# Issues in Information and Media Literacy

## Criticism, History and Policy

**Edited by
Marcus Leaning**

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# Issues in Information and Media Literacy: Criticism, History and Policy

## Contents

# Preface

This is the first of two volumes that explore contemporary issues in information and media literacy. Undoubtedly, such forms of literacy are current and exciting topics. As the chapters in this and the accompanying volume show information and media literacy presents new and demanding challenges to policy makers, education managers, teachers and educational practitioners and perhaps above all, students.

Literacy, be it information, media, digital, visual or any number of a rapidly growing forms of literacy must be understood as the result of educational activity. Literacy comes through learnt practice and educational activity is the formalization of such activity. The chapters in these volumes explore the practice, necessity and interpretation of such education.

Information literacy and media literacy are of course distinct areas of academic enquiry and practice with their own traditions, modes of enquiry and paradigms. One of the intentions I wanted to achieve with this project was to illustrate how there are perhaps more similarities than differences between the two. Media literacy has a long tradition of developing defensive, coping and empowering attitudes in students. Information literacy differs in that the techniques taught are more concerned with enabling students to find, analyse and produce information. However, as technologies evolve and content becomes less and less tied to specific formats and the volume of media and information channels multiple, this distinction between being skilled users of media and skilled users of information becomes increasingly arbitrary. The two traditions can, and certainly should, learn from each other and one of the aims of this project was to engender such activity

A further aim was to try and encourage some form of dialogue between those who study the activity of media and information education and those who conduct it. At the start of this project I envisaged a small volume bringing together a number of papers that would both examine the issue of information and media literacy from both an analytic standpoint and from a practical, practitioner orientated perspective. I initially sought chapters from either an academic perspective investigating the activity of information and media literacy or from the angle of

practitioners who could document educational activities. The result of the call for papers was overwhelming. Over 60 chapters were proposed and those that have been selected were chosen as they offer a considerable breadth and depth of interest to both the practitioner and analytic reader. The division of the texts into the two volumes was a hard task and the split used was one of many possible and there were innumerable other ways in which the chapters could have been grouped (many of which I tried out only to reject as they did not quite offer an equal balance).

While the accompanying volume, *Education Practice and Pedagogy*, is concerned with how media and information education can be conducted, this volume is broadly concerned with criticism, history and policy and again the title chosen is but one of many that could have been used. This volume brings together accounts that examine the development and implementation of media and information education in a number of different settings and the chapters come from authors in many different countries and I am particularly proud of the diversity of the chapters included here. Furthermore, in some instances the chapters presented here are the first real attempt in English to detail the development of media and information literacy in particular locations.

We start in Section One with two chapters that examine the theories and ideas of media education. The first is a chapter concerning the theories that have informed media education. In this chapter I seek to examine some of the basic ideas behind the activity of media education, the rationale for it. In Chapter Two Niina Ussitalo examines the manner in which media education may be considered a technology of citizenship. Ussitalo explores the construction of media literacy as a civic competence and questions the degree to which media education can lead to the automatic creation of citizens.

Section Two broadly examines media literacy in relation to public policy and how politics has impacted upon and shaped media education. In Chapter Three Yasmin Ibrahim looks at the 'change-over' from an analogue to digital signal in the UK. Ibrahim examines the cultural construction of 'television literacy' in relation to technological and social change. In doing so Ibrahim explores how the idea of media literacy is continually shaped and transformed by political and social pressures. In Chapter Four attention turns to media education in Taiwan. Tzu-Bin Lin examines the construction of media education in publicy policy and by stakeholders in Taiwan. Tzu-Bin pays particular attention

to the relationship between media education and new media in both policy documents and in a series of interviews with key stakeholders. In Chapter Five Kirsten Kozolanka focusses upon the intersection of media / inofrmation education and the new right political administration in Ontario, Canada. Kozolanka makes use of Gramscian and Frierian conepts to examine how the discourse of public policy gradually shifted.

In Section Three attention is paid to how media education can be developed and practiced. Chapter Six is concerned with a critical evaluation of media education activities in Turkey. The authors, Mine Gecel Bek and Mutlu Binark provide both a critical examination of current practice and some strong suggestions for how the current system may be improved. In Chapter Seven Joseph Borg and Mary-Anne Lauri consider media education in the Maltese educational system. Borg and Lauri identify a number of different influences upon the nature of media education including the Catholic church and UNESCO. In Chapter Eight Mira K. Desai and Geeta Seshu reflect upon the divergent manner in which information and media education is manifest in India. They note the neccesity of information and media education programmes to match the considerable increase in volume of media and information.

In Section Four the authors deploy a more historical approach. Eduardo Villanueva Mansilla examines the historic and current situation of media education in Peru in Chapter Nine. Villanueva Mansilla notes how previous Marxist inspired ideas of media literacy have resulted in a media literacy programmes being regarded in a largley negative manner. Such taininting has resulted in their relative paucity in contemporary times despite the obvious need for such programmes. Chapters Ten and Eleven both consider media education in Russia. In Chapter ten Alexander Fedorov provides a history of the development of media education from Communist times to the present in Russia. In Chapter Eleven Jiwon Yoon examines recent media education both in terms of its own internal development but also condiering external efforts from international bodies.

In Section Five we turn in a different direction with a Chapter Twelve in which Teun Velders, Roberto Muffoletto, Sjoerd de Vries and Piet Kommers propose a new interdisciplinary perspective for visual literacy. This new perspective offers a broader and stronger position from

which to examine visual literacy and the chapter concludes with the details of an extensive case study.


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# Chapter 1

# Theories and Models of Media Literacy

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## Introduction

As numerous scholars have argued, literacy is a contested term (Christ and Potter, 1998). In the most widespread, reportive (how it is used) sense literacy denotes possession of a skilled competence. This interpretation is slightly at odds with the etymological, formal and prescriptive use found in dictionaries in which it refers specifically to textual competence; the degree to which an individual is competent in the skills of reading and writing of a particular language. A literate person is, therefore, someone who possesses theses skills to a certain degree. However, literacy as a term has moved away significantly from referring only to textual understanding (Kress, 2003) and now many forms of literacy can be identified and measured: visual literacy; information literacy, media literacy, multimedia literacy and many others (the analysis of some of which can be found in this and the accompanying volume).

In this chapter I am concerning myself with the idea of media (another contested term) literacy; to be media literate is to be conversant with media. Furthermore, literacy usually refers to a set of *acquired* knowledge and skills, it is the result of a process of education that provides knowledge and introduces and hones the skills that allow that knowledge to be applied. We are not born literate, while we may have certain natural abilities and competencies that allow us to apply knowledge in a particular way and develop certain skills, we accept that the knowledge must be learnt and the skills must be developed through practice. Media literacy is thus widely understood to be a particular body of knowledge and set of skills that has been acquired through a process of targeted media education (Buckingham, 2003, p.4).

In several large studies and reviews of the literature of media literacy there has been a conscious decision to demarcate the possible recipi-

ents of media education by age. Thus media literacy has been examined in relation to: young children (e.g. Rideout et al., 2003); children (e.g. Marsh et al., 2005); young people (e.g. Buckingham, 2005); youths (e.g. Craig, 2003) and adults (e.g. Livingston et al., 2005). Other authors (e.g. Penman and Turnbull, 2007) have regarded media literacy without re-striction to age. The approach adopted here is similar. While children have been the topic of far more media literacy research and comment than adults (Dennis, 2004) many of the ideas explored in relation to children have also been applied to adults. As has been pointed out, many of the fears associated with children being exposed to and nega-tively influenced by media have also been applied to other groups, such as certain sections of the adult working class (Buckingham, 1997; Petley, 1997). Here I want to explore a number of models of media literacy that have been used and applied to both adults and children.

In examining these models I want to 'step back' from looking at what works best or what we should be doing to encourage media literacy. Instead I will look at the *idea* of media literacy, what it is and what con-cerns lay behind it. The chapter will consist of three linked sections; first I will look at the idea that the media can cause change; this will explore whether the media should be examined in terms of its 'form' or its 'content' and whether it can actually cause change. Second, I want to examine how media education and literacy programmes have been deployed and I will briefly look at five different models of deployment. Third, I will look at different ideas of what media education pro-grammes should do and why they should do them, here I will look at a three different models of media education; the inoculation /protection approach; the cultural / demystification approach and the participatory approach, that have and continue to hold sway in media education programmes.

## The Media: Form, Content and the Power to Cause Change

What is meant by 'media'? Can it cause changes in or affect the audi-ence? Are some media more influential than others? Such questions, along with many others, are the standard topics of debate in media literacy circles and despite considerable research we still seem a long way from finding definitive answers to even the most fundamental of questions (Hobbs, 1998). Media, particularly when coupled with liter-acy, is a contested term (Christ and Potter, 1998). As noted above,

literacy in its most precise usage refers to the possession of skills of textual competence; accordingly media literacy should refer to a competency in the media. However, media refers to multiple forms of communication and one key debate that has taken place in media literacy circles is the prioritisation of certain forms of media over others. When teaching media, which 'form' or media technology should we be looking to examine? Buckingham proposes an approach to media education that he argues can be applied to the "whole range of media – from big budget blockbuster movies to snapshot photographs that people take in their daily lives" (2003, p.4). However a number of other authors have argued that the differences between media, particularly the qualities of new media may necessitate a new approach to media education (Gauntlet, 2007; Merrin, 2008).

The issue is complicated further when we consider the difference between media forms and media texts. Media *forms* include radio, television, web technologies, and computer games consoles, various types of mass circulation print media such as newspapers and magazines, and many others. Media *texts* usually refer to the content that is made available by the media forms such as the content of documentaries, animations, web pages, blogs, radio plays, print adverts and actual computer games.

Much media theory has been divided over a key argument related to the power of the media, as both a form and a text, have upon the experience of the audience. One school of thought takes its lead from the work of Marshall McLuhan who proposed that the 'form' of the media, and the senses used in the consumption of that media, result in considerably different audience experiences and even different types of society (McLuhan, 1962, 1964; McLuhan and Fiore, 1967). McLuhan was primarily concerned that literate, or book based culture had resulted in a decline in the use of senses; text based culture required only the use of the sense of vision. This lack of use of the other senses lead to a 'spiritual impoverishment' of the individual. Fortunately, the electronic age offered hope as multi-media would require use additional senses to vision to engage with it. The more senses we use to engage with a media the fuller our experience and the more spiritually fulfilled we will be. Thus it is the form of media rather than its specific content that has the power to structure relations and human action. New forms of media bring about new forms of interpersonal interaction. Against this position a second tradition drawing upon the insights of Raymond Williams

(1974). Williams' key work in this field, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974), is primarily sociological, in contrast to McLuhan's spiritual or psychological orientation. Deploying what became known as his 'cultural materialist' approach he focuses attention upon the social conditions of technological and mediatic development and use. Three key aspects of Williams' work are of particular interest. Firstly, in opposition to the McLuhanite position that media technology changes mankind, Williams proposes that technologies take forward existing practices: 'all technologies have been developed and improved to help with known human practices' (Williams, 1974, p.129). Secondly, technological development does not exist in a vacuum, rather it is tied to socially conceived goals – Williams proposes a 'social history' of technology as opposed to a purely technical account (Williams, 1974, p.14). Thirdly, the speed and direction of technological development is determined by the specific interest of certain groups; 'intention corresponds with the known or desired practices of a particular social group, and the pace and scale of development will be radically affected by that group's specific intentions and its relative strength' (Williams, 1974, p.129). Thus, where McLuhan stresses the importance of technology in structuring human life, Williams proposes that nothing in a particular technology preordains its use or effects.

Reviewing this debate Bolter argues that academic attempts to explain new media, what is often termed 'new media theory' can be divided into two broad camps: 'formalist' approaches – theories that 'appear to focus on 'internal' or even 'inherent' characteristics of the media' – and 'culturalist' approaches – theories that focus on 'characteristics that are 'external'' (Bolter, 2002, p.77). I have argued elsewhere that this debate is tied to conceptions of how we understand media (and in particular new media) and that we must be wary of viewing media technology as in some way outside of society yet influential to it (Leaning, 2009).

A third position focuses more upon the content of the media than its form. Here the basic premise is that media content will in some way affect the audience – the media effects model. Attention is directed at how media content influences behavior, a particular and perennial concern being how certain 'new' content, for example 'video-nasties' or certain computer games result in negative and often violent behavior. This position is underpinned by a positivistic approach to studying and researching media. The media and people's response to it can be measured and interpreted using scientific methods drawn from the natural

sciences. Research in this area uses scientific discourse in its formulations and seeks to establish causal links between exposure to or use of particular media content and specific behavior. While this approach has been subject to considerable criticism (Barker and Petley, 1998) it is still a very influential position and informs much popular comment and popular understanding of the media and, as will be noted below, is very influential in informing certain media literacy campaigns.

Against this view are positioned many academic arguments that challenge the power of the 'media effects' proposition. These arguments are made in academic texts from within the disciplines of media and cultural studies. While not receiving anywhere near the same amount of popular coverage as the media effects accounts (Barker, 1997) these ideas are quite influential, historically at least in media literacy circles, particularly in the UK.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the four positions against the axes of form and content and the power to change behavior.

| *Table 1 – Media Form and Content – the power to cause change* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Attention should focus on…* | |
| | | **Form** | **Content** |
| *Changes in behavior are caused by or related to…* | **Media technology** | McLuhan – different media will cause different effects, media determinacy | Content effects; e.g. media violence causes real violence |
| | **Wider changes in society** | Williams – media forms are part of society | Media / cultural studies |

It is between these four poles or conceptions of the media that numerous debates concerning media literacy take place.

## Modes of Deployment of Media Literacy Programmes

Programmes in media education are usually initiated with a perceived reason. Media education and the resultant desired state of media literacy are consciously and purposively developed to deal with specific perceived threats (Penman and Turnbull, 2007). Media literacy activities may arise in response to the introduction of new technologies or new forms of content. Likewise they may occur due to a perceived 'lack' or

recognition that some form of social behaviour that is desired is not occurring (or that some behaviour is occurring and it is undesired) and the reason that this is happening is tied to the media. Moreover, such fears are not new or a particular characteristic of our time; as Schwartz (2005) points out Socrates / Plato feared writing would damage our ability to memorize. Thus media literacy is a way of achieving a particular goal, of getting an audience (often children or youth) to behave in a particular manner. Media literacy programmes are therefore firmly situated in the history and time of their deployment and use – they are developed to respond to particular issues that have become apparent at specific times and places. Indeed, they provide an interesting way to 'read' the concerns of a society, they offer a window into common fears. Ironically, threats to the status quo identified with the media are often brought to the attention of most people through the mass media; media reporting the perceived effects of media. Furthermore, it is worth noting that media literacy programmes are one of several strategies commonly deployed in the face of a perceived threat upon the status quo by either content or technologies and forms of media. Other strategies have included the state censorship of content (Ermolaev, 1996), licensing and or sanctioning the ownership and / or use of media technology (see for example the restriction of photocopying machines in the USSR during the 1970s and 1980s (Yarim-Agaev, 1989)).

Patterns of media literacy programmes occur for different reasons and are implemented by different agencies in different countries. However, despite this heterogeneity it is possible to discern five very broad patterns:

> First, in many developing countries little if any organised media education occurs (Domaille and Buckingham, 2001). What instances of media education that do occur either take place on an 'ad-hoc' basis and are usually the result of a conscientious teacher or group of locally organised activists. In many instances media education takes place outside of formal schooling and non-governmental organisations may seek to assist in the development of programmes, for the most part these programmes are akin to those mentioned below in the third category.

> Second, media education emerges from associations and non-hierarchical 'grass-roots' organisations of teachers. These tend

to be horizontal organisations of practitioners who come together to share practices and materials and who in certain instances make modifications to the curriculum so as to incorporate elements of media literacy. The key defining instance of such groups is that they tend to be organised outside of formal education yet because the participants are practicing teachers the influence tends to be strong. Such a model is very evident in Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Tyner, 1998). Such groups also play a considerable part in interpreting the subject and may challenge centrist policy and curriculum changes.

Third, a model that is very evident in the US is the 'top down' approach. Here pressure groups such as church groups, television and media regulatory groups, media access groups and professional associations advocate and organise media literacy activities. It is important to note that such activities are often organised to further the interest of the pressure group – they organise media literacy activities so as to achieve their religious, moral, political or professional goals (Tyner, 1998). However as Piette and Giroux (2001) note the situation is not historically static and as policies and technologies change so do the responses of pressure groups.

The fourth model may be referred to as 'curriculum centred'. Here the school curriculum either explicitly includes media education or it is afforded a space wherein media education can be taught, such as social studies or the Japanese model of a 'Period for Integrated Study' (Domaille and Buckingham, 2001). In the UK the formalisation of media education in schools has reached such a degree that it can be one of the subjects taken for school leaving and university entry examinations by students. In such instances media education has been recognised as of importance in educational practices and has a highly structured curricula. However the reasons for including media education in the syllabus may be varied (Edith, 2003). A further point in relation to the incorporation of media education into the school curriculum is that the location in the curriculum may impact considerably upon the type of media education that is taught. For example where media education is located in a personal or health development section of the curricula it tends to be of the inoculatory or protectionist model;

when it is in the language or social studies field it tends to be of the more evaluative approach (Kubey, 2003)

The fifth model can be understood as a government initiated but 'hands off' approach. Here guidance, materials and assistance is made available by government agencies, such as the British Office of Communication and / or other national and international agencies such as the Council of Europe. The guidance and materials are made available either directly or through agencies to the public. This can then be used directly by individuals or by parents and guardians of children to 'equip' them with the means to engage with the media in a non-detrimental manner.

It is important to note that these models are not mutually exclusive. Public policy in general and media education in particular are far from static. As noted by a number of authors in this volume, media education policies have changed considerably in recent years and not always in a positive direction.

## Models of Media Literacy

Running across the varied patterns of deployment are differing models of what media literacy should actually do and why it should do it. These are also historically situated and are tied deeply to academic trends and ideological arguments. Distinct trends and traditions in media education have been identified by a number of authors (Masterman, 2001). Here I will focus upon three key perspectives that influence media education. It is important to note that while the development of media literacy is often seen as a linear process – slowly developing and improving – it has been argued that media literacy responds to wider cultural shifts. Indeed, Edith (2003) argues that media education operates in a manner that is antithetical to a linear progress with teachers interpreting and often challenging curriculum models that are in turn responding to developments in academia. While the three perspectives examined here did emerge and become dominant in a roughly chronological order; the protectionist perspective in the 1960s, the demystification perspective in the 1980s and the participatory perspective in the mid 1990s (Frau-Meigs, 2006) all three are to a degree still evident in media education.

One of the first instances of specific media education is the establishment of a Film School in Moscow in 1919 and in 1926 the establish-

ment of the Soviet Cinema Friends Society (Fedorov, this volume). Both of these activities, and numerous others in the USSR during that period, were intended as devices by which communist ideology could be disseminated and the communist systems of government legitimated. The media were envisioned as vehicles through which communist ideology could be propagated. Interpreting the media in this way was not limited to the Soviets however and the media's propensity to contribute to the dissemination of a particular ideology or value system was noted by commentators from the right as well. From this perspective, education about the media was something that could be used to protect a population from alien and damaging media. In many instances the media were conceptualised as a 'disease' or illness that would infect a population. In the vernacular, media education could then serve as a form of 'inoculation' and protect the population from such insidious and damaging forms of communication.

## The 'Inoculation' / Protectionist Model

The earliest example of this 'inoculation' model of media literacy is most often thought to be F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson's 1933 work *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness.* The intention of this volume and Thompson's follow up work with the journal *The Use of English* was the protection of high cultural literary traditions from what they thought was 'mass culture' (Buckingham, 1998). Collins (1976) regards such efforts at media education as a response to a perception that media were somehow alien to culture. Mass media would lead people away from more difficult or challenging yet rewarding cultural pursuits. Thus people must be taught how to discern 'good' high culture from 'bad' mass culture (Masterman and Mariet, 1994). Media education in this model was a form of protection against media, what contemporary critics and historians identify as a notion of 'inoculation' or protection against the disease of media (Buckingham, 2003: 7). It was not just academics and literary theorists advocating this view however and the UK government's Spens report of 1938 which investigated education in the UK similarly regarded mass media as detrimental: "The pervading influences of the hoarding, the cinema, and a large section of the public press, are (in this respect as in others) subtly corrupting the taste and habits of the rising generation." (Board of Education, 1938, p. 222).

Running alongside this conservative interpretation of the media, the Marxist orientated work of members of the Frankfurt School also warned against the threat of the media. In this interpretation the media were considered as part of the 'culture industry' and while the rationale for resistance to this was very different to that of the Leavisite traditions the resultant approach – a fear, skepticism and characterization of the media as manipulative – had much in common with that of the Leavisites.

This form of media education advocated a defensive approach to examining media texts. Media texts would be examined in educational settings primarily to build in students a defence against them. The media was considered alien and dangerous and the role of media education was to instruct students in how to defend themselves against its pernicious effects. Thus, as Masterman says, this version of media education was "education *against* the media" (2001, p.20, italics in original).

In it important to note that such a model is still very evident in many media literacy programmes today. As Kubey (2003) notes, in the US there is still a strong emphasis upon 'protecting' children and others from 'harmful' media content. Drawing heavily upon the 'effects theories' a considerable body of research is produced by members of the health, psychological and psychiatric professions related to the detrimental effects of media upon children and adults. Much of this research identifies negative effects upon children following their being exposed to too much media, the incorrect form of media or inappropriate media. A further explanation for the longevity of this approach is the importance it places upon teachers. Masterman (2001) notes that teachers are accorded a position of considerable cultural significance within the model. Accordingly the model receives considerable support from practitioners and media studies teachers.

### *Demystification Model*

Drawing upon a range of developments in media and cultural studies that made use of advances in the fields of social theory, literary theory, linguistics and semiotics an alternative approach to inoculatory media literacy began to emerge in the 1960s and reached its zenith in the 1980s. This approach was heavily influenced by the critical theories of Marxism, feminism, post-colonial theory and a strong dose of counter-cultural activism. At core was a concern that much mass-media content is in essence ideology and that the audience uncritically consume such

content (Penman &Turnbull, 2007). The role of media education was to show the ideological premises behind media messages, to lay bare the political messages that were transmitted by the media. In identifying such messages the media would be 'demystified' and shown to be the biased, ideological text it is.

It would be erroneous to see the transition between the inoculation model and the demystification model as being a sudden and discrete shift in approaches. Much of the early work of the demystification model was derived from developments in film theory articulated thought the journal *Cashiers du cinéma*. Film studies was engaged in a struggle to legitimate itself as an academic field and in seeking to depict film as a worthy art form seemingly replicated many of the earlier arguments concerning the value of popular culture as opposed to high culture (Masterman, 2001).

Masterman (2001) identifies the developments in theories of semiotics and ideology in the early 1970s as a key turning point in the media education. The translation of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in 1971 offered a new direction for the study of ideology that was not as 'closed' as the Althussarian model had been. Semiotics similarly made a substantial contribution to media education. Masterman (2001) contends that Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957) made two substantial contributions to the development of media education. First, Barthes' work raises the issue that media do not directly report the world, rather they can only offer a representation of it. The media are not a transparent lens through which we view the world, rather they mediate it. This approach lead to a strong tradition in media studies of examining the nature of the representations and the manner in which particular ideas, people and events are constructed in the media. Second, Barthes' work challenges the distinction between high and popular culture, a prejudice that underpins much of the protectionist model. Barthes was of course not alone in attacking this model of culture and his work is part of a broadly left-wing class based model of cultural value (see Williams, 1958). This approach advocated a broadening of analysis, focusing on popular as well as high texts. Furthermore, Barthes' work targeted items that had not previously been considered 'texts' or subjects of analysis; wrestling, cars, toys and the faces of film stars. These topics underpin the central idea that the subject of study should not only be high art but all culture as lived by people. Only by expanding the scope of analysis can we begin to see the myriad of ways in which ideology flows though culture

and the many ways in which it affects and impacts upon us. Such an emphasis afforded media education a link to the far broader remit of cultural studies that was emerging in the 1970s. The application of the critical tools developed within literary and cultural studies once applied to media resulted in the development of an approach to media educa-tion that was subsequently recognised as a form of 'critical literacy' (Kellner, 1998). This 'critical dimension' within media education has been recognised as of considerable importance (Livingstone, et. al). This approach received and continues to receive much support from teachers of media education. It allows teaching to be seen as an activity that empowers students in the face of ideological forces and endowed teaching with a political function. It is still popular in many areas of media education, is closely tied to cultural studies and similar humani-ties orientated subjects and is strongly present in older more established university departments.

However, the approach also resulted in media education becoming a 'bette-noir' for neo-conservative pundits and policy makers who rose to the political ascendancy in the 1980s and 1990s in many countries. Conservative critiques of media education programmes often draw upon earlier Leavisite ideals of culture and are consequently are dismis-sive of the attention paid to popular culture. Additionally such critiques are also wary of the left wing critical 'bias' in media education pro-grammes. The inherent 'critical' aspects of media studies that challenge existing readings of texts and practices and seek to identify alternate ideological narratives are not popular with more traditional interpreta-tions (see Kozolanka this volume). A further critique is that the demys-tification approach does not equip students with the skills necessary to produce media content. Industry friendly pundits criticized media edu-cation courses for not teaching the actual media production skills nec-essary to work in industry.

## *Participatory Model*

Both the inoculatory and demystification models of media literacy had at core a fear of the mass media impacting upon an unprepared popu-lace and both systems resulted in various strategies to assist users de-fend themselves against the negative effects of mass media. However three notable changes have taken place that have resulted in a gradual shift and move away from these protectionist approaches.

First, there has been a dramatic change in the way media consumption is theorised. Where previously the consumers of media were understood as 'passive', developments in psychology and cultural studies indicated that audiences should be considered more 'active' in their understanding of texts (Buckingham, 1998, p. 37). Audiences were found not simply to be passive in their consumption of media, rather media audiences are conceptualised as being far more sophisticated in their interpretation of media texts. The viewer or reader does not passively consume media, taking in all the messages the media promote. Instead research showed how audiences selectively and actively engage with media content. They seek out certain types or genres of media, identify with characters and generally integrate media content their lives in a way that earlier effects based theories could not adequately explain.

Second, developments in pedagogic practice and specifically the emergence of 'constructivist' theories of learning indicated that media education could be better facilitated by encouraging students to explore media production activities themselves. Constructivist theories posit learning best occurs through practice. The best way to learn an activity is to engage in that activity rather than to learn 'about' it in an abstract manner. Within the field of media education the emphasis should be upon students' experiences of media and most specifically through engaging with the activities of media production, even in its most rudimentary form. In engaging with activities of media production students will be faced with the same decisions and choices that media producers face. In encountering such decisions the students will begin to see how existing media texts have dealt with issues of representation. In turn this will allow the students to develop a more critical attitude towards media texts.

Third are the vast changes in media technology resulting from digitisation and the growth of computing technology and the accompanying transformation of the way in which people approach media. The rise of digital media and its widespread use has undoubtedly had a considerable effect upon how people regard and interact with media. Initially this impact was theorised as a contest between different forms of media technology with digital media gradually replacing existing media (Gilder, 1994; Negroponte, 1996). An alternate and more measured view holds that new digital technologies are shifting the manner in which people encounter and use media. This interpretation regards the media landscape as a mixed environment of new and old media, digital

media have bought about a new 'ecosystem' of media forms (Naughton, 2007). In this new environment the audience becomes far more active, the various communicative channels facilitated by new media mean that audiences not only engage in consumption of media forms but also in production. Jenkins (2006) notes the many ways in which audiences now refashion, expand upon and re-circulate media content. Audiences can no longer be considered passive consumers but must be considered as active elements of the ecosystem themselves.

Against the back drop of these three changes the participatory model of literacy sees the role of media education as one of facilitating engagement with media through both critical and creative practice. As reports from Livingstone, et al. (2005) and Penman and Turnbull (2007) note, media literacy education is now often geared towards the development of skills to encourage the engagement with and production of media content. Media literacy from this perspective is concerned with allowing audiences to engage with and participate in media culture and not to be a victim of it.

## Concluding Remarks

It is important to note that the gradual transformation in tone and approach from protectionism to a more engaged and active vision of the audience is only the most current turn in media education's long history. While the current model is particularly suited to contemporary media and technological practices in certain environments it must also be understood to reflect certain, current ideological concerns. As noted above developments should not be regarded in a progressive manner, the shifts in focus owe as much to gradual transformations in ideological dominance as they do to advances in pedagogical practice. The earlier rationales for media education still inform much practice and it would be erroneous to regard these as in some way deficient; they indicate support for alternate ideological belief systems, not faulty practice. Furthermore, future changes in the political landscape may well result in new pressures and new imperatives upon media educators. What today seem like the best practices and perfectly legitimate approaches may well not be suited for tomorrow's media education needs.

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# Chapter 2

# Media Education as a Technology of Citizenship

## *Niina Uusitalo*

## Introduction

Media education has recently been included in projects of active citizenship in many European countries. Underlying this development is the vast interest in education for citizenship in western democracies from the 1990's on (Gilbert, 1997). In public discussion there has been an almost celebratory view of the potential of media education to empower individuals and encourage them to take part in societal matters. Media literacy has accordingly been designated an essential civic competence that is hoped to boost democratic participation in all age groups and walks of life. Media literacy refers here to the knowledge and skills learners acquire through media education (Buckingham, 2003). The media literacy skills needed for ideal citizenship in the information society have been defined in media education research, state politico-administrative texts and school curricula (For example Masterman & Mariet, 1994). Even academic literature has seldom questioned media education as a tool of empowerment (Critique by Buckingham, 2003).

The appearance of media literacy as a civic competence is understandable in mediatized western societies, where young people are more than ever involved with new media technologies, producing contents online, often out of the reach of parental guidance. The high rate of media consumption by individuals, the influence of the media as consciousness industries, the growth in the management and manufacture of information and pressures to treat information as a commodity have also enhanced claims for the importance of media education since the 1980's (Masterman & Mariet, 1994). Media literacy as a civic competence is defined not only as the ability to critically assess media contents

but also the capability to take action and communicate effectively through media (Masterman & Mariet, 1994.).

Media education can undoubtedly benefit individuals by imparting necessary skills, new perspectives and feelings of empowerment. However, the aim of this chapter is to critically evaluate the assumption that media education can automatically create citizenship, and that this process is natural and straightforward for all concerned. My methodological standpoint is to view media education as a 'technology of citizenship', a term coined by Barbara Cruickshank. This means that media education is a tool for governing individuals towards citizenship. To be specific, media education can be used in a variety of technologies of citizenship, taking place in different social settings and involving different modes of governance. The outcomes of governance are never certain and foreseeable, as the chapter will show.

Furthermore, in this chapter I analyse the construction of media literacy as a civic competence. Actually media literacy is no more a 'natural' part of citizenship than any other civic competence, such as social knowledge, political skills or commitment to democratic principles (See Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Citizenship is always a constructed concept, as are the competencies attached to it. There are also power-related and discursive reasons for designating media literacy as an essential civic competence. Using the term 'media literacy' is actually based on an analogy between the competencies which apply in relatively new, controversial or low-status areas (in this case, media) and those which apply in the established, uncontroversial, high-status area of reading and writing. The analogy is used to support claims for the importance and respectability of the new area of study (Buckingham, 2003). Using the term 'media literacy' is especially understandable in the case of citizenship education, as literacy per se is unquestionably seen as a basic civic competence (See Levine, 1996).

I begin the chapter with an overview of how technologies of citizenship can govern individuals towards citizenship. I then proceed to look at how media literacy is discursively constructed as a civic competence in technologies of citizenship. Lastly I view how technologies of citizenship function on different levels of society through goal-setting, translation and interpretation.

# Technologies of Governance

The term 'technologies of citizenship' may sound unfamiliar and obscure, but in fact these technologies exist everywhere in society in various forms. According to Cruickshank, technologies of citizenship can be discourses, programs or other tactics aimed at making individuals politically active and capable of self-government. Examples can be neighborhood organizing campaigns, an empowerment program, safe-sex education or social service programs promoting self-help, to mention a few (Cruickshank, 1999). In my view, too, technologies of citizenship always aim to construct self-governing subjects, but the goal need not be politically active citizens. Media education could, for instance, be used to construct individuals who are capable of coping in the information age.

In my view technologies of citizenship can be based on liberal, communitarian or republican views of citizenship. The liberal view focuses on the individual role of a citizen in the political system. The communitarian view focuses on citizenship as membership of a community entailing a juridical status. The republican view sees citizenship as a mode of social agency within the context of pluralistic interests. All views have different implications for citizenship education (Dahlgren, 2006; Gilbert, 1996). Citizenship is here used in the broad sense of membership of a society.

Technologies of citizenship are produced on different levels of society, for instance in state strategies, educational institutions and projects promoting active citizenship. Technologies are based on wide-ranging citizenship discourses, which are then formulated into specific programs with the aim of empowering or subjectifying a certain group of people. Technologies in turn may further strengthen and propagate the underlying citizenship discourses. The common denominator is that all technologies of citizenship aim to promote a certain mode of citizenship; they specify methods of attaining this goal and they are aimed at specific subjects. In this paper I concentrate on media education as a technology of citizenship. This means that media education is seen as a means of creating citizenship and furthermore media literacy is seen as an integral part of ideal citizenship.

Technologies of citizenship can also be called technologies of governance. At its most general , the term 'governance' is used as a kind of catch-all phrase to refer to any strategy, tactic, process, procedure or

program for controlling, regulating, shaping, mastering or exercising authority over others in a nation, organization or locality (Rose, 1999). Different authors use the terms 'government' or 'governance'. In this chapter I use the term 'governance' for the sake of textual clarity. I define governance to mean forms of action and relations of power that aim to guide and shape (rather than force, control, or dominate) the actions of others or oneself (See Cruickshank, 1999; Rose, 1996). Governance is not limited to programs conducted by the liberal state, for governance can also involve internal and voluntary relations to rule, the ways we act upon ourselves (Cruickshank, 1999). The study of governance is close to the study of policy as a process, which concentrates beyond the formal machinery of official policy making, for instance on teachers and pupils as policy makers (Ozga, 2000).

Technologies of governance are those technologies imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired events. Rose terms them 'human technologies' in that, within them human capacities are to be understood and acted upon by technical means. According to Rose a technology of governance is an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transacted aspirations to achieve certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed. (Rose, 1999) In my understanding specific technologies of citizenship may utilize several modes of governance. Taking school media education as an example, one can find different forms of governance used to achieve educational goals. Forms of governance can for example be pedagogical knowledge, buildings of a certain design, techniques such as the timetable for organizing bodies in space and time and playgrounds to allow the observation and moralization of children (Rose, 1999).

The aim of technologies of citizenship is to instill a certain way of acting into individuals, who then uphold these modes of action in their own lives. In other words people are objectified into subjects (See Alhanen, 2007). Technologies of citizenship do not cancel out the autonomy and independence of citizens, but are modes of governance that work upon and through the capacities of citizens to act on their own (Cruickshank, 1999). Individuals are thus required to assume the status of being the subjects of their lives (Burchell, 1996). Through technolo-

gies of citizenship individuals are persuaded to choose certain modes of action from a multitude of options. They may also feel empowered in their ability to choose and act. One must note that the relationships between techniques of the self and techniques of government are not necessarily harmonious or mutually reinforcing (Burchell, 1996). Therefore it cannot be assumed that technologies of citizenship will produce a certain type of citizen subject.

## Constructing Citizenship Ideals

Technologies of citizenship involve ideals of citizenship; they introduce tools for achieving those goals and they are aimed at a certain group of people. Focusing on this idea, I wish to look at media education as a tool of producing citizenship and media literacy as an ideal civic competence. Constructing citizenship ideals involves a discursive process of governance, which I call goal-setting. According to Rose, governing individuals becomes possible only through discursive mechanisms that represent the domain to be governed as an intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics, and whose component parts are linked together in a systematic manner by forces, attractions and coexistences (Rose, 1999, draws on Miller and Rose, 1990). This is a matter of defining boundaries, rendering that within them visible, assembling information about the things included and devising techniques to mobilize the forces and entities revealed (Rose, 1999). Following Rose's thoughts, before one can seek to manage a domain like citizenship, one must first conceptualize a set of bounded entities and relations as citizenship which is amenable to management. This conceptualization is never neutral, for defining citizenship means either implicitly or explicitly constructing ideals of citizenship.

In my understanding, technologies of citizenship govern by setting three kinds of ideals: a) they define the attributes of ideal citizenship, b) they define the subjectivities and subject positions of ideal citizens in society, and c) they define what societal problems or challenges ideal citizenship could solve. The same three ideals underlie all purpose-oriented citizenship programs and can also be found in texts promoting media education as a technology of citizenship. Technologies of citizenship are based on ideals of citizenship (for example the ideal of active citizenship) and they can also further strengthen these ideals through their functions. In this process technologies of citizenship also take part in reprehending current modes of citizenship. Individuals

lacking the desired skills are seen as somewhat inadequate citizens, who can be made 'proper citizens' with additional technologies. This is not only a feature of our current times. Cruickshank finds that participatory and democratic schemes for correcting the deficiencies of citizens are endemic within liberal democratic societies (Cruickshank, 1999).

Let us now look at how media literacy is constructed as an ideal in technologies of citizenship. Firstly technologies of citizenship specify media literacy as an integral competence needed for 'proper' citizenship. This means that the discourses specify what kinds of media literacy citizens should ideally possess, and at the same time what some citizens are lacking. Having a certain competence (for instance the ability to use the Internet fluently) makes an individual a proper citizen, and not having the competence makes a person inadequate in terms of citizenship. Even a person who has "adequate" media literacy skills is defined only in relation to a specific competence, forgetting other ways of being a citizen. Thus defining civic competencies leads to the definition of ideal citizenship as well as the reprehension of current modes of citizenship.

Secondly media literate citizens are offered ways of being and acting as citizens: they may be expected to vote, to take part in public discussions or to use media literacy skills in their work careers. One can say that discourses formulate an array of subject-positions that are available to citizens. The positions of the subject are defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or groups of objects (Foucault, 1989). Thus by acquiring media literacy an individual can optimally find work, partake in political discussions and on-line voting and stay in touch with friends and family. At the same time media literacy skills can be seen as important competencies of global citizens and a global workforce. In addition to creating subject positions, discourses enforce subjectivities. This means that citizens are urged to become self-observing, self-governing and self-learning subjects, which makes them adaptable to new social circumstances and subject positions.

Thirdly the actions of media literate citizens are endorsed as solutions to societal challenges of political apathy, unemployment, loneliness or even globalisation. Governments seek to use education as a means of improving economic productivity, as workforce training and as a sorting and selection mechanism for distributing opportunities (Ozga, 2000). Educating media literate citizens is thus not only a goal in itself,

but also a means of achieving societal objectives. The whole chain of thought goes as follows: a) attaining media literacy b) will enable people to take desired subject positions in society c) which in turn will solve societal problems. These statements may be expressed in discourses explicitly or implicitly.

By viewing the process of governance one can gain critical consciousness regarding the ideal image that by taking part in media education participants automatically become active citizen-subjects. The discursive construction of citizenship begins to look more like a utopian view of producing citizens. However, one cannot totally overlook the persuasive power of technologies of citizenship. In the last part of my chapter I will look at how technologies of citizenship work on different levels of society through the processes of goal-setting, translation and interpretation. The final outcomes of technologies of citizenship depend on the process of subjectification which takes place on the individual level of interpretation.

## Three Levels of Governance

Technologies of citizenship come to life on different levels of society. One can specify three levels of governance which can be called goal-setting, translation and interpretation. First of all *goal-setting* refers to the discursive objectives that are formulated by authorities. In the case of technologies of citizenship this means defining what kinds of competencies citizens should have, how they should be and act and what societal problems are hoped to solve through their activities. The process of goal-setting was illuminated in the previous part of the chapter.

The second level of *translation* involves processes which link up the concerns elaborated within general and wide-ranging political rationalities with specific programs for the governance of a specific problematic zone of life (Rose, 1999). In other words, translation involves defining the means of reaching citizenship goals, which in this case refers to media education.

The third level of *interpretation* refers to the process of subjectification, where individuals negotiate their subjectivities in relation to technologies of citizenship. Needless to say, the goals and programs set by authorities can never penetrate society unchanged. Even implementation of exact education policies can never be achieved in a vacuum. Since policies are part of a social environment, they can be expected to be

ignored, resisted, contested or rearticulated to suit local circumstances. (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997) The same goes for more non-specific texts.

To give a clearer picture of the workings of technologies of citizenship, I illustrate them using the educational field as an example. This field is particularly interesting in relation to technologies of governance, be-cause educational practices constitute a core domain of linguistic and discursive power and of the engineering of discursive practices (Fair-clough, 1995). First consider the level of *goal-setting* in the educational field. The media literacy objectives for public education or governmen-tal projects are specified in law texts, state politico-administrative documents and national curricula. Beyond formal official discourses, the media, associations, economic actors and academic researchers influence definitions of citizenship. In all these discourses, ideals of citizenship are constructed and media literacy is defined as a civic com-petence.

Second, in the dynamics of *translation*, alignments are forged between the objectives of authorities wishing to govern and the personal pro-jects of those organizations, groups and individuals who are the sub-jects of government (Rose, 1999). In the field of education this means that individual school principals, teachers and educators have the task of interpreting and enforcing certain citizenship goals set by authorities. Translation is also formulated on the state level in the writing of project plans or curricula. Translation is, of course, an imperfect mechanism which is subject to innumerable pressures and distortions: it is not a process in which rule extends itself unproblematically across territory (Rose, 1999). Those working in schools are not merely passive recipi-ents and implementers of policy decisions (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Educators may, for instance, accentuate certain media literacy goals and utilize specific modes of governance in their teaching. They may em-phasize certain citizenship ideals based on their own associations in organizations or influenced by predominant discourses in the public sphere. Furthermore, educational institutions have their own specific surroundings, emphases on teaching and ways of action, which formu-late or even distort the original goals set for governance.

Third, students *interpret* the educational contents they are faced with. They also enforce certain modes of citizenship in their own lives, per-haps taking some guidelines from the technologies of citizenship they have taken part in. This is to say that the 'governed' negotiate their

subjectivity in relation to technologies of citizenship. Technologies of citizenship are by no means the only settings of subjectification. Administrative and legal discourses, as well as popular culture, provide a range of ways of thinking and talking about oneself as a citizen (Fairclough, Pardoe, & Szerzynski, 2006). At any one time human beings are subject to a variety of distinct practices of subjectification in different places and spaces (Rose, 1999). As stated earlier, the process of subjectification is never completely lacking in autonomy. Nor is it entirely free from the power-struggles of governance. In fact one can identify a dual structure of power in technologies of citizenship. Technologies of citizenship can be seen to be both enabling and constraining for the process of subjectification. The discourses, practices and materialities of governance inevitably make available to people a range of resources out of which specific instances of 'citizenship' can be assembled (Fairclough, Pardoe, & Szerzynski, 2006).

Technologies of citizenship do not rely on institutions, organized violence or state power but on securing the voluntary compliance of citizens (Cruickshank, 1999). The discursive power of technologies of citizenship is based on persuading people that the ideals in technologies are in their best interests. According to Foucault, subjects never absolutely control the discourse in which they operate, but the regularities of discourse direct their actions (Alhanen, 2007; Foucault, 1989). Subjectifying people into thinking of themselves as citizens is accomplished when people internalise discursive practices. Through established practices, people form a certain way of perceiving the world and themselves. At the same time practices regulate more complex ways of thinking by defining ways of perceiving, structuring and conceptualizing the world (Alhanen, 2007).

In offering resources to construct citizenship, discourses of governance also tie people to a certain range of options. This makes technologies simultaneously voluntary and coercive; the actions of citizens are regulated, but only after the capacity to act as a certain kind of citizen with certain aims is instilled (Cruickshank, 1999). In Cruickshank's words, the discourses of democratic citizenship tend to foreclose the ways it is possible to be a citizen rather than seeking to place the question of citizenship within the reach of ordinary citizens. Individuals may thus come to think that they cannot act as citizens without certain citizenship competencies. On the other hand possessing these competencies may give them feelings of empowerment.

It is important to note that even possessing 'civic competencies' such as media literacy, does not automatically mean that individuals will step into the desired subject positions. They may well realize that they are taking part in a technology of citizenship that is promoting certain ideals of citizenship. They may also decline to be subjectified in terms of the offered citizenship ideal, and rather use media literacy for their own ends, such as consumption, entertainment and non-political socializing. The question then becomes whether definitions of citizenship are too rigid if they cannot include activities that people voluntarily partake in, but qualify these actions as non-civic.

## Conclusion

It can be invigorating to take a critical view of oneself and anatomize one's own subjectivity as a citizen. We undoubtedly learn citizenship from our parents, kindergarten, school, media and by taking part in organisations, institutions and in working life. We have learnt from innumerable discourses and practices what kinds of competencies citizens should have and how they should act. Looking at the history of our own citizenship, it becomes clear that in fact our freedom to act as citizens is an accumulation of subjectifications.

In this chapter I have attempted to take a critical view of the process of creating citizens. By viewing media education as a 'technology of citizenship', one takes distance from the assumption that media education can automatically create citizenship by generating media literacy skills in individuals. The analysis of how media literacy is constructed as part of citizenship ideals helped dispel the glorification of media literacy as the saviour of citizenship. As stated in this chapter, governing citizens comes to life through the processes of goal-setting, translation and interpretation. The thought of individuals being inevitably governed towards citizenship may seem simplistic, but in fact individuals do not lose their autonomy and freedom in this process. They are able to make choices, even though technologies of citizenship may present them with certain desirable modes of action. This means that the outcomes of governing people are never certain or predictable.

Aiming to empower citizens through media education sets ideals of citizenship. Defining which skills are important for fully-fledged citizenship is a process of inclusion and exclusion. Some types of competencies and some types of individuals are seen as inadequate measured against the picture of ideal citizenship. Therefore it is imperative to

realize that media literacy is no more a 'natural' part of citizenship than anything else. There is perhaps nothing 'natural' about even being a citizen. As Nikolas Rose puts it, all the essential, natural and defining conditions that tend to be ascribed to the human world – such as forms of subjectivity, conceptions of agency and will, and the ethics of freedom itself – are not antithetical to power and technique but actually the results of specific configurations of power, certain technological inventions, certain more or less rationalized techniques of relating to ourselves (Rose, 1999). Identifying and analyzing these processes need not be disenchanting, but can on the contrary be empowering and refreshing. Transilluminating the process of citizenship construction may in fact be a true source of individual empowerment.

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# Chapter 3

# The Analogue to Digital Switchover: Media Literacy in the Context of Change

*Yasmin Ibrahim*

## Introduction

How we use, consume and interact with new media platforms is an integral part of media literacy in contemporary societies and cultures. The concept of media literacy can mean different things in different times. The switchover from analogue to digital marks a seminal moment in the broadcasting history of the UK where the imminent transformations in the broadcasting landscape politicises the issue of media literacy through the context of this change. The digital switchover is the phased switch-off of the analogue terrestrial television network and its replacement with a new fully digital terrestrial network that involves converting the current broadcasting network as well as encouraging everyone to convert or upgrade their TV, radio and recording equipment to receive digital broadcasting (Iosifidis, 2007). The Switchover entails every household going digital, region by region between now and 2012, and in October 2007 Whitehaven, Cumbria became the first place in the UK to lose its analogue signal (Beaumont, 2007). Significantly the discourse of the switchover is closely connected with information and communication technology) (ICT) skills which are seen as vital to a person's participation in modern society whether it be in the workplace, public sphere, domestic spaces or education (Livingstone, 2003). It underscores how convergence has equated media literacy with a body of skills which will be required to move between the technologies.

According to an OFCOM Media Literacy Audit (2006, p. 11), despite variations in the use and perceptions between digital platforms, television remains the 'dominant platform in terms of people's knowledge and interest'. This highlights the importance of television in people's lives as well as the social implications for the digital conversion and the significance of literacy in defining proficiency both in terms of con-

sumption of programmes as well as people's participation in society through the provision of information and services through the digital platform. The television viewer, then, appropriates the role of consumer-citizen in policy dialogues concerning the switchover.

Television consumption is about an 'everydayness' which signifies an intimacy with television technology and content which is central to people's everyday lives and rituals. The consumption of television then conveys a media literacy that is shaped and informed by both the technology and its domestication in the home (cf. Silverstone and Hirsch, 1992). The conversion to a digital platform firstly breaks a long relationship with analogue television where the interface between audience and content did not involve the technological interactivity which the digital platform emphasises with its 'red button' connectivity. Media literacy in terms of digital television is built on not just the gaining of new skills but perhaps the need to change a relationship and way of thinking that has existed for a long time with the analogue platform. This change applies especially to older viewers for whom television represents the recording and narration of national events and a national consciousness shaped through time.

Beyond the home, the policy arena on television literacy provides a framework for analysing the politics surrounding the switchover. An ongoing narrative describes the changing relationship between technology and society which stresses the cultural and political factors that mediate the taking posession of, use, and spread of technologies. Implicit within the terminology of the switchover is change. While the change in itself is not a contentious issue, the degree to which it is expected to alter the ways in which people consume television politicizes the issue of media literacy. Also, the gaining of new skills by people to engage with new platforms may also influence wider political debates on technological determinism, citizen empowerment, and nationalism. Moreover, new divisions and vulnerabilities may also be created.

As Hilde Van den Bulck (2007, p. 34) points out, the discourse of technological determinism often associated with ICTs is also complemented by a degree of 'technological nationalism'. This means that the 'efforts of the government to promote digital convergence via public service broadcasting (PSB) is inspired not just by an urge to increase the potential of PSB and the welfare and well-being of citizens but also to improve economic investments and political prestige.' Van den Bulck (2007, p. 34) aptly asserts that new digital media leads to the creation of

a society in which the 'old grounding of people and culture in time and space disappears to be replaced by an interactive and selective global citizen-consumer who has the power to shape his or her identity and social life across old boundaries'. Such a transition from push to pull technology, she argues, implicitly demands new forms of literacy that can enable citizens to move easily across the boundaries between consumer and citizen and to give them more autonomy, freedom of choice, and opportunities.

This chapter examines the cultural construction of television literacy through the context of technological and social change. More importantly, it provides a narrative of how the concept of media literacy itself is being continually shaped by our political and social context. And it broadens the definition of literacy beyond its simple meaning to embrace different forms of engagements and understanding, thus linking it with wider issues of inclusion, age divide, citizen rights, the changing role of PSB and the transformations within broadcasting in Europe.

## Defining Literacy

The abundance of literature on the concept of literacy indicates that it is a problematic term and has been viewed from different perspectives, from library sciences and education to media studies. Its flexibility in terms of its standard definition can be explained by variations in our understanding of the nature of knowledge but equally by its contingence upon the cultural and social contexts in which it is discussed. This makes literacy a relative and elastic concept (McGarry, 1993) which has evolved through time. As Martin and Grudziecki (2006) put forward, while technology does not create social order it is complicit in social change. And while social change itself can be driven by various factors, technology can be a tool, a medium, and a mirror that reflects these changes. Livingstone (2004) discusses the role of history, culture and social forces in defining literacy in different eras. According to Livingstone (2004, p.12), literacy "concerns the historically and culturally conditioned relationship among three processes". Firstly, "the symbolic and material representation of knowledge, culture and values". Secondly, "the diffusion of interpretive skills and abilities across a population", and thirdly, "the institutional especially the state management of the power that access to and skilled use of knowledge brings to those who are 'literate'". The definition of literacy as such has been

transformed from the ability to read and write to mean the ability to understand information in the digital age (Lanham, 1995).

In our era the term has been associated with other forms of literacy including 'digital literacy', 'multimedia literacy' and 'information literacy' (Bawden 2001), highlighting not just the impact of technology in shaping the concept of literacy but also the value societies place on information as a social capital. The term 'digital literacy' has been used by a number of authors throughout the 1990s to refer to the ability to read and understand hypertextual texts (i.e., those found on the Internet and accessed by a computer) and multimedia texts (i.e., those which involve a combination of text, still images, animation, audio, and video) (Bawden & Robinson, 2002). Thus, in the digital age, an information-literate citizen is one who is able to acquire and use information which is appropriate for any situation.

Digital literacy and multimedia literacy require more from those who consume new media technologies. While literacy in itself entails understanding information, however it is presented, digital literacy involves the skills of understanding images and sounds, etc, as well as text. This highlights the key distinction between print and digital literacy. The latter can encompass new forms of presentations and perhaps new forms of engagements (Lanham, 1995), a distinction that leverages on the idea that engagement with different information in different media varies according to individual traits and learning styles. Bawden and Robinson (2002, pp.297-98) assert that information literacy and indeed digital literacy can encompass a broad form of literacy which can include all the skill-based literacies but it cannot be restricted to them nor can it be restricted to any particular technology or set of technologies, and understanding, meaning and context which are central to it.

In specific reference to the digital switchover, the term 'media literacy' needs to be defined and, as Martin and Grudeziecki (2006) assert, it is focused more on the nature of various genres of media and the ways in which messages are constructed and interpreted. According to Bawden (2001, p. 225), media literacy as a term is used to imply critical thinking in assessing information gained from the mass media and the Internet, and as such is seen as a component of information literacy. Information literacy itself then alludes to a broader skill base which requires 'the ability to access, retrieve and evaluate information in the midst of the information explosion' (cf. Bawden, 2001, p. 243). For Livingstone (2004, p. 8), a skill-based approach to new media literacy would then

include four components: access, analytical competency, evaluation (or the ability to discern and bear judgement), and content creation. Digital television requires new types of skills and engagements but also an understanding of how information can be used for different transactions, transactions which can re-configure audiences as consumers and citizens. Thus the issue of access goes beyond the upgrading of hardware and must entail a satisfactory engagement with symbolic texts through the cultivation of analytical skills (Livingstone, 2004, p. 6).

The UK's National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE, 2004) acknowledges that 'media literacy is taking its place in the array of literacies increasingly recognised as necessary for not just day-to-day life but also for participating actively in democracy.' In the policy arena, media literacy is linked not just with issues of access but also the changing political economy of broadcasting and equally with the changing role of PSB and its justifications for continued public funding. According to the then UK Minister for Culture, Media, and Sport, Tessa Jowell (Jowell, 2006), 'PSB is becoming public service communications. This means serving citizens and consumers in new ways.' It is this dimension of literacy which goes beyond the functionalist model that is vital to the discussion of media literacy in the context of change. Whilst the functionalist perspective is preoccupied with the range and levels of proficiency with regard to cognitive skills, the socio-cultural model premises literacy as being relevant and defined by the social context, and it is in this sense that literacy is ideological (cf. Martin and Grudziecki, 2006, p.250)

## The Changing Role of PSB

Historically, Public Service Broadcasters in Europe have been entrusted with the core responsibilities of education, information and entertainment. Beyond these key responsibilities, PSBs rely on public funds and enjoy relative autonomy and monopoly in national broadcasting which are endorsed by the government. These characteristics are key parts of PSBs, where serving the public is the most important goal and providing open access to information is fundamental. However, the secure position of PSBs has been increasingly threatened in recent years. As Collins (2004, p. 34) points out, 'with the introduction of new information and communication technology, satellite television in Europe in the early eighties provoked debate that the end of spectrum scarcity

seemed to delegitimise political intervention in broadcasting markets.' Collins argues that new possibilities and services often put the focus and attendant criticism in terms of cost and programming back on public service broadcasters' performance. The changes in terms of technology, emphasis on commercialisation, and the need in the policy arena in Europe to assert consumer choice, led to PSBs losing a clear definition of their mission and function in society in the 1980's. While the 1990's saw a reaffirmation of the continued support of these institutions by both the European Union and national governments, there was nevertheless a desire to review the role of PSBs in a changing social and technological context.

The promotion of media literacy in the UK is a new responsibility placed on OFCOM arising from section 11 of the Communications Act 2003 (OFCOM, 2006, p. 4). OFCOM defines media literacy as the 'ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'. Besides OFCOM, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), as the UK's Public Service Broadcaster, has also been entrusted with playing a crucial role in the switchover. Digital UK is the instrument by which the main broadcasters will coordinate the switchover and the BBC is a majority shareholder in it. The 2006 White Paper 'Building Digital Britain' sets out the special role of the PSB in this context. Beyond the provision of generic information about digital TV and radio, the BBC must also develop new interactive and web-based services. Van den Bulck (2007, p. 36) contends that in the context of change from analogue to digital, with the traditional notion of open access becoming obsolete, it is indeed apt that PSBs become the central instruments in guaranteeing equal access to media content. He also states that it is equally apt that PSBs will function as a cultural cement to provide common frames of reference for engagement in terms of programming. Similarly, Iosifidis (2007, p.6) proclaims that PSBs have played a significant role in enhancing consumer interest in digital services and making the various switchover targets seem achievable.

Under the new charter agreement which spans from 2007 to 2016, the BBC's responsibilities will entail extending the digital network to ensure that consumers who now receive analogue can receive digital terrestrial signals in the future, informing the public by undertaking a major communications effort, and helping the most vulnerable TV viewers by providing practical help with the switch to digital TV for those aged 75 and over and people with significant disabilities (Department of Cul-

ture, Media & Society, 2006 White Paper; Iosifidis 2007). The issue of access and universality are central to the premise of PSB where it is expected to be available to everyone and to have a universal appeal. The principles of universality and quality which PSB signifies in the digital era is thus underpinned by issues of access and new divides which politicise media literacy as a crucial component in removing these imbalances. Digital television is supposed to effect an increase choice and quality, with its ability to transmit more channels and services for the same cost, yet it is also associated with the digital divide (Iosifidis, 2007). As Gunter (2003, p. 43) points out, the concept identifies a division in society between people who have access to and the ability to use new information and communication technologies and those who don't. The challenge for governments with regard to the digital divide is that that these new media technologies should facilitate rather than undermine equality in education, participation and culture (cf. Livingstone, 2004, p. 6).

As Christensen (2002, p. 26) points out, making the assumption that television is the most important public sphere is dangerous, as the notion of universal access as a fundamental part of citizenship is at risk if there is a significant minority that is not able or unwilling to cope with new technology and changes in the market.

The failure of ITV digital and the success of Freeview, along with the backlash from the Hutton Inquiry, criticisms of reporting on the war in Iraq, and the reticence of the Labour government to dismantle or restructure the BBC against the changing economics of 'spectrum plenty' have made the digital agenda all the more crucial for the BBC's continued existence and relevance in society since 2002 (See Smith & Steemers, 2007, pp. 43-45). It needs to be pointed that ITV digital was a subscription-based digital terrestrial broadcast service that was launched in the UK in 1998. This broadcast service jointly owned by Carlton and Granada Communications became financially unviable leading to its demise in 2002 and in the same year the defunct digital platform was used to launch the Freeview service in the country. In contrast, Freeview is a free digital terrestrial service which broadcasts free-to-air television channels, radio stations and interactive services from BBC and other broadcasters. The service can be received either through a set-top box or any television equipped with an integrated digital tuner.

## Television as a Shared and Intimate Space

Ellis (2000) observes that the historical context of television and con-
tent has changed. The period between the 1940s and the 1980s symbol-
ised an era of scarcity where only a few broadcasters were in the market
and broadcasting for only part of the day. The ensuing period from the
1980s was characterised by an era of availability where satellite and
cable joined as competitors for market share. Ellis (2003, p. 39) terms
the present phase as an 'era of plenty' in which interactive media tech-
nology changes not so much original content itself but more the con-
texts of television reception and use. The transformation of the techno-
logical infrastructure primarily entails new ways of accessing content via
multiple platforms and therefore there is more technology to consume
(Van den Bulck, 2007). Digital broadcasting allows around four to six
times as many programmes as analogue to be transmitted in the same
spectrum and this enables an increased mix of programmes for viewers
and the freeing of the spectrum for other purposes (Webb and Crine,
2007). Tessa Jowell defined the switchover as one that 'leaves us with a
legacy of choice' (BBC, 2005) transforming the concept of spectrum
scarcity and the discourse of terrestrial public service broadcasting as a
public good that should be safeguarded in the interest of the nation. In
addition to the five terrestrial channels (i.e. BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Chan-
nel 4 and Five) viewers will be able to watch a whole array of free-to-air
channels for no additional fee (Beaumont, 2007). In 2006, Mark
Thompson, Director General of the BBC, stressed that the corporation
needs to forge a new relationship with its audiences 'as audiences won't
just be audiences any more, but participants and partners. We need to
get to know them as individuals and communities and let them config-
ure our services in ways that work best for them' (cf. Smith and Steem-
ers, 2007, p. 50).

Television as a technology has a long history with its audience and this
trajectory implies the acquisition of a literacy which is mediated through
the domestication of the technology within the intimate space of the
home. As a medium that connects the private space with the public
spheres of society, television is deeply embedded within the moral
economy of the household where the household is part of a transac-
tional system, dynamically involved in the public world of production
and exchange of commodities and meaning (Silverstone et. al., 1992,
p.19). Television prior to the 'era of plenty' (Ellis, 2000) signified a
temporal space shared by millions but consumed within the private

confines of a domestic setting where spectrum scarcity created an audience which wasn't fractured by the availability of choice that satellite or cable television later offered. The everyday, the unusual, and national rituals were mediated through the television space which temporally shaped the consciousness of a consuming public (cf. Scannell, 1989). Iosofidis (2007, p. 6) contends that TV has been characterised as a familiar and trusted medium of communication and it has contributed to shaping our social and cultural understanding of the world.

Gunter (2003, p. 45) points out that television is a 'familiar technology to most people and certainly more familiar then the PC-Internet. Television nevertheless is a traditionally passive medium and the digital TV platform invokes a shift in psychological orientation, whereby television is treated as an interactive medium.' Gunter (2003) asserts that with the PC 'users are accustomed to engaging with the technology's interactivity because it is part of the inherent nature of the machine. With television, on the other hand, users are accustomed to switching it on and letting its content wash over them in a more passive mental mode.' OFCOM's 2006 Media Literacy Survey confirms this psychological orientation. The survey of 3,244 respondents found that television was the most familiar platform and TV is still being used in a largely traditional way with only 30% of those with digital TV having made use of the interactive features. OFCOM's literacy audit of 2006 also distinguishes age as a determinant factor in media literacy as over-65s have significantly lower levels of media literacy than other age groups. Additionally the research revealed that this lower usage can be explained by a perceived lack of need for new digital services. Receptivity to new technologies has then been associated with demographic factors such as age, socio-economic class, level of education and disposable wealth (cf. Gunter, 2003, p. 43).

Although the conversion to digital has been increasing, mere access does not translate to literacy. The proportion of households that receive a digital television service has increased from 19% in 1996/97 to 65% in 2005/6 (OFCOM, 2006), and according to a report by OFCOM in September 2007 about 84% of UK homes have digital television already installed, which is an increase of 13% from 2006 (Beaumont, 2007). In an earlier survey commission by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) in 2001 the findings revealed that while 40% had access to digital television only one in five used interactive

services at least once a week on this platform. The majority of the re-spondents never used interactive services and the over-60's constituted 70% of those who avoided the interactive component (cf. Gunter, 2003. p. 46). It reaffirms Gunter's (2003, pp. 46-47) contention that availability does not necessarily translate into usage and with more fa-miliar technologies that have established usage patterns and psychologi-cal orientations, users must be re-conditioned to approach them in a different way. Media literacy here, then, entails not only the acquisition of certain skills but altering some of the learned orientations and usage patterns with technologies. Equally, viewers have a low tolerance for working hard to find interactive services in multi-channel environ-ments. The switchover from analogue to digital is also perceived as unpopular as it is regarded as an extra cost to watching television (Klein et al., 2004, pp. 8-14).

## Discourse of the Switchover

The discourses surrounding the switchover raise various issues which politicise media literacy. These debates include the issue of interactivity, the construction of the elderly and the disabled as 'vulnerable consum-ers', and notions of citizenship and empowerment.

### *Interactivity*

In this context media literacy also entails familiarising the audience with the whole notion of interactivity. Christensen (2002, pp. 4-17) moots the argument that digitization and the emphasis on interactivity is insti-gating a re-domestication of television. This is based on the fact that television in its traditional form has been a one-way flow of informa-tion where it has been associated with an ideology of control. In com-parison, the digital platform allows audiences to engage with the me-dium differently whether by consuming programmes on demand or taking part in polls. The concept of 'view on demand' coupled with the notion of audiences having the possibility of taking part in programmes - reality shows such as *Big Brother*, for example - mediates the notion of television programming being embedded within people's daily routines. It promotes the idea of the audience choosing when they watch a pro-gramme and equally the idea of them having the ability to change the outcome of a programme through their voting or participation. Chris-tensen (2002, p. 21),  in citing Rafaeli and Sudweeks, emphasises that while the issue of interactivity has been associated with the evolution of

new forms of sociability he caveats the boundless opportunities pre-
sented by digital television by emphasizing that digital literacy must
precede this desire to fully engage with the interactive potential of the
medium. As such, technology does not come with instant interactivity
and neither can it provide social interaction through the sheer availabil-
ity of this function. These are entailed by both technical and media
competence (cf. Christensen, 2002, pp. 22-23). The conversion to the
digital platform associates media literacy with the ability to embrace
interactivity. Television as a technology no longer signifies a bounded
sphere. Due to convergence it can encompass other platforms includ-
ing radio and the Internet, and media literacy is then defined as the skill
to engage with the technological features as well as the content. Ac-
cording to the Media Literacy Audit (OFCOM, 2006, p. 4), while 77%
of the population have access to digital radio services, one in three are
not aware that they can listen to digital radio services through either
their digital TV or internet service. The audit also reveals that interact-
ing with TV is most common among the 25-34 age group with 52%
having done so and there is a steep decline in interaction from age 45
upwards (OFCOM, 2006, p. 4). Christensen (2002, p. 3) infers interac-
tivity must have an 'impact on everyday life that goes far beyond what
is determined by people's uses and gratification.' As such, interactivity
as part of the digital environment must spread beyond its availability to
embed into people's consumption patterns. Interactivity for the sake of
interactivity invokes resonant debates on technological determinism
and equally society's ability to shape technology according to the con-
text and function. The 'red button' ideology, which is intrinsic to new
media literacy and interactivity, is not limited to audience engagement;
it also extends into the type of programming that would support ele-
ments of interactivity. Hancer (2006, p. 429) points out that 'BBC does
not commission programmes now without at least considering the
interactive options that could be made available and additionally all
mainstream news programmes are supplemented by interactive con-
tent.'

### The 'Vulnerable' Consumer

Much of the discourse on digital literacy and the digital switchover has
also discursively constructed the 'vulnerable consumer'. While the
rhetoric surrounding the switchover is steeped in the discussion of
opportunities, choice and empowerment, it is also equally saturated

with the discourse of the vulnerable consumer through the new forms of social exclusion such new technologies can bring (Iosifidis, 2007, p. 7). The lack of literacy in engaging with new digital platforms constructs such consumers as socially and politically vulnerable where access to new technologies may not necessarily translate into having the necessary acumen to become active consumers of the technology. As Gunter argues, 'new ICTs can take time to become established in a usability context even though access has been widely achieved. On the other hand, younger better-off and better educated people are more likely to be early adopters of new ICTs' (cf. Gunter 2003, p. 43).

The British government, through its 2006 white paper, has acknowledged that those aged 75 and over and people with disabilities are particularly likely to face practical difficulties in obtaining, installing and beginning to use digital equipment (DCMS 2006). OFCOM's Consumer Panel 2007 found that some consumers, especially the elderly, are confused about the equipment they will need and are less confident about installing the technology themselves (Chapmen, 2007; "Consumers confused…," 2007). The OFCOM Consumer Panel Report's (OFCOM, 2007) categorisation of the 'vulnerable' include 'older people, those with a disability, people on low incomes and people in rural areas.' The Media Literacy Audit (OFCOM, 2006, p. 3) identifies age as a key discriminatory factor in terms of the volume of television consumed. Those aged over 65 watch move than 65 additional hours of TV per week compared to 16-24 year olds. TV viewing is similarly high amongst low-income households (aged under 65) or those with a disability (aged under 65), particular those with hearing or mobility difficulty (OFCOM, p. 33). A survey done by Help the Aged also reveals that 57% of older people still saw digital television as a threat (BBC, 2005). There are thus concerns that the digital switchover may not reach these segments of the population (BBC, 2005), which thwarts the ideal of universal access. Implicit within this discourse of the 'vulnerable' is the fact that the lack of literacy among these groups may widen existing society divides while creating new barriers which impede engagement with and participation in society.

### Citizenship

In discussing the issue of audience and democratic citizenship, Murdock (1999, p. 8) defines citizenship 'as the right to participate fully in social life with dignity and without fear, and to help formulate the

forms it might take in the future.' But importantly Murdock (1999, p. 11) argues that full citizenship also entails required access to relevant symbolic resources to use them effectively, thus highlighting the relevance of literacy and its relationship to citizenship. A knowledgeable citizenry is integral to public engagement in participatory democracies. Inevitably media are intrinsically implicated in the functioning of democracies, and television is often seen as integral to the media platform. The discussion of television has been about double articulation, where it involves both engagements with technology as well as content. The increasing politicization of information and exchange of ideas and dialogues as a necessity to the functioning of democracy has over time made television a major contributor to the sustenance of the public sphere. Notwithstanding the ongoing debates on the dumbing down of serious political discussion and the trivialisation of the political, television often occupies a dominant role in the spread of information and the circulation of knowledge. However, as Dahlgren (1995) infers, the concept of the audience alone is inadequate and far too media-centric for the analysis of the public sphere and thus there is a need to incorporate the notion of the citizen. This is evident in policy discourses where there has been a further splintering of the audience into the consumer and the citizen to illuminate the different roles and relationships which position the media in society as both a moral and cultural force. Ed Richards, Chief Executive of OFCOM, in distinguishing between the consumer and the citizen presents the former as 'private individuals who transact in the market place with supplies of many kinds.' The role of the latter on the other hand is about 'making judgements about what is in the wider public interest.' Media education and literacy for OFCOM would then entail both recognising the rights of the citizen and the consumer and ensuring that both are given proper attention.

While traditionally television has been about a one-way communication, the digital platform offers interactivity and the ability for consumers to create content (Richards 2007). Tessa Jowell's speech to the Royal Television Society in 2005 identified '...digital technologies as having the potential to reconnect citizens with one another and with government,' and 'have the potential to reinvigorate democracy' (BBC, 2005). Gunter (2003, p. 44) contends that the integration of technology is regarded by government as an important democratic development. In this sense, much of the information for participation in public life and the governance of societies and communities can be transmitted via

television. Hancer (2006) advances the ability for television to enable e-governance with the discussion of the National DigiTV Project in 2005 where local governments had investigated the medium, created services and honed them to become a local portal offering relevant services and information on a safe and familiar medium. According to Radar (1991), the information-literate citizen will be distinguished by an ability to acquire and use information appropriate for any situation and will also be able to deal effectively with rapidly changing environments. Here media literacy is not only situated through the change in the medium but also the wider social and political implications and potential that the medium can offer.

## Conclusion

The changing nature of the broadcasting landscape and the demise of a consensual policy framework regarding the BBC and the discourses surrounding the 'digital revolution' signify a context in which media literacy is being continually shaped in contemporary UK society. This socio-cultural framework goes beyond the functionalist paradigm of literacy which predominantly premises on the acquisition of a range of cognitive and practical skills. This politicization of media literacy renders it as an ideological tool to moot discussions and meanings of literacy. The notions of empowerment, choice, vulnerabilities, citizenship and the construction of the media-savvy audience are discourses that implicate media literacy in complex and tenuous ways. Media literacy has inevitably been shaped through both the adoption and appropriation of new technologies and the demise of the old, but the purpose of technology in itself does not define the meanings we bring to the concept. The interplay of cultural and social forces (cf. Livingstone 2004), and consequently the ideological and policy paradigms that evolve, contextualise and frame literacy.

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## Chapter 4

# New Media and Media Literacy: A Case Study of Media Education Policy in Taiwan

## *Tzu-Bin Lin*

## Introduction

Over the last 15 years, there has been a boom in media education in the East Asian region. However, this has appeared as a grassroots movement rather than a national policy. The first White Paper expressing the determination of the central government in promoting media literacy was issued by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education in 2002 (see Ministry of Education, 2002b). This makes Taiwan the first country in East Asia to have an official vision of media education. Therefore, the case of Taiwan is worth of studying.

This paper aims to explore how the discourse of media literacy is constructed by stakeholders and in public policy in Taiwan. The value lies in the analysis of empirical studies of media literacy policy with a specific focus on its relationship with new media. It is difficult to explore the policy discourse fully in this paper because of the word limit. So I have chosen one of the most popular issues in this field – the relationship between new media and media literacy. Media education and media literacy are both used in this paper. Media education refers to the process of teaching media literacy as the desired goal.

New media (also 'new media technology', 'information and communication technology', 'information literacy', and 'e-Learning') has increasingly occupied a significant role in media education discourses. These terms are used in various contexts with various meanings and definitions. In this paper, these terms represents different dimensions of new media. They will be used in different paragraphs but all refer to new media. Various approaches to media education such as active civic engagement (Goodman, 2003), and creativity production (Buckingham, 2003; Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Burn & Durran, 2007) approximately link to the issue of new media technology. One of the

common premises of these diverse approaches is that the appearance of the internet and other digital technology brings a new era of media education with both potential advantages and challenges.

## *The Context*

In locating this debate on the effect of new media technology in a Taiwanese context, there are two types of rhetoric: the moral anxiety of the 'internet café phenomenon'; and the utopian view of the 'revolutionary' power of new technologies to make Taiwan one of the leading countries in the world's knowledge-based economy.

Young people spend more time surfing the internet than on any activity apart from school (Lin, 2003), a finding that shows that the influence of the internet has become stronger than that of television among the young. As well as importing the internet from western countries, Taiwanese people have also imported the internet café business. As well as the rise of online games and the appearance of broadband technology, internet cafés have become increasingly popular and teenagers are the target consumers. Internet cafés provide children and teenagers with new entertainment and social spaces that allow them to develop new types of relationships and interactions. However, new social issues are emerging from these spaces. The Ministry of Education (MOE) website identifies issues brought about by the prosperous internet cafés. Internet cafés are accused of causing phenomena such as an increase in gambling and increases in the number of dropouts, gangsters, and sexual criminals (Ministry of Education, 2001). The following words are from a mother who called a helpline and complained about internet cafés (Su, 2001):

> I have to go to all internet cafés to search for my fourteen-year-old son. I have tried different ways to change him and to bring him back from the internet cafés. But, I failed again and again. My son keeps going to internet cafés. The distance between my son and I becomes increasing longer. Is he enchanted by devils in internet cafés?

As seen from the responses of the MOE and the desperate mother, the internet café has caused moral anxiety among Taiwanese people. An example of the second theme can be found in the *Challenge 2008*, a six-year national development project, and the National Science and Technology Program for e-Learning (*NSTP for e-Learning*). As stated on the *NSTP for e-Learning* website, the national programme has at least three missions: providing better training, bridging the digital divide and im-

proving teaching and learning. What ICT has brought to the country is represented as positive. Furthermore, the objectives of *NSTP for e-Learning* are:

- Create a diversified e-learning environment afford for learning anytime anywhere.

- Better equip the general public for a digital era to improve national competitiveness.

- Stimulate market demand to expand the economic scale of e-learning industry

- Shape an environment favourable for e-learning under policy guidance

- Taiwan as an R&D canter for e-learning soft/hardware in global Chinese community.

- Taiwan becomes a global R&D powerhouse of e-learning-related technology.

As a result, the focus of *NSTP for e-Learning* is on how to develop platforms, software and applications but the social and cultural dimensions of ICT are not mentioned in this programme. As a result, it is a skill-oriented approach to ICT/e-Learning – the idea of learning is reduced to a way of acquiring the skills of operating hardware and software to access information. This rhetoric in *NSTP for e-Learning* shows the public a picture of how new technology is going to lead society to a better future – a 'technological determinism' perspective which is one of the main themes of the information society (Buckingham, 2007a; MacKay, Maples, & Reynolds, 2001; Selwyn, 1999; Webster, 2002). Unlike the anxiety surrounding the internet café, the potential of ICT is represented as inevitably positive and may bring advantages to the nation in terms of global competition.

## *Methodology*

This paper aims to analyse the discourse of media education in Taiwan. The assumption underpinning this methodological choice of analysing discourse is that social change is caused by the change of discourse. Consequently, this assumption leads to what Fairclough (1992) suggests that a way of understanding or predicting social change is to explore the discourse.

As Gordon & Lawton (2003, p.264) explain, "a White Paper describes official policy towards an issue and is often a prelude to legislation." In other words, the White Paper maps out the future direction of Taiwanese government in promoting media education. Deconstructing the policy discourse helps people to know more about the implicit assumptions hidden behind the policy discourse and may bring changes to the future policy and implementation. Utilising the concept of discourse in policy analysis can provide "a particular and pertinent way of understanding policy formation" (Ball, 2006, p. 26).

However, discourse is an ill-defined term in social science as Cousin and Hussain (1984) point out that the concept of discourse is increasingly becoming overloaded and is more likely to cause confusion than clarity. In this paper, I adopt Fairclough's definition (2003, p. 124):

> Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions.

Fairclough's approach is known as critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995, 2003). Like Ball (1994), Fairclough also adopts a broadly acceptable Foucauldian view of discourse which links to the issue of power on the theoretical level. Practically, Fairclough proposes to conduct 'Textually-Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA)' which is ignored within the Foucauldian theoretical framework (Fairclough, 1992). It is necessary to indicate that there are various theorists claiming that their approaches are CDA. Although they share some common ground, there are differences between them (see Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA represents a set of approaches in the field of discourse analysis and its features are as Mills (2004, p. 131) describes:

> Because of these difficulties in [discourse] analysis, critical discourse analysts have developed a radically different form of analysis, which defines the term discourse differently … . they have integrated Michel Foucault's definition of discourse with a systematic framework of analysis based on a linguistic analysis of a text … .

Moreover, Taylor (2004) demonstrates how to use CDA as a means of analysing education policy in Australia and described CDA as an approach which focuses on both linguistic and sociological dimensions of discourse. In this paper, techniques such as looking for key terms, identifying various styles of speaking and modality, and tracing the use of metaphors will be adopted. The linguistic evidence will be discussed

together with the wider social context of Taiwan and the context of media education.

## Remarks

While analysing the policy text and interviews which construct the discourse, it is crucial to indicate that this policy discourse is situated in a specific wider social context that I have described earlier Moreover, the discourse of media education in Taiwan is a mixed one – i.e. there are various elements that have been selected from other relevant discourses of media education worldwide. The focus of this paper only reflects one dimension of the policy discourse. Therefore, it is necessary to point out that the whole picture is far more complicated and incorporates various rhetoric and approaches of media education. The data in this paper come from the content of the White Paper, relevant policy texts and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders.

Moreover, it is crucial to recognise that what I am attempting to do is not about making judgments – i.e. not to approve or disapprove the ideas that the stakeholders have proposed in the interviews and in the White Paper. There are lasting debates within the discourses of media education worldwide and the role that new media play in media education is one of them. It cannot be simply evaluated without considering the context, the motivation of the advocate and the outcomes. My goal here is to deconstruct the discourse of media education in Taiwan with a special focus on the role of new media.

# Representation of New Media

## Policy Makers on New Media

As a prevalent issue in the policy agenda (as it is in the NSTP), the new media do not attract the same attention from the policy makers of media education. Most policy makers do not mention new media or ICT when talking about the target of media education. SC is a typical example.

Extract A

1    R*:    Is there any priority target of media education [in terms of different media]?

2    SC:    No! In terms of media education, there is no priority target. Each medium has its

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | | own characteristics and unique problems. Print media, television and internet have their |
| 4 | | problems. There is no priority. Human beings live in the media environment. It is |
| 5 | | impossible to get in touch with one medium only. So, it is necessary to know the |
| 6 | | context. We can't help focusing on television and advertisings only. In the early |
| 7 | | stage, we need to start from the most influential media. Television is more popular then |
| 8 | | newpapers. Television is most influential medium. |
| 9 | R: | How about the new media? For example, the internet. It is also popular among |
| 10 | | children and teenagers. |
| 11 | SC: | Mm Yes. Internet is important as well but compared to television, it is still not |
| 12 | | that popular. So, television is the first target. |

*R is researcher; SC is one of the policy makers.

Although SC mentions 'internet' with 'television' together and claims that every medium is unique and equally important, his focus is actually on television because he points out in line 6 to 8 that television is the main target of media education in Taiwan. This *contradictory style* – i.e. SC expresses that there is no priority target for media education in Taiwan while indicating that television is the main focus – reduces the credibility of his claim. Otherwise, SC generalises new media as internet and traditional media as television. A simple binary opposition shows that he is aware of the new media's difference from traditional media. However, there is an imbalanced relation between traditional media and new media. He stresses how influential television is and it appears five times in this extract whereas the internet is mentioned once. Using 'can't help' suggests that he is really concerned about television and it is an inevitable choice in Taiwan because it is 'the most influential medium'.

However, the consumption of new media has begun to override the advantage held by traditional media such as television and radio in Taiwan. 'The internet café phenomenon' and playing online games has

drawn more attention from the public in recent years. SC ignores the reality that new media are taking the place of traditional media and the gap between traditional media and new media is becoming increasingly narrow in terms of their popularity. This is not to underestimate the influence of television or to claim that television is not important any more. There should be a better balance between new and traditional media in the discourse of media education.

Another interesting point in this extract is that SC juxtaposes television, a type of media, and advertising which is a genre rather than a type. It may be that SC tries to put emphasis on a certain genre of television and to imply that advertising is the most influential genre. Focusing on television also appears in SW's interview.

Extract B

1   R:      To you, what is the most important medium?

2   SW:     We do not make what the most important medium explicit. When we have the

3           workshops with teachers, we never say that the workshop is about teaching television.

4           But, inevitably, television as the popular medium on transmitting information is the main

5           theme. Taiwanese people spend lots of time watching television and this reflects on our

6           course and concepts of media education. Although we have been trying to have an

7           introduction to internet literacy, the main theme of our teaching materials is television.

8           We never use the materials from radio because it is not a popular media nowadays.

Here, SW shows a *style of confusion* – a confusion of her identities as policy-maker and media educator. Asking her this question is to explore if there is any priority target in the policy but she brings in her experience as a media educator. It does not mean her experience is irrelevant. However, it shows that her identity is shifting in this interviewing setting. From the interviewer's viewpoint, she might be supposed to act as a policy-maker in this context rather than as a media educator because the questions before this extract and after are both about policy-making

rather than media education in general. Her identity as a media educator has an influence on her choice of the target of media education. While talking about the television, SPW also uses 'inevitably', an indicator of high modality. However, in line 6, she said, "although we have been trying to have an introduction to internet literacy, the main theme of our teaching materials is television." Comparing to 'inevitably', 'have been trying' that is used to describe the 'internet literacy' represents less concern about new media through a lower modality claim.

From these two extracts, the main target of media education in Taiwan is 'television'. Disregarding the increasingly popular digital media such as the internet, mobile phones and computer games among children and teenagers, the policy makers still put their focus on television. To some extent, it is a reflection of these policy makers' interest because they do not have relevant experience in issues about new media except KL. Although KL is the only one with the expertise in ICT and education, KL does not argue for including more ICT elements in the White Paper. As he expressed his intentions of taking part in the policy-making committee, he said:

Extract C

| 1 | KL: | I think I had better provide you some information before answering your questions. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | At that time, I was interested in information literacy so I took part in the [policy-making] |
| 3 | | committee. There must be something in common between media literacy and |
| 4 | | information literacy. |
| 5 | R: | Information literacy? How do you define it? As I know, your research interest is in |
| 6 | | ICT and education. Right? |
| 7 | KL: | Yes. But. With a special focus on ICT and library. |
| 8 | R: | Library? |
| 9 | KL: | Yes. How to search for information through ICT in a library. As you may know, I just |
| 10 | | stepped down from the position as the head of the college library about a year ago. |
| 11 | | My research is more on the use of ICT in library. |

In line 3 and 4, KL uses 'must' which is a high-modality auxiliary to indicate that there is a strong link between information literacy and media literacy while 'something' is used to represent the link. By contrast, 'something' shows an uncertain relation – KL does not know what the link is because 'some' is a general adjective without specific indication, representing a lower modality. High- and low-modality indicators existing in one sentence produce a contradictory statement. It is an attempt to collapse information literacy and media literacy into each other but it is an unsuccessful one. KL may know about information literacy but is not clear about what media literacy is. Without making the link explicit, this attempt brings more confusion than clarity. Although 'information literacy' is mentioned in KL's interview, it does not represent ICT in media education or in general sense. Specifically, KL puts emphasis on ICT in libraries. This is the reason why, in the section of implementation of media education, a library is one of the key sites for promoting 'life-long media education' for adults and it is proposed by KL.

Here, another point is that there is an implicit distinction between 'good (high quality)' and 'bad (low quality or even corrupting)' media. Libraries are represented as good places for accessing media and gaining information in KL's interview while the internet café, a prevalent social phenomenon causing lots of debates in Taiwanese society, is ignored, and can be seen as a significant discursive omission. The internet café could be a place for people to access 'information' as well and is far more popular than the library among the younger generation. However, the public opinion about internet cafés is negative and so they are not viewed as positively as libraries in terms of accessing media and retrieving information. The library and the internet café stand for opposite places to access media, showing an implicit cultural distinction within in this discourse – the cultural dimension of 'access' is there but unspoken. (The cultural dimension of access will be discussed later.)

### *New Media in the White Paper*

Consequently, there are only a few paragraphs about information technology in the White Paper which is as follows (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 11):

> According to the "Challenge 2008: National Development Plan"
> set out by the Taiwan government, the core components that
> form the basis of national competitiveness are human resources

and living environment. These rely on the quality of the public in-
frastructure and the development of professional talent. These
are important issues for Taiwan to face the fierce competition
and daunting challenges on the global scale. The core value of
Taiwan's development lies in the sustainability of human re-
sources. Projects such as e-Generation Manpower Cultivation
Plan, Cultural and Creative Industry Development Plan, e-Taiwan
Construction Plan and New-Home Community Development
Plan all emphasize the general public's access to information and
ability to use, discern, create and express information. All these
objectives are almost identical with the core values of media edu-
cation.

This is a typical 'intertextuality' in policy-making as Ball (1994) de-
scribes, in which some policies may enact or contradict others. At this
point, the vision of new technology in *Challenge 2008: National Develop-
ment Plan* provides the legitimacy to the White Paper in the education
field. The use of prefix 'e-' in the extract shows a positive view of new
digital technology which is its power to enhance the life of Taiwanese
people culturally and economically. New media are described as ulti-
mate solutions for the new global challenges and competitions that
Taiwan is facing in terms of economics and culture. The 'e-' provides a
magic solution while claiming that the core values of 'e-' solution are
identical with the values of media education although the use of 'al-
most' shows a reduction of modality. However, one critical point is left
blank: *what are the core values?* As I have demonstrated in the discussion
above, creating media content – media production by learners – has not
been stressed in the White Paper, in the interviews and other relevant
sources. Only in this paragraph, 'create information' becomes part of
the core values of media education. This inconsistency shows that the
policy borrowing is an inferior one which causes contradictions. The
policy makers do not have a solid definition of the core values of media
education in the first place, nor a clearly-conceived idea of the relations
between new media and traditional media.

Furthermore, there is an omission of human agency. In the policy-
borrowing text, only various projects are mentioned without answering
the questions such as: *who or which departments are going to be in charge of the
implementation?* In other words, there is no clear agency presented here.
Besides the institutions, other social agents such as teachers and learn-
ers are missing. It is a character of the *objective style* of policy text in gen-
eral. There is no personal pronoun presented in the policy text, which is

a common method to achieve a highly *objective style*. Carter et al. (2001, p. 134) provide an explanation that one possible effect of the absence of pronouns is to make the text impersonal and give the readers a feeling that they receive the facts. The policy text tries to disseminate a specific representation of a certain issue and the absence of personal pronouns brings about an atmosphere of *objectivity*, which is a rhetorical strategy to increase the credibility and reliability of it.

Although it can be argued that every policy is unavoidably a generalised one and presents itself as objective, it does not mean that the objects of the policy - the Taiwanese people with a specific focus on children and adolescences in this case - should be ignored. New technology and relevant projects are taking the action to face the global challenge while the ultimate aim of this policy, the Taiwanese people or at least the younger generation, are excluded.

Another example of new media is in the beginning of the White Paper and its reference to the importance of media (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 4):

> In the 21st century, competition is fierce and the challenges are daunting. Information is accumulated at a rapid pace in the global village where economies, cultures and societies interact. Information has become a necessity of life for all world citizens, no less important than sun, water and air. The time spent on media is an important element of daily life. In the case of a typical elementary school student in Taiwan, apart from school, travel to and from school and sleep, he or she spends half of his or her leisure time watching television. The hours spent by adolescents on TV, computer games and surfing the Internet have been on the increase.

'Information' and 'media' are both mentioned in the extract but link up with different target audience. 'Information' is paired with citizens that usually imply adults while 'media' is linked with children, typically elementary school students. An implicit distinction is made by this pairing that there are two kinds of new media: one conveys 'information' to citizens (adults); the other provides entertainment for children. Information should come from more serious media and this implies that there are good media as trustworthy sources of information. Information is the key term in this discourse and acquiring the skills to access information is the aim of ICT and e-Learning. However, this discursive construction is not the same in media education. The definition of

accessing information, for example, is different. In the discourse of e-Learning/information (or digital) literacy, technology is usually viewed as a neutral learning tool that is detached from its social and cultural context while the cultural dimension is the key in the discourse of media education (see Buckingham, 2007a).

Moreover, comparing the public response to the *internet café phenomenon* and the ideal magic solution of ICT/E-learning is an example. New media and technology such as computers and the internet are crucial to these two phenomena. The former causes anxiety among teachers and parents while the latter represents a new pedagogic revolution. The same implication can also be found in the distinction between the library and the internet café as I have discussed above.

In the first half of this extract (from line 1 to the beginning of line 5), there is a predominance of abstract terms such as 'competition', 'challenge' and 'information' coming together with dynamic verbs like 'accumulate' and aggressive adjectives such as 'fierce', 'daunting' and 'rapid'. These linguistic features provide the actors, these abstract terms, with a strong degree of agency. On the contrary, children in the second part are allocated less agency in terms of their relation with media: they simply 'spend' time 'watching' television. Moreover, another discursive construction of the 'lack-of-agency' children is produced through omission of significant cultural activity such as the internet café, arguably because such activity, while more dynamic than 'spending time', would also be potentially subversive, and remote from either the world of 'information literacy' or the 'culturally healthy citizen' who is the desired object of the White Paper (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 15). There is no relevant discussion on what children are doing in the internet café or with the internet in the interviews and in the White Paper. The role of the internet is presumed as positive in ICT/e-Learning discourse and as negative in the internet café phenomenon. The users, children and young people in this context, and their use of internet are ignored. In other words, there is no recognition of the internet café culture of children and young people when the internet café functions as a prevalent social phenomenon and causes moral panic within the society.

Both television and new media including computer games and the internet are mentioned but, as it describes, the consumption of television occupies half of children's leisure time. The role of television, a traditional form of media, is still more important than the new media.

In addition, the role of information is highly valued and is deemed as important as sun, water and air which are vital to people's life. The 'sun, water and air' are for physical wellbeing while information is for mental wellbeing. It is a metaphorical device for relating the importance of information to the construction of the healthy citizen. The other example is *Part 1 Implementation of Related Laws and Regulations* of *Chapter 3 Policy on Media Literacy Education* in the White Paper. Three out of four relevant adjustments of laws and regulations relate to television and other traditional media, and the rest focus on lifelong learning. The internet is mentioned in relation to lifelong learning in the White Paper as follows (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 22):

> 3. The enforcement of the Lifelong Education Law: the encouragement and subsidy of media broadcasting and production of media education programs:

> Article 14 of the Lifelong Education Law stipulates that electronic media shall provide a certain percentage of channels to broadcast programs relevant to lifelong education.

> Television, broadcast, Internet and print media shall actively participate in the production and broadcasting of media education programs.

Yet, confusion occurs here as there is a mixing of two different educational practices: lifelong learning and media education. It can be surely argued that there is a possibility to connect media education and lifelong learning together because lifelong learning is an established sub-area in the education agenda in Taiwan. The issue is that there is no relevant content in the Lifelong Learning Law mentioning the teaching of media education or media literacy (Ministry of Education, 2002a). Therefore, even though there is an article in the Lifelong Learning Law on producing and broadcasting lifelong learning programmes; it will not guarantee that the electronic media are going to produce media education programmes as it is assumed in the White Paper.

It is an important point that the new media are frequently absent and ignored by policy makers. Although the key term 'information' appears many times, it has nothing to do with the new technology. It can be concluded that the national focus on new technology is not reflected in the written text of the White Paper while a specific medium, the television, is the main focus in the written text which constructs a television-oriented media education discourse.

## *Visual Images about New Media*

The ICT discourse is strengthened by the visual images in the White Paper. New media devices appear in the visual images more than television which is the main medium discussed in the written text. Figures one to seven are images concerning new media drawn from the White Paper. Figure 1, is an image from the cover of the White Paper, and shows several television sets, a computer monitor, a desk-top computer and CD-ROM. A mixture of various media seems to express that media education in Taiwan tries to incorporate all media. However, the rest of images are more about digital technology and new media such as CD-ROMs, computers, keyboards and several mice though there is one more image of a bookshelf full of books. The images of new media are in the majority in the White Paper and most of them are technical devices such as figures one, three, four and seven.

In figure two, a boy, a computer-savvy child, concentrates on watching the computer monitor with a curious facial expression. The computer seems to be something magical and the child can use it without restraint. There is no fear or uncertainty but attraction and familiarity – the child is familiar with the computer. The fifth figure shows a '0-1' flow running through a smaller earth with the real Earth on the right. Some continents are more vivid in the smaller digital earth. It suggests that the digital technology condenses the space while making the Earth more visible and comprehensible. The sixth figure is another representation of digital flow emitting from the satellite dish to the satellite in space and this flow covers all continents on earth. These three figures depict images that represent a 'Brave New World' created by new digital technology.
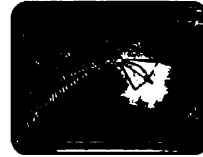
Figure 1

Figure 5

Figure 2

Figure 6

Figure 3

Figure 7

Figure 4

Source: The White Paper on Media Literacy Education. (Ministry of Education, 2002b)

## New Media and Media Education

It is noticeable that there is a gap in the interviews and policy texts – that is there is only a limited element of new media. The policy makers

deliberately put more emphasis on traditional media but keep a distance from new media (SC and SW are examples). There is certain type of cultural discrimination against aspects of new media culture in Taiwanese society but it is ignored by these policy makers. Various types of new media are not stressed in the interviews and the policy texts. However, new media is an existing issue and, therefore, the policy makers borrow from other policy texts (the *Challenge 2008: National Development Plan*) without clearly explaining its relation to media education at all. The inter-textual borrowing does not fulfill its original aim – that is to fill in the representational gap of new media in the White Paper. In a word, some new media are mentioned in the White Paper but in a reductive account. The policy makers omit any consideration of the new media cultures of young people, which are highly appreciated by various media educators in other countries (Buckingham, 2007c; Burn & Durran, 2007; Luke, 2003; Marsh & Millard, 2000; McDougall, 2006). Instead, they simply borrow the utopian rhetoric of e-Learning and information literacy.

The argument here is that, as policy makers and advocates, two important issues need to be put into consideration: one is to learn from those who have practised media education to avoid falling into similar pitfalls; the other is to be aware of the social context and the issues that the policy aims to tackle. As a widespread social phenomenon, new media and related issues are under-represented in the White Paper. Moreover, within the reductive account, the borrowed text causes confusion between the discourse of e-Learning/ICT in education and media education. The borrowed text does not help readers to clarify the role of new media/ICT in media education discourse but increases confusion by mixing two different discourses – the discourse of ICT in education and the discourse of media education.

The difference between these two discourses has been a lasting debate (see Buckingham, 2007c; Burn & Durran, 2007; Luke, 2003). One example is the UK where there has been much discussion between government agents, academics, schools and commercial companies. Various people provide insightful critiques on the current situation of ICT in education in the UK (Buckingham, 2007c; Selwyn, 1999; Selwyn & Fitz, 2001). The UK government invests heavily in providing 'access' to equipment but this kind of 'access' does not mean changes will occur automatically and ICT in schools is a 'narrow training in technical skills' (Buckingham, 2007c, p. 112). In the US, there is also a reflection on the

use of new media and new technology in the education setting. As Cuban (2001) describes the situation, schools are well-equipped with computers but the use of them in classroom is very limited.

As Buckingham (2007c) argues that 'access' should not be just about the access to the ICT equipments but to 'cultural forms of expression and communication', the model of UK media education can be expanded and applied to new media so that it can prepare learners with critical media literacy which in turn helps learners in terms of media culture. Furthermore, the UK model also relates to the rhetoric of creativity and media production. This debate of the role of new media/ICT in media education has not occurred in Taiwan yet as is presented in the White Paper. As a result, some of the main themes of new media in media education such as the potential of media production to foster critical understanding (Buckingham, 2003; Burn & Durran, 2007) are missing.

The blurring of boundaries between rhetorics of media literacy and of e-Learning is a crucial issue to media educators as Burn and Durran (2007) have discussed. It is argued that media education includes all media and digital media such as ICT as it is part of it. However, with the increasing importance of digital technology and of the notion of information/digital literacy, there is a trend to view media education as ICT. It is necessary to clarify the difference between these two discourses although there are some overlaps between them. One succinct and persuasive account is from Buckingham (2003): it is the difference between 'learning through media' and 'learning about media'. ICT is a subset of the first category while the aim of media education is the second one. Learning through media means that media are tools of learning and media are means of learning while learning about media focuses on media as a subject in terms of culture. The above discussion does not mean that new media/ICT are not important in media education. On the contrary, Luke (2003, p.115) points out how the media educator should face the challenge of new media with the special reference to media education in Australia:

> To avoid ending up on the cul-de-sac of the information super-highway, media educators need to take charge of new media by using new media, teaching with and about them. They should seize the moment and create the kinds of conceptual links and nodes from the core principles of old-style Media Education (e.g., narrative, genre, semiotics, editing, medium-specific design fea-

> tures, audience, political economy, etc.) and design a new web-
> like concept map within which to locate an expanded definition
> of media literacy that connects across various media.

Besides Luke, the work of Buckingham (2007a, 2007b) and his col-
leagues (see Burn & Durran, 2007; de Block & Rydin, 2006; Willet,
2005) is to make media education current. It can be argued that the
trend of media education in the UK and in Australia is to expand 'old'
media literacy and to adjust it to teach new media. Meanwhile, there are
other academics proposing that new media, the internet in particular,
can increase the civic engagement of young people (see Bennett, 2008;
Montgomery & Gottlieb-Robles, 2006). These show that new media
have a strong impact on the future development of media education. I
would argue that Taiwan is no exception. Therefore, the relevant policy
needs to address this issue in-depth and with more care.

Figures one to seven show readers another side of the discourse which
coincides with the text borrowed from the *Challenge 2008: National De-
velopment Plan*. To some extent, it amplifies the policy borrowing that
represents a technological determinist approach. As with the verbal
borrowing, the images do not clarify the role of ICT in media education
discourse, but reinforce the positive view of new media in the same way
as the verbal discourse of e-Learning. The visual rhetoric connotes
highly generalised ideas about new media such as digital flow and the
global village. Moreover, the relationship between children and media is
reduced to merely technology as in image 2 – a boy uses a computer.
The computer-using image represents access to the equipment rather
than access to cultural forms. It is a highly reductive view of the use of
new media – learning through media which is a technical approach to
ICT/new media. Learning how to operate the machine and use soft-
ware is the key element. Children's media culture is not just about
knowing how to use computers. Learning about media – that is to
know the media culture and foster critical skills of understanding media
– is under-represented.

## Conclusion

In terms of the place of ICT/new media in media education, neither
the written text nor the visual images make the relationship overt in the
White Paper. Within the contradictory styles of SC and SW, there is an
explicit preference for one medium – television. New media are not the
priority of the policy although a technological determinist approach is

implied in the borrowing of text and visual images. The policy makers recognise the importance of new media but they do not know how to address it in the White Paper. One of the possible explanations for this is that their research interests are not in new media but in television and they are not aware of the debate on the role of new media in media education simply because they are not familiar with new media. To fill in this gap, they have borrowed ideas from another policy, the *Challenge 2008: National Development Plan*, without making adjustments to fit in the context of media education. It, therefore, causes a contradiction and confusion in the White Paper. The discourse of ICT/e-Learning/information literacy does not contribute positively to the construction of the discourse of media education in Taiwan. Moreover, it forfeits an opportunity to define the role of ICT in media education. As I have demonstrated above, young people's cultural use of new media is ignored by the policy makers and is reduced to a utopian rhetoric of new media technology. In other words, the cultural dimension of new media is absent in the discourse of media education in Taiwan.

In terms of new media, the media education in Taiwan adopts a skill-oriented approach to new media rather than a cultural approach. Lacking of a clear definition of, and approach to new media in the White Paper means that media education in Taiwan may not have enough capacity to deal with issues of new media, especially young people's media culture and new media which are prominent cultural practices in the local context.

As expressed above, there are other issues in the discourse of media education in Taiwan. New media is one of them but is under-represented. I would argue that it is an issue that needs to be dealt with. This deconstruction may enable the policy makers in Taiwan as well as in other parts of the world to pay more attention to the role that new media should play in media education.

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# Chapter 5

# The Politics of Media Literacy and the Struggle for Democratic Citizenship and Media: Lessons from Ontario, Canada

*Kirsten Kozolanka*

## Introduction

In the province of Ontario, Canada, three incompatible trajectories—education advocacy, New Right politics, and the information and media environment—are the key forces at play in establishing, retaining and extending media education. This chapter examines Ontario's engagement with media education as a case study of the challenges facing efforts for fostering media-literate citizenship within these environments. In so doing, it makes broader connections between media education and democratic media, suggesting that media education is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to foster critical citizenship in conjunction with the struggle for democratic media. As such, the successful struggle in Ontario to keep media literacy on the curriculum is relevant to media literacy struggles in other jurisdictions. For instance, the "No Child Left Behind" and other educational policies launched by President George W. Bush in the US shift education significantly towards a harsher, narrowly focused and under-funded model of education that makes it difficult to teach students critical thinking.

The 'critical' in critical media literacy and in critical citizenship is sometimes implied in general definitions of media literacy, at the same time as some definitions lack the attention to standpoints and contexts that clearly fall into the critical realm. The Association for Media Literacy (AML) in Canada is an example of the former, while the Centre for Media Literacy in the US leans towards the latter. Overall, neither organization explicitly tackles media literacy as the broader "project of radical democracy" put forward by Kellner & Share recently (2005, p. 372). Torres & Mercado (2007) address the requirements of a critical

approach to media literacy head on in their three-dimensional conception that I use in this chapter:

> (1) develop a critical understanding of how corporate for-profit media work, driven by their political and economic vested interests; (2) search for and support alternative non-profit media; and (3) characterize the role of teachers in helping students and their parents to become media-literate users and supporters of alternative media (p.260).

What I am calling "critical citizenship" in this chapter emerges from the Torres & Mercado understanding of critical media literacy.

The chapter is underpinned by the theories of Gramsci (1971) on how political change takes place. Gramsci theorizes civil society as the site of political and ideological struggle, as well as the site where intellectual and moral leadership is exercised for the purpose of gaining consent to govern from civil society. His work conceptualizes how social transformation and ideological reformulation emerge from the ground up, as well as from the top down. For Gramsci, political change takes place when a class or group achieves leadership in both the sphere of economic production in political society and in the social forces of civil society. To accomplish this, the group or class must build a system of alliances that go beyond its own narrow interests, moving through phases of increasing political consciousness and solidarity to the point that it has sufficient power to influence or transform social and economic relations. This is relevant to Ontario in 1995, when the Conservative Party under Premier Mike Harris came to power with a New Right platform of remaking citizen-state relations through massive restructuring. It is also germane to the 'bottom-up' approach of media literacy advocates.

Gramsci's views on education also speak specifically to the ideals of critical media literacy. He envisioned the transformation of education as a starting point for nurturing what he calls "organic intellectuals" who are able to play leadership roles in society. He considers leaders or directors of their social groups as organic intellectuals. Gramsci theorized a humanistic education system that produced these human problem-solvers who are capable of taking up any job *in addition to* the role of good citizen. The key is to restructure the education system to focus on producing creative, autonomous thinkers rather than the technical workers needed for immediate, practical uses (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 26-

43). This, of course, is the opposite of the stress placed on practical skills training and the slashing of education budgets, including media literacy education, by the government of Ontario in 1995.

In Gramsican terms, critical media educators are inherently suited to operating as both grass-roots consensus-builders within one of the central institutions of society, but also as organic intellectuals playing leadership roles in society.

The chapter is also informed by the work of Freire on literacy in transforming education into activist movement. Freire was in the forefront of shifting education and literacy from a narrow focus on text and self towards how they work together in contexts (Luke, 2000, p. 453). His 1970 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, sparked a literacy movement that was egalitarian, collectivist, student-centred and based on joint negotiation. His work speaks to the centrality of the process of transformation and turning perception into action. It also openly imbued literacy studies with power and class analysis. This grass-roots, collective approach to education was instrumental in struggles for media literacy education in Canada and elsewhere, and proved fruitful in the specific case of the struggle against the Conservative government's withdrawal of media studies from the Ontario curriculum in 1998. In the case study in this chapter, media education advocates similarly turned perception into action by taking up the challenge posed to media literacy.

For a critical conception of information literacy, we can turn to the work of Feenberg (2001), who views technology as shaped or constructed by society in all its political, cultural and economic aspects as well as in negotiation and struggle. Feenberg rejects deterministic and essentialist approaches and argues for the dialogic and participatory potential of technology to liberate from social domination: "We must ourselves make the decisions that will steer the future development of educational technology" (p. 87). He advocates for a focus on "sustaining the dialogue that has always been at the heart of the educational experience" (p. 90). Instead, simplistic managerial and reformist educational efforts tend to "close off the process of intellectual exchange" (p. 83). The latter comment aptly describes the reality of the managerial approach to education espoused by the Ontario provincial government of 1995 and other New Right political projects. This case study shows how media education advocacy in Ontario challenged implicitly the enclosure of education and information literacy into narrow and decontextualized transactions.

Tyner (1998), too, examines information literacy in the context of media education, suggesting that it can move beyond simple issues of access to technology and computer literacy with their "technical and skills-based approach" (p. 98). She stresses how information technologies can be used effectively by addressing critical and cultural literacies.

Discussion of information and media literacy from the perspective of critical media literacy is not complete, however, without an examination of the object of literacy education: the corporate information and media system itself. Most media education in Canada focuses on information and media practice in efforts to foster critical thinking, but the systems supporting such practice are often ignored. Canadian scholarship on media education is slowly moving towards a more critical stance, led in part by the work of long-time media education pioneer, Barry Duncan. In 2005, Duncan visited Australia and New Zealand, where critical media literacy is the norm, and he has since incorporated this contextual perspective into his work (Duncan, 2007).

Canadian critical communications scholars, however, often focus on the political economy of communication without explicitly addressing media education. Yet, clearly, they understand the limitations imposed by such corporate environments, particularly within the very concentrated Canadian media environment. A critical history of media in Canada would cite classic studies such as the Davey Committee from 1970 and the Kent Commission from 1981 that "have pointed to the ways in which [media] concentration narrows the perspectives found in the news media, as well as raises the spectre of owners manipulating news to suit their own corporate or political agendas" (Gasher & Skinner, 2005, p. 52). Of concern in Canada is the ever-increasing consolidation of already huge media corporations across different media markets, which prioritizes efficiency and discourages diversity of views by reusing content across media holdings. Skinner and Gasher argue that corporate expansion of media also has an impact on the quality of media content, "as resource cutbacks and lay-offs invariably follow takeovers" (p. 54).

Advances in communications technology have made this possible, according to McChesney (2003), but technology in itself is not to blame, it has merely been the enabler: "The real force has been a shift to neo-liberalism, which means the relaxation or elimination of barriers to commercial exploitation of media, and concentrated media ownership.

There is nothing inherent in the technology that required neoliberalism" (p. 30).

Cheaply produced content is content that relies on information subsidies from government, as one of the main providers of current affairs content, and from public relations professionals, who are the suppliers of soft news and entertainment. Advertising money, which has its own corporate interests, becomes a central component in keeping media enterprises afloat. The corporate media system is not in the business of supplying information for citizenship, but "advances corporate and commercial interests and values and denigrates that which cannot be incorporated into its mission" (McChesney, p. 35). Thus, participatory citizenship, which demands media literacy, suffers from the impoverished content that results.

As with the discourse on education under the Harris government and other New Right governments, discourse on technology was deterministic as well as determinedly focused on narrow objectives that fed corporate needs for trained workers, rather than critical citizens. In Ontario, this symbolic and material environment placed into jeopardy gains made by media education advocates and called into question the very need for such education.

## Advocacy, Politics and the Information/Media Environment

Pungente (1998) says the media literacy movement in Ontario was grounded in public and parental concerns about violence in the media, as well as in the support and "informal lobbying" of teachers themselves (p. 5). It is likely that this would not have happened without the formation in 1978 of the Association for Media Literacy (AML), which developed a textbook, summer courses for teacher training and conferences, as well as lobbied governments in support of media education over the years. These two strands of providing support for teachers and promoting media literacy have remained constant throughout the years (Provençal, 2004, p. 6). In 1984, AML was joined in its efforts by the Jesuit Communication Project, which develops and promotes media literacy, and has a media literacy resource centre (Provençal, 2004, p. 9). Spurred by such advocacy, Ontario exhibited leadership in education policy in 1986 by becoming the first jurisdiction in North America to make media literacy mandatory on the high-school curriculum (Duncan, Pungente, & Andersen, 2002), implying a commitment through

educational policy to the needs of critical citizenship. Since then, media education advocates have maintained a strong presence in pedagogical circles in Ontario.

Both previously and currently in Ontario, successful media education is seen to include: a grass-roots movement involving teachers, support from educational authorities, in-service training, the existence of appropriate expertise and teaching materials, an organization to facilitate information sharing and curriculum development, appropriate means of evaluation, and open collaboration of those involved (Duncan et al., 2002). In addition, it has gained further inspiration from the experiences of Australia and New Zealand, which takes a contextual and critical approach. In Australia, for example, Morgan (1997) suggests that an imperative for successful media literacy studies is the autonomy of teachers within classrooms, alongside national educational policies and commitment to multicultural and social justice agendas (p. 28). Although not usually explicitly stated, recent advocacy in Ontario reflects this broader approach (Duncan, 2007).

This multi-layered environment of grass-roots advocacy, organizational strength and relationships with government officials served the media literacy movement well in 1998 when the Ontario government attempted to shelve the media studies course.

After a promising start to media education in Ontario, in 1995 the political environment shifted. The novice New Right provincial government began a hegemonic project to remake Ontario society that included massive cutbacks in public education spending.

Prior to the 1995 election, the election platform document of the Conservative Party signaled that there was to be significant change in the operations of government that was predicated on the disputed claim that there was a crisis in the polity that needed to be addressed (Walkom, 1997). Within months of its coming to power, the Ontario government began to follow through on its platform and, as Woolstencroft (1997) argues, "negated much of what previous governments had accomplished" and became "the leading voice of neo-conservatism" in Canada (pp. 385-386).

Heeding the advice of the right-wing provincial government of Alberta to move quickly, and also to keep the expected opposition off-balance, the government began by making extensive cuts to the public sector and, as Ibbitson (2001) wrote, then "shoehorned more than a genera-

tion's worth of reforms and restructuring into two and a half years of unremitting action" (p. 148). Government spending cuts in the first few months of its mandate alone totaled $5.5 billion, including cuts to health, education, social assistance, labour and housing. Although education was not listed for cutbacks, the government signalled early in its mandate that it planned to restructure the Ontario school system. Paquette (1998) writes that the government proceeding with changes to education governance and funding "at warp speed… attacking on all fronts in rapid succession" (p. 13).

In early 1997, the Harris government announced a further series of policy and structural initiatives that profoundly changed the way government would function in relation to the citizens of Ontario. The changes included reduction or elimination of some local control of public schools and major jurisdictional shifts in how education and other major public services were handled from the provincial income tax base to the municipal property tax base (Ralph, Régimbald, & St-Armand, 1997). Transformational changes noted by Paquette included: cuts to the Ministry of Education budget; reduced transfers to school boards; a 'savings strategy' for school boards; repeal of the *Employment Equity Act*, which had an impact on school board hiring; phased-in abolition of Grade 13, the final year of high school; creation of a College of Teachers to regulate, certify and test teachers; overhaul of secondary education; announcement of a complete new curriculum for all students from kindergarten on; and introduction of a standardized report card.

One alarming aspect of the changes for media education was the creation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office with responsibility for standardized provincial testing, in effect, a mechanism for ensuring back-to-the basics education. In response, teacher unions, school boards and parents organized against the changes, with a strong presence at the public hearings.

Later in 1997, the government introduced the main plank in its education restructuring agenda, the *Education Quality Improvement Act* (Bill 160). The main thrust of Bill 160 was to discipline education finance and teachers' unions. It revised the *Education Act* to include already-negotiated working conditions for teachers and it removed principals and vice-principals from the bargaining unit (Paquette, 1998, pp. 23-24). It centralized control of the major cost and spending elements in education, removed the ability of school boards to raise local taxes to

fund budgets, and forced budgets to be approved by the newly formed Education Improvement Commission. The bill also gave cabinet the right to make decisions concerning education through unilateral regulation rather than through democratic legislative processes.

When Ontario teachers walked out to protest the changes, once again advocates of public education rose to the challenge. Education advocates and parents' groups, by virtue of their geographical dispersion, voluntary status, limited resources and varying degrees of media savvy, were organized and worked against Bill 160 mostly at the grass-roots level. Despite these handicaps, which they turned to their advantage by building support from the ground up, they still managed to shake confidence in the government at a critical time when it was attempting to consolidate its nascent hegemony half-way through its mandate (Ipsos-Reid, 1998; Kozolanka, 2007).

Key to the new government establishing hegemony was its communications and media management strategies. These included the so-called "blitzkrieg" tactics and the use of a discourse of crisis. Blitzkrieg tactics are used to push through policy initiatives quickly and overwhelm both the media and potential public opposition (Easton, 1994). The discourse of crisis and its attendant message of "there is no alternative"— borrowed from Thatcherism—is used as a rationale for convincing the public and the media to support restructuring initiatives (Hall & Jacques, 1984). These tactics effectively circumvented independent judgment by both media and the public, and made it more difficult for challenges to the government to succeed (Kozolanka, 2007).

A further target for the government in the educational sector was media education, in the form of the hard-fought-for media studies strand on the secondary school English curriculum.

In its education policy announcements and initiatives, the Harris government of 1995 used the rhetoric of technological determinism to convince Ontarians that it had no alternative but to restructure and reformulate education in order to remain a competitive economy. As with the government's overall political project, its policies and initiatives on education echoed the narrow, teach-to-the-test educational approach of Thatcher and Reagan in the 1980s.

Given the semi-peripheral status of Canada and its location adjacent to the United States behemoth, Canadian cultural and communication history is driven particularly by developments and advances in Ameri-

can policy. Tyner (1991) tells us that the economic recession in the US in the early 80s fostered an environment with two implications for media literacy. First, media education was linked to:

> a widespread belief that students should be trained to compete in the global marketplace. …[T]he critical viewing curriculum was seen as an unnecessary frill and new funding for computer literacy programs pushed critical viewing off the education agenda. The 'back to the basics' movement in education subsequently nudged computer literacy to the sidelines" (pp. 1-2).

By the time the New Right government came to power in Ontario in 1995, "basic skills movements dominated the educational and political climate" in the US (Yates, 2004, p. 11). The new Ontario government, in a Canadian system in which jurisdiction for education is held provincially, envisaged education as skills training. It quickly recast education to fit the new back-to-basics global and corporate ethos, notably by renaming the ministry responsible as the Ministry of Education and Training. It emphasized this shift by also refocusing its cultural agency, the television station TVOntario, on technology-based curriculum learning, "the province's lifelong learning vision" (Ontario Ministry of Privatization, 1998; Kozolanka, 2001).

Second, according to Tyner, "a climate of industry deregulation" prevailed (p.2), propelled forward by the *Telecommunication Act* of 1996 and a Federal Communications Commission ruling in 2003 that liberalized limits on media ownership and was weak on protecting the public interest.

In Canada, already one of the most concentrated corporate media environments in the Western world, communication laws protected culture and industry against foreign ownership (the traditional threat was from American corporations) and regulated Canadian media systems as "the only way to ensure that Canadian media represent the interests and perspectives of Canadian citizenship… [and] the development of a shared set of ideas and values, a sense of nationhood, a Canadian culture" (Gasher & Skinner 2005, p. 51). Driven by New Right libertarianism and the perceived need for global competitiveness, however, beginning in the mid-1990s, Canadian media have seen unprecedented media consolidation (p. 52). The most recent government report on the media, produced by the Standing Senate Committee on Communications and Transport in 2006, made the usual strong statement on cul-

tural protection, but lamely recommended that proposed media merg-
ers be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (Canada, 2006). Since then,
media consolidation has continued apace.

Thus, under policy, political and media conditions that constrain public
education, inhibit participatory citizenship and permit media conver-
gence, critical media literacy ran counter to the best interest of the gov-
ernment. In early 1998, it announced it would eliminate its media liter-
acy course from the secondary-school curriculum.

## The 1998 Campaign

Despite the best communications efforts of the government to close
down general media and public opposition, by the time it decided to
pull the stand-alone media studies course in what Quill calls a "quietly
implemented plan" (1998, p. 1), advocacy in the broader educational
community was widespread and on the alert. Barry Duncan and the
Association for Media Literacy spearheaded the organization of support
against the government on the issue of the media studies course. As
Doles (2007) describes in his history of AML, once media literacy ad-
vocates learned that the ministry had decided to eliminate media literacy
from the secondary school English curriculum, they concentrated their
efforts on exploiting their media contacts, stimulating action from aca-
demics and business leaders, and participating in and attending stake-
holder meetings sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Training
(pp. 1-2).

Neil Andersen, an AML board member, high-school teacher and a
member of the media studies curriculum writing team for the ministry,
put together the information package that was sent to "everyone we
ever knew… in all walks of life" (Andersen, 2008). The package called
on supporters to spread the word and lobby the government for rein-
statement of the course.

Duncan recalls there were several reasons for the success of the cam-
paign. The strategy to saturate the media resulted in positive coverage
from influential columnists and journalists like Michele Landsburg,
Naomi Klein and Geoff Pevere (Duncan, 2007). The radio channel for
the public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, inter-
viewed Duncan on its popular province-wide noon-time show (Doles,
2007, p. 2). Some of this media activity was due to prior contacts that

AML had built over time with the media and now called upon to spread the word.

The government's call for stakeholder input on changes to the language arts curriculum (which included the media studies course) created an opportunity for the AML to insert itself into the official discourse on the issue. As Duncan points out about the AML's advocacy media literacy, "*we* were the stakeholder" (2007). This is a credible position, given that "most of the Canadian media education texts published in this decade have been written by AML executive members" (Media Awareness Network, 2002, p. 1). A key point in the campaign was the stakeholder hearings held by the government around the province to discuss the blueprint for the new elementary and secondary language arts curricula.

Many saw the policy move by the government for what it was: an attempt to reach the government's reduced-spending targets and an opportunity to get rid of one of the most practical and successful ways of building critical citizenship. In this regard, Duncan recalls a key moment, confirmed by Jeffrey (2007), when Jeffrey from the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology stressed in her comments to the government at the hearings that critical thinking taught by teachers in elementary school carried over to other parts of the curriculum and into post-secondary learning. In other words, far from being inconsequential or outdated in modern times, Duncan says, "the universities were saying that these courses are advantageous in teaching students deconstruction" (Duncan, 2007). Yet, a former teacher who attended a focus group sponsored by the ministry at this time recalls that the topic under discussion was which 25 of the many courses on the curriculum were to be retained in a reduced curriculum—and media studies was not among the choices. (The teacher, who is still involved in the education community in Ontario and has ties to the education ministry, cannot be named.)

Media coverage also picked up the critical thinking subtext. Under the headline "Media literacy too dangerous to survive," journalist and author Naomi Klein (1998) wrote about her visit to a media studies classroom in which students were discussing classic texts by Huxley and Orwell about dystopian and tyrannical societies—only to find out that Premier Harris was about to cut their course. She concluded that "media studies, it seems, has taught these students not only to analyze the media but to analyze everything—including the reason their govern-

ment wants to do away with a media studies program which is lauded and imitated around the world" (p. 1). Another journalist wrote that teachers were saying "the Harris Tory government's back-to-basics education policy reflects a growing concern among its advisors that media literacy in schools leads to widespread criticism of government and big business" (Quill, 1998, p. 1).

Finally, the campaign sparked a successful letter-writing campaign to the ministry and editors of newspapers, creating a further sense of grass-roots support for media education. Andersen says the AML was copied on more than 400 letters to the government (Andersen, 2008). Altogether, the support from universities and colleges, the activism of teachers, support from the public and positive media coverage provided a level of feedback that the government could not ignore. While generally the government was decrying the influence of stakeholders— which it called 'special interests'—in the case of the campaign to keep media studies, close ties to ministry contacts worked in the AML's favour.

Parts of the campaign to save the media studies curriculum were elite-centred, with academics and well-known newspaper columnists lobbying to keep the course. Other aspects of the campaign emanated from parents, teachers and the public already sensitized and pre-conditioned to the nature of the Harris cuts. In a very literal sense, the media literacy community acted as Gramsci's organic intellectuals, stimulating consciousness about the government's policies on education, expanding the struggle to others at the grass-roots level and then turning consciousness into action. Already wounded by the teacher walkout in reaction to Bill 160 late the previous year, the government acquiesced quietly. In fact, the campaign was so successful that the government at one point claimed it hadn't actually cancelled the media studies course in the first place (Andersen, 2008). Andersen, who was on the curriculum writing team, disputes this: "We knew it was gone because we weren't working on it [anymore]." Late in 1999, advocates learned that media literacy would remain in the new curriculum in the upper two grades (grades 11 and 12) of secondary school and that an optional media studies course would be offered at the grade 12 level (Doles, 2007, p. 4).

# Directions in Media Literacy Advocacy in Ontario

After a change in government in 2003, education budgets have slowly increased through a patchwork of policy announcements that still place education spending in current dollars near the original 1995 cutback levels under the Harris government (Mackenzie, 2002, p. 3; Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2007a). In effect, while claiming to invest in education, the new Liberal government has continued the stringent, New Right policies of the previous government. The media literacy curriculum, saved through the advocacy of the media education community, continues but without any new curriculum resources being attached to it (Pungente, 2007).

On the other hand, the training obsession of the previous government continues. The training envelope now resides in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities—a relief perhaps to primary and secondary school teachers but an ominous sign for the academic community. Between 1999 and 2006, the ministry's budget for training increased substantially (11.8%), while funding for colleges and universities was left behind (0.59%). Calculations are often based on operating budgets only, particularly if governments want to demonstrate that they are keeping election promises by keeping costs low. This would show the post-secondary program of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities increasing in this period by 20.90% and the training program by 8.60% (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2007b). When the operating and capital budgets are taken together, however, the overall picture shifts.

In recent years, most of the positive developments in media literacy have been initiated by media education advocates outside of the education ministry (Crawford and Pungente, 1999). The Summit 2000 Conference held in Toronto hosted media educators and media professionals from around the world (Doles, 2007). Another positive development is a partnership, started in 1998, brought together the Jesuit Communication Project in Toronto, the Ontario Association for Media Literacy and the television company CHUM to develop media education programs and study guides (Crawford and Pungente, 1999). According to Crawford and Pungente, "The Canadian tradition of media education has never contained an anti-media philosophy. As Canadian media professionals have come to realize that media education does not mean 'media bashing,' they have been pleased to work with media edu-

cators and to collaborate in various ways, including the production of a number of excellent audio-visual materials" (p. 79).

Duncan points to several developments in 2007 alone in both Canada and the US that contribute to scholarship in the field. In Canada, two journals (*Our Schools/Our Selves* and the *Canadian Journal of Education*) devoted an entire issue to media education. In the US, a 700-plus-page volume on media education, *Media literacy: A reader*, was published (Macedo & Greenberg, 2007).

Although the continued assault on public education is no longer in the forefront of the media or public agenda, corporate media conglomeration is a greater threat to critical thinking than ever before. Even the partnership with CHUM is in jeopardy since the convergence of the CHUM media group with Canadian media giant CTVglobemedia in 2006 (Pungente, 2007). Although the CHUM partnership has won approval from some, corporate media industry participation in media education remains problematic to others (Provençal, 2004, p. 6).

## Conclusion

Addressing the current state of media education in the US, Yates (2004) suggests that advocacy can influence educational policy by raising awareness, providing the "practical resources that contribute to the creation of demands and support," and keeping on top of the changing policy environment in order to be able to keep media education on the policy agenda (p. 9).

This is important advice in the Ontario educational environment, which prior to the New Right onslaught was already steeped in parental and public participation in policymaking on public education—a level of involvement that made it difficult for the Harris government to implement its education restructuring initiatives. The media education movement, as this chapter has described, emerged from and owes much to this deep level of ongoing and ingrained consciousness-raising that leads to action. Similarly, future success of media education for critical citizenship lies not only in specific campaigns for curricular change, but in building broad advocacy initiatives that challenge larger Canadian policy and media environments.

The wreckage in the public educational system in Ontario that remains after eight years of New Right politics and four years of subsequent Liberal government in itself demonstrates the continued need for po-

litical advocacy. Although there is relief that the cuts have stopped, the Ontario educational system is still underfunded. When a government merely stops making cuts to a public program and doesn't rebuild it, it is difficult to grant that government any more legitimacy than the previous one. It is ominous that the new government, which has astutely quelled public concern by increasing funding to targeted areas such as special education, has not reversed the restructuring or de-funding. A public education system that is not fully funded and 'teaches to the test' simply cannot provide either the resources or the learning environment for fostering critical citizenship over consumerism or skills training. One recent example of the continued salience of New Right thinking on education is an article in the newsletter of the Fraser Institute, an influential right-wing think tank in Canada. The article, "Beware the media literacy police," claims that Canadian teachers' unions care more about media literacy than reading and writing skills (Sleeman, 2004, p. 1). Academics are also increasingly worried about the skills focus in Canadian universities, as well as the issue of corporate-funded research (Tudiver, 1999; Turk, 2000). In 2000, the Ontario government announced a new education funding formula that reduced funding to universities specializing in the liberal arts (Doles, 2001). In addition, according to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, Ontario currently has the second lowest public financing and the second highest private financing of any province or territory in Canada (2007, p.3).

In the broader information and media environment, advocates must ensure that new media are used to foster democratic thinking and participation. We have seen in myriad ways how easy it is for the same corporate media interests to take over the Internet, for example, and curtail its dialogic and liberative potential. According to Barney (2005), the development of information and communication technologies in Canada has "largely been exempt from democratic political scrutiny" (p. 658). He says technology is instead "an object of political judgement" (p. 656) and calls for "an end to the private/market regulation of technology endorsed by neo-liberalism and a return to public regulation through democratically transparent and accountable state agencies" (p. 658). Key to counter this narrowly-focused corporate information environment is broadening our understanding of media literacy to include examination of corporate media as driven by their economic and political interests. As Klein stressed in her newspaper column during the 1998 campaign, "the decision to do away with media studies sums up the Tory vision for cut-to-the bone school reform: Corporations are

the saviours of education, not the subjects of it" (1998, p. 1). To counter this political stance, some Canadian media activists are turning to a nascent media reform movement spearheaded by Canadians for Democratic Media (www.democraticmedia.ca/front) and turning to alternative media, such as www.rabble.ca, www.thetyee.ca and the Ontario-based www.straightgoods.ca, in which advocates can themselves exercise their citizenship as media producers.

Another area that holds promise to fulfill the aims of democratic citizenship is the movement within academia to redefine journalism education, a key driver of media culture. The deeply rooted journalism culture in North America continues to churn out technically sophisticated but critically innocent practitioners. The devotion to 'just-the-facts' and 'neutral' reporting takes a deterministic approach to media work. It also emphasizes the complicity of journalism schools as serving not the public, but the news industry, and confirms the industry's "appropriation of journalism as a corporate domain" (Gasher, 2007, p. 129). As Gasher points out, journalism is experiencing a "structural crisis that implicates the industry in its inability to rise to the challenges it faces." Gasher and others are calling for journalism education that meshes theory and practice, and that interrogates the ideal and the reality of the social role the media play in society (p. 129).

Unfortunately, media education advocacy has remained somewhat isolated from broader political struggles. Other issue groups that were active against the Ontario New Right similarly acted within their own zones of knowledge and comfort, but rarely reached out beyond. The 1998 campaign to save the media studies curriculum reached a group level of consciousness, and was successful in its particular goal, but it never took its consciousness-raising to the society-wide level envisioned by Gramsci that would change the overall system. In both advocacy and academic movements, it is essential that advocates and activists cross disciplines and organizations to create alliances (Provençal, 2004, p. 9). In this, Nichols and McChesney (2002) acknowledge the resource difficulties for grass-roots struggles, but also insist that the media democracy movement at the very least needs to be the second priority for all social movements. This does not mean that the struggle for critical media literacy take place at an unreal point of contact removed from its core of Freirean dialogic action. It must continue to be grounded in grass-roots action, but will only take flight if it also activates on Gramsci's multiple political levels. For instance, the AML recognizes that one

of its ongoing challenges is "to form alliances and coalitions with the stakeholders who have the ears of politicians and bureaucrats in the provincial government" (Doles, 2001, p. 3). This it managed successfully in the 1998 campaign, but its advocacy did not extend to the level of collaboration with others involved in broader struggles beyond educational restructuring that were taking place at the same time.

More positively, surely another level of action lies in the recognition that on a personal level, in the very act of struggle for critical media literacy, advocates are themselves exercising critical citizenship and can potentially make use of Freire's collective and systemic approach to the process of learning. As Gramsci's fledgling organic intellectuals, critical media advocates are vigilant and responsive to encroachments on critical media education. As they continue to churn out the high-quality teaching materials that can sway policymakers and the media, they can also build networks that go beyond engaging the powerful in the education ministry and the powerless in school communities to make the connections to the broader information and media environment in which critical media education needs to take place. As the 1998 campaign demonstrates, advocates for critical media literacy in Ontario and elsewhere recognize that "[t]he essence of the media literacy movement is one of change and defending the legitimacy of ideas that challenge the *status quo*" (Provençal, 2004, p. 9). But, as Provençal argues, it is not sufficient in an era of continuous information and media transformation to simply be a media literate *person*, but one must also ask what needs to be done to attain a media literate *society* (p. 10, emphases added).

The three incompatible trajectories of education advocacy, New Right politics and the information and media environment continue to clash in the first years of the 21st century in Ontario. This has broader resonance with those in other jurisdictions who may face similar encroachments on gains made in media education over the years. As Andersen says about the AML's continued vigilance of the Ontario media studies curriculum, "we've had to fight for our survival pretty much for our whole history" (Andersen, 2008). Critical media advocates can and have played lead roles in society as Gramsci's organic intellectuals, they do so in ways that transform education into action, as Freire theorizes, and thus they demonstrate the potential for the critical dialogue and participation envisioned by Feenberg. Moreover, critical media literacy, with its thematic of critical citizenship within a public environment that

continues to value public education, could well be situated to become the nexus in broader Gramscian struggles for democratic citizenship and media.

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# Chapter 6

# A Critical Evaluation of Media Literacy in Turkey and Suggestions for Developing Critical Media Literacy for Democratic Social Transformation and Citizenship

## *Mine Gencel Bek and Mutlu Binark*

## Introduction

RTÜK (Radio Television Authority in Turkey) began a media literacy program in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in 2004. Following the training, designed for 30 teachers, the program started in 2006 in the five pilot cities (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Adana and Erzurum). In 2007, 'Media Literacy' has become an optional course for the 6-8.th grades of 35,000 primary schools in 81 cities.

In the first section of this chapter we will give a overview on the authors' theoretical stance – critical pedagogy will be integrated with the literature on critical media literacy. By relying on these, we criticize the dominant schooling system of the Ministry of National Education and Radio-Television Authority in Turkey. Based on the conceptualization adopted here, we suggest both a new frame for media literacy program and a social and ethical responsibility for the teachers in Turkey. Continuing this approach in the second section of the chapter, current applications and developments of media literacy in Turkey will be evaluated by critically analyzing the course program and the available materials. The chapter will end with some suggestive remarks.

The authors emphasize that a critical pedagogy perspective is very important to construct the interactive curriculum of media literacy, which will improve the civic culture in Turkey. A critical media literacy program will provide a critical approach to the students so as to identify neo-liberal and the neo-conservative ideologies that have been disseminated to all the phases of the everyday life from work ethics to cultural products, even private affairs. Through the tools offered by a critical

media literacy program, the students are able to think and relocate the context of economic, political, cultural, social and historical practices and backgrounds. The chapter also suggests that critical media literacy programs should take into account the productive dimension with an analysis of media industries; locate the media texts in the daily life of students; and also look at consumption practices.

# Critical Pedagogy

"Pedagogy is not simply about the social construction of knowledge, values, and experience; it is also a performative practice embodied in the lived interactions among educators, audiences, texts, and institutional formations. Pedagogy, at its best, implies that learning takes place across a spectrum of social practices and settings" (Giroux, 2004a, p.61).

Critical pedagogy is rooted in interdisciplinary contributions from education, cultural studies, feminism, post-structuralism and post-modernism, to which Freire (2003), Giroux (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b), Apple (2006), Grene (1993), McLaren (2003), Hooks (1994), and Macedo and Steinberg (2007) are contemporary contributors. However, it is possible say that critical pedagogy is also based on John Dewey's interventions in liberal education in the United States and the work of the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Sholle, 1994, p. 13, Giroux, 2003a). Critical pedagogy has developed over the last thirty years, and has brought into question the cultural politics in education and has conceptualized the educational field both as a political field and a practice of power. Thus, in the words of Sholle, pedagogy is not simply a "teaching technique", rather "it refers to all those practices, that define what is important to know, how it is to be known, and how this production of knowledge constructs social identities" (1994, p. 15). Such a politicized conceptualization of pedagogy carries the practice beyond the formal educational activities to all ideological apparatus of the state, such as family, unions, religious institutions and the media. Giroux continues Theodor Adorno's argument on the recognition of education as a critical practice in his article "Education after Abu Gharib" (2004b) and says that the ideological influence of mass media, the hyper-masculinity and sexism, the rituals of everyday violence, the inability to identify with others, the racism, the class exploitation, the growing social injustice, and the state repression could be recognized only by the tools of critical pedagogy. Thus, critical pedagogy defines

knowledge acquired in and through all ideological apparatus as a social construction, rooted in power relations, and those granted knowledge reproduce the dominant and existing social relationships within the society (McLaren, 2003, pp. 72-89). In Mc Laren's words, this concep-tualization of education will contribute in to establish the democratic public sphere and to cultivate a politicized citizenry, who has an interest in equality and social justice and is a capable of fighting for the devel-opment of civic culture (cited in Sholle, 1994, p. 13).

While discussing the main principles of critical pedagogy, there is a particular need to mention the work of Paulo Freire. Freire identifies a distinction between schooling and education. To him, *schooling* is a form of social control in which pedagogy is used to discipline the students and place them as skilled citizens in the given social order. On the other hand, *education* serves as a form of social transformation and supports the students' self-empowerment (Sholle, 1994, p. 11). Hence, for Freire pedagogical practice, in his words, "the pedagogy of the oppressed", becomes a democratic tool and the places of education are seen as democratic public spheres. For Freire, the pedagogy makes clear the dominant power relations in every aspects of life. To cope with the dominant power relations, Freire considers dialogue as an educational strategy for the students' self-empowerment and uses terms such as *conscieentizaçao (conscientization)* meaning that the students, as empowered subjects, are aware of the social realities that construct their lives and that they can discover their own capacities to re-construct these defini-tions of situations. Further, using dialogue throughout the educational process, both teachers and students, learn from each other (Freire, 2003, pp. 57-68). Freire sees the dominant schooling system as a *bank-ing concept of education* in which the students are seen as having empty minds, which have to receive, be filled and store deposits such as the dominant and permitted knowledge/information. Instead of this op-pressive educational strategy, Freire suggests a *problem-posing education* in which the activities of the teacher and the students are not dichoto-mized, and the students are encouraged to pose problems related to different and various aspects of everyday life. Freire says that, "Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality" (2003, p. 64). He continues to explain the problem-posing education as follows: "In problem-posing education, men develop their power to

perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (2003, p. 65. Italics in original). Thus, the critical literacy that emerges from problem-posing education consists of the various forms of decoding of the ideological dimensions of institutions, social practices and cultural texts such as television serials, films, news.

Another significant contribution to the discussions on critical pedagogy is by Giroux. Giroux particularly focuses on the neo-liberal and new-right policies and their influences on educational system. In his work, *Impure Acts: The Practical Politics of Cultural Studies* (2000) he argues that the new-right policies and conservative ideologies depoliticize the edu-cational field and schooling helps to cultivate the students as life-long ideal consumers, supports the consumption-based individualism, he-donism, pragmatism and neo-liberal ethical values (2000, pp. 11-33). For him, this commercial culture and the corporate model of schooling erode civil society, and the consequence of this erosion is the construc-tion of the democracy of consumers (2003b, p. 120). Based on con-sumption-oriented democracy, neo-liberal and neo-conservatist ideol-ogy produce a kind of authoritarianism which abuses the education system in ways such as the hidden curriculum of the classes which dis-seminates religious fundamentalism, cultural chauvinism, xenophobia, racism and banal nationalism (Giroux and Giroux, 2006, p. 25). Giroux, like Freire, suggests public pedagogy as an alternative for the corporate model of schooling, as public pedagogy emphasizes the interconnec-tions and the struggles over the approved knowledge, history and rela-tionships, and thus develops the democratic citizenship in society (2000, p. 130). For him, critical public pedagogy as a form of cultural practice should not simply tell the students how to think or what to believe, as does the corporate model of schooling, but provides the conditions for a set of ideological and social relations which engender diverse possibilities for students to produce rather than simply acquire knowledge, to be self-critical about both the positions they describe and the locations from which they speak, and to make explicit the values that inform their relations with others as part of a broader attempt to produce the conditions necessary for either the existing society or a new and more democratic social order (2002, p. 78).

Giroux highlighted three central tasks of the practices of critical peda-gogy: first, locating the teachers as cultural workers who serve the de-

mocratization of the society; second, considering popular culture as a terrain of pedagogical struggle without romanticizing it; third, conceptualizing pedagogy as not only transmission of knowledge, but rather the act of producing knowledge, forms of ethical address and social identities (2002, p. 78). By posing these tasks, Giroux connects popular culture and everyday life experiences with the academic inquiry, and examines the different ways of how people can participate in social, cultural, economic, and political life and the cultural texts they consume. He also makes distinction between critical pedagogical practices and propagandizing, critical teaching and demagoguery. Giroux emphasizes the importance of the responsibility of the educators who have to offer the students hope and the necessary tools to establish the civic culture as an ethical response. He claims that critical pedagogy is definitely not a job preparation, or even critical consciousness raising activity; it is about imagining different futures for citizens, and developing hope in dark times. Thus, critical public pedagogy is conceptualized both as an ethical referent and a call to action for educators, parents, students (Giroux and Giroux, 2006, p. 30).

Sholle sees critical pedagogy both as a counter-hegemonic practice on the neo-conservative and neo-liberal politics, and as a proposal for a better future, where education serves in cultivating active citizens; the experiences of different social groups are addressed through dialogue; theory and practice are integrated within the curriculum; public intellectuals take social and ethical responsibilities and actions towards the social, political, cultural issues (1994, p. 27).

## Critical Media Literacy

Students need to learn how to read new cultural texts critically, but they should also learn how to create their own cultural texts by mastering the technical skills needed to compose television scripts, use video cameras, write programs for computers, and produce and direct documentaries (Giroux, 2000, p. 33).

As discussed above, corporate culture-based education – the banking model of schooling in Freire's terms – sees the students as passive receivers and emphasizes the transmission of knowledge from the teachers to the students. However here we utilize the critical media literacy approach based upon critical pedagogy. Trend says that critical media literacy is rooted on the crossroads of cultural studies and critical pedagogy (1994, p. 235). Denzin defines critical pedagogy as an approach

that connects agency, identity, discourse within the larger context, and a self-reflexive and dialogical process (2003, p. 31).

The influential role that broadcasting and emergent information and computer media play in organizing, shaping, and disseminating information, ideas, and values is creating a powerful public pedagogy (Giroux, 1999; Luke, 1997). These changes in technology, media, and society require the development of critical media literacy to empower students and citizens to adequately read media messages and produce media themselves in order to be active participants in a democratic society (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 3).

Critical media literacy is both a critical theory and critical practice in which one can understand the conditions of media production, media industry, analyze media texts from various viewpoints, and recognize the roles and the place of media within everyday life and its routines, and then produce one's own cultural texts which will circulate as alternative narratives to the dominant cultural reading. Critical media literacy enables the students to question the dominant meanings that media texts produce and reproduce, and what could be done to intervene in this hegemonic production of accepted culture. Thus, critical media literacy expands the conceptualization of literacy, and relates the text, the reading act and the production process within the classroom environment. The literacy we suggest here could contribute in democratizing the pedagogy and encourage both teachers and students to analyze the dominant ideology, and the dominant politics of the representation of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality throughout inquiring the text of cultural industries. Kellner and Share recommend that critical media literacy program should be based upon project-based media production – even it is very simple – hence the analysis of the cultural texts becomes more meaningful and guides the students to take action on the social, economic, cultural, political and historical conditions where these texts are embedded (2007, p. 9). Rhonda Hammer's critical media literacy course at UCLA where students produce counter hegemonic movies and web sites is a key example (Kellner & Share 2007, p. 10). Through these works the students challenge the mainstream media's misrepresentation and stereotyping of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. As Leistyna and Alper, propose this kind of practice of critical media literacy program encourages us to think of politics culturally and to enable us to grasp the process of hegemonic production of commonsense values (2007, p. 72).

Critical media literacy particularly on the politics of representation (McLaren & Hammer, 2007), and derives from cultural studies, feminist theory as well as critical pedagogy. Furthermore, critical media literacy brings into the question of media's economic structure, such as the ownership of the mass media and the work ethics of media professionals. After analyzing the political economy of media, students are encouraged to produce their own alternative media texts, while they also develop as active and participatory citizens in every aspect of social life (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 16). We contend that if media literacy is conceptualized as it is suggested above in Turkey, then it will promote the democratization of social life from micro-scale to macro scale. We recommend that media literacy programs must combine critical thought and production together. In order to practice it, the possibilities of new media will also be effectively utilized. In the remainder of the chapter, we will analyze the media literacy in Turkey from this perspective and make some suggestions.

## Media Literacy in Turkey

RTÜK (Radio Television Authority in Turkey) and the Ministry of Education in cooperation began the 'Media Literacy' course in five pilot cities (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Adana and Erzurum) in 2004 following the training of the 30 teachers. This program will be rolled out countrywide in the 2007-2008 education semester as an optional course for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade of 35,000 schools in 81 cities. RTÜK officials mentioned that their intention is to make it an obligatory course and also stressed the importance of parental education on different platforms (an example of this was the International Conference of Media Literacy, 24 November 2006, Ankara). RTÜK's media literacy program can be seen as one of a number of initiatives, such as a TV ombudsmans and Intelligent Signs that target the self regulation of the media. The Intelligent Signs is a system developed by RTÜK that aims to protect children and the young from harmful content by alerting children and the young about programs that 'contain violence, horror, sex and behavior that can build negative examples'. The Intelligent sign system comprises four symbols (7+, 13+, 18+, general audience)– codes that identify the appropriateness of programs according to age groups and three symbols defining harmful content (violence/ horror, sex, behaviours which can lead to negative examples).

We argue that RTÜK's approach to media literacy is fuelled by a protective mentality. In almost every expression by RTÜK's head and its officers, the basis of media literacy is seen as children' being able to recognize the difference between fact and fiction. In the guide book prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve RTÜK, 2006, pp. 5-6), the protective approach can be traced to the focus of children being seen as the 'most sensitive group' open to media effect, their being in danger, their being 'undefendable receivers', and the need to raise their consciousness against the media. In another teacher's handbook published by RTÜK in 2007 (RTÜK, 2007a, p. 35), media literacy similarly is described as increasing the resistance of individuals against the possible harmful effect of the media texts. As an education program, it gives priority of protecting children and youth against the possible harmful effects of the media.

Therefore, the basic rationale of media literacy education is described as 'reducing the negative effect of the media on them'. The principles listed for teachers in the section on "Media and Ethics", such as 'being incompatible with the society's national and moral values' and 'programs not being obscene', reminds us that the RTÜK's principles (for a critique of these, see Gencel Bek, 2001) are not compatible with 'critical media literacy' as discussed at the beginning of the chapter. It is not be so easy to decide whether and to what extent a media text is compatible with the society's national and moral values. Therefore, instead of protecting these principles which can be interpreted differently by different people, a more radical approach, focusing on questioning and on citizenship is needed. Also, the narrow approach that defines harmful content as just violence and pornography should be widened in order to consider that there are still important problems in the representation of sexism, racism and war in the media.

In the section on 'Media, Society and Culture' within the RTÜK documentation, none of these issues appear. Instead, possible discussion topics such as blood donation, sports, the effect of TV on family, relative and neighbour communication, rising fast food culture are listed (RTÜK, 2007a, p. 54), and teachers are asked to write the following sentence on the board for discussion in the classroom: 'Only those who can enliven and develop their culture can have a legacy to leave the future generations'. It should of course be noted that culture is not a fixed entity but a continuous sphere and cultural diversity and racism could be included. In fact, we suggest that a media literacy which would

contain these elements is vital for the Turkish context which has experienced inter-cultural hostility and intolerance.

However, implicit within the RTÜK and Ministry of Education discourse about media texts is a conservative interpretation, an extension of official political culture. Accordingly, criticism is limited and reduced, it also does not take into account the effect of political economic dynamics on media content (i.e. concentration of the media industry, commercialization, maximization of profit, addressing the standardization of tastes and interests, de-unionization and decreasing relative autonomy of media workers; media owners and editors intervening media content in parallel with the media group's interests. A textual analysis without reference to the political economic context would be insufficient. As Kejanlıoğlu (2006) notes in line with the critical pedagogy theorists discussed above, we cannot talk about participation and the right to be informed in an environment where access and representation are limited.

In order to adopt a critical pedagogy perspective in critical media literacy education, it is not sufficient to 'teach' media literacy to teachers; instead they themselves should adopt a critical pedagogy perspective. Moreover they should work in an environment where they can adopt such a perspective, leaving aside the authoritarian, transmissive model and supporting students' active involvement, participation and production. That means a radical transformation of the education system in Turkey. In sum, media literacy in Turkey so far is a non-critical media literacy. Indeed, reactions from children on the website designed by RTÜK (2007b) to develop media literacy in children confirm our comments. The participation, which is mainly based on children's work on the Media Literacy course, perceives the media mainly as representing 'the general structure of the society', 'Turkish society', 'we', 'Turkish police', 'moral values of Turkish youth', 'internal enemies', 'military', 'customs and conventions', 'our land'…etc. These are some of the remarks of children about the media in Turkey after attending media literacy program:

> In fact, this outfit does not have any place in our customs and conventions.

> There is no family life, no conception of honour. We should not be misled by these three-days last marriages and pink dreams.

> These programs which do not obey ethical and moral values affect young girls with the clothes worn.
>
> This program is not compatible with the general structure of our society and undermines the private life of family, which is the core of society.
>
> This serial downgrades the structure of Turkish family, Turkish way of life and Turkish police institution.
>
> These kind of program cause the degeneration of Turkish youth and them losing moral values.
>
> It causes young people downgrade Turkish military force. It harms hierarchical relations.
>
> 'Oriental belly dancing star' is a competition which is made only for money and fame; disregards our moral values.
>
> In this serial, military is portrayed as a non-serious institution.
>
> The aim of this and alike programs is earning money easily by insulting the people's customs, conventions and pride and by playing with the religious emotions (RTÜK, 2007b) .

Since these discourses naturalize dominant myths and constructions, both the aim and most possibly the outcome is a media education that is conservative rather than critical.

However, media literacy in Turkey is not limited to this official program, but has also started to be organized by various alternative and oppositional groups. In 2007 June, for example, in the Forum for People's Rights organized by *Halkevleri* (cultural intuitions established by a directive of Atatürk (Turkey's first president) in 1931 to educate public in parallel with Kemalist modernization project), media literacy was mentioned during the workshop on 'People's Communication Rights'. According to this declaration, the establishment of a 'Communication Right Platform' was decided upon. This platform will bring together all parties who have demands and opinions about the sphere of communication; create initiatives to control media content, support media literacy, suggest an alternative media experience which helps develop people's right to being informed. The declaration also mentions that universities that provide media education should also be in cooperation with media workers in the production process. As Geray mentions (2007) media literacy here is not a passive criticism but supports people being productive in communication. This initiative, we note, does not

use the word of 'critical' but even so is an important initiative in terms of relating media literacy with 'rights. Even though it does not address media literacy directly, another critical and oppositional declaration is made in the action call of International Independent Media Forum on the 4-5 November 2006 in İstanbul, organized by *Inter Press Service IPS Communication Foundation*. The main question of the forum, 'Is Another Communication Possible?', was responded to by academic and media professional Ragıp Duran that media users/consumers do not have a developed media literacy consciousness (quoted by, Binark, 2007, p. 24). Alternative Turkish media organisations such as *Bianet, Açık Radyo, Özgür Radyo, Evrensel, Birgün*, and *Express* joined the forum; and participant students supported the notion of media literacy (Binark, 2007, p. 26).

The interest of media researchers in Turkey in the issue of media literacy is also quite recent. An important initiative is the International Media Literacy Conference organized by Marmara University, Faculty of Communication on the 23-25th May 2005 in İstanbul. Most of the papers presented are available on their website. A book by Ertürk and Akkor Gül (2006) adopts the paradigm of 'effect' and investigates the relationship between children, parents and TV, based on research in the form of questionnaires and focus group interviews conducted by 100 students (7-12 years old) and parents which tries to measure the effect of the news genre on children's lives. Different from this work, a critical perspective was adopted by the book of the authors of this chapter (Binark and Gencel Bek. 2007). This text does not only connect media literacy with critical pedagogy theoretically, but also contains information on the historical development of media literacy in different countries. The authors further included examples of their own their courses in the book as examples of critical media literacy.

The interest of the media sector in Turkey in media literacy is yet to develop. The Turkish media industry follows developments in media education from a distance. This position was criticized by the TV correspondent Oğuz Haksever (NTV news channel) at the International Media Literacy Conference (organized by RTÜK on the 24 November 2006), who viewed it as 'shooting themselves'.

Our suggestion for a critical media literacy education in Turkey is a program which focuses on developing and supporting consciousness that is inclusive of citizenship and responsibility. In fact, there is already work done in the area of education. These studies question the content

of course materials in general (Üstel, 2004) and make a series of suggestions for citizenship education and present alternative course materials. TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association), for example, supported the development of alternative course books for geography, history and philosophy in 2002. Tarih Vakfı (The History Foundation) published an alternative course book on the 20th century World and Turkish History. Critical media literacy from a different sphere can make an important contribution to those efforts that focus on citizenship and prioritize democratic culture, human rights and cultural diversity. The media is not only the product, or extension of, the existing social realities; instead it has an important role in transforming power. Designing media literacy with in a critical way with the appropriate tools will be a complementary initiative to the work on democratizing books and curriculum in schools.

In sum, the critical media literacy suggested here considers the relation between production, text and consumption practices, furthermore it informs and increases the awareness of different media and production relations; the images of the country and the world, life styles, identities, conventions in the mediated texts; the imagination of an audience with multiple and segmented identities; the differing influence of these difference on the consumption and reception; and the role of the media in creating and sustaining a collective popular memory.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we sought to analyze the official media literacy education and suggested an alternative model. This model, which is informed by critical pedagogy and critical media literacy, should connect critical media literacy and citizenship. The criticism of the protective approach has a pedagogical base in the literature of media literacy. In this approach, education is teacher-centred and students memorize what the teacher says, as if it were the truth. According to Hobbs, there are also discussions on whether this education has a 'political agenda' (1998, pp. 19-22). However, in any educational process and practice, even when it seems as if there is no political agenda, or when knowledge is claimed to be conceived as 'pedagogical', there is a hidden political agenda. As we have stated, the dominant political agenda and certain choices are internalised in the books prepared by the related commissions of RTÜK and the Ministry of Education. As we take into account the fact that the prevailing themes of the children contributing to the

RTÜK's media literacy website are nationalism, military, family and other traditional, conservative values, as seen in the examples quoted above, we can conclude that official media literacy is far from being critical.

According to the approach we adopt here, the criticisms of media texts are not only pedagogically based but be critical-pedagogically based. An education based on this approach contains criticism of dominant ideologies such as racism, sexism and homophobia, which exclude, oppress and eliminate the 'other(s)'. The agenda of such education is not limited to how the issues are constructed in the media texts, but also continuously asks the question 'why?' This question leads us to consider the political economic context and historical dynamics in the production processes of media texts. Thus, instead of reinforcing the already powerful and hegemonic values, the aim of critical media literacy should contribute to young people being more informed about the power relations; to be respectful to other(s) and transform the socially excluding values and mechanisms. Critical media literacy is, therefore, closely related to the development of the consciousness of citizens who can read media texts critically and intervene in the production process. The cornerstone of critical media literacy is teachers discussing with students what they learn and, why; adopting an issue-oriented education by moving the daily life experience into the class instead of using the classical transmissive mode. This is how students can realize in the process of analyzing and producing media texts that they are also active subjects/ agents.

Silverstone (2004, p. 440) argues that a responsible and transparent media culture and representation depends on critical literate citizenship. We, differently, do not claim that critical media literacy is a magic solution for everything. We neither reduce social transformation and participatory citizenship to critical media literacy nor argue that a more democratic media environment is possible only through critical media literacy. Instead, what we argue is that critical media literacy is one of the means. We hope that this issue is not only left to official institutions and their limited understanding, which considers media literacy as a means of control, or reduce it to a skill education; and instead hope that more critical and oppositional initiatives (such as trade unions, non-governmental organizations and citizenship initiatives) adopt and develop it; thus democratic transformation on official understanding and practices can be realized.

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# Chapter 7

# Empowering Children in a Changing Media Environment: Media Education in the Maltese Educational System

*Joseph Borg and Mary Anne Lauri*

## Introduction

Malta is one of the seven European countries where media literacy has for many years been a component of the school curriculum (European Commission, 2007). (Buckingham (2003) differentiates between the concept of media education (i.e. the process of teaching and learning about media) and media literacy (i.e. the knowledge and skills learners acquire). The Maltese model uses the term media education as encompassing media literacy and as a result the term *media education* will be used throughout this paper.). This Mediterranean country, with a population of 400,000, is the smallest member state in the European Union (EU). It gained its independence from British rule in 1964. The two official languages are the indigenous Maltese language as well as English and most people are bilingual. This paper discusses the political, religious and educational context which influenced the development of Media Education in Malta from its introduction in the early eighties, its formal adoption in the National Minimum Curriculum and its development to the present day. It also puts forward suggestions regarding the way Media Education continues to develop as a tool of empowering students in the Maltese educational system.

Media education was formally introduced in schools in Malta in October 1981 at a time when on the international scenario, the inoculation approach was still prominent in several Media Education programmes, in many countries (Alvarado & Boyd-Barrett, 1992; Masterman, 1988). This approach is commonly attributed to Leavis' and Thompson's 1933 book *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness*. It encourages the protection of children and young people from media influence

in the same way one would protect people from a disease (Masterman, 1985).

In the past decades there were several models of Media Education and different countries adopted different frameworks depending on the context in which they were introduced. Bryant and Anderson (1983) divided the models into two types: "those whose major emphasis is on the classification and analysis of content, and those that emphasize the character of the cognitive processes used by the viewer" (p.316). Other authors give different classifications. For example Minkkinen (1978), outlined three distinct approaches: the moral approach, the aesthetic approach and the communicative approach. In the moral approach, students were provided with moral criteria to evaluate film and television programmes. Programmes in some countries, for example USA, Sweden and Germany, used social criteria besides moral ones to encourage critical attitudes. On the other hand, the aesthetic model, which generally promoted a hands-on approach, was used in countries such as the USSR, UK and the Netherlands. The aim of this approach was to develop the child's imagination, emotions and creativity. The communicative model, which in many aspects is very similar to the aesthetic approach, aimed to teach students to understand audiovisual messages while simultaneously training them to express themselves audio-visually. France, Spain and Belgium adopted this approach (Minkkinen, 1978; UNESCO, 1977). Minkkinen also noted that very often these different models are combined together in some Media Education programmes.

Of particular interest and influence regarding the approach to Media Education in Malta was the position taken by the Catholic Church. Authoritative Church documents emphasized the moral dimension of Media Education. The Pastoral Instruction *Communio et Progressio* (1971) stated that Media Education must be systematically given a regular place in schools curriculum at every stage of education. It further stated that it is never too early to start encouraging artistic tastes in children together with, a keen critical faculty and a sense of personal responsibility based on sound morality (Communion et Progressio, para. 67). The Decree of Vatican II, *Inter Mirifica* (1963), promoted the teaching of "proper habits of reading, listening and viewing" (para. 25). These habits were considered "proper" if they were "oriented according to Christian moral principles" (Communion et Progressio, para. 25).

Buckingham (2003) documented the role of Churches in Media Education outside the formal education system. Church schools, in many countries including Italy, Australia, India, USA, France, Ireland and Chile were putting into practice the documents issued by the Church (Canavan, 1979; Pungente, 1985; UNESCO, 1977). During this period, that is the Seventies and the Eighties, UNDA - the international Catholic association for radio and TV, was working hand in hand with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with the aim of promoting both formal and informal teaching of Media Education (UNDA, 1980).

In 1980, Malta was one of the countries which took part in a project launched by the international Catholic association for television and radio and UNESCO to evaluate a ten lesson course in Media Education. This international scenario in the beginning of the Eighties provided the context, and some influence, for the introduction of Media Education in Malta in 1981. There were two other factors which influenced the introduction and development of media education. One was the presence of key persons among the Church's decision makers who believed in the importance of the Media Education and the second factor was the strained political relationship between Church and state prevailing at that time.

## Introducing Media Education in Malta

In 1981 broadcasting was monopolized by the State and heavily used by Government to promote its positions in its controversies with the Catholic Church and the Opposition during a period of intense political crisis. The print media were also heavily involved on opposite sides of the political debate. Political polarization was characteristic of Maltese society and consequently of the media. This situation gave impetus to the idea of promoting the teachings of the Church regarding Media Education. This was at that time, considered as a way of resisting the use of the media for political manipulation and for the spread of non-traditional values.

The Catholic Church, to which more than 90% of the Maltese are affiliated, published documents and mandated the teaching of Media Education in its schools as early as 1963 (Inter Mirifica, 1963). However up to 1980, Media Education was not taught in any Church school in Malta. As a result of the enthusiasm of members of the Church commission responsible for the media and their collaboration with the

Catholic international association for broadcasters, the situation changed. In October 1981 Media Education was introduced on an experimental basis in four Church schools. In just over five years the number of schools teaching Media Education increased to twenty seven (Borg & Lauri, 1994).

The Maltese model of Media Education used in these schools was more akin to the aesthetic and communicative model than to the moral model proposed by Minnkkinen (1978). Besides, it used the experiential method of teaching encouraging students to carry out many practical media projects. This model helped students' progress from passive media consumers to empowered media users. The media workbooks used in the primary level as well as the textbooks used in the secondary level reflected this objective.

Workbooks were written to be used in grades four to six (ages 8-10) of primary schools and a textbook was produced for Forms 1 and 2 of the secondary schools. These texts were periodically updated to reflect new media developments in Malta, for example, the 1993 edition reflected the introduction of radio pluralism in Malta and the resurgence of the cinema while the edition of 1998 reflected the introduction of television pluralism and the Internet. Following feedback from teachers, two new books were produced for the first two years of the secondary level. '*Exploring Media Languages. Media Education for Form 1*' (Borg & Lauri, 2003) and '*Exploring the Media landscape. Media Education for Form 2*' (Borg & Lauri, 2004) were published.

The books for the primary schools are basically workbooks. Information is intentionally held to a minimum while practical activities are emphasized. Consequently students learn more by actively involving themselves in projects than by passive instruction. The very basic and elementary elements of the language of television, newspapers, magazines, picture stories, radio and signs are introduced to students but television is given the most importance.

The book for Form 1 used in the secondary level (age 11) builds up on media languages though it introduces new aspects and information. The book used in Form 2 book discusses issues related to media content such as news, advertising and stereotyping within the context of Maltese society. The secondary school books are textbooks more than workbooks. Both sets of books include many media activities.

# Empowering the Stake-Holders

The concept of involving different stakeholders in the promotion of Media Education was recognized from the early years. In 1982 UNESCO sponsored the "Grunwald Declaration on Media Education" and advocated an integrated strategy for the introduction of Media Education. This declaration stated that Media Education "will be most effective when parents, teachers, media personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge that they have a role to play …." (UNESCO, 1982, para. 7). This holistic strategy was adopted in Malta. School administrators, teachers, parents and students were targeted when introducing the subject in Church schools (Borg, 1987). Through one to one encounters and meetings for stakeholders these important target groups were persuaded that Media Education should be considered as important as any other subject taught in the curriculum.

Parents and teachers were given particular attention because these two target groups were considered pivotal for the success of the programme. The importance of parents was also recognized by Masterman and Mariet (1994) who made a very strong case in favor of the role of parents in media education. They looked at parental support as vital to the successful development of Media Education. Hence short training courses were also organized enabling them to help their children in their studies (Borg cited in Silverblatt & Enright Eliceiri, 1997).

Involving parents is important as they are not always aware of their children's use of the media. A recent survey carried out by Johnson (2007) identified the wrong perceptions parents have regarding the use of the Internet made by their teenage children. Comparing the responses given by students to those given by their parents revealed that parents are not sufficiently aware of how often teenagers came across or visited porn sites, websites with violent pictures or hateful material.

The role of teachers is also very important. The Grunwald Declaration (UNESCO, 1982), the recent "Paris Declaration" (Commisssion Nationale Francaise Pour l'UNESCO, 2007), and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of the EU (2007) emphasized the role of teachers and the importance of training them to be prepared to teach the subject. As Buckingham (2001) rightly pointed out, "well-intended documents and frameworks are worthless without trained staff to implement them" (p. 13).
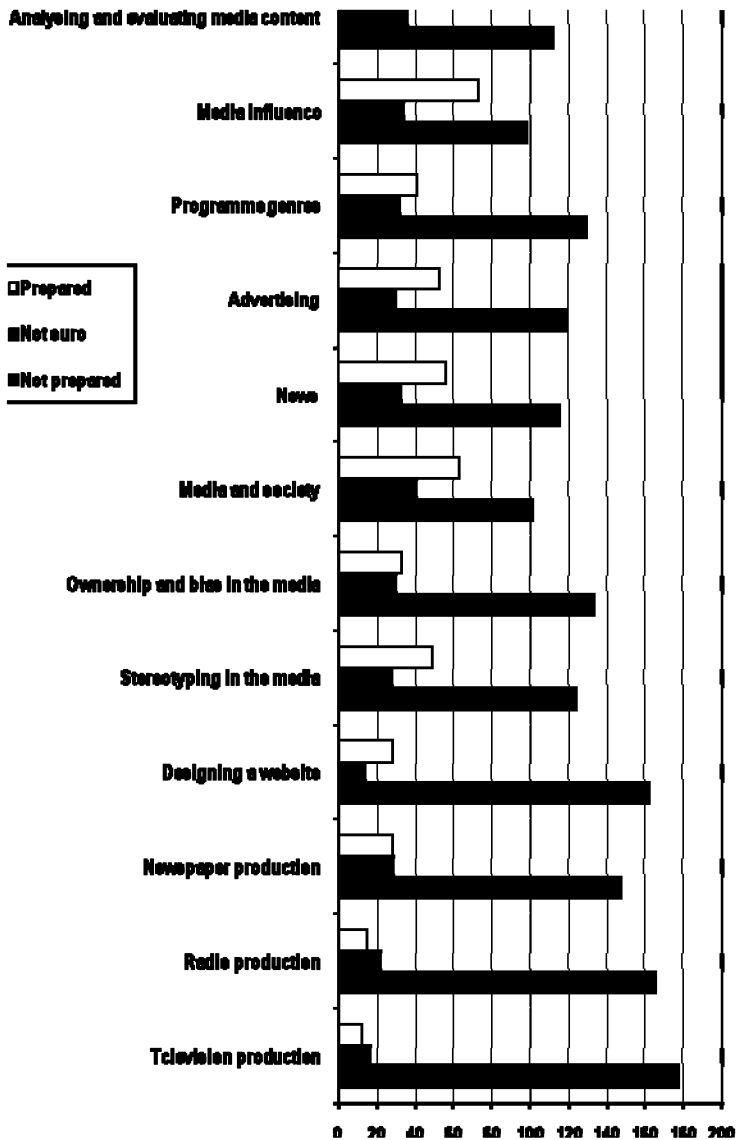
*Figure 1: Preparedness of teachers to teach topics in Media Education*

A study by Lauri and Borg (2006) investigated how prepared teachers in Malta felt in teaching Media Education. As shown in Figure 1, the results collected from 206 participants from eighteen state schools in Malta show clearly that a high percentage of the teachers interviewed felt unprepared to tackle issues such as television and radio production and ownership and bias in the media.

The feeling of lack of preparation reflects the fact that up to the present day, most of the teachers in the Faculty of Education undergoing training are given very limited training in Media Education. Unless the student teachers are given more training, both theoretical and experiential, the idea of teaching Media Education across the curriculum will not succeed. Teachers cannot teach what they themselves do not know or have not experienced.

## The National Minimum Curriculum

Media Education in the school curriculum was formalized by the Ministry of Education when it published the National Minimum Curriculum - "Creating the Future Together" - in December 1999. The curriculum caters for the education of students between the ages of three and sixteen. This was a very important step in the development of Media Education. It listed fourteen educational objectives "that are mainly intended to contribute to the best possible formation of every person so that good Maltese and world citizens can be produced" (p.47). Objective 8 was about the teaching of Media Education. It outlined the knowledge, skills and attitudes that such a programme should help students acquire.

The National Minimum Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999) - which is binding on all schools - includes Media Education as one of the objectives of a holistic education that should be taught in all schools, State, Independent and Church Schools. Table 1 summarizes the requirements outlined in the curriculum.

| Table 1: National Minimum Curriculum | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | KNOWLEDGE | ATTITUDE | SKILLS |
| Media and society | Basic knowledge of different sectors of the media's social function; Relations with political and economic institutions; Symbiotic relations with society; The Press Act and censorship; Media and democracy | Readiness to defend freedom of speech; Critical attitude towards the media | Analysis of media's role in society and in our culture; Render information technology accessible to all, including children with different abilities |
| Media organization | Ownership structures; Importance of social impact in consumption; Roles of different media workers; Different financing systems | Critical attitude in connections with the organisational need of production | Analysis of product in light of organisational limitations; Familiarisation with process of production including sign language, Braille and sub-titles. |
| Media content | Media's interpretative aspect (e.g. stereotypes); History of important media sectors; Internet | Critical attitude based on a system of personal values; A selective attitude regarding media consumption | Basic skills in writing letters, reports, investigative stories and simple TV and radio scripts; Expressing oneself through use of computers; Analysing advertising; Balance between educational and entertainment programmes |

| Media language | Different genres found within different media systems | Critical attitude towards the media; Appreciation of aesthetic and cultural impact | Using equipment, techniques and materials of different media; Production of simple media items; Use of computer and Internet facilities |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Other elements | Educational possibilities provided by the media; The media and change in education; Invasion of privacy, distortion of truth, bias; understanding media conventions | | |

A closer look at the actual situation of Media Education in schools uncovers some problems. The National Minimum Curriculum should have given the necessary push to bring a qualitative leap in the teaching of the subject in all schools. However this did not happen as it was not followed through with the necessary organizational infrastructure. Fifteen focus groups were set up to implement the Curriculum. None specifically targeted Media Education. The position of the Educational Officer responsible for the subject has been vacant for more than eight years.

## Role in Curriculum

The place that Media Education should have in the curriculum is one of the most long standing debates on the subjects. Masterman (1988) outlined three possibilities for the inclusion of Media Education:

"a. as a *specialist area of study* in its own right (that is "media studies");

b. as an *integrated* part of more traditional disciplines (for example, language, literature, the humanities, social studies. Media

      "texts", might be studied alongside print texts in any of these subjects, for example);

      c. as a distinct and separable "theme" within a particular subject area (so, "the media" might be studied in some depth as part of social studies, or language and communication courses)." (p. 21)

Pungente (1985) suggested two other possibilities besides the three mentioned by Masterman. He claimed that Media Education can take the form of an extra-curricular activity outside regular school hours or a combination of methods. As an example of a possible combination in the curriculum, Pungente said that during a four year course in secondary schools, Media Education could be a course on its own in the first year and it could then be integrated into at least two subjects in the second and third year. In the fourth year several optional courses could be offered.

Buckingham (2003) pointed out that the debate is alive today as it was twenty years ago. While reflecting the tripartite distinction made by Masterman (1988), he discussed the possibility of Media Education as part of various subjects particularly highlighting, two subject areas these being Media Education in language and literature as well as in ICTs.

Minkkinen's (1978) position that "ideally, mass Media Education should be a subject on its own" (p. 126) is also discussed by Frau-Meigs (2006). She outlined the pros and cons of the use of the different methods in various countries and stated that Media Education is now established as a specialist subject in secondary schools in several countries. This subject tended to be popular with students but the increased centralized control of the curriculum was resulting in a decline of time available for specialist subject. In this scenario Media Education was becoming a minority subject. On the other hand the tendency which advocated Media Education across the curriculum tended to adopt the attitude that an "issue that is every teachers' responsibility can quickly become nobody's responsibility" (p. 13). Frau-Meigs noted that most media educators believe that the existence of a specialist department in Media Studies was a pre-requisite for the implementation of Media Education across the curriculum.

In Malta, while the National Minimum Curriculum explained in detail the aims and objectives of the programme, it did not however specify whether Media Education should be taught as an interdisciplinary sub-

ject or as a subject on its own. As a result State and Church schools could choose different strategies.

The option adopted by state schools was that Media Education should be taught as part of other subjects. As a result of this decision, very limited components of Media Education were introduced in Social Studies and Personal and Social Development at the primary and secondary levels (Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, 2005; Department of Curriculum Management, 2006). There were also limited references in the religion text book for Form 5 (Deguara, 2003). Much more importance to aspects of Media Education is given in ICT courses that are an integral part of the curriculum of the primary schools and secondary schools (Department of Curriculum Management, 2006). Such programmes are being enhanced in line with Government policy to bridge the digital divide.

The decision to integrate Media Education with a number of subjects meant that in actual fact, the onus was on the individual teachers who had to integrate Media Education in their own subject. Since the majority of teachers have not been given adequate theoretical and experiential training in Media Education, teachers find this difficult to do and as a result Media Education is not being given the importance it deserves.

Church schools which introduced Media Education decided that the subject  was to be taught as a subject on its own so that it would be given enough time for its exposition. At the same time, the programme encouraged the integration of particular topics in Media Education with other subject areas in the curriculum. Experience showed that integration with other studies was easier to carry out in the primary level where children were taught most of the time by one teacher. At the secondary level, where students were taught by different teachers, integrating Media Education with other subjects was possible but more difficult. Most Church schools are teaching the subject in Grades 4-6 of the primary level and some continue teaching the subject in Forms 1 and 2 of the secondary level. A number of schools have reduced the importance that the subject used to receive in past years due to lack of trained teachers in the subject and an overcrowded curriculum.

# Books Facilitating Empowerment

The set of books used throughout the primary and secondary schools do not only give most of the knowledge component asked for in the National Minimum Curriculum but also provide students with the practical work needed to acquire the skills and develop the attitudes indicated in the same document. They thus help to empower students in three different aspects: awareness of their media use; acquisition of tools for critical appraisal of content and language and awareness of the importance of what goes beyond the "frame" i.e. the societal and organizational aspects.

*Enable students to become aware of the media use they make*

Many students are not sufficiently aware of the number of hours which they spend using different media. Media use does have beneficial effects but over use can lead to negative effects. These would typically exhibit negative behaviours such as not doing homework, getting poor school grades, irritability and annoyance when unable to play, sacrificing social activities and even stealing money to buy and play video games. Putnam (2000) explained that computer mediated communication encouraged people to spend more time alone, talk online with strangers, sometimes giving personal details and forming superficial relationships at the expense of deeper face-to-face discussion and companionship with friends and family.

As a result, becoming aware of the importance of managing the use one makes of the media, is an important objective of Media Education (Thoman, 1995). It is only when students are made aware of their heavy use of the media that they realize the importance which media play in their life.

Objective 8 of National Minimum Curriculum, with regard to media use, says, *inter alia*, that a selective attitude should be developed regarding media consumption. One of the aims of the Maltese programme is to raise the students' awareness of the amount of time they dedicate to using the media and therefore their importance in the formation of their attitudes and lifestyle. The media books for the primary and secondary level help students monitor their use of TV, radio, and the Internet/email. Monitoring of newspapers and magazines use is discussed at a later stage when the students are more mature.

*Enable students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to assess critically media content and language and produce simple media products*

The critical assessment of media content and language is an important feature of media education. The production of simple media products is a practical way of mastering the media and achieving empowerment. The National Minimum Curriculum gives importance to these three aspects.

The media empowered student realizes that media content does not offer us reality but a representation of reality. More than a transparent window on the world, media content a give us a more mirrored or mediated version (Buckingham, 2003, McQuail, 2005). A discussion of how different aspects of media content are communicated in Media Education programmes in different countries is given in von Feilitzen and Carlsson (2003).

Out of all aspects of media content, the Maltese programme gives special attention to news, advertising, stereotyping and the portrayal of violence and sexual images. The different aspects of news, its gathering and reporting, is referred to in the primary level; however, it is tackled in depth in the secondary level. Advertising and the language of persuasion is treated in a similar way. Stereotyping and negative content such as violence and pornography are only discussed in the secondary level. The notions of genres, bias and representation are studied in both levels. A more detailed discussion of the books is given in Lauri and Borg (2006).

The second aspect of empowerment is that of understanding media language. There are many researchers who believe that different media have different languages (e.g. Crisell, 1986; Tarroni, 1979). Others have reservations about the possibility of speaking of media languages (eg. Messaris, 1994). Buckingham (2003) highlighted the importance of the study of media languages including syntagmatic combinations and paradigmatic choices as part of Media Education. The most popular position, and the one which this programme embraces, is that each medium has its own language. In this framework, students are helped to become familiar with the language of television, the language of newspapers and magazines, the language of radio and the language of the Internet. The media books, in line with the requirements of the National Minimum Curriculum, help students acquire this skill. The

media workbooks touch upon the language of cinema and television, newspapers and magazines and that of radio. *Understanding Media Languages*, the book used in Form 1 discusses at length the language of TV and cinema, radio and newspapers/magazines as well as the language of the Internet.

The third aspect is helping students acquiring the ability of producing simple media products. Such productions by students are considered to be of particular value to develop both a more in-depth critical understanding of the media as well as an exploration of students' emotional investment in the media. OFCOM (2004) and Kirwan, Learmonth, Sayer, and Williams (2003) agreed to include in their definition of media literacy both the ability to 'read' as well as to 'write' (or produce) media messages. Kirwan et al. consider as part of media literacy "the ability to 'write' media texts, increasingly using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such as desktop publishing, authoring multimedia packages, video filming, photography and digital editing" (Kirwan et al., 2003, p. 5). In his discussion of the subject Buckingham concluded that "practical, hands-on use of media technology frequently offers the most direct, engaging and effective way of exploring a given topic. It is also the aspect of Media Education that is most likely to generate enthusiasm from students" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 82).

The Media Education programme in Church schools stresses the production or "writing" element by giving importance to the class activities, class projects and exercises meant to stimulate the interest of the children in issues related to the media. The students, even at the primary level, are encouraged to learn that the techniques and technologies used by each medium influence the language of that medium. They are expected to be able to produce their own simple media products. Secondary students are invited to build a web page, produce a radio programme, produce the front and back pages of a newspaper and a magazine, create their own advertising campaign, produce their own advertisements among many other projects. Such production or "writing" skills enhances children's understanding of the media and the pleasure that they get from different media. Moreover, students feel empowered as a result of their "reading" and "writing" abilities.

*Enable students to look beyond what is in the frame, the printed page, the web page or radio programme. The societal and organizational aspects help the better understanding of what is produced and why*

Media messages are constructs made in a particular organizational framework with a definite ownership structure together with the processes of production in a particular society. This relationship is both important and very complex (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). Masterman and Mariet (1994), Minkkinen (1978) and Buckingham (2003) highlighed the relevance of these aspects to a programme of Media Education. The National Minimum Curriculum gave importance to these aspects. As a result, the books used in the Maltese programme – at the primary but much more at the secondary level – give considerable importance to the relationship between ownership structures and content. They talk about the structure of the advertising industry and that of a print media organization. The roles and functions of the media in society are discussed. They create awareness of different media organizations in Malta and give an account of the history of the media in Malta.

## Conclusions and Future Challenges

Media Education is needed today more than it was needed twenty five years ago as the media landscape is now omnipresent. In an island of 316 square kilometers and a population of 400,000 there are today eight television stations; two of which are owned by political parties, thirteen national radio stations and twenty-six community radio stations. Cable TV has a penetration of about 80% of households. In fact almost all homes have at least one TV set and most have two sets. A radio digital platform is being introduced in the second quarter of 2008 while television transmission will be completely digitalized by 2010. This will increase the number of services on both platforms. More than half of Maltese houses are connected to the Internet, and the number is constantly increasing. Students spend hours using the Internet and watching television. IPaqs, Ipods, computer games and mobiles are part of the personal accessories of all but especially of the young. There is also a strong presence of the print media including 15 daily and weekly papers and dozens of locally produces magazines. Such a media landscape makes a pronounced Media Education programme a critical need.

In this context it is being suggested that the following initiatives be taken up:

1. Since lack of teacher training was identified as one of the main shortcomings of the programme, the situation can only be changed if the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta provides both a component of Media Education as part of the training of all future teachers as well as a more advanced unit to those students who wish to deepen their studies in the area. This training should include theoretical dimensions and practical skills. Training in Media Education should also be part of courses offered under the Continuous Professional Development programme regularly organized by government.

2. A new concerted effort involving policy makers, administrators of state, church and independent schools, teachers, parents and media professionals is essential for the success of the future of the programme. This is also advocated by the Grunwald Declaration (1982) and the "Paris Declaration" (Commission of the European Communities 2007). Such an effort can produce a holistic strategy which addresses existing problems.

3. Government should appoint an Education Officer responsible for the execution of the Media Education programme on the national level. This will give a clear indication that there is the political will to move forward and help tackle the problems of an overcrowded syllabus and lack of resources.

4. An attempt can be made to have a Media Education component as part of summer schools organized by Government. The involvement of stakeholders of the social sphere can disseminate Media Education outside of the school environment.

5. One limitation of the Media education programme was the lack of involvement of media professionals. Their inclusion can promote an informal approach to Media Education through radio and television productions as well as newspapers and magazines. These productions can tackle elements from the curriculum as well other aspects which are of interest to parents as well as children. The Media Education television channel run by the Ministry of Education should play an important role in this proposition. The involvement of parents and NGOs can provide the advocacy needed to pressure policy makers in the educational field as well as media professionals to take the actions being proposed.

6. The Maltese experience has shown that Media Education is only given its deserved status and importance when it is treated as a separate subject. The "integration" strategy has not really worked in the local environment. Teaching Media Education as a subject on its own should be the norm especially in secondary schools. The "integration" strategy should be carried out over and above the teaching of Media Education as a separate subject especially in those years where this is not catered for.

7. It is also being suggested that media workbooks and textbooks should be written in Maltese. Although English is the language of instruction in many Church and independent schools, yet in government schools, lessons are taught in Maltese. Having media workbooks and textbooks produced in Maltese will enable teachers in state schools to use these books with their students.

If we were to evaluate the success of Media Education in Malta we would describe it as moderate. The experience of Media Education in Church schools is much more positive than that in state and independent schools. The suggestions made should help surmount the difficulties that are being faced today mainly by putting into practice the official documents on the subject including those proposed by the European Union. Recital 37 of the new Audio Visual Media Services Directive (2007) states that "the development of media literacy in all sections of society should be promoted and progress followed closely" (p.L332/21). The Communication from the Commission (2007) provides further pressure in the same direction.

But perhaps the greatest impetus to the further development of Media Education will be the over saturation of the media's presence. In a country totally surrounded by the sea the Maltese have learned that the best strategy for survival is learning how to swim and not building a dyke. Similarly, the ever increasing inundation by the media will be a stimulus for media educators to increase people's ability to swim in this environment. Hopefully Media Education will, more and more, appear to be the solution.

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# Chapter 8

# Information and Media Literacy in the Indian Context: Diverse Directions

## *Mira K. Desai and Geeta Seshu*

## Introduction

Over the last decade, sweeping economic changes in India have transformed the country's urban and rural landscape. The opening up of India's economy to foreign investments, the Information Technology revolution and the mushrooming of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), the entry of multinationals in retail trade and the development of industrial hubs across small cities and towns have had a deep and diverse impact on the political and social life of the people in India. Nowhere has this change been more evident than in the media.

Post-Independence, the Indian media - whether the predominantly family-owned print media, privately owned cinema or state-controlled public broadcasting television and radio - has played an important part in the country's political, economic and social life. Astutely combining the roles of conveyor of news and information for political and economic elites with that of a purveyor of mass entertainment, the media has been an integral part of the communication systems of the country, helping transmit and shape diverse ideas, values and opinions, alternately supporting and opposing dominant political formations.

Over the decade since the opening up of India's economy, there has been a proliferation of privately-owned television channels and FM radio channels, a boom in multiplexes and the resultant rise in small budget films as well as the growth of regional language print media. While all this holds a promise of growth, the development of multiple vehicles of communication and therefore better content for diverse segments of readers and audiences, it has also given rise to apprehensions that the media has also become commodified.

Media content, critics say, is being 'dumbed down' as news television channels that beam on a 24x7 basis have contributed to a torrent of trivia. 'Infotainment' – the entwining of information to entertainment – is here to stay and, with it, a lack of substance and depth in information. The messages of the media are varied and at times, confusing. Media responses to events of the day are either negligible or hopelessly disproportionate to their significance. If, on the one hand, one has a surfeit of news as entertainment or staged reality shows, there are cutting-edge news stories, films or documentaries that seek to inform and enlighten, albeit less widely publicized or distributed.

Content aside, the media is an arena for massive investments, both from international media conglomerates and national business houses. A slew of tie-ups and joint ventures in television, film and print media, has also substantially altered old investment and ownership patterns. There is intense debate on government policy on foreign direct investment in the media, regulations and changes in legislation to cover everything from cross-media ownership, licensing norms and content. The media is, today, an integral part of the Indian economy's globalization agenda.

While exposure to different media and their attractions is tremendous, a corresponding level of media education is severely lacking in the country. Media and information literacy is still in a nascent stage in India. How does the cultural, economic, political and social diversity in India affect access to information? How is information and media spread over this terrain? How is the need for information and media literacy in India being met?

## The Media in India

A country that boasts of an over 5000-year-old civilization and an over 50 year-old democracy, India is unique in more ways than one. It is a land filled with contradictions yet united by a composite policy framework. A union of 28 states and seven union territories, India's Constitution defines the country as a 'sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic'. Present day India is rural (72 percent), densely populated (density 324 per square kilometer), young (65 percent below 30 years of age) more literate than earlier (decline in absolute number of illiterates from 1991 to 2001) and rapidly moving towards industrialisation and urbanisation.

India is an example of how cultural diversity in society is mirrored by the market not merely for economic reasons but for cultural and political also. The Indian media is as diverse as its society, having varied ownership, linguistic markets and complex distribution mechanisms. Most of the media in India are as old as any in the world. "While print and cinema developed in pre-Independence India at more or less around the same time as in other developed countries" (Kesavan, 1985), television was introduced after Independence in a limited way in 1959 and grew after 1982 while the Internet began in Indian in the mid-1990s. Private enterprise fuelled the growth and development of print and cinema whereas television, radio and the Internet were developed under state control as public service enterprises till the late 1990s when the process of liberalizations and economic reforms got underway.

A complex network of laws govern print media, broadcast media has become autonomous under Prasar Bharati, the public service broadcaster since 1997 and legislation to regulate broadcast media is currently under discussion. New media initiatives has been powered by privatization of telecom, a number of e-governance projects and attempt to raise confidence of people in the new technology. In addition, a right to information movement has taken root and has become an instrument for the redressal of grievances, a fact widely discussed in the media (Sarin, 2008)

Bucking the worldwide trend, print media in India has also seen a spurt; with at over 200 million adult readers and a potential reader base of at least 300 million literate people. The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries - Price Waterhouse Coopers (FICCI-PWC) Indian Entertainment and Media Industry Annual report, 2007 remarks that print media is now at Rs128 billion, with a projected size of Rs 232 billion by 2011 at a CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) of 13 per cent. Whereas the pre-Independence press in India was strongly nationalist, with a history of participation in freedom struggle, it also comprised family run businesses, strong regional groups, and exercised a strong influence on society. The introduction of modern printing technology, that coincided, paradoxically, with the Emergency and post-Emergency period in India, resulted in the growth of magazines and in the spread of newspapers. The print media business became market-driven and witnessed the entry of professional corporate bodies. There has been a spurt in the non-English press in India (Jeffries, 2000). Magazines have seen steady growth in last five years and after

general interest magazines and women's magazine, the business maga-
zine market is growing speedily. With the relaxation of Foreign Direct
Investment in print media (general interest not news), foreign maga-
zines have also entered the Indian market.

As per IRS (2006) 51.2 million households in India had cable and satel-
lite connection and are receiving transnational television in their house-
holds of the total 91.9 million TV homes in India. The total TV view-
ing audience in the country has grown from 430.7 million in 2005 to
437.8 million. India is the world's third-largest television market. There
are, today, over 300 private television channels, broadcasting in more
than 11 languages. The resultant loss post-1990 is to the public service
broadcaster, as cable and satellite households in India are growing.
FICCI-PWC report, 2007 notes the current size of the Television in-
dustry is estimated at Rs 191 billion, with a projected figure of Rs 519
billion by 2011 at a CAGR of 22 per cent.

The Indian film industry is the largest in the world in terms of ticket
sales and number of films produced annually with 877 feature films and
1177 short films were released in the year 2003 alone (ref: Central
Board of Film Certification, India (http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in).
FICCI-PWC report, 2007 lists the current size is estimated at Rs 85
billion and is expected to reach Rs. 175 billion by 2011 with a CAGR of
16 per cent. Usage of the Internet and new media, which seemed to
pick up slowly given lower computer penetration in the country, is now
around four million, according to data available with the Internet Ser-
vice Providers Association of India.

The huge rise in mobile telephony of over 200 million subscribers has
also corresponded with the worldwide trend of convergence of differ-
ent media in the mobile. "India stands 10 out of 16 countries in 'e-
readiness' ranking in the Asia and Pacific region, and 53 out of 68
countries of the world. This ranking is based on the annual study of the
Economist Intelligence Unit on parameters like connectivity, business
environment, consumer and business adoption, legal and policy envi-
ronment, social and cultural environment and supporting e-services"
(Ghosh & Das, 2006). This has also led to many initiatives like using
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for e-governance
and information literacy.

# Media Education in India: Whither Media Literacy?

In India, the approach to media education as a concept is not uniform. Kumar (1995) acknowledges that 'much confusion exist about what media education really is" and elaborates on the importance of "visual literacy, media education/studies, information education, communication education". Sanjay Asthana (Carlsson et al., 2008, pp. 251-258) comments on the Cybermohalla project (http://www.sarai.net/community/saricomm.html) and Mapping the neighborhood project, in order to sketch dialogic process between media education, learning and literacy, and looks at how both projects explore how "young people learn and develop innovate uses of media in diverse socio-cultural settings".

At another end of the spectrum, media education is also the imparting of skills and training for the media profession. Given the emphasis on media and entertainment as a major industry poised for growth in the coming years, it is interesting to see the corresponding spread of media education with such a professional orientation across India. "In 1938, the Aligarh Muslim University was the first institution to offer a Diploma in Journalism but this was discontinued after two years. The year 1942 marked the beginning of 'communication/media education' in pre-independent India when the Department of Journalism at Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan) started a course in journalism. Post independence, by the sixties and seventies, media education became more widespread when various universities started either 'journalism' or 'communication' programmes" (Desai, 2007).

Over the last decade, there has been a proliferation of private media and communications institutions that offer both under-graduate and post-graduate programs. These courses provide a mix of theoretical and practical modules and seek to impart the skills needed for media professionals in two principal areas – journalism and advertising. The growth and expansion in the entertainment and media industry in India has also spawned a number of institutes offering courses in digital media, film, animation and television broadcasting.

The curriculum of University-affiliated courses includes a history of communication; communication theory and even media studies. These courses draw heavily from the extensive critical media theory developed in the West. While film studies and cultural studies are well developed in India, extensively related to decoding of content and audiences, there

is not enough emphasis on analysis of structural issues concerning ownership, ideology or political economy.

In India, media literacy and education is a miniscule component of media studies for undergraduate and post-graduate communication and media courses in the university curriculum. Barring a few university courses, most of them make no reference to media literacy. It still does not form part of the school curriculum. Also, it is not taught as a criti-cal area of study or in terms of established principles of information and media literacy. Besides journalism, mass communication or media studies courses; the media is not centric in other courses of study in any curricular design, with the exception of a few post-graduate courses on media and society in faculties like Sociology or Political Science. Kumar (2007) elaborates on the history of media literacy in the name of media education and notes about "its beginnings in India in the early 1980s. The pioneers, most of whom were part of media institutes established by the Catholic Church, were largely influenced by the efforts in Media Education in Australia and the U.K.".

## Media Literacy: Our Interactions

Over the years, media activists in India have, in several independent efforts, critiqued the mainstream media, primarily in terms of the con-tent and agenda-setting aspects of media coverage of communal con-flicts, of gender and representation of women, of the media's successes and failures in delving into socio-economic issues etc. While any dis-cussion and debate on the media remained confined to either profes-sionals working within the media or in the academic arena, other efforts towards media awareness amongst lay readers or general audiences are made by religious or socio-political groups.

That there is an urgent need to reach out to readers and audiences with a critical understanding of the principles of media literacy cannot be overstated. It's is important to gauge the present level of awareness of school and college students on the media and media issues and their impressions on media coverage of important social issues and also determine whether media education and literacy can be introduced as part of school curriculum.

Several discussions with students, parents and teachers in schools and colleges in Maharashtra clearly indicate that the hunger for more in-formation and analysis on the media is deep and abiding. The discus-

sions followed a series of lectures and workshops on issues concerning the media conducted by one of the authors as an independent initiative over the last decade. These issues ranged from representation of women in the media; media and communalism; media ethics; sensationalism in news and the impact of 24x7 news, media ownership, etc. A session with parents of a Mumbai-based school discussed issues related to children and the media and a media literacy program was initiated with school students.

Some notable facets of these sessions are enumerated here. These have been categorized on the basis of the issues discussed and, while essentially experiential, they provide an interesting overview of the ground realities of media education and awareness amongst diverse audiences. Though they may not be indicative of the situation all over India, the idea is to document audience responses in a given context.

**Gender, representation of women and the media:** In 2003, students of an under-graduate degree college in Vasai in Thane district, Maharashtra, expressed dismay at advertisements that utilized women's bodies to sell different products – from automobiles, sanitary ware, furniture and the like.

A series of lectures for college lecturers, as part of a University Grants Commission-sponsored refresher course in women's studies over the last five years, also provided interesting insights. While criticism of the disappearance of serious analysis and reportage on women's issues was acute, the lecturers also expressed curiosity about the media's internal workings, its filtering processes or agenda setting. Several lecturers expressed anger at what they saw as the market-driven agenda of the media but also voiced helplessness at the influence the media wielded over their students.

In a convent-run SSC (State Secondary Certification) Board girls' school in Malad, a suburb in Western Mumbai, two successive workshops were conducted in 2005 on media representation of women. With audio-visuals and clips of advertisements and news clippings, a discussion ensued on the stereotypical images of women, the commodification of women's bodies, the media's obsession with ultra-thin, impossible-to-achieve body proportions or prevailing social preferences for a fair skin and advertisements of beauty products that promised this. Several young students who aspired to careers in modeling or even in television learnt about the manner in which photographs were doc-

tored to enhance some features and minimize flaws while one young participant asked whether advertisements for fairness creams could be believed and whether the creams really worked!

**Religious fundamentalism and the media:** A series of film screenings, talks and audio-visual presentations on media and communalism were held in a number of colleges in Mumbai and Pune from 2002. It is interesting to note that, in the immediate aftermath of the communal riots in Gujarat, a state in Western India, a majority of students expressed skepticism of media coverage of the 'victims' of communal riots and carnage. In a college in Mumbai, after a talk on the Gujarat riots, some students insisted that the media was 'lying' about the scale of the violence or the actual number of dead in the riots, despite interacting with journalists who covered the riots and could provide first-hand experiences of the violence!

An exception was the emotional response of college students in Pune, where an intense discussion on the use of different media by fundamentalist organizations for propaganda purposes followed the screening of a short documentary on the riots in Gujarat. In another college in Mumbai, again after a discussion on propaganda and agenda-setting in the context of communalism, a student wanted to know what the 'truth' was and how one could find 'true' information, especially because a number of websites run by fundamentalist organizations representing one side only.

It was only when students were presented with plain, unvarnished facts; films and documentaries that challenged the predominant understanding or when exposed to different points of view and discussions on the subject were taken up on a long-term basis, did bias and prejudice break down and give rise to a willingness to recognize that there was another side to a situation.

**Children and the media:** The younger generation, main users of new digital media, has begun using emails, chats, social networking site and search engines like Google extensively. Reports of criminal cases involving school-going children, adolescents or of young couples in Delhi, Mumbai and in smaller cities and towns – from transmitting images using Multimedia Messaging Systems (MMS) or posting messages on social networking sites – indicate the lack of understanding amongst youth about the consequences of media usage.

In workshops conducted with parents on 'children and the media' in 2005-06 in a school in Mumbai, the emphasis was on making media work for children and helping parents understand the media. After a brief presentation on media effects on children, the discussion veered towards parental controls, the helplessness especially of working parents in controlling TV time and in harmful media messages. Violence in media – whether in video games, film or in television news or sex and sexually explicit media messages, were discussed and parents exchanged views and information on their own coping strategies. An outcome of the workshop was the decision to form a film club for middle-school (5th and 6th grade) children. The film club began screening animation films of Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, popular old English musicals like 'Mary Poppins' and award-winning children's films made in different languages in India. The film club effort continues to date. The film screenings, followed by a discussion, have met with varying success. Most of the children are avid moviegoers, brought up on a diet of mainstream Bollywood and Hollywood cinema. The films selected for the screenings are not usually commercially successful films. Two years after the formation of the film club, some students have begun asking questions about the craft of filmmaking.

In late 2007, a media literacy workshop was conducted for 6th grade students of a Central Mumbai school. In a session on food and advertising, the students brought advertisements and discussed their favourite food advertisement, the photographs used to market food, the jingles and catch-lines, etc. Students were asked to list the number of advertisements for some food or the other before, during and after their favourite television programme (usually 15-16 food advertisements), the kind of foods advertised (pizza, candy, cereals, chocolates, snack-items etc); a list of freebies or toys in various junk-food packets; clubs and competitions for a toy. The food advertisement workshop drew forth instant response from the students and while they agreed that food advertisements were 'great fun to watch', they could also see how companies target children. Two students shared their futile experiences with filling up forms for competitions to 'win' a toy that was advertised and being disappointed when no toy came in the post; others spoke of how they collected 'cheetos' or bottle caps and Pokemon cards (promotional goodies given with food products).

Ownership, 24 x 7 news and sensationalism in news: In a talk on media ownership with post-graduate students of the Department of Sociology

in Mumbai in 2006, the presentation traced the growth of the press in India and the present-day situation of media houses with a presence in print, film, television and radio. Patterns of cross-media ownership and convergence, governmental policies on media ownership and regulation were discussed. There is little information amongst students about ownership patterns or of media policies, leave alone an understanding of information spread across different media.

In a college in Central Mumbai, a discussion was held in 2007 on the impact of 24x7 news with students of Bachelor in Mass Media course (BMM, University of Mumbai). For them, the frenzy for news, the chase for celebrity-oriented news, the effect of the plethora of news television channels on news content, the race and competition for TRPs (Television Rating Points) and audiences were familiar issues. What was lacking was a sharper understanding of the pressures and processes behind news-production, the choices made in editing rooms or the agenda-setting that works to project one kind of news over another.

Initial discussion on the media usually throws up comments like 'the media is sensationalist', or that 'the media is frivolous and interested in celebrity-tracking' or 'too powerful and can make or break reputations' or 'unconcerned and indifferent to its readers and viewers, unless they have the purchasing power'. When probed further, students were skeptical about the role and responsibility of the media, with comments like 'all that appeared in the news was wrong and exaggerated', in a way reflect 'their own reading of media'. The understanding of the students about media processes was often rudimentary or negligible and resulted in feelings of discomfort, anger or helplessness. Disgust and cynicism were also rife.

There is little or no understanding about linkages of ownership within the media, of media houses that own businesses or of the shared interests of media houses among majority of the audience groups which makes media literacy all the more relevant. There is more familiarity about older media like print than the number of private radio or television channels, film production houses or Internet.

The interactions lead us to conclude that at the institutional level, there is some understanding of the importance of media literacy but little clarity as to how one could work towards it. The lack of any curricular framework for any such effort is also a challenge. The efforts for media

awareness and education in India, initiated by both civil society organizations and activist groups remain scattered and not widely documented. Media educationist Kewal Kumar states that "It is only in the southern states of Kerala, Tamilnadu, and Karnataka that Media Education has become a part of the school curriculum; in states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra it is taught outside school hours; in most other efforts in Media Education, NGOs, Social Action Groups, some women's groups, some members of SIGNIS, have taken the lead" (Kumar, 2007). He even refers to training kits developed by teachers in the Southern States and points to the origin of media literacy in India by stating, "it was not surprising to see that the States of the South pioneered the Indian movement in media education/(literacy)." What they resisted primarily was the domination of the North Indian language, Hindi, and the North Indian culture centred in Delhi and Bombay.

Abhivyakti, an organization in Maharashtra in Western India, started media education programmes in local schools of Nashik in 1995. Abhivyakti, meaning expression, aims to equip the children with critical awareness about media, and in a participatory process, attempt to discover ways of strengthening their response towards the media. The organisation has published 'Media Education in the Indian Context', a booklet which features the functions, objectives, methodologies of the Media Education programme in the school (http://www.abhivyakti.org.in). Tej-Prasarini or "Light-Spreader" is a multi-media publishing project of the Don Bosco Education Society of the province of Bombay, India. It offers four day course in media education for 'parents, teachers, and youth leaders. The center has many publications and books for media education (http://tej.freeservers.com).http://interact.uoregon.edu/mediaLit/JCP/contacts/contacts.pdf also lists some of the agencies/individuals involved in media literacy in India.

Kumar (2007) is skeptical that schools from other states of India will introduce courses in media education/ (literacy) in the near future. At the college and university levels, there is little Media Education; the priority in most courses is to train professionals for the various media, especially television, cinema, the press and the Internet as discussed earlier. In such circumstances and given the fact that an independent and critical media movement needs to be strengthened in India, the efforts of media literacy will remain scattered and segmented.

This reconfirms an urgent need to educate and sensitize school and college students, parents and teachers on the nature of the media. This will sharpen their understanding of media messages and help them become active and critical citizens rather than passive and malleable target audiences/consumers. Instead of feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, this will help in the development of a more pro-active attitude towards the media and a clearer understanding of one's own role in receiving media messages.

## Information in India: Access and Denial

In India, information has always been a resource confined to an elite section, and access and utilization of information was strictly dependant on caste, class, gender and religious identity. Historically, the oral tradition ensured that the originator or transmitter of the information controlled the dissemination of information to a select minority - myths, religious and social texts were transmitted from elders to young men of the upper castes and contained elaborate justifications to 'control' information and its dissemination. There are historical records of news bulletins by the Mauryan dynasty during the 3rd Century BCE, or during Mughal rule in India but information in this context was purely in the realm of espionage - the 'coding, transmitting and de-coding of messages' for the rulers.

Over 200 years of British colonial rule brought in a two-fold change – in education for the British civil services and in print media, first through religious periodicals and subsequently, journalism. Information began to be disseminated in a more universal manner, through newspapers and magazines in different languages. The radio as a medium gained prominence. Other contributory factors included technological developments, transport and a rise in literacy levels. The nationalist movement and the strong socio-political consciousness of pre-Independent India also helped fuel the demand for more access to information.

The growth of the media and the spread of universal adult education in post-Independent India have also contributed to the dissemination of information. Literacy levels have increased from a mere 18.33 percent in 1951 to 60.84 percent by the 2001 Census. The rise in the levels of literacy among males was from 27.16 to 75.85 percent whereas female literacy levels rose from 8.66 to 54.16 percent. Till 1976, education was the exclusive responsibility of States but became Union and State sub-

jects due to an amendment in Constitution of India. The National Policy of Education in 1986 and the Programme of Action in 1992 led to many changes in the Indian educational scenario. The National Literacy Mission launched in 1988 to impart functional literacy to non-literates of 15 to 35 years of age and Sarva Shikshan Abhiyaan (campaign for universalisation of education) launched in 2001 culminated in the passage of the Universalisation of Elementary Education Act in 2002, which covers children in the age group of six to fourteen. Both have apparently met with mixed success.

Discussing the information scenario in India, social scientist and writer Sunil Khilnani says, "India has one of the most restrictive, archaic attitudes about access to information - this is certainly an aspect of the state that needs to be opened up to the criticism of democracy. The laws on the right to public information combine legacies from the colonial Raj with a more contemporary technocratic secrecy" (quoted in Sridhara, 2002). After the Freedom of Information Act 2002, which was criticized for permitting too many exemptions, The Right to Information Act was passed in October 2005. "Under the terms of the Act, any citizen of India may request a department of the Central Government, State Government or Public Sector company or bank for information on almost any question related to the department or company's functioning...It is considered a major milestone in the journey towards transparency in governance and an important tool in the fight against corruption" (Nair, 2006). The media also has been instrumental in disseminating information about Right to Information Act.

## Information Literacy Initiatives in India

At the moment, two distinct trends pertaining to information literacy prevail in India. The first are policies and programmes of the government mainly aimed at rural communities and the second are civil society initiatives, including that of educational institutions and universities. Apparently, there seems to be a degree of convergence when government programmes are implemented by civil society organizations. As far as community initiatives for information are concerned, Ghosh and Das (2006, p. 6) remark, "some initiatives are based on successful partnership between private bodies (like corporate houses and NGOs) and public bodies (like village Panchayats), this may known as private public (PP) partnership, e.g., eChoupal, TARAHaat. Some initiatives provide Government to Citizens (G2C) interface to ensure better transparency

in governance, e.g., Bhoomi, Gyandoot, Community Information Centres, etc".

Apart from community-level initiatives by non-government organizations, at times in collaboration with Central and State governments, other civil society efforts include the endeavors undertaken by libraries and departments of library sciences in various universities in India. For instance, the Central Library of Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, realizing the importance of Information Literacy, brings out brochures, pamphlets and fact sheets, besides conducting tutorials, conferences, invited talks, specialized presentations for the faculty, students and industries. Its website lists 28 programmes conducted for information literacy during 2002 to 2007 (http://www.cenlib.iitm.ac.in). The Indian Society for the Advancement of Library and Information Science (SALIS), in collaboration with UNESCO, launched the e-Learning Portal for Awareness Raising on Information Literacy for South Asia on 19th December 2007 (http://portal.unesco.org).

The Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies, an NGO near New Delhi, founded in April 1997, is committed to advocacy and developing knowledge solutions for under-privileged societies through the use of innovative and effective Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The Centre undertakes development projects through the usage of knowledge-sharing tools and products like print and electronic media, and building capacity through training programmes including one on 'Managing information in the digital age' (http://www.cseindia.org).

Gulati and Dongra (2006) elaborate on a few ongoing programmes like Swiftjyoti (www.niitercs.com), Akshaya-ekendra (http://www.keralaitmission.org) and Informationthela (http://www.it.iitb.ac.in). Another such project called 'Tele centres on wheels' has been recently launched by the Change Initiatives, a rural Indian NGO, with support from UNESCO and the West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency (WBREDA) for remote villages in West Bengal (http://portal.unesco.org reported on 18-12-2007 New Delhi).

Bhatnagar and Schware (2000), Harris and Rajora (2006), and Agarwal (2007) elaborate on the experiments/initiatives/case studies of use of ICT for development. An analysis of these projects/ experiments/ initiatives reveals that instead of aiming at 'information literacy' per se

they intend to provide decision-making support to public administrators in planning, implementation or improving of development projects, provide access to information and transparency to citizens, or empower people through training using ICT. Many of the projects are hardware driven and have little investment in training or capacity building prior to use of ICT infrastructure at the grassroots level.

## Information Literacy: Some Dilemmas

The UNESCO-sponsored Meeting of Experts on Information Literacy in Prague in 2003 observed, "Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand". In a country like India where there are 22 official languages and several dialects, besides socio-cultural and economic contrasts, it is a challenge merely to enumerate the information concerns of the majority, leave alone organize the information and equip people to handle it.

Ghosh and Das (2006) discuss the use of the library –from rural libraries, public libraries and libraries located in educational institutions for information literacy. According to them, "information literacy programmes are already in existence in narrower forms in various libraries and information centres in India, in the forms of user education, bibliographic instruction, library instruction, library research and so on.' However, as rightly pointed out, "more needs to be done and that 'training of the trainers, who will deliver information literacy programmes need to be strengthened, as a chunk of library and information professionals are not in a position to handle modern ICT tools and techniques in information handling due to a lack of personal interests or other reasons". A similar observation has been made by Das and Lal (2006) who also emphasis the need for using the existing network of public libraries in India for information literacy. They note, "Information seekers may want consolidated or exhaustive information. To provide right information to the users, public librarians need to be trained to develop information literacy competency and should able to educate the user that will make user information literate".

In India, policy makers have suggested the creation of community information centres to provide various kinds of community information required by common citizens, e.g. education, health, nutrition, sanitation, agriculture, wholesale prices of agricultural products, village indus-

tries, weather, land records, utilities (such as, ration cards, driving licenses, birth certificates, death certificates, caste certificates, income certificates, etc.), and so on. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India (July 2002 - July 2007) coined a term, Providing Urban amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) that describes coherent knowledge and resources distribution across the country. The PURA will deliver three types of connectivity: physical connectivity by providing roads in rural areas, electronic connectivity by providing reliable communication network and knowledge connectivity by establishing more professional institutions and vocational training centres. Since the emphasis is more on connectivity, the literacy about usage of that connectivity is envisaged as a next step.

The Government of India established a National Knowledge Commission (Pitroda et al., 2006) on 13th June 2005 and has been given a time-frame of three years. The Commission remarks, "Access is one of the most fundamental issues in a knowledge society. Even if universities, research institutions and laboratories produce large amounts of knowledge, it will be of little use until the majority of the population actually possesses adequate means to acquire, absorb and communicate this knowledge."

Rajaram (2006) categorically remarked, "the basic challenges are posed by the government, bureaucrats and politicians of a country. Do they really want their citizens to be information literate? If they believe that they may end up losing more by having an informed people they may discourage rather than encourage any programme that may lead to information literacy." When one examines the e-governance initiatives of Government of India in 2007, nothing much seems to have changed from the early controls on transmission of information and knowledge as the flow of information is still from government to citizen suggested by the acronym of G2C. What is the correlation between knowledge and information? And what are the concrete terms by which information literacy contributes to democratic processes in a diverse nation like India where the citizens are deprived of basic rights of education, health services and transport, leave alone the right to human dignity.

In an analysis, based on case studies on information literacy originating from different geographical, political, economic, social, cultural, demographic and educational backgrounds, Rajaram (2006) points out the gaps in information literacy. She lists the political hurdles, inadequacy of technical infrastructure and IT skills, traditional system of education,

lack of collaboration between libraries and teaching faculties, low literacy rate, lack of libraries, low demand for library services, lack of financial and human resources, inadequacy of time devoted by libraries or academic institutions for such information literacy initiatives, low levels of publishing and students' attitudes.

While governmental initiatives seem to emphasize the infrastructure to access information, measures for information literacy do not seem to be a parallel concern. The question is, by providing infrastructure for information and indeed, some data like policy documents, laws or even community records, does one ensure information literacy? Information literacy for all is a very important requirement if people are to exercise their power under RTI (Right to Information Act 2005). Unless institutionalized, the efforts in the direction of information literacy may not bear any fruits even as far as enforcement of RTI is concerned.

## Towards an Inclusive Framework for Information and Media Literacy

As earlier discussed, the UNESCO definition of information literacy encompasses one's information concerns and needs. The definition of media literacy as a concept has "different meaning in difference countries and cultures" (von Feilitzen & Carlsson, 2003, p. 12).

In the summer of 1990, 180 delegates from 40 countries convened in Toulouse, France for an International Media Literacy Conference by UNESCO (United National Educational, Social, Cultural Organisation). The conference defined four levels of media education around the world of which India was labelled as a second level country "where media education is uneven. For example, there may be a national curriculum but no textbooks or teaching materials being published. Or there may be interested teachers but no policy or curriculum frameworks for teaching. Example: Austria, Ireland, Italy, some developing countries, such as India and the Philippines" (http://www.medialit.org).

The definition of media literacy in the context of the European Union, according to Tornero (Carlsson et al., 2008, pp. 103-116) clearly includes information literacy as the "term used to describe the skills and abilities required for conscious, independent development in the new communication environment- digital, global and multimedia- of the information society. He defines it as "a skill that involves and encom-

passes other skills and forms of literacy: reading and writing literacy, audiovisual literacy (often referred to as image or visual literacy) and digital or information literacy….is a necessary part of active citizenship and is key to the full development of freedom of expression and the right to information".

Kumar (2007) rightly remarks, "The whole approach to the teaching of media education/(literacy) in India needs a new radical rethinking. New strategies need to be evolved so that a critical interpretation of the old and the new media both as technologies and as sources of information and media content become an integral part of education at all levels – school, college and university. And furthering his argument he comments that unlike 'individual-centered' media literacy, media education has to be community-centered.

In a country of vast economic and social disparities and political inequalities, the acquisition of information and knowledge is a crucial tool for empowerment. Government initiatives approach the acquisition of information in physical terms – by developing ICT tools and digital infrastructures for accessing information. On the other hand, civil society initiatives emphasize training programmes for adult education and digital literacy skills. Clearly, these efforts are scattered and divided. According to Gulati and Dongra (2006), "the right to access to information has not been realized by the majority of India's people. Rather than protecting citizen's right to information…the media in these countries has not done enough to counter this culture by procuring information and putting it in the public domain."

The overview of efforts in the direction of information literacy as well as media literacy clearly reveals a disconnect between the organizational framework for making 'information' available, the media through which information and media messages is disseminated, and the viewers, the readers and the audiences of this media and information. If on the one hand, 'information' is seen as a treasured commodity or product, the media views its readers and audiences as a 'market' for the product. The media might not be interested in making their 'market' conscious of their existence. Besides, despite the seeming diversity of media, the public perceptions of its credibility or accountability seems low, as evident from our limited interactions with them.

As the access to information evolves into a more critical understanding of information processes, the awareness of the role of the media in

providing information and shaping culture will also become more acute. There will be an increase in the awareness of the role of different sections of society in the generation of and use of information, the creation of messages through different media as well as its impact on its readers and audiences.

Given the diversity of languages in India and the levels of literacy in the country, any attempt towards information or media literacy calls for a decentralized framework that includes media and civil society organizations, besides the formulation of policies. Information literacy as well as media literacy needs to be developed and strengthened as strands of a whole, incorporated in educational curriculum at the school level itself, utilizing both theory and practice to help develop critical thinking from a young age. While libraries must be encouraged to participate in an information literacy movement, the resources of the library and digital information networks must be brought into the classroom. Information and media literacy cannot be seen as isolated attempts confined to media institutes or libraries but it involves economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, psychologists and so on. Not confined to a few programmes or discussed in seminars and conferences, it has to become a grassroots activity undertaken on a continuous basis. Information and media literacy are integral part of a process where the content of information - along with an understanding about access to information, sources of information and uses of information – are the tools that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

The days to come will unveil how effective the newly acquired Right to Information Act is empowering ordinary citizens India. But it is imperative that an inclusive institutional framework is put in place to ensure that each and every Indian not only become literate but also become information and media literate. It is when information and media literate citizens access, assess and utilize information across media that they will acquire the knowledge and wisdom to better their own existence and that of the world around them.

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## Chapter 9

# Failures of the Past, Absences of the Present: Peru's Radical Take on Media in the 1970s and Its Relationship with the Non-Existent Media Literacy Scene in the 2000s

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## Introduction

In 1987, a study on the perceptions of Peruvian history among secondary schoolchildren established that the understanding shared by them about past and present Peru could be described as a "critical idea": Peru was a country with a potential for greatness, but betrayed by a succession of bad governments, from the colonial era to current times (Portocarrero & Oliart, 1989). This perception, that arose decades before it was detected, is an important element in any assessment of media literacy, both of the intentions behind the few programs that tried to include it in school curricula, as well as of its failures.

Peru's media literacy experience is a failed one, but for different reasons than the usual mismanagement, lack of follow-through or budget shortcomings. The attempt to implement media literacy was not in the educational system, but in the media industry itself, as part of an experiment that tried to change completely the role media plays in developing societies. The failure of such a radical experiment has been a drag upon any attempt to provide media literacy at the school level, while the intellectual assumptions that brought radical reform have transformed many times but have not necessarily changed into a new understanding of the role of media in society. This particular conflict, a radical interpretation of media as part of society, was not original to Peru; the experiment was. This paper tries to present the outlines of the experiment and the consequences for media literacy.

## Latin America and the Radical View of Societies in Need of "Deep Transformations"

Latin America experimented a radical transformation during the 1950, when the confluence of urbanisation, industrialization and radical politics produced a clear understanding from the intellectual elite of a new form of reformist or even revolutionary politics, geared towards changing power relationships in countries traditionally dominated by *criollo* elites, the descendants of Spanish and European settlers, who controlled the land and the economic and political structures. A conceptualization of Latin America as a region controlled by the forces of capitalism, though in its periphery and in a dependant relationship, was the driving force behind the development of social sciences in the region in the 1960, as the works of that period attest (Cardoso & Falleto, 1969; Dos Santos, 1970; Furtado, 1964).

At the same time that this political perception was emerging, media was arriving to the region in full force. Certainly, radio has operated commercially since around 1929 (Bustamante, 2005), but it was confined to urban areas and less than affordable to anyone outside of the middle classes; similarly, the press published for the urban elites until 1951 when newspapers cheap enough for mass consumption started publication (Gargurevich, 2005). In 1958 television started operations, replacing radio as the locus for an emerging popular culture, both coming from the US and locally developed. The centrality of mass media, attested in literature and movies from that era or reflecting on it, made it a popular topic for the leftist intellectuals, influenced by thinkers or analysts of all sorts, that saw in the media the dismantling of a beloved "upper culture" inherited from Europe, or a new incarnation of the "opium of the masses".

The conflict was thus set up, and the following years brought a large number of works that tried to promote a critical understanding of media and popular culture, with an emphasis in the need to empower the masses for them to create their own cultural expressions (Freire, 2005; Illich, 1971, 1973; Salazar Bondy, 1973). The expansion of public education, both K12 and college-level, in many cases under less than adequate circumstances, allowed for this reasoning to flourish.

It is in this time period that the works of Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire became prominent, promoting both the concept of *alienation*, as well as the notion of life-long education, not necessarily in the school. Educa-

tion as liberation of the poor, set down by an economic, political and educational system bent on reinforcing and strengthening domination and producing alienation, was a significant tool of any struggle for social revolution, in any of its varied colours. A path for radical reinterpretation of the role of education, and the potential for media to become part of it, was set. This path demanded a critical reading of media, but not just in terms of learning how to deal with contents and messages, but for transforming media into an ally, not an enemy, of this struggle. Liberation from domination and alienation became the most relevant issue in the study and transformation of media as it existed.

Alienation in this particular interpretation is conceptually based in Marx's notion of work beyond the control of the individual, by commodification of labour (as exposed, for instance, in *The German Ideology* and *Capital*, (Marx, 2008)) In this understanding of alienation, developed among others by Tönnies (1963), alienation is a manifestation of the individual's estrangement from family and community towards goal-oriented relationships. From this starting point, alienation was developed into a critique of media consumption, since media contents tend to provide imagery and ideas related to idealized social conditions, where social classes were irrelevant and in many cases, prejudices of any form were non-existent. In societies with high levels of income inequalities and significant social prejudice, media contributed towards ignoring the need for a transformation, and made citizens unaware of the real conditions under which they were living. Thus, media *alienated* citizens from their real world and acted as a barrier to social change.

The best example of this approach is the book by Dorfman and Mattelart "How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic", originally published in 1971. A powerful if biased essay, it saw mass media products as artifacts of alienation, using Marxist theory as a tool to understand the effects that capitalist media had on ideology and political choice. Under this point of view, consumption of media in its many forms inevitably brought a distance between the real living and working conditions of the population and its expectations of a better life that could not be achieved under the exploitation of capital. Thus, the work of media scholars, information professionals and educators was to achieve "*concientización*", that is, getting to understand the way that corporate interests manipulated media to increase their power, and how to reject this kind of contents and create new, more adequate ones.

This is the general framework under which media literacy studies were conducted in the region during the past 40 years. Certainly, there have been many changes in the media and information world, and the self-assurance of Marxist scholarship has declined severely (though it is still present in many places). However, and considering its own particularities, most of the issues regarding media literacy in Peru are to be explained from this starting point.

## Specific Peruvian Circumstances in the Latin American Context

Peru is a country in South America, normally seen as lying on high altitude mountains, though it has a narrow coastal strip where over half of the population (INEI, 2008), over 70 % of its GDP (INEI, 2008) and most of its cultural production and consumption (IIFTUSMP, 2005) takes place. While the aboriginal cultures have a significant presence in the Andean highlands and in the Amazon jungle, most of the aboriginal cultural manifestations have been integrated into mixed, regional cultures in the coastal area, where mixtures of Spanish-based urban traditions and transformed aboriginal ones have faced a constant influence from popular culture, coming from the cultural powerhouses of Latin America: Mexico, Argentina, the Caribbean music scene and even Brazil.

Almost all national radio and television broadcasts come from Lima, the capital city, though many cities have their own radio stations, TV stations for free-to-air or pay-television, and many cities have their own cable TV operators, with a combination of international, Latin American and national stations in different degrees of formality. As mentioned before, there is little local printed media away from Lima, and book production is tiny, with most of the books on the legal market imported and a large number of pirated copies readily available all around the country.

The arrival of the Internet, in the mid-1990s, coincided with the privatization of state-run telecoms, and allowed the rise of the *cabina pública*, an Internet cafe that provides very basic connectivity and access for an extremely cheap price (less than 0.66 cents USD an hour) at almost any urban center of the country (Villanueva, 2004). At these prices, the Internet has become a daily fixture for people even in the poorest areas, even if it remains mostly an entertainment / personal communication venue, with little if any significant usage for economic or educational

purposes. Combined with widespread piracy of cultural goods, almost all of the successful media releases are easily available, at very low prices, destroying both the import market and the local industry in the process. Informality and consumption of pirated goods is not limited to the lower-income sector of the population: it is just as common to see street vendors offering not-yet released movies in the well-heeled areas of Lima as it is in the poor neighbourhoods of small towns.

## Critical Reading and the Socialization of Media

Media literacy inscribes itself in a specific tradition in the region, known as critical reading. In this perspective, media and information demands a critical approach, defined from the beginning as an opposite of con-sumption, with a strong component of social transformation. To learn and read media in a critical way is part of the process of gaining con-sciousness of the limitations that capital puts in the political awakening of the masses.

In the 1970s, when an unique experience took place in Peru: thanks to the only military dictatorship of the time that leaned somehow to the left, a batch of regulations and political decisions tried to implement the critical reading thinking in mass media, not as a regulation of media and information from a public discourse perspective, but from educational policy. Peru's government, headed by General Juan Velasco, assumed that significant transformations of the economic, social and cultural conditions of Peru were not only needed, but urgent, and that the op-position by entrenched economic and social elites was too strong for anyone to try to achieve these transformations through electoral means (RNP, 1975).

Education, understood traditionally as a closed process that concen-trated on scholar achievement and finished when leaving school or college, was proposed as a life-long process that should lead to the transformation of a population who had been reared in a traditional, paternalistic way that allowed for the perpetuation of an structure of power, and favored the current urban, Western-oriented elites.

Expressed formally in the Education General Act of 1971, media was incorporated into "life's education", not seen as continuing education through school-based services, but as a process of both information-transmission as well (and perhaps more important) as transformation of the attitudes of the public towards society, politics and the role of the

common man and woman in it (Jaworski 1983). Media should not sell things or trade in basic, base emotions, but transform the people by raising awareness (the aforementioned *concientización*) of exploitation and disadvantages. It wasn't a question of understanding how to read the media, but of changing it completely and rid it of any commercial orientation (RNP, 1975; see endnote for details).

While this perspective was official policy in the Chile under Allende, his administration did not try to nationalise the printed press or radio, and TV was controlled by the government (an exception to the US-style commercial orientation of TV common to Latin America). Allende's fall made Peru the only country where official policy towards the media considered a threat and in need of radical change. "Socialization", the process that would have allowed communities and social organizations to become operators of media services, setting the agenda and promoting their own understanding of society and its issues, required the governments to nationalise all media forcibly and without compensation.

The critical reading tradition had a very straightforward approach when dealing with traditional media. Since the already explained biases were linked into the structure of the industries themselves, those interested in a social transformation had little to do besides being aware and critical of the biases. The Peruvian experiment appeared to be such a transformation, or at least was defined in those terms by the rhetoric of the revolution used by the military. There would have not be any need for further critical reading of the media after it became controlled by social and local organizations, since the causes of the bias, the control of information and entertainment by capitalism intent on numbing and alienating the masses, would have disappeared.

This particular experiment failed miserably, thanks to political reasons but also because the idea itself was naive and failed to account for the realities of political activism and interests in Peru (Pease, 1977). While TV stations were under government control for about eight years, from 1971/1972 to 1980, newspapers were nationalised in 1974 with the stated date of July 1975 as the deadline for delivering control of them to a number of social and local organizations. That handover never took place, and both TV and printed media stayed tightly controlled by the military government till 1980, when an elected government returned and restored the position to its pre-1974 status. Only magazines that, under the constant threat of closure, and radio stations that behaved

carefully and did not get into political arguments, were left alone, without actual censorship being implemented.

From that time forward, any mention of critical appraisal of media has been denounced as a manifestation of the same spirit that brought the 1974 nationalisation. Liberal politicians insisted that the only proper way to deal with media literacy was through the promotion of freedom of the press. Later developments, including bribing many media owners to promote the policies of Alberto Fujimori's administration in the late 1990, did not change much in terms of political support for media literacy.

## Ethnicity and Class

Peru is usually defined as a middle-income country in a region of significant inequality of income as defined by the Gini index (UNDP, 2008) where traditionally wealth has been in the hands of an European-stock minority, even if the actual ethnic lines are sometimes blurred by the *mestizaje* process, the mixing of ethnic background through marriage (Fuenzalida, 1971) It can be argued that cultural fault lines can be more important than actual ethnic differences, though it is more or less evident that those living in poverty come from Andean and Amazonian backgrounds, and that a premium has been assigned to Western patterns and styles of living, beauty and consumption.

It is quite common that advertising presents an image of consumption associated directly with a Western ethnic appearance, and that Peruvians clearly related to aboriginal ancestry do not appear at all, besides specific products directed towards the lower levels of economic income. However in recent years a combination of changes in the distribution of wealth, with more mestizo citizens earning more, and globalized cultural consumption, with music, TV and movies being enjoyed across wealth and ethnic lines, creating an environment where it is more common to observe Peruvians of different physical appearances enjoyed similar products and services. Beyond very specific demands for less male-centered advertising, and for the stopping of certain blatant negative stereotypes in humour and popular depictions of poverty-associated ethnic groups, little has been done regarding the very biased presentation of an all too white, Western-oriented kind of ideal consumer.

## Critical Reading and the Lost Decade

The end of military rule set media in the same terms that existed before the beginning of Juan Velasco's dictatorship in 1968. Democracy meant both full respect to freedom of speech and the press, but also no further questioning of the virtues of media as bulwarks of a free society. The many failures of the left in Latin America, from mild failures, as in Peru to catastrophic ones, as in Chile, made it very difficult to convince the population that a transformation was needed: Peru returned into government the same president that had been deposed in 1968, and Fernando Belaúnde precisely promised continuity and stability, without any upheavals.

One of the foremost assumptions brought by the new government was the sanctity of the media. Their place in a liberal polity was converted into the only guarantee against the attempts by the extreme left to disrupt the yearned-for stability, and any critique of their action was a replay of the ideas that brought the crisis of 1974 and its aftermath. Even if one particular newspaper or TV station acted against basic ethical standards (slandering or aiding and abetting crime), attempts to criticise or punish such behaviour were seen as attacks against freedom of speech (Gargurevich, 1988).

Media literacy was one of the victims of the search for stability, due to its identification with a revolutionary / reformist view of society. Those still believing both in the need to face the biases of media and of transforming society turned into leftwing politics and activism through NGOs. These organisations were the most dedicated to a different view of social communication, in the form of alternative / people's media.

The emergence of alternative media in Latin America, and in Peru in particular, coincided with the growth of a new way of organisation by the urban poor, living in new settlements that demanded both public services and respect by the general public and attention by governments. The *pueblos jóvenes* (young townships) as they were called in Peru, were the focus of a series of projects, intent on creating alternative forms of political organisation that allowed for the townships to become self-sufficient to a point, politically aware and to articulate local demands with a grand, national political agenda of non-violent transformation (Degregori, Blondet & Lynch, 1986). Media, in the form of alternative, people-run and people-oriented media, was part of the

equation, and was considered alternative communication, that is a different strategy and philosophy of communication, that pursued inclusive values, rejected commercial aims, fought with the people and was aligned somehow into the political discussion with those that were understood to represent the people's interests.

It is necessary to stress the relationship between the actual instances of the peoples' movement (*movimiento popular* in Spanish) with higher political purposes: the transformations pursued at the local level were allegedly the first level of a radical social transformation that will provide for a new kind of society, in a way creating socialism from the bottom-up (Portantiero, 1981). Alternative media was an expression of this willingness to transform the whole society, and its dismissive attitude towards "old" mass media is understandable in the terms set by the alternative media proponents.

This perspective left many outside of the conversation: those living outside the kind of settlements that could be organised in this particular way, those living and working in lower-middle class up, and specially the media itself, since it was assumed, still, that there was little point in trying to find common ground with anyone besides the very few papers and radio stations sympathetic to the interests of the people. Community media, mostly radio, was included in alternative communication.

Media literacy had little room for growth, since those in favor of it were committed to a political process intent in creating a world that wouldn't need it; those against it were left alone and not bothered into considering its potential benefits. Peru almost went into melt down between 1989 and 1992: economic mismanagement produced hyperinflation; the Shining Path terrorist organization killed thousands and brought parts of the country to an standstill, with the rest in fear of what would happen next; military and police forces killed many too, as part of their counterterrorist strategy; and finally, Alberto Fujimori shut down Congress and started an authoritarian administration with some democratic trappings (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, 2004).

But even more significant for this particular discussion: the failure of the left to win 1990's presidential elections, combined with the fall of the Soviet bloc and the end of political viability of traditional Marxist-inspired left politics, set the scenario for the destruction of the "popular movement", the politically-organised urban settlements that were subject of the violence of Shining Path, the repression of the military, and

hyperinflation (Tanaka, 1998). Alternative communication was lost in the destruction of its political base, in its many different guises (Gargurevich, 2006). Most certainly, this situation is not just a Peruvian one; but still, the void left at the end of the 1980 by all the failures and disappearances was felt in a particular way in Peru.

The following years were too complicated by political and economic upheavals for the general public and even media activists to focus too much on an issue like media literacy. After the relative quiet of the end of hyperinflation and the capture of the leadership of Shining Path, most of the public discussion moved to a new constitution, approved barely by a referendum in 1993, and general elections in 1995, when Mr. Fujimori got re-elected. The Internet was just a minor curiosity by the time the next controversies regarding mass media appeared, though the effects brought by it are still being felt.

## Emergence of the Internet, the Crisis of Confidence on the Media

The Internet arrived to Peru as a result of the absence of an adequate policy of access to information. While most of the countries of Latin America had programmes for accessing the Internet, financed by public funds and run by their national councils or institutes of scientific and technological information, Peru's academic and research community had to create a cooperative mechanism, financed by the partners, to allow a connection to the Internet to arrive. This happened against the open opposition of the national institution in charge of scientific policy, for turf wars and a significant distance between public and private research institutions that still exists, perhaps at a lesser intensity, today.

When in February 1994 the Internet finally arrived, it was hailed as a tool that will allow for a significant increase of productivity by the Peruvian scientific community. As part of this view, educational institutions were encouraged to invest in connectivity, even at school level, even without actual plans to provide for contents or training. The first project of secondary school connectivity, the RENACE network, was drafted in 1996, though it did not reach a significant number of schools nor produced any significant review of teaching strategies, methods or content (Villanueva, 2004). A number of projects of different levels of consistency and strength later, in 2007 Peru has decided to provide to a as-yet undefined number of schoolchildren with computers under the One Laptop Per Child initiative (Villanueva, 2007).

It can be stated that there is not, even today, a clear policy about usage of digital information and resources neither at school or college level; at the same time, Peru still lacks any kind of media or information literacy programs. These two situations are somehow related.

The hopes invested in the Internet are still present in Peru's society and its policy debates. A tool that transforms, in a positive way, everything that touches, as attested by the statements by current President Mr. Alan García and his education minister, Mr. Luis Chang, regarding the acquisition of OLPC's XO-1 computers. The potential for change and its role in development notwithstanding, computers are tool that can be used in such a variety of ways, as they are currently used in Peru, that such a biased reading of its potential cannot be considering but intentional naïvete.

This naïvete arises from the same set of ideas that keep media as a sacred vessel of freedom of speech: a deep political interpretation of policy debates, that showed in the original discussion of media literacy in the 1960, and that is still present today. Under this point of view, computers are programming tools, but the access they provide to media and its content is seen as secondary to the benefits of learning computer-based and styled reasoning). No need for training or researching on the effects of such contact with contents, since the main purpose, and the expected behaviour of the users, is as programming platforms. This "pure" understanding of computers is similar to the "pure" view of media as perfect artifacts of a liberal society, and as such, is similarly flawed.

Although the "pure" computer is still standing, the "pure" press-as-a-vessel-of-freedom was seriously wounded when in 2000 it was revealed that a significant number of newspapers, journalists, radio stations and even national broadcasting networks, had been bribed by associates of Mr. Fujimori. The object of this bribing was to attack potential opponents of Mr. Fujimori in 2000's general election and to assure his re-election (Fowks, 2000). This situation created a serious crisis of confidence in the media and even raised the possibility of closing down any medium guilty of this kind of crime. This didn't affect new media at all, since it was very little development in that area at the time; but did change at least partially the public perception of the role of media in society. However, it did not bring any calls for media education or critical reading as an educational subject, not beyond a very small group of individuals.

While this perception of media and Information technology as separate domains persists, it will be very difficult to achieve anything regarding media literacy. While the old understanding of media as a hindrance rather than as a part of democracy building persists, the Internet has been embraced by those reared in the old critical reading tradition as a potential tool for liberation (Fainholc, 2004). This view is also embraced by the new *altermondialisme* movement, but one of the main shortcomings they exhibit is their comprehensive identification with the free software movement, seen as a continuation of previous struggles for "freeing" media (witness the participation of Richard Stallman in Venezuela's Telesur cable TV station).

The basis for the alternative communication movement of the 1980 was the existence of the already explained "people's movement", the organization of the population with a clear political horizon. This kind of organization has disappeared for most practical purposes, and what remains is a collection of varied interests under the umbrella of *altermondialisme*, promoting a fuzzy different world view that does not embrace capitalism in general nor global, informational capitalism in particular (Amin, 2007). This movement (expressed in the World Social Forum, among many other venues) sees media as an expression of globalised capitalism and as a source of manipulation and, to a point, domination. Under this interpretation, global media and its local partners are in fact, barriers in the road to a fairer, freer world. The response is the development of alternative outlets, very similar to those in the 1980 but with a lower level of concrete political commitment (Gumucio, 2006 is a good source of examples of this kind of endeavours).

Thus, it is possible to establish a connection that brings, full circle, the domination school of the 1960 together with the *altermondialisme* currently into a continuum of distrust with big media and a reiterative hope that some kind of alternative, coming from State action, or from the people's actions, will provide for a valid, useful and proper media scene. This antagonistic approach towards media makes it very difficult to develop at least the conceptual basis for some kind of media literacy education, even though when the rough issues have been considered for a country like Peru (Quiroz, 2006) or more precise guidelines developed in countries with at least a similar cultural background (Fainholc, 2004; Gutierrez, 2003). One of the main problems is the succession of failures, from the flawed "socialization" in the 1970 to the collapse of the left project in the 1990 to the crisis of the press in 1990 thanks to

Fujimori's manipulation: each failure brings a stop to a series of experiments and leaves unanswered questions piling up with new ones brought by the newer media. Peru, as in many other countries of the region, cannot learn from its mistakes because too much was invested by too many into processes that became mistakes.

Dialog with the media entrepreneurs and media professionals does look very difficult, due to the assumption that no kind of intervention can be allowed, and that promoting discussion of the media is a weak but significant version of such an intervention; the interest of the political body to include these issues in the discussion is almost inexistent since there is little political gain and very much to lose, if media groups start to complain about intervention. The end result is already known: public mistrust of the media, public fear of the Internet, stoked by the media, and a large contingent of activists, scholars and intellectuals engaged in alternative communication, looking for ways to provide a different perspective to the public, but failing for reasons of scale, attractiveness and perhaps, too much importance given to ideology.

Developing a new perspective demands both discarding the rhetoric and the ideological underpinnings of previous debates, on both sides of the argument. For academia and activists, media has to be seen as an organic and critical partner in the discussion about society and education, while the industry would have to assume that some kind of media literacy would be actually good for them, since it may bring a more educated consumer that demands better and more abundant local media outlets, instead of just "canned" shows or light entertainment. The bridging this divide does not look close, though.

This review of the absence of media literacy programmes in Peru has been necessarily quick and short on supporting information, since one of the consequences of the collections of failures and shortcomings has been the removal of the subject even from media and press training. To promote a critical approach towards the media it is customary to actually set coursework or develop classes about this, unfortunately this has not been the case. Nor has research in the subject, or on the historical conditions preventing it to happen, been common. Further research is needed, if the current absence is to be confronted.

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**Endnote:**

The following is the full mass communications policy as stated in the Plan de Gobierno (policy guidelines) (RNP, 1975) for the National Peruvian Revolution of 1968-1975, translated by this paper's author.

Diagnosis: Broadcasting concentrated in largest cities and controlled by a few private companies that manipulate public opinion for their own interests. (pp.75-76)

Proposals: (4) To put broadcasting to the service of education, culture, recreation and truthful information about national and foreign reality, for the whole nation.

(5) The state should run broadcasting services, alone or in partnership with Peruvian private capital, towards its steady transfer to organizations that represent our society.

# Chapter 10

# Media Education in Russia: A Brief History

*Alexander Fedorov*

## Introduction

Media Education in Russia has developed its own history since the beginning of the 20th century. Within the context of increasing interest in media education worldwide, recent developments such as the introduction of a pre-service teacher training, and the systematic publication of the media education community journal, media education has good prospects in Russia.

## The Synthesis of the Ideological and Practical Concepts in Russian Media Education in the 1920s-1950s

Media education:

- deals with all communication media and includes the printed word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology;
- enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills using these media to communicate with others;

- ensures that people learn how to analyse, critically reflect upon and create media texts; identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts; interpret the messages and values offered by the media; select appropriate media for communicating their own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience; gain or demand access to media for both reception and production.

- Media education is part of basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy (UNESCO, 1999).

Media education connects with the process of education of different media - press, photography, radio, cinema, television, Internet, etc. In Russia the first appeals to integrate press, radio and film studies into the system of education were made as early as at the beginning of the 20th century. However, they were only realized after the Communist regime had come to power. In early 1920s the majority of the Russian population was illiterate. Therefore the Kremlin leaders decided to support the development of radio and cinema, at the time being the most accessible entertainment form for masses, and thus best suited for propaganda. Around the same period the first school of film was opened in Moscow (1919). Film education there was aimed at the training of "ideologically correct" actors, directors, and screen writers, ready to facilitate authorities to disseminate communist ideas across the country through their films.

Important constituents of general media education in this country in the 1920s were film clubs and clubs of young journalists, amateur film/photo studios, amateur journals and magazines in universities and schools. In 1925 the Soviet Cinema Friends Society (SCFS) was organized. SCFS objectives were also framed by the communist ideology. It is worth noting that the head of SCFS was one of the Kremlin principals known for his cruelty against enemies of the Revolution – the "iron" Felix Dzerzhinsky. After his death in 1926 the position was taken by another person originally from the repressive secret police service.

SCFS activity (1925-1934) can be divided into several main directions:

- Propaganda of the communistically-charged films and photos.

- Sociological surveys of mass audience.

- Setting up amateur film and photo studios.

- Creation and maintenance of cinema theaters for school-children and for the youth, including the system of film clubs (film discussions there were obviously targeted at ap-

proving communism ideology and criticizing bourgeois culture).

- Setting up school film clubs.

Thus, beginning in the 1920s the synthesis of the ideological (Marxist) and practical (i.e. focusing on training school children and students to use the technical equipment, shoot film sequences, take photo and pictures, develop the amateur film and radio transmissions, publish school newspapers, etc.) dominated in Russian media education.

A lot of well-known Russian directors like S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin, D. Vertov and others were in the Central Council of the Society. There were about 50 SCFS' amateur studios in Moscow that had film cameras (Ilyichev & Naschekin, 1986, p. 7). Similar clubs where films were demonstrated, discussed and made; lectures, exhibitions were held, worked in Astrakhan, Vologda, Rostov-on-Don, Voronezh, Tomsk, Omsk, Novosibirsk and other cities. Due to the initiative of the Central Council of SCFS in Moscow the special educational courses for club leaders from different cities were taught, teaching manuals were published.

The first All-Russian Conference of SCFS was held in 1928 with delegates from 60 cities. For several years SCFS published its newspaper "Cinema". In 1930 this society included 110,000 members. In the early 1930s the Society added one more sector – young amateur photographers.

However, actively supporting film and radio education, the Kremlin had the primary goal of teaching at least elementary literacy to masses within the framework of the so called "cultural revolution". That is why media education of pupils and students through press was regarded as the most important. "The government supported this process, pursuing two main goals: the spread of the communist ideology and the liquidation of illiteracy of population (almost half of the country's population couldn't even read). These two goals were closely connected with each other. The role of media in a Soviet society was increasing rapidly. Dozens of newspapers and magazines published by different schoolchildren' – and youth unions appeared. Kids-journalists often joined the clubs where professional journalists taught them to prepare articles for newspapers and magazines" (Sharikov, 1990, pp. 29-30). Schools in almost all cities of Russia issued some kind of press or school papers in the 1920s.

Yet many of the attempts in Russian media education were abolished by the Stalin regime in 1934, when SCFS was closed, and the leaders were repressed. In spite of the strict censorship, the debate occurring in film clubs of SCFS developed in this way or another not only the creativity of children but also the critical thinking of the audience. Therefore they could provoke undesirable (for the regime) thoughts about life in the country and its social structure. Also cameras of some non-professional SCFS members could shoot inappropriate footage that was not sanctioned by the authorities. On the whole, from the late thirties till early fifties only those film, photo, radio and press amateur activities were allowed that were consistent with the aims of communist propaganda.

## Dominance of the Aesthetic Concept in Russian Media Education in the 1960s-1980s

It was not until late 50s – early 60s that media education was given a second birth in Russian schools and universities. The amount of institutions where courses of film education were taught was growing (Moscow, Petersburg, Voronezh, Rostov, Samara, Kurgan, Taganrog, etc.). The movement of school journalists, radio-journalists and photographers was also given a new start.

Beginning from 1957 film clubs began to appear again, uniting thousands of the "the tenth muse" lovers of different ages. In 1967 the first big seminar of film clubs' leaders from 36 cities took place in Moscow. A statute of many clubs included not only the watching and discussion of films, but studying the history of cinema, works of outstanding masters, sociological research, etc. (Lebedev, 1969, pp. 52-54).

By 1967 there were about four thousand small amateur film studios and circles (Ilyichev & Naschekin, 1986, p. 38). Some of them became a form of media education centres. For example, they did sociological research about the role of cinema in people's life, studied the history of cinema, organized film screenings and discussions of films, exhibitions, produced documentary, feature and animated amateur films and so on.

In 1967 the Council for Film Education in schools and higher educational institutes was established by the Union of Filmmakers (Moscow). It was headed first by a film critic N. Lebedev and then by professor I. Waisfeld. He was the first Russian media educator who delivered a report on problems of media education at the UNESCO conference in

Rome in 1966. Some other Russian media/film educators who began their work in schools, colleges and clubs in the sixties are: Yury Usov, Inna Levshina, Zinaida Smelkova (Moscow), Nina Gornitskaya (Petersburg), Stal Penzin (Voronezh), Uly Rabinovich (Kurgan), Oleg Baranov (Tver), Svetlana Ivanova (Taganrog), Evdokiya Gorbulina (Armavir), Elvira Gorukhina (Novosibirsk), and others.

From the very start the Council tried to consolidate the efforts of media teachers-enthusiasts from different Russian cities (Moscow, Petersburg, Voronezh, Kurgan, Samara, Novosibirsk, Rostov, Taganrog, etc.). It collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Pedagogic Academy and State Committee of Cinema publishing teaching plans, curriculums, sponsoring seminars, workshops and conferences. Starting from the second half of the 1960s such conference were held in Moscow, Tallinn, Alma-Ata, Erevan, Tbilisi, Petersburg, Kiev, Kurgan, Bolshevo.

The social and cultural situation in Russia at that time provided grounds for a great interest in cinema among school children and teachers. Video and PCs were only dreamt of in science fiction novels. Films were seldom shown on TV, (in fact there was only one, later two television channels). Therefore, cinemas were crowded (statistics showed that in average, a person went to the cinema about 18 times a year), and school children went to the movies even much more often than adults.

For many Russians the screen was the only window into the world, cut through a then thick "iron curtain". Due to the production of 8- and 16-mm cameras the amateur film studios movement developed very actively until the early 1980s. Instructors or teachers of such clubs were mostly graduates of Moscow Institute of Culture, Pedagogical Institutes and Universities. The number of clubs and studios grew from 5000 (1974) to 11,000 (1983), and the number of members of these youth groups grew from 60,000 to 120-130,000 people (Ilyichev & Naschekin, 1986, pp. 53-60). In the second half of the 1980s many of these clubs began to use videotapes for making films, an easier and cheaper method.

"Curricula for the basics of cinema art for schools and pedagogical institutes were written in the 1960s-70s. These programs were significantly different from many programs of other subjects: their authors avoided strict regulation, dogmatic approach (…). It was emphasized in these curricula that communication with art should be *enjoyable*. One

more important peculiarity of the programs on cinema art was that the task was not to prepare specialists in a small field, since the country did not call for 50 million film critics. The objective of cinema pedagogy was to widen the spiritual, cultural world of school children, to develop their personality" (Waisfeld, 1993, pp.4-5). I agree here with I. Waisfeld who said that "classes of media teachers can be described as a dialogue. An old "teacher-centered" scheme, where a teacher is a source of knowledge and a pupil is its receiver, is broken. Both pupils and teachers get a bigger field for creativity, improvisation, for game activities. A game is treated as kind of a reality model. It helps to grasp the inner dynamics of a film, its deep roots" (Waisfeld, 1993, pp.5).

However, some Russian teachers of media education still practiced outdated pedagogical approaches. For instance, A. Bernstein believed that "teaching with film is impossible without constant control of what a pupil sees on TV every day and in cinema theatres" (Bernstein, 1971, p. 7). Here, I think, one can clearly see the similarity with viewpoints of many American media teachers (especially in the 1940s – 1970s) who also considered that the main goal of media education was a strict control, "information defense", "inoculative approach", aimed against the harmful impact of press, screen, etc.

In early 1980s there was a big experiment of introducing film education into the primary and middle school curriculum in some Moscow schools. Similar experiments on media education (on the press, radio, cinema and TV materials) were conducted in summer children centres like "Ocean" and "Orlyonok". As for the universities, lectures and practical classes for the teachers-to-be were held. Some Institutes of Teachers' Professional Development (in Moscow, Kurgan, Tver) have also made a contribution to media education. Seminars and workshops on teaching media were conducted. Some universities integrated media education into courses of the aesthetic education.

For example, Film and TV Studies courses have been taught in Voronezh Pedagogical Institute since 1970. Then similar courses appeared in Voronezh University and Institute of Arts, and several schools. Since 1965 the film club has been working in Voronezh. Some other Russian cities and towns (Moscow, Petersburg, Kurgan, Tver, Rostov, Samara, Taganrog, etc.) have a similar structure of media education centres. As a rule, it is a net of courses on media education in universities, teachers' training colleges, institutes, school elective subjects, film clubs in schools and community centers.

One of the most active enthusiasts of literature on media education was Lev Rybak – a teacher, film critic, the chief editor of the "Kino Centre" publishing house. The author of several brilliant cineastes' biographies, Lev Rybak founded the book series "Cinema & School". There he published four of his books, written in an entertaining way, using the language, comprehensible both for teachers and high school students. Three of these books tackled the problem of screening Russian classical and modern literature. And in his book "With a film, face-to-face" Rybak wrote about the subjectivity of film perception. "Before I became a film critic", Rybak wrote, "I had been a school teacher for more than 15 years. I went to the cinema with my pupils. And sometimes I was really hurt when a pupil of mine, after having seen a good film, said: "Rubbish!" evidently not considering the film to be a good one. I was mad: you can interpret a film in your own way, but try to comprehend it! Viewers' impressions of a film are always different, individual; there is no sense in trying to level them. But how can one make these impressions emerge at all and not be so poor?" (Rybak, 1980, p. 6). I must agree that this is still one of the key questions on the media education agenda though many media education researchers and teachers have tried to find an answer to it.

The publication of programs and study guides has always been an important component of media education. Moscow publishing houses ("Prosveschenie", "Pedagogica", "Detskaya Literatura", "Novaya Shkola", "Kino Center", "Iskusstvo") have published several monographs, programs dedicated to the issues of media education. Articles on media education were published in magazines "Iskusstvo Kino" (Film Art), "Pedagogica", "Specialist", "Ecran" (Screen), etc.

In spite of the ideological demand of the communist regime media education in Russia of the 1960s-1980s was less and less focused on propaganda. The aesthetic theory of media education targeted at the developing of the "good taste" and appreciation of media texts, especially masterpieces, became the leading one.

It was the aesthetic centre in media education that let Russian teachers escape the ideologically-charged analysis of media texts. Instead, they paid attention to the analysis of the language, expressive means of cinema, radio, press, photography, and television.

Let me cite one typical (for the aesthetic theory) opinion, shared by quite a few Russian teachers: "the main aim…is to turn young audience

to the cinema art, its acknowledged values" (Monastyrsky, 1999, p. 133). Many more quotations about the orientation of media education towards the study of the masterpieces of media arts may be added here (e.g. Penzin, 2001, p. 73, etc.).

Analyzing such approaches the American researcher Tyner fairly notes that the aesthetic theory of media education privileges cinema compared to press and television. Moreover, some media texts selected by a teacher, are declared as "good", and other (often students' favourites) as "bad", thus the values question, that is "good" vs. "bad" remains the key problem (Tyner, 1998, p. 115). Therewith some European scholars, for instance, Masterman (1997, p. 22), believe that the aesthetic theory of media education is essentially, discriminatory, because it enunciates its aim as the development of the ability for a qualified evaluation of only art spectrum within media information. Masterman argues that the question of judgement of the quality of a media text should be supplementary, and not the key one, while the main aim is to help students understand the way media function, whose interests they represent, the way media texts' content represents the reality, and the way they are perceived by the audience (Masterman, 1997, p. 25). However, Masterman admits that aesthetic media education is still more effective than protectionist approach, being "for" media, and not against them.

At all the stages of the media education development in Russia there were its opponents too. They were afraid that "fast and awkward accomplishment of the ideas of school film education can destroy the direct contact between the screen and young audience by its importunate interference. Thus, after special training newly educated "film literate" audience would critically evaluate, not simply enjoy a film. But in order to enjoy cinema one should watch films freely, without any bias. One cannot turn a visit to a cinema theatre into the obligatory school subject. "It is wrong to 'freeze' love of the youth for the cinema" (Rybak, 1980, p. 4).

However, despite all the difficulties, the 1980s in Russia were marked by the process of enhancement of media education researches: transition from the description and summarizing of the pedagogic experience to the studies of psychological and/or sociological grounds of this phenomenon; the growth of the researchers' interest to children creativeness through media. Researchers began to explore media effects on smaller children. In the 1980s their activity affected the elementary school too (Sharikov, 1990).

As far as the research work is concerned, the Laboratory of Screen Arts at the Institute of Art Education of the Russian Academy of Education was in the lead for several decades. First doctor's theses on media education appeared in the 1960s. Doctoral research by O. Baranov (1968), A. Karasik (1966), and Y. Rabinovich and R. Rabinovich (1966) was dedicated to the problem of film education of school pupils. And V. Saperov's thesis (1969) analyzed the problem of using radio broadcasting in education. In the 1970s many dissertations about teaching audiovisual literacy were defended (N. Goncharova, 1970; S. Sokolova, 1971; U. Usov, 1974; I. Levshina, 1974; G. Labkovska, 1976; S. Ivanova, 1978; Z. Malobitskaya, 1978; V. Monastyrsky, 1979). Later studies of media education for pupils included: producing and using audiovisual means in school (L. Pressman, 1981; V. Bulavko, 1982), filmmaking by school children (E. Yanelauskas, 1983; U. Bozhkov, 1984; P. Genkin, 1985), social & psychological aspects (Ch. Shakeeva, 1983; N. Kirillova, 1983), morals education of teenagers (Z. Smelkova, E. Zharinov, 1986), analysis of using foreign films in media education (A. Fedorov, 1986), inter-disciplinary ties of literature and film courses (G. Polichko, 1987), employment of cinema as a complex education of pupils (N. Gutova, 1987), aesthetic education and artistic development of school children (N. Yakovleva, 1988; U. Usov, 1989, and others). Theses based on the school data made way for the research of media education in universities. The most important works on media education in Universities appeared in the 1980s (L. Seregenkova, 1982; S. Odintsova, 1981; S. Penzin, 1987).

## Media Education in the Epoch of "Perestroika"

In the end of the 1980s the vigorous development of the video began to change the work pattern of clubs and amateur children's studios. VCRs and video cameras were used more and more often for making and showing films. School TV studios were emerging. In 1990 the Association of Young Journalists was established.

After a long resistance by authorities (who viewed film clubs, amateur radio, press and media education movement as potentially dangerous encouragement of oppositional critical thinking) finally, in 1988 the Russian Federation of Film Clubs was officially established.

The number of members of Russian Association for Film Education reached about 300: primary & secondary level schoolteachers, high school, university, college, lyceum teachers & professors, leaders of

film-clubs, journalists, etc.   Russian Association for Film Education included also members of the Laboratories of Screen Arts and Media Education (Russian Academy of Education, Moscow. Undoubtedly, in the end of the 1980s Russian media educators got a substantial state support (for example, the Cinema Friends' Society, including the Association of Film Education, was funded by the state budget).

"Perestroika" years at first seemed as the golden age for film clubs, amateur press and radio and TV. The foundation of the new media Associations and Federations promised an anticipated liberation from the censorship's dictatorship, an opportunity of the best media texts' exchange.

In fact, the Film Clubs Federation began to collect its own film library, club enthusiasts were invited to regional and All-Russian seminars, conferences and festivals, famous actor and directors toured the country meeting their audience face-to-face. But the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and following drastic growth of prices forced its rules. In 1990s even big Russian film clubs could not afford buying a new film copy from Moscow. Not to mention small film clubs in small provincial towns. Together with the film club movement the economic crisis hit amateur school film, radio, TV and video studios too. The vast majority of them closed down.

## The Search for New Benchmarks
## (1990s – early 2000s)

As it has already been mentioned, media education in Russia has encountered numerous difficulties during the entire history of its existence (ideological, financial, technical, etc.). In the 1920s - 80s the political and censorship control and poor technical equipment of schools and higher educational institutions hindered media education movement. In the 1990s media teachers were granted freedom and independence for developing programs and their practical implementation. But they lacked financial and technical support. Many Russian schools and colleges in the 90s didn't have enough money for teachers' salary, not mentioning the audiovisual equipment. Moreover, still just the few universities were preparing future teachers for media education of pupils.

The drastic change in social and cultural situation in Russia effected serious alteration in media education's development. The remains of

the "iron curtain" fell down. More and more Russian were getting the opportunity to travel abroad. Cinema, radio and TV stopped being the only window into the world. Films (including foreign films) were not a deficit anymore; you could watch them on TV on different channels. Media repertoire was satiated with American action movies. Information about film and music stars, new releases and premiers could be read in hundreds of newspaper, magazines and books. By the end of the nineties nearly every urban family owned a VCR. Computers, interactive games, Internet spread very rapidly. Thus, an uncomfortable question arised: could a school teacher, as a rule lagging behind his pupils as far as media consumption concerned, have authority in the sphere of media culture with his pupils?

Nevertheless Russian media education was developing. International conferences on media education were held in Valuevo (1992), Moscow (1992, 1995), Taganrog (2001), Belgorod (2006, 2007), etc. The Screen Arts Laboratory at the Research Institute for Art Education of the Russian Academy of Education (this laboratory was headed by Professor Dr. Yury Usov until his death in April 2000) published books and teaching materials, programs on media and film education (by Prof. Dr. Yury Usov, Dr. Larissa Bazhenova, Dr. Elena Bondarenko, etc.).

In May 1991 the first Russian Cinema Lyceum was opened (and it existed until 1999). International conferences on media education were held in Tashkent (1990), in Moscow region – Valuevo (1992), in Moscow (1992, 1995), Taganrog (2001). The non state firm "VIKING" (Video and Film Literacy), set up by the Head of the Association for Film and Media Education G. Polichko, sponsored a lot of successful projects, such as the Russian-British seminars on media education and conferences, mentioned above. Despite the fact that in the late 1990s the firm went bankrupt its managers did not give up and organized summer festivals of film and media education for children in Uglich and Maloyaroslavetz.

In 1998 the Association for Film Education was transformed into the Russian Association for Film and Media Education. The main directions of Association's work are: integration of media literacy courses in school and universities; development of school and university curricular; teacher training programs; conferences and seminars; publications; research; maintaining web resources on media education.

The intensive development of video and information technologies has changed the face of the club and amateur studio movement. Schools began to be equipped with video cameras, computers, and DVD players. In spite of all hindrances, young Russian television journalists make a serious competition against press journalist, more traditional for schools.

Russian radio and television presented an interesting example of practical media education. For example, in 1991 television season the morning program of the Russian Channel One included a five-minute newsblock of "School News" that was produced with teenagers participation at all stages, from ideas for news items to montage. Children and adults worked together - the "subject-to-subject" paradigm (Sharikov, 1994, p. 11) of the television program production was realized. After that the program "Magpie" was broadcasted. Again, it was produced by children and adults for children and adults - students, parents, and teachers. In May 1992 A. Menshikov introduced the entire news program "Tamtam News" (10 minute programs broadcast 5 times a week) on the Russian National Channel. Schoolchildren were also anchors and producers of the program. Moreover, teenagers who took part in the project started noticing positive changes in their lives, including development of communication skills, rise of the motivation for new knowledge, etc. A 14-year-old M. Azarov reported: "Since I became a TV anchor, I've been aimed at studying well in school so that my television image should coincide with reality" (Sharikov, 1994, p. 14).

At the same time traditional media education of schoolchildren and youth on the material of press stood its ground too. Children agency YUNPRESS (S. Scheglova and others) launched several projects including international festivals of young press, conferences, and publications of teaching manuals. Later the Internet reasonably entered the field of activity of this organization.

The Association for Internet Education was created in the late 1990s. It directed the network of training sessions for teachers across the country. Interesting Internet projects for schools were developed and integrated by E. Polat, E. Yastrebtseva, Y. Bykhovsky, E. Yakushina, and others. For example, in 2005 the Center for Media Education in the city of Togliatti organized a *Virtual Tour of the Media Land*, an Internet game for schoolchildren (http://mec.tgl.ru/modules/Subjects/pages/igra/priilog_1.doc). The participants form teams, visit some Russian media educational websites,

study their content, answer questions, accomplish creative tasks, and create presentations. To find out more about the methods used in specific media education classes one may visit the "Biblioteka" (*Library*) section of the Russian Association for Film and Media Education website http://www.edu.of.ru/mediaeducation. Since the turn of the XXI century the projects integrating media education with cultural and art studies have been led by the Russian Academy of Education Laboratory, headed by S. Gudilina.

However no regular academic journal on media education has been issued until 2005 when the journal of "Media Education" was set up by ICOS UNESCO "Information for all" (Russia, http://www.ifap.ru), the Association for Film and Media Education, and Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute. The magazine offers a needed forum for the exchange of information about different forms and contents of media education, thus fostering essential coordination of efforts of Russian media educators.

First works focusing specifically on problems of media education, and not only film or print education, appeared in the 1990s (A. Sharikov, A. Fedorov, L. Zaznobina). In 2000 the first Russian thesis analyzing the foreign experience, the theory and history of media education in the U.S., was written (A. Novikova). In the 1990s the Laboratory of Technology and Media Education (Russian Academy of Education) headed by Professor L. Zaznobina worked out a concept of school media education, integrated into the basic curriculum.

From the 1990s onwards, Russian media education specialists (U. Usov, L. Bazhenova, A. Novikova, G. Polichko, A. Spitchkin, A. Sharikov, A. Fedorov and others) have joined the international media educators' community, participating in international conferences for media education (held in France, Canada, Austria, the UK, Brazil, Spain, Greece, Switzerland), publishing their works in French, American, English, Australian, and Norwegian journals.

By the year 2001 the number of secondary and higher educational Russian institutions training professionals in media (film, photo, radio, TV, journalism, Internet, etc.), has quite grown. Besides VGIK (Russian State Institute of Cinematography), School for Script Writers and Film Directors, Russian Institute of Professional Development in the Field of Film, now there are St.Petersburg State University of Film and Television, Film-Video Colleges in Sergeev Posad and St. Petersburg,

film/television colleges in Irkutsk, Sovetsk, and Rostov-on-Don. Professional media education is included into the curriculum of St. Petersburg State Academy of Culture, St.Petersburg Academy of Theatre Art, Institute of Professional Development of TV & Radio Specialists (Moscow), Independent School of Cinema and Television (Moscow), Grymov's School of Advertising, Institute of Modern Art (Moscow), New Humanities Academy of N. Nesterova (Moscow), several schools of animation, etc.

In February 2000 (A. Fedorov and others) the first in Russia bilingual (Russian-English) Internet site http://www.medialiteracy.boom.ru (and after - http://www.edu.of.ru/mediaeducation) on media education was created. More than 20000 people visited the site during the first 7 years of its existence. The same year staff of the Laboratory headed by L. Zaznobina in the Russian Academy of Education opened one more Russian web site on media education (http://www.mediaeducation.ru ).

The important event in media education development in Russia was the registration of the new minor specialization for pedagogical universities – 'Media Education' (№ 03.13.30) in 2002. Since 2002 this specialization has been offered in the curriculum of Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (head of this academic project is Professor A. Fedorov; instructors: I. Chelysheva, E. Murukina, N. Ryzhykh, N. Babkina and others). This team has published about 30 monographs, textbooks and more than 400 articles about media education and media literacy. Members of the research group were also awarded several national and international grants (The Foundation of the President of the Russian Federation, Russian Foundation for Humanities, Foundation of Russian Ministry of Education, Kennan Institute (US), IREX (US), MacArthure Foundation (US), Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation, US), DAAD (Germany), Fulbright Program (US).

In 2004, the ICOS UNESCO "Information for All" (Russia, the head is A. Demidov) in cooperation with the South Urals Media Education Center conducted the interregional round-table discussion "Media Education: Problems and Prospects" in Chelyabinsk. The participants discussed the concept and notions of media education and educational standards in this area and mapped out the ways of concerted efforts to be made by national and regional mass media in the coverage of media education problems. Media education was proclaimed as one of ways of the development of a national information and educational policy, social integration, and media literacy.

The final document of the round table included suggestions to introduce a major specialty *Media education* with a qualification *Media educator* for universities of Russia; to develop the plan of effective realization of Media Education in various regions of the Russian Federation; to create a databank about forms and methods of media education activities with the purpose of the analysis and generalization of experience; to publish "Encyclopedia of Media and Media Education" with contributions by the leading experts in the field of theory and history of mass communication and media education; to support the regular release of the journal *Media Education*.

Another step of ICOS UNESCO "Information for All" was the organization and participation in the All-Russian conference "Through Libraries - to the Future", which took place in Anapa (2005), supported by the UNICEF, Ministry of Education, the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, Krasnodar Regional Library for Youth, Department of Culture of Krasnodar Region, National Fund for Professional Training, The Russian School Library Association, Russian Association for Film and Media Education (http://edu.of.ru/mediaeducation).

In the beginning of the XXI century Media Education Centers or projects (including media education conferences) were created in Belgorod (A. Korochensky and others), Byisk (V. Vozchikov and others), Chelyabinsk (A. Minbaleev and others), Ekaterinbourg (N. Kirillova and others), Irkutsk (L. Ivanova and others), Krasnodar (T. Shak and others), Moscow (L. Bagenova, E. Bondarenko, S. Gudilina, M. Fominova, E. Yastrebtseva and others), Omsk (N. Hilko and others), Perm (P. Pechenkin and others), Samara (A. Sharikov and others), Tomsk (I. Zhilavskaya and others), Taganrog (A. Fedorov, A. Novikova, I. Chelysheva, E. Murukina, N. Ryzhykh, E. Kolesnichenko) Toliatti and others Russian cities. Within the framework of conferences the reports directly concerning questions of media education, problems of the organization of multimedia databases, electronic libraries, and media centres in libraries for children and youth were heard. Another event was the presentation of a multimedia product of "Information for All" - a CD *Media Education; Media Pedagogy; Media Journalism* (also sponsored by the administration of Hanty-Mansijsk Autonomous Region - UGRA, Russian Association for Film and Media education and Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (http://www.tgpi.ru). This CD includes monographs, teaching manuals, programs and articles. And a recently fulfilled

initiative is Media Literacy page on the UNESCO Moscow Office website.

Media education in Russia is not a required school subject (with the exception of some secondary schools used as an experimental field and media orientated universities and faculties). Thus there is no national curriculum for media education, no standards or guidelines. Many Russian teachers still confuse media education with using media as a technical aid. Media language is seldom a topic in its own right. Only few school principals encourage the integration of media education, or support teachers' initiative. Media education can be integrated across the curriculum into Informatics (Internet & computer application lessons), Language and Literature, Arts, or Science. Another variant is an optional autonomous media education course.

Russian media education movement does not exist in vacuum, and naturally there are many skeptics, among highly qualified and educated people as well. For example, Russian journal Media Education (*Mediaobrazovanie)* published an article "What is Media Education?" by Professor Dr. Kirill Razlogov (2005), Director of the Russian Institute for Cultural Studies. He thinks that there is no sense in formal media education for all, because those who are really interested receive this kind of literacy spontaneously and naturally. True, some people are certainly able to effectively develop their own media culture. However, public opinion polls show that media competence of the majority of the audiences, especially the younger generation, leaves much to be desired. True, there are some gifted individuals who successfully educate themselves in certain fields without attending schools or universities; however it is not a good reason to close formal educational institutions. I have no doubt that all universities, especially pedagogical ones, need media literacy courses, and media education must become "part and parcel of the curriculum" the way it has been in Canada or Australia.

Media education in Russia can be divided into the following main directions:

- Media education of future professionals in the sphere of press, radio, television, cinema, video and internet-journalists, editors, directors, producers, actors, directors of photography, etc.

- Pre-service media education of school and university level instructors at Universities, Pedagogical Institutes and in-service professional growth courses.

- Media and ICT education (integrated into the existing curriculum or autonomous - special courses, electives, clubs activities) as part of the general curriculum in secondary schools, colleges and institutes.

- "Out-of-school" media and ICT education in children/students' clubs, leisure centres, institutions of extra-curricular work, clubs.

- Distant media and ICT education of schoolchildren, students and adults through press, television, radio, video, and Internet.

- Independent, continuous (theoretically, life-long) media and ICT self-education.

The following types of Russian media education models can be distinguished:

- Educational-informative models (studies of the theory and history of media and media language).

- Ethical and philosophical models (study of moral, philosophical problems on the media material).

- Developing models (social and cultural development of a creative person in aspects of perception, critical thinking, analysis, imagination, visual memory, interpretations, etc.).

- Applied models (hands-on Internet, computer applications, photography, camera work training, etc.) (Penzin, 1987; Sharikov, 1990; Usov, 1993; Spitchkin, 1999; Zaznobina, 1998; Fedorov, 2001; 2005; 2007; Fedorov, et al., 2005).

The key principles of media education in Russian pedagogy are:

- Development of the personality (development of media perception, aesthetic consciousness, creative capabilities, individual critical thinking, analysis, etc.) in the process of study.

- Connection of theory with practice; transition from train-
  ing to self-education; correlation of education with life.

- Consideration of idiosyncrasies, individuality of students.

The main functions of media education are the following: tutorial, ad-
aptation, developing and directing.

The tutorial function presupposes the understanding of theories and
laws, the adequate perception and critical analysis of a media text, capa-
bility to apply this knowledge in out-of-school contexts, logical capabil-
ity.

The adaptation function displays in an initial stage of communication
with media.

The developing function implies the development of creative, analytical
and other capacities of personality.

One of the most popular Russian media education model is the model,
presenting a synthesis of the sociocultural, informative and practi-
cal/pragmatic models (Fedorov, 2001, 2005, 2007; Sharikov, 1991;
Spitchkin, 1999; Zaznobina, 1996, 1998). From this perspective, media
education is regarded as the process of the personality's development
with and through mass media: i.e. the development of the communica-
tive culture with media, creative, communicative skills, critical thinking,
skills of the full perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of
media texts, training of the self-expression with media technology, etc.
The resulting media literacy helps a person to use possibilities of the
information field of television, radio, video, press, and Internet effec-
tively, contributes to the more sophisticated insight into the media
culture language (Fedorov, 2001, p. 38).

Conceptual basis: the sociocultural theory, elements of the critical
thinking theory, semiotic, cultural studies, ethical and ecological theo-
ries of media education. The cultural studies component (the necessity
for media education as a result of the development of media culture)
and sociocultural component (acknowledgment in pedagogy of the
importance of the social role of media) condition, according to
Sharikov's concept, the main postulates of sociocultural theories of
media education: 1) development of media obligates to the necessity of
the special professional training in each new field, connected with new
mass media; 2) taking into account the mass scale of media audience,
professionals, especially the teachers of the special media subjects, face

the need of the media language education for the bigger audiences; 3) this tendency grows because the society realizes the growing influence of media and, as a result, persuades media educators to further development of the media education process.

Aim: sociocultural development of a personality (including the development of the critical thinking) on the material of mass media.

Objectives:

- Introduction of the basic concepts and laws of the theory of communication.

- Development of the perception and comprehension of media texts.

- Development of the skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation of media texts of various types and genres, critical thinking of the audience.

- Development of communication skills.

- Training to apply the new knowledge and skills for the creation of own media texts of various types and genres.


Forms of work: media education course: integrated or autonomous.

Main components of the media education program's contents: (dealing with the study of the key concepts of media education: media agency, category, technology, language, representation and audience):

- Types and genres, language of media; the place and role of media education in the modern world.

- Basic terminology, theories, key concepts, directions, models of media education.

- Main historical stages of the media education development in the world (for higher education institutions only).

- Problems of media perception, analysis of media texts and the development of the audience related to media culture.

- Practical application activities (literature-simulated, art-simulated, and drama-situational).

Fields of application: may be used in educational institutions of different types, in colleges of education, in-service teacher upgrade qualification training.

For the full implementation of the model the rubric for the criteria of the media literacy development is necessary (Fedorov, 2005, pp. 92-114), which are: 1) motivational (motives of contact with media texts: genre, thematic, emotional, gnoseological, hedonistic, psychological, moral, intellectual, aesthetical, therapeutic, etc.); 2) communicative (frequency of contact with media culture production, etc.); 3) informative (knowledge of terminology, theory and history of media culture, process of mass communication); 4) perceptive (skill of the perception of a media text); 5) interpretive/ evaluative ( skills to interprets, analyze media texts based on the certain level of media perception, critical autonomy); 6) practically-operated (skill to create/ disseminate own media texts); 7) creative (creativity in different aspects of activity- perceptive, role-play, artistic, research, etc., related to media).

Therefore, media education in the modern world can be described as the process of the development of personality with the help of and on the material of media, aimed at the shaping of culture of interaction with media, the development of creative, communicative skills, critical thinking, perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, teaching different forms of self-expression using media technology. Media literacy, as an outcome of this process, helps a person to actively use opportunities of the information field provided by the television, radio, video, film, press and Internet (Fedorov, 2001, p. 8). Within the context of increasing interest to media education worldwide, the UNESCO program's support, recent developments such as the introduction of a pre-service teacher training, and the systematic publication of the media education community journal, media education has good prospects in Russia.

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# Chapter 11

# The Development of Media Literacy in Russia: Efforts from Inside and Outside the Country

## *Jiwon Yoon*

## Introduction

This is an 11th grade History of Art class. The teacher shows a film about "The Portrait as a Genre" and starts to ask questions of the students, such as: "What is the genre of this film? What is the main idea of this scene? How is a painted landscape different from a landscape captured by a camera for a film?" Students actively participate in the class discussion, sharing their various opinions about the film. These students use naturally the terms "documentary," "film," "reality" and "genre."

This scene is a part of what Professor Fedorov (2002b), a leading scholar in the field of Russian media literacy, observed when sitting in Ms. Ludmila's class on the history of arts in Russia. Such practice of media education is increasing in Russia (Fedorov, 2002b). Once a means of spreading communist ideology, Russia's media education, including its goals, approaches, pedagogies, and practice, has gone through a striking transformation process.

This chapter is about the development of media education in Russia, which has been possible through efforts not only from inside the country, from such experts as Russian scholars, educators, policy makers, curriculum developers and media professionals, but also from outside the country, from such International NGOs as UNESCO and UNICEF. I shall examine the positive effects of the partnership of International NGOs along with Russian media education as valuable resources for post/current communist countries for the development of media education.

In order to observe the development of media education in Russia and its relationship with International NGOS, I started by searching aca-

demic journal articles regarding media education in Russia and then expanded these sources through cited books and articles in the reference list. I also conducted a general information search by using keywords "media education and Russia" and "media literacy and Russia" in Internet searching engines, Yahoo and Google, and in the periodical archives LexisNexis. I also conducted the same search in the archives of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In order to get more comprehensive data when undertaking the Internet search on these websites, I did not limit the information according to the time frame with the hope of getting some sense of the history of media education in Russia. While a numerous sources were found from the searching engines and archives of UN, UNESCO, and UNICEF, it was hard to find useful sources from periodicals. This difficulty may be explained by the researcher's language limitations, which excluded sources in Russian. Therefore, searching Russian periodicals may have resulted in more enriched data for this research.

## Why Study Media Literacy in Russia?

In the *Dictionary of Media Literacy*, the six factors which determine the success of media literacy education within a particular country have been described as follows:

1) The level of development of the media and educational systems;

2) The sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic environments in which media and education operate;

3) The nature, structure, and functions/ objectives of media and education;

4) The differential nature and needs of a wide range of target audiences of media education (e.g. children versus adults, women versus men, various races in multicultural societies);

5) The presence of extant traditional/ folk media and traditional communication networks that are still viable as forms of mass media;

6) The role of grassroots organizations and nongovernmental organizations in media education (Silverblatt & Eliceiri, 1997, pp. 61-62).

Education is a part of the public sphere at large and influenced by the regulation and power of the government (Apple, 2004). In the book *Ideology and Curriculum*, Apple (2004) defines the school as "a rather significant agent of cultural and economic reproduction" (p. 30) because what is taught at school is knowledge that is considered legitimate by specific social groups in society . Students are required to learn, and what they learn is selected from a larger body of knowledge. This process of knowledge selection is influenced by the power and ideology of a given society (Apple, 2004). Apple extends this argument further by indicating how cultural and economic reproduction is observed in the mass media and popular culture (Apple, 1982). In fact, mass media not only reproduce the ideologies, but also are "constitutive of ideologies" (Apple, 1982, p. 12).

The five determining factors of media education, along with Apple's reproduction theory, show the influence of sociocultural, sociopolitical and socioeconomic environments on the media, education and media education. This implies the necessity of having distinct media education programs for societies within different cultures.  This idea is well-described in a UNESCO report by von Feilitzen who argues that media education movements should stem from the needs of local communities.  Media literacy/media education thus should be defined according to the needs and goals of each society (Gilbert & Fedorov, 2004).

Therefore, a well-developed media education curriculum in a certain country cannot always be practiced and appreciated by other countries because of different sociocultural and economic environments.  On the other hand, this distinction also can mean countries with similar social environments can learn from one another. Scholars and media educators may refer to media education curricula in other countries with similar environments. Russia's unique history, economic attainment, social structure, and media organizations distinguish it from countries with more developed media education programs or with active ongoing research. At the same time, many post-communist countries share some similarities with Russia. For that reason, this study can be used as a resource or a guideline when designing a media education curriculum in other post-communist countries, such as China, countries in Eastern Europe or even communist North Korea, whose economic systems

and media environments are similar to those previously existing in Russia.

## Historical Contexts of Media Education in Russia

During the Soviet Period, media censorship by the government disabled media education because access to contextual information in regards to the media, such as the press, television, and films, was denied by censorship (Fedorov, 2002a; Pungente, 1997). The mass media system as an entity never became a subject for academic research. No individual was allowed to examine and discuss the entire system and professors and scholars in this area could explore only a portion of the whole picture. Since 1920, the restriction of media/journalism studies was one of many taboos in the communist system. Elena Androunas (1993) indicates that until she published her book *Soviet Media in Transition: Structural and Economic Alternatives,* no other members of the press opposed Vladimir Lenin. All research in the Soviet Union was not allowed to cover the fundamental principles of the system, and journalism was most severely restricted because of its great influence on ideology. Most academic endeavors, including media studies, were used to demonstrate the veracity of Marxism. In consequence, students majoring in mass media or journalism in Russia could not study any textbooks or scholarly books that holistically approached the Soviet media system. After perestroika, which means " the reconstructing" in Russian and stands for the organizational restructuring of the Soviet economy and bureaucracy, started in June 1987 by Mikhail Gorbachev (Burawoy & Hendley, 1992), the mass media were utilized as an instrument for radical change. While previous national leaders used the media to maintain the system, Michail Gorbachev used the media to reform the system (Androunas, 1993).

Since then, the situation has changed dramatically. After seventy years of a totalitarian Communist regime, the society went through a painful transformation to democracy and capitalism (Androunas, 1993). When Russia became independent in 1990, the media system was not controlled by the state anymore, but rather developed under free market conditions (Silverblatt & Zlobin, 2004). After the emergence of commercial media in Russia, some Russian scholars called the Russian media garbage because they thought Russian popular media content was giving corrupt ideas to young people without providing diverse ideas to viewers (Gilbert & Fedorov, 2004; Netopina, 1996). The negative in-

fluence of the media has been a concern of policy makers, educators and scholars, while the awareness of competitive global environments, where the ability to analyze and manage information from the media is considered power, has increased. According to Elena Bondarenko, such media information environments have resulted in the demand for media education (Fedorov, 2006).

In fact, media education in Russia can be tracked to 80 years ago when film clubs and clubs of young journalists, amateur film-photo-studios, were organized in the 1920s. Among them, the Soviet Cinema's Friends Society [Obchestvo Druzei Sovetskogo Kino (ODSK)], which was established in 1925, is seen as having a critical influence on initiating film education, although the emphasis was dominantly on the close examination of aesthetic approaches to film. However, these film education efforts were stopped by the Stalin regime in 1934, the year the Soviet Cinema's Friends was closed (Fedorov, 2002a; Gilbert & Fedorov, 2004). Media education in Russia restarted in the early 1960s in primary and secondary schools, universities, and children's centers all over the country. At that time, seminars and conferences on media education were held in several places (Fedorov, 2002a). The first cinema clubs also appeared in the 60s, where members watched and discussed various forms of films including what did not appear in the public theaters, such as modern philosophical and experimental films as well as European and American films (Fedorov, 2000b). Such casual forms of media education in cinema clubs were deemed suspicious. In 1967, the "Russian Council for Film Education in Schools & Universities" was formed as a section of the Russian Union of Filmmakers in Moscow (Fedorov, 2000b; Gilbert & Fedorov, 2004).

In 1988, thousands of film devotees from different cities were united by a federation of cinema clubs. On this occasion, participants were liberated from official cinema authorities and dictatorship over the films. A course for cinema teachers was also offered at this event. Cinema teachers did not want to receive governmental support, so they initiated the Russian Association for Media Education, which currently has approximately 300 members (Fedorov, 2000b; Pungente, 1997). Members included teachers in primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, lyceums and leaders in film-clubs. The government did not financially support the association, but it supervised several successful projects such as the International Media Education Conferences in Tashkent (1990), Moscow (1992) and Taganrog (2001) and the Russian-

British Media Education Seminar (1992; 1995). The association also offered courses for media educators and produced Internet websites about media education, such as http://www.edu.of.ru/mediaeducation.

The rapid social and cultural changes in Russia during the 1980s positively influenced the development of media education. Foreign films were available on TV channels and information about the entertainment world could be easily found in periodicals. Research on media education also started to move from describing and summarizing pedagogic experiences to discovering "psychological and/or sociological grounds of this phenomenon" (Fedorov, 2000a). Since perestroika in June, 1987, media education in youth clubs also grew. Some courses in secondary schools started to explore the role of the media in transmitting and protecting culture and examined the development of the technological and cultural evolution of the media in Russia (Pungente, 1997).

## Media Education in Russia

Historically, Russian media education had a very strong connection with cinema education. Besides the film clubs and cinema schools, the curriculum for the basics of cinema art for schools and pedagogical institutes was designed in the 1960's to 1970's. The objective for this curriculum was to broaden "the spiritual, cultural world of school children, to develop their personality" (Waisfeld, 1993, as cited in Fedorov, 2000a). In the early 1980's, another attempt to introduce film education in some Moscow primary and middle school curricula was experimented with. In the institutes and universities, those who wanted to be teachers could take classes on cinema education. Institutions designed teachers' professional development and offered seminars and workshops on cinema education. Moreover, media education was integrated into the aesthetic education in some universities (Fedorov, 2000a).

According to Rossiyiskaya pedagogicheskaya encyclopedia (Russian Pedagogical Encyclopedia, 1993), media education is defined as pedagogy which encourages the study of "the mass mechanism and laws of mass communication (press, television, radio, cinema, video, etc.)." The main objectives of media education are: to prepare the new generation for the modern information age; to teach the perception of different kinds of information; to teach a child/ student to understand information and realize the consequences of its impact on human mentality; and to master different forms of communication including the nonver-

bal communication with the help of technical means (Rossiyiskaya pedagogicheskaya encyclopedia, 1993, p. 555, translated and cited by Fedorov, 2006).

Fedorov (2002) categorizes the Russian media education with four models (p. 5):

1)  "educationally-informational models," which examine the theory and history of media and media languages;

2)  "instructionally-ethical models," which study moral, philosophical problems in the media content;

3)  "developing models," which discuss a creative person's social and cultural development, often focusing on perception, imagination, visual memory, interpretations, analysis and critical thinking; and

4)  "practical models," which teach how to use the computer and train in the practical use of media.

Many media educators understand the different stages of media literacy development as follows:

1)  the verification stage, where educators determine students' abilities, such as levels of media perception and technological skills;

2)  the practical creation and perception stage, where students learn how to produce the media along with the structures of media content;

3)  the analysis stage, where students develop analytical abilities when consuming media;

4)  the media history stage, where students learn  important events in media culture history together with contemporary conditions (Fedorov, 2002a).

Russian media education also includes production exercises in its curricula, such as writing exercises for scenarios, articles, or practice of post-production works of films (Fedorov, 2002a, 2002b).  Many production-oriented secondary and post-secondary educational institutions offer education and training for media professionals. Another media education trend in Russia is the integration of media education into other regular school subjects. In both Russian schools and universities,

media education is often integrated into aesthetic subjects (literature, music, art, aesthetics), linguistic subjects (Russian and foreign languages), and other courses like history, philosophy and law (Fedorov, 2000a).

Media education in Russia is gradually expanding its influence as a field of study as seen by the academic journal *Media Education*, which has been supported by Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, NGO Interregional Civil Organization in support of UNESCO 'Information for All' Programme (ICOS UNESCO IFAP) in Russia, and UNESCO Moscow Office (Email interview with Valery Gura, cited in Fedorov, 2006; UNESCO, 2001, 2005c). Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute also has offered media and cinema education courses since 1981. Some students set their research foci on media education and coordinate school cinema clubs where new students discuss classic and modern films (Fedorov, 2000b). In addition, recent media education movements in Russia show a tendency to follow Western-style approaches of critical analyses of media and culture (Gilbert & Fedorov, 2004).

## Practice of Media Education in Russia

In Russia, media education is practiced in various educational settings, from the cinema clubs for young people, and clubs for young journalists, to the primary and secondary schools and film schools for film professionals (Fedorov, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b). While clubs and film schools were more frequently observable forms of media education during the twentieth century, media education in primary and secondary schools emerged during the twenty-first century. When practicing media education in secondary schools, Russian teachers still favor aesthetic analyses of films and TV programs when practicing media education due to the strong historical tradition of cinema clubs (Fedorov, 2000b). However, the aims of media education recognized by Russian teachers show more holistic approaches to media education:

1)  Students should be able to analyze moral and psychological motivations of the characters and actions in media texts;

2)  Students should be able to explain audiovisual languages in documentary and feature films;

3)  Students should be able to explain categories of some forms of media education, such as genres, film, press, video, audio, etc.;

4) Students should be able to talk about the aesthetic values of media content;

5) Students should be able to discuss the goals of media institutions (Fedorov, 2002b).

Class observations in ten different secondary schools by Fedorov (2002b) showed that when practicing media education in the class, teachers often clearly stated these goals to students so that students could understand what they should learn and focus on during the lesson.

In this research study, Fedorov (2002b) observed ten lessons in ten different classes with 126 girls and 95 boys who were 14-16 years old and interviewed ten teachers who were practicing media education in secondary schools. Most teachers majored in languages, arts, history, and social pedagogy. Seven of the ten teachers had taught media for 3-6 years and were motivated by the necessity of providing more relevant and modernistic lessons (60%), their inclination towards cinema, television and arts (20%), the effectiveness of media content as life role models (10%) and the educational qualities/factors of media education (10%). Some teachers mentioned the influential power of media as a part of life and home when providing reasons for practicing media education (10%). Teachers perceived media education as "a subsidiary way to traditional education" (50%), "an effective means for the expanding of knowledge and development of personality" (20%), and "games and group activities" (10%). These teachers considered media education to be different from other education due to its effectiveness for conscious development (20%), education (20%), aesthetic perception development (10%), and communication and information access (10%).

Fedorov's observation also found out that media education classes in secondary school discussed media categories (90%), representations in the media (40%), media agencies (30%), and media languages (20%). These teachers told him that they have examined or will examine information covered in media content (20%), aesthetic values (10%), and audiences (20%) in previous or future classes. Teachers also recognized gender differences existing in media education classes. Twenty percent of teachers saw boys being more comfortable with media technologies, for they are often exposed to more of them, such as video games and the Internet. Forty percent of media educators, however, considered

girls more "sensitive about aesthetic perception" (Fedorov, 2002b, p. 102)

## Limitation of Media Education in Russia

Opponents of media education have existed throughout its development in Russia. Those opponents were afraid of destroying "the direct contact between the screen and young audience by its importunate interference." Media education was seen as the implementation of bias, which terminated the pleasure of watching (Rybak. 1975. as cited in Fedorov, 2000a). Along with this resistance towards media education movements, other difficulties also were recognized, preventing the development and practice of media education.

The most difficult factor for media education to succeed in Russia is low interest in the field. A number of teachers do not even know media education exists. Some teachers who claim to practice media education simply use media technology to aid their teaching in the class rather than teaching media "to prepare the new generation for the modern information age," as defined in the Russian Pedagogical Encyclopedia (Fedorov, 2002a, 2006).

In Russia, school education is centralized by the Ministry of Education, which plans and implements national programs for all schools. In this centralized system, teachers currently have less of a chance to practice media education, because media education is not included in the state educational curriculum and teachers are given little elective courses, where they might implement media education (Fedorov, 2000a, 2002a). Some institutions have tried to initiate media education by developing programs or teacher training. For instance, the Laboratory of Media Education at the Russian Academy of Education in Moscow designed experimental educational standards of media education to integrate this approach into the existing curriculum. The Kurgan Teacher Training Institute developed its own media education programs. However, such attempts by different organizations were acknowledged by few schools (Fedorov, 2002a). Also, a model for national media education curriculum, developed by the Russian Academy of Education, was never practiced in schools. Some school principals encouraged media education and some schools made media education an independent subject while other schools offered it as a cross-curricular subject. However, media education still depends mostly on efforts by passionate and enthusiastic individual teachers (Fedorov, 2002a).

Financial difficulties also have been a big challenge to Russian media education, because many schools have not had enough money to equip their facilities with recent audiovisual technology. Many Russian secondary schools used to have a computer class in their curriculum. However, most of those computers were old models which did not allow Internet access, hence limiting the impact of computer learning. Most schools also did not have DVD players or video cameras (Fedorov, 2002a). The hope is that, through the support of the Ministry of Education and others, the situation in Russian school is improving. For instance, in 2008, all primary and secondary schools in cities, and many other primary and secondary school in the provinces, as well as all the universities in Russia have Internet access. Therefore, students' access to sources on the Internet is becoming more convenient.

Another difficulty in implementing media education at schools has been teachers' motivation. Russian teachers have not received a regular salary until the year 2002. Even when they were receiving their salary, they were paid only about the equivalent of twenty to thirty U.S. dollars per month. Such monetary factors discouraged young males from becoming teachers. Ninety percent of Russian teachers used to be females and the majority were middle-aged women. Since many Russian women were already busy with housekeeping, these teachers were not interested in media education because practicing media education did not pay them extra money (Fedorov, 2002a, 2002b) However, fortunately Russian teachers have been receiving regular salaries since 2003, which has stabilized their financial situation. Still, for many teachers, teaching media literacy is viewed as an additional burden to their regular duties.

One of the efforts to overcome such limitations is the involvement of international NGOs, such as UNESCO and UNICEF, who have been working to create a positive atmosphere in order to promote the development of media education. The following section discusses the role and influence of UNESCO and UNICEF on the improvement of Russian media education.

## UNESCO and Media Education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency in the United Nations (UN), focusing on education, social and natural science, culture, communication and information. Themes related to communication and information include "access to information," "capacity-building," "content devel-

opment," "freedom of expression," "media development," and "preservation" (UNESCO, 1995):

1) Access to information: UNESCO believes that individuals should be empowered so that "they can access and contribute to information and knowledge flows." Therefore, UNESCO tries to facilitate information access by "setting standards, raising awareness and monitoring progress to achieve universal access to information and knowledge" (UNESCO, 1995).

2) Capacity building: UNESCO believes that everybody should be given the opportunity to attain the skills and knowledge necessary to "understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from the emerging knowledge societies." Therefore, the organizations concentrate on equipping people with appropriate skills and abilities for "critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives through media education and information literacy programs" (UNESCO, 1995).

3) Content development: UNESCO believes that the "development of, and access to diverse contents is crucial for knowledge societies." Therefore, UNESCO works to solve the current language limitations in cyberspace, by developing linguistically diverse contents and training professionals and policymakers in the field (Amelan, 2002; UNESCO, 1995).

4) Freedom of expression: UNESCO also believes that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are primary human rights, so the organization offers policy advice to governments and support to independent and pluralistic media. Such support is often given to countries in conflicts or transition. UNESCO's mission is promoted through various activities, such as information and communication technology training, especially for women and young people. UNESCO also supports community multimedia centers in underprivileged areas. In addition, it also tries to foster creativity in the spirit of freedom by enforcing art education in all school curricula and strengthening technology education, because access to new technology is thought to allow more possibilities for original forms of expression (Amelan, 2002; UNESCO, 1995, 2003, 2006a).

5) Media development: UNESCO supports the training of media professionals at communication institutions. UNESCO also works to raise public awareness about communication resources so that individuals can benefit from these resources.

6) Preservation: UNESCO supports the preservation and documentation of cultural and historical heritage to maintain a record that reflects the diversity of languages and cultures.

As shown from the list above, UNESCO uses media education and information literacy programs to develop individuals' abilities for "critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives" and to equip them with necessary skills in knowledge societies (UNESCO, 1995, 2003); (UNESCO, 1995). UNESCO holistically defines media education by including its various characteristics, rather than simply describing it. UNESCO's definitions of media education are as follows:

1) Media education enables individuals to acquire understandings of the communication media used in their society and to control media technology.

2) Media education empowers learners with appropriate skills to communicate with others through media and to create media texts.

3) Media education teaches individuals how to analyze and critically reflect upon media content; media education recognizes "the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts."

4) Learners can recognize the value of messages and decide on proper media in order to communicate their messages and reach target audiences.

5) Learners can obtain the access to the right media for reception ad production.

(Email interview with Richard Cornell, cited in Fedorov, 2006, p. 4)

## UNICEF and Media Education

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is also an agency in the United Nations (UN) which is designed for children in the world, especially for their "health, education, equality, and protection." With global

authority, UNICEF influences decision-makers and other child advocates so that every child's rights are respected regardless of their situation. Therefore, UNICEF works to solve the problems of poverty, diseases, violence and discrimination which often prevent children's positive development (UNICEF, 2006a).

For a number of years, UNICEF has worked to facilitate children's rights to express themselves through the media and to let their voices be heard by supporting the distribution of media content that contains their voices. This way children can actively explore and partake in public forums and discussions that might influence their futures (Carlsson & Feilitzen, 1998). UNICEF's endeavor to encourage young people, especially in developing countries, to use mass media as a form of expression and participation is well shown from the Oslo convention. At the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1999) in Oslo, children, young people, media professionals and children's right experts discussed the relationship between the media and the development of children's rights. The convention formed the Oslo Challenge, which acknowledges the important role of media in every aspect of children's lives, such as "education, freedom of expression, play, identity, health, dignity and self-respect, protection" (MAGIC, 2006). Participants of the convention also came up with five components in the Oslo Challenge (MAGIC, 2006):

1)  Children's right of access to the media, including new media.

2)  Children's right to media education and literacy.

3)  Children's right to participate in the media

4)  Children's right to protection from harm in the media and violence on the screen.

5)  The media's role in protecting and promoting children's rights

The Oslo Challenge also includes a challenge to governments, organizations, media professionals, children, young people, and the private sector (including media owners, parents, teachers and researchers) to address how everybody can be practically engaged in "exploring, developing, monitoring and participating in the complex relationship between children and the media" (MAGIC, 2006).

As a response to the Oslo Challenge, UNICEF produced a website called MAGIC, which stands for Media Activities and Good Ideas by,

with and for Children (www.unicef.org/magic). On the website, educators and parents can obtain various sources regarding the media and children, such as relevant articles, media education curricula, and local resources. Children get to learn about their rights, including the right to share their stories with others. Children can learn about how other children live by watching video clips produced by these children, and they can submit their own videos to tell their own stories. Information about other organizations or websites where children can speak out through media production is available as well.

## The Role of UNESCO and UNICEF in the Development of Russian Media Education

While UNESCO and UNICEF have contributed to media literacy practitioners and scholars all over the world by making various resources available on their websites, they also directly influence many countries through a number of projects and resources. Russia is a country which has gone through a tremendous transition from communism to capitalism; this transition has influenced the mass media system, public education, and other public resources in general. As such, Russia has greatly benefited from UNESCO, in terms of media education.

When discussing and implementing media education, UNESCO uses two approaches: youth education and professional training. This latter element is noteworthy because its media products influence the public, especially the youth (UNESCO, 2005a, 2006c).

While UNICEF and UNESCO both work with media literacy issues, they do so in different ways. On the one hand, UNICEF works more directly with children, youth and their educators so that their right to be educated and right to express their thoughts and stories using media technology are realized. On the other hand, UNESCO projects focus more on creating a positive media and educational environment by monitoring and lobbying public policies, making recent technology more available, and training media professionals. While this paper concentrates on the distinct roles of UNESCO and UNICEF in the development of media education in Russia, the fact that their scopes of action are not limited to those listed above should be also remembered: UNICEF also works with media professionals and policy makers and UNESCO also works directly with children and educators.

# UNESCO in the Development of Media Education in Russia

Since 2001, NGO Interregional Civil Organization in support of UNESCO 'Information for All' Programme (ICOS UNESCO IFAP) in Russia (http://www.ifap.ru) has supported media education in Russia (Email interview with Victoria Kolesnichenko, cited in Fedorov, 2006). Through collaborations, the Intergovernmental Council for IFAP and Resolution of the Russian Commission for UNESCO initiated the establishment of the Russia Committee of the UNESCO IFAP. "Information for All Programme (IFAP)" is a UNESCO's intergovernmental program that is designed to encourage "universal access to information and knowledge for development" in order to establish knowledge societies. IFAP also collaborates with other intergovernmental organizations and international NGOs with expertise in information management and preservation, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFAL) and the International Council on Archives (ICA) (UNESCO, 2001, 2006b). In addition, IFAP in Russia participates in the establishment of the national policies and builds partnership with institutions outside Russia.

IFAP's efforts to create information society are well represented by their projects. For instance, based on the belief that the establishment of a public legal culture and awareness of legality when creating an information society is important, IFAP introduced the Public Centers of Legal Information PCPI program in 2003 to build a network of public legal information centers. Now, about a million people have access to public legal information centers through large Russian public libraries. IFAP also collaborated with researchers in the Kemerovo State University of Culture and the Arts to provide individual Russians with equal access to cultural and educational resources. Experts from these two institutions have trained a population in outlying areas, such as Kuzbas, so that they can learn how to search, analyze and use information. One of their programs is "ABC of Personal Information Culture." This course was developed to measure each individual's access to and knowledge of cultural information and to teach them how to create various information products. One-tenth of students in secondary schools in Kuzbas and a number of educators, librarians, professors and graduate students participated in the "ABC of Personal Information Culture" course (UNESCO, 2001).

UNESCO's "Information for All Programme (IFAP)" also trains educators and librarians so they will be fully prepared to educate young people about the media. For instance, with help from the Culture and Arts program at Kemerovo State University, IFAP held the first teacher training workshop in Russia and more than a thousand educators, librarians and cultural experts in Kuzbas have been trained in information culture (http://www.ifapcom.ru/). Educators, researchers, librarians and other cultural professionals can benefit also from using resources on NGO Interregional Civil Organization in support of UNESCO 'Information for All' Programme (ICOS UNESCO IFAP) in Russia (http://www.ifapcom.ru/) and on a website established by IFAP and the Russian State Youth Library on ecological culture (www.eco.ifap.ru). More information and resources are available in Russian on the UNESCO website. IFAP also publishes a hardcopy form of the brochure, guidelines and curricula and circulates them within the country. IFAP also supports the preservation of the contemporary arts, which matches UNESCO's goal of preserving cultural heritage. For instance, from August 2003, the Russian IFAP committee has worked with the Heikon Opera to digitalize the sound and video recordings in their theaters, so that performances in the theater can be reproduced in a high quality format such as VCD or DVD.

UNESCO's endeavor to create a society where everybody can actively seek, analyze, use and create media using technology is not restricted to the Information for All Program. In fact, the UNESCO Moscow office acknowledges the importance of media education and sees it as "an essential element in the formation of a civil society" (UNESCO, 2005b). In order to integrate their efforts in developing a consistent policy and to provide a new catalyst to bring educators, professionals, and researchers in the field together, the UNESCO Moscow Office and the South Ural Center for Media Education held a round-table discussion on media education development in Russia. The UNESCO Moscow Office also supported the interregional youth festival. The third annual festival was in Voronezh and the theme was "The Internet and Us," which addressed the problems and offered solutions to the problems of an informative Internet community for teachers and students, network communication among students, and the development of creativity using the computer. Eighty-six teams of teachers and students participated from educational institutions in eight different Russian regions. Several hands-on experiences were available for participators, such as creating school websites or electronic newspapers. Also,

UNESCO Moscow's websites dedicate a special section to media education (http://www.unesco.ru/) (UNESCO, 2005b).

As mentioned earlier, UNESCO considers professional training very important because their productions influence the public, especially youth (UNESCO, 2005a, 2006c). Therefore, the UNESCO Moscow Office works to improve the quality of media professionals and journalists. For instance, while the Moscow office directly trains media professionals and journalists, the office also arranges a number of conferences and round-table discussions about training and retraining for media professionals and journalists. Their roles are especially important because of Russia's unique situation with "post-conflict territories in the cluster countries" (UNESCO, 2005b, p. 33). Some of the topics of the conferences and round-table discussions include autonomous journalism in post-conflict situations, freedom of expression, and the responsibility and position of female journalists in armed conflicts. UNESCO also encourages young people to produce independent media. The Moscow office opened a series of training courses on media development for youth workers so that young people can participate in the development of media in post-conflict regions (UNESCO, 2005b).

The UNESCO Moscow office works to promote universal access to information and knowledge, freedom of speech and press, and the wide use of communication technologies in education, science and culture (UNESCO, 2005b). For instance, the office works to enhance the social inclusion of young people in small and outlying areas by establishing information centers in these remote areas. These information centers allow Internet access and introduce new information technologies to regional people.

## UNICEF in the Development of Media Education in Russia

UNICEF Russia does not appear to focus much attention on media education, probably because other serious issues exist that are more urgent, such as protecting children from social problems, violence, and family issues, such as divorce or parental negligence. UNICEF specifically works with the consequences of armed conflict because it tremendously affects children. Many children live in poor and difficult conditions and UNICEF endeavors to offer better environments and opportunities for kids living in such conditions. While the direct influence of UNICEF on Russian media education development is not evident

through secondary sources (such as web pages, books, and other documents from UNICEF), Russian children, media educators, media professionals and researchers might benefit from UNICEF through resources available about media education. UNICEF MAGIC is one example of this, as explained earlier.

While UNESCO concentrates on creating positive medical and educational environments, UNICEF works to directly influence children and educators by providing various educational resources on their websites and venues for children to speak out through the media, such as www.unicef.org/magic and www.unicef.org/voy. The "UNICEF Voice of Youth" website indicates that its mission is to offer a "safe and supportive global cyberspace within which [youth] can explore, discuss and partner on issues related to human rights and social change, as well as develop their awareness, leadership, community building, and critical thinking skills through active and substantive participation with their peers and with decision makers globally" (UNICEF, 2006b). MAGIC and Voice of Youth projects aim to help every child in the world, but the websites did not indicate whether Russians were taking advantage of these cyber opportunities. Since both Voice of Youth and MAGIC do not provide their content in English, it is even harder to determine if Russian educators, scholars, media professionals and children are really using the resources available at these websites.

## Limitations of UNESCO/UNICEF Support in Media Education Development

While UNESCO/UNICEF and other international NGOs can support media education movements by lobbying for policy issues, providing more resources, and training educators and professionals, their suggestions are not always appreciated by experts. Screen violence in Russia is one example that shows the ineffectiveness of UNESCO's Declaration of the Rights of the Child. According to Article 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, mass media should distribute content that benefit children socially and culturally as well as appropriate guidelines to protect young people from harmful content which might negatively influence them. The UN and UNESCO emphasize societal regulations for children's media viewing to protect young people from injurious and threatening information (Fedorov, 2003). However, despite UNESCO's efforts to train media professionals and lobby for public policy, Russian society and states have been

tolerant on the issue of media violence. Throughout its history, Russia has not regulated on screen violence, as opposed to the erotic and pornographic scenes which they have regulated more rigorously (Fedorov, 2003). While the legitimacy of using censorship to solve the problems of media violence and sexism is still debatable, media literacy has been suggested by scholars as a strategy to change the negative influence of violence in the media. Deconstruction allows young people to recognize the techniques used to create violent scenes and to learn to distinguish reality from fantasy (Kipping, 2001; Thoman, 1995). However, the Russian government still has taken action to implement media literacy programs to solve the negative impact of media violence.

As shown in the above example, international NGOs cannot exert their influence unless their efforts and concerns are acknowledged and appreciated by policy makers, political/legislators, administrators, and local experts. Therefore, UNESCO's efforts to work directly with local institutions and experts can result in more productive outcomes. Such partnerships should encourage countries with insufficient resources and experts to develop media education programs and to create positive media and educational environments. In addition, the efforts of other NGOs, besides UN affiliated organizations, also should be acknowledged so that more people and institutions can benefit from their efforts. For instance, the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) works in Europe to provide media literacy education for women and WLP's partner NGOs to empower them with the ability to produce knowledge and distribute it through media technology (Marin & Lengel, 2002). The effective use of sources from international NGOs and consistent efforts by local experts have the potential to bring about the most desirable synergy effects to promote media literacy education.

## Conclusion

Media education in Russia appears to have a more promising future since many individuals and institutions are aware of its need and are working hard to implement such programs within Russian educational settings. Particularly, the energy of individual educators and scholars is igniting the media education movement in Russia. Many humanities teachers, including Russian, literature, history, arts and ecology educators, have shown great enthusiasm in integrating media education into their lessons (Fedorov, 2002b).

However, Russian scholars and educators need to come up with an agreed meaning and a value associated with media education. No clear distinction exists between teaching media and teaching with media. Teachers who use media technology in their classrooms claim that they are practicing media education. Government officials and educators often focus on training for media technology when discussing media education. Teachers see media education as the same as a traditional education with media technology supports (Fedorov, 2002a, 2002b, 2006). A clear understanding of the meaning and value of media education will provide more opportunities for educators and scholars to truly integrate media education into real educational settings through balancing production and critical media analysis.

The possible contributions of media education in Russia and in other post/current communist countries also need to be discussed further. Many communist countries have not encouraged discussion and critical analysis within their school education. Any examinations of the media and dominant culture also have been restricted since such challenging of the social system has been strongly prohibited. Discouraging members of society from sharing problems that they saw and from providing suggestions to improve their environment have resulted in a slowing down of development. Media literacy education can contribute to solving this problem by nurturing individuals and providing them with constructive critical skills. Media literacy also can lessen the information access gap. According to the data in 2007, 29.4 % of Russians have Internet access, while 71 % of Americans have Internet access (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2008). Therefore, post/current communist countries and other developing countries should work to offer more educational programs and adequate public technology resources in order to increase their public's access to technology and their ability to use such technology effectively. However, since many of these countries lack technological and human resources to promote media and information literacy, partnerships with international NGOs, such as UNESCO and UNICEF, should be increasingly encouraged.

According to a survey conducted by Domaille and Buckingham for UNESCO for the purpose of obtaining information about the aims and methods of media education in different countries, several media education experts mentioned the influence of UNESCO in the history of media education development. These experts also suggested that UNESCO can better help media education movements by providing

the following supports: training teachers (including distance learning and local training), promoting international networks, providing resources for different national contexts, lobbying public policy on media education, assisting the distribution of current research, and supporting new research initiatives (Domaille & Buckingham, 2001).

Going further than partnerships with international NGOs, partnerships with other countries should also be encouraged. Such connections will increase the awareness of global contexts, expanding the scope of learning experiences and research areas. The integration of international aspects of media education will guide students, educators and scholars to have a more holistic understanding of media, which is required in this era of international media. In conclusion, these recommendations for media education in Russia have the potential to benefit not only media education experts in post/current communist countries, but also those in other countries with quite different social environments.

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# Chapter 12

# ACCEPTED: Visual Literacy from an Interdisciplinary Perspective

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## Introduction

Competence development in visual communication is a theme of growing importance in current communication studies. This paper describes the reflections of four communication researchers and teachers on the theme *visual literacy*. The reflections are based upon a case study we designed and delivered in a joint effort of a bachelor study in Media and Design delivered by Saxion University and a master study in Communication delivered by the University of Twente. We considered this master's course as a way to develop the visual literacy of students. However, we considered this course also as a continuous professional development for us as teachers in this area. We wanted to develop a basic theoretical framework and an educational strategy to develop knowledge, insights and competences in visual communication. Clearly, we did not succeed in all of it. Here, we present our lessons learned, our reflections on the theme visual literacy and finally, as a work in progress, our theoretical framework for a coherent basic Visual Communication master study.

Because visual communication is the main domain of human communication, we came to an accord for the disciplines that should have to be included in the curriculum of the project (shown in Figure 1), thus building the acronym ACCEPTED:

- Art: considers the history of art as the history of visual communication because of the concepts that underlay the visual manifestations.

- Culture: focuses on the cultural diversities in history and geography for production and reflection. We chose to include this

also because of the heterogeneous character of our research group.

- Cognitive: deals with the scientific knowledge about human perception, especially with an accent on recent, digital and nanotechnology research.

- Ethics: relates to the written and unwritten laws concerning published visuals and also gives attention to the copyright rules in different countries.

- Psychology: refers to the domain of individual character differentiations and the related domain of typology.
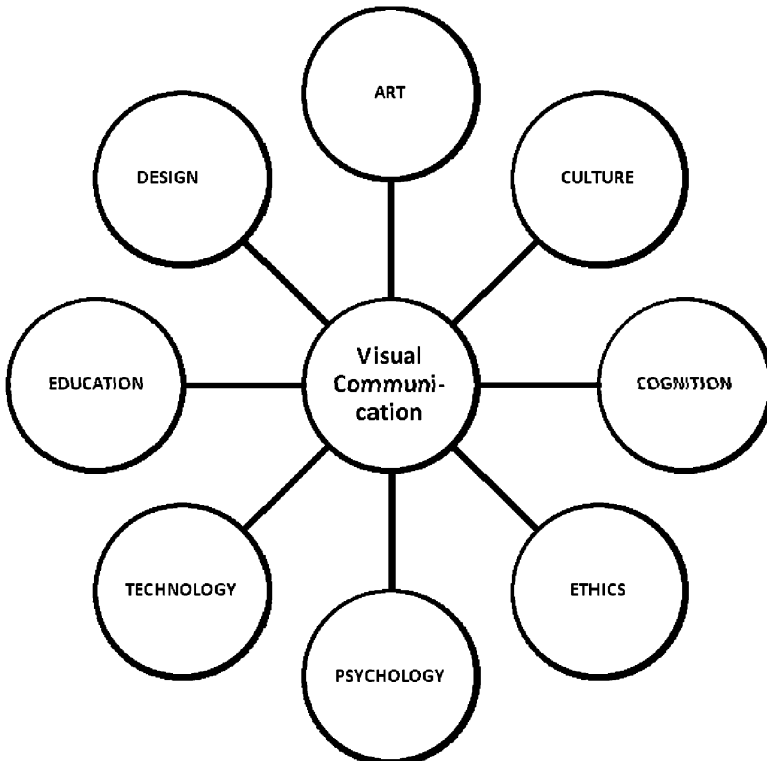


**Figure 1. Disciplines included in the project curriculum**

- Technology: includes the avalanche of technical developments in both hard- and software that is shown and trained in small workshops.

- Education: represents that both theoretical and practiced new educational approaches and didactical strategies have been applied.

- Design: deals with all the commercial, propaganda and illustrative visualizations that do not belong to the domain of the so-called *high art*.

## Visual Literacy Revised

Visual Literacy is as old as visual communication and mostly defined as the ability to read, write and think in images; however, the first definition is claimed to be given by John Debes at the "first national conference on Visual Literacy" in Rochester, New York in 1969:

> Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing at the same time he has and integrates other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects and/or symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environments. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication. (Debes, 1971)

What was most amazing upon first reading the report on this conference (sponsored by Kodak) is that Debes refers to all kinds of disciplines except the ones that work with visuals "by nature," including the visual arts, art and design, and art history. Being involved in those disciplines, one wonders why leading scholars were not included in this event.

The first to mention other aspects of visual literacy is Rudolf Arnheim, who, long before the conference, published: *Art and Visual Perception* (1954), *Toward a Psychology of Art*, a collection of essays from previous years (1972) and *Visual Thinking* (1969).

It is hardly understandable that Debes did not yet know *Visual Thinking* at the third national conference in 1971. Debes' contribution to the conference book starts with a variation on a statement made by Gauguin (1898) without mentioning the source, which might have been a slip of the pen, and when he quotes Korzybski (in Debes, 1971) on page two of the conference report, he seems not to realize that he quotes Aristotle. Of course it is not the intention to criticize an article from 1971 by standards of 2008, but it is necessary to put into perspective some original statements to revise the definition that is employed by International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) until today.

Although the focus of the third national conference was on education, Debes also fails to mention Victor Lowenfeld who published *Creative and Mental Growth* (1966) in which he introduced a psychological typology and an age-based scale of creativity development. Lowenfeld was preceded by Donald M. Anderson's *Elements of Design* (1961) and followed by Edmund B. Feldman's *Varieties of Visual Experience* (1967). Anderson gave a good structure of visual elements, which is an absolute necessity for a visual language structure. Feldman extended this domain with functions, styles and structures of visual art forms. If art history has to be involved in visual literacy, "godfathers" such as Heinrich Wolfflin and Horst W. Janson cannot be neglected. Wolfflin wrote *Principles of Art History* (1915) and focused on Western (read European) art while Janson's *History of Art* (1962) included the rest of the world. In a summary can be concluded that Debes' definition is not only vague ("refers to competences"), it has, at least, to be extended and specified at the following points:

1. Psychological components

2. Cultural/historical components

3. Educational and scientific components

4. Art historical, (or better history of visual communication) components.

5. Social/political context

Visual literacy describes a state of the art, while at the same time visual communication is a fluid, emerging field of study and practice.

## Psychological Components

Since Plato and Aristotle, there are two approaches to understanding the world: the rational and the empirical. For two thousand years, these approaches were alternating as dominant in the Western culture, until Emanuel Kant brought them together two centuries ago. Not that there is only one approach from then on, but at least the different approaches were related and no longer opponents. Although no longer opponents, the two approaches have remained as manifestations of individual (typological) differences in the human characters. These differences are also manifest in the history of visual communication; sometimes the eyes (observation) are the most important instruments to register reality, while at other moments, the mind and the idea are dominant. In the world of art and design, for over hundred years, these typological expressions are described in various terminologies. After Carl Jung (1922) published his depth psychological typology of 2 x 4 characters, the variations on the theme were many. One of the most popular deviations is that of Herbert Read (1943) where he adopts Jung's terminology for children's art. Not only the psyche determines what we see and how we see it, but also there is a close relation with the individual frame of reference that is a product of talent and development. In *How Art Education Occurs*, Elliot Eisner (1972) refers to psychologists who stated that the educational process should have to consist of helping children to learn how to use the different frames of reference to experience, understand, and master nature. These frames are most developed in the domains of human thoughts and feelings, known as Arts and Science. Each discipline should have to support these frames with useful experiences, starting with the basic skills.

Aristotle said, "There is no word that is not evoking an image." If this is considered as being part of "normal human learning," it should have to mentioned and practiced in the curriculum. Apart of that, the nature of images is even much more complex than described above. During a twenty-year research program, Harvard psychologist Stephen Kosslyn wrote on the nature of vision and mental imagery, which he later published in *Image and Mind* (1980). The research gives insight into the relation between visual mental imagery and visual perception and also the implementation into the human brain. Kosslyn shows that perception

and representation are linked. His theory is brain-scan computer tested. This introduction of digital-mediated tests in the modern scientific world has opened new ways for seeing and defining visual literacy, too.

### Cultural/Historical Components

"[Comprehend] and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication." If this means "…understand and enjoy works of art," (Debes, 1969, p. 25), the undefined, competencies must then, at least, include world histories of art, iconology, symbolism and semiology. Now, all interpretations imply a cultural context, and this can be rather complex and different from that with which we are familiar. At this moment, most societies turn into multi-cultural societies, which is a phenomenon that creates often more diversity than harmony. Recently the work of an Iranian photographer was excluded from an exhibition in a prominent Dutch museum, because it showed homosexuals wearing masks to prevent them from being recognized. This is curious because the Netherlands is well-known for tolerance for homosexuals and even allows same-sex marriage. On the other hand, Iran is a Muslim state, and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the current President of Iran, declared recently that there are no homosexuals in Iran. So, the work of the Iranian artist in the Netherlands became an inter-cultural dilemma in a social-political context. More complex is the fact that the photo models are wearing masks that represent the prophet Mohammed and his nephew Ali. It is absolutely forbidden to represent them in fundamentalist Islamic art. Now, the work is even an offense to the Muslim religion. In this political-religious context the museum director had to decide whether freedom of art expression is more important than evoking aggression from fundamentalist Muslims. This is not only a cultural problem, but also involves political and historical conflict because, perhaps, 50 years ago with a different government in Iran, this incident would not have happened.

Ernst Gombrich wrote in 1966: "…for a picture is not a natural sign whose message is self-evident to the viewer with an innocent eye but a conventional sign which offers only abbreviate or incomplete visual information to our imagination." If this is true, then the viewer must be trained to correctly interpret the image to understand it. This skill is an absolute must for professional interpreters of art: art historians, visual communicators, and art and design teachers. We only doubt if these professionals will ever come to the same conclusion concerning the

historical reality of the picture. For the dissertation "Reading Images" a team of 10 experts from the disciplines mentioned above, was employed. This team had to read 40 images on three levels: pre-iconographic, iconographic, and connotative. For the first two levels there was quite a consensus; however, on the connotative level, there was rather much diversity in interpretation, and it was in most cases not to trace the (hidden) intention of the author/artist, and to conclude who is right.

Especially for older images, the historical context has to be considered, and even when iconography is known, it is still a quest to find the roots of the message. According to Gombrich (1966), an image cannot be a true copy of nature because when we paint, draw, or describe what we see, we always make a selection of the whole of visual information that comes to our retina. So, we are constructing the image no matter whether it is impressionistic or expressionistic. An image tells us what the creator or artist made, but the particular motivation remains a secret because it is the intended meaning of the author. In art history, or preferably, in the history of visual communication, we speak about a style if some of the presumed intentions are manifest in a work as common-sense. The private motivation of the authors has become part of a collective *Zeitgeist*. Enjoyment of masterpieces of visual communication is strongly related to the viewer's frame of reference, and the competencies to build that frame are far beyond the domain of visual literacy. The question even arises if there is an absolute visual literacy? Is it possible to read, write, and think in images without the help of any other sensory experience? Are words, sounds, or any other experiences needed to confirm the visual sensation?

### *Educational Components*

Media education including visual literacy, or verbal/visual literacy or audiovisual literacy, might be a necessity in the digital age; however, the big questions remain: how do we teach it, and who is going to teach it? In the eighties, at the Media Education Platform, a national committee to discuss the position of media education in Dutch schooling, both questions were hot items. Let us start with the issue of *who*. One participant, a science teacher, was sent by his board because he worked with lenses; this participant was important because for new media, a camera, which needs lenses, is required. Another, a biologist, came because he was an expert in macro-photography, for a geographer was

no other job available in his school and pedagogues pretend that they can teach everything. It might be clear that this team never created a course in media education. Orientation in other European countries made it clear that in the UK they taught media education, although it was focused on English-language education. It is good to point to the fact that, in spite of Herbert Read, the UK had no art and design discipline in the national curriculum, until the seventies. French and Swiss education incorporated semiotics in the curricula, and for the rest of Europe, the interest for the discipline was nil; however, Germany was an exception where some of the states had great scholars who introduced visual communication as part of, or even instead of, art education. This was the start of a new tendency in education: social engagement that included a critical approach of the consumption society. It is good to commemorate that in Germany the neo-Marxist pedagogy from the Frankfurt School was forbidden because of its relation with left-wing terrorism.

In 1991, in the Netherlands, the Centre for Educational Research (Amsterdam University) published the report: "The Effects of Art & Design on Visual-Three Dimensional Abilities and Aesthetical Perception" (Haanstra, 1991). The report, based on two meta-analyses, is an attempt to bring together research on the effects of art and design education on human behavior. The first chapter of the report, "Learning to See as Target of Art & Design Education," mentions a list of 28 authors all giving statements about the effect of visual-art training upon visual perception. However, no one deals exactly with the objects of *high art* and *low art*, the mutual references of art images and advertisements or comics, some authors underpin the research questions for visual literacy.

Parsons (1987) presents the case that the difference between judgment and preference, as made in psychological research, is depending on the state of development, similar to the descriptions of Lowenfeld. In the preconventional phase description, judgment and preference of a work of art coincide. In the conventional phase, there is more difference between the three aspects. External criteria for judgment and preference are accepted as dogmas. In the postconventional phase, the external criteria are objects of discussion, too. The relation between preference and judgment in that phase is complex.

Gardner (1983) describes the Visual-Three Dimensional Intelligence as familiar qualities, as there are, recognition of shape, transformation of

shape, and graphical reproduction of three-dimensional information. More abstract is the use of images for problem solving.

Some other important statements come from *How Artistic Learning Occurs* (Eisner, 1972). Artistic learning deals with the development of abilities to create art forms; it deals with the ability to understand art as a cultural phenomenon. Thus, an understanding of artistic learning requires us to attend to how people learn to create visual forms having aesthetic and expressive character, to how people learn to see visual forms in art and in nature, and to how understanding of art occurs.

Gestalt psychologists, especially Arnheim, have developed one of the most useful conceptions of artistic learning. The Gestalt theory of perceptual development argues that as people mature, their ability to discriminate among the qualities that constitute the environment increases. Thus by this theory, an adult is able to perceive qualities and relationships between qualities that are much more complex and subtle than those that most children perceive. This process of being able to perceive, compare, and contrast qualities is what Gestalt psychologists call *perceptual differentiation.* The visual world is exceedingly complex, and as we mature, we learn to reduce the visual world to certain general visual and discursive symbols for these qualities.

After reading all these art and design giants, a conclusion might be that teachers from this discipline are the best choice for teaching visual literacy. Although, referring to previous conclusions, these teachers should also be familiar with the literacy of other disciplines that are mutually related to the visual one.

## History of Art and History of Visual Communication

The history of art is a relatively young science. Two thousand years ago Pliny the Elder had some interest in the life of famous (Greek and Roman) artists and their creations. The real interest in (Classical) history, including art, emerged during the Renaissance. Finally, it was Winckelmann who, in the second half of the 18th century, made the basics of modern history of art. There are different methods in the discipline; next to the biographic, the iconographic, and the formal approaches, today the structural\historical analysis is applied. The history of art incorporates more and more other sciences: psychology, sociology, and iconology. Iconology is especially concerned with the cognitive qualities of a work of art and goes beyond the aesthetic qualities. When Vasari

wrote his *Le Vite* (1550) about the lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors, and architects, the book contained only Italian artists. *The History of Ancient Art Among The Greeks* (1764), by Johann Winckelmann, focused on the aesthetics of the Greeks and made that the standard for art criteria. As long as this is the only criterion, "…one can enjoy the masterworks of visual communication" (Debes, 1969, p.27). But visual communication is much more than just some knowledge of a few art works, and even more, the intentions of many artists are not to give aesthetical satisfaction at all. This is not only true for modern art; most of the works we find in art history books were made with religious, political, or economical purpose. A visually literate person can enjoy works of art although (s)he will *read* more in the images. The aforemen-tioned movement in German and Dutch art education in the 1960s turned the focus from aesthetics to visual communication. This visual communication was an emancipation movement against the capitalistic consumer society and included in their topic of aggression all verbal-visual media: printed matter, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, television and film graphics, audiovisual productions, and others. The history of art is closely related with the history of visual communica-tion, although the latter includes more and other social/political disci-plines, including trade and advertising.

A rough overview of the history of visual communication will start with the cave paintings and petroglyphs, both containing figurative and symbolic-like representations from which the function and meaning has to be guessed because there is no sensory information to confirm it. One could say this is pure visual communication, although these pic-tures also prove that Aristotle was correct when he said that there is no word without an image and vice versa. The next step is the pictures next to ideograms, the Chinese calligraphy, the Sumerian cuneiforms, and the Egyptian hieroglyphs. The last two are also responsible for the development of the Greek alphabet, or single symbols to single pho-nemes. The sturdy, often sculpted, letters of the Romans gradually changed into the more fluent manuscripts of the Middle Ages. These were often illuminated and gave verbal and visual information to the largely illiterate audience. Literally from the floor to the ceiling, cathe-drals were picture books of sculptures, mosaics, frescos, and stained glass.

Printing was born when Gutenberg (1450) invented the way to make multiple copies from documents. Consequently came the diminishing

of illustrations, and if they were present, they were mostly black and white. Printing stimulated verbal literacy, and on the other hand, it freed the illustrations next to the verbal texts. It does not astonish that then came the birth of manuals for reading images like *Iconologia,* by Cesare Ripa (1593). Printed pictures had to be linear engravings from the woodcuts by Durer until the steel gravures by Dore and until Sene-felder (1799) invents lithography. That worked with a stone grid and opened possibilities for halftones and colour. The next great invention is photography by Niepce in 1826 which freed visual artists from the task of copying nature and opened to a large audience the possibility to document in images objects of their interest. A result of all these devel-opments is that art and craft movements are founded and design be-comes a new discipline. This discipline, closely related to industrial production, can be considered to be the first (or a new) manifestation of applied art. It is here that the division is made between *art for art's sake* (*l'art pour l'art*) and the applied art: design. Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, and Art Deco are some of the names for these applied styles. On the other hand, the avant-garde, the frontline of the freed artists, invented one new *ism* after another: Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, and Sur-realism. In a mutual exchange with applied arts, these styles came to-gether in organizations bringing architecture, furniture design, decora-tive, and free arts together as with De Stijl in 1917 and the Bauhaus in 1919. Journals and magazines brought the visual information to the home of the consumer. These publications brought not only the actual products, but also the reproductions of more and less known artworks. Visual information, in the form of words, sounds, film, posters, adver-tisements, comic books, and television, dominated the post.

After World War II, at the end of the 20th century, scholars of the humanities, philosophers, critics, and scientists began to reflect on their contemporary culture that could be seen as local or Western. The reali-sation that the world has become a *global village* starts an era that is called Postmodernism. This era is also the age of the computer, and today, thanks to software developments, everybody can be a desktop publisher, although that does not mean that everybody can be a de-signer. In spite of all programming facilities, creativity and communica-tion qualities remain a basic necessity for effective design. *Processing* is a new programming language and integrated development environments built for the electronic arts and visual design communities. Visual In-formation Design is a scientific/ technological visualisation process in computer applications to present interactive and/or animated digital

images. Game design and 3D educational environments are new domains in the educational field; soon Second Life will enter that domain, too. The sky is the limit for the digital possibilities of visual communication for science, education, and entertainment.

### Social-Political Context

To critique the Debes (1971) model of visual literacy, developed in the late 1960s, almost 40 years before this writing, is a challenge, not only in respect to the model and the model's author, but to the epistemological environment it existed in at the time. In this case hindsight is helpful, for the model can be viewed in a historical framework, as well as a social one. Debes and his work to promote visual literacy in education as a viable knowledge and practice is to be recognized, along with many others who were working out of the 1960s and into the seventies

When Debes first presented his overview of a model for visual literacy in 1968, in the USA, it was a time when those inside and outside of education were responding to the development of what was viewed as a sterile, static, non-humanist approach to learning and teaching. It was a time when Skinner introduced the vision of his teaching machine within a neo-behaviorist learning paradigm. The use of educational television was seen as a solution to controlling a growing liberal teaching profession and the equalizer for delivery of the official curriculum to all students by "master" teachers, thus centralizing instructional and curricular control within district and state departments of education. The introduction of programmed learning through various kits and programs further placed the control of the total instructional experience with instructional designers and external content experts. From the 1980s to the present, the delivery of this "fixed" instructional system (technology) was shifted to computer software in the form of computer-assisted, based, and managed formats. The 21st century introduced the notion of multi-mediated integrated learning systems (Muffoletto, 2001).

Fueled by the fears presented by a growing Cold War, the Sputnik challenge to the technological and scientific power of the United States, the growing demand of constitutional rights by minority populations, the Vietnam conflict, and the Kennedy(s) and King assignations, coupled with Watergate and the departure of Richard Nixon from the office of the President, the United States entered deeper into the age of television and mass media to an extent not experienced before. Beyond the

power of the radio in the 1930s to steer public knowledge and perceptions, television not only told us what was truth, but showed us the truth, as well.

Media educationmedia literacy and visual literacy were all responses to the presumed need of a democracy to understand the nature of mediated messages and to have a public voice which emerged not from the institutional control rooms of the media industry but from the backyards and kitchens of marginalized populations. It was a time of the seminal work of McLuhan (1964), the growth of media and film studies programs at all levels of education, and a questioning of the modernist perspective and control over the production of knowledge. The more the population knew about the media industry and its production of messages, the more often the notion of "the Truth" was questioned.

Media education extended beyond the filmstrip and the educational film to educational programs that attempted to humanize the classroom and school by placing the camera and microphone in the hands of teachers and students. Point and click cameras, affordable and portable audio recorders, joined with small portable video equipment, provided the means to reform education, to value the experiences of the individual, to teach the curriculum through the eyes and ears of the learner, to resist programmed instruction, and to de-personalize curriculums. Then, as it is now, progressive educators sought to educate, at all levels, the awareness and skills of their students to deconstruct the intended messages flowing towards them via the media, thus to become media literate (Muffoletto, 2007).

The history of media literacy is grounded in political questions of power and of power over whose mark is left, whose meaning is heard and legitimized. Who was allowed to leave their mark and who was to provide "the" interpretation of the gesture, varied by the moment and geography. Media and visual literacy education, whether it is formalized in educational institutions or in community centers, is meant to empower those living in silence, to change power relationships, thus giving individuals and communities a voice.

In finding their voice, the culture of silence can be broken. In learning to produce media messages whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, the storyteller or producer is better able to understand the story of others as constructed messages, a text to be read that is coded with intentions and benefits. Media literacy and visual literacy then become more than

a set of competencies to be acquired; they become a vehicle for understanding the mediation of reality. For after all, our understanding of reality is a re-mediation of sensory codes into socially and historically constructed meanings and messages. Reality is not what we see, hear, or feel, but it is what we make it to be.

How then are we to better understand a definition of visual literacy constructed at a time of social unrest, challenge, and fear in the United States? At a time when the culture of the United States was saturated with mediated images of war, resistance, consumption, beauty, the "good life," and relationships between of men and woman? How will a definition offered in the late 1960s benefit us now in the early 21st century? The point is that it may not. Debes' definition is built upon defining a set of "vision competencies that can be integrated with other sensory experiences for effective communication." He continues in suggesting that the "development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, and symbols, either natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment" (Debes, 1969, p. 27). At first glance this seems straightforward enough. On further inquiry there are some basic problems with Debes' definition.

Situating the image in a neutral manner, removes it from any social, cultural, or political context. Nowhere in Debes' (1969, 1971) early papers on visual literacy does he elaborate on the cultural and political framework of the image and the role of the writer/producer and the audience/reader of the image. At a time when mediated and re-mediated media messages are flooding the public landscape in the United States, forming the consciousness of "what is" in the minds of citizens, not to situate the media, the image, on the cultural horizon is questionable. The meaning of any image, sound, and gesture is itself historical and cultural.

Debes does note the presence of the visual image within various disciplines and areas of inquiry, such as anthropology, sociology, art, and communications, but he stops there. Nowhere does he discuss or suggest that the meaning of the visual text/image is dependent within the paradigmatic nature of the discipline in which it is found. This is a major flaw in his discussion, the appearance of the neutrality of the image, its production, and its consumption by readers.

Debes reduces visual literacy to a set of competencies for an individual to learn. He presents a reductionist approach to a complex cognitive, social, and political process and does not reveal the subjective nature of a condition termed *literacy*. Debes does not credit the role of the reader of the visual text in the construction of its meaning as a collaboration between the producer and the reader. Learning or developing a set of perceptional and cognitive skills does not lead a person to be literate. Literacy itself is defined within a historical and situational/social environment. As Paolo Freire (1970) suggests, it is not just teaching someone to read and write, but what is read and written that is important to a literate society. Learning to read and write, consuming uncritically the messages of the other, is oppressive and not liberating. Any definition of media literacy and visual literacy that does not identify libratory practices is oppressive and undemocratic

As we suggested earlier in this paper, mid-century K-12 education in the United States was under a lot of pressure to produce scientists, engineers, and mathematicians to compete on a global scale. There was an influx of scientific thinking in education pointing to visions of various teaching machines, testing devices, and teacher-safe curricular delivery materials (Cuban, 1986). The educational system was asked to control and steer learners and teachers through the official curriculum. Schools were considered to be sterile and controlled environments where students were treated as objects and schools as factories or work places. The film *High School* (1968) by Fredrick Wiseman was one of the few films that portrayed schooling in this manner. Above all, schools were to maintain and reproduce the status quo (Apple, 1979, 1982; 2001; Besser, 1993; Popkewitz, 1991). Media educationand/or media literacy were viewed as a response to the controlled atmosphere of the school, challenging the systematic nature of the schools. Media literacy and film study classes were designed to challenge the nature of the media industry and the modernist notion of a fixed "Truth" and to give a voice to students and communities that were once silenced (Ellsworth & Whatley, 1990). It was media literacy, not visual literacy, which addressed these concerns. Unlike the Debes model of visual literacy, the media literacy movement was part of a school reform effort to make schooling more relevant to the lives of students, address the nature of mediated messages found in the official school text and the culture outside the walls of the school, and to build an informed population. It was not until the 1980s with the back-to-basics movement in the

United States that efforts similar to media literacy were limited or removed from the school day.

In the end, it is the models, their assumptions, and their framing of reality that really matters. The visual literacy model offered by Debes in the late 1960s and early 1970s deferred attention to the real issue at hand: democratic practice.

The above discussion places Debes' definition for visual literacy as far from complete for the time it was first written. The developments in the field of visual communication and media education, especially in central Western Europe, have been totally neglected, as well as the extension of these domains. Visual literacy is mostly related to or viewed in light of another literacy. So it might be better to say that: Visual -, like Verbal - and Audio Literacy, are sub-domains of Communication Literacy. Or as Barrett (1997) suggests: To be visually literate requires cultural literacy.

## Case Study

Based on our perspectives on visual literacy, we designed and delivered the course Visual Literacy and Communication to develop the knowledge, insight, and skills of communication students in the field of visual communication. It was a joint effort of the bachelor study Media and Design delivered by Saxion University and the master study Communication delivered by the University of Twente. Given the importance of the topic and a lack of interest in communication studies to address this topic, we took an educational strategy to enable students to become immersed by this topic "to never forget what it is all about."

The main course characteristic was shaping a community of practice (CoP). More precisely, this specifies the strategy, structure, culture, personnel, management, and systems of the course (Van der Kolk, 2007).

Developing and carrying out the course based on the CoP principle was a creative task that was a result of teamwork between five teachers. Moreover, those teachers were already connected in the community of practice through informal network and common interests. The exciting part was that they designed and executed the course, which was regarded contradictory by the management. The teachers represented two educational institutions: the University of Twente (UT) and Saxion Hogeschool, which is a higher, non-academic institution. The partici-

pants of the course were the students from both institutions. Thus, the newness also resided in collaboration between two educational institutions that differ in their educational approach, goals, and students. Moreover, teachers themselves had different educational backgrounds and expertise, thus an interdisciplinary approach was applied in the design and implementation of the course.

The course embedded two parts: literature study and visual literacy experiment. The main goal of the course was to build up a community of practice, which consists of teachers and students from UT and Saxion. Therefore, the main focus was to develop students as junior researchers, which resulted in the concrete outcome: the book compiled from students' papers. First, the challenge laid in the motivation of the students with different background and prevailing needs (academic versus practical students). Secondly, the teamwork and collaboration of students from different institutions, which do not have common courses, was in question. Lastly, the lectures and seminars were very intensive.

All disciplines and fields of importance, mentioned in the acronym ACCEPTED, were presented in offered and required literature, lectures, individual research, team fieldwork, workshops, and demonstrations. A first evaluation and report was presented at the 2nd International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology in Design and Communication (Velders et al., 2007).

Though the course is designed and carried out in an (hopefully) attractive way, the main question remains: What is the impact of new course characteristics to students' motivation, learning, and interaction between each other?

### *Methodology*

To answer the effects of the innovative course, three questionnaires were applied. Inter-learning inventory was designed to measure learning and interaction factors. The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) (Ryan, 1982 in McAuley et al., 1989) evaluated students' motivation, and a CoP inventory was developed to identify course characteristics. All the questionnaires applied the same gradation scale (1-5) where 5 meant strong agreement and 1 strong disagreement. There were 20 respondents in the research. For statistical analysis, Pearson correlation (2-tailed significance) was applied. Four dimensions of motivation were

measured: interest-enjoyment, perceived competence, effort-importance, and tension-pressure (McAuley et al., 1989). The CoP components evaluated were strategy, structure, culture, personnel, management, and systems of the course.

## Results

Results have indicated that course characteristics have significant impact on all three variables: learning, motivation, and interaction between students. The strongest relationships were between the course characteristics and learning (0.704) and the course characteristics and interaction (0.685). The relationship between motivation and the course was statistically significant but not that strong (0.489). An interesting finding is that learning is related to motivation (0.653) and interaction between students (0.535).

As motivation consists of different components, it was also interesting to indicate what components are most influenced by the characteristics of the course. Results show that students' perceived competence level (0.725) can be most influenced by the course characteristics, while students' interest in the course depends also on the course characteristics (0.608). On the other hand, there was no significant relationship found between the course characteristics and students' effort put in the course. Surprisingly, tension and the course characteristics were insignificantly, but negatively, related (-0.398).

As the course is characterized by six components, it was important to evaluate which components are the best predictors of students' learning, motivation, and interaction. However, the following course characteristics reduce the tension-pressure factor, and it is not known if a student can always be motivated without external pressure. Results have shown that systems and strategy components had strongest relations with those three variables.

The conclusion of this research points out that the characteristics of the course have positive influence on students' learning, interaction, and motivation. That is why scholars and educators should be more conscious and experimental with the study material and educational approach. However, to support and expand conclusions, further research and a larger amount of respondents are needed.

# Overall Conclusion and Discussion

The course Visual Literacy and Visual Communication for Global Education was delivered during only three months. This placed quite a high workload on the students, also, because interaction between students from different locations is time-consuming. The cohort began with 50 participants, but 10 left because they had subscribed to other courses, as well. The first task, an individual literature research, was a heavy task for the Saxion students, but with the second task, the practical experiment, they could show their skills. The intense tutoring was motivating, as was the interaction. The cooperation between Asian and European students was good and made some statements relative. When 40 individual students are doing research in the field of visual literacy, it shows that there is no standard terminology and some authors have deviant visions.

This paper presents our view on a basic theoretical framework for visual communication and we described a case in which we developed an educational strategy to develop knowledge, insights, and competences in visual communication. Both are applied and further developed in the next 'versions' of the course. We think that this practical approach, based on the design and implementation of courses in this area, helps us to make appropriate choices between relevant theories, models and constructs and helps us to continually rethink the significance of these choices for the practice of visual communication.

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# Issues in Information and Media Literacy:

## Volume 1 - Criticism, History and Policy

This book is the first of a two volume series charting the dynamic and fast expanding field of information and media literacy. As the chapters in this and the accompanying volume show, information and media literacy present new and demanding challenges to policy makers, education managers, teachers and educational practitioners and perhaps above all students.

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This broad ranging book will be of interest to practitioners in the fields of information and media literacy, to academics who study the fields and to managers and those responsible for the administration and development of programmes.

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