky's (1991) elements of postmodern literacy: postmodern literacy acknowledges oppositional texts found in popular culture forms and encourages the reading and writing of alternative texts; postmodern literacy is critical literacy that, through the use of language, promotes public consciousness of social, cultural and economic ideologies. Gee's distinction between acquiring and learning knowledge illustrates how vital it is for teachers to allow students to bring their understanding of their world in to a classroom and apply it to the learning process.

The notion that students make meaning through secondary discourse is reinforced by Halliday (1974). According to Halliday the role of schooling is to help students develop an awareness of their social position. It is "by means of language that a person becomes potentially the occupant of a social role" (p. 10). He refers to this as the "functional approach of language" (p. 13).

Language that fosters meaning making adopts a socio-linguistic nature which according to Halliday involves "the encoding of a behavioural potential into a meaning potential" (1974, p. 19). The meaning potential Halliday refers to is not found within subject content but rather emanates from the student. In essence, what is being referred to here is the notion that we each negotiate our own meaning of a message or a text.

Like Halliday, Anderson and Meyer (1988) argue that meaning making involves the interaction between communicants, content and context. We are reminded here of Moffett and Wagner's notion of the role of purpose and context in discourse. However, traditionally teachers have considered language as a means to teach content rather than as an interactive process through which students construct meanings. Halliday, Anderson and Meyer advocate that for discourse abilities to be developed, classrooms need to be interactive. This echoes Barnes' (1992) notion of interpretation teaching. Students must be given the opportunity to explore not only expressive and artistic forms of language but also socio-cultural usages of language that students experience everyday, such as popular culture forms of language.

Knowledge of and Learning about Language

Doughty, Pearce, and Thornton (1976) extend Moffet's notions of discourse described earlier by including the context in which discourse takes place. Language according to Doughty, Pearce and Thornton is more than a standard form of writing or linguistic ability. Students come to school with a wide experience and familiarity with language that they use everyday. Doughty, Pearce, and Thornton refer to this as knowledge of language. However, they argue that learning about language involves more than familiarity. Learning about language includes using language to express and order one's experience as well as understanding how to use language for different audiences in specific social occasions. The focus in the first part of learning about language is on the student who uses language for articulating his/her own experiences to him/herself. The second aspect of teaching about language is understanding how we use language in establishing our identity within social groups as well as understanding how social contexts operate to create our social identity.

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Doughty, Pearce and Thornton outline three levels of social relationships. At one level, language is used in relationship to one's role and status as membership in a family or a community. Moving beyond the family and community, language is used as a means through which we maintain our identity outside or within larger social groups, such as in a crowd or in an interview. The final and farthest away in terms of social context is the way we use language in relationship to social institutions, such as school and the workplace.

A student's ability to use language for the specific purposes and social contexts described above includes being aware of the active range of roles one must play and the social behaviours that others see as appropriate from someone in the different roles. The focus here is on the user of language who acts within and upon a social context.

However, Doughty, Pearce and Thornton point out that understanding the role of language in a social context also includes being conscious that our identities are also acted upon by the kind of language used during the course of interaction. They define literacy as, "the ability to draw on a wide experience of the language system in order to meet the particular occasions for using language" (p. 112). This definition is important for Media Education since it argues that literacy includes the knowledge that students already have about language (wide experience) as well as the need for students to understand the specific purposes and contexts (particular occasions) in which language is used.

Some of the particular occasions described by Doughty, Pearce and Thornton (1976) include using language to convey information, reporting events, making speeches, producing advertisements, and writing a radio or television script.

Doughty, Pearce, and Thornton agree with Britton et al.'s notion that language use in schools is mostly a transactional function of language. They observe, as Barnes did, that teacher talk dominates schooling. Like Moffett, they criticise current Language Arts teaching as largely skill building for formal learning situations in schools.

They refer to the kind of language used by teachers as the "language of the subject text book and public examination" (p. 17). Text book based language teaching is used as a model for good language. However, it leaves little opportunity for students to draw from their wide experiences of the language system. Reflection is sacrificed in search of the "correct" answer (Dias, 1992). Rather, a student's intelligence is gauged according to his/her ability to use standard text book language. In turn, students evaluate their own use and ability to use language on this model. The text book approach ignores one of the major premises of the Dartmouth Conference which argued for language teaching that included the development of a child.

In place of a text book approach to language teaching, Doughty, Pearce and Thornton advocate that teachers help students to use language effectively in the process of articulating experience. Learning about language includes being able to name things, categorise abstract and general concepts, describe sensations, distinguish between fiction and reality, and express values and attitudes.

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Doughty, Pearce and Thornton also argue that learning about language involves understanding that language is used in different ways for different occasions, suggesting different audiences. Discourse occurs when there is an understanding that there is a real audience with whom one is engaged in a meaningful relationship. This is important since it is the first time in our discussion reference is made to the consideration of a real audience which expects a specific kind of discourse. Doughty, Pearce and Thornton argue that real audiences are an important part of what students have to know in learning about language.

Rosenblatt: Text, Author, Audience and Reader

Rosenblatt (1978) brings together much of the work discussed so far in this inquiry concerning the nature of language, the role of writers and readers and how meaning is created in a message or a text. Her concept of a text goes beyond the symbolic structures and conventions. She stated:

> Text designates a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols. The visual or auditory signs become verbal symbols, become words, by virtue of their being potentially recognisable as pointing to something beyond themselves (p. 12).

Reading includes responses to all kinds of texts, such as speech, statues or objects (i.e., media). A text includes a writer's intended message and a reader's aroused consciousness to that meaning. Rosenblatt argues that it is important to consider not only what a text brings to a reader but what readers bring to a text. Her focus is on the reader instead of the producer of a text:

> Readers bringing to the text different personalities, different syntactical and semantic habits, different values and knowledge, different cultures, will under its guidance and control fashion different syntheses, live through different works (p. 122).

In the act of reading the importance of a reader in creating meaning of a text has historically been neglected. From classical times, the focus in this act was on the text itself and how well the text reflected or imitated reality. However, toward the end of the 1800s, society became more complex and uncertain of its own social reality and order. We may assume that the industrial revolution and the advent of mass media such as newspapers and magazines played a role in promulgating social uncertainty. This uncertainty resulted in the notion that a text did not stand alone. How well a text imitated or reflected reality was only as valid as the person who created it. Rosenblatt describes the role of a reader as an invisible eavesdropper (p. 2). The only way in which a reader could participate in a text was to express meaning in the author's terms. The reader merely decoded the message of the author. The reader was often judged by his/her ability to comprehend the text the author generated. Rosenblatt argues that throughout literary history, a reader has not been acknowledged as an active part in making meaning of a text.

In opposition to gauging a student's understanding of a text by how well he/she interprets what is supposedly a "correct" reading of a text (i.e., according to "authorial intent"), Rosenblatt stresses that a text does not act upon a reader. Instead, it is a reader who responds to a text. She refers to this as a "transactional process" (p. 18) in which a reader reconstructs meaning in a text according to the symbolic nature of the text and the reader's past, raw experiences. The reader selects elements from the text and then cuts and pastes to fit a context, a personality and a level of meaning. How a reader makes meaning in a text is dependent on a reader's experiences with texts. According to Rosenblatt, "texts act as stimuli, blueprints and regulators" (p. 11). They are not fixed creations but develop through collaboration and appropriation of texts which already exist. Dias (1992) echoes

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Rosenblatt's transactional notion. Dias argues that texts are not static unchanging entities and that the traditional role of a teacher as one who establishes meaning in a text for students is counter to the transactional process. Similar to Willinsky's (1991) idea that texts in postmodern literacy develop through collaboration and appropriation of texts that already exist, a text is renewed in the transactional process that occurs between a reader and a text.

Aesthetic and Efferent Reading

Efferent Reading

All texts summon active readings and thus active readers. The type of response activated is dependent on the reading of the text. Rosenblatt states that all reading is carried on in a form of experienced meaning through efferent and aesthetic reading. In efferent reading the focus is on the information which a reader requires in order to carry out a specific function. The meaning is drawn outward from the reader. Efferent reading is characteristically practical. During efferent reading, a text acts upon a reader. Readers are not asked to call upon their life experiences and are not permitted to seek out a position (but are asked to call upon their references with similar texts). In this way readers of an efferent text are not part of the sensual elements of a text. Reader and author share a common experience represented in a text and consequently agree on the meaning conveyed. Dias (1992) comments that reading a text in order to answer predetermined comprehension questions is not the same as reading for one's own pleasure (p. 132). When a reader is asked to give a preferred reading of text rather than his/her own reading, not only is spontaneity lost but also positioning oneself within a text becomes a forced rather than a personal, unconscious and

immediate reaction.

Aesthetic Reading

Rosenblatt's (1978) notion of "aesthetic reading places the experienced meaning in full light of awareness and involves the selective process of creating a work of art" (p. 75). The focus in aesthetic reading is what happens for a reader while the reading is going on. The text draws a reader inward to his/her own life experiences. Aesthetic reading entices a reader to become involved in the transactional processes described in the previous section. We cannot ignore our experience while reading a text any more than we can ignore our perceptions of the world around us. Aesthetic reading is selective since a reader picks out information that has particular cognitive and emotional appeals.

Rosenblatt points out that the same text may be read either efferently or aesthetically, depending on whether a reader is acting in what Britton et al. called a participant or a spectator position. As a participant, a reader is asked to perform or respond to a text in a specific way, efferently. For example, asking a student to name the characters or plot in a short story. As spectators, readers can consider how they felt about the believability of the characters or plot, thus reading aesthetically.

Rosenblatt stresses that students must be given opportunities to read aesthetically so that they will be able to engage in the transactional process of reading. In this way they will realise their relationship with a text. She stresses that through aesthetic reading students become producers of language by structuring and clarifying experience(p. 29). It is especially interesting to note that

Rosenblatt believes that the purest of interpretations of a text are those by what she calls an ordinary reader (p. 140). A text for an ordinary reader is a living entity to be experienced rather than analysed. The ordinary reader does not secure cues from literary devices hidden within a text by the author. Ordinary readers make meaning in a text through emotions triggered by "socio-cultural settings" (p. 78). It is, thus, more important what a reader brings to a text rather than what a text brings to a reader.

Rosenblatt rejects what she calls the ideal reader of a text or a correct reading of a text (p. 140). Her notion of literacy is one which includes the transactional relationship in which a reader strives to become closer to the text in the process of making more demands on texts and therefore on him/herself. By responding to a text in any form, oral, written or visual, a reader is able to position him/herself within a literate world by making meaning. Rosenblatt thinks that education's responsibility lies in narrowing the gap between literacy designed for the ordinary reader and literacy designed for the elite (p. 142). In essence she is arguing for the right of all readers to take responsibility for making meaning and to participate on a level footing, without procedures which hinder literary transactions.

Rosenblatt's notion that readers actively create meaning of a text fits well with one of the basic premises of Media Education: audiences negotiate meaning of texts.

McCormick, Waller and Flower: A New Model of Reading

McCormick, Waller and Flower (1992), like Rosenblatt, argue that reading is not a passive activity

out rather one in which a reader actively creates meaning (p. 6). They describe reading as:

1. An interactive process, produced by the interaction of the readers and texts.

2. Having both cognitive and cultural dimensions, that is, it is both an intellectual procedure that requires certain mental strategies and skills, and a cultural procedure, contingent upon your wider beliefs and assumptions.

3. The making of meaning is not merely a "subjective" or individual experience because both readers and texts are deeply influenced by their socio-cultural context. Readers and texts alike are produced by (that is, they are the products of) their history and culture. Or as some theorists like saying, they are "written" by their culture.

4. As a consequence of point 3, and because relationships between signifiers and signified are always culturally derived, certain readings might seem "correct" or even "intended by the author" in one socio-cultural context but will not seem so across all cultural contexts. Thus no text can be said to contain a single, fixed meaning since readers' determinations of meaning are dependent on social, cultural and literary assumptions that are in a continual state of change.

5. The readings readers develop from the text have implications for the other parts of our lives outside the classroom: there is no such thing as a purely "literary" reading (p. 9).

McCormick, Waller and Flower's theory of reading conceives of texts as a system of signs. The term signs refers to objects, icons, or symbols that communicate, comprising a signifier and a signified. A reader's understanding of the physical existence of a word or image, the signifier, is not necessarily the same as the mental image, or the signified. Purves, Rogers and Soter (1990) comment that semioticians have defined literacy as "thinking in sign systems, including not only oral and written sign systems but also art, music, dance and drama" (p. 86). Within these sign systems we can include print, radio, film, television, man-made environments and popular culture artifacts.

Alvarado and Boyd-Barrett (1992), editors of *Media Education: An Introduction*, contend that signs are useful tools for exploring the meaning of texts. Signs serve to explain how texts can have

multiple meanings for readers, which McCormick, Waller and Flower refer to as polyvalent readings. Polyvalent reading is similar to Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading since it invites the transactional process in which readers give a variety of responses and interpretations to a text.

Polyvalent reading serves as the foundation for a "new model" of the reading process which suggests that readers and texts each bring two categories of repertoires to bear on the reading transaction. Repertoires are comprised of combinations of ideas, experiences, habits, norms, and assumptions. One category of repertoire includes a knowledge of language systems and literary conventions such as medium, genre, mode, rhetoric and codes. A second repertoire includes general ideological assumptions implicit in the moral ideas, beliefs and values about the world at large. Reading is a transactional process involving a reader and a text in which a reader brings to bear both a literary and general ideological repertoire to construct meaning from the text in which is embedded the producer's literary and ideological repertoire. Following from Rosenblatt's notion that readers negotiate meaning of texts, McCormick, Waller and Flower's new model of reading is important for Media Education. It introduces the notions that texts are made up of signs which are socially and culturally constructed, have multiple meanings and contain ideological and value messages.

A SHIFT IN THE IDEOLOGY OF LITERACY

In reviewing the developments in English Language Arts, especially since the Dartmouth Conference, one can see the evolution in thinking about the nature of English Studies. Because of the shift in emphasis from Composition and Literature studies (a Cultural Heritage and elitist model) to Language Arts (a New Literacy Model), there has been a concomitant shift in understanding of

Literacy. This new understanding has best been characterised by Street (1984) in what he calls an "Ideological Model of Literacy." Its main features include the following assumptions:

- the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded.

- literacy can only be known to us in forms which already have political and ideological significance and it cannot, therefore, be helpfully separated from that significance and treated as though it were an "autonomous" thing.

- the particular practices of reading and writing that are taught in any context depend upon such aspects of social structure as stratification and the role of educational institutions.

- the processes whereby reading and writing are learnt are what construct the meaning of it for particular practitioners.

- we would probably more appropriately refer to "literacies" than to any one single "literacy."

- writers who tend towards this model and away from the autonomous model recognize between the analysis of any "autonomous" isolable qualities of literacy and the analysis of the ideological and political nature of literacy practice (p. 8).

THE EVOLUTION OF MEDIA EDUCATION THEORY

This section has two objectives: to present a summary of the theoretical evolution of Media Education and to discuss its concomitant curricular developments.

The Contribution of Educational Technology to Media Education

Silverblatt (1995) states that the development of media technologies in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries provided for the dissemination of information and entertainment to mass audiences. The last sixty to eighty years has been designated by social historians as the period called the communication revolution (Finn, 1972). This time period has been marked by developments in printing, photography, motion pictures, radio and television accompanied by research in psychology, mass communication and education.

Inevitably these media found their way into schools and influenced curriculum. The advent of the uses of audio-visual technology began with films during the late 1920s and 1930s. Radio came into prominence during the late 1930s and 40s. As a result of the uses of these technologies to train large numbers of military and civilian personnel during World War II and the accompanying research on the effects of these technologies, there was a proliferation of audio-visual technology including still and motion picture projectors, slide sets, filmstrips and a variety of sound and communication technology in schools after the war.

While there exists a history of the evolution of educational technology in schools (see for example Heinich 1989 and Saettler, 1990), it will not be discussed at length in this inquiry because this is not Media Education as we have discussed and defined it. Educational technology's focus was on using audio-visual technology to teach subject matter; that is, teaching content through the media rather than teaching about the media. Although the history of educational technology is not directly significant to this inquiry, the result of bringing technology into schools established a climate in which media could be studied in its own right. It is my intention at this point to explore early attempts at Media Education.

The first medium that was seriously examined as a medium itself within the context of formal education appears to be film. The reason for this was that film appeared to be most like literature. While films were being used in English studies during the 30s, for the most part English teachers, in Britain and the United States, viewed commercial cinema as a threat to serious literature. There were few attempts to deal with film as a literary experience but rather as a means through which teachers could demonstrate superiority of classical literature over common forms of entertainment. The real motivation of English teachers during the early part of this century was to encourage students to reject lower class standards of popular media. They taught about media in order to discredit it, in the hopes that students would steer away from popular media texts.

Between 1929 and 1932 a series of studies were sponsored by the Payne Fund (Applebee, 1974). The focus of the studies was on the effects of motion pictures on children. The conclusion of the report emphasised that motion pictures played an important part in a young person's life, outside of school. The report prompted the NCTE to recommend that a list of classical films be developed based on classical texts, standards of appreciation outlined and a nation wide evaluation of the effectiveness of film study in schools be carried out. The outcome of theses recommendations demonstrated that not only film but also newspapers and magazines could be adopted to English studies (Applebee, 1974).

In Britain, during the 1920s and 30s, Media Education developed from a classical tradition of literary criticism. The approach taken was based on the premise of immunising students against popular texts such as films so that they would turn toward reading the classics, high quality print literature

(Buckingham, 1990; Halloran and Jones, 1992; Masterman, 1985, 1994). The innoculatory notion of Media Education found its genesis in the 1938 *Report on Secondary Education (Spens Report)* which stated that "the cinema and ... the public press ... subtly corrupt the taste and habit of a rising generation" (cited in Halloran & Jones, 1992, p. 11) and in the writings of F.R. Lewis and Denys Thompson.

The Leavis and Thompson Influence

Democratisation, urbanisation, education, increased income, leisure time, and industrialisation resulted in the emergence of the middle class in the late eighteenth century (Silverblatt, 1995). With the growth of middle class and the development of media technologies during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, came the development of a new form of popular entertainment (i.e., popular culture). Nye (1978) defines popular culture as:

> those productions, both artistic and commercial, designed for mass consumption, which appeal to and express the tastes and understanding of the majority of the public, free of control by minority standards. They reflect the values, convictions, and patterns of thought and feeling generally dispersed through and approved by American society (p. 22).

Historically, popular culture has been considered by elite cultures as a threat to cultural authority. According to Halloran and Jones (1992), Leavis and Thompson's publication, *Culture and Environment* (1933), reflected a cultural mistrust of mass media by educators as well as many others in the middle and upper classes of society. Their thinking was that industry was the product of technological and mechanistic capitalism. Since the mass media are products of technology, they promulgated the decline of cultural values and the deterioration of language by preventing society from meeting human needs that are associated with work, nature and community. On the other hand,

great cultural works were viewed as expressions of personal values. Leavis and Thompson considered that popular culture artifacts, which were mass produced and lacking any real challenges, distracted young people from the genuine forms of high culture such as classical literature. Their views are illustrated in this quote:

> those who in school are offered (perhaps) the beginnings of education in tastes are exposed, out of school, to the competing exploitation of the cheapest emotional responses; films, newspapers, publicity, in all its forms, commercially-catered fiction - all offer satisfaction at the lowest level, and inculcate the choosing of the most immediate pleasures, got with the least effort . . . . We cannot, as we might in a healthy state of culture, leave the citizen to be formed unconsciously by his environment; if anything like a worthy idea of satisfactory living is to be saved he must be trained to discriminate and to resist (pp. 3-5).

Leavis and Thompson viewed English studies, through a response to "serious" literature and through written and spoken language, as society's best defense against the decline of old values and the encroachment of capitalism. Young people were to be innoculated so that they would be provided with the skills necessary to discriminate between high culture and those products produced by the mass media. The position stemming from the innoculatory principle was also applied to cinema. Masterman (1980) notes that the importance of Leavis and Thompson was not their moralistic stance, but rather their role in bringing media texts into classrooms.

The innoculatory approach to teaching mass media continued in Britain and the United States into the late 1950s and 60s (Hoggart, 1959; Hall and Whannel, 1964). Concern about the impact of the mass media was expressed in *The Crowther Report* (1959). The report warned that:

> ... because they [mass media], are so powerful they need to be treated with the discrimination that only education can give... There is also...a duty on those who are charged with the responsibility for education to see that teenagers, who are at the most insecure and suggestible stage of their lives, are not suddenly exposed to full force of the mass media , without some counterbalancing assistance (vol. 1, paragraph 66).

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Buckingham (1990) cites two examples of current concerns about the effects of mass media. Moral)anic refers to the view that media are contributing factors in the decline of moral values. Foremost, ıre concerns such as violence and pornography in television and movies. Marie Winn's book, *The Plug-in Drug* (1985) focuses on the ways in which television affects children's thought processes ınd interaction with their families. Also, Elizabeth Thoman (1990), executive director of the Center For Media and Values, wrote in the quarterly newsletter *Connect* that:

> ... the mass media tend to favor instant gratification and the quick fix, confrontation over communication, image over substance and limitless material gain for the simple reason that, well, it's progress (p. 1).

Media Education: The 1960s

Ironically, the Leavis and Thompson practice of encouraging that advertisements, newspapers and journals be brought into schools for innoculation purposes played an important role in advancing the teaching about various forms of popular entertainment in schools during the 1960s and 70s. By the 1960s teaching about media became part of the English curriculum (Buckingham, 1993b). Masterman (1985) notes that English teachers of the 1960s could not accept the innoculatory concept, simply because many of these teachers had grown up with the electronic media and therefore considered Leavis' elitism and devotion to high culture as a confrontation with their own appreciation of popular culture. Also, the 1960s saw the introduction of communication courses at universities in both North America and Britain. Because they were students in university communication courses, teachers came to realise that films produced by specific directors, initially from France, then the rest of Europe and finally from the United States, had as much value as classical literature. Consequently, teachers began to bring their training in communication studies

nto English and Fine Arts classrooms. Teaching against the media became teaching about the media. The move from innoculation to discrimination is referred to by Masterman (1985) as a shift to the Popular Culture Paradigm. An illustration of this shift is reflected in the *Newsom Report*.

The Newsom Report and Dartmouth Conference

The hesitation of English teachers to teach media is expressed in several reports. In 1963 *Half Our Future (the Newsom Report)* was part of a broad re-evaluation of education at all levels in Britain. The *Newsom Report* focused on secondary schools and was influenced by the child-centered approaches of Dewey (Alvarado, 1977). The Report made "a strong claim for the study of film and television in their own right as powerful forces in our culture and as significant sources of languages and ideas" (paragraph 474). It stated:

> The English lesson . . . is most likely to offer those opportunities which allow adolescents to write out of themselves what they are not always prepared to talk about . . . . Teachers whose sole standard is correctness can dry up the flow of language and shackle creative and imaginative writing before it is under way (p. 157).

While it was favourable toward the use of mass media in schools, it still presented a Leavisite view of film and television as a teaching tool to be used to counter-act the corrupting influences of the mass media. Claiming that education's approach toward the mass media should be discriminatory, the report suggested that newspapers and magazines be studied in secondary schools and that film and television supplement literary texts (Halloran & Jones, 1992; Masterman, 1980; Murdock & Phelps, 1973). The Report stated:

> We need to train children to look critically and discriminate between what is good and bad in what they see. They must learn to realise that many makers of films and of television programmes present false or distorted views of people, relationships, and experience in general, besides producing much trivial and worthless stuff made according to stock patterns

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(paragraph 475).

Some English teachers held the view that a limited number of films could be considered as art forms and used as criteria by which to judge "immoral" films. Generally speaking, a thematic approach was used which attempted to connect the major moral precepts of "good" films with the students' life experiences. The report proposed that films, which demonstrated good moral values and which were therefore to be considered as art forms, could be used to develop a student's judgment and discrimination:

> By presenting examples of films selected for the integrity of their treatment of human values, and the craftsmanship with which they were made, alongside others of mixed or poor quality, we can not only build up a way of evaluating but also lead pupils to an understanding of film as a unique and potentially valuable art form in its own right, as capable of communicating depth experience as any other art form (paragraph 476).

The *Newsom Report* was significant in that it advocated a serious consideration of popular texts in schools and an application of literary criticism to film criticism. This development provided an opening for media to be integrated into English and Humanities courses. It is important to note that at the time the *Newsom Report* was written, television was becoming popular. However, the Report dismissed television since it believed that it lacked virtues associated with high culture. In effect, the report judged each of the mass media as separate entities based on their aesthetic and virtuous qualities. Masterman (1980) remarks that the advice of the report resulted in a disjointed approach to Media Education so that there was a separate course in television, film, radio, print, etc.

Three years later, and a continent away, the participants at the Dartmouth Conference (1966) suggested that all media were vital to classroom instruction so that students would be able to express

their experiences orally, written and visually. Muller (1967) comments that English teachers at the Dartmouth Conference realised that they could not, "treat the mass media simply as the enemy" (p. 138) and that they would do better to work with the new art forms, good and bad. The Dartmouth participants, many of whom were from Great Britain, suggested that as teachers their role was to help students to be more discriminating consumers of media. While the Dartmouth Conference influenced the use of mass media texts in schools, it did not provide direction as to how Media Education should be taught.

1970s

Despite the increased use of media as a result of the Popular Arts Paradigm, Media Education by the mid 1970s had changed little since the 1920s (Masterman, 1985). Masterman lists three reasons for this. First, English teachers, for the most part, still clung to innoculatory ideologies. Second, these ideas were based on a notion of high versus low culture (i.e., between classical texts versus popular media texts). Third, the criterion used to distinguish between high and low culture were based on a teacher's subjective opinion. Since many teachers in the 1960s came from middle class backgrounds whose values were based on conservative notions of family, religion and loyalty, their analysis of television and films reflected many of their own middle class values. Many students who came from lower class backgrounds were prevented from sharing their own interpretations. This alienated many students, just as Standard English alienated students in English classes. Finally, Media Education up to the mid 1970s failed because film, especially the "classics," was principally used as the object of study, even though the most influential and popular medium for students in the 1960s and 70s was television. In 1975 The *Bullock Report* (Department of Education and Science,

1975) recognised that students spent a considerable amount of time watching television. It supported the integration of television into the study of mass media. It advocated that television should be used as a disseminator of experience and that a critical approach to it should be developed. While the *Bullock Report* may have been the spark that re-energised Media Education, a further reconceptualisation of media was necessary.

The Contribution of Structuralism and Semiotics to Media Education

The development of Media Education in the late 1970s can be attributed to the emerging interdisciplinary field of structuralism which spawned the study of semiotics as an approach to understanding media (Alvarado & Ferguson, 1983; Masterman, 1985, 1994). Gibson (1984) quotes Scoles' definition of structuralism: "... a system: a complete, self-regulating entity that adapts to new conditions by transforming its features whilst retaining its systematic structure" (p. 12). Central to structuralist theory is the idea that structures or systems manage and define objects of study.

Structuralism's underlying principle, upon which all other structuralist principles build, is the notion of wholeness. The wholeness that makes up the structure of human behaviour includes interactions with political institutions such as schooling and the media as well as our social position: class, gender, culture, and race. This can best be summed up by the phrase the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Ensuing from the notion of wholeness, the second principle of structuralism is that reality lies in the relationship of the parts to the whole. For instance, meaning in texts is determined not by what individual words express, but rather by what words convey through their relationship to each other.

Structuralism has its original roots in the study of linguistics. In the late 1800s, sociolinguist Ferdinand Saussure rejected linguists historical approach to the study of language. Saussure argued that language had to be examined in its present forms through sign-systems. That is, on the signifying practices of language. All forms of language are sign-systems which express the conveyed meaning of the author and the interpreted meaning of the reader. Sign-systems distinguish between what the sign denotes, the signifier and the connotation of the sign, the signified.

Saussure's notion of sign-systems established the field of semiology which is "not restricted to linguistics, but would study all forms of communication in society . . ."(Gibson, 1984, p. 19).

While Saussure focused on written language, Barthes' *Elements of Semiology* (1967), *Mythologies* (1957), and *Image, Music and Texts* (1977) demonstrate how such non-print texts such as toys, wrestling matches, football games, cinema and a strip-tease act can also be understood as sign-systems. Gibson (1984) quotes Barthes:

> ...systems whose functions is not to communicate an objective, external meaning which exist prior to the system, but only to create a functioning equilibrium, a movement of signification... they signify 'nothing'; their essence is in the process of signification, not in what they signify (p. 100).

Barthes draws attention to the idea that media texts can be actively read through meaning conveyed in words, sounds and images.

Gibson argues that "literature will be replaced by semiotics, for writing - any writing, Shakespeare or advertising jingles - is merely different parts of a system which can be studied to discover how

they work" (p. 100). Gibson makes the link between literature and Media Education. Literature, in structuralist terms is considered as a system with its own conventions and customs. The role of structuralism in literature, and indeed in Media Education, is to:

> ...underpin a whole range of structuralist activities: classifying within and between literary genres; identifying the fundamental dramatic situations; revealing the structures of fairy tales and myths; mapping the laws and functions of folk tales, demonstrating the various ways in which signs or language create an illusion of reality and hence convey meaning (p. 95).

Structuralism also presents the notion that all systems are subject to transformation. While maintaining universal laws of language, literature transforms itself as authors rewrite their own texts and as readers reconstruct them. This fits with Media Education which argues that meaning is created through a transactive process combining the intent of the author and the reader's interpretation.

Literary analysis seeks to make relationships between the elements of literature such as text, genre, convention and device (Gibson, 1984). Likewise, Media Education builds on the concept that representation in media texts does reflect reality but attempts to recreate reality. Structuralism maintains that the system must be studied synchronically in a snap-shot approach. In the snap-shot approach, we understand the system, literature or the media, by examining how the parts are related in a specific text, rather than considering language in an historical context. We can better understand media by exploring how meaning is created in a particular text.

Semiotic's notion of texts as sign-systems underlies the fundamental principle of Media Education. The principle of non-transparency asserts that, "media are symbolic (or sign) systems which need

:o   be actively read, and not unproblematic self-explanatory reflections of external reality"
;Masterman, 1985, p. 20). In order to be media literate a student must be able to understand the sign and symbol system of media (Silverblatt, 1995).

Ideology

The signifying practices of structuralism and semiotics are responsible for Media Education's move away from innoculatory and discriminative practices toward understanding how values, beliefs systems and attitudes are created in texts as dominant representations of reality (Silverblatt, 1995; Masterman, 1985, 1994). According to Hall (1996), media do not merely reflect society but rather promote the dominant ideology of a culture as a means of maintaining control.

Media Education attempts to expose the naturalness of media texts as ideological products of media control and power. Masterman's (1994) description of ideology as two dominant and yet opposing ideas, the explicitly political and the common-sensed, unconscious, and unrecognised, links the power of media institutions with audience's acceptance of dominant ideologies. Considine and Haley (1992) state that most:

> ...audiences still perceive the media image as transparent, a sign that simply says what it means what it says. They therefore tend to dismiss any intensive explication as a case of reading too much into it (p. 3).

Buckingham's (1990) notion of ideology includes male-dominant gender roles and racist attitudes. Students must have the opportunity to deconstruct the visual, audio and editing techniques, the rhetorical devices for example, in order to discover how meaning is constructed and transmitted in cultural texts such as film, television and shopping malls. Buckingham's (1990) concept of ideology

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s based on the notion that all languages, oral, written and visual, operate as sign-systems which, 'can be read in many ways; each text contains within itself the possibility of an infinite set of structures" (Culler 1975, quoted in Gibson, 1984, p. 100). Buckingham, Fraser and Mayman (1990) suggest the following analytical procedures which enables students to recognise ideological messages:

1. express initial response to a given text.

2. identify and describe the different elements composing this text.

3. identify the most prevalent associations and meanings for each of these elements.

4. combine these associations/meanings together to suggest the dominant ideological meaning of the text.

5. compare this meaning with other instances of the same category of text in order to arrive at conclusions about their overall ideological function.

In the process of deconstructing rhetoric to reveal ideology, a student discovers how a text is organised and explores how its meaning combines with their own personal experiences (Williamson, 1981). Readers/viewers move beyond the dominant ideologies of the original text, to consider issues of ideologies of resistance, production and consumption within a socio-political and historical context.

1980s: Media Education for its own sake

Alvarado and Ferguson (1983) state:

> Those who favoured the introduction of media studies into the curriculum argued that it was ridiculous that the major social, political and cultural form of communication in the twentieth century civilisation should be ignored by a curriculum inherited from a nineteenth century education (p. 24).

.t is only within the last decade that Media Education has developed from fragmented courses in

elevision, film, advertising, radio, etc. to a disciplined program of integrated principles, concepts,

nethodologies and pedagogy. The writings of Masterman and Buckingham of England, Quin and

McMahon in Australia, Dick of Scotland, and Duncan of Canada influenced the development of

Media Education curricula based on the new attitude toward the media. These curricula were, in

part, the result of grassroots pressure from teachers in Scotland and England who began to realise

that the new media were a source of motivation for students. These teachers influenced the writing

of the *DES Report: Popular Television and Schoolchildren* (Department of Education and Science,

1983) in England which stressed that specialist courses in Media Studies in schools are not enough

and that all teachers should include television studies in their classrooms. The recognition that the

media could be a valid field of study in schools and the development of new curricula in Media

Education led to the need for a systematic way of teaching media.

CRITICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

Eddie Dick provided a model (1990) for the initial framework of Media Education (See Figure 4):

Figure 4

Analysis

- Denotation
- Connotation
- Codes
- Genre
- Narrative
- Ideology & values
- Commodity
- Connections

TEXTS

AUDIENCES

The Media Construct Reality

- Culture
- Gender
- Textual competence
- Psychology
- Use
- Active Readings

PRODUCTION

- Codes & Practices
- Ownership
- Control
- Finance
- Distribution
- Legality
- Technology

Practice
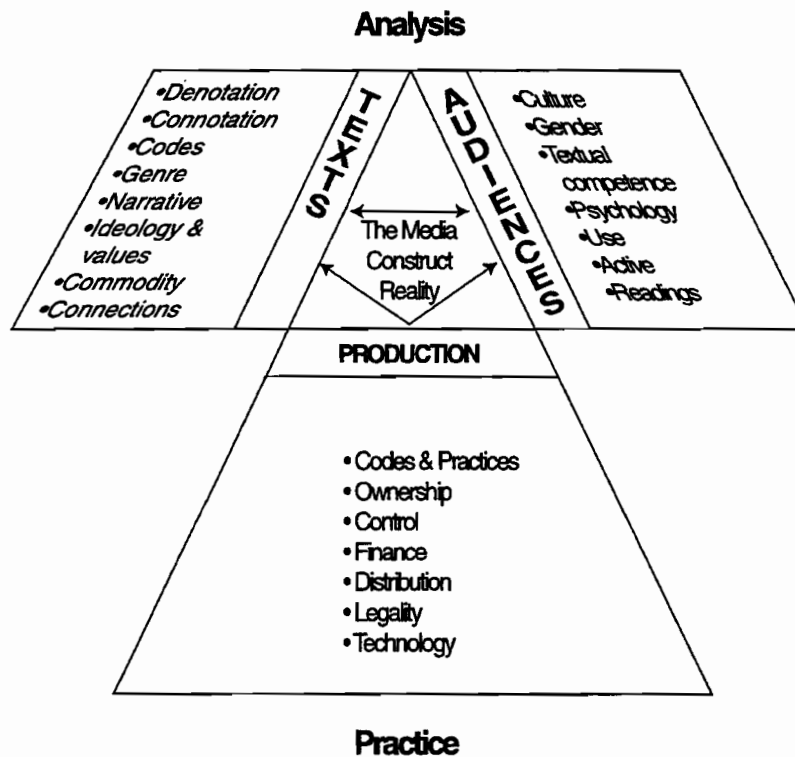
There have been several variations of the model. However, most of these have remained true to Dick's original conception (Shepherd, 1993). The frameworks are significant since they provide teachers with a way by which they and their students can coherently explore media. All the frameworks share common elements: text, audience, and industry (referred to in some models as production) and an underlying premise that all media texts are constructions (Masterman, 1985, 1994).

This premise states that media do more than reflect reality. It contends that books, television programs, films, newspapers, radio programs, advertisements, and other cultural artifacts are actively produced. Media Education enables students to become aware of the social, cultural, political and economic implications of media messages in order to interpret the ways in which media actively construct reality. It requires that students deconstruct media products in order to identify and examine not only the variety of techniques and rhetorical strategies used to create them, but also the cultural practices, ideas and values vested in them. It aims to have students develop an awareness of the multiplicity of motivations, controls and constraints that those who construct media products are subject to, and the sources - economic, political, technical and social - of these influences. It seeks to develop an understanding that the meanings of these constructed messages resides as much in the individuals who read media texts as they do in the texts themselves, that the process of interpretation of media messages is highly selective and contingent on cultural, environmental and psychological factors (Emery et al., 1995).

Production: Sources, Origins and Determinants of Media

Cowles and Dick (1984) suggested that Media Education should begin in a classroom with exploring the commercial aspects of media. As cultural artifacts, media representations are produced, owned and controlled by individuals and organisations.

The process of constructing media texts is influenced by the powers and motives of ownership; that is, media texts have embedded in them the dominant ideology of capitalism and private property. Furthermore, media producers are also subject to constraints: technological, legal, economic, codes

nd practices that may mitigate the messages of the texts themselves. The objective of exploring production is to help students understand the relationship among these dimensions of media production, including an understanding of the infrastructures of media monopolies, their creation, ownership, control and relationship to other independent media, how media ownership influences content, and how the media industry is regulated (Masterman, 1985, 1994; Silverblatt, 1995).

Texts: Media Rhetoric

Texts, according to Masterman (1985), include books, posters, clothing, advertisements and public environments as well as television programs and films. Texts are constructed by producers using specific rhetorical devices and practices and are reconstructed by audiences as they read them. The producer of the text presents what is inevitably selected and presents partial representations as true, rational, authentic and necessary. Media rhetoric is the ensemble of decisions and determinants media producers select in order to construct meaning in a text. For example, a director may decide that a specific shot, selection and editing of a sequence, the gender, age, race of a character or music tempo may produce a desired meaning in a television or film ext. The interaction of signs, such as the camera shot, the denotation of the person or object, and the mood or environment create signifying units. Since the interpretation of a text is a social and cultural construct based on the manner in which the signs denote or connote meaning, a reader must be familiar with the uses of the codes and conventions specific to each medium and genre produced by the systematic shaping of rhetorical practices (Buckingham ,1994; Masterman, 1985, 1994; Lusted, 1991).

Embedded in any text is ideology. The concept of ideology is elusive and therefore problematic in Media Education. Masterman (1994) states it can refer:

> ... in one definition, to any explicitly political (and generally doctrinaire and inflexible) set of beliefs (e.g., as in fascist or Marxist ideologies), in another, to its opposite, the realm of common sense, as manifested in our taken for granted beliefs and everyday language (p. 37).

Ideological analysis at the school level is difficult since the only culture students know is the one which they inhabit (Quin, 1994). Thus they are unaware of alternative or contradictory ideologies. Media Education encourages students to question the taken for granted, dominant ideologies of media texts through disclosing the rhetorical devices and practices used in the process of constructing the ideological meaning. Students can then move from what a text denotes, its descriptive state, to a rendering that connotes meaning that is socially and culturally constructed. As Quin and McMahon (1992) note, the role of a teacher is to help students discriminate between texts and contexts, as well a between image and cultural context.

Audience

Media Education emphasises the role of audiences actively creating meaning from a text rather than merely receiving it (Lusted, 1991; Worsnop, 1994). Silverblatt (1995) reminds us that the reception theory recognises that an audience may reach a different reading than the "preferred" (i.e., the author's intended message). Students and teachers can explore the ways in which responses to texts differ and what contributes to the differences: culture, gender, race, class, experiences with similar texts, psychological profile, predisposition, interest level, stage of development. Knowing how they and others respond to texts, assists students in finding how audiences accept, resist or negotiate the meanings embedded in texts. Masterman (1985, 1994) points out that in the past, media teachers

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expected consensual and relatively consistent responses from their students; how they are likely to expect diversity. Students should be encouraged to negotiate their own meanings, possibly disputing not only media's values, but the teacher's as well.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURAL STUDIES

The key concepts described above reflect the developments that took place in English Language Arts, structuralism and semiotics as described earlier. One other contribution to Media Education has been that of cultural studies.

While Richard Hoggart's (1959), David Morley's (1980), John Fiske's (1989), and Stuart Hall's (1996), and work in cultural studies in the last four decades have influenced Media Education, with the exception of Giroux (1983), relatively few people within cultural studies have realised its application to Media Education. However, media educators in Britain, Australia and Canada have recognised the contribution of cultural studies to Media Education. Buckingham (1990) argues that cultural studies offers Media Education a theoretical approach to cultural production, in particular access to youth culture.

Masterman (1985) suggests that the cultural studies model of Media Education is essential for economic and political awareness. Quin and McMahon (1992) comments that Media Education must include the study of the media's socio-political context as well as the links between the political structures, media policy and cultural products. Mitchell (in Emery et al., 1995) states that cultural studies:

...takes as its central questions those which pertain to the texts on the other side of the line of Shakespeare, as well as questions about how the line ever got there in the first place: who draws it, why? how is it maintained? Cultural Studies is not about taking 'low culture' texts and trying to elevate them to canonised status, nor is it necessary about justifying the reading of low culture texts by investigating the ways in which they somehow serve as some sort of subversive reading. An important component of what Cultural Studies is all about is to explore the definition of what constitutes the texts of Cultural Studies. The focus is on a broader definition of what constitutes a text. (p. 7).

By not restricting itself to canonised texts such as classical literature, the cultural studies model of Media Education enables media educators and their students to question what defines culture, and more specifically, to build on children's knowledge of popular culture texts such as television programs, romance novels, magazines, toys and shopping malls. Cultural studies positions Media Education so that the focus is on the relationship between the students and his/her identity within a culture.

MEDIA EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Over the past thirty years, curricula in Media Education have been developed. This section describes the efforts of a number of countries where Media Education has been an aspect of study in schools. The programs reflect the diversity of attitudes to Media Education outlined in the preceding brief history. Some reflect innoculatory approaches. The more recent ones have taken on developments in the recently emerging fields of structuralism, semiotics and cultural studies. For an in depth review of these programs see Piette (1992, 1995).

Scandinavia

Although some aspects of media were taught in art and social subjects, Media Education had no official position in the curriculum until the early 1970s. At the beginning of the 1970s, Finland officially integrated Media Education into the school curriculum (*Committee Report on the Curriculum Planning for Comprehensive School in Finland, 1970*). The principal objective of the program was to sensitise students to the power of the media in controlling information. The theoretical approach of the program was influenced by Nordenstreng, whose research demonstrated how information is disseminated through media in capitalistic societies (Minkkinen and Nordenstreng, 1983).

The Finnish program does not focus on any one medium in particular, but rather on cross-media study. The accent is placed on the political and economic dimensions of small and large, national and international, media organisations and their influences on how and what information is disseminated.

France

During the 1960s, Media Education, or more precisely, film education in France developed largely outside of the formal education system, as extracurricular activities, sponsored by socio-cultural organisations such as film societies, school clubs and youth organisations (Bennett, 1977). In 1963 pressure from teachers and organisations such as the *Association National Pour La Promotion des Arts de L'Ecrans dans l'Universite'* (ANPEDU), prompted the Ministry of Education to acknowledge film study as an important aspect of education. However, while providing some

unding, the ministry did not include film education into the formal educational system. Consequently, many film organisations formed their own libraries, magazines and summer schools. Unfortunately, the lack of trained organisers and lack of guidance as to how film should be taught, resulted in disorganised discussions and lecturing in film.

While film was the primary source of Media Education in the 1960s, the *Union Francais des Oeuvres Laiques d'Education par L'Image et par le Son* (UFOLESIS) recognised that there were other forms of media, such as still images and magazines which also should be studied. It organised youth centres, school clubs, and junior film societies as well as media workshops.

In the mid 1960s, Father Vallet was responsible for the first attempts at Media Education in formal, Catholic educational settings. Developed at the Institut du Langage Total of the Catholic University of Lyons, the program united the arts into a "total language" of the media including film and advertising. Between the 1970s and the 1980s, the Institut du Langage Total (Faurie-Roudier and Valet, 1983), the Centre de recherche et documentation pedagogique (CRDP) and the Institut de la communication audiovisuelle (ICAV) developed pedagogical materials for visual communication programs. The materials were largely influenced by semiologists such as Barthes (1967, 1977) and Metz (1977). As a result, Media Education programs focused on how audiences interpreted codes and images.

At the beginning of the 1980s the government of France initiated the *Jeunes* Telespectateurs Actifs project (JTA). The project favoured practical pedagogical experiences initiatives which would assist

tudents in becoming more critical television consumers (Pierre, 1983). The JTA project was ignificant in that it created a national partnership between government, parents, educational and ocio-cultural groups. The project encouraged initiatives across various regions of the country to levelop their own pedagogical needs.

Today, as during the 1970s and 80s, Media Education is assumed by organisations such as the Centre le liason et de l'education aux medias et des moyens d'information (CLEMI) and voluntary organisations who are developing material to sensitise students and the public to the media Jacquinot, 1985).

Switzerland

The Swiss media programs during the 1970s concentrated on visual education. For example, the French Swiss program, *Decouverte de l'Image of the Centre du l'Initation aux Communications de Masse de Lausanne* concentrates on the visual signs found in still images. The objective of the program was to enable students to decode the different types of signs and how they are used to create stereotyped representations in visual images, and to understand the role of rhetoric (Golay, 1988).

The Centre d'Initiation aux Mass Media du canton de Fribourg also developed Media Education programs centering on the study of the image. *Initiation aux Mass Media* (1984) officially integrated Media Education programs into the Fribourg schools as well as provided in-service training for their teachers (Berger, 1983). Similarly, German Swiss media educators concentrated on developing methodologies which could assist students in learning visual language (Doelker, 1992).

The Centre for Media Education of Zurich did not limit itself purely to instructing students how to decode the visual image. For a number of years, it gave equal attention to critical television viewing based on a psychological perspective influenced by the work of Piaget. The principal purpose of the program was to help students understand the different ways media represent reality (i.e., rhetoric). Other areas of Switzerland also produced models of Media Education which incorporated production and analysis of media.

Germany

The Institute of Film and Image for the Science of Teaching is the principal centre for the production and distribution of Media Education documents in Germany. Radio and cable television stations have been producing their own educational programs since 1973. Television productions have incorporated programs made by students.

In Germany, as in other countries where education is the responsibility of the province, state, or region, development of Media Education programs, or media competency as it is called in Germany, varies from state to state. In schools which have voluntarily implemented media programs in grades five to ten, the aims are to: compensate for negative media effects, lead students to reflective reception, educate students to authoritative use of all media and to encourage students to create media themselves. In some states where Media Education is not voluntarily integrated, such as Bavaria, the general policy is to integrate apprenticeships in audiovisual production and critical analysis in all levels of the school program: *Gesamtkonzept der Medienerziehung in der Schule*. In other areas of the country, such as North Wesphalia, recent projects have developed conceptual

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Media Education programs focusing on critical analysis of media productions: Projektgruppe Medienerziehung (Tulodziecki, 1992).

Belgium

During the early years of Media Education in Belgium, teachers received 60 hours of introduction in the use of audiovisual equipment. Since the end of the 1980s a series of initiatives, particularly in the area of television awareness were undertaken. A program was developed for those who wished to integrate television awareness in their teaching programs. The program, *"Tout savoir sur la tele,"* consists of eight modules, each focusing on a different aspect of television: the language of television, television programming, educational television, audience research, television journalism, fictional television, variety television, and technical aspects of television production (Vanderstichelen & Guyot, 1989). Each month, the journal *Mediacteurs* publishes a supplement which enables teachers to keep up to date.

With the success of the program and the growth of interest in Media Education, in 1990 the Fondation Roi Beaudoin examined the state of Media Education in Belgium. The foundation's investigation resulted in a large pilot project on television awareness, *Telecole. Telecole*, 1991-1992, involved 21 elementary and secondary classes. The project consisted of instruction in audio and visual grammar and instruction of production techniques and processes. The objective of the project was to demonstrate the importance of officially integrating Media Education into the curriculum. In their recommendations, those responsible for the project suggested the expansion of Media Education program for different levels in Belgium schools.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a long tradition in teaching media, beginning with the creation of the British Film Institute (BFI) in 1933. The objective of the BFI was to:

> encourage the development of the art of the film, to promote its use as a record of contemporary life and manners and to foster public appreciation and study of it from these points of view (Alvarado, 1977).

It is important to remember that during the 1930s many educators feared that commercial films were a corrupting influence on young people. Under the general term *Film Studies*, a number of British school establishments voluntarily integrated film studies into its program. The theoretical approach was influenced by the literary criticism tradition. The contents of the courses centred around the study of genre study, authorship, film as industry, etc. (Alvarado, 1977; Alvarado, Gultch, & Wollen, 1987).

Around the mid 1960s, the Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT) favoured the integration of teaching other media besides film, particularly television (Masterman, 1980). SEFT publishes the journals *Screen* and *Initiatives,* which provides information on research in Media Education.

The 1980s saw spectacular developments in Media Education in the United Kingdom, largely the result of the BFI and SEFT, which produced material to encourage teachers to integrate Media Education into its courses, such as English. Also, during these years, the British model for Media Education was developed by Len Masterman, one of the most influential theoreticians not only in the United Kingdom, but in all of the English-speaking countries (1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1985, 1991,

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1994). Masterman's objective was to design a theoretical model which would provide teachers with the conceptual tools to guide them in their attempts to teach about media. Also during this time, there was an increase in the number of regional associations interested in Media Education and the BFI organised workshops, seminars and conferences across the country to promote Media Education in schools.

Media Education in the United Kingdom is a grass-roots movement. In effect, the teachers are responsible for the development of Media Education in their schools, rather than the central authority of Great Britain. This makes it possible for schools to have relative autonomy, which is not the case in many countries. Under pressure from teachers, more and more English schools have integrated Media Education into their school programs and have opened the doors to experimental projects, not only in film and television, but also in the social and cultural aspects of media.

It is estimated that 40% of educational institutions in the United Kingdom offer some sort of course in media. Students aged 16 years and older can choose Media Education as a credited optional course. In England and Wales, approximately 10,000 students are enrolled in optional media courses (British Film Institute, 1990).

Each year the BFI publishes a catalogue or a summary of all the materials which teachers can order. The materials, in the form of guides called *Teaching Packs*, enable teachers to approach different aspects of media. For example, the series on film includes the study of different genre of films, analysis of film narrative, the study of Hollywood celebrities, analysis of representation of women,

etc.

Other documents focus on television studies: analysis of genre, economic and industry aspects of television, etc. The material enables the study of decoding images and the analysis of the influence of the media such as the study of gender representations and analysis of stereotyping in the media. The material also consists of simulation exercises which provides opportunities for students to become involved in the production process. The British have a large repertoire of resources which permit the exploration of different aspects of media.

Further, the education department of the BFI has recently begun to publish a newsletter, *Media Education News Update*, which presents an exhaustive list of current publications from the private sector, teaching institutions, and teacher initiatives. Added to this are a number of publications, such as Comedia, which provide important access to Media Education resources. Also, the English Media Center provides elementary and secondary Media Education Curriculum materials as well as teacher training courses.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Scotland has been studying ways of integrating Media Education into its school system. The Scottish Film Council (SFC) is responsible for promoting and directing Media Education. Their role is similar to the BFI in England and Wales.

In 1984, the SFC took an inventory of available teaching material (Cowles and Dick, 1984). At the same time, the SFC assisted in creating regional associations of teachers interested in Media

Education. These groups are affiliated with The Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES) which publishes the *Journal of the Association for Media Education in Scotland.*

In the reform of its school program for students aged 16 to 18 years old, the Ministry of Education in association with AMES and SFC proposed a program of eight modules for the teaching of media, *Media Unit.* The first module presents a holistic analysis of the media; the other modules focus on the study of the different media: television, radio, graphic arts, photography, news, film, advertisement, rock music and the analysis of media industries.

With the success of the courses offered at this level, Scottish teachers pressured for the introduction of Media Education at the primary and secondary level. It is estimated that 170 primary and secondary schools in Scotland offer courses in Media Education (British Film Institute, 1990). The SFC regularly produces new Media Education program materials which examine the cultural aspects of the media. For example, *Picturing Women* explores the representation of women in photography; *Local Heroes* is concerned with Scottish rock groups and their influence in the British media industry (Scottish Film Council, 1990a, 1990b).

Australia

Today, Australia is the country most committed to integrating Media Education into its school system. As stated in the introduction of the literature review, Western Australia initiated the first evaluation of the impact of Media Education, as it is now conceived, on the students in its schools (McMahon & Quin, 1992). There still does not exist a national program, thus the integration of the

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Media Education varies from state to state.

Recognising the importance of media in the lives of young people, the Sydney Catholic Education Office was the first to to develop a Media Education program for elementary and secondary schools: *Mass Media Education: Curriculum Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools* (Canavan, 1972). The program, which is used largely in the Catholic School system of Australia, centered on the analysis of values embedded in media texts and the study of journalism, radio, television and film.

In New South Wales, the Ministry of Education established a general policy of integrating Media Education from primary to the end of secondary schools: *Mass Media Education K-12* (New South Wales Department of Education, 1984). The program consists of units designed for different levels, and adopts a sociological focus of the role of media in society. The units can be used to develop specific courses in mass communication or they can be adapted to study the particular aspects of media across the curriculum.

In Central Australia, programs *R-7 and 8-12 Media Lab,* which address students from primary to secondary, provide a series of activities which can also be used across the curriculum. The activities are organised around five broad themes: the language of the media, the purpose of media messages, the form and content of media messages, the study of the influences media have on society, and technical aspects of media. These activities are designed as small group media projects. The approach taken is on production more than on analysis of media (South Australia Education

Department, 1983a, 1983b, 1984a, 1984b).

In Western Australia, the program *Media Studies 8-12* attempts to help students understand the manner in which they construct reality. McMahon and Quin have produced a number of texts which have aided Media Education in schools: *Exploring Images (1984), Real Images: Film and Television (1985), Stories and Stereotypes (1987), Meet the Media (1988) and Australian Images (1990).* Each of these is designed as conventional resource guides for teachers. Chapters provide specific analysis and production approaches. Once students have learned the information in each chapter, they are invited to pursue follow-up study on specific aspects.

The Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) represent teachers interested in Media Education. As well as organising annual conferences on Media Education, ATOM also publishes a public information magazine, *Metro*, which is intended to promote Media Education throughout the country.

The United States
Similar to Britain, the United States initially took on a protectionist stance toward Media Education (Leveranz and Tyner, 1993, cited at http//laplaza.org/~cmhshomeHimes3.html). The social climate during the 1970s and 80s was favourable toward schools becoming involved in educating students about the media. Concerned about the effects of television violence, parent, teachers and community groups pressured the American government to convene a senatorial commission to investigate the influences of television on young people: *Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and*

Violence, 1972. It was at this time that Media Education came to the forefront of being a possible solution to the negative effects of television on children. A number of important researchers developed instructional programs and experiments to examine how children view television (e.g., Donohue's [1978] *Television's Impact on Emotionally Disturbed Children's Value System*; Wright, Watkins, and Houston-Stein's [1978] *Active vs. Passive Television Viewing*).

As a result of the interest in the need for critical television viewing, the Federal Education Department funded research projects that would encourage the development of critical television viewing materials for different levels. Examples of these are: *Elementary School Student's Critical Television Viewing Skills* (Corder-Bolz, 1979); *Critical Television Viewing* (WNET/Thirteen, 1980a) for cycle one high school; *Inside Television* (Far West Laboratory, 1980), a series of programs which focused on analysis of television for cycle two high school; and *Television Literacy* (Boston School of Public Communication, 1981) for the post-secondary level.

Other programs developed during these years were: *Teaching Critical Viewing Skills: An Integrated Approach* (Ploghoft and Anderson, 1982), *Getting the Most Out of TV* (Singer, Singer, & Zuckerman, 1981a) and *Teaching Television* (Singer, Singer, & Zuckerman, 1981b). Teachers at the elementary and secondary levels also developed their own critical television viewing skills materials based on teaching experiences (Lehman, 1980; Potter, Faith & Ganek, 1979; Potter, Hanneman & Faith, 1980, 1981).

In the mid 80s, a strong conservative movement developed in the United States in education which prompted a back to basics approach. This movement ushered in a rapid decline in the number of Media Education programs. The back to basics movement opposed innovative educational experiences; the term critical television viewing became suspect. In effect, many were of the opinion that media classes reduced time which should be devoted to reading and writing.

Toward the end of the 1980s, there was a resurgence in Media Education in the United States due to influences of theoretical work in the United Kingdom, Australia and English Canada. Organisations responsible for the resurgence were the Centre For Strategies in Media Literacy, the National Telemedia Council and the Centre for Media and Values, which published information bulletins, *Strategies, Telemedium* and *Connect*. The objective of these publications was to promote Media Education in American education. Pedagogical materials were developed focusing on strategies for integrating Media Education across the curriculum. For example, the recent program, *Media and You*, an initiative of the Centre for Strategies in Media Literacy, is aimed at primary level (Lloyd-Kolkin and Tyner, 1991). Around the same time, prompted by technological advances in industry, there was growth in the use of "new media," such as computers in schools.

Many of the programs in the United States focus on the symbolic and visual languages of film, video, computers and popular culture texts. The pedagogical approach taken is student-centered following the notions of John Dewey.

Latin American Countries

Over the last fifteen years Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela, have embarked on several Media Education projects (Torres, 1988). Programs, such as *Critical Analysis in the Social Communication Media*, focused on the broad social influences of media. Other programs concentrate on critical television viewing.

As well as the development of programs, a number of conferences and research projects have been organised. The Brazilian Society Association and the Brazilian Christian Union for Social Communication sponsored an international conference to examine Critical Analysis in the Social Mass Media. The Catholic University of Chile along with the German government and Media Education experts from Europe, held three conferences between 1981 and 1983, *Meetings for Children's Television*. In 1984-1985 the Chilean University of Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Education organised *The National Meetings on Media Educators* for teachers and researchers. The themes of these meetings were: *Education of the TV Viewer* and *Educating with the Press and TV*. With support of the World Action for Christian Communication and the Regional Office of UNESCO for Latin America and the Carribean, two Latin American seminars were held on TV Education. The first meeting in Santiago, Chile highlighted sixteen research papers from Latin American countries. The second was held in 1986 in Curitiba, Brazil. Several projects were aimed at using television as a teaching tool in family situations: *Nuevas Relaciones Famialares a partir de la Television (New Family Relations Starting on TV); La Television y los ninos (Television and Children)*. Since 1982, the Latin American Institute for Communicative Education has been involved with developing programs and research projects concerning the relationship of family and

elevision viewing.

Teacher training in Media Education began in 1982 with the *Educational Social-Communication Project*. The Institute of Education of the Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso has been offering future teachers optional courses in Media Education since 1983. In 1985, a pilot project, *Education for Teachers* , involved teams of teachers, counsellors and parents in school settings. The project took the form of introductory workshops in Media Education. *The Media for Education: Television and Computers Program*, 1987, of the Universadad de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Education, addressed the needs of in-service teachers. In Buenos Aires, the *III Latin American Meeting of Education for TV Program* for pre-school and primary teachers focused on developing awareness in image and sound technologies. As of 1988, educators in several Latin American countries have been attempting to integrate Media Education into university curricula.

Other Parts of the World

The Media Education movement is not limited to the industrial countries; other countries are equally active in this area. In most of these countries, very often the projects are the work of Catholic organisations or social community offices. Catholic schools in some countries are encouraging the promotion of mass media courses for young people. For example, in Malta, the Secretary for Social Communication developed primary and secondary programs: *Media Workbook, Media Teacher's Handbook* (Borge, 1985) and Media Studies (Borge, 1989). In Columbia and the Philippines, Media Education programs have been developed by organisations closely associated with the Catholic milieu (Dominquez, 1990; JES-COM-Philippines and *the People in Communication*, 1989).

Since the beginning of the 1970s, UNESCO has also been active in promoting Media Education. UNESCO launched a series of studies on the state of Media Education around the world (UNESCO, 1977, 1982, 1983, 1984). UNESCO also initiated the development of a Media Education program which could serve as an international model. Sirkka Minkkinen (1978), who worked on the Finnish program, was in charge of overseeing UNESCO's international project. Since the beginning of the 1970s, UNESCO's has had an interest in promoting information technology. In effect, UNESCO seems to view Media Education as a means to counteract the control of information by industrialised countries.

Canada

Media Education in Canada began under the term Screen Education during the 1960s and concentrated on feature and short films. Films were used primarily as a means to teach through the media utilizing an innoculatory approach. Duncan (1993) refers to the years 1966 to 1971 as the first wave of Media Literacy in Canada. The Canadian Association for Screen Education (CASE) sponsored the first conference of media teachers in 1966 at the University of York in Toronto. As a result of budget cuts and the back to basics movement, CASE was dissolved in 1971 and interest in Media Education declined in Canada during the 1970s. The first wave ended with the publication in Ontario of the *Ministry of Education's Screen Education Guidelines*. At the beginning of the 1980s, we see the development of the first formal practices in Media Education in Canada. Brandeis (1993) provides a description of Media Education initiatives across the country.

British Columbia

In British Columbia, the initiatives were limited to critical television viewing workshops rather than complete programs. For example, the Media Education Workshop: *"Happy Days" Project* was developed by university researchers at the request of the British Columbia Ministry of Education (Urgerleider & Jacques, 1980). The materials focused on critical analysis of a popular American television program, and was aimed at secondary students. While British Columbia does have some optional media courses, Media Education is not identified in the Ministry documents, except as an optional course at the senior level for *Writing in Journalism.* Television production courses are taught in some secondary schools in British Columbia which are aimed at preparing students for careers in media. However, there are no in-service Media Education programs for teachers. In the summer of 1992, representatives from secondary schools teachers, university professors, the National Film Board, Media Watch, The Knowledge Network, Canadian Filmmaker Distributors West and Adbusters Magazine, formed the Media Literacy Association of British Columbia. The aim of the association was to develop and implement Media Education programs and to promote awareness of the influence of mass media in Canadian society.

Alberta

Although public and Catholic school boards have a strong interest in Media Education, since 1982 there has been only one cross-curriculum media program in Alberta, entitled *Viewing.* In 1990, several conferences were sponsored by the University of Alberta, The Society for Instructional Technology, the Alberta Association for Curriculum and Development and the National Film Board.

Saskatchewan

In 1988, educators in Saskatchewan formed Media Literacy Saskatoon (MLS). The aims of the association are to establish provincial, national, and international networks among educators, advocate for the implementation of Media Literacy in the curricula, and influence policy and provide educational support. The association advocates a cross curricular approach. They have developed Media Literacy curriculum for elementary and secondary schools. Also, they have designed other programs: *Telemedia, Newsmedia, Kidmedia* and a unit on *Film and Literature* for senior English classes. The MLS has developed a proposal for incorporating Communication Skills and Critical and Creative Thinking into all levels of the curriculum. This includes appreciation, production and analysis of the media.

The Saskatoon Board of Education is the province's most progressive school board in Media Education. It has media programs and television facilities from kindergarten to high school. Media Literacy is mandated in the primary and secondary Language Arts curriculum. MLS publishes *Media View*, a quarterly newsletter which contains practical information, bibliographies, reviews and lesson ideas. In 1991, MLS became a member of the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation Subject Council, which provides financial support.

Manitoba

While Media Education is not mandated in Manitoba, the official policy is that Media Education should be integrated into Language Arts curriculum in early and middle years, with a focus on television advertising. Secondary teachers are encouraged to include Media Education their

Language Arts courses. However, there are no in-service courses for teachers. In 1990, The Manitoba Association for Media Literacy (MAML) was founded at the Special Areas Group Conference sponsored by the Art Educators of Manitoba. The goals of MAML are to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to interpret the ways in which media construct reality, develop an awareness of the social, cultural, political and economic implications of these constructions and their persuasive value messages, and develop an appreciation and aesthetic understanding of the media. As well as sponsoring workshops for teachers, parents and the general public, MAML publishes *Directions*, a quarterly newsletter. In 1992, the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba held a summer institute in Arts Education which included a full course in Media Literacy at the graduate level.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia renewed an interest in Media Education in 1990 as the result of a presentation by Barry Duncan, president of the Ontario Association for Media Literacy (AML). The Association for Media Literacy - Nova Scotia (AML - NS) represents public schools, universities, colleges, and institutes. The AML - NS has sponsored several conferences and in-service training programs. It also publishes a newsletter, entitled *The Mediator*.

Quebec

In mid 1989, the l'Association nationale des telespectateurs undertook a series of initiatives promoting critical television viewing: sensitising parents, teachers and socio-educational and cultural animators; organising seminars on critical Media Education; and the developing teaching material

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Caron-Bouchard, Marcotte, & Vesin, 1986; Lauzon, 1985; Piette, 1995; Piette, Giroux, & Caron, 1986).

For the last fifteen years le Centre St-Pierre has been animating educational workshops in popular media. Their target audiences are adults and their work is outside the formal education settings (Centre St-Pierre, 1993; Labarre, 1988). Other groups, such as Evaluation Media/Media Watch have developed materials to help adults become aware of the effects of stereotyping in media. In 1988 the Centrale d'Enseignement du Québec (CEQ) created a guide for teachers focusing on gender stereotyping in media (Gratton and Joncas, 1988). The Quebec government produced a document, *Clip mais Clip Egal,* which denounces gender stereotyping in videos. Some schools have also created programs to sensitise students to the influence of the media, although these are few.

In 1990, a small group of teachers (of which I was one), university professors, and university students met to discuss their common interest in Media Education. The result of that meeting was the formation of the bilingual Association for Media Education in Quebec (AMEQ). The objectives of this association are to establish a network of teachers from various school boards who use media or are interested in using media, encourage dialogue on implementation and evaluation of media programs, and assist teachers with in-service training and workshops.

In 1991, l'Association des cinémas parallèles du Québec developed an educational film program intended for primary level: *Cinémagie* (Association des cinémas parallèles du Québec, 1991). Further, for the last three years, l'Institut québécois du cinéma, a consulting organisation for the

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Quebec government, put into place a study to examine the needs of film education for young people. In their report, the institute identified educational film as a priority for years to come (Institut québécois du cinéma, 1992). In the results of this report, l'Institut concentrated on regrouping representatives of the Institute, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Radio-Quebec, la Cinematheque and the Centrale de l'enseignement du Quebec, with a view of elaborating a plan of action to integrate a film education program in Quebec schools. The NFB have produced a bank of audiovisual resources to accompany pedagogical materials to assist teachers in film education.

The educational establishment also demonstrated an interest in Media Education and increased their initiatives in developing educational materials in Quebec schools. The CEQ has collaborated in the production of a guide to accompany the resource document *La Population aux medias* by Lina Trudel of Institut Canadien d'Éducation aux Adultes (ICEA) (Institut Canadien d'Éducation aux Adultes and Centrale d'Enseignement du Québec, 1993; Trudel, 1992). The ICEA document is aimed at adults and concerned with the influence of media and the ways in which the general public can have a voice. The ICEA program has a similar perspective to that of le Centre St-Pierre.

The Centre for Literacy, at Dawson College, has for the last two years been promoting Media Education in English schools. This organisation publishes a newsletter, *Media Focus*, and organises activities for the English teaching population. The Quebec Ministry of Education has convened a group of teachers (I was on the committee) and professors to produce a guide for the English Language Arts Secondary I - V: *Media Files* (MEQ, 1995). The program includes modules on the study of magazines, newspapers, radio, television, film and cultural studies. These replace the four

Secondary English Language Arts Communication Arts Program Guides on television, film, radio and print developed in 1980.

In June 1993, the Centre for Literacy in partnership with the Service collectivites de l'UQAM, organised the first important conference in Media Education in Quebec: Vivre avec les medias, ca s'apprend! This event brought together representatives from the English and French milieu in Quebec and Ontario. This conference was a turning point in the development of Media Education in Quebec. The participants resolved to work toward an exchange that would insure the promotion of Media Education.

Ontario

The Children's Broadcast Institute of Toronto developed *Guidelines for the Power of Television Workshops*, for teachers and parents (Nostbakken and Nostbakken, 1982). TVO Ontario (1982) developed critical television viewing materials: *Let's Play TV in the Classroom.* This program was intended to teach students about television production.

In the mid 1980s, spearheaded by The Association for Media Literacy (AML) and The Jesuit Communication Project, Media Education began its true evolution in Ontario. Comprised of parents, teachers, and women's groups, these organisations very actively lobbied the Ontario Ministry of Education for the integration of Media Education into its elementary and secondary schools. Following the interest demonstrated by Ontario teacher groups like the AML, the Education Ministry accepted the introduction of Media Education in the Language Arts curriculum. In 1987, the Ontario

Ministry of Education released guidelines for Media Education in the Language Arts. In 1989 members of the Association for Media Literacy of Ontario (AML) submitted to the government the *Media Literacy Resource Guide* (Ministry of Education of Ontario, 1989). An adaptation of the resource guide was developed for the French sector of the province, *La competence mediatique, 1989.* One third of the of English courses at the intermediate and senior level and ten percent at grades seven and eight would be devoted to Media Studies. The Ontario program involves the principal mass media: film, radio, television, print, magazines, photography, popular music, rock videos and cross-Media Studies in advertising, sexuality, violence, Canadian identity, news and analysis of the key concepts and problems associated with mass media culture. Also, students may choose Media Studies as an optional course or as one of five English credits required for high school graduation.

The approach taken by the Ontario program was influenced by the British, Australian and Scottish models. Most notably, the goals of the Ontario program follow the work by Masterman in *Teaching The Media* (1985). His concept that media do not present reality but rather construct reality is central to Media Education programs. The Ontario program assists students in understanding how media construct reality, the influences of media on society, the commercial, social and political implications of media and the specific nature of each medium.

The aims of the curriculum as described in the *Media Literacy Resource Guide, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, Ontario Ministry of Education* (1989), are as follows:

- to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to interpret the ways in which the

media actively construct reality.

- develop an awareness of the social, cultural, political, and economic implications of these constructions and their pervasive value messages.

- develop an appreciation and aesthetic understanding of the media.

- decode media products in order to identify and examine the cultural practices, values, and ideas contained in them.

- identify, interpret and experience a variety of techniques used to create media products.

- recognise that those who construct media products are subject to a multiplicity of motivations, controls, and constraints, which include economic, political, organisational, technical, social, and cultural factors.

- recognise that everyone uses a selective and interpretative process to examine media texts. This process and the meanings obtained depend on psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors (p. 7).

The curriculum also features these key concepts:

1. all media are constructions.

2. media construct reality.

3. audiences negotiate meaning in media.

4. media have commercial implications.

5. media contain ideological and value messages.

6. media have social and political implications.

7. form and content are closely related in the media.

8. each medium has a unique aesthetic form. (p. 8-9).

The AML and The Jesuit Communication Project were responsible for making Ontario teachers aware of the program. They organised seminars to explain ways in which teachers could integrate media into their English classes. They also organised The Trent Think Tank in 1989 at the University of Trent which brought together forty-six educators and media professionals to examine the future of Media Education in Ontario. The AML and The Jesuit Communication Project also sponsored two conferences at the University of Guelph in 1990 and 1992 which united teachers and researchers from around the world. The AML regularly publishes *Mediacy* , a newsletter for teachers, and The Jesuit Communication Project publishes *Clipboard* which helps to network and keep teachers up to date with international Media Education activities.

Le Conseil pour l'integration des medias en education (CIME), a group of francophone teachers, was responsible for implementing *La Competence mediatique* in the French school system. The French sector of TV Ontario has been very active in promoting Media Education. It produces a 13-part series, *Pop Media*, which complements established programs aimed at helping students analyse and decode the various messages and values television, videos, advertisements and magazines. The series consists of five themes: music industry and advertising, news, advertisements and magazines.

The directives of the Ontario Ministry of Education are that Media Education represents 10% of the Language Arts or French first language programs at the seventh and eighth grade levels and 33% at the intermediate and senior levels. The programs, as set in *Media Literacy/La Competence Mediatique*, enable teachers to adapt it to their own needs. The result has been the development of

other Media Education programs in Ontario. Today, there exists an abundance of educational

material which permits teachers to familiarise themselves with the question of Media Education.

These materials include: *Meet The Media* (Livesley, McMahon, Pungente & Quin, 1990), *Media*

Scenes and Class Acts (Livesley, 1987), *Media: Images and Issues* (Carpenter, Smart and Worsnop,

1988), *Mass Media and Popular Culture* (Duncan, 1988), *Media Works* (Andersen, 1989), and

Screening Images (Worsnop, 1994). In 1987, the Faculty of Education in Toronto, provided courses

for teachers in Media Education.

The National Film Board of Canada also produced documentary videos, *Media and Society* (1989)

and *Constructing Reality* (1993) which can be used to teach about media. The Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation has developed documentary videos, *Inside the Box*, for the study of

television journalism. Several school boards in Ontario have produced their own specific materials.

The AML published anthologies of day-to-day teaching activities: *The AML Anthology* (Association

for Media Literacy, 1990; Smart, 1992).

CAMEO

In 1992 the Canadian Association of Media Education Organisations (CAMEO) was formed.

CAMEO is a Canada wide non-profit organisation. Presently, this organisation, as are many of the

provincial organisations, is in its embryonic stages.

MEDIA EDUCATION ISSUES AND APPROACHES

Issues

Despite a fair degree of agreement among Media Education curricula regarding content, there is some debate regarding the place of Media Education in the curriculum, how the curricula are to be implemented and the general approaches to teaching that ought to be employed. The areas of dispute appear to be:

1) whether Media Education should be a separate subject of the curriculum; whether it should be part of English studies or whether it should it inform the study of all subjects of the curriculum (Buckingham, 1990; Masterman, 1985, 1994).

2) what is the value of student production to a Media Education program relative to analysis? On one hand, it is argued that student production has relatively little value to Media Education because students focus on technological expertise rather than the concepts of the critical framework (Masterman, 1985). On the other hand, recent work by Ferguson (1981), Grahame (1990), Stafford (1990), Emery et al. (1995), Ellis (1993), and Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) suggests that student production of media texts should be a central and indispensable part of the teaching about media. Production work invites students to become reflective about their own learning as well as provides students the opportunity to discuss what they already know about popular culture texts.

Approaches

Generally speaking, the following approaches are typical of those featured in the Ontario Media Literacy curricula.

The inquiry method provides students with skills required to formulate questions, research information, collect data, and analyse the results of their inquiries in order that they are able to articulate the meanings of their investigations for themselves and others.

Building on the work of Robert Ennis (1962), the critical thinking approach enables students to reflect on the producer's point of view in a media text and to compare it with their own. According to Duncan (1988), the "challenge is in fostering not only the skills but also the necessary habit of mind, the critical spirit, if you like, in both teachers and students" (p. 4). This approach, according to the Ontario Resource guide, includes distinguishing between facts and value claims, determining reliability, determining accuracy, distinguishing between warranted and unwarranted claims, detecting bias, identifying stated and unstated assumptions, recognising logical inconsistencies, and determining strength of an argument (p. 15).

Piette (1995) has developed a set of criteria from the literature on critical thinking and has applied these to the analysis of several of the major Media Education curricula produced in Britain, Canada, Switzerland and the United States. His conclusion is that more critical thinking approaches and teaching strategies need to be deliberately incorporated into Media Education programs.

Emery (1993) states that teachers need to provide opportunities for students learning about media. They need to problematize what students know about media by helping them articulate and question their underlying assumptions. Teachers need to assist students in finding information as well as provide resources and skills that will allow students to resolve their own inquiries. Teachers need

:o promote student understandings and skills which will help in their production and analysis of texts
(p. 4).

MEDIA EDUCATION PEDAGOGY

Media Education pedagogy is critical pedagogy (Giroux and McLaren, 1989), which offers students the opportunity to question meaning and create meaning based on their own interaction with media texts found outside of formal schooling (i.e., popular culture). Students are invited to actively explore socially and culturally constructed representations. Buckingham (1993a) views Media Education as demystification which, through analytical processes, students question and challenge the non-transparency and non-neutrality of texts, including cultural and economic policies of institutions such as the media and schooling.

These demystifying practices develop consciousness awakening about how media codifies experience and shapes meaning. Becoming conscious of how reality is constructed (in texts) enables students to analyse and create print and non-print texts within specific contexts.

Freire (1990) refers to conscious awakening as "conscientization." Conscientization enables a student to reflect objectively on his/her own reality and position. Students question not only those areas in a text that are obvious but also those ideological issues which are not so transparent. By recognising and participating in both sides of a text (i.e., authors and readers), students question not only the text but also question, and reevaluate if necessary, their own and other previously accepted understandings of reality. Through problem-posing, ideological exploration, Media Education

pedagogy provides opportunities for students to become conscious of media texts as powerful producers of dominant ideology. Buckingham (1993a) cites the example of objective analysis of racist or sexist stereotypes which "liberate us from the false ideologies these representations are seen to support and promote" (p. 285). This type of analysis is characteristic of what Freire (1970, 1990) describes as liberatory education in which "the teacher of the students and the students of the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher student with student teachers" (p. 67). Media Education pedagogy that develops conscientization and liberatory education redefines pedagogical relationships.

Media Education has its foundation in progressive pedagogy. At the centre of Media Education Curriculum is the child (Shepherd, 1993).

Unlike traditional teaching, Media Education is student-centered; it promotes autonomy through active collaborative group work, using enquiry, discussion and practical project production (Masterman, 1985, 1994). Students and teachers work individually and collectively as co-learners, through a process of debate, negotiation and consent. Media Education pedagogy acknowledges that students possess a wide knowledge of the media gained outside the classroom and argues against the idea that students are repositories in which teachers deposit information, a process referred to by Freire (1970, 1990) as the banking concept of education which "maintains and even stimulates the contradiction between teacher and student" (p. 46).

Inviting students to bring their own popular cultural texts alters a classroom since it requires specific modes of teaching and learning between teacher and student, student and teacher and student and student. According to Masterman (1985):

> ... teaching effectively about the media demands non-hierarchical teaching modes and a methodology which promote reflection and critical thinking whilst being as lively, democratic, group-focused and action-oriented as the teacher can make it (p. 27).

Masterman's non-hierarchical pedagogy advocates assisting students to articulate what they know as well as to realise the underlying questions that arise from student knowledge. Media teachers relinquish the position as providers of absolute truths and answers and keepers of knowledge and become co-researchers. The role of a teacher in non-hierarchical pedagogy is to navigate student learning without constraining, to prompt without making solutions obvious, and to enable students to learn without giving into the urge of making the learning neat and predictable. As navigator, a Media Education teacher selects the object of study of which s/he knows but relearns as a co-learner with students (Shor & Freire, 1987).

Media Education has a distinctive epistemology in which knowledge is not so much deposited upon students as it is actively created by them through a process of investigation and dialogue (Masterman, 1994, p. 59).

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that there are essential conceptual differences between English education and Media Education (Buckingham, 1990), the literature review has concentrated on the historical, cultural, social and theoretical connections of English Language Arts teaching to Media Education based on

the relationship between language and postmodern literacy to texts, readers, writers and audiences. It documents the shift from an early, dominant class-based notion of literacy that included the ability to read and write certain literary fiction texts to a more democratic and broader perspective of literacy which included a whole range of texts and different discourses and contexts in which individuals participate. The literature review establishes:

> ...the notion of knowledge about language has a considerable potential for progressive English teachers, and connects to Media Education in some very productive ways (Buckingham, 1990, p. 22).

Media Education, like English Language Arts, is concerned with fundamental questions of language as a form of communication, in which meaning is conveyed or signified in three kinds of discourse: oral, written and visual. Each discursive form of language has its code or grammar and ways of codifying reality which must be learned in order that a student can "read" the text. Thus, literacy and a development of literacy about the media require an awareness of rhetoric including conventions, codes, genre, and narrative. The literature review provides evidence that the ability to transfer language into different forms of discourse, and into different situations, is an essential element of literate behaviour. Bazalgette (1991) writes:

> Most people agree that fully literate readers bring many understandings to a text: that they can recognise what kind of a text it is, predict how it will work, relate it to other texts in appropriate ways. They can thus understand it critically, enjoying its pleasures, engaging with its arguments, reading between and beyond the lines (p. 90).

Every medium can be thought of as a language. Every medium has its own way of organising meaning, and we all learn to "read" it, bringing our own understandings to it, and extending our own experience through it.

Typical of how the above was translated into the curriculum are the general and specific objectives of the *Quebec Ministry of Education Secondary School Curriculum: English Language Arts I-V* places language in the context of oral, written and visual discourse and communication:

1. The student will show an understanding of the communication process.

2. The student will show an understanding of the nature and function of language.

3. The student will show an understanding of the types of discourse.

4. The student will show the ability to understand an oral, written, or visual discourse.

5. The student will show the ability to follow an appropriate process in composing an oral, written, or visual discourse.

6. The student will show the ability to develop his/her own viewpoint through participation in the communication process (p. 33).

Language Arts and Media educators and theorists such as Dixon, Britton, Barnes, Moffett, Rosenblatt, Flower, Masterman, Buckingham, and others discussed in the literature review, help to redefine literacy based upon the distinctive and complementary roles that oral, written and visual discourse play in understanding the social/personal growth of a student, the teaching/learning environment, how meanings are constructed in different media, and audiences' different interpretations of the same text. These discourses occur within social, cultural, political and ideological contexts. Furthermore, these socio-cultural contexts shape audiences and how they interact and reconstruct discourse. An important aspect of literate behaviour developed in the literature review is the ability to be aware of the nature of ideologies and the ways in which they are communicated.

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The literature review observed that non-print visual media can be thought of in the same way that we think of print. The concept that enables us to think this way is that print, visual images and sounds are signs.

Linguists (e.g., Saussure), semiologists (e.g., Barthes) as well as Language Arts educators (e.g., McCormick, Waller, and Flower) have much in common. Semiology acknowledged the media (i.e., print and non-print texts) as systems or structures which reflect a deeper sense of the interrelationships between a literary and visual text, how language works, and how meanings are communicated in different forms, for different purposes and for different audiences. Further, although Dias' research dealt exclusively with poetry, it has applications to all kinds of texts and demonstrates an approach to reading and textual analysis in which meaning resides within the reader/viewer.

The review of the literature establishes not only the theoretical associations of English Language Arts and Media Education but also identifies the social dynamics of the classroom in which students and teachers participate in the learning process as co-learners. Britton et al.'s notion that students function in the expressive mode implies a pedagogy in which students have more opportunity to express their understandings through themselves. This is very closely allied to Barnes' notion of the interpretation teacher. Both these concepts are comparable with Masterman's non-hierarchical teaching.

The review of the literature enabled me to consider how my Media Education program encouraged the development of my students' literacy about the media as well as the impact it had on the traditional notion of literacy that is the concern of schooling.

TAPE THREE

METHODOLOGY

Tape Three describes how I used a classroom-based research methodology within a qualitative, action research paradigm to find evidence of my students' literate behaviour. The method for theorising was based on grounded theory adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The chapter is divided into the following parts:

PART 1: Introduction

- Classroom-based Action Research as a Reflective Practice
- Reflection
- My Rationale for Classroom-Based Action Research
- Action Research and Media Education Research

PART 2: Methodology
- Phase 1:   - Developing a Media Education Unit
                      - Implementing the Unit
                      - Initial Data Collection and Revising the Data Collection
- Phase 2:   - Collecting the Data
                      - My Role as Teacher/Researcher
                      - The ACE students as Co-Researchers
- Phase 3:   - Data Analysis
                      - Data Analysis Procedures: Constant-Comparison

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

I was looking through some of my papers today and came across my, an early draft of my dissertation. I can't seem to throw any of this stuff out. I intended to study someone's media lit class in Ontario.- maybe Duncan's. How could I have been so naive? Looking back now,

how could I have thought of studying any one else's class? Practically I could never had afforded it. Academically, it makes sense to study my own students. I mean I don't think I would have felt so close to the research if I had studied someone else's class. All around, it makes so much more sense teaching and studying my own class.

RJ, January 25, 1994

(**RJ** refers to my own reflective journals, explained later in this chapter.)

This inquiry was carried out while I was teaching full time. I consider this an asset since the research informed my teaching practices and vice versa. Generally, this is a hermeneutic inquiry, intended to illustrate the knowledge I acquired based on meanings constructed during the course of collecting the data from my own teaching of the Media Education Curriculum. It falls into the paradigm of action research. Bryant and Zillmann (1996) insist that a defining feature of action research is that the researcher is actually participating in the practices being researched:

> The point here is that action research is concerned both to understand and to change particular situations, and that researchers who are not in and of the situation are not in a position to do either (p. 114).

Classroom-based Action Research as Reflective Practice

I realised early in my career that if I was to grow as a teacher, I had to break away from traditional teaching practices which bored me as a student, and frustrated me as a teacher (see Tape One). I felt I needed to be constantly reexamining and testing the parameters of my profession. I view teaching in the same way that I view learning. That is, learning is not a neat, packaged process. It is "messy," active, and ongoing, which requires the learner to incorporate previous knowledge with new information, thus yielding new knowledge. Teaching, on the other hand, includes reflection — a conscious effort of designing, implementing, evaluating and redesigning. Gee (1996) nicely articulates what I see as teaching/learning. He states,

> Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though

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not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life experiences that trigger reflection. This teaching or reflection involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into analytical parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter (p. 138).

The ACE Program, which I designed, provided me with the unique opportunity to engage in this form of teaching/learning.

Reflection

The other thing is that I feel so much more connected to the research. I somehow feel I own it more than if I had studied someone else's class. It seems less mechanical. I don't feel like I am working on a small scale project for a course. Rather, the inquiry has real meaning.
RJ, January 25, 1994

Dewey reminds us that experience and reflection create growth. He argues that teachers should take ownership of conducting research in their classrooms, and in doing so are liberated from impetuous and routine activities. My inquiry of the ACE students, built on what Dewey (1938) called reflective, systematic teaching. It is also an attempt at deliberate theory building teacher research (Kemmis, 1988; McTaggart, 1997; McTaggart & Garbutcheon-Singh, 1986).

A more current understanding of reflective practice can be found in the January 1991 report, *Reflective Practice as an Orientation to the Professional Education of Teachers,* presented by the Steering Committee in the Department of Educational Studies, McGill University. In the report, the Steering Committee quotes Schon (1987), a leading theorist in the area of reflective practice in various contexts:

In essence, a professional practice is conceived as a type of "thinking on one's feet" which

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in the classroom translates into carrying out actions that are based on our assumptions about learners, our own role as a teacher, and on past as well as possible future events in the classroom.

Far from being simply 'what am I doing and why am I doing it?' stance, the reflective practitioner must give consideration to 'Where do I go from here?'

In the process of becoming reflective practitioners teachers are introduced to skills and strategies which help them become articulate and analytical about their assumptions and beliefs and actions. In essence, they learn to 'lay on the table' their interpretations of dilemmas and episodes in their teaching (p. 2).

The above quote corresponds so aptly to what I was doing daily with my students. I was constantly assessing what I was doing, why I was doing it and planning - sometimes on the spur of the moment - what I was going to do next.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) noted that it is only recently that teachers' questions are being included in the literature on teaching. According to these authors, teachers' questions about their own practice are the basis of teacher inquiry. Still, reflection is one thing; basing claims on reflection is another. Researching my own teaching transformed reflection into "inquiry," what I can only describe as an enlightened teaching. Reflection is not only fundamental to action research but also, in the same way that a flashlight lights one's way in the dark, reflection provides the researcher with a way to proceed (Schon, 1987).

My Rationale for Classroom-Based Action Research

While I agree that much of what we understand is learned after the initial incident — reflection-on-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) -- I also see reflection as an active process that occurs during the incident, as well as reflection-in-action. In a speech presented to the American

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Educational Research Association in 1987, Schon stated that reflection in action,

> ...involves a surprise, a response to surprise by thought turning back on itself, thinking that what we're doing as we do it, setting the problem of the situation anew, conducting an action experiment on the spot by which we seek to solve the new problem. We've set an experiment in which we test both our new way of seeing the situation, and also try to change that situation for the better (p. 2).

Generally, in the process of this inquiry, I have attempted to adhere to the following principles of action research (McNiff, 1993) by:

1. Focusing on educational improvement in the ACE classroom.

2. Exploring questions pertaining to improving my own teaching practices.

3. Making sure that my inquiry of the ACE students was systematic and vigorous.

4. Describing and explaining the data.

5. Validating my claims by using more than one source of data.

6. Making the results known to teachers/researchers like me.

The underlying assumptions, upon which I have used classroom-based action research are to:

* inquire into authentic questions, in a real situation.

* be critical of my teaching.

* be *actively* involved in the teaching and operation of the ACE Program and at the same time *research* the impact of Media Literacy curricula on my students.

* be secure to formulate intuitive insights.

* involve ACE students as subjects, participants and co-researchers.

* be responsive to the changing demands of the data and its contextual factors, the ACE Program, developments in education policies for at-risk students at my school board and

provincial level as well as developments in Media Literacy theory and practice.

* to be a producer and user of educational theory, that is grounded in my own teaching practices (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993).

* influence changes in ACE Program curriculum design.

* satisfy my own convictions regarding the potential of Media Literacy for at-risk students, rather than prove or disprove whatever expert knowledge may already exist concerning at-risks students' literacy skills.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) best express the essence of classroom-based action research as I used it in this inquiry. They describe it as self-reflective, "emancipatory" or "critical action research" which educators undertake in a socio-cultural classroom setting.

Without a doubt, the ACE Program is its own socio-cultural world, within the larger school setting. Its uniqueness within this setting has led me to question taken for granted ideas about the position of at-risk students in schooling (see Tape One). Classroom-based Action Research offered me an avenue through which I could better understand and come to terms with this principal concern. I hope that, through this inquiry, I may be able to offer news ways of considering at-risk students' literacy skills, thus enabling them to take their place in mainstream education.

Action Research and Media Literacy Research

Action research in Media Literacy is a recent development. In their article, Cultural Studies Meets Action Research in the Media Classroom (1996), David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green

lescribe curricular developments in Britain, that eventually led to classroom-based action research

n Media Literacy:

* In 1986 The *British Film Institute (BFI)* assembled a small group of primary teachers, with the purpose of researching and documenting media children's learning processes in Media Literacy programs.

* The outcome of the BFI's research project was the publication of *Primary Media Education: A curriculum statement* (Bazalgette, 1989). This statement was crucial in getting Media Literacy, or Media Education as it is referred to in Britain, included in the National Curriculum. This was followed by a secondary curriculum statement (Bowker, 1991).

* These events increased teacher interest in Media Literacy. This prompted the BFI, in collaboration with the Open University, to develop a distance course for teachers (Alvarado and Boyd-Barrett, 1992). The course includes, among other things, a broad range of accounts of Media Literacy in elementary and high schools. A few examples are, *Nursery School Children Talking About Television*, by Sue Noort; *Representation*, by Dot Froggatt; *Nature Park*, by Kate Dewar; *Clash of the Titans*, by Jude Brifley and *Playtime*, by Jenny Grahamme.

The events described above moved Media Literacy research from predominately theoretical studies, conducted by academics, to classroom-based research, pursued by teacher-practitioners.

Of particular help to me in this inquiry was Peter Scrimshaw's article, Evaluating Media Education Through Action Research. Scrimshaw (1992) links Media Literacy research and classroom-based

action research:

1. Media Literacy and classroom-based action research emphasise active learning, see critical reflection as a precondition for changing practices, and set these practices in their social and institutional context.

2. Media Education and classroom-based action research offer epistemology in which knowledge is not treated as neutral but rather as part of the dialogue, reflection and action.

3. Many of the basic data gathering techniques, skills and equipment are common to action-based and Media Education research (i.e., direct observation, data collection, data reduction and analysis, interpretation and hypothesis formulation, use of audio and video technology).

4. Action-research, as a form of curriculum evaluation, aims at improving curriculum. By doing research in my own classroom, I was able to improve the ACE program. Thus, my research informed my teaching.

5. Previous research methodologies used in English Language Arts employed a classroom-based action research design. Media Literacy curricula began, and continues to be located in English studies.

(pp. 242-245)

PART 2: METHODOLOGY

I decided that the "case study" approach fit the kind of action research I was interested in. A case study is a detailed, empirical examination of one setting or a single subject or set of subjects within its real life context (Yin, 1994). This inquiry is a single-case design, focusing on the ACE Program and the ACE students, from 1991 to 1997. Further, my examination is more than descriptive. It is also interpretive in nature (Merriam, 1988), so that I analysed, interpreted and theorised about the specific instances in my inquiry.

The particular procedures I chose, and which I describe in the remainder of this chapter, are suitable to the nature of the ACE Program and students, the current and developing theoretical concepts

associated with Media Literacy and English Language Arts.

A Methodological Overview

Figure 5 provides an overview of the methodology I used in my inquiry.

Figure 5

Summary of Research Methodology

Phase/Duration	Purpose	Data Collection Sources
One October 1991 to June 1992	- design media units - implement units - preliminary data collection - revise data collection	- field notes - reflective journals - photographs
Two October 1992 to March 1997	- data Collection - coding of data	- field notes - reflective journals - photographs - audio/video recordings - student work - unstructured interviews
Three April 1997 to March 1998	**Analysis** **Constant Comparison Method**	
	- scanned data - highlighted data - preliminary category development - developed and revised categories	

PHASE ONE

Developing the Media Education Units

In Phase One I developed the units for the Media Education Curriculum I designed specifically for

the ACE students. Specifically, developing the units involved:

a.   identifying objectives, as stated in the Quebec Ministry of Education Curriculum

guideline for 16+ Programs.

b. adapting and applying Media Education concepts and elements of the critical framework

to the 16+ objectives.

c. designing media, literacy activities, gathering materials: articles, books, magazines videos,

audio tapes, to be used as examples or triggers to initiate dialogue, preparing

instructional/support, materials, such as handouts, obtaining media and developing

evaluation procedures.

d.   developing procedures, including group and individual responsibilities for each media

project, project parameters, and the implementation of media technology such as

multi-media. The group-based collaborative projects encourage student dialogue, reflection

and action through analysis, problem solving and decision making (Freire, 1990), within

Media Literacy curriculum and pedagogy.

Note: c and d above were often co-designed with the ACE students.

Implementing and Revising the Units

Once the units were designed, I implemented them into my classroom. Similar to the process of my

action research, the development of units progressed in an ongoing, cyclical fashion. My initial unit

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designs were constantly being transformed in direction, depth, and sophistication. These changes were prompted by the students' daily involvement, feedback and actions, as well as my own observations and evaluations. The following excerpt from my reflective journal illustrates the cyclical process in designing these units:

> I feel so unstructured. I spend so much time designing the units and then I have to change them. They, the students, either change the focus or add on to the projects. My wife has begun to ask me why I spend so much time. "After teaching twenty years, don't you have it all prepared?" is a question she often asks.

> I thought the marketing unit might last three weeks, but they've been working on it for almost two months, and they're still not tired of it. I listened to the audio tape I left with Mike's group. I can't believe how much time he spent on the budgeting part. I mean that's a lot of math, but he kept with it. I know its math, not English, but it's still significant. It is a media project!

> Each day, ... several have taken the project in a different direction or been turned on by something. In fact, the other day I tried to put an end to the project, and they got upset. There was a chorus of, "Sir, why do you always do that? We get into something and then you want to change it!" This is so ironic. From what I know of these kids, that is being turned off to school, and what I have seen of kids like these, lethargic, unconcerned, they seem so into this project.

> RJ/November 11, 1991

The above excerpt gives you some sense of the complexity of the on-going process of developing the curriculum I created for the ACE Program. It illustrates the reflection-in-action process I underwent as I developed the units, reshaping and redesigning aspects of it in response to the students' engagement with the activities.

Initial Data Collection and Revising the Data Collection

Also during Phase One, I began preliminary data collection. This was primarily in the form of my own field notes and reflective journals. These were especially important for me in the early stages

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of the data collection since they enabled me to step back and reflect upon the direction the inquiry was, and should be, taking and the kinds of data which should be collected. This is illustrated in the excerpt below:

> I think I'm getting a better idea of the kind of stuff I want to collect. That is stuff related to the students' ideas of genre, conventions and so on. The other thing is - I'm starting to understand my role. As it says in the literature, I am the research instrument. It's taken me almost the last school year to get a grasp of this idea. I mean its elementary, but I'm not sure I saw it as a central factor before. Maybe I was stuck in a positive role - afraid to be subjective, qualitatively that is. Anyway, I'm starting to loosen up and become more focused.
>
> **RJ**/November 1, 1991

I also reflected on my role as the "primary research instrument," the data I had collected, what the data was "saying" to me. For instance, I made an attempt to look for exceptions in the data which might counter my assumptions. This was often done, by asking myself "what if" questions, playing 'devil's advocate." I also checked the data against evidence and theory from the literature. In particular, I reflected about:

1) what I had learned about my students' literate behaviour and interactions with media.

2) insights I had gained about teaching media to at-risk students.

3) my professional role and ideological positions about teaching.

4) the next step(s) to take in the inquiry.

The following excerpt from my reflective journal illustrates this reflection:

> You know, it's really starting to dawn on me what I'm seeing. The students' work is starting to "talk to me," as they say. I mean I'm starting to understand that what I have been doing for years is listening to what they say about what they read in the media texts they consume. How come I didn't realise or at least articulate that before? They don't use the terms - but still they demonstrate they understand the concepts.
>
> **RJ** (December 10, 1993)

PHASE TWO

Collecting the Data

The data collection in the field involved several cyclical stages: planning, action, observing, revising and reflection (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The following types of data collection sources were used: field notes, reflective journals, as well as reflections of ACE students, my co-teacher, parent/guardians and school administrators, unstructured, exploratory interviews, video and audio tapes, photographs, instructional materials, student artifacts/documents and media productions. I collected an enormous amount of data. It fills several large boxes, several binders, and two filing cabinet drawers in my basement office.

Field Notes and Reflective Journals

Field notes are coded by the letters **FN**. I kept field notes, including my own observations and impressions of daily routines, student actions, reactions, attitudes, bits of dialogue.

The field notes were often very sketchy notations, sometimes no more than hastily written words or phrases on scraps of paper or in my teacher's lesson plan book. It is probably more appropriate to refer to these as "scratch notes" (Sanjek, 1990). These scratch notes were then word processed and kept chronologically in a binder. In the sample field note below, I continued jotting down words, phrases, comments, as the students continued to work on a media project:

Marketing Project

- know many different radio stations; different music genres;
- sense of target audience; CHOM: rockers, FM96 working class?!
- Jon: Vermont Public Radio; McGill Radio;
- Harvey: noted station at work study placement, related to demographics at placement;

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- Mark - technical background from father; frequency
- calling out - interest?!
- punk cabbage doll, musical carpet;
- they're so focused - listen to Mike's group on audio tape!
- Mike and Tanya telephoned Discus - Discus was interested - neat!!!
- amazing how much involvement by Mike;
- costing of project: advertising, budgeting, capital, airing for ads;
- figured profit: upset how much profit store would make;
- ignored bell.

<div align="right">FN, January 21, 1993</div>

The field notes acted as reflective triggers. They were helpful when it came time to write **Reflective Journals**. The journals, designated by the letters **RJ**, included descriptive accounts, personal ponderings and reactions, as well as perceived theoretical and methodological questions (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998) and ideas, generated from the literature in Media Literacy, literacy and English Language Arts. For instance, the excerpt from the reflective journal below was developed from the field notes above:

> What really intrigues me about this project is not just what the students are producing, but rather whose producing it. W.L, M.D, W.D and T.P. are a very troubled group of kids. Each one has their own family problems and consequently school problems. The only one who has any real literacy skills is T.P. as well as any "school knowledge." None of them are really turned on to schooling. And yet, this project turns them on. I mean their, enthusiasm, direction, collaboration and so on is almost always focused.

> I asked them to keep an audio tape going while they worked on their budgeting plan for the project. (I am not including a transcript of the tape; it is consists mostly of M.D. talking out loud as the others follow his lead). The tape spans a couple of hours of continuous work. It was really incredible! During the whole time. Mike, as well as T.P. worked almost non-stop, doing and redoing the math for the budget. M.D. never demonstrated any real interest in math before, let alone any class work. And yet, here he is, so into it. It's not just what he was doing but how. I mean he was so intense. They were figuring profit margin, advertising costs, capital, target audience.

> The most exciting and perhaps humorous event was when they called Discus and asked if they might be interested in their product. I think the students thought that they would be laughed at. But the Discus rep. asked them to bring it down for consideration. Unfortunately

the kids declined. What I think impressed them was not just the idea, but how they presented it to them on the phone. I remember that they practised their pitch ahead of time. M.D., a bright kid, but a very "disturbed" and illiterate young man, is perhaps one of the most articulate and was chosen to speak.

<div align="right">

RJ, January 25, 1993

</div>

Audio Recordings

Audio recordings, coded: **aud.tps**, were used to augment the field notes, documenting the students' discourse during class discussions and project work. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983):

> Actual words people use can be of considerable analytic importance. The situated vocabularies employed provide us with valuable information about the way in which members of a particular culture organise their perceptions of the world, and so engage in the social construction of the reality (p. 153).

I transcribed the audio tapes. In order to keep track of the material on the tapes, I developed an indexing system according to date, the context in which the discussion took place (i.e., the project or unit theme), and the topic (i.e., specific lesson focus). These were recorded on a spread sheet, using *ClarisWorks* software.

By recording the classroom discussions, I was also able to guard against collecting data that relied too heavily on my own anecdotal reflections (Burgess, 1985a, 1985b). Unintelligible comments are indicated by (...). The following sample is from a classroom discussion focusing on Madonna's video *Truth or Dare*, which was one of the resources I use when teaching how celebrities are marketed:

Me: (after viewing the video *Truth or Dare*) So, reactions?.

P.V:	Disgusting!
Me:	Why?
Class:	(calling out loud)
Me:	One at a time. Scott.
S.H:	She uses sex. She exploits sexuality.
Me:	What else?
B.P:	Parts of it were in black and white.
Me:	Which parts?
B.P:	The documentary stuff.
Me:	You mean when they are just kind of muddling around?
B.P:	Yeah.
Me:	But there were parts in color. So what was in color?
J.S:	The concert.
B.P:	I know why too!
Me:	Why?
B.P:	Because they wanted it to stand out.

aud.tps June1995/pop culture/madonna:truthdare

Videotape Recording

Video tape recording is effective in capturing and communicating the simplest to the most complex information, engaging all of a person's senses, directly or indirectly. I collected two kinds of video recordings: unedited tapes recorded by myself (**uned.vid.tps**) and edited student video tapes (**ed.vid.tps**). Both sets of tapes assisted me in 1) making sense of the field notes, and 2) recording salient classroom activities, including daily routines and interactions, by slowing down the action. Each viewing and reviewing provided me with new insights, which in previous viewings had gone unnoticed. As in the case of the audio tapes, I developed a similar indexing system.

Some Cautious Considerations About Video Taping Classroom Interaction

I anticipated that video taping might pose technical, ethical and strategic problems. Videotaping the class in the process of group work and class dialogue was often seen by the students as obtrusive and

riggered either artificial or hostile reactions. I soon found that having students do the videotaping of the class was less disturbing. On the whole, students seemed to be more accepting of being video taped if they had the opportunity at some point to operate the camera.

At first I was a little apprehensive about having a student record video data, concerned that I would miss out on valuable moments. This proved not be the case. Involving the students as co-researchers (discussed later in this chapter) meant we could discuss what and how to video tape.

The advantage of the audio and videotape recordings was that they enabled me to "relive" the Media Literacy activities and focus on things that may have been unnoticed in my field notes. I could also immediately review the tapes as well as cross reference them with the field notes.

Photographs

I and my co-teacher took several dozen rolls of photographs. The photos supplied additional data that was "frozen" in time, and were sometimes easier to analyse than some of the video tapes. I kept the photos in an album, organised chronologically.

Teacher Curricular Development

The time and resources which I have invested in curriculum development for the ACE Program rivals that of conducting this inquiry. Over the last twenty-three years of teaching, I have spent countless hours adding, changing and refining the various class activities and projects. My wife has often asked, "Why after so many years of teaching can you not just use the same materials each year?

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Other teachers do." My response is always the same. "I am not like most other teachers. And my students are never the same." The end result has been a large collection of teaching materials. I have included these as documents in the data collection because they are essential to the operation of the Media Literacy classroom, and have contributed to the development of the students' literate behaviour.

Student Artifacts

I collected many print and non-print artifacts produced by the students, individually or in groups, coded: **stu.art.** These included journal entries, storyboards, scripts, video tape projects, posters. Generally, I approached student work by asking myself the following questions:

1. what is the piece of work all about and in what context was it produced?

2. what does the work tell me about what the student already knows about media?

3. how do I interpret what the work is "saying" to me?

4. what questions arise from the work?

I also made note of popular culture texts -- clothing, magazines, comics etc. -- which the students brought to the classroom. The artifacts provided me with insights into the students' background and the texts which interested them. Scrimshaw (1992) writes that students'

> own texts are a significant source of evidence: assignments, project work, and exam papers are obvious elements. Materials chosen by pupils are another reservoir of information, although their precise significance for the pupils is less easy to establish without inquiring. T-shirts, clothes, choices of records or tapes, videos hired, tv programmes watched, magazines, papers and comics, can all be relevant. (p. 244)

Interviews

The dialogical nature of a Media Literacy classroom invites the students to use their own voice. With this in mind, I wanted to use this inquiry as a vehicle through which I could bring the ACE students' stories into the public domain. I interviewed several of the students -- those whom I felt could articulate their ideas on audio tape about what it was like to participate in the Media Literacy classes.

I had originally contemplated using structured interviews. However, it occurred to me that during occasions when, as part of their regular job search class, we practised interviewing techniques, the students seemed stiff - not themselves. I was concerned that a structured interview would result in a one-way conversation, with me asking the questions and the students responding with brief, monotonous answers. Admittedly, I was also concerned that I too would become too formal in my presentation of the questions. I quickly abandoned the idea of structured interviews in favour of unstructured interviews, coded **intervw** (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). More often than not, one prompt yielded a plethora of responses, as evident in the following excerpt:

Me: Jason, I'm working on some research for my work at McGill. I thought you might help me.

J.R: Sure.

Me: I just want to have a discussion about the past year. Could you tell me how the media have changed for you since you've been in ACE?

J.R: Media changed for me in understanding since I've been in this program. Before I started, I just watched it. Now I question some of it. Like why they did it or how they did it in this way. And now after the media course I can understand. Like in movies, it can be an action or romance, whatever. Like how different shots can change the mood of things. Like a close up or a far away shot can make it seem like a change of time. Well maybe not a change of time but different feelings. I practised angle shots; you can understand how it works, how they do it. I don't watch tv

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anymore, it kind of destroyed it, when I watch it. It ruins everything for everyone else.

Me: You mean when you watch with some one?

J.R: Yeah. Like I know how to do that or I'd like to know how to do that. And when I know how it's done, I try to explain it to them. I find different foul ups that they made.

Me: Anything else?

J.R: Like covert commercials, commercials that are hidden in a movie or a show. Like 7-UP. They were showing this place, I don't remember where it was, but any how, these people and you could see the big 7-UP. They tried to hide it but you could see the red circle.

Me: What about working on the projects?

J.R: um...I know that I'm the kind of person who can't sit in a class room and take notes. The projects...I can't just research from the book to paper, writing it down, putting it in my own words, typing it up and handing it in. It's not me. What I like doing is going out, researching it, interviewing people, finding out exactly what I want to find out. Sometimes it doesn't work out that way, but that's what I like to do. I'm also not fond of working independently. I'd rather work as a team. If I do 50% the other person catches up with the other 50%.

Me: Do you think working on projects has helped your learning?

J.R: Well, you understand what...when you come back with your project you can say, hey look, this is what I learnt. I'm not just saying it, I'm proving it to you. 'Cause a lot of people don't like not having physical proof. These are the people I interviewed, this is what I found out. It even shows how the project is made from explaining the project, all the way to when it's finished. And it's done not to the teacher's satisfaction, but to our satisfaction. It's a good feeling handing in something like that. I did this. I'm proud of this. It also shows that someone has the initiative to get off their butt and make a movie (student produced video). And why can't I do it!

intervw, June 7, 1993

My Role as Teacher/Researcher

I just read or at least reread Mayher's book, *Uncommon Sense* [1990]. I really enjoy the book. I especially like his anecdote about how, as a child, he had to give an oral presentation in front of his classmates about a field trip. His teacher berated him for not doing what she expected - 'commonsensically'. I'm not sure if I was like Mayher when I was a student, but I definitely am a teacher who approaches teaching 'uncommonsensically' at least by some accounts. I work more on instinct than on what I may or may not have learned at McGill (sorry). I know that this drives my co-teacher crazy sometimes. I sometimes teach by the seat of my pants. I mean if the students say or do something that excites me - I just go with it. I kind of like it that way, but I can see how it would not make sense to someone who

works *commensensically*. I don't teach in a neat, organised way. I can't follow in a line. Learning isn't neat so why should teaching?

<div align="right">RJ, January 16, 1994</div>

What I know about teaching at-risk students, using Media Literacy and media technology, is through induction, that is, by how I perceive and make sense of what occurs in my classroom on a daily basis. Whether I was a teacher and/or researcher, the approach I took in the data collection and analysis reflects what Mayher (1991) refers to as "uncommon sense learning," the outcome of intentional or purposeful action, that is neither linear, neat nor packaged. It also reflects my pedagogical intuitions and theories that have served me well in my teaching, especially in the ACE Program.

Unquestionably, there were times during the course of this inquiry when it seemed I had dual personalities. I was more than a teacher, living the mundane, everyday teaching routines. At other times, I was more than a researcher, unyieldingly following accepted methodological designs. Patton (1990) succinctly reflects my thinking here. He argues that the best a researcher can do is his/her very best, fairly representing the data and communicating what the data reveals given the purpose of the inquiry. By this, Patton does not imply that there are no rules. Merely that procedures are not rules. The qualitative inquiry depends on skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the researcher.

It's Christmas and I need the break, which is such a cliche. I feel like I'm playing so many roles at school. - teacher, program developer, coordinator and researcher. Added to that I feel that being with the students everyday, heightens these roles. I'm not sure how exactly. Maybe it's just that I play so many roles in my relationship with the - teacher, social worker, psychologist, parent. But my mandate is to teach. I wish that is all I had to do. Actually, that's not true. I like teaching this way. I can't teach a class for fifty minutes, then go onto the next group. It doesn't make for good learning. Question - I wonder if the students feel the same way. It just occurred to me. When I changed the class schedule back to fifty minutes that is back in 1991, the kids were really upset. So I guess they really do like the

schedule the way it is - at least I hope these kids do as well.

RJ, January 3, 1994

During the course of this inquiry, I taught the ACE students everyday, all day. My students and I did more than co-exist. As I stated earlier, I believe this was an advantage in terms of this inquiry, as well as my teaching overall. Together we were a community, within the larger school population. For some students, I was just one more teacher they had to endure on the way out of school. For others, I was a teacher, surrogate parent, social worker and a confidant. Agreeably, an exhausting number of roles, but this was inescapable considering the amount of time we spent together, the entire school day, every day, for two years. Without question, we had a more intimate, intense relationship, beyond what is usual in a traditional school setting. Still, as illustrated in my reflective journal below, I was troubled:

> So what's bothering me? I mean I'm excited about the way the ACE Program is shaping up - the schedule, using media and the kids reaction to it, but also irritated. Maybe it's the fact that if I see this why can't other teachers? Are we too set on teaching to the class? But that wouldn't account for it. Obviously the reason is more embedded teaching in mainstream that in alternative programs. But just think. If we got away from focusing on literacy in a narrow, print oriented sense, then maybe students like mine could join with regular students in mainstream classes.
>
> **RJ**, March 1, 1994

Excerpts such as the one above indicate that the data in this inquiry is not neutral. How can it be? I have exclusive insider knowledge and expertise about the ACE students and the ACE program. Also, after twenty three years I have developed a particular perspective and understanding regarding teaching, especially teaching at-risk students. In fact, perspective may be too mild a word; conviction or passion are more accurate. Unfortunately, my convictions sometimes get me into unfortunate situations, as illustrated in the following heated exchange between myself and a

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colleague in my school:

> **Colleague:** There are students who go onto university and those who do not because they can not remember, aren't motivated and in short can not learn.
>
> **Me:** (irritated) I can't believe you think that! Ya, students like mine (ACE) may not go onto university but don't tell me they can't remember, aren't motivated and can't learn. Are you telling me that the students who fail your classes can't learn. Maybe they don't remember or want to remember what you want them to.
>
> **Colleague:** But you have to admit there are students who are academics and those who aren't...
>
> RJ, June 28, 1995

ACE Students as Co-researchers

I believe that the students and my intense contact promoted a level of trust, as much as is possible between adult-adolescent/ teacher-student. As illustrated in the following excerpt from my reflective journal, I sometimes worried whether or not I should explain the study to them. I was unsure if they would understand that my intent is to better understand them and to improve my teaching.

> For a while now, I've been concerned about letting the students know what I'm researching. I mean they know I'm doing research - they were given the permission forms - although few have returned them, even with repeated requests to return them. In the past, 91 -92, I really involved the students. They seemed ok with it, but with this group, I'm worried. How they would accept it?
>
> RJ, December 10, 1993

In view of our intimate relationship, I was apprehensive how my position as "the research instrument" might affect the social and working relationship I had with the ACE students. It did not take me very long to decide that I could not avoid having the students involved. Elliott (in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988) points out the logic of involving participants. He states, "since action research looks at problems from the point of view of those involved it can only be validated in unconstrained dialogue with them" (p. 122).

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In the long run, involving ACE students, not only as participants but as informants as well, provided opportunities for them to openly express, reflect, defend, demonstrate, identify and clarify issues related to their learning. The students' collaboration and participation in this inquiry provided them with a sense of what Freire (1990) called "conscientization" or critical consciousness. This had the effect of empowering the students, something that most students, especially those at-risk, have little opportunity to experience.

Still, to ensure that I was not, as Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1996) comment, neglecting the reality of the power-relations (i.e., teacher/adult - student/teenager), I adopted, at least a partially emic position (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). As surrogate researchers, ACE students were given conditional empowerment. With my coaching, the students developed research questions for their projects, choosing print, non-print and human resources, choosing to collaborate or not with peers.

Employing the ACE students as co-learners/researchers in the inquiry was one method I used to offset some of the possible effects of my biases (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994). It should be noted that the students were made aware, both in the original letters of information and consent sent home at the beginning of the inquiry, as well as verbally, that they could withdraw from all or part of the inquiry without concern of repercussions.

PHASE THREE

Data Analysis

As I have demonstrated in my reflective journals, I was constantly thinking and working with the data. Formal data analysis began in the Spring of 1997, by which time I had collected more than a sufficient amount of data with which to address my research questions.

Thomas (1993) suggests researchers experience three different stages. He states:

1) We translate from the subjects' language into one that is meaningful to us,
2) We translate those meanings into scientific significations for the purpose of analysis, and
3) We filter and translate those double meanings into a new set intelligible to an audience (p. 1).

I had thus far gathered the raw data - the interviews, video and audio tapes, and the written, spoken and visual language of the ACE students. In the remainder of this Tape, I describe how I went about translating the raw data into a form which allowed for analysis.

I applied a constant-comparison method (Glaser& Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), around which I developed elements of literate behaviour.

Data Analysis Procedures: Constant Comparison Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest a framework for the data analysis which I used. I drew from theoretical approaches in English Language Arts and Media Literacy (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998), as well as from inductive reasoning, based on my experiences teaching at-risk students.

After the data were collected, they were subjected to an inductive process of constant comparison. This method began with several sessions in which I scanned through my field notes and reflective journals, audio and video tapes, as well as the students' journals and artifacts. Each time, I did a closer reading, highlighting surprising, interesting and intriguing events, repetitive actions, students' comments and knowledge, which I felt were symptomatic of the students' literate behaviour. I must admit, I was working on my own impressions of what literate behaviour might be, rather than basing my data selection on any theoretical foundations. I wanted to be open to the data, "letting it speak to me." Therefore, I made no attempt to code the data in this initial stage.

I then spent some time refreshing myself with the major concepts and theories in English Language Arts and Media Literacy from the Review of the Literature. Using key points from the review of the literature, I started to develop some basic categories against which I could check the highlighted data. It soon became clear to me from the number of codes which I was developing that if I were to keep the data analysis manageable I needed to narrow and reduce my "theoretical playing field." I needed to find elements in the theory which provided an alliance among a broader notion of literacy and Media Literacy curriculum, and from which I could generate elements of literate behaviour.

Willinsky's (1991) elements of postmodern literacy and Dick's (1990) critical framework of Media Literacy provided such a balance. The categories are divided into two levels: 1) theoretical categories generated from Willinsky and Dick, and 2) process categories (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998) based on data which illustrated the ACE students' learning over brief and/or extended periods of time. The theoretical and process categories are listed in Figure 6:

<center>

Figure 6

Theoretical Coded Categories

</center>

Code Categories	Definition
- gram/synt/sym	Students are aware and/or use grammar and syntax of symbol systems,
- wk/sym/cds	Students work to rearrange the symbolic codes in texts.
- txt/con/genre	Students are aware of and/or use conventions and genres.
- app/rew	Students appropriate a printed text in order to rewrite it, making it their own. The texts in such instances are either print or non-print. I looked as well at such elements as genre, conventions and intertextuality.
- txts/pub	Students acknowledge, in writing or in speech, that popular culture texts are sites for exploring one's own position in society, as autobiographies. This is also similar to Britton et al.'s (1975) reading of student work as expressive or personal.
- signs/meanings	Students' recognition of dominant, cultural visual and auditory connotations and their relevance to major themes in a text. These pointed to the process of signification in the students' comments and productions work.
- vis/conv	Students are aware and/or use specific visual conventions used to convey meaning, such as camera shots and transitions.

- ele/express	The students' expression of ideas through computer and/or audio-visual technology.
- txts/rhet	Students demonstrate through construction and deconstruction their understanding of skills used to construct meaning.
- const/real/aud	Students are aware that their constructs of what they consume in the media are subjective meanings based on their prior personal backgrounds, knowledge and life experiences.
- indust	Students have a general knowledge of media industries and/or institutions and their relationships to media products.

Process Coded Categories

- expl/tlk	exploratory talk to help each other better understand texts.
- sev/writ/reads	The students performed several readings/viewings and/or writings/producing of a text, each time modifying their previous understandings.
- prior/to/new know	The students formed bridges among their prior knowledge of media into new areas of understanding in the process of reading and/or writing texts.
- pred/ana/inter/confirm	The students predicted, analysed, interpreted and confirmed their responses in the process of reading a text.

| - const/subj/means | The students constructed subjective meanings based on their prior knowledge and life experiences. |
| - resp/affect | The students responded affectively, through their personal relationship to the text, and cognitively through their observations. |

I have reduced the above to two broad categories - the Literate Behaviour of Reading and the Literate Behaviour of Writing.

Literate Behaviour of Reading means being actively and cognitively engaged in doing a close reading of a primary text - a television program, a popular book series, movies, comic strips, advertisements etc. This includes reading as a social process in that meaning is not established in isolation, but rather through interaction with others.

Literate Behaviour of Writing involves constructing texts for an audience using media technologies - computers, multi-media, digital cameras, desk top video editing; modes and codes of communication, according to forms and conventions characteristic of discourse in specific contexts.

In the Tape which follows I shall present two episodes through which I represent the richness and complexity of the data I have collected on the ACE students. Episode One: The Literate Behaviour of Reading is comprised of three scenes, each dealing with the students' analysis of three texts. Episode Two: The Literate Behaviour of Writing focuses on two scenes dealing with the students' working, writing, and talking about their media projects.

TAPE FOUR

THE LITERATE BEHAVIOUR OF THE ACE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

In Tape Three, I identified and categorised the literate behaviour of ACE students as it emerged from the data. As can be imagined, I have collected an enormous amount of data over the last five years I have been studying my ACE students as they followed my Media Education Curriculum. My major problem was how to present the results of the inquiry in a way that would give a reader the sense of both the scope of the literate behaviour and the nature of the classroom experiences that gave rise to the categories of behaviour I identified. I abandoned the notion of identifying each element of the Literate Behaviours of Reading and Writing and presenting supporting data from disparate instances of classroom experiences and data sources because I felt it would result in too fragmentary a picture of the ACE classroom. Instead I have opted to present two episodes - one for Reading and one for Writing, as typical of the kinds of behaviours identified in the data.

Episode One : The Literate Behaviour of Reading consists of three scenes each of which is a chronological account of the reading by ACE students of two short films and a feature length video. The scenes took place in, more or less, the sequence presented. In real time, each scene took place in approximately one morning - three hours. Our class schedule enabled us to work for sustained periods on any one project and involved the same group of students.

Episode Two: The Literate Behaviour of Writing consists of two scenes, each of which is an account of two media projects the ACE students undertook and are organised around the activities of the project, rather than presented chronologically. The projects spanned several weeks and involved two different groups of students.

EPISODE ONE

THE LITERATE BEHAVIOUR OF READING

SCENE ONE: THE APPRENTICE

Set Up

In 1992 I was asked by a colleague who, at the time, was working in the marketing department of The *National Film Board*, to develop a lesson plan for a short, nine minute video, entitled *The Apprentice*. I should state that I previewed the video several times. Indeed, it took several viewings before I was able to "read" it comfortably, although as you shall see, not as well as I thought. Embarrassed, I told my colleague of my difficulty reading the film. She admitted that she also had some difficulty following the text.

The bizarre nature of *The Apprentice*, and the fact that it seemed to be aimed at a young audience, made me apprehensive about using it with the ACE students. Still, since there was no dialogue, it presented a good opportunity for my students to demonstrate what they had learned about "reading" visual texts. Earlier in the year, we had studied television and film language, such as the use of different camera shots, angles, and movement. The only other connection I could make to my

students was that the story involved, obviously, an apprentice and a teacher. Since the ACE students participate in On-the-Job Training, twice a year, they are in many ways modern day apprentices.

The Narrative

The Apprentice is an animated film on video about a teacher and his apprentice set in mediaeval times. The narrative focuses on the adventures of the teacher and apprentice as they travel across the country side. In the course of their travels, they come to a fork in the road. Ignoring the advice of the teacher, the apprentice decides to go on alone. Along the way, he is confronted by several obstacles. The story is divided into individual scenes, implied through fades to black, shifts in location, and jump shots. The fades to black operate in much the same way that page turning acts in a book to advance the story. Visual cues, including camera shots, angles, movements, also carry the narrative.

Introducing the Text to the ACE Students

I introduced this visual text to the ACE students in the following manner. I explained that a friend of mine, who worked for an important government, national institution, the National Film Board of Canada, had asked me to provide her with some general feedback about a video she had just received. Several of the students questioned why she had chosen our class. I responded that aside from the fact that I was a friend of hers, she also knew that we had been exploring media production and analysis work.

Since I was not confident that I really had a "lesson plan" I decided not to be any more specific as to the kinds of feedback my colleague was looking for, hoping that something might develop on the spot. The most I would venture to ask the students was to tell me what occurred in the beginning, middle and end of the *Apprentice*. In other words, to convey the narrative. I must admit, that I did not feel comfortable about being vague as to what I expected of them. This was due in part to the fact that I found it difficult to interpret the video myself. On the other hand, this was a pedagogically challenging opportunity to engage in what Masterman (1985) called teaching in a non-hierarchical fashion. Both the students and myself were going to co-investigate the video.

The students' reading of *The Apprentice* developed in the following way:

Initial, Silent Reading

As I have done with other print and non-print texts, I initially began the activity very conventionally, by asking the students what the title of the video might suggest to them, engaging them in a discussion concerning the meaning of an apprentice, including similarities and differences among apprentices in "the old days" and their own on-the-job experiences, and what they thought the story might be about. The students easily related the concept of an apprentice to themselves.

I told the students that we would read/view the video, without stopping and without interruptions. Following this, we would discuss the plot and characters. Without any further introduction, the video was presented in its entirety. The students were then asked to express their initial responses to the film. As I had expected, many thought that the video had no point at all. Surprisingly, this actually

added to their interest and curiosity. The classroom echoed to a chorus of, "Let's see it again."

Surprised by their response, I rewound the tape and we viewed it again.

A Second Reading

My aim in the second reading was to slowly move them into broadening their comprehension of the

video. This time I asked them to tell me what happened at the beginning, middle and end. Many

were only partially able to do so. Others related the plot in greater detail. What occurred next can

best be described as serendipitous, or as Barry Duncan has called it, 'a teachable moment', as

reflected in the following audio tape excerpt:

      Me: Can anyone tell me what the story is about?"
      M.D: You don't get it Sir, do you?"
      Me: (somewhat embarrassed) "No Mike, I guess I don't."
      M.D: (frustrated) O.K. Sir, rewind it again.
              (after viewing the video again) Now do you get it?
      Me: I'm not sure. Tell me.
      T.P: Sir, it's about a teacher and his student.
      Me: Oh, I think I'm starting to see it now.
      M.D: It's like us. We're apprentices on our work study.
      Me: So how do you know who the teacher and the student is?
      M.D: Rewind it again and stop it when I tell you.

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I was really intrigued by M.D's comment that, "It's like us. We're apprentices on our work study,"

displays that he was responding affectively, through his personal relationship to the text, based on

his prior work study experiences. Many of the other students had similar interpretations to M.D.'s.

I decided to admit the difficulty I had reading the text. They were bewildered by my inability to see

what seemed so obvious. Some were suspicious that I was acting naive, so as to elicit their

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responses. I tried to tell them that in my private previewing of the video, I had not read the video to the extent that they were now exhibiting.

I became excited that what I thought was going to be a fairly mundane and brief lesson, suddenly seemed to take on the possibility of being much more. I was not expecting the students to do make such personal connections. Remember, my initial idea was merely to have them tell me the beginning, middle and end of the

narrative.

A Third, Fourth and .....Readings

I began to realise that the students were moving beyond initial first impressions of the story. Subsequently, I shifted the activity toward interpretation, getting the students to share what they felt the author of the video intended and what meaning they found in the text.

With each reading and rereading of *The Apprentice*, the students analysed and reconsidered their earlier readings. They developed associations and connections, that provided them with insights to their initial understandings, predictions and inferences.

Since I wanted to see what elements helped them read the video, I asked them to tell me what visual cues assisted them. In the next excerpt, several of the students were able to help me better understand the significance of some of the story elements:

> Me: Hey, I'm really impressed. But what visuals or images helped you come up with these themes? What do you think the person, author of this video was trying to say?

Like why did they seem to zoom into the good luck charm around the teacher's neck?

M.D: You still don't get it, do you Sir? (giggles, inaudible comments from the class). Look rewind it back to the tree. (tape is rewound). O.K. (sarcastically) Now fast forward it to the *good luck charm.*

Me: Oh, I get it. It's the tree. So, why is the teacher wearing the symbol of the tree around his neck? (at this point, I really was starting to prompt them).

K.G: It's the same shape as the tree and shows us that the teacher has also been there.

P.V: Ya, the teacher has already passed the tree test.

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M.D recognised that the "good luck charm," which the teacher wore around his neck, represented the tree which blocked the path of *The Apprentice.* Similarly, K.G. understood that, "It's the same shape as the tree and shows us that the teacher has also been there." P.V followed up on these comments with, "Ya, the teacher has already passed the tree test." These comments are significant for a couple of reasons. First, their comments illustrate that all three students were aware of the symbols system in the text and were rearranging the symbolic codes in the text, specifically, the 'lucky charm and the tree', in order to make meaning. Second, each of these students read and write well below their grade levels, based on standardised tests. Third, if these students had not had the opportunity to talk about the text, they might not have been able to make the connections among the charm and the tree as easily and/or as quickly. That is, through exploratory talk (Barnes, 1992) they were able to help each other understand the symbolic codes.

There were several similar instances when the students asked me to rewind or fast forward the video to specific points in order that they could show me connections between one point and another in the story. In fact, toward the end of the activity, I literally turned the vcr and the remote control over to them so that they could review the video as they needed it. I recall that I was intrigued by how, in

small groups, they searched for specific instances in the story, discussed them among themselves and then returned to their writing. They understood the principle of recursivity in learning how to read a narrative. That is, looking forward and looking back.

At this point, I decided to capitalise on the students' engagement. With each viewing, the students became more excited, and confident about offering their ideas about what they understood in the video. As the students became more confident, I did as well. I decided to investigate whether the students could transfer the idea of theme or the larger social message embedded in narratives, to *The Apprentice*. We had studied the concept earlier in the year. However, understanding theme has always been a difficult concept for these students, as well as most of the at-risk students I have taught in the past.

It was at this point that I suggested that in groups of three or four they could view the video at their discretion, looking for symbols and other visual cues that helped them develop the broader social message of the story. A Media Education approach sometimes referred to as 'iconographic analysis'. This reflects Media Education's reliance on semiotics as a way of exploring how and why audiences interpret texts differently.

The students now began to talk about the connotations associated with the images and symbols used in *The Apprentice*. I am using the term symbols here to mean cultural codes as interrelated signs that allow us to explain and understand our world.

Some of the symbols, which the students considered significant, and the meanings they associated with them, are listed below:

* apprentice - a beginner; self

* teacher - wisdom, experience

* laughing flowers - pressure; society laughing at *our* mistakes distraction; frustration

* cliff - obstacles; people who fell off and didn't get back up to try again

* hourglass - time is running out

* two roads - fate; temptation

* cliff/fall - stupidity; mistakes

* tree - realisation; obstacle

* sword - strength

* nose - discouraging; truth; lesson; challenge

By referring to the list of symbols they developed the following themes:

* making mistakes

* learn by your mistakes

* don't think you know it all

* let someone guide you, listen and understand

* let experience guide you.

* learning the hard way

* avoiding obstacles

* learn first; don't rush

On one hand, I was very pleased by the students' recognition of the connotations of the visual symbols, and their ability to relate these to major themes in the text. It displayed their Literate Behaviour of Reading associated with signification.

On the other hand, I recall being a little concerned that I was encouraging them to over-read the video. I cautioned the students about interpreting every item in a visual, or print text, as being a symbol. They more or less ignored my advice, continuously reading and rereading the video looking for more symbolic elements. I believe their engagement with the text is significant in and of itself.

What I had hoped would last one fifty minute class, was now going into its third class. It was obvious to me at this point that I had stumbled onto a real learning experience, for the students and myself. I realised that I needed to get the students to express their ideas about the story as writers.

> Me: Alright. Take the rest of the class to write down what the story means to you. Like being in the ACE Program, like being an apprentice on your work study?

While some of the students were not pleased with the task of having to write about their ideas, I did not have to coerce or compel some of those who have formerly resisted writing.

A few of the students indicated through talk that they understood the narrative but had difficulty articulating it in prose. One sixteen year old student, whose ability to read or write was well below that expected at his age and grade level according to standardised reading tests, decided to refer to the plot model I had taught them several months prior. Figure 7 illustrates his way of expressing the narrative.

Figure 7
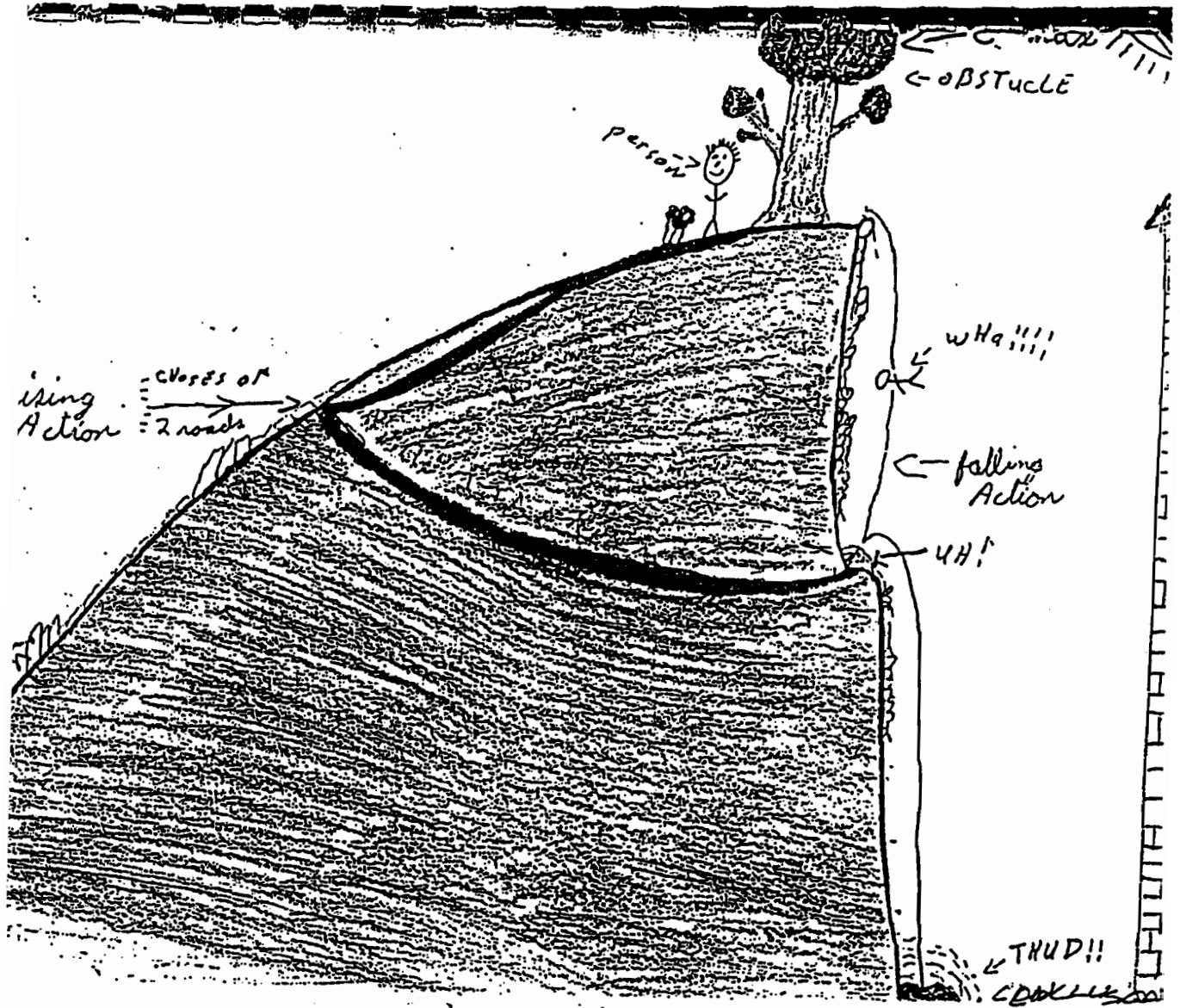
I was very pleased with his pictorial interpretation of the video. It reinforced my contention that even those students whose literacy levels are well below what we expect in secondary school, do possess an understanding of narrative structures.

At this point several of the students asked if they could watch the video again. Thinking that this was a ploy not to have to write, I grudgingly agreed. As I walked around the classroom, I kept an eye on those in front of the television monitor. Happily, they seemed to be writing as they were reading the video. By the time the fourth period came around, I decided to bring closure to this activity. Keeping in mind that print for many of the students is something to avoid at all costs, there was some resistance by several students to stop writing. The following are some of the students' comments from their notebooks:

> * At the end of the story the teacher had a charm of the tree around his neck, which meant that he had already faced the obstacle that the apprentice was going through. Just like our teachers already went through the same obstacles as us, but they let us learn by our mistakes.
>
> * The teacher knows that the apprentice needs a nose because he's been there before.
>
> * There are also obstacles in school, not apples or trees, but the temptation to drop out.
>
> * The apprentice represents the students of the ACE Program because the teachers guide us so we may get experience so we will be able to get over obstacles on our way.
>
> * We have to make choices just like the apprentice. We have to learn from our mistakes.
>
> * Thank God this apprentice had a teacher and a tree to get him out of trouble.
>
> * This class is like the video because the time is running out for us too.
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The comments above reveal that M.D. was not the only one in the class who made connections among the characters in the video and their own, personal experiences. Comments like, "Just like our teachers already went through the same obstacles as us, but they let us learn by our mistakes," "The apprentice represents the students of the ACE Program because the teachers guide us so we may get experience so we will be able to get over obstacles on our way," and "We have to make choices just like the apprentice," are indicative of the students' literate behaviour of constructing subjective meanings based on their prior knowledge and experiences in the ACE Program. Indeed, the students responded affectively, through their personal relationship to the text, and cognitively through their observations. I think this is important since it demonstrates the importance of relevancy and appropriateness of texts for readers. In Tape One I wrote of the difficulty I had early in my career getting my students interested in the so called "high interest - low vocabulary" books we were reading. *The Apprentice*, on the other hand, was completely relevant to the ACE students.

Chandler (1998) describes the act of reading as, "essentially a sense making activity, consisting of complimentary activities of selection and organisation, anticipation and retrospection, the formulation and modification of expectations in the course of the reading process. (p. 14)" As it turned out, the ACE students taught me about the complexity and relevancy of this text. I was somewhat humbled by this experience.

Making Personal Connections: The Apprentice as an Evolving Autobiography

As I stated earlier, several students were explaining the video by making their own personal connections to it. I have come to understand that students use media texts to mediate their own

personal stories. For instance, I noticed that when analysing media's construction of the world of work or families in television drama and situation comedy programs, the ACE students identify with characters and situations in the programs.

I am going to digress from *The Apprentice* for a moment to pursue this Literate Behaviour of making personal connections to texts, by describing the responses of two groups of students to the situation comedies *Roseanne* and *Full House*. I used these two television programs to explore the image of family.

Roseanne is particularly appropriate because of its popularity among my students. Some of the students compared *Roseanne's* fictional family to their own. In fact, as one student remarked, "Roseanne is like my family - dysfunctional." Indeed, I have found that some students know *Roseanne's* fictional family as well, and in some cases better, than their own, a rather sad commentary. Each year, there are several ACE students who come from single-parent families, or families in which there are multiple step-mothers or fathers. Some live in group homes.

The students watched the first 30 seconds of the programs' opening sequences. The following exchange is typical of the type of dialogue which stems from the students' analysis of the opening 30 seconds of *Roseanne*:

> Me: Ok, what can you tell me about *Roseanne's* family from the opening?
> M.D: There's junk food on the table.
> Me: So?
> P.F: They're poor. He (the son) has a baseball hat and usually rich people don't wear baseball caps.
> T.P: Ya, and they're eating regular cereal.

Me:	What about *Full House?*
S.H:	The way they're dressed... (interrupted).
P.F:	The way they talk isn't real. They don't use slang. Class: (all at once) Yes they do!
P.F:	(irritated) Ya, but they don't swear.
P.D:	They're middle class.
Me:	How do you know?
S.H:	What they have. Everything looks new. The way they dress. They wake up in the morning and the girls have lipstick on.
Me:	What else?
M.D:	They don't argue.
S.H:	The little girl makes me cringe. She's not her age. She's so cute.
J.R:	Its the comments she makes. She puts them in at the right places.
J.S:	She's a wannabe adult.

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aud.tp/March 9, 1991/Roseanne-Full House/families

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Now compare the above exchange with the following discussion focusing on the situation comedy,

Full House.

M.H:	The way (the family) acts is constructed. It's kinda weird that in one day all the stuff happens.
M.D:	Ya, the date too. They made the date like Cinderella.
J.L:	They didn't show the date. It's over and the weekend is finished. Then, they're back in school on Monday.
K.G:	The ending is dumb.
M.D:	The principal is not reasonable. He gives everybody two hours detentions after school. He's the typical principal. He's been stereotyped.
Me:	What image of teens is presented in the program?
S.H:	(cynical) That isn't like real teens! They were too immature! They had like thirty years experience. That's not what teens are like nowadays!

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aud.tp/March 9, 1991/Roseanne-Full House/families

</div>

In the above discussions about *Roseanne* and *Full House*, the students focused on how realistic or

unrealistic the families were portrayed. In the instance of *Roseanne*, some of the students were

aware that their ideas of the images they consume in the media are subjective meanings based on

their own prior experiences and backgrounds and knowledge. This is evident in comments such as,

| M.D: | There's junk food on the table. |

Me: So?

P.F: They're poor. He (the son) has a baseball hat and usually rich people don't wear baseball caps.

T.P: Ya, and they're eating regular cereal.

On one hand, in the excerpts above the students are expressing their understanding that the images of family in *Roseanne* and *Full House* are fabrications constructed by the producers for television. That is, the notion of agency. The students were more accepting of the latter since, 'it seemed to be more like their own families'. However, while not saying it directly, the students were more tolerant and accepting of *Roseanne*, as a fictional family, limited by certain conventions. On the other hand, many students displayed a real disdain for *Full House*. They were much more critical of the lack of realism associated with the characters and plots, even though they were aware that it too was a situation comedy intended to create humour. This is evident in comments such as:

"The way they talk isn't real. They don't use slang."
"Ya, but they don't swear."
"They wake up in the morning and the girls have lipstick on."
"The little girl makes me cringe. She's not her age."
"It's the comments she makes. She puts them in at the right places."
"The way (the family) acts is constructed. It's kinda weird that in one day all the stuff happens."
"That isn't like real teens! They were too immature! They had like thirty years experience. That's not what teens are like nowadays!"

They were also critical of how time is constructed and how problems or conflicts are resolved:

"They didn't show the date. It's over and the weekend is finished. Then, they're back in school on Monday." "The ending is dumb."

I believe that some of the students' tolerance for *Roseanne* and rejection of *Full House* is due to their emotional or affective response and connections to the characters.

The point here is that in their analysis of the situation comedies, the students were demonstrating an important aspect of literate behaviour - critical reading/viewing. That is, they were able to:

1. distinguish between media's construction of reality and reality.

2. identify elements of narratives.

3. identify particular aspects of the characters.

Rosenblatt (1978) remarks:

> the reader's attention to the text activates certain elements in his past experience - external reference, internal response - that have become linked with the verbal symbols. The symbols point to these sensations, images, objects, ideas, relationships, with the particular associations or feeling - tones created by his past experiences with them in actual life or literature (p. 11).

Returning to our discussion of *The Apprentice,* our discussions of the text were in essence dialogues, between the students and me, about what it means to read stories as symbols through which we could better understand ourselves. The symbols provided ways for the students to incorporate into their readings of the text, their own experiences as ACE students -- apprentices and as part-time workers - as well as their experiences with other mass media texts about the world of work and the family.

The students positioned themselves within the fictional world of the characters in the video. Their reading was more than a shallow retelling of the narrative such as its plot, themes, script, conflict/resolution, symbolism. They responded to the narrative's structure in very specific and personal ways (Masterman, 1985). At the same time they viewed and identified with the characters on the television monitor, reorganising them in relation to their own experiences and as participants in the viewing process. In Britton et al.'s (1975) term the ACE students acted in the role of spectator. I argue that acting in the role of spectator is a highly literate behaviour indeed.

By appropriating the author's intended message(s) (Willinsky, 1991), and relating it to their own situation, the students reworked the narrative, constructing it as their own personal narratives. In doing so, the students themselves became story tellers. The students unraveled each thread of the story's rhetoric and spun it into their own autobiographies. By assigning themselves as the main character (student/apprentices in the ACE Program), they retold the story from their particular perspectives and points of view - in the process discovering more about themselves. In Moffett's 1968) words, *The Apprentice* was for the students, about growth and self-knowledge.

The experience reinforced my view regarding the importance of a student's repertoires (McCormick, Waller and Flower, 1992) in the reading and writing process. The students' reading of *The Apprentice* drew from their own experiences, memories (Britton, 1970) and anecdotes such as the following examples taken from their journals:

> 1) students in Lake of Two Mountains High School, expressed by one of the students: "the 'flowers' are laughing at the Apprentice, like some people in LTM laugh at us in the ACE Program."
> 2) students in the ACE Program: "The apprentice represents the students of the ACE Program because the teachers guide us so we may get experience so we will be able to get over obstacles on our way."
> 3) On-the-Job Training students: "We have to make choices just like the apprentice. We have to learn from our mistakes."
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The Apprentice as a Socio-Cultural Experience

I think that the reading experience of *The Apprentice* was not only a significant lesson in self-discovery, but also in allowing each student to discover how others understand the text and themselves.

The ACE students' reading of *The Apprentice* was not an isolated experience. While each student made meaning of the text, sharing their interpretations and representations constituted a collaborative experience. Willinsky (1992) writes that texts serve as foundations for telling and retelling stories, built upon social and cultural experiences. English Language Arts theorists/educators such as Medway (1980) speak of coming to terms with our inner self through talking, reading and writing. The ACE students' interpretations and hypotheses about how they see themselves and how they are seen by others, developed through social interaction, primarily through sharing their ideas with other students in the class. Britton (1970) called this expressive language, and (Barnes, 1992) referred to this as exploratory talk.

The students and I engaged in a dialogue which included negotiation, resistance, consent, verification and validation. In some ways this process reminded me of Holdaway's (1979) notion of "shared reading responses"; reading a story together, pausing from time to time to think about what had been said and written.

This dialogic process was evident in two ways. First, whereas at other times, discussions have led to ridicule of some of the comments made by academically and/or socially weaker students, in this instance, the classroom took on an atmosphere of mutual respect. The students seemed engaged with the text. Rather than being ridiculed for their lack of understanding, weaker students actually helped stronger students. Even those students who were usually complacent, apathetic or had difficulty articulating their thoughts, joined in the discussion. Their progressively detailed interpretations developed through a process of building upon each other's insights.

Second, Moffett (1968) explains the importance of group discussion in a classroom setting as,

> an external social process (in which) each member gradually internalizes as a personal thought process: he begins to think in ways his group talks. Not only does he take unto himself the vocabulary, usage and syntax of others and synthesize new creations out of their various styles, points of view, and attitudes; he also structures his thinking into mental operations resembling the operations of the group interactions. If the group amends, challenges, elaborates, and qualifies together, each member begins to do so alone in his inner speech. (p. 46)

The viewing of *The Apprentice* provided a forum for the students to talk openly and purposefully about their lives, their goals, their experiences as apprentices in an open atmosphere, which to the students, was personally purposeful. The students' ideas came from their own stories, real and imagined, and which enabled them to construct an idea of a common culture, making sense of their social world. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) remarks that finding meaning in a text is a social as well as a literary understanding. The interaction among the ACE students and the text demonstrated to me that their reading/viewing was more complex than I had previously thought. It also reinforced for me that the language involved in such social discourse should be included in English Language Arts classrooms, in the same way as are other social discourses.

The ACE students are often referred to as "reluctant readers." I would argue that this is a stereotyped label. While they may be reluctant to read the specific texts demanded of them in schooling, my experience, as I have illustrated here, has been that they are indeed eager readers. At the beginning of each unit, I ask the students to list popular culture texts, and spinoffs of these, including movies, television programs, videos, songs, toys, games, magazines and books which are related to the current topic. I am always amazed by the length and magnitude of their lists. For example, in the Fall of 1994, the class was working on the theme of war. I asked the students to name various

television programs/movies, games/toys, songs, magazines/books related to war. I have included below a partial list generated by the students:

TV Movies	Games/Toys	Songs	Magazines/Books
Platoon	Gi Joe	Civil War	Legion
Good Morning Vietnam	Battleship	Wind Beneath	Guns & Ammo
Predator	Contra	One	Untold Story
Top Gun	Commando	War Ensemble	Modern guns
Casualties	Risk	Angel of Death	Soldier of Fortune
Schindler's List	Turn and Burn	Run to the hills	Ground Zero

Textual Influences

The Apprentice follows the typical plot formula of introduction, rising action, climax, denouement and conclusion. The students are accustomed to this pattern, and yet have difficulty with it in print texts. In a way, *The Apprentice* is analogous to a more traditional print, literary work and I would argue that many of the basic concepts which apply to stories in print, apply as well to stories on film and video. The ACE students' engagement with *The Apprentice* was very much the approach and involvement we would hope and expect students in a mainstream English Language Arts class to exercise when occupied with more traditional short stories.

But what was it about the Apprentice which solicited such deep insights? What motivated them to read the text as critical viewers, looking beyond common sense meanings and their relationships? What was it that appealed to them about this, seemingly nonsensical text, in more than just an entertaining way? The students responded to the video beyond a superficial, "Did I enjoy it?" From what is in fact a very simple narrative, the students fashioned a rather complex reading.

The ACE students used the visual and auditory cues, editing and camera work conventions, formal features of the video, in a manner that led them to ask deeper questions than: what is the plot, who are the characters and why are they important to the story?

Some of the characteristics of *The Apprentice* deserve consideration, since they influence the interaction among the ACE students and the text. Audiences react instinctively to images and sounds in films and video symbolically (McKee, 1997). *The Apprentice* audio is limited to nonsensical sound effects, such as garbled dialogue and a sound effect, signaling an introduction and end to each scene. These offer the reader few clues from which to follow the story. The students read *The Apprentice*, primarily, through representations created by its image systems. I have found that many of the students do not have semantic difficulties; in fact many have quite extensive vocabularies. I think the following exchange best explains their awareness of the characteristics unique to print and non-print texts:

M.D:	On tv you can see the characters and how they act and all that.
M.W:	Like a book you have to think. You have to picture what the characters are like. In a movie, it going through before your eyes. You can see what it's like.
B.P:	You can read both (print and tv) the same way.
Me:	How do you know when there's an emotional scene?
Class:	(all at once) faces, music, close ups, shots.
S.H:	When you watch it, (on tv) you can't feel the mood. You can only feel the action.
Me:	You mean the emotional impact?
J.L:	You can understand it more.
Me:	Can't you get that in books?
J.L:	Ya, you get the feelings, but it's not as clear.
Me:	What makes the images in movies more emotional?
P.N:	The things they do. The long shots and close ups.
Me:	How?
P.N	'Cause the extreme close-up you can see the person's face; see the all the emotions.

J.S:	Ya, like Platoon, I can't read the book.
Me:	Why?
J.S:	You know, like I'll read the first paragraph and then I can't remember what I read so by the time I finish the book...The movie, when I watched it the first time and seems ok but then I watch it a second time, it's clearer. Like when we watched *The Apprentice*.
J.R:	It's like when you watch a movie and then read the book. They talk about the scene in the book, but in tv they *do*(his emphasis) the scene. The characters and the setting are the same (in the book and tv), but stuff happens, like it's mixed up. This happens, then that happens.
Me:	Why is that?
P.N:	Because everyone has their own image.
J.L:	But isn't it the same author?
P.N:	Not always.
S.H:	In texts, I mean books and all that they have words to create meaning, but in movies they have to use pictures to make it more meaningful.

aud.tp/January 28, 1991/books and tv

The students revealed not only a fairly sophisticated understanding of the differences between print, film and television texts. They also point to considerable metacognitive awareness of their own processing of these texts. Clearly they are more adept at processing visual rather than print texts. An example of the difficulty some of the students have in following sequences in print texts, and how after several viewings, they are able to modify their understanding of visual texts by focusing on the symbols, patterns, changes in location and time is J.S's and J.R's comment,

> J.S: You know, like I'll read the first paragraph and then I can't remember what I read so by the time I finish the book...The movie, when I watched it the first time and seems ok but then I watch it a second time, it's clearer. Like when we watched the Apprentice.

> J.R: It's like when you watch a movie and then read the book. They talk about the scene in the book, but in tv they *do* (his emphasis) the scene. The characters and the setting are the same (in the book and tv), but stuff happens, like it's mixed up. This happens, then that happens.

> **aud.tp**/January 28, 1991/books and tv

n reading visual texts, such as television and movies, the students draw on their previous media experiences to understand the elements in non-print texts by reading the *"faces, music, close ups, shots, the action."*

P.N.'s remark that, "...everyone has their own image" is especially telling about how the ACE students read *The Apprentice*. In *The Apprentice*, they found parallel representations of the main characters and their conflicts, to themselves, including the world in which they function (Britton, 1970). They searched out images in the text which provided them an understanding of the narrative sequences, and which enabled a broader interpretation.

The cartoon characters in the video are neutral and flat. Their main function is to provide the action. As well as the fact that there was no dialogue or voice over, the video does not provide the reader with clues to the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Each scene and change of setting is identified by a fade to black, accompanied by an audio signal, best described as a bong, as if to say, "and then." The students were forced to rely on what Rosenblatt (1968) called "selective attention" to details, looking for clues in the images and actions, that would fill in the gaps, revealing the story's overall plot and thematic structures. In turn the students used the clues to support their interpretation of the narrative.

And it was not only singular images that provided the students clues, but also the juxtaposition of the images assisted them in making separations and links. So for instance, the scene in which the Apprentice falls to the ground, "losing his nose" is juxtaposed with the image of the Teacher

'blowing up a nose". This is reminiscent of Barthes (1957) notion of "hermeneutic codes," as a set

)f cues used to understand the narrative.

In this way, some of the students were able to single out significant themes, as the story developed:

> Me: How does the teacher know to blow up a nose for the Apprentice?
> K.G: Because the teacher went through the same thing. He knows what is going to happen
>   to the student.

<div align="center">and</div>

> Me: Why was the the teacher wearing the tree around his neck?
> P.F: Because the teacher has already been to the tree and knows that the student will
>   knock into it also.
> M.D: Ya Sir, the tree is like the tree of experience or something like that.

<div align="center">**aud.tp**/March 25,1992/apprentice</div>

Here again the students were revealing the literate behaviour of predicting, analysing, and

interpreting their responses in the process of reading *The Apprentice*. There is also evidence in the

above remarks by the three students that they are able to not only identify specific symbols, such as

the nose and the tree, but also to make associations. It is possible that in some instances, such as the

one described above, images and symbols, which are created by juxtaposition of segments, may be

more meaningful for a reader than that created by print. The ACE students had a particular reason

for reading the images: to decode the message(s) in the narrative as well as the cultural codes. Many

of their responses to the codes and symbols in *The Apprentice* stemmed from the specific meanings

conveyed by the codes. In the class discussions of the multiple readings of *The Apprentice*, the

students identified:

- how scenes are linked to each other in relation to the scene before and after (i.e.,

transition/fluidity).

- various motifs or themes.

- specific visual conventions of the medium used to convey meaning, such as fades to black.

- dominant images and their relevance to the major themes in the narrative.

- audio cues and their relationship to the development of the narrative.

- cultural values connoted in the images, such as the flowers laughing.

- symbolic aspects of the images, such as the tree, the nose, the cliff and connected them to

the connotations of the objects.

- how certain groups, such as themselves, can be represented in a text.

The students were quite adept at being able to predict how the story would develop and in constructing their own textual analysis. They retold the story from a contextual and thematic perspective, indicating evidence of ideological and sociological thinking. The data clearly reveal their understanding that reading is a meaning making process.

SCENE TWO: THE OASIS

Transition and Set Up

I eventually wrote an article based on the scene with *The Apprentice*, which was published in the National Film Board's magazine entitled, *Animando to Zea* (Rother, 1992). As well, a revised version was included in a special issue of the *English Quarterly*, Canada's principal English Language Arts journal, on Media Education. I have often stated that the ACE students wrote the article, I merely articulated it for them. .

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Keep in mind that the publication of *The Apprentice* experience was an exciting outcome. For me, it was an acknowledgement of the ACE students' literate behaviour. For the ACE students, it was a sign of public recognition, something that is usually left for "high achievers."

After reading the article in the National Film Board publication, the media center manager for my school board asked if my students would preview a video she was considering buying, titled *The Oasis*. Naturally, I was more than pleased to accommodate the media center manager, although my motivation was selfish. I was anxious to use *The Oasis* for several reasons. I wanted to see if the experience with *The Apprentice* was more than just a fortunate teachable moment. I also wanted to see if the ACE students could apply the knowledge and ideas they had demonstrated in reading *The Apprentice* to other works as well.

The Oasis is a half hour video about a young boy who, in the course of driving through the desert with his parents, embarks on a surrealistic dream to escape his parents' constant arguing. The approach I took reading The *Oasis* with the ACE students was similar to *The Apprentice,* except this time we all had a prior experience to draw on.

The first thing the students noticed was the "letter box" format of the video. Some students had ideas about why the producers used this format. While their notions were technically incorrect, I include the students' ideas here since I think it illustrates their awareness of production techniques, and how audio-visual technology is used to focus a reader/viewers's attention and how specific visual conventions are used to convey meaning:

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* It draws our attention to the center of the screen.
* It's a technical thing, but they left it there for a reason, like to keep our attention on the screen.
* It makes it seem like you're supposed to look at it like a fantasy.

Some of the students thought that the dream like scenes in the video created a "fantasy mood."

M.S: It was like a fantasy; a dream.

E.V: Yeah. His parents were always putting him down. He didn't have any confidence until he *imagined* those people.

Me: So what might be a theme of the story?

J.L: Dreams come true.

M.E: Believe in yourself.

T.P: If you put your mind to it you can overcome obstacles.

Me: What were his obstacles"

E.V: His parents.

Me: what is an oasis?

M.D: It's different for everyone. A place that...something you like to see, like a dream.

As discussed earlier, identification plays a significant role in the ACE students' reading of texts. In *The Apprentice* many identified with the role of apprentices in their work study. I was especially impressed with E.V's understanding of how the Oasis was the boy's means of escaping from his parents. E.V. was a very sensitive and insecure sixteen year old. His reading and writing skills were very weak. In general, he had difficulty with much of the class work, such as following directions and completing tasks independently. Consequently, he often became frustrated and gave up easily. However, it seems that he quickly identified with the boy in the video. His statement in the above passage that "His parents were always putting him down/He didn't have any confidence until he *imagined* those people," makes me feel that E.V is identifying the boy's feelings in the video, with his own. Relevance and identification are an important aspect of the literate behaviour of reading. At this point, I decided to see if the students could employ symbolisation as they did in *The*

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Apprentice.

The story takes place in a desert. A young boy and his parents are travelling across a desert in a car. In the middle of the desert, the boy comes upon an oasis, inhabited by an ordinary looking man and woman. I asked the students what the significance of the oasis was in the story. One student stated, "the oasis is the kid's hope." His family is arguing all the time and in the oasis he has hope. Another student described the oasis as "a home away from home."

Throughout story, the boy is struggling to play a saxophone, something which his father does not support. It is only when the boy meets the man in the oasis, that he learns how to play the saxophone:

> Me: What does the saxophone represent?
> E.V: The boy's best friend.
> M.H: Escaping from his parents.
> P.N: Patience.
> **aud.tp.**/Oct. 1992/oasis

The students noticed that at the end and beginning of each scene, a turtle appeared moving toward or away from the center of screen, or was present throughout the scene.

> Me: Why a turtle?
> J.R: It's a sign post saying welcome to your dream. It was like an entrance or an exit sign.
> K.G: It's his guardian angel.
> M.S: It leads him to peace.
> E.V: Answers to problems come slow and the turtle is slow.
> Me: Why a desert?
> M.H: There are no mirages in cities.
> P.N: And it's a dream.
> E.V: In a desert there is no one to hear him. He can play his saxophone.
> **aud.tp.**/Oct. 1992/oasis

As was the case in *The Apprentice*, some of the students were able in *The Oasis* to exhibit their ability to understand that grammar and syntax of symbols systems mean different things for different people. J.R's remark that the turtle is, "a sign post saying welcome to your dream/It was like an entrance or an exit sign," is a good example of this aspect of literate behaviour.

In the following scene I provide a more detailed example of how their reading of a full length animated cartoon program, in which the students, although unaware, used concepts such as signs, signification, denotation, and connotation to create meaning. The example shows that the ACE students' textual analysis can be considered in the broader discipline called semiotics.

SCENE THREE: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Set Up

I like to incorporate popular culture texts in my teaching for several reasons. First, popular texts are a common experience for students. Spenser (1986) refers to texts such as those found in mainstream television as sites of emergent literacies, which are not available in schools. Second, popular media texts can act as a leveller in the sense it enables students, at varying literacy levels, to be a part of, and indeed, contribute to the learning experience in English Language Arts. Third, it draws from the students' prior experience. Fourth, such texts are for students, reflections of their values, beliefs, knowledge and assumptions. Finally, as Moffett (1968) points out, I see a connection among primary texts and the everyday life experiences of students.

The text, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Epic Begins,* is a full length, seventy-two-minute, animated, video version of what was in the early nineties a popular television series, cartoon program.

Because the students were familiar with the myth behind *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:*, I stopped the video at the end of the opening sequence in order to find out how much prior knowledge the ACE students have of *Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles.* In this excerpt some of the students contrasted the everyday idea of a turtle with the image created in the media of the Ninja culture:

Me:	Do you consider the Turtles monsters?
D.C:	Well Sir, no. Turtles are slow and dull. They look weak.
G.S:	Ya, Ninja's are powerful, fast and slick. They control their bodies. That's why they chose them as good guys. It's not like real turtles.
Me:	What does mutant mean?
D.S:	No, I think mutant means kind of an amphibian or um....
G.S:	I think it means change.
J.B:	(forcefully) Mutant means change or transformation.
Me:	What does Ninja mean?
D.S:	(excitedly) Ninja means a kind of Karate. The most dangerous thing of Karate.

aud.tp/May 6, 1994/ninja

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Epic Begins, was part of an introduction to a "cultural studies" unit I did with my students in 1994 which I do every alternate year as part of the ACE Program. The unit I developed has the following steps:

- an introduction to popular culture

- a discussion of what makes a popular text popular

- a "close reading" of a popular culture text

- a multi-media advertising campaign for a product they have developed

While the students get to develop a popular text of their own, initially I invoke teacher privilege in choosing a text to demonstrate how to do a close reading. I chose *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for several reasons, some academic, others more esoteric. These reasons were:

- early on my two sons were avid viewers of the program and so, in my protectionist role of parent, I sat and watched it with them.

- the programs turned out to be semiotically more advanced than I had anticipated, and I became hooked on their analysis.

- in university courses building up to my dissertation, I became acquainted with the notion of myths and formulas.

The sudden interest in Saturday morning cartoons, mythology and semiotics, triggered an idea of how I might, within the context of the cultural studies unit, introduce the ACE students to basic formulaic patterns, genre, plot, and character, in popular texts.

Reading the Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles

The ACE students' reading of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Epic Begins*, illustrates how, as readers/users of popular texts, they were able to "read" the text at a rather sophisticated level, based on prior knowledge learned in the ACE Program.

Their reading involved analysing the:

- denotative levels of the text.

- connotative levels of the text, including format, genre, narrative closure.

- the ideological structures of the text (McCormick, Waller & Flower, 1992).

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Most of the students had no problem providing a detailed synopsis of the myth behind the Turtles. I assumed their ease in recounting the narrative was due to their familiarity from watching the television program, a "Saturday morning cartoon." Several of the students seemed embarrassed to admit that they indeed had watched the cartoon, and actually enjoyed it. More importantly, one of the students commented that, "all cartoons start the same way. *Ninjas* is like *Robocop*." His comments point to his understanding of the conventions of the text by making specific references to another text that employed the same conventions.

The opening of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:*, lasting approximately five minutes, including theme song, relies heavily on a series of fast moving images. The purpose of the opening sequence is to introduce the viewer to the: 1) overall form of the text; 2) the Turtles' "mythical transformation" from human form; 3) each of the protagonists, including the four Turtles, their mentor, Splinter, a rat, also transformed from a human, and the antagonist, Shredder, who maintains human form; 4) the Turtles, as archetype heroes, journey on a "mythical quest" to find an antidote which will return them and their mentor to human form. In the process, the heroes protect and save themselves and their human friends from succumbing to the powers of their archenemy "Shredder." The remainder of the narrative is a series of redundant episodes dominated by battles between good and evil, characterising the underlying theme of danger and a return to safety, found in similar fantasies.

In some ways, the narrative's formula is reminiscent of the classical myth, in which the main characters' orderly world is upset, leading to a quest which will restore the equilibrium. Even the title prepares us for the narrative. For instance, words like "epic" and "ninjas" can be read as a

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metonym for the narrative's spiritual and mythical theme, based in tradition and history. Similarly, "mutant" adds to the foreboding theme concerning the dangers of nuclear technology.

While the tone of the narrative is, by definition, exaggerated and thus humorous to children and teens, it also brings together certain polar elements (Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Propp, 1968), which I will expand on later. For instance, animal and human, young and old, protagonist and villain, ancient and modern, tradition and technology.

A Comparison of my Close Reading of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the ACE Students'

The Narrative Structure

The narrative's characters, images, themes, events and symbols make it an archetypal myth. Analysing the sequence of events that form the plot -- syntagmatic analysis (Hodge and Tripp, 1986) -- and using Propp's (1968) notations: PR - pursuit, H - struggle and Rs - rescue, I developed the following diagram to illustrate the students' and my comparative analysis of the narrative's overall structure (see Figure 8):

Figure 8
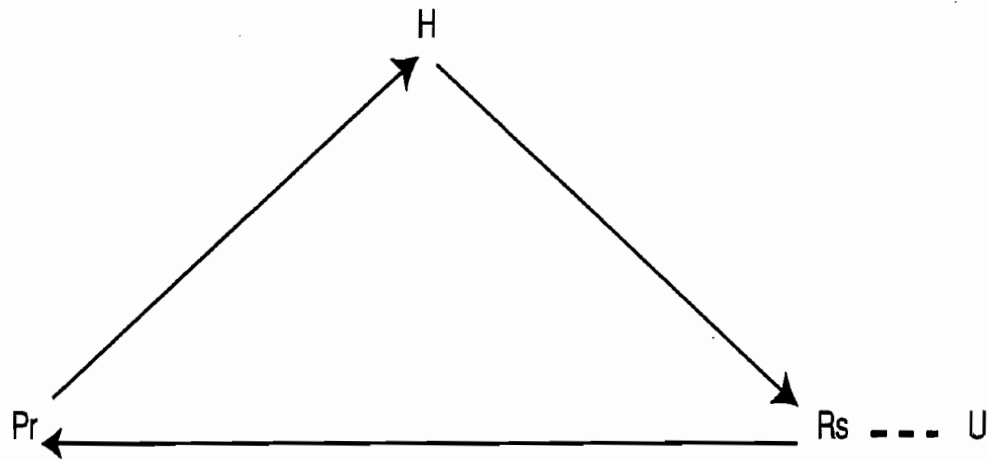
I read the narrative of the video as a series of closed, reoccurring mini-adventures, which advance the story. Each of these follows a pattern of pursuit, followed by a conflict, ending in a rescue by the Turtles. What makes each mini-adventure novel is the introduction of new characters, good and evil. Each mini adventure was in some ways unique, each standing alone, but still part of the overall structure of the narrative. The students' reading of the plot's structure was continuous and open, rather than closed (see Figure 9). In their words, the plot centred on "chase and search" functions instead of pursuit and rescue. Several of the students referred to other programs, both live and animated, which employed the same type of structure, illustrating their awareness of how one text can be understood through the experience of another:

D.C: It's about saving the world.
J.B: Ya, the bad guys want to capture the power of the earth. The action keeps the series going.

aud.tp/May 6, 1994/ninja

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Figure 9

Good Guys

Chase — — — — — — — Battle — — — — — Search — — — U

Bad Guys
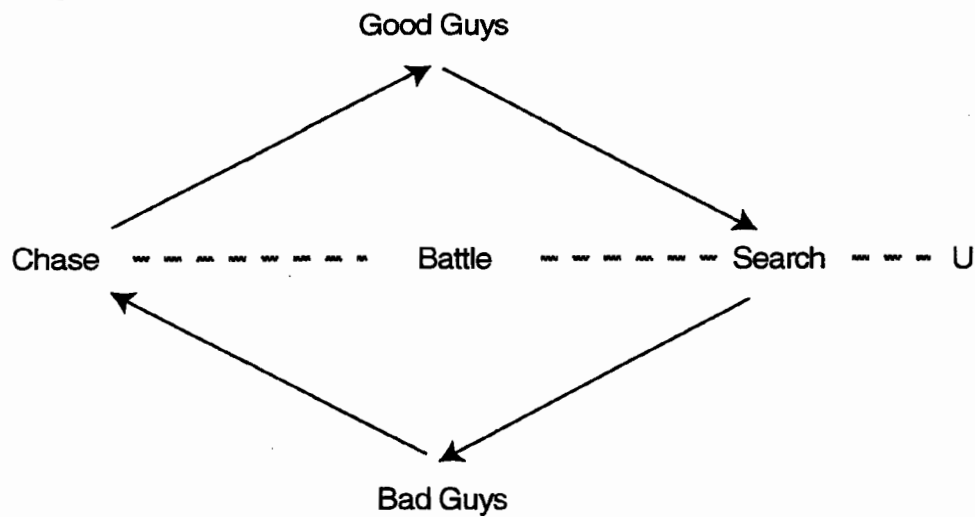
They agreed with me that there was not really a conclusion; that the video was a spin-off, the purpose of which was to extend the television series and the myth. That is, the video was in fact a two-hour commercial, the purpose of which was to entice viewers to watch the weekly version.

Structural Patterns of Oppositions: The Characters

The analysis developed above provided both the plot's structure as well as mapped the pattern of structural oppositions (Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Levis-Strauss, 1976). Fiske and Hartley (1978) described these as vertical sets of opposites. Much of the students' and my analysis of binary, central polar, oppositions were developed from the opening images in the first five minutes of the video.

Using the polar oppositions, central and paired oppositions (Hodge and Tripp, 1986), I developed what I will call the cultural oppositions (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

My Cultural Oppositions

Polar Oppositions	Turtles	Shredder
	nature	culture
	man	technology
	human	animal
Central Oppositions	animal	human
	man	technology
Paired Oppositions	male/female	male
	primary colors	tones
	slang	contemporary
	high pitch	low pitch
	good	evil
	conformists	non-conformists
	romantic	mechanistic

The ACE Students' Cultural Oppositions

Typical of all myths, The Turtles and their villains take on supernatural dimensions. They are both human and animal as products of nature. At the same time they, and the villains, are characterised by their appearance and weaponry, as products of man's technological accomplishments and mismanagement. In Levis-Strauss' (1976) words, the Turtles and their enemies are "segregated outside the natural environment of which [they are] morally as well as physically an inseparable part" (p. 284). As illustrated in Figures 11 and 12, the ACE students' and my analysis of the characters contain similar elements.

Figure 11

Ninja Turtles and Allies	Shredder and Accomplices
hip	normal
male	male
teenagers	older
bright colors	dark colors
good guys	bad guys
defenders	villains

The real difference between my and the students' analysis was not in the construction of the oppositions, but rather in the manner in which the students constructed them. That is, they analysed the characters through their physical, descriptive attributes, as well as roles.

Almost all of the discussion was dominated by the boys in the class. Even when it came to discussing April, the only female character in the narrative, the males referred to her as an "agent of the Turtles." Obviously, the ACE students considered that the video, and the television series, are aimed at a male audience.

Setting

Having explored how the students understood the characters, we turned our attention to the setting of the story.

Me: Why underground?
D.C: If everybody was above ground, it would be like norm. It's like *Beauty and the Beast*.
Me: What's the difference between above ground and below ground?
D.C: Below ground is lower than civilisation. Above ground is everybody is there.

                aud.tp/date

The narrative takes place both above and below ground. The Turtles and their leader, Splinter, reside in a subterranean world, the sewers under the city. According to the students, the Turtles' *"hide-out"* was in the sewer to protect them from their adversaries as well as from man's *"natural habit of disturbing or destroying anything abnormal."* The students also suggested that below ground also makes for *"a better grandstand entry."* The students' analysis of the video is illustrated in Figure 12:

Figure 12

Above Ground   **Below Ground**

heroes return   hidden
danger   protection
evil   safe
life   peace

The students' description of the setting more or less matched my own. It brought to my mind, notions of "dystopia." They actually grasped the idea that the world above ground was in constant turmoil.

As a result of comparing and contrasting my semiotic analysis and that of my students, I now realise how the ACE students' analysis of the video process moved from focusing on the content of the narrative to understanding its structure. I was thus able to get at some of the following complex literate behaviours of these students.

READING AS A RISK TAKING EXPERIENCE

In the first few months of the ACE program, many students are hesitant to join in classroom dialogue. I think this is a coping skill they have developed from their previous class experiences. Using popular texts, as a common experience, has been a great asset in getting them to participate in literary discussions. During the course of discussing the texts, the students were confident enough to provide ideas that they had not fully worked out, but were willing to offer to others in the class to develop. This often manifested itself as seemingly disruptive behaviour. Students called out their thoughts, interrupted one another, etc.

In the process of dialoguing about popular texts, I have learned to regard the ACE students' argumentative and general disorderly behaviour, not as a problem to be stifled, although I must admit it does stretch my patience. Rather, I consider their behaviour as a positive reaction to literacy experiences, rare occurrences for at-risk students, both at home and in school. It is these experiences which recruits students, such as the ACE students, into membership in what Frank Smith (1988) called the 'literacy club'. From their own retelling of the stories of *The Apprentice, The Oasis and The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, it was clear to me that the ACE students:

> * had an understanding of basic narrative structures. I was surprised how well the ACE students were able to relate the video to other television programs and genres, live and animated.
>
> * relied on already learned Media Literacy skills in their attempt to understand the symbolic elements created by the visual and audio codes operating together and separately in the video

message.

* based on the video the students were able to construct a thematic perspective of the cartoon series as a whole.

* developed, from simple narrative elements, complex sets of oppositions.

* recognised how the producers appealed to younger audiences through the non-realistic elements.

READING FOR PLEASURE

It is important to remember that, except for the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,* the choice of texts was not mine, nor the students, but rather the result of requests from my colleagues. Also, the students struggled with their interpretations; not from the sense of correctness according to my standards, but from their own need to make sense of the narratives. This suggests to me that if students are to enjoy literary experiences, they don't necessarily have to "like" the material. Rather, enjoyment comes with being able to find a way of encountering texts which enables all readers to join in the act of reading.

Perhaps Rosenblatt's (1968) idea of readers of texts as 'performers', who derive pleasure in a text merely by making meaning, is a fitting analogy to describe the ACE students' involvement in the readings. Pleasure is an aspect which I believe is often overlooked in classroom encounters with stories/literature. It is thus a dimension of literate behaviour. Medway (1980) believes that it is through the pleasure of a text, rather than lessons about texts, that students may be motivated to engage with reading and writing.

The enthusiasm and assertiveness many of the ACE students demonstrated in the act of reading the videos, is difficult to express in prose. I regret not having video taped the experiences. It seemed to me that at times they got "lost" in reading, interpreting and discussing the texts in the same way that many people get lost reading a book.

I think that their experience with popular texts, such as the *Ninja Turtles,* counters the idea that at-risk students are disinterested in literature. My students learned, as David Lusted (1991) notes, that reading narratives is about picking apart story-telling, our own and that of others, and in the process they found the experience intrinsically rewarding. Making experiences with literature enjoyable is also a vital role of English Language Arts teachers.

The Apprentice, The Oasis and *Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles* scenes illustrate the ACE students' literate behaviour in the act of reading media texts. Their responses to the texts can be judged in much the same way that we judge students' responses to traditional forms of literature in books, in mainstream English Language Arts classrooms.

STORY ELEMENTS

From the data presented, it is clear that the ACE students were aware of the following story elements and their functions in each of the texts discussed:

- characters   - structure
- plot   - symbolisation
- setting   - representation
- mood   - theme

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The students used and compared these elements to interpret and construct their meanings of *The Apprentice, The Oasis* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

THE INTERPRETATION PROCESS

The ability to interpret is as basic to non-print texts as it is to print, and a strong indicator of literate behaviour. For the ACE students, interpretation came about through "purposeful talk" (Barnes, 1992). In the process of interpretation the ACE students asked questions of each other and myself in order to clarify personal ideas. There were few instances when the students disrupted the classroom dialogues by disagreeing with each other. They appreciated each other's contributions to the interpretive development of the narratives.

During the course of reading the texts, they sometimes called out their predictions of what would occur next, as well as implied meanings, not outwardly apparent in the texts. In fact, I was pleased that, for the most part, the students were able to follow the story sequence, something which I found they had difficulty doing in traditional print texts. I was especially impressed by their ability to identify the various structural levels, as in their interpretation of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I think that a lot of this is a result of their keen engagement with the texts.

<div align="center">

EPISODE TWO

THE LITERATE BEHAVIOUR OF WRITING

</div>

Thus far, I have focused the discussion of the ACE students' literate behaviour in the process of "reading." That is, making meaning, through the language of audio-visual media texts. As well, I

lave attempted to make links to what we, as English Language Arts teachers, require of students when they are asked to make sense of more traditional literary texts.

But textual analysis is only one side of the same coin. Many media educators/theorists (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Masterman, 1985) have argued that practical work, also referred to as production, is vital to learning about the media. Borrowing from *The Media Files* (Emery, et al., 1995), as well as from Buckingham (1994), I see "writing media" as an active and discursive social construction of texts for real and imagined audiences.

I considered the ACE students' media productions as extensions of writing in the traditional sense. So for instance, once the students complete their treatments, storyboards and scripts, I provide them with a video camera and ask them to "write their essays" rather than "shoot their productions." Having shot their raw footage, the students then "edit and revise and/or expand" their productions, much like we ask students to do with their print essays. As you read through Episode Two, you will note how the ACE students approach their media projects - writing, drafting, editing, talking, in similar fashion to the way students approach writing print in an English language Arts classroom.

In Episode Two, I describe the students' literate behaviour as it is manifested in their productions. I will describe how, "doing" media projects provided them with opportunities to use language skills in realistic ways - planning, organising, revising, editing, and in ways we traditionally consider oral and written development - rehearsing, drafting, revisioning, publishing.

SCENE ONE

MARKETING A POPULAR CULTURE PRODUCT: A SIMULATION

IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Marketing A Popular Culture Product: A Simulation in Entrepreneurship, was a multi-media, cross curricular project. In groups of three or four, ACE students were required to develop a popular culture product, adapted from something in existence or something new, aimed at a specific audience. Group members assumed one of the following roles: media producers, researchers, text editors, video editors, artists, talent. The students were provided with a "fictional" amount of money, as a working budget from which to finance the development of a prototype, packaging and a multi-media advertising campaign, such as television, radio and print, for their product.

THE ACE STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF MEDIA LANGUAGE

AND CONCEPTS

In this section I will describe the students' knowledge of specific aspects of media industries, including advertising, audience research, economics, and the processes by which media and popular culture products are produced and distributed. As well, I will provide examples of their awareness of the form and conventions associated with media texts produced by media industries.

Advertising

Part of the Marketing Project required the students to produce a print such as a newspaper or

magazine ad, or a 30 second television and radio commercial. I started the advertising section of the

project by reviewing the communication model. The model I presented to the students is described

in the *Quebec Ministry of Education Curriculum Guide* (Ministere de l'Education, 1985) as,

> a set of relationships among a sender, a receiver, and a message, bound by a purpose; all
> communication should involve feedback, where the receiver of the message becomes the
> sender of information to indicate whether or not the message has been received and
> understood (p. 3).

What follows are audio excerpts which evolved from the students' discussion of the communication

model:

S.H:	Communication is about getting a message across.
Me:	Right, communication is also about sharing ideas.
J.N:	Ya, passing on information, but you've got to be able to understand the information.
M.D:	Ya, what's the use of receiving information if you don't understand it? You have to be able to take some kind of action.

aud.tp/October9, 1993/comm model

J.N. and M.D. demonstrated their knowledge of the communication model, as a set of relations

among sender, receiver and message (Moffett and Wagner, 1976), as well as a "sense of audience."

This is illustrated in their comments that, "you got to be able to understand the information" and

"what's the use of receiving information if you don't understand it? You have to be able to take

some kind of action." M.D was aware that in order to be sure that a message not only reached the

intended audience, but also that the audience understood it, required some sort of action. That is,

M.D. realised that if the advertisement was successful, it meant that those who saw it purchased the

product advertised. Without knowing it, M.D was referring to the formula known in the advertising

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ndustry as AIDA: *attention, interest, desire and action.* Action here refers to the purchase of a

)roduct, or in the case of a public service announcement, acceptance of an idea.

Having presented the model, the students participate in several activities focusing on how

advertisements are developed for specific audiences.

Me:	How do advertisers create appeal?
J.L:	They attract us. They use tricks to create a desire.
Me:	Like fantasy. Can you give me some examples?
M.H:	Like *Bounty* and the desert island
Me:	How about promises?
P.F:	*Weight watchers.*
Me:	Sex.
E.V:	Good looking guys and girls. *Club Med* have that.
Me:	Health.
J.S:	*Participation*
Me:	Acceptance.
K.B:	Clearasil.

aud.tp/January 2,1993/advertisements

In the above exchange, the students were able to display the literate behaviour of constructing

subjective meanings based on their prior knowledge. In this example, they linked their previous

social and cultural knowledge of stereotypical images of the ideal man and woman, with an

awareness of how advertisements use words and images to play into the desire to live up to theses

images.

Since this was an initial introduction to advertising appeals, and I had not previously provided

examples or models, I was surprised by how quickly the students were able to make the connections

among specific advertising appeals and specific products. For instance, the students were quick to

make the connection that the Weight Watchers advertisement appealed to the notion of making

promises. I think this illustrates their understanding of how media language takes advantages of connotations.

Also, the students were aware of the notion of agency in advertising -- the idea that there are individuals behind the advertisements whose motivation is to manipulate a viewer.

While activities, such as the one described above, provided the students with an awareness of how advertisers reach an audience, it was during producing their own commercials that they began to understand the importance of making a message clear to the audience. Actual hands-on experiences using various media technology available in the ACE Program - video cameras, video toaster, audio mixer - demystified for them how media can be used to attract an audience to a product.

One group of boys created a thirty-second television commercial for their board game, *GODZ and DEMONS* appropriated from *Dungeons and Dragons*. According to these students, the appeals they used were:

> Fantasy: We are in the past with knights and dragons and demons.
> Power: The game is about power, who will be the strongest to win the war.
>   **stu.art/**Jan.28,1993

I was really excited about the depth of involvement this group of students displayed in creating the commercial for *GODZ and DEMONS*. The day of their shooting they unexpectedly came to school with various costumes and props, some borrowed from the school's drama department and some which they themselves created (see Figures 13, 14, 15).

Figure 13

Figure 14
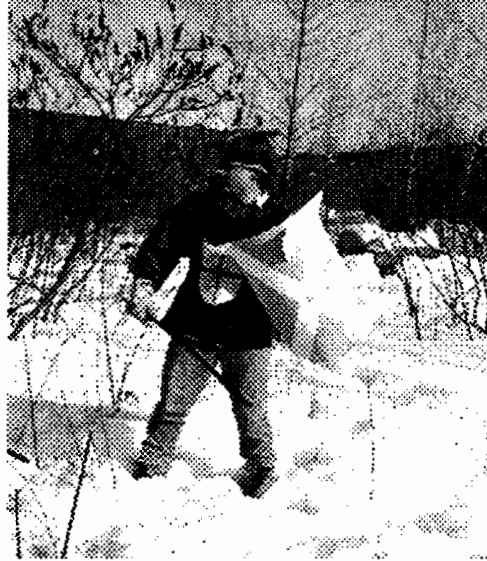
Figure 15

Indeed, the boys' commercial was much more than a pitch for their product. It was a story which they themselves conceived and which they communicated through drama. Drama is something which is a natural part of media production, but something which I think is often overlooked in high school Media Education programs. This is somewhat ironic, since drama involves turning ideas into spoken words and actions. Engaging in drama enabled the boys who produced *GODZ and DEMONS* for their media project, to use language for an authentic purpose. They wrote for a real

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audience, in this instance myself, their classmates and a target audience for their board game. It also developed their understanding of how language can be used in various forms and functions. That is, the transactional, poetic, expressive (Britton, 1970). It also provided the students with an opportunity for developing collaborative skills as well as learning about plot and characterisation.

Interestingly, some of the boys who developed *GODZ and DEMONS* seldom openly volunteered to participate in classroom dialogue or in writing activities. I have often thought that such students possess poor self concept and lack confidence, and so choose to become invisible in class through non-participation. And yet, here they were engrossed in parody, speech, expression and role play, the opposite of non-participation.

One aspect of all of the students' work which may not be apparent here, is that they produced many drafts of their work, according to my and their discussions - revising, editing and revising again. Perhaps most significant was that they rarely complained about having to revise their work. In fact, many of them took pride in the number of drafts they produced. Indeed, I think that they felt a sense of accomplishment. I think this in itself is significant when we consider that writing was something that most of the ACE students greatly disliked, and in some cases feared.

Teaching about Audiences and Media Consumption Habits

Teaching about audiences provides students with knowledge about the influences and impact of media on individuals and society as a whole. ACE media projects requires the students to conduct audience research. This includes investigating audiences' media preferences, consumption habits,

rogram scheduling, censorship, product placement, ratings and the relationship of these to the economics of media industries.

I was not surprised by the students' knowledge of the various local radio stations and their audiences. Nor was I surprised that their preferences of musical genres ranged from heavy metal to western to classical music. However, I did not expect that some of them were aware of such a diversity of radio stations. In fact, in researching the cost of advertising on the radio, part of the requirements of the multi-media advertising campaign, J.S. telephoned, and spoke to the station manager of *Vermont Public Radio*. Another radio station which I did not expect the students to have knowledge of, or an interest in was McGill University's radio station, CKUT. Yet some of the students decided to place their ads on CKUT because they thought that their products might appeal to the "college crowd."

From time to time I asked the students to put into practical application, what they had learned in their projects. This could be in the form of a letter. T.P.'s letter below, demonstrated her knowledge of the type of music that the station played and what it did not play. More importantly, she indicated an awareness of some of the potential pitfalls and benefits of appealing to a wider audience:

> Dear CHOM:
>
> I would like to congratulate you on you a very good radio station. I decided to write to you to give you a couple of suggestions to make your station better. I know quite a few people that listen to CHOM and like it very much. But in a way you are catering to one group of people. A lot of your listeners are teenagers and a lot of teens listen to heavy metal music. I've noticed that your radio station doesn't play any heavy metal.

A lot more people would tune in if that sort of music was played. I know that you would lose some listeners but you would gain more than you would lost. Please take this into consideration.

Thank you for your time.

> Yours Truly,
> a dedicated CHOM listener,
> T.P

stu.art/Feb.22,1993

The following description of one group's marketing project illustrate the ACE students' knowledge of pitching a product to a specific target audience:

Docsy Cool Dude

> We are using as a Cabbage Patch Kid, and turning it into a skin head doll. Our doll will be wearing: a peace sign, Doc shoes, bush jacket, earing going from ear to the nose, tatoo, ripped jeans, a lot of chains. The doll is about 1 foot high.

stu.art/Feb.20,1993

As pointed out previously, the students' description of the doll demonstrated their literate behaviour of connecting their previous social and cultural knowledge with specific text, conventions, genre of media products. They also demonstrated that particular products are developed with very specific demographic information in mind (i.e., gender, socio-economic status and age). It seems that they have also taken into account the amount that parents would be willing to pay for their product:

> Our doll is aimed at ages 8 and up. It is for both male and female [sic], and it is for lower class and middle class. Our doll will cost $34.99 + tax.
> **stu.art**/Feb.20,1993

Since we had studied demographics related to audience research in previous projects, I was pleased to see that the students had transferred their knowledge to this project as well. I was especially

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pleased that this particular group had also recognised the psychology involved in reaching their target audience. This is an issue we had talked about, but which I did not sense had really sunk in. Indeed I am not sure that I really made an effort to emphasise the "psychological aspects" of audience research. Why didn't I? Is it possible that I assumed that none of the ACE students were capable of understanding such concepts? If I did, it was a reminder to me that I still possessed some of my own prejudices about the abilities of at-risk students. In any event, the students' description of their target audience's psychology, proved once again that I had underestimated their literate abilities, in this case around complex issues related to media industries, including marketing and distribution:

> Our doll will be popular for many reasons. A lot of younger kids want to be like older sisters or brothers or even teenagers they see on the street. They want to be older. Basically they look up to skin heads, so they would want this doll, it is an image of them. It's like their sign, their identity.
>
> **stu.art/**Feb.20,1993

The students here recognised the process of identification, and the importance of representation in social differentiation and cultural identity. The analysis of the target audience and their motives for wanting the doll are quite sophisticated for so-called at-risk students. The articulation of the analysis is remarkably coherent and persuasive. Also, I would like to think that their reference to the term "sign," is a consequence of the textual analysis work (i.e., denotation/connotation), done previously.

The Economics of Media Industries

M.D, T.P, W.A. and W.L comprised a very "active" group. M.D. and T.P were especially vocal and opinionated. They were also very productive. Their idea for a Popular Culture Product was "Musical Carpets" which, when stepped on played the music of different groups. These students

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ıroduced prototypes of two of their favorite rock groups, *Guns n Roses* and *The Exploited.*

Another requirement of the Marketing Project is the development of a business plan, including budget, showing expected expenditures for such things as producing a prototype, packaging, advertising on television, radio and print media, as well as profit margins. The students' discussion below illustrates their awareness of the economic determinants of the media industry.

M.D:	O.K, three times a day....
T.P:	M. we don't have enough money for three times a day!
M.D:	(emphatically) Yes we do! O.K...(figuring costs) It's costing...87...7...95
W.L:	So we don't have so much.
M.D:	Yes we do. We cut it out of our profit. Where's our profit taker?
W.L:	W. are you getting this down?
M.D:	We have $60,000 profit, so we'll take out $20,000.
T.P:	O.K. M. I'm going to copy this all over again.
M.D:	(ignoring T.P.) O.K. we take out $21,000.
T.P:	How much do we have left?
W.L:	I hate money!
M.D:	O.K. $22,000... we have $66,000 plus $22,000 equals (figuring on calculator)... 03588.

aud.tp/Feb.3,1993/marketcarpet

In reviewing the audio tape, I was surprised how immersed the students became in their projects. In their regular math class, many of the ACE students, including most in this group, show little interest in the contextless expectations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division or even of simulated problems in their textbooks. However, the above exchange continued for at least an hour during which time there was a considerable amount of calculations, in particular by M.D. The dialogue also ranged to:

- needed capital for producing the carpets and marketing.

- the cost of advertising three times per day, for three weeks on television and radio, during

prime time on *Music Plus and YTV* .

- the cost of advertising in magazines and comparisons of texts among different media.

- comparisons of the costs in order to scrutinize which medium to advertise in.

Indeed, the students became so involved in their "financial" discussions that they ignored the bell

at the end of class, a rare occurrence.

Another anecdote involving M.D and those in his group, which is both significant and humorous,

occurred toward the end of this project. In conducting market research for the *Musical Carpet* , the

ACE designers telephoned a well known record distributor to see whether they might be interested

in their product. Unfortunately, I did not have the foresight to have an audio recorder on hand, and

have provided an abbreviated account of the telephone conversation from my reflective journal and

M.D's recollection:

M.D:	(anxiously) My name is M.D. I represent (each group was referred to by a factious company name, which the students invented) .... We have a prototype of a product you may be interested in. (M.D. went on to describe their product).
Distributor:	That sounds interesting. Why don't you meet with us and we can discuss it further.
M.D:	(extreme nervousness) Look we're just a bunch of high school students! (hangs up).

RJ/Feb.20,1993/marketcarpet

What is significant is what followed immediately after the above telephone exchange. The students

involved were at first unsure what to make of the conversation - was the man on the other end of the

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hone serious about wanting to see their product, or was he being condescending? Back in the classroom, I recalled some of the group members jokingly scolding M.D. for not taking the man's offer to bring the Musical Carpet to his office for consideration. The broader outcome of this event was that the students realised that their ideas had merit. It provided them with a temporary "ego boost." It seemed to me that the positive experience transferred into subsequent projects. Furthermore, it illustrates an important point about their literate behaviour and their abilities as communicators. Part of the success of the telephone conversation lay in the students' effective articulation of the nature of their product to the company representative. As teachers we often compliment students on a text they have written - a story, a composition, an essay. In a similar way, the man's offer to see the carpet was to the students like having someone compliment their text.

SCENE TWO

A SOCIO-CULTURAL MEDIA EDUCATION PROJECT: GENDER AND MINORITY GROUPS IN THE MEDIA, THE WORKPLACE AND SOCIETY

The Images of Gender and Minority Groups in the Media and the Workplace Project was an attempt to have the students conduct socio-cultural research. The actual project was the culmination of two weeks of dialoguing, reading, viewing and writing about the media's construction of men and women, and minority groups.

explained to the students that there were several aims for the project. These were to: 1) compare/contrast the media's images as we discussed in class, 2) explore their own question about gender or minority groups, 3) get to know themselves better. I explained that they were to work in teams and that each team was to develop its own question based on either gender or minority issues related to the images created.

The Report: Purpose, Audience, Conventions

The teams presented a written dossier to me. The dossiers contained: a title page, an introduction telling people what they wanted to investigate, a copy of a questionnaire, a copy of the results of the questionnaire presented in table or graph form, an analysis and explanation of the results. Each team wrote a synthesis of the important information they discovered from the raw data into a written text. Thank you letters to people interviewed were also included. Some students included a video tape of their interviews and/or a mini documentary of their project. Evaluation was based on the dossier, a written synthesis using the data they collected, an oral presentation and team work.

The project conducted by M.E., J.F., C.A., and P.M. was an example of a Gender Project. They described their focus for investigation this way:

> In our group we will find out about which jobs women are most rejected from and the reasons for that. We will interview three people, preferably company bosses in an executive position. We will also ask women workers their good and bad points and what they are.
> **stu.art**/January 7, 1994/gender

Their project included several types of writing, aimed at different audiences, word processing, charts and statistics. I think this is a good example of what Britton (1970) was referring to when he spoke

if using different forms of writing, for different audiences, and which I see as an indication of the students' literate behaviour. Furthermore, many students were able to demonstrate a considerable competence in attending to conventions of print discourse: form, paragraphing and sentence structure, surface features of the language.

While many of the students have wide knowledge and opinions on how race and gender are represented in the media, in general they are not forthcoming in discussions that take place in a classroom setting. The outcome of the media projects, in which the students explore these two topics, had a tendency to motivate them to voice their opinions in both informal discussions with peers, and in formal discussions in the class, as expressed in their comments below:

> Before I did not even think of gender or minorities. I knew there were, but I did not really look at it the way I do now. I still don't really understand gender, but I really understand minorities. I see them everywhere like at school, workplace, and where I hang out. Doing our minority project Jason and I have discovered a lot of little things that people usually see.

> Like sexism, I didn't know much about it, but I did a project on it so now...I interviewed doctors and stuff and getting opinions from everybody else, so like I involved my school related activities.

> **stu.art/**January 16,1994/gender/minorities

> I did learn quite a bit, and having to do a project on Gender helped me understand the importance of understanding the problems of Gender and Minorities in our society. I've become more aware so now I tell others. I also did like the presentation that I did at McGill University.

> **stu.art/**January 16, 1994/gender/minorities

Comments such as the ones above illustrate many of the ACE students' literate behaviour of an

awareness of the social, cultural and ideological issues in the media they consume, after working on

projects. At the end of the Gender and Minorities Project, one student wrote in her journal:

> I find that I have become aware of gender and minority issues. Whenever people start talking
> about such things I get antsy, and speak my mind.
> **stu.art**/June 6,1994/gender/minorities

Another girl wrote:

> I find that women in television and movies are stereotyped (and have lot of sexism). To
> prove this theory in the past I have done projects surveys, and interviews. The facts that I got
> was that a lot of men think that women should stay home barefoot and pregnant. Others have
> said that women should not be in high authority because they are too soft, weak or too
> understanding to take anything seriously. I find myself that there are now more women in
> authority but still not enough.
>
> Watching television, movies and rock videos have got my family and I into a lot of
> arguments. It could have been over the easiest, agreeable issue, but they just don't
> understand. Take for instance sexism or such, that isn't clearly visible unless you have an
> open mind about issues like these.
> **stu.art**/June 6,1994/gender/minorities

The student's remark, that "sexism isn't clearly visible unless you have an open mind" is interesting.

She realised that she was constructing her own, subjective meanings of the images she was viewing.

I think this is, in part the result of what she learned from a practical exercise we did in class in which

the students are asked to consider the "hidden messages" in magazine ads. As a follow up, using the

same magazine advertisement, the students produced an "oppositional" text (Fiske, 1982).

ACE Student Learning from Media Projects

Outcomes of the ACE students' learning resulting from the media projects was not always immediate. Perhaps some of the most personally satisfying comments I get from my students are in letters from graduates of the program:

> And when I was thier we did a hell of a lot of papers on t.v. and the media. Its good in a way because now when I watch an ad on t.v. I break it down in my head.

> and

> I see things much differently since I've worked with the media, and I've only learned a little. I seem to have learned very much. With books and magazines I get to reading articals, and now I pick up more than I would normally have. In t.v. and movies some parts in the shots they take, and I critic them and think of what kind of shot I would have tooken.
> > **stu.art**/June 6, 1991/letter

Sometimes, this new awareness can lead to awkward situations in the homes of ACE students'. Parents have told me that their once, uncommunicative son/daughters, are constantly commenting on what they are watching, sometimes making family viewing difficult, as expressed by one of the students:

> I have arguments with my little brother and my mother about almost all the t.v. shows because single and career women are the big thing in the nineties (Grace Under Fire). me and my brother always argue about that show and also (Murphy Brown). Single mothers in the workforce is the new thing in the 90s. I always win the battle about these topics because I learned a lot about them.
> > **stu.art**/June 6,1991/families

Another student wrote:

> ... Covert commercials are the biggest hotest issue in my house. I can't watch anything without noticing a covert commercial. It gets on my parents nervs, so they can't say I don't listen and learn.
> > **stu.art**/June 6, 1991/families

One student seemed to have a solution to keeping peace in her family:

> Me and my family we don't usually discuss or argue. My parents got there t.v and I got mine, so we can't really argue.
>
> **stu.art**/June 6,1991/families

Developing Conceptual Behaviours

An important element of literate behaviour is the ability to form bridges among one's prior knowledge into new areas of understanding in the process of reading and/or writing a media text. In the comment below, the student made reference to her awareness that she had heard certain words in what she was viewing on television, and as a result of the media projects, had come to realise their meaning and how they relate to his understanding of gender issues.

> It all changed when we started all the projects. I started to hear more words on t.v. that we used in class and I would of never known these words or understood the meaning of the topic. I noticed more and more as I went along every project that I learned more and more. Gender and minorities is a problem but still I learned a lot.
>
> **stu.art**/June 6, 1991/endof yearjournal

Being aware of and being able to use specific visual conventions, such as camera shots, angles, and movement to convey meaning is an important aspect of the Literate Behaviour of Writing. I am always delighted when a student comes to class and transfers these conventions, learned in practical media exercises, to something s/he noticed on a television program and/or movie, and incorporates these into their media productions. I think this is because, I enjoy watching them discover these concepts on their own, as they operate the equipment. I am impressed by how readily the students adopt and use technical skills and language of media production. I think the students were just as pleased with their newly acquired knowledge of media production:

> Before I started media production I just questioned some of it like why they did it or why they did it this way. And now after taking the media course I can understand. Like in movies, it can be an action or romance, whatever. Like how different shots can change the mood of things. Like a close-up or long shot make it seem like different feelings. I practiced angle shots, you get to understand how it works and how they do that. Ya, like I know how to do that or I'd like to know how to do that.
>
> **stu.art/**June 6, 1991/endof yearjournal

Media production work seemed to interact with many of the students' more traditional literacy skills, strengthening each other reflexively. For some students this meant increasing their efforts to advance their writing skills. Many began to be more conscious of different writing techniques. Working with the video cameras gave students different points of view, not only about the media and/or social issues, but also about ways of learning. Some saw that improved writing skills were necessary to produce better videos. Creating storyboards helped these students conceptualise their ideas, so that their writing was better organised and clearer. Knowing that there was an audience, besides a teacher, made writing a more purposeful activity. On many occasions, students sought my, and/or their classmates, advice on how best to word a sentence so that it was clearer, or how to be more economical with their words. Comments such as those below, illustrate that not only did print become less of a threat for many ACE students, but also some of them realised that media technology and media production provided an avenue for expression of ideas.

> With the video cameras I've noticed that you can still get your skills done, but from a different perspective. Instead of worrying about spelling and punctuation you can do your work visually and vocaly.
>
> **stu.art/**May 12, 1993endof yearjournal

> I know that I'm the type of person who can't sit in a class room and take notes. I can't just research from the book to paper, writing it down, putting it in my own words, typing it up and handing it in. It's not me. What I like doing is going out and researching it. Interviewing people. Finding out exactly what I want to find out.
>
> **aud.tp/**1992/endofyearjournal

Realising that there are different ways of learning also meant for some of the students that they

actually could learn. The media projects enabled many of them to achieve success, and in turn,

developed their self-confidence and willingness to learn.

Growth and Improved Attitudes Toward Writing and Reading

> Well you understand what when you come back with your project you can say, hey I know
> this is what I learnt. I'm not just saying it, I'm showing it, I'm improving it to you. These
> are the people I interviewed, this is what I found out. It even shows how the project is made
> from beginning the project all the way to when its finished. And it's done not to the
> teacher's satisfaction. It's a good feeling handing in something like that. I did this, I'm
> proud of it. It also shows that somebody has the initiative to get off their butts. And why
> can't I?
>
> **stu.art./**June 6,1992/endof yearjournal

The media projects presented the students with real life, relevant problems. During the course of

working on the media projects, they took many risks - an ironic twist for students considered

'at-risk'.

Handling the technology, whether it was a video camera, the video toaster or a computer meant, for

some students, taking a risk. Using technology engrossed many of the ACE students so that they

were less hesitant to engage in new skills, academic and interpersonal. They appeared to feel that

the technology was less judgmental than a teacher might be:

> I love using all kinds of technology. I love what is in the future, maybe that is why. When
> we work on the computers the day goes by so fast.
>
> **stu.art./**June 6,1992/endof yearjournal

Besides the technical skills the students were experiencing, the students developed self-confidence,

something which few had ever experienced in the past. This for me was one of the most exciting

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aspects of observing them as they worked on the media projects. The students' improved self-confidence was evident in three areas: 1) their approach and attitudes toward writing, 2) working collaboratively with class mates, and 3) dealing with the public.

One of the things I noticed was an increasing willingness on the part of the students to take the risk of having someone else read their work. For already fragile egos, voluntarily asking for, and then accepting criticism from a teacher and/or peers was, for many an uneasy experience. In fact, the students willingly edited their work, rather than having to be coerced into doing so. Rarely did any of them balk at being asked to edit the same work several times. They recognised the importance of rewrites and revision.

Why are the students willing to take such risks with their writing, actions, something most would not have done prior to working on the media projects? Part of the answer may have been in their awareness that there was an audience for their writing, beyond a teacher. This realisation made the activity more purposeful. A student wrote in her journal:

> I myself have found that by being exposed to the video camera and computers that my writing skills are more expressive and to the point. I really find that using these methods of computers, cameras and so on have been an enjoyable and educational experience. With these writing skills, I am sure that it will help me in the future, towards getting a good job.

> I've changed as a writer since using the camera or computer because I write more than I used to. I used to write about 75 words but now I write close to 200 words depending on the subject. I know that when I use a computer I write better. I don't know why, but I just do.

> **stu.art/**June 16,1992/endof yearjournal

Many of the ACE students' attitudes towards reading also developed positively.

Me: Do you think doing the projects, using the cameras and other equipment had any

affect on your reading and writing skills?

H.J: Doing the projects I had to research so I had to read more. I write a bit faster. Now I take notes. It used to take me two days. Now I write more?

Me: Why do you think that is so?

H.J: Well, it's because I know more about the subject. Like if some one had asked me about men in t.v. I would have sat there and said "huh." Now I know more about the subject and ideas, ideas pop into my head like movies we've watched which emphasise men and women in the workplace and that helps me.

aud.tp/may 12,1993/projects

Collaboration

For many students working in a group was a fairly new experience. Unfortunately, and ironically, at-risk students are not often given opportunities to work collaboratively. This is part of the stereotyped image of at-risk students, that they have difficulty working cooperatively.

Having the confidence to share what one has written and/or produced leads to shared and collaborative writing and thus students are best able to develop their literate behaviour of writing. Many ACE students realised the advantage that group work had in developing their literacy and their work.

Working in a group was something I have had a lot of trouble adapting to. At the beginning of this year many people adapted to this way of working faster than I did. The disadvantage was sharing ideas, and I'm still not used to that. I was tought to work on my own with little teacher supervision. But the advantage of working in a group is that others will find your mistake 90% of the time, so no mistakes are made on the final draft of your work. You can also get better ideas by working with others. I remember one day a group member got a good idea and that did help our project.

stu.art/June 6, 1991/endofyearjournal

There were times when the students experienced feelings of frustration and disappointment. The media projects required organisation, team work, which resulted in some interesting lessons about

what it means to work collaboratively and what it means to be a friend.

> My view is that we had a bit of trouble following procedures correctly, but overall, our work was accomplished. Some of the trouble's I found we had was that people who I was working with would not do the work and some of them didn't even go with us to the pool hall. I also found that I was doing my part plus the parts of my fellow woker's so I was constantly working.
>
> **stu.art**/March 15, 1994/projectjournal

The student journal entries that follow illustrate W.L's perspective on how her group performed over

a three day period. The young lady who wrote this series of journals conveyed a good grasp of how

different members were feeling about the project as well as about each other. She was also able to

assess which students were actually pulling their weight. Furthermore, she suggested roles which

best suited some of the group members.

> I feel that the project is not moving along as fast as it could. Everyone seems to like the project. But if we do not work on it will not get done by itself. Tarra is often getting into arguments since Yohan is back. I think Kevin should be aloud working on the camera because he seems to like it and understand it even if does not pass the test some people are not good at tests.
>
> **stu.art**/March 15, 1994/projectjournal

> Tomorrow Joey, Whip and Mat are going to the (television) station and they are painting the logo. Now Mat is working because it is fun. Jason is so tired of doing all the work, he thinks Mike should be helping more and concentrating on his part of the project. The people that have to work on the computers and cameras are the ones that are working and Jason the director is doing a very good job. Jason is always working non stop. The boring part of working in a group is when your partner is not doing there share of the project.
>
> **stu.art**/March 15, 1994/projectjournal

> Everyone is working so well. It is quiet without Mat. Jason is getting frustrated Mike is not working much. Mike should forget the teachers and concentrate on helping Jason. Everyone did not take this project serious at the beginning so they are rushing at the end.
>
> **stu.art**/March 17, 1994/projectjournal

In describing her group members' performance, another student was willing to risk letting me know

what my role should be as well:

> The group has a lot of imagination. They work well but Yohan think to highly of himself
> and he has no right to boss the others. Mat, Eric, Joey and Whip do more individual work
> than group work but they are working well. Bruce understands his work he is very well
> concentrated Mr. Rother is always to busy and Patty is trying to finish her part but I think
> Mr. Rother should concentrating on his part in the project instead of doing the directors job.
> **stu.art**/March 10, 1994/projectjournal

For others, collaboration was a totally worthwhile experience:

> The positive thing that I found worked well was that we were well organised, we had
> everything planned out on what our roll's were. The work wasn't that hard of an assignment
> to complete because we all worked together equally. the project was fun to do and we got
> to investigate the arcade from a different perspective.
> **stu.art**/March 10, 1994/projectjournal

Excerpts from journals revealed a willingness by many ACE students to express opinions and

feelings about daily events as well as the overall project progression. Many times in the course of

a project, students went through a process of resisting a group member's ideas, negotiating, and then

consenting to a collective agreement. For some students offering solutions to problems was a form

of risk taking. Experiencing participatory decision making processes, enabled many of them to learn

conceptual, technical and academic skills. But it also taught them a great deal about themselves

through interactions with their classmates. Indeed, merely voicing their fears and concerns, both in

their journals, to each other and to me, constituted risk taking.

The journal entries in this section also reflect the persistence and self discipline of some of the

students, who were determined to carry through with the projects. Some of them took the risk of

volunteering for responsibilities that they were not always confident they could accomplish so that

he projects could be completed successfully. The journals here reinforce my view that, contrary to what many educators believe, at-risk students, such as those in the ACE Program, really are interested in achieving academically, their own learning and do not want to drop out.

The Literate Behaviour of Public Expression

Earlier, I wrote that initially many of my students do not join in on class discussions and, metaphorically speaking, appear mute. They are afraid to take risks for fear of opening themselves up to criticism and/or ridicule, something many of them have unfortunately experienced often over the course of their school careers. Once they are well into the ACE Program, much of this reticence disappears. In fact they not only develop the confidence to speak out among themselves, they also develop the confidence to express themselves to broader audiences. I think it is important to emphasise that at-risk students are rarely, if ever, given the opportunity to present to others what they have learned and/or what they already know. On a number of occasions, the ACE students participated in large public events which required them to explain, discuss, and spontaneously respond to questions and/or debate issues. One of the first of these occasions was *The McGill Media Fair*, at which ACE students were among other high school students from across Quebec, who presented their media projects. Following the *Media Fair,* one of the ACE students wrote in his journal:

> I did learn quite a bit, and having to do a project on Gender helped me understand the importance of understanding the problems of Gender and Minorities in our society. I've become more aware so now I tell others. I also did like the presentation that I did at McGill University.

> **stu.art/**June 6,1991/gender/minorities

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The second opportunity for the students to be involved in a public event was an all day workshop presented at McGill by David Buckingham, a leading teacher, theoretician and researcher in the field of Media Education. Again, the audience consisted of teachers and students from across Quebec. The topic was violence in the media. The ACE students were among many mainstream high school students who risked sharing their personal beliefs and concerns (see Figure 16 and 17).

Figure 16
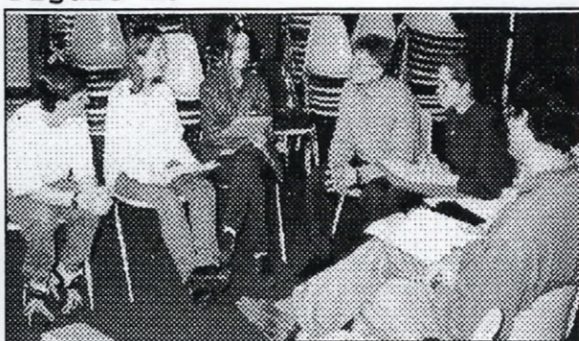
Figure 17

Public occasions, such as these gave the ACE students the opportunity to test out what they had learned about the media in the ACE Program. For example, a few of the students remarked that they thought it was "neat" to use and hear media vocabulary related to analysis and production they learned in class, outside of the classroom setting, in a public forum.

One such instance occurred when the students presented their script, set design and format ideas to the managing director of the *Cf Cable* community channel. Over the last several years, students in the ACE Program have produced three such programs, each focusing on cooperative education programs. The experience of being at the television studio, in the studio board room, would have been overwhelming enough for many students. Having to provide arguments, as well as express

opinions and ideas about how the broadcast should develop, only increased their uneasiness. Still, they managed to convey their plans in a professional and articulate manner. Similar examples occurred when guest speakers, who worked in the media industry, spoke or gave workshops to the class.

As I have indicated elsewhere, one of the dominant assumptions about at-risk students is that they will most likely have poor self concepts. The examples above suggest otherwise, providing the students are given the opportunities to present themselves. I asked the students to discuss how they felt working on the media projects had helped them to develop their self concepts:

> The skills that helped to build my confidence was the phoning skills because I'm not one to talk on the phone to much and also I get nervous when I call someone but since I did the media projects I don't get nervous on the phone anymore.
>
> **stu.art/**June 16,1992/endofyearjournal

Another student wrote:

> This year I sure did one thing, and that was learning how to beat my shyness which I think I did very well, it took lots of self confidence, something I had nothing of in the beginning of the year.
>
> The major step to beating my lack of self confidence was going to work in another city. My shyness was beaten at work because I had to work with the public. We had to arrange meeting times with one of the people we interviewed, a doctor. It did takes us three weeks just to finish the interview with the doctor. It took a long time, but our project was successfully completed.
>
> **stu.art/**June 16,1992/endofyearjournal

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CONCLUSION

In Tape Four, I provided a detailed discussion of the results of my inquiry. I presented two episodes - The Literate Behaviour of Reading and The Literate Behaviour of Writing.

In the first episode, I described the ACE students' Literate Behaviour of Reading as they read/viewed two short films, *The Apprentice* and *The Oasis*, and a full length video, *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. The ACE students demonstrated several important characteristics of The Literate Behaviour of Reading:

- responding to texts affectively through their personal relationship to the text, and cognitively through their observations.

- acknowledging in writing and in print, that visual texts are sites for exploring one's position in society, as autobiographies.

- appropriating texts in order to rewrite it, making it their own.

- predicting, analysing, interpreting and confirming their responses.

- detecting, questioning how and why media's construct of reality, with special attention to ideological contexts through which texts are positioned.

- performing several readings, each time learning and modifying their previous understandings.

- identifying, linking and interpreting symbol and sign systems.

- using oral and written language to articulate what they have learned about elements in media communications, including media language, genres and conventions.

- an understanding of denotation and connotation.

- an understanding of narrative structures.

- an awareness that reading is a meaning making process.

- critical reading/viewing skills.

In the second episode, I described the ACE students' Literate Behaviour of Writing in the course of producing two media projects; the first focusing on media industries - Marketing a Popular Culture Product, and the second, a socio-cultural research project - Gender and Minority Groups in Media, Society and The workplace. The students demonstrated an awareness of the following Literate Behaviours of Writing:

- the production and consumption of media texts.

- intended messages aimed at a specific audience, its purpose and forms of media messages.

- the economic basis of mass media production.

- the rhetoric of media language.

- the relationship among form and content of media texts, recognising that each medium has its own grammar.

- recognised the technical techniques used to produce media texts.

- rehearsed, drafted, revised, edited and published/presented.

- aesthetic aspects of media texts so that they can evaluate their own likes and dislikes of media.

- that media contain ideological and value meanings in media texts.

- formed bridges among the knowledge of media and media texts which they already possessed and extended that new knowledge into new areas of understanding.

As well as providing evidence of the Literate Behaviours listed above, I also conveyed another important aspect of Literate Behaviour. That is, almost all of the ACE students were actively and continuously engaged in the Reading and Writing which I described in this Tape. This is not only true of the episodes, but throughout my Media Education Curriculum.

In Tape Five, I elaborate on the significance of what I found in Tape Four, specific to the ACE students, as well as provide a model of Literacy Education for at-risk students, and then suggest some questions for the future.

TAPE FIVE

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF MY INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION: INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

With the video cameras I've noticed that you can still get your skills done, but from a different perspective. Instead of worrying about spelling and punctuation you can do your work visually and vocaly.

stu.art/May 12, 1993endof yearjournal

I know that I'm the type of person who can't sit in a class room and take notes. I can't just research from the book to paper, writing it down, putting it in my own words, typing it up and handing it in. It's not me. What I like doing is going out and researching it. Interviewing people. Finding out exactly what I want to find out.

aud.tp/1992/endof yearjournal

Well you understand what when you come back with your project you can say, hey I know this is what I learnt. I'm not just saying it, I'm showing it, I'm improving it to you. These are the people I interviewed, this is what I found out. It even shows how the project is made from beginning the project all the way to when its finished. And it's done not to the teacher's satisfaction. It's a good feeling handing in something like that. I did this, I'm proud of it. It also shows that somebody has the initiative to get off their butts. And why can't I?

stu.art/June 6,1992/endof yearjournal

Many of education's routines are founded in history, as well as ideology. Since the Industrial

Revolution education has operated, often with the best of stated intentions, on a system of inclusion

in mainstream schooling and exclusion from it. For most at-risk students, fatigue and

discouragement during the course of their elementary and high schooling as they struggle with

traditional educational practices, cause many not to continue. Stainback, Stainback and Forest

(1989) put forth the following argument:

> If we want an integrated society in which all persons are considered of equal worth and as having equal rights, segregation in schools cannot be justified. That is, no defensible excuses or rationales can be offered, and no amount of scientific research can be conducted that will in the final analysis justify segregation. Segregation has no justification: it is simply unfair and morally wrong to segregate any students including those defined as disabled, from the mainstream of education (p. 4).

An educational system which segregates students, such as the ACE students, operates on what Freire

(1973) referred to as "the banking system" (p. 52) where a teacher's role is to transmit knowledge

to students "depositing" information into students as they would deposit money into a bank. Taking

this idea further, the currencies necessary for access to mainstream schooling, post-secondary

education, and potentially "good jobs" include:

> - a conformity to a traditional instructional system which includes sitting in rows.
> - attending to teachers' presentations of material.
> - moving from classroom to classroom in set periods of time in which discrete subjects are taught.
> - formal testing, most of which is print based.
> - traditional literacy skills in which students are given the information via copying from the blackboard, overheads, etc.
> - reading teachers' handouts and/or from one set of class textbooks.
> - listening to teacher talk and responding at length to their questions, but speaking very little.
> - generating print texts most of which are either highly restricted presentations, such as "objective" test genres or essays.

In fact, many students, such as the ones I teach, have actively resisted acquiring these currencies.

Consequently, they have found themselves relegated to the fringes of education with little possibility

for upward mobility, in schooling or vocationally.

We live in a society dominated by digital, multi-media, information technology. Nevertheless, for the most part, education is still predominately print based. Most of the teaching which takes place in school is transmitted through print texts. Generally, visual and auditory texts are ignored, except when they are used as "audio-visual aids." In ignoring the use and study of these texts in their own right, teachers are ignoring other forms of literacy and what it means to be really literate in a multi-media society. Postman (1971) echoes my thoughts:

> ... the term universal literacy simply meant the hope that all men [sic] could have made available to them reading and writing. But the term continues to change as the means of communication change. Today literacy is the skill with which man manipulates the many media of mass communication. Reading and writing are still important. But much more is required in a multi-media age (pp. 26-27).

The ACE Students' Struggle for Literacy

Having observed the ACE students for the last six years, I have come to the conclusion that they are literate and that traditional practices of literacy education such as those I have described above have prevented us from acknowledging their literacy. My school's notion of literacy which used de-contextualized print texts as the only data source to determine the ACE students' literacy reflects almost exactly Street's (1984) characterization of a model of literacy that is outdated and inadequate. The principal assumption of the "autonomous model" is that literacy is largely determined by performance on "essay texts," and from that performance accessors generalize broadly from what is, in fact, a narrow culture-specific practice. Other features of the model include the following assumptions:

> - there is a single direction in which literacy development can be traced, and are the direct result of that development - "progress," "civilization," individual liberty and social mobility.
> - that literacy is distinguishable from schooling.
> - that literacy can be isolated as an independent variable and the consequent claim that we can study its consequences.

- that the consequences are represented in terms of cognitive skills and/or economic 'take off'
(p. 2).

My school's adherence to this, above, notion of literacy has had disastrous consequences for the kinds of students who are "at-risk." In spite of the fact that I have discovered how literate my ACE students are in reading and writing their texts, I continue to be frustrated by the refusal of my school system, and, I believe most of the outside world, to relinquish its hold on this "autonomous model" and the concomitant consequences that result. For the ACE students their "illiteracy" will continue to result in a:

> ... struggle for development, justice, greater equality, respect of cultures and recognition of human dignity of all and the claims of each to an economic, social and political stake in society and the fruits which derive therefrom (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4).

Over the last thirty years, many educators have tried to boost the self-esteem of at-risk students through various "feel good" approaches and activities, but these educators have not fundamentally changed their conceptualisations of literacy or pedagogy. Ironically for the ACE students, the results have been the opposite of these educators' intentions.

Traditional methods and approaches have inadvertently contributed to poor feelings of self worth and a lack of interest in school. In the province of Quebec, the drop out rate is approximately thirty eight percent, and promises to increase. I have found that my Media Education Curriculum challenged, involved and encouraged the ACE students to develop their overall literacy. Several students have said that it was one of the principal reasons for their staying in school.

J.A. was one of my students who, on her own, decided that the "regular program" was not meeting

her needs and conversely she was not able to meet its demands, and decided that the ACE Program

might help. In her journal, she wrote:

> I was one of those students who felt I was at a dead end. I thought there was no help for me
> and everyone, including myself, thought I was a lost cause. I started to have very low
> self-esteem.
>
> After a couple of weeks in the ACE Program, my self-esteem soared. I started feeling good
> about myself. I finally felt I had a place in school. I started getting active and happy in doing
> my assigned tasks. I went to school everyday with a smile rather than a frown. It felt good
> waking up in the morning.
>
> **stu.art**/May 98

On the basis of my experience with the ACE students, I wish to argue that education needs to rethink

how it approaches literacy so that it recognizes:

1. reading and writing as socio-cultural practices that are context bound.

2. that texts students are asked to read and write include both print and audio-visual forms.

3. that texts students are asked to read have relevancy to them (i.e., that they take cognizance

of the students' own socio-cultural contexts) and that students' response to these texts form

the basis of their literacy education. One of the ways that would ensure the authenticity and

relevancy of responses is to have students choose texts.

4. that the data sources used to assess students' literacy take cognizance of and reflect the

context-bound nature of literacy practices of these young people.

The comments from the ACE students which I quoted at the beginning of this Tape confirm for me

the preceding premises.

I have attempted in this inquiry to situate literacy within a broader set of individual and social competencies. I have chosen in this inquiry to focus on ways in which the ACE students exhibited *their own* form of literate behaviours in the process of reading and writing media texts. I believe that the Media Education Curriculum I developed enabled me to identify some of the parameters of the ACE students' literacy and to confirm the effectiveness of the Media Education Curriculum and the pedagogy I used in developing the literate abilities of the ACE students.

A BROADER PICTURE OF LITERATE BEHAVOUR

My observations of the ACE students' literate behaviours echo many of the concepts provided by English Language Arts and Media Education theorists, which I discussed in the Review of the Literature.

The ACE students read -- they understood and responded to, written and visual languages. They wrote -- they used print, oral/aural, and visual forms of language, within a social context, for specific and relevant purposes and for different audiences. Britton et al. (1975) call these activities of reading and writing means of coming to terms with ideas and experiences and of communicating with others. These are the expressive, transactional and poetic functions of language.

In the process of reading and dialoguing about the video texts the students became aware of how the texts related to their own status and experiences. Once they were able to make personal meaning from the texts, they were then able to articulate that meaning to the rest of the class. This is what

Moffet and Wagner (1976) said about reading and writing involving the ability to move from interior dialogue based on personal values and experiences to social speech. Rosenblatt's (1978) notion of reading as a transactional process in which readers act upon texts by reconstructing them, explains the ACE students' ability to make connections among their life experiences, with various ideas and experiences represented in *The Apprentice* and *The Oasis*. The students' retelling of these texts, based on their own life experiences is Willinsky's (1991) second principle of postmodern literacy which argues that texts are not fixed creations but develop through collaboration and appropriation of texts which already exist. In their analysis of situation comedies the ACE students participated first as readers and then as writers and critics, Willinsky's third principle of postmodern literacy. The students were highly critical of these television programs based on their own life experiences as well as their experiences with media texts.

Further, the students' reading of the cultural signs in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, as I presented in Tape Four, are examples of McCormick, Waller and Flower's (1992) notion of polyvalent reading in which meaning is constructed by individual readers according to their literary and ideological repertoires. Many of the students had fairly sophisticated understandings of the dimensions of representation, detecting biases, stereotypes, omissions and inconsistencies in the *Ninja Turtles*.

In the process of working on the Marketing Project, many of the ACE students described the links between the production and ownership of popular culture texts. For example, each group gave itself a company name and an associated trade mark and slogan. I recall one student forcefully stating that

"his company" needed to place a copyright symbol on their package so that other groups of students would not be able to steal their ideas. This led to each group doing the same. Another instance which illustrates the students' knowledge of ownership occurred during the phone call M.D and his group made to the record store company regarding their Musical Carpet (see Tape Four). After the phone call M.D. worried that his groups' idea might be "stolen" by the record company. Thus, as Willinsky (1991) suggests, they appreciated that the postmodern world is a mixed economy of art and commerce, encompassing popular cultural forms.

In addition, I found the links from the ACE students' literate behaviours to many of the English Language Arts educators/theorists. The impact of my Media Education Curriculum enabled the ACE students to:

- develop a sophisticated understanding of and critical stance toward the dominant means of communication in their lives - the mass media.

- build their language skills so that they are able to conceptualise ideas for themselves and others.

- express those ideas in words, images and sounds.

- encode those ideas in organised, sequential, and clear presentations, which includes an articulation of their personal sensibilities..

- participate openly in an exchange of ideas and opinions as scholars/producers of media texts.

- use inquiry and critical thinking skills to develop their interests.

- develop self-expression and feeling of self-worth.

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The data analysis confirmed my hunches that the ACE students possess these literate behaviours. And yet, I am not totally surprised by these findings. The ACE students like most other students, bring experiences of thousands of hours of viewing, listening and interacting with media to school, and have informally acquired many of the literate behaviours I described (see Tape 4 - The Literate Behaviour of Reading and Writing). In other words, students, such as those in the ACE Program, come to school with an already developed repertoire of literate behaviours that need to be fully acknowledged, organised and exploited within the context of schooling.

CURRICULUM

The trigger to this whole project occurred during the completion of my master's thesis when one of my students in the course of working on a video production, described to me his understanding of media language. It was this critical incident that led me to see the important role mass media played, or might play, in the lives of my students and how media-based curriculum might be used as a link to develop their literate abilities in the more traditional forms, such as reading and writing print.

Thus, in the Media Education Curriculum I designed, I included elements of the conceptual framework - texts, audience and production developed by Dick (1990), (see Tape 2). The students critically analysed media texts, such as *The Apprentice, The Oasis* and *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* , as well as situation comedies. They also constructed media texts, such as the television, radio and print advertisements for the Marketing projects.

Generally, media oriented curricula developed for at-risk students have focused on the use of technology rather than on the development of literacy. There is a strong emphasis on equipment manipulation and production and little on practical reflection. The thinking is that these students do not possess higher level thinking ability necessary to deal with analytical work. I think the examples, taken from ACE student journals which follow, dispel this notion.

During a discussion of minority groups, it became obvious that K.H had very strong and biased opinions regarding the media's image of black and white people. While she claimed not to be "prejudiced," she felt that media's image was biased in favor of blacks. She interpreted a rap song she heard outside of school this way:

> In the media some rap songs create a terrible image of Caucasians. The lyrics mention how difficult black peoples lives are living in dangerous communities and being victims. White people are portrayed in their rich homes in safe towns not giving any thought to reckless violence.

> **stu.art**/April 25, 1994

S.C.'s opinion regarding the image of women in the media was just as obvious as K.H's views about media's image of blacks and whites. S.C. contrasted two situation comedies she viewed at home:

> One program that really shows sexism is HOME IMPROVEMENT. Tim is always putting women down and he never allows Jill, his wife to use his tools. Tim's always mentioning that a women's place is in the kitchen. A show that proves the opposite in GRACE UNDER FIRE which illustrates how women can survive without a man around the house. She even works in a non-traditional job.
> **stu.art**/April 25, 1994

These excerpts also demonstrate what Smith (1988) said about how children learn about reading, writing and literacy outside of school. Most of the ACE students have implicit understanding and

ritical awareness of media texts. My curriculum helped them to reflect, articulate and expand upon what they knew about the media they consumed. In doing so, I believe the students began to see hemselves as readers and writers who deserved to be "members" in what Smith called "the literacy lub." They also exhibited the following eligibility requirements for entry into the club:

1. their reading of the media texts was meaningful and purposeful to them personally.

2. they related and added what they read in the texts to their personal repertoires.

3) they were continuously active during the media projects.

4) they were able to relate the learning they acquired in the media projects to their everyday lives.

5) they collaborated both in the reading of the media texts and the media projects.

The Teaching Approach: A Retrospective Look at the Pedagogy

Here I reflect back to the kind of environment I provided which enabled me to identify the ACE students' literate behaviour. I want to describe the teaching approaches I used in the ACE Program because I firmly believe that they enabled me to tease out the students' literate behaviours.

The Media Education Curriculum I designed provided the ACE students with non-threatening, noncompetitive experiences, rich in reading (viewing) and writing (producing). It featured projects through which the students could dialogue, reflect, access, and evaluate ideas and information. In following this curriculum, the ACE students developed a more meaningful understanding of themselves and the concepts at the heart of English Language Arts and Media Education.

Building on work by educators and theorists such as Dewey, Vygotsky, and Freire, I employed a constructivist, project-based approach and student-centered pedagogy. I attempted to ensure that the students were actively involved in contextualised, real world problems. I made sure that the ACE classroom was a living entity which invited concrete, inductive and spirited learning. I exploited the students' mind set which tended to operate in the present tense and was geared to active participation.

Teaching Practice

As I explained elsewhere in this inquiry, the ACE students were more comfortable working in extended blocks of time instead of in fifty-minute periods, each devoted to a separate subject. However, it was necessary for me to ensure that I was covering all of the subjects in the ACE Program - English, Math, French, Life Skills and World of Work. Consequently, I designed The ACE Program as an interdisciplinary curriculum. Class time is not divided into discrete periods. Since I did not have to worry about taking time away from another subject, or another teacher, students were free to work on one specific aspect of their project for extended periods of time. Students could also venture outside of the school into the local community to do research or interview various people for their project without having to worry about being back in time for another class.

Negotiating Curriculum

The curriculum was thematically based, and was actually negotiated with the students. I gleaned themes from the original Cooperative Education 16 + Ministry curriculum guides. So the Gender

ınd Minority Groups in the Media and Society theme originally came from units on family and getting along with people. Following is a description of how I conducted classes on the Gender and Minority Group theme. It is typical of my overall teaching approach.

After writing the title of the theme on the overhead, I asked the students to speculate what the theme might be about. My intent was to get some ideas about the direction they might want to take. This was followed by asking them to provide me with titles of books, television programs, movies, magazines, games and so on which in some way dealt with the topic we were working on at a specific time, such as media's image of men and women in the workplace. I have always considered my students my first resource.

Using a list of texts, the students and I chose one for a close reading, usually a television program and/or movie, which over the next day or two we "read" and analysed. I subsequently scrounged print-based texts, such as short stories, poems, and magazine articles which we could also use for our initial discussions. The students were also required to choose a book from the library or from home. One class per day was devoted to just reading. Many ACE students who had never completed an entire book before, did so when given this class time.

A Dialogic Approach to Analyzing Texts

The approach I took analysing the texts with the students is best characterised by Freire (1973) as a dialogue which involves an "I-Thou relationship between two subjects" (p. 52) in which I and the students engaged in a two-way communication. Masterman (1985) characterises dialogue as a

'genuine sharing of power" (p. 33) in which each participant listens carefully and responds to what has been said. The intent is to come to a better understanding of the issue or topic at hand.

Generally speaking, I adopted the following approach to working with texts. I began by asking the students their general responses to the text. For example, I asked, "Did you like it? Why? What was it about?" Then in small groups the students would talk in greater detail about their response to the text and any observations made about it. A recorder took notes. We would then hold a class dialogue of what our responses to the text were and what we learned about it. At that time we would also review segments of the text, usually a number of times in order to confirm our responses and observations. Following our public discussion, the students individually wrote their responses in their notebooks. The responses were subsequently used as springboards for finally writing about the texts or for their projects. I collected the notebooks either the same day or allowed them to complete the responses and submit them the next day.

The Issue of Power

The next few days were spent dialoguing openly about the texts we read. Recall the amount of talking and thinking out loud which took place as we read *The Apprentice, Oasis* and *Teenage Ninja Turtles*. As in the case of *The Apprentice* I did not have as strong an interpretation of the text as some of the students. Many of the students took pleasure when they realised that I did not understand *The Apprentice* in the same depth that they did. They enjoyed watching me grope, struggling to compose my own understanding of the text. This reminds me of Freire's (1970) comment that, "through dialogue the teacher-of-the-student ceases to exist and a new term emerges;

he teacher-with-the-students" (p. 67). According to Freire, knowledge does not only belong to the eacher but also to the students. By revealing that I was not the all-knower, the students felt that they 1ad something to bring to the learning; to offer to me and their classmates. In such instances, neither : nor they occupied a special position in the class hierarchy. Masterman (1985) calls this 10n-hierarchical teaching which promotes reflection, critical thinking within a group-focused, 1ction-oriented atmosphere. Barnes (1992) refers to this type of teaching as interpretive.

I should make it clear that the non-hierarchical teaching approach I describe here does not imply that I relinquished teacher control. While a dialogical and non-hierarchical approach does involve a sharing of power, a differential power relationship continues to exist, with me in control. Indeed, the type of teaching approach here can be risky since students might consider that a teacher's willingness to dialogue about, rather than transmit, ideas (Barnes, 1992) suggests that s/he wishes to become "one of the group."

While I had knowledge of the formal processes and concepts of English Language Arts and Media Education, the students also had expertise: in some of the processes, much of the content of the texts we examined together, and especially in making connections among the texts and their own real life experiences. You may recall the richness of the ACE students' responses to *The Apprentice* and *The Oasis* as we discussed the words, images and sounds that enabled them to make links to their own lives (see Tape Four). This dimension of my teaching approach focuses on personal response which requires the students to think about what elements of their own repertoires they can bring to a text, and to the classroom researcher.

INTERDEPENDENCY, INDEPENDENCE and INCLUSIVENESS

There are several things I want to say about the reading experiences which I think contributed to generating evidence of the ACE students' literate behaviour. One concerns twin notions of interdependency and independence, the other issue is inclusiveness.

In the ACE Program, the students and I nurtured each other's ideas, constructing our own interpretations of the texts. As we talked about the videos, I acted as secretary, writing the students' ideas on the blackboard so that we could all see each other's contribution to the discussion and the results of our individual and collective thinking. This approach enabled the students to:

1. understand that not everyone reads stories the same way.
2. that each can read the same text differently.
3. that each has the ability to add to the shared meaning.

By using the responses of their fellow classmates' writing on the board, the students were able to tease out ideas, gradually progressing to more sophisticated understandings of the texts. I am reminded here of what Dewey (1934) wrote that education comes about through the inspiration a student gets from those with whom he interacts, including his/her classmates and his/her teacher. The technique of open dialogue of student responses and writing them on the board also gave the students opportunities to voice uncertainties about ideas. They realised that not knowing and/or questioning their own ideas was acceptable and did not mean that they were "stupid." In my reflective journal I wrote:

It occurred to me today that some of the kids who don't usually have the confidence of many

of their classmates, and in fact are considered outcasts by some, aren't afraid to speak up when we discuss media texts. They ask questions, offer response, seemingly without concern of ridicule. And they aren't ridiculed. E.V and P.T are examples. They really got involved in our dialogue contrasting *Memorandum* and *Schindler's List.*

R.J/October 3, 1994

)ften the feedback given to students helped them clarify their ideas. Freire (1970) wrote, "education

; a live and creative dialogue in which everyone knows something and does not know others, in

/hich we all seek together to know more" (p. 113).

\ second, and what I consider an extremely important aspect of the socialization experiences

escribed above, is the issue of inclusiveness. Approaching the reading experiences through

ialogue and discussion created an inclusive reading environment. Grade and/or credit levels, and

ocial status in the class, were inconsequential. The reading experiences which occurred let each

tudent see that his/her idea had value and contributed to our collective understanding, something

/hich was especially important for the traditionally weaker students. Frequently, we discourage

/eaker students from participating by trying to draw out more than what they are able to offer "on

1e spot." By prodding too much, many of these students are reluctant to take risks and tend to draw

way from these situations. In creating an inclusive atmosphere, all of the students were encouraged

) continue reading and to actively participate.

DEVELOPING THE ACE STUDENTS' RESEARCH PROJECTS

ifter having spent several days, dialoguing, reading, viewing and writing, I asked the students, in

roups, to compose a thesis statement about a specific theme in the text we had been reading, which

1ey would like to prove or disprove, or a question they would like to investigate.

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Their ideas for inquiry were then placed onto the overhead. Each group brainstormed ways that they might go about their inquiry. The only requirements I placed here were that they had to use print, non-print and/or audio-visual sources. The other requirement was that their final submission included a written, oral and audio-visual presentation. The students' ideas included such inquiry techniques as surveys and interviews. My role here was to help them develop the survey questionnaires and prepare for the interviews. I also coached them, pointing them toward suitable resources. In most instances, the students did the actual locating of information or contacting various individuals to interview. Locating human resources for information involved the students in authentic communication activities, such as calling on the telephone, writing and faxing business letters, e-mailing and so on. Over the next few weeks the students worked on their projects.

The Use of Time

The duration of some of the projects is an interesting issue. As I did not have formal daily lesson plans, I only had an approximation of the amount of time the projects would last. This was not based so much on the students' ability as it was the level of their engagement. Since I had the luxury of working with the students all day and was not bound to an inflexible schedule, I let the projects continue as long as the students displayed interest. Remember that some of the students reacted angrily when I attempted to put closure to reading *The Apprentice* as well as when I threatened to reinstate the fifty minute class period (see Tape One). They told me in their own way that they had to have some say in how and in what time frame they developed knowledge. Frankly, in most instances, it was not my intention that the projects last such an extended period of time, but the projects took on lives of their own; and the students gave life to the projects. The only time

constraint was that each project did not last more than one term.   Noteworthy, is the students' engagement, considering that at-risk students lose interest in most school assignments quickly (this should not be confused with the notion of short attention spans). Dewey (1934) considered interest an indication of 'growing power and dawning capacities'. According to Dewey, the role of the teachers is to identify and encourage such power.

In most instances, the final stage of the projects was the submission of a written, audio-visual and oral presentation to the class. In many cases we celebrated the end of a theme with a broad, informal discussion of the overall project and/or a "showing off" of the projects to invited guests such as the school and or school board's administration.

The approaches I have described above were experience based. They were also oriented toward active, concrete, inductive and kinesthetic learning.

The students were actively involved in reading, talking, writing, viewing or producing. The atmosphere was alive. In most instances the students were stimulated. I trusted the students to learn and they trusted me to get out of their way and let them learn. I encouraged the students to develop their own patterns of addressing the problems they were pursuing. I let them organise their learning strategies, and they let me in on their learning, as a mentor and coach. There was no set routine to the learning. While I had an idea of the direction I wanted the class to go in the initial reading/viewing activities, the students shaped and implemented the days which followed. Some days they worked in class, on others, with the required preparations, their investigations took them

outside of the class into the larger community. Some days they worked in the classroom at their desks, on others they were scattered about on computers, video editing or hidden in a closet producing a radio show. Vygotsky (1978) could have referred to this approach as "taking advantage of the zone of proximal development" in which a student is guided to solve problems on his own, using all of his/her prior understanding (scientific conceptual knowledge). It was messy learning, but it was real learning. It was the kind of learning which created a sense of community.

A LITERACY CURRICULUM MODEL FOR AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

I began my inquiry with an exploration of the theoretical concepts of English Language Arts and Media Education that would provide a framework for investigating the ACE students' literate behaviours of reading and writing. I explored links among the concepts and theories of English Language Arts Curriculum, and the Media Education Curriculum I designed in the ACE Program, and their relationship to the literate behaviours displayed by the ACE students themselves in different contexts.

Buckingham (1993b) argues that there is a paradoxical relationship among English and Media Education. In his article, "English and Media Studies: Making the Difference," he points out the conceptual and practical differences among the two disciplines. While I acknowledge that these differences exist for some English and Media Education theorists, I prefer to believe in fundamental

intertwined relationships among English Language Arts and Media Education theory, curriculum and pedagogy. These relationships can be expressed in terms of how we understand literacy in schools - more precisely, in terms of literate behaviours.

Through the 1970s, 80s and early 90s there has been a shift in the conceptualization of English Education. English educators have become Language Arts educators who recognize that language as it develops serves important human functions - expressive, transactional and poetic (e.g., Britton et al., 1975), is organised into forms of oral, written and visual discourse (e.g., Moffett & Wagner, 1976), is developed in social contexts (e.g., Bruffee, 1986), serves intentions of writers (e.g., Graves, 1983) and readers (e.g., Rosenblatt, 1978) and is generated for audiences (e.g., Doughty, Pearce and Thornton, 1976). English Language Arts education is about providing learners opportunities to use and investigate language in all its various dimensions, so that they can come to terms with the ideas of the world in which they live and can act critically, creatively and consciously on that world (see for example, Greene, 1988). Reading and writing are seen as complex processes that have cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions. For English Language Arts educators, reading includes all kinds of text: from Shakespeare to shopping malls, from *Sesame Street* to the *Wall Street Journal;* writing means producing a television commercial or performing a radio talk show, or writing an essay on the computer. To be sure, much of the above conceptualization has been influenced by developments in other fields such as Communications and Linguistics. However, I would argue that within the field of English education, the preconditions existed for the ready adoption of these ideas and that many aspects have preceded developments in both the fields of Communication and Media Education.

It is significant that many of the major theoreticians/practitioners in the field of Media Education either come from or write from the English education community: Len Masterman, David Buckingham, Andrew Hart (Britain); Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahon (Australia); Barry Duncan, Neil Anderson, Donna Carpenter, Jack Livesley, Chris Worsnop, Rick Shepherd (Canada.)

A Changing Conceptualization of Literacy

These changes in view have resulted in a changing conceptualization of Literacy. We have moved beyond earlier considerations involving the functional aspects of language, such as ordinary everyday communication or being able to understand and express oneself in the workplace. In describing the new Literacy, John Willinsky (1991) establishes some prime considerations that have developed from English Language Arts theory and practice:

- what counts is the use of language rather than the medium or technology.

- texts are not fixed creations, but develop through collaboration and appropriation of texts which already exist.

- all texts, oral, written and visual are dependent on the socio-cultural meaning of signs.

- postmodern literacy acknowledges the contribution of mainstream popular culture forms as sites for exploring the relationship between one's position in society and the socio-political ideologies in society.

- postmodern literacy endorses the theoretical and production aspects of Media Studies in order to help students demystify media texts.

- postmodern literacy is critical literacy that, through the use of language, promotes public consciousness of social, cultural and economic ideologies.

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In their introduction to *Media Files*, Emery et al. (1995) -- I am one of the "et al." -- attempt to consolidate for English teachers in Quebec, the evolution of English Language Arts theory and Willinsky's notion of postmodern literacy. First, we encourage teachers to reconceive texts as cultural artifacts - a weaving together of signs drawn from an individual's experiences with them as a member of a culture- created for the purpose of communicating ideas.

> Texts, therefore, include print (fiction and non-fiction), radio, television and film, environments such as shopping malls, and toys like Barbie and GI Joe dolls. (We have used the word "signs" - a term for objects, icons, symbols and/or words, comprising a signifier and a signified - instead of "words" or "symbols," because the term more accurately applies to all forms of language, including the media as well as traditional forms of language.) (Emery et al., 1995, p. 5).

Next we introduce the terms repertoire (developed from McCormick, Waller and Flower, 1992) and ideology:

> ... this [repertoire] refers to a combination of knowledge, experiences, habits, norms conventions and assumptions that are brought to bear by an individual in any specific reading or writing instance. ...For purposes of our discussion [of Literacy], we conceive of two aspects or categories of repertoire: that which includes matters related to discourse and its forms - medium, genre, mode rhetoric and code; and that which includes matters of ideology. Both aspects of repertoire are shaped by social, cultural, historical and gendered experiences (Emery et al., 1995, p. 5).

We see reading as a transactional process in which a reader and her/his repertoire meets a text and its author's or producer's repertoire(s). Reading is a cognitive act in which readers, because they attach different meanings to the signs of a text, help to create the texts they read. Thus, different readers may make sense of the same text in quite different ways. To some extent, the diversity of readings may be invited or allowed by the nature of the text itself. Furthermore, because readers may read a range of different texts (i.e., have different repertoires), this will affect the reading of a particular text. Reading is, at the same time, a social process in that the meaning of a text is not

established by a reader in isolation, but rather, through social interaction and principally through talk. How individuals talk about and use what they read both shape and reflect their own cultural identities. Readers also develop hypotheses about how other people read and form alliances with other individuals who read like they do. They also define themselves socially and culturally in terms of tastes and preferences, in terms of what they are not as well as what they are (see Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994). In short, in any given encounter with a text, an immensely complex interplay of repertoires takes place. Writing is also a process which involves writers using complex discursive and general repertoires to construct texts for real or imagined readers/audiences, who "read" them. Like reading, writing is a complex cognitive activity in which individuals construct texts for others using media modes and codes of communication, according to forms and conventions characteristic of discourse in specific contexts. It, too, is simultaneously a social process in that writers construct discourse from certain socio-cultural communities or contexts to others within or outside these communities or contexts, bringing to bear complex rhetorical strategies that enable them to articulate who they are as much as what they have to say. Furthermore, reading and writing are not seen as discrete activities, but as simultaneously interactive processes so that even when readers act "in the reading mode" they are constructing (i.e., writing) meaning; when writers write they read the meanings of what they write not only as readers of themselves but also acting in the capacity of imagined other readers of their texts.

Within the framework of the above understandings, Literacy constitutes the individual's conscious use of new or expanding repertoires as a reader and a writer. Literate behaviour is the ensemble of processes individuals -usually in social groupings or discourse communities - undertake in

developing that consciousness.

As I have stated elsewhere in this dissertation, my focus has been on how Media Education Curriculum might be considered a site for at-risk students' struggle for literacy. The connections I have made between English Language Arts and Media Education are drawn from data I have gathered as the ACE students read the video texts and wrote their media projects.

Figure 18 which follows shows the relationship among English Language Arts Education, Media Education and Literate Behaviours of Reading and Writing. The elements are constantly interacting in the actual events of teaching and learning. Think of this as a three dimensional model in which none of the elements are in any particular hierarchical order. I have also commented on how the ACE students exhibited various aspects of the model.

The figure presents a broad view of the position of English Language Arts and Media Education within the context of literacy. It illustrates that conceptualisations of literacy always arise out of socio-cultural contexts (Street, 1984).

Figure 18

Context of Literacy

Media Education	English Language Arts
Literate Behaviour of Reading Response	**Literate Behaviour of Reading Response**
critique	aesthetic
understand	efferent
Analysis	**Analysis**
purpose	purpose
industry	context
media langugage / genre	langugage form / genre
audience	audience
Literate Behaviour of Writing	**Literate Behaviour of Writing**
use of language forms	use of language forms
audio	audio
visual	visual
print	print
Media Education Key Concepts	**Functions of Language**
construct reality	expressive
industry / production	transactional
aesthetic	poetic
Processes	**Processes**
plan	rehearse
organise	draft
revise	revise
edit	edit
present	publish
Curricular Approaches	**Curricular Approaches**
collaborative	collaborative
project-based	project-based
process-oriented	process-oriented
Pedagogical Approaches	**Pedagogical Approaches**
non-hierarchical	interpretative / negotiated

The Literate Behaviour of Reading

Response

I am using the phrase "responding to" in the same way that Rosenblatt (1968) talked about the transactional process in which readers reconstruct meaning in texts, and McCormick, Waller and Flower's (1992) notion of reading as an active process. From a Media Education point of view, I see "responding to" similar to Masterman's (1990) key concept which states that audiences negotiate meaning. In this instance, I am thinking of audience as single readers, albeit acting as members of social groups of readers.

The ACE students responded to the video texts in much the same way that all readers respond to print texts They read the texts looking to understand the plot, (efferently), and at the same time, based on their personal positions and experiences, as critics, (aesthetically). Reading both traditional and media texts is a transactional process in which a reader and his/her repertoire meets a text and its repertoire. This supports the reading dimension of literacy as we described it in the *Media Files* (Emery et al., 1995).

Analysis

How a reader approaches a print and/or media text, and subsequently responds to it, depends on knowledge of language/media forms and genres, the audience at which it is aimed, its specific purpose, and the context in which it is read (Doughty, Pearce, & Thornton, 1976; Masterman, 1985). One of the contexts in which a media text must be considered is the context of "industry." Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) note that Media Education teachers deal with the issue of

ndustry in the production, ownership and selling of media texts, while English teachers do not. However, given English Language Arts' conceptual understanding of context, purpose and audience, here is no theoretical reason why English teachers cannot incorporate "industry."

The Literate Behaviour of Writing

Understanding language forms and genres also means understanding that form and content are closely related as well and that each medium has its own grammar and codifies reality in unique ways (see "Key Concepts" in Association for Media Literacy's *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, 1989, p. 10). The model illustrates the relationship among the various forms of language in English Language Arts - aural, visual, print, and Media Education - audio, visual, print.

There were several instances when ACE students exhibited their understanding of the conventions used in various media texts, and the links among language form and content. Examples of these understandings include their discussions about advertisements and situation comedies, and how their genres, audiences, purposes and contexts could be identified by: the specific spoken language - vocabulary, dialect; sound effects and music; and/or the specific production techniques - camera shots, angles, movement, pacing. Their media projects displayed their understanding of how language forms and media languages could be manipulated for specific audiences, purposes and contexts.

The Key Concepts/Functions of Language

The model illustrates links among the functions of language (Britton et al., 1975) and several of the

key concepts of Media Education (Dick, 1990). According to Britton et al.'s "transactional function" of language we attempt to advise, persuade or inform. This is precisely what occurs in most mass media texts, especially when one considers the industry dimension.

Simultaneously, we attempt to aesthetically please both the author and the reader (see *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, 1989, Key Concept 8), attending to the poetic function (Britton et al., 1975).

Throughout the writing process, whether we are writing a report, an advertisement or a documentary, we use an "expressive" function of language in order to construct for our readers, our own sense of reality.

In producing mini-documentaries in the Gender and Minority projects, and print and non-print advertisements in their Marketing Projects, ACE students used transactional, poetic and expressive forms of writing.

Processes

Writing and/or producing a print and a media text invoke similar processes: rehearsing/planning, drafting/organising, revising, editing and publishing/presenting. Both writing and media productions begin with imagining in the mind's eye the message that is to be conveyed to an audience and the words/images which will create the intended message. All kinds of texts involve the printed word at some stage of their development.

So for instance, before embarking on their media productions, the ACE students first met in groups and *rehearsed* what message they wanted to create in their productions and *planned* how they were going to go about creating the message. The students then, *drafted* a production proposal and *organised* themselves according to the people, places and things which they needed to complete their productions. Part of the organisation also included *revising, drafting* and *editing* the production.

Curricular/ Pedagogical Approaches

I have found that the curricular approaches which feature collaboration, which are generally project-based, and which focus on processes and the development of capabilities lend themselves well to both Media Education and English Language Arts Education. Furthermore, I see great similarity in the pedagogical approaches advocated by Masterman (Media Education), Barnes, and Boomer (English Language Arts Education): non-hierarchical; interpretative and negotiated.

The model I described above represents a visual representation of my thinking which came as a result of my inquiry. My teaching prior to this dissertation was intuitive. The model provides theoretical and conceptual justification for how I teach English Language Arts and Media Education. I now see my English Language Arts and Media Education Curriculum as Literacy Education for at-risk students. I strongly believe that this notion of Literacy Education has value for other teachers and students in alternative programs, who are struggling with conventional teaching and learning practices.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The antecedent to this inquiry was a question which came as the result of something a student said to me in the process of my Master's thesis. It seems only fitting that the words used to set the scene for future research come from something a student wrote to me at the end of her stay in the ACE Program (she was killed in car crash soon after leaving the ACE Program). L.G. wrote:

> I fully realise that you have not succeeded in answering all of my questions. In fact, I feel that you have not answered any of them completely. But the answers I have found only serve to raise a whole set of new questions, which only lead to more questions, some of which I didn't even realise were questions. In some ways, I feel that I am as confused as ever, but on a higher level and about more important things.
>
> **stu.art**/June 1991

When I asked L.G why she wrote this for me, she explained that the way I taught her was not the kind of teaching she was used to; the kind which always seemed to end with answers, most often someone else's. She went on to explain that what I did was to encourage and give her the confidence to ask more questions from the answers she already had or those she discovered in the course of exploring some of the topics we covered in the ACE Program. I like to think that her comments above were a kind of thank you.

In many ways, this dissertation has left me with as many questions as answers. And like L.G, I find solace in knowing that I too am confused on a higher level and about increasingly important things.

Some of the questions which have arisen from this inquiry and which are points for future qualitative explorations are:

1.   to what extent are the observations I made about the responses of the ACE students

to my Media Education Curriculum idiosyncratic? I believe that the results of this inquiry do have potential benefits for similar alternatives programs. However, more studies of Media Education Curriculum and Pedagogy with at-risk students should be undertaken.

2. to what extent are the ACE students' abilities in dealing with traditional forms of texts affected by their experiences with Media Education Curriculum? I presented indications that the ACE students were able to translate their literate interpretations and constructions of media texts to more traditional forms, but much more investigative work needs to be done on this, both with at-risk and mainstream students.

3. perhaps most important, are the curricular and pedagogical questions which arise from my inquiry. One question is, "to what extent are we willing to rethink who, how, and what we are teaching in order to develop approaches that motivate and encourage, not only students who are struggling with conventional schooling practices, but also all students?" A broader question is implicated, "what types of investigations must educators perform regarding factors which lead schooling to resist the kind of model I presented earlier, and what changes in education must occur if such a model is to work?

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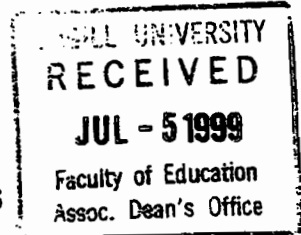
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APPENDIX

Certificate of Ethical Acceptability and
Letter of Information and Consent to Parents and Students

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR
FUNDED AND NON FUNDED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS

Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee consists of 6 members appointed by the Faculty of
cation Nominating Committee, an appointed member from the community and the Associate Dean
demic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research) who is the Chair of this Ethics Review Board .

undersigned considered the application for certification of the ethical acceptability of the project entitled:

Impact of A Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate Behaviour of At-Risk Adolescents.

roposed by:

icant's Name ___Irving Rother___   Supervisor's Name ___Winston G Emery___

icant's Signature ___Rother___   Supervisor's Signature _____

ree / Program / Course ___Ph.D Ad-Hoc___   Granting Agency _____

application is considered to be:
ll Review _____   An Expedited Review ___✓___

newal for an Approved Project _____   A Departmental Level Review _____
                                                          Signature of Chair / Designate

review committee considers the research procedures and practices as explained by the applicant in this
ication, to be acceptable on ethical grounds.

of. Evelyn Lusthaus
rtment of Educational and Counselling
hology

_____
ture / date

of. John Leide
uate School of Library and Information
es
___John Leide 99L 7/14___
ture / date

of. Margaret Downey
rtment of Physical Education

___Margaret Downey   99/07/19___
iture/ date

mber of the Community – To be determined

_____
ture / date

4. Prof. Lise Winer
Department of Second Language Education
_____   7 July 1999___
Signature / date

5. Prof. Claudia Mitchell
Department of Educational Studies

_____
Signature / date

6. Prof. Kevin McDonough
Department of Culture and Values in Education

_____
Signature / date

H. Maguire Ph. D.
 of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee
ciate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research)
ty of Education, Room 230
514) 398-7039/2183 Fax: (514) 398-1527

_____   July 26/99___
Signature / date

ed May, 1999

LTERNATIVE CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM (A.C.E.)

LAKE OF TWO MOUNTAINS HIGH SCHOOL
2105 RUE GUY,
DEUX MONTAGNES, QUEBEC.
J7R 1W6

ie (450) 491-1000
(450) 491-6862

Letter of Information and Consent: Parents and Students

Date

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students:

This letter is to inform and invite you and your son/daughter to participate in a search project which I am conducting. As well as your son/daughter's teacher, I am so a doctoral student at McGill University, Faculty of Education. As part of the quirements for my degree, I am conducting a study with students in the ACE rogram, entitled The Impact of Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate Behaviour of Selected Group of High School Students.

My study explores how the Media Literacy curriculum, which is a component of ie English Language Arts Program in the ACE Program, enables the students to emonstrate their understanding and ability to analyse and produce media, including oks, magazines, television and videos.

This study will help me better understand the students' interactions with various rms of media. The results will, direct me to ways in which I may link what the :udents already know about the media with the various requirements of the English anguage Arts Program. In the long run, I am sure that the quality of my teaching and onsequently the students' learning will benefit from this study.

In order to conduct my study, from time to time, I will be interviewing students dividually, in small and large groups about various aspects of their media onsumption, as well as elements linked directly to the class work. These interviews ill be audio and/or video recorded. I will also be taking photograph and videos as the :udents work in class. I will collect some of the student's class work as well. tudents will not be required to attend or participate in activities outside of school time. here will be no disruptions to the normal class routine.

Names of students will not be included in the final written discussion. Personal iformation about specific students will not be reported. Students who wish not to take art or who wish to withdraw from the study, at any time, may do so without epercussions.

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lease sign your agreement for your son/daughter to participate in this study and
turn as soon as possible. Thank you!

The Impact of Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate Behaviour of a Selected Group of High School Students.

I give my informed consent for my son/daughter to participate in the study, The
npact of Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate Behaviour of a Selected Group of
ligh School Students.   I understand that neither his/her name, nor any personal
formation, will appear in the final project report and that s/he may withdraw from all
· part of this study without concern of repercussions of any sort. I also understand
at I may request a final copy of the study before it is published.

Name of Student (print): _____

Student's Signature: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____