



May 2002

In this month's bulletin:

**TV-Turn-off Week II Media Unlimited II Pop Culture  
Maureen Baron II Len Masterman  
AML Workshops**

---

## TV-Turn-off Week



Now that thousands of people (an estimated 6.4 million) have undergone at the end of April their one week of TV abstinence on behalf of TV-Turn-off Week, we should carefully scrutinize this much publicized activity supported by 73 national organizations. There are dozens of reports on the subject (it is a very trendy topic for free lance journalists) ranging from people in agony in having to go cold turkey – and many more who find that foregoing TV watching frees them to read, take walks and gain a new perspective on their stress-filled lives. Pam Steager, writing about the benefits for the activity in the Providence Phoenix, exhorts us to "TURN OFF, TUNE OUT, DROP IN."

(Begin this assignment with a visit to the Web site for the TV -Turn-off week Network:  
[www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org).)

- How convincing is the TV-turn off rationale? What do you think is the role played by references to studies on violence and obesity, and their connection with TV watching, in the TV-turn off philosophy?
- What did people participating in this experiment learn about the impact of television on their lives?
- In the context of the family, what changed in terms of the typical family dynamics, e.g. sharing of day to day happenings, playing games together?
- What, in your opinion, are biggest limitations and the biggest advantages of this exercise?
- To what extent would it be better to learn how to watch television critically, looking at the medium in terms of pleasure and power, as opposed to turning it off? In other words, isn't this what the goal of media literacy is all about?



- Do you agree with Umberto Eco's observation "A democratic civilization will save itself only if it makes the language of the image into a stimulus for critical reflection, not an invitation to hypnosis."
- According to The TV-Turn-off Network, students watched less television, read more, participated in more screen-free activities than usual, and were more likely to borrow, purchase or receive a book. Is this true for those you interviewed?
- Culture critics assert that television is closely linked with our consumer culture in which 'television proposes and the mall disposes.' Do you think that watching less TV might help to reduce our love affair with consumerism? Why or why not?
- What changes will your interviewees make in their television viewing habits? How convincing are their resolutions?
- What impact on your own TV viewing habits did this assignment create?

---

## Media Unlimited: What's your navigational style?

***Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives***  
 Todd Gitlin. Metropolitan Books, 2001, 244 pages.

"How fast can montage go without leaving perception behind? How much shorter than seven seconds can a sound bite shrink? How much quicker can Internet access get? How much multitasking, how many advances in Palm Piloty can customers bear?"

*Media Unlimited* (p. 115)



The above is a typical paragraph from *Media Unlimited* by the distinguished media critic Todd Gitlin. (His books include *Prime Time* and *The Whole World is Watching*.) A great phrase-maker, he calls this phenomenon "The tyranny of urgency," an apt summation of the assault we experience from our hyperkinetic media environment.

In the first chapter, "Supersaturation, or, The Media Torrent and Disposable Feeling," Gitlin amasses an impressive quantity of anecdotes, images and raw data to show that "The Buzz of the inconsequential is the media's essence." He pens some dazzling descriptors to capture the impact of all these images.

Here are a few examples:

Iconic plenitude is the contemporary condition,  
and it is taken for granted.

What drives modern civilization is not speed itself  
but the dialectic of speed and slowness.

The desire to be branded was not simply manufactured from on high. In an era of ever-renewed selfreinvention when religion and trade fail to provide deep identities, a brand can be a declaration, like a preprinted greeting card.



Generally, the author provides us with dozens of perceptive nuggets of analysis. Where he sometimes fails is that his many telling examples pass us by without the careful examination they deserve. Gitlin's conclusion – "Under the Sign of Mickey Mouse" – says it all, for it examines the globalization of American popular culture and considers the elements that have made it so appealing and therefore so commercially successful.

While Gitlin is an informed academic, he has written a book in which the ideas are easy to grasp and instantly applicable. In this regard, he joins a short list of skilled media writers such as Neil Postman and Douglas Rushkoff who popularize ideas about mass media and popular culture.

The penultimate chapter in the book, "Styles of Navigation and political Sideshows," could serve as a stimulating exercise for students and teachers alike to examine the different ways we respond to media and popular culture. Audience theory would help teachers make these observations especially meaningful: How do you cope with the media torrent? What is your navigational style(s)?

Here is my edited version of the navigational styles which Todd Gitlin outlines in greater depth in *Media Unlimited*. These techniques and attitudes enable us to cope with the torrent of sounds and images.

**N.B.** Gitlin warns us these are loose categories that often overlap, and that we shift our categories for many reasons. For example, one moment we may be an ironist in our attitude to trash TV, the next we may be a fan of televised football games or WWF event, the next a culture jammer changing the content of an exploitative ad etc.

### **Navigational Styles Exercise**

- Choose the categories that seem to suit your attitudes regarding television and explain your choice.
- Apply some or all of the categories below to a range of television content: drama, sitcoms, news, Reality TV. Use the categories as a way of clarifying your own relationship to the media – especially television. What categories best described your navigational styles?
- What did you learn about your self and others through this exercise?

**The Fan** Your style is emotional and visceral, hunting for the pleasure of recognition. You are often in touch with other fans, and use the media stars as markers of distinction, e.g. loving Britney Spears or boy bands or indulging in karaoke.

**The Content Critic** You are always aware of bias, seeing the many inequities, e.g. gender and race. You try to keep a semi-detached relationship to media content. You are always seeking transparency and the high moral ground in media coverage.

**The Paranoid** Here criticism shades into paranoia. You accuse television – the idiot box – of making us vegg out, turning us into couch potatoes. You are inclined to believe the validity of subliminal advertising (sexual messages embedded in the ice cubes of your drink, for example). You are concerned about sinister conspiracies – government/CIA – like those played out in "The X-files."

**The Exhibitionist** You like to exhibit yourself and get excited in seeing yourself as a member of a television audience a la Andy Warhol's 15 minutes of fame. The screen flatters you with programs like *Survivor*, in which recruits are hurled into concocted situations. You are interested in the backstage lives of Big Names.

**The Ironist** Your post modern knowingness permits you a good conscience, a sense of superiority because – let's face it – our media spectacles are all so phony. You love to trash the pop icons-of-the-week. Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* was "oh so hip," wink, wink, nod, nod (splattered



brains in the back seat of a car, for example). Like David Letterman you critique the media world and treat your mediated guests very ironically.

**The Culture Jammer** Images have power but you believe you can change them and redistribute political and social power. The Jammer defaces billboards and makes comments about the images of oppressed groups. You probably like some of the hilarious spoofs of ads found in *Adbusters* Magazine (Joe Chemo and Calvin Swine). Computer hackers are also jammers who disrupt operations or dismantle sites of power.

**The Secessionist** You believe that the media are beyond reforming, not least because of economic interests. You ration the amount of TV you watch, abstain from cell phones, participate in TV-Turnoff Week. There are partial secessionists who participate very selectively in TV watching. The media industries try to narrow cast to such constantly changing niche markets.

**The Abolitionist** You believe that society must be forced to be free, that we are "amusing ourselves to death" (Neil Postman) and are scornful of our consumer society. Committed abolitionists are found among the young anarchists bands who roam the U.S. and Europe, disdainful of authority. Any sense of wholeness and freedom can only return by undoing the massive division of labour.

---

## Media Clips



## New Pop Culture Web Sites: Something For Everyone

**Popcult Magazine**  
[www.popcultmag.com](http://www.popcultmag.com)

This one is a wild and wacky look primarily at fads, or an in-depth look at things like sugar saturated breakfast cereals. There is the Web site of the week, and interviews with someone who makes plastic owls. You get the picture. Loads of kitsch, fun and trivia. Readers are invited to post their reviews.



## Pop Matters

www.popmatters.com



This is an impressive Web site written by people with solid credentials in journalism, fiction writing, music production, as well as some academics who want to reach a large audience of people who enjoy in-depth, but not stuffy, analysis of pop culture. What I liked about both these sites is that they are updated every week.

### Youth, Popular Culture, and Everyday Life

Reported by Sarah Hildebrand, Toronto



The weekend of Feb. 8-10, Bowling Green State University played host to an international, interdisciplinary conference on "Youth, Popular Culture and Everyday Life."

Located in Bowling Green, Ohio (just south of Toledo), BGSU offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Popular Culture, and is home to extensive popular culture resources including the Popular Culture Library ([www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/pcl/pcl.html](http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/pcl/pcl.html)), the Music Library and Sound Recording Archives ([www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/music/music.html](http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/music/music.html)), and the Center for Popular Culture Studies ([www.bgsu.edu/departments/popc/center.html](http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/popc/center.html)).

The conference, organized by Dr. Joe Austin and the members of the Youth Cultures Research Cluster, brought together an array of interdisciplinary scholars from the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Turkey. Together, they sought to explore "the multiple ways in which popular culture and everyday practices have influenced youth, children, and the teenager as social categories, the ways in which young people have responded to these influences, and how the complex interactions between them have varied over time, location, and social identity." Panel presentations addressed a variety of related subjects, including media education and activism, the criminalization of youth, *Pokemon*, *Sesame Street*, rock music and hip hop, fans and groupies, the construction of categories such as "teen" and "tween," riot grrls, nerds, and the "slacker" stereotyping of Generation X.

One highlight was the much anticipated keynote address by Dr. Janice Radway. Well known for her seminal work on women who read romance novels (*Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, 1984, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), Dr. Radway presented her new research in progress on "Girls, Zines, and the Miscellaneous Production of Subjectivity in an Age of Unceasing Circulation." Other notable presentations included the plenary address by Dr. Carol Seigel on "goth" youth cultures and abstinence rhetoric, as well as a panel of British scholars revisiting the influential subcultural acts theory of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).

Plans are in the works for the publication of an anthology of conference papers – watch this space for further details or contact Dr. Joe Austin at [jaustin@bqnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:jaustin@bqnet.bgsu.edu).



## **Maureen Baron: Quebec's Media Border Crosser**



I have met only a handful of media educators who can be said to be effective border crossers in the realm of education: accommodating the needs of media literacy teachers, librarians, communication arts specialists and cyberfolk engaged in digital media. Welcome Maureen Baron, the multi-media consultant for the English Montreal School Board. Warm, friendly and gracious, she is the ideal person to bring these disparate groups together. A sociology grad from Concordia plus an MA in educational technology, Maureen has been a consultant with the CBC, The National Film Board, served as an elementary school teacher and now acts as a consultant to her school board, where she works in both English and French.

She has made numerous presentations at workshops and conferences and is chairing a major conference for AMTEC (Association for Media Technology in Canada) to be held in Montreal in 2003. She is the co-founder of AMEQ, the Association for Media Educators in Quebec.

### **B.D. How did you get started in media literacy?**

**M.B.** I was working at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in the Educational Marketing Department when they launched the series, "Media and Society." Part of my job at the NFB was to link such productions with the provincial curricula and to create workshops for teachers on how to use NFB productions in the classroom. When "Media and Society" came out I had to learn all about media literacy. I started to learn about it and I was hooked.

### **B.D. I am envious of your Quebec experience, especially working in the French language and plugging into both English and Quebecois culture. Can you talk about the benefits, personally and educationally, of working in this milieu?**

**M.B.** To work in more than one language is an enriching experience. It is like opening two doors to a room, seeing and hopefully appreciating two perspectives. It is another opportunity to learn about, and participate in, another culture. This is always interesting. It allows me to increase my network of professional and social contacts. This is always an advantage when looking for sources of information, resources to acquire or use, and help in projects or work.

### **B.D. To what extent does AMEQ successfully bring English and French groups together?**

**M.B.** AMEQ maintains contact with a Francophone group and individuals in the field. Because of local linguistic politics, AMEQ does not run bilingual programs. However, AMEQ and the Francophone group share information and let the memberships know about planned programs.

### **B.D. What are the chief accomplishments of AMEQ?**

**M.B.** Currently Quebec is undergoing an enormous curriculum reform and media literacy is a significant element in the new curriculum. The new curriculum is divided into subject domains – the traditional subjects of Languages, Mathematics, Sciences etc.; and Life Long Learning areas of study, one of which is media literacy. The subject domains and the areas of life long learning are compulsory content areas of the curriculum. AMEQ members have been consulted on the curriculum reform pertaining to Media Literacy. Today, AMEQ members are working as part of the Media literacy curriculum writing teams at the Quebec Ministry of Education.

### **B.D. As a member of CAMEO (the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations) how do you see this organization helping to bring about national initiatives?**

**M.B.** Individual provincial groups function by the grace of volunteers who are already busy people. Often, they do not have the time to network and organize outside of their province and some are even having trouble finding the time to do what they would like to do inside their province. A national organization like CAMEO can facilitate the sharing of information and



resources between provincial groups, can help organize national events such as meetings or virtual or face-to-face conferences, and can help ferret out and disseminate information emanating from the federal government such as the availability of grants or other financial programs, partnership programs, or opportunities for publication.

**B.D. Resource teachers and their organizations – national and provincial – talk about information literacy. How can media literacy best connect with these groups?**

**M.B.** Information literacy refers to the ability to understand that information is created and/or disseminated by someone for a specific purpose. Therefore, it must be evaluated for credibility, validity and reliability and not just accepted – no matter who, or what, is the source. In other words, not everything that one reads, hears or sees is true. Media literacy teaches the same thing – media constructs reality. Information literacy concentrates on strategies to validate the text while Media literacy concentrates on an expanded level of comprehension and creation of the text.

**B.D. Some teachers in the media community within our schools teach Communication Arts. This includes video production, photography, digital animation, experimental film and video. Normally, they do little critical media literacy analysis. How would you assess their contribution to curriculum?**

**M.B.** In my school board I have a few teachers who teach a Communication Arts course. While this tends to be a production process based course, the teachers do some media literacy work as well. One teacher is Frank Tiseo, at Laurier Macdonald High School, who has won the Magic Lantern Award for Media literacy Education because of his unstinting practice of combining the media construction process with the teaching of Media literacy principles. Lee Rother, of Lake of Two Mountains High School – and also a Magic Lantern Award winner for Media literacy Education – teaches both construction and deconstruction within his courses. However, this Communication Arts course is an optional course and there are very few schools that actually teach it.

Traditionally, media literacy is taught within the English Language Arts course or, in Quebec, specific courses called Moral Education or Personal and Social Education. These courses cover all sorts of topics, from Sex Education to Consumer Education to ethical topics like capital punishment. Many teachers of these courses include such media literacy topics as advertising, gender presentation, bias and stereotyping. Within these courses it has been quite easy to make the media literacy connections. This past year the Moral Education consultant and I prepared and delivered a full day workshop to 25 high school Moral Education teachers on bias, the impact of stereotyping and ideology reflected in editorial cartoons. It was very successful because the teachers immediately saw the connections between the media literacy principles, the elements of social justice and the relevance of the topic to their students' daily life (post September 11, 2001). Ultimately, they saw the need for the understanding these media literacy principles as a life long skill.

**B.D. What are the biggest challenges you face with this new curriculum?**

**M.B.** The challenge in the coming years stems from the implementation of the new Quebec curriculum reform, where media literacy or media education is now a compulsory "life long learning" topic that must be covered across the curriculum – from pre-school to the last year of high school. I have been involved in some professional development for elementary school teachers on media literacy and we hope to do a lot more in the coming years. The content of the high school curriculum in media literacy is being written now and once it is available, we will deliver professional development to the teachers.

I will be a part of a team of consultants from Pedagogical Services in my school board who will collaborate to plan and deliver these professional development sessions. The team of consultants will come from all of the traditional school subjects and so we will model the cross curriculum integration of media literacy. This will be an even greater challenge because we will have to do



this in English and French. While the media literacy concepts are the same in both languages, the resources and pop culture references will be different.

---

## Recommended Resources

### **Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media literacy in the English Classroom**

Ellen Krueger & Mary T. Christel. Heinemann, 2001, 170 pages.

The two authors of this book are practising teachers. Like any good teachers, they bring plenty of enthusiasm to their work and provide a treasure trove of practical classroom-tested ideas. Teachers will be grateful for the many references to approaches that worked well with their students or were problematic. The book is primarily about film in the classroom (the title, unfortunately, does not convey this fact), although there are some short sections on television, cartoons, photographs and advertising.



Media in the English classroom is the context for their pedagogy and curriculum. In the English speaking world, it still seems largely true that the English department plays host to the slowly evolving discipline called media literacy. This is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, media can be a great handmaiden to teaching literature – think of the compatible arrangements in reinforcing ideas about symbolism, narrative, structure and literary themes. But as Masterman pointed out (see the review of his book *Down Cemetery Road*), what is left out can be as important as what is included. What we are lacking here are "contexts to the texts," specifically areas such as the shaping role played by the media industries and economic concerns and the construction of ideology and consciousness. The richness that could occur through submitting texts to these key aspects is lost. Instead, critical viewing is reduced to questions around camerawork, realism, plot, characterization, visual and verbal clues (p.105). Having said this, I would add that the majority of media literacy projects in the United States tend to take the same approach.

On the positive side, Cristel and Krueger offer some outstanding multi-media approaches, and film literature comparisons – e.g. *King Lear* and *The Dresser*. There are short study guides to films like *Edward Scissorhands* and *Reversal of Fortune* and a sample film study syllabus. There are well-developed models for writing about film and general discussion activities. Compiling their best lessons and suggesting innumerable topics for media teachers to explore, Christel and Krueger have given us much to admire.



### **Down Cemetery Road: Why the BFI's Proposals for Moving Image Education are No Good**

Len Masterman, 2002, 106 pages.

In the last thirty years, Media education has undergone innumerable debates. From protectionism to celebration, from discrimination to disdain (yes, I made that last one up) media teachers have flirted with the many fads of education and the postmodern subject. Media education is indeed a site of struggle; it is by nature full of contradictions and rife with debate.

UK media educator Len Masterman has long been at the forefront of the movement as an author, teacher, and consultant to UNESCO. Masterman has written extensively about some of these



divisions and pedagogical experiments. In the ground breaking *Teaching The Media* (1985), he provided an historical overview of the contending rationales for studying the media and, in the process, showed the limitations of dubious pedagogies. For example, the inoculation approach to teaching the subject was predicated on the belief that the media are inherently harmful, that media education was about teaching 'against the media.' That such an approach, largely discredited elsewhere in the English speaking world, has some loyal followers (I hope it is not a majority) in the United States, is a cause for concern and reveals a reluctance to learn some hard earned lessons.

Compared with North America, the UK is, along with Australia, a world leader in media education. Central to its development in the last twenty years in the UK is the important role played by the British Film Institute (BFI) which has provided extensive teaching materials, newsletters and sponsored seminars and institutes for classroom teachers. A superficial overview of the BFI education resources would indicate that they have helped to fill a critical gap in an area where few teachers have any formal training. So what does Masterman's new book – with its killer title *Down Cemetery Road: Why the BFI's Proposals for Moving Image Education are No Good* – have to do with anything except some seemingly petty, internecine warfare in the UK? And why should the rest of us beyond the UK even care? Let's look briefly at Masterman's main arguments.

While acknowledging the valuable role played by many members of the BFI down through the years, it is primarily the media education documents they have created, along with speeches and newsletters from leaders such as Cary Bazalgette (in her role as head of Education) that Masterman interrogates. In essence, Masterman concludes, the BFI has strategically misdirected the media education movement. Here are some examples:

- The BFI provided a limited range of territory for the media studies classroom through privileging film and only paying token attention to television, which is central in the lives of young people. Documents such as "Moving Images in the Classroom" – while attractive to beginning teachers – have diffused the study of media through cross-curricular initiatives aimed at injecting small amounts of media into subjects like English, History, Geography, Science and Art.
- The absence, for the most part, of important contexts such as ideology, economics, social history, and knowledge of industry practices means that media studies is in danger of being sanitized and depoliticized, its richness ultimately lost. These elements, asserts Masterman, "gave to the study of media its meaning and depth." (p. 33) Because it fell on English departments to host media studies, it was easy to integrate compatible English-oriented topics such as genre, symbolism and characterization – but at a price. Masterman had already warned us in 1985: "In their exclusive concentration on media texts, English teachers fatally neglected the contexts within which those texts were produced, distributed and consumed. They were able to give little account of the media as consciousness industries." Masterman then cynically speculates that the BFI's documents were designed to make their work politically acceptable and worthy of BFI grants.
- The BFI criticized UK media education practices claiming they "lacked coherence" and were "patchy and uneven." Masterman refutes these assertions and claims that the recent "Moving Images in the Classroom" guide was itself under-theorized (I would add, however, that it is very useful in terms of one key aspect of film: the teaching of codes and conventions). The moving images curriculum is organized by five key stages of cineliteracy. Here is Masterman's succinct response to this schemata: "The component parts do not correspond to any cognitive, psychological, social or any other verifiable stages of development" (p. 44).
- The chief antagonist in this diatribe is Cary Bazalgette. While the critique of her work may sometimes appear very personal, Masterman seems able to support his case with concrete evidence from curriculum documents which she coordinated, speeches she gave to media education groups, and newsletters which were widely disseminated. The one obvious limitation to Masterman's account is that we still need Bazalgette and the BFI's official response to this monograph, especially since Masterman charges that we are often unsure if



Bazalgette is speaking personally or officially for the BFI. (It will be interesting to follow the critical response in the UK.)

- Acknowledging the successful infrastructures for media education created by Canada, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand, Masterman concludes: "My only belief is that the future of media education will only be safe in the hands of media teachers themselves." There are echoes throughout this monograph of the issues and debates taking place in North America and elsewhere. This is a cautionary tale and Len Masterman has the courage to tell it. Readers will draw their own lessons from this severe indictment of the BFI, an institution which nonetheless has made a significant contribution to the study of film and culture.

In North America, Masterman's monograph is available for approximately \$20.00 from Theatre Books  
11 Saint Thomas St.,  
Toronto ON, M5S 2B7  
E-mail: [action@theatrebooks.com](mailto:action@theatrebooks.com)

You can order through a toll free number if you live in North America: 1-800-361-3414, or you can write Len Masterman at:  
Alpha Media  
Upper Heath Cottage  
90 Downham Road South  
Heswall, Wirral, UK. CH 60 5SQ.

---

### Call for Essays

Original essays are invited for a collection tentatively entitled "Media Literacy, Media Democracy: The Audience in the Information Age." The reader will be organized around several orienting questions: What is media literacy? What does it mean to be media literate? Why is media literacy important? What is the impact of the mass media? What are the political potentials of new media? Ideally this collection will be suitable for use at both undergraduate and graduate levels in a number of disciplines, including media studies, cultural studies, gender studies, etc.

Possible submissions may address the above questions, but may also include such subjects as: analyses of media education projects and models; media criticism; the role and responsibility of educators, the media, parents, and the state; gender and media impact; youth and media impact; and issues of "new" and "hyper-" media. Any number of methodological approaches are appropriate and not limited to: Sociology, Textual Analysis, Anthropology, Culture Studies, Historical Analysis, Psychology, Folklore, etc. Please submit 2-page proposals or completed manuscripts (MLA style, 15-25 pages in length) to:

Reconstruction Reader Submissions  
104 East Hall  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226  
[shildebrandt@reconstruction.ws](mailto:shildebrandt@reconstruction.ws)

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at the above e-mail addresses. The deadline for submission of completed papers is August 16th, 2002. This collection co-edited by Sarah Hildebrandt and R. Stewart Varner.



## Upcoming Events

### Media Education Workshops for Media Educators: From Beginners to Advanced



Media education has been part of the Ontario school curriculum for over 30 years and the Association for Media literacy has played an essential role in sustaining this initiative. The following are the workshops we are prepared to offer Ontario teachers this year. Most of the ideas and resources presented here would be relevant to media educators outside of Ontario. I hope you find the list useful.

Presenters include: Carol Arcus Neil Andersen Derek Boles Barry Duncan Ian Esquivel Liz Flynn Wayne McNanney John Pungente Dede Sinclair Sylvie Webb Carolyn Wilson Chris Worsnop

#### Topics for media education workshops:

(You may want to include condensed and combined versions of these topics in our presentation. In order to address your requirements, we are prepared to work with a variety of components suited to the special needs of your teachers.)

#### Introduction to Media Education: Survival Skills for the New Millennium

Consider this an opportunity to experience an overview of media education. Content would include: formulating a rationale for media education; background and application of the key concepts of media in the classroom; making the case for the importance of media production; and working with teachable media moments to enhance exemplary practices and to develop an appropriate critical pedagogy. Finally, the workshop will address essential support resources, varieties of course organization and dealing with concerns of copyright.

#### Solutions to Teaching the Media Strand: How to make it both practical and challenging

While it is easy to do some predictable fill-in-the-time media activities to address the media strand, we believe it is of paramount importance to find innovative ways of working with today's teachable media moments. This workshop is designed to show teachers how to develop a variety of short, practical media units following MET expectations and to use the key concepts of media analysis. Throughout this workshop, we will make the important case for a. demonstrating that the media strand will effectively address the expectations for the non-media strands and b. that media studies will facilitate the integration of key elements within English courses such as film-literature comparisons, varieties of narration and the structural principles of myth.

#### Teaching the Media Studies course

With only one stand-alone credit available, keen media teachers will aspire to consider this course to be the crown jewel in their teaching assignments. Items to be considered include: integrating media production; varieties of course organization and background knowledge for teaching several in-depth units such as those noted in our list of topics. There are some excellent new resources that will greatly enhance this course. Finally, part of this workshop will be devoted to assessing some current senior media studies courses used in Ontario high schools.



### **Media and the Elementary school**

This workshop we will cover many of the topics described in the workshop "Introduction to Media Education." These include key concepts of media, the role of production, working with teachable media moments, and using appropriate resources. Special consideration will be given to the current marketing practices to attract the "tween audience" and through the success of media phenomena such as Pokemon, video games, the Harry Potter books and the colossal smash hit, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Key insights will be taken from an invaluable new book, Honey, We lost the Kids: Re-thinking Childhood in the Multimedia Age by Kathleen McDonnell, a Toronto children's writer and popular culture critic.

### **Teen Identity and Marketing: The Construction of Cool**

Using material to be published by Harcourt-Canada, this unit will look at the world of logos and branding and the role of cool hunters, public relations agencies and spin doctors in influencing public opinion and, more specifically, teen consumption. Finally, we will offer some empowering opportunities for student resistance to the global trends associated with corporatization. Both global and yet personal in outlook, this is a compelling, socially relevant topic for investigation.

### **Teaching the Ontario Media Expectations**

Chris Worsnop will conduct a teacher workshop focused on the media study expectations at any grade level, or at any two or three adjacent grade levels. The workshop will cover the key concepts of media education and will go on to link the key concepts and grade-relevant materials to the expectations. The final part of the workshop will focus on appropriate assessment. (2 hrs)

### **Media and Global Studies**

From the pervasive Disney icons and the impact of transnational media corporations to the media coverage of the 9/11 crisis, today's critical social issues pervade our everyday lives. Such concerns center around notions of justice, human rights, ideology, environmental concerns, and in critiquing the exploitation of workers in Asian sweat shops. How can we assess the media coverage of these events? How can we best handle the controversies when our students may wish to become activists? Other areas in media and global studies include images of the Third World, representations of nature, and images of tourism.

### **Media and the New World order in the wake of 9/11**

The media coverage of September 11 and the war in Afghanistan have presented teachers with amazing opportunities to apply the key concepts of media and to investigate the tools and impact of propaganda through demonization, racism and fear mongering – both on television and in current journalism. In addition, 9/11 has made English and media teachers critique the use of false dichotomies of language and the adoption of various discourses of power and patriotism. Central to the various sites of social and political struggle is the response of the entertainment industries in a time of crisis. Presenters: Barry Duncan and Carolyn Wilson

### **Critical Thinking in Media Education**

Chris Worsnop will conduct a practical workshop to show how critical thinking can be observed, encouraged and taught as a part of media studies. He will use materials from his own studies conducted jointly with Prof. Alexander Fedorov of the Taganrog Pedagogical Institute in South Russia. (90 min)

### **Education for a Digital world: Developing new critical literacies and new curriculum**

Educators acknowledge that we are living in an information and knowledge society in which new and converging technologies are impacting on schools, library resource centres, the work place and our homes. What is currently lacking is the critical thinking and combined media and information literacies which will allow us to understand the social, political and commercial



implications of these new technologies. This presentation will make the case for implementing a spectrum of skills and cross-disciplinary insights. The Internet is itself a most intriguing medium for study. At the same time, it can be used to support all the other media in a variety of ways. Whether exploring the media through the Internet, at newspaper, radio, or TV sites, or examining the Internet itself, this workshop will expand your horizons. Presenters; Carol Arcus and Neil Andersen

### **Assessing Media Work Across the Curriculum**

Chris Worsnop will conduct a workshop showing how students can use all media formats (e.g. sound, video, Web pages, music, editorial etc.) to report on their learning in all subject areas. He will go on to offer teachers suitable ways of assessing sample student media products using materials from his own publication: *Assessing Media Work: Authentic Assessment in Media Education*. (2 hrs)

### **Other Media Education Topics**

The following are additional media education topics which can be developed into full in-depth workshops or be used as components in our more generic, introductory workshops. These areas include: media and gender; media and race; media and violence; media and Canadian identity; and corporate sponsorship in education.

---

## **2002 Summer Institutes and University Courses**

**For Information about upcoming Summer Institutes  
see the April 2002 edition of "Barry's Bulletin"**

---

## **The Final Word**

It's been an interesting year for media educators. Highlights of "Barry's Bulletin," September to May include:

- The world post-Sept 11
- The values and ideology of the Superbowl telecast
- Canada and the winter Olympics and Canadians elusive search for identity through the media
- Japanese media education and Japanese popular culture
- Media education and the challenge of cultural appropriation
- Reviews of some important new books for media education
- Reports on media education from around the world, from Russia to New Zealand
- Interviews with leading media educators
- Reports on seminars and conferences and announcements of forthcoming media institutes and special events

I want to thank everyone for your continued support. I am grateful that some of my material has been reprinted in several journals, including *Australian Screen Education*, *Telemedium* from Madison, Wisconsin and *Our Schools, Ourselves* – a radical perspective on Canadian education.

Finally, I appreciate the advice and the creative skills of Jane Tallim in making the Bulletin so appealing.

"Barry's Bulletin" will resume in September. Take good media care of yourself. Feedback is



welcome! You can e-mail me at: [baduncan@interlog.com](mailto:baduncan@interlog.com)

---

Barry Duncan is an award-winning teacher, author, consultant and founder and past president of the Ontario-based Association for Media Literacy. Co-author of the best selling text book, *Mass Media and Popular Culture*, he has presented workshops and keynote addresses to thousands of teachers in Canada and around the world. You can contact Barry at [baduncan@interlog.com](mailto:baduncan@interlog.com).

