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**STUDENT RESPONSES TO
A GRADE 11 MEDIA LITERACY UNIT**

by

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**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Education
Lakehead University**

**In partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Education degree**

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Abstract

This study, employing both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques, investigated senior high school students responses to a specific media literacy unit: THE NEWS. Students from the same school were observed in a natural classroom setting. Data were collected from the daily observation of students, class assignments and activities, student journal entries, and the administration of a questionnaire on three separate occasions.

The data analyses showed that many factors influence students' responses. There was a noticeable difference in the way female and male students responded to media discussions, written assignments, and oral presentations. Although variations also were noted in gender preference of media and the length of time girls and boys spent enjoying a particular medium, adolescents reported audio visual and audio as their first choices over print media. This preference reflects the portability of these media for the adolescent. It also suggests that media literacy courses need to include multi-media instruction.

How students apply their media literacy to real-life situations is an area that this study examined only through student reports. More exploratory research in the area of application is recommended. The questionnaire responses

suggest that the influence of the class assignments and activities on the students' existing media concepts was short term. Change takes time.

Much can be discovered about media literacy instruction through the observation of media students. Educators need to realize that media literacy is an integral part of today's curriculum that prepares students for the future.

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Dedication

To my mom and dad,

Florence and Raymond T. Greer

for their warm hearts and gentle spirits

and

To Kristy, Rebecca and John

for their love and support

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Association for Media Literacy, which was formed in 1978, worked for nearly a decade to convince the Ontario Ministry of Education of the importance of media education. Since that time, media education has experienced many changes. Its perspective has evolved from an anti-media instruction, that targeted media as dangerous because of its negative influence on language and culture, to a perspective that focused on screen education with emphasis on the use of audio-visual equipment and film-making, to a perspective that focused on mass media and the deconstruction of media messages (Greer, 1991). By 1987, this latter perspective was adopted by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Media literacy became a component of Ontario schools' intermediate and senior divisions English curriculum "to give students the experience and skills they need to understand, enjoy, and evaluate presentations in a variety of media" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987, p.3).

This information though interesting is historical. More important today is educators' recognition that a student's evaluation of media messages has become a cultural phenomenon and

that the study of mass media and media constructions must be included in education. Students are active media users who spend more hours watching television than they do in school (Steed, 1993). Students must "tune in" and become critical active users of the media (Greer, 1991).

Students changing responses to the media are important and may provide educators with valuable information about students' media explorations and discoveries. To date, investigation of student responses to media literacy instruction is limited. The lack of such research creates a void in the literature and hinders educators' understanding of students' knowledge and skill. The Ontario Ministry Guidelines, 1987, declared that the study of media "should make students visually literate and conscious of their viewing habits [and] assist them in managing their own lives in what has popularly been called the information age"(p.19). To understand students' knowledge and skill, it may be necessary to ask the students themselves.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses of senior division students in a natural classroom situation by exploring and describing changes that occurred in their responses during a media unit.

Research Questions

Four questions guided this study:

1. What changes occur in students' responses to the media as the result of a specific media literacy unit?
2. What differences does gender make in the students' responses?
3. What difference does medium make in the students' responses?
4. How do students apply their media literacy to real-life situations?

Limitations

A major limitation of this study is the number of students that registered for the course and who either did not show up or dropped the course. Originally, fifty-five students' names appeared on the class list. Of these, seven students never attended class, and ten students dropped the course. By the time the NEWS UNIT for this study was introduced, the six case study students had to be chosen from a group of thirty-eight students rather than the original fifty-five students.

Delimitations

The study was further delimited by the researcher/teacher's deliberate decision to present the NEWS UNIT at the end of the media program. The NEWS UNIT was preceded by three other media units. The first unit, HISTORY OF THE MEDIA & ADVERTISING, introduced the students to mass media and the

concept of media construction. The second unit, CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, explored the history of children's literature and its correlation with the stages of advertising. The third unit, LOCAL MEDIA & INDEPENDENT STUDY, provided an opportunity for students to promote

1) a school activity, 2) a local landmark or 3) a children's literature using the positive images and messages that had been discussed in the previous units. By the beginning of the fourth unit, the students also had begun an independent study to research a particular aspect of a media that interested them.

Consequently, the NEWS UNIT was offered at a time when the students were experienced in media construction and deconstruction. They had worked over four months in partnership and group situations. They understood that close attention to timeline was critical. They had become quite sophisticated in their creation of positive image building and positive messages. They had explored mass media from a local, regional, national, and international perspective. Although the NEWS UNIT was an aspect of media that they had not explored, one may conclude that the students would accept that the NEWS was a media construction. A more detailed account of the course and study is presented in Chapter Three.

Definition of Terms

In this study, media literacy was a semestered course offered at the grade-eleven level. It was a two-credit course that encompassed English media, graphic design, and communication technology. Students studied the media from an historical perspective and a critical analysis of contemporary literature. Upon completion of the program, students earned a credit for English and a credit for Technological Study.

Key Terms

The following words are used to describe the media. They are defined here so that the reader of this study will understand their use in the context of the media literacy study. **code**- a system of signs, verbal, visual, or aural used to convey meaning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, p.4).

Communication Technology- this refers to a course which introduced students to the technological world of electronic communications (television recording, editing and production, lighting and video graphics) ("Alpha" High School Calendar, 1995).

construction- in mass media a vehicle that conveys meaning; for example a completed television program, including the specific choices that have been made regarding editing, camera angles (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, p.4).

decode- another term for decode is,

deconstruct- to take apart and identify the elements (e.g. script, music, sound affects, camera angles) that are used to make the meaning that is conveyed in the construction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989 p.4).

English media (EMD)- the course which reinforced all communication skills developed in previous grades through an intensive study of media (print, radio, video, film, television, and other electronic communication) ("Alpha" High School Calendar, 1995).

Graphic Design-the course which introduced the retrieval, creation, and use of computer graphics, word processing, desktop publishing, photography and layout ("Alpha" High School Calendar, 1995).

media- all the different sources of information, various means of communicating which provide information or entertainment e.g. TV, books, magazines, movies, radio, newspapers (Lakehead District R.C. Separate School Board, 1988, p.100).

media literacy- an informed critical understanding of the mass media; involves an examination of the techniques, technologies and institutions that are involved in media production: the ability to analyze critically media messages, and a recognition of the roles that audiences play in making meaning from those messages (Shepherd, 1993, p.26).

Significance of Study

This study has significance for how educators, by listening to and recording students' responses, prepare students for the future. As students became critically aware of the media and developed their thinking skills "to decide rationally what to believe or do", this study observed and recorded the teacher teaching "inductively" and taking the role of "facilitator and co-learner" to describe how students "negotiate meaning" in the media curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, p.14-15).

Further significance of this study is illustrated in the students' developing ability to conceptualize media concepts. For example, as the media became more sophisticated, so did students' thinking skills. For this reason, the Ontario Ministry of Education adopted Jerome Bruner's spiral curriculum for media studies because the "spiral curriculum organized according to the interrelationship between or structure of basic ideas...developed and organized... in increasing depth and breadth" would complement the development of the students' cognitive growth (A.C. Ornstein and F.P. Hunkins, 1988, p.170).

Finally, this study has implications for the media literate student. Educators must encourage students to become pro-active and life-long learners of the media. This study will help educators access and understand students' needs for media education that extends beyond the classroom. This study, through

journals, questionnaires, daily observations, and the collection of related student, teacher, and school documents has provided insights from the students' point of view which educators can use in future media literacy programs.

Overview of the Research Report

This research report is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides the introduction and rationale for the study. Chapter Two presents a literature review that includes,

- a) Ontario Ministry and Board Guidelines
- b) Practical Approaches to Media Literacy
- c) Theoretical Foundations for Media Literacy.

Chapter Three outlines the research design methodology. Chapter Four reports the analyses and the results of the findings for the study. Chapter Five provides a summary as well as a conclusion and recommendation for future studies in media literacy.

Chapter Summary

Research shows a shift in the instruction of media literacy from one that has examined media as the manipulation of culture to one that empowers students by encouraging them to deconstruct media messages. Researchers continue to investigate the possibilities of media literacy instruction to ensure its

educational purpose in the curriculum. This chapter has examined the history and rationale for the teaching of media literacy. It has considered the evolution of media literacy instruction and the importance of media literacy in the education of students.

The study provides evidence from student responses that a media literacy program that analyzes popular culture is a critical life skill and must be included in the education of students. Through a descriptive research design which employs both qualitative and quantitative data gathering, this study illuminates the students' role in media literacy instruction and describes students' responses to a media literacy unit. The results provide information for classroom teachers and other educators who form policy and develop curricula.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERARY REVIEW

Introduction

While a search of the professional literature shows that researchers have considered the role of teachers and the use of media in high school English courses, few researchers have reported about secondary students themselves and their responses to media instruction. The result of two CD ROM computer assisted searches showed that few studies of media literacy for secondary students had been conducted. Sixty-two references were identified by using the following six descriptors: media literacy, visual literacy, media, literacy, media English and English media.

Twenty-six of these references examined teaching strategies and class instruction. For example, Emery (1987) followed the evolution of media from 1)an audio-visual instruction, to 2)a media literacy and language arts component, and finally to 3)instruction generally associated with the English curriculum. He addressed the need for media studies and was optimistic about its future, but reported that it was an underdeveloped part of the curriculum.

For twenty-five items, the research investigated adult literacy and the use of technology. For example, Hobbs (1988) examined how people from different cultural backgrounds interpret and use communication technology. This study focused on the users' experience and familiarity with a medium versus perceptual processes.

For three articles, the researchers reported the use of textbooks and media studies and eight explored the role of the student and the media. Of these eight references, four investigated the child and media literacy. For example, Roberts A. Braden (1990) concentrated on the visual associations that grade-five children made in their selection of books and the aesthetic value of technological instructional material. Three studies examined the learner but did not specify an age or level. For example, David Buckingham (1991) addressed the need to combine a study of media as popular culture with children's own "subcultural experiences", but did not specify an age. His study focused on the issue of academic learning (learning from books) versus active learning (learning by doing). Finally, Barbara Shapley (1991) investigated the high school student and media literacy, but concentrated on the role of the instructor to integrate media literacy into the curriculum. This study recognized the lack of integration of media and other school subjects in the United States school curriculum.

Two research reports were of particular interest to this present study. A study by Betsy Sue Barber (1985) from the

University of Connecticut examined technological changes (e.g. the use of audio-visual equipment in English instruction) and the English teacher. Barber was concerned with the appropriateness of today's curriculum in an age of increasing technological change. A doctoral dissertation by Charles Suhor (1981) explored English teaching and the profession's disregard for the hardware aspects of the media.

The results of the computer-assisted searches provided different interpretations of media-literacy instruction. They portrayed the historical evolution of media education by investigating media instruction as 1) the use of audio-visual equipment, 2) the analysis of film and film-making and 3) the interpretation of popular culture. The researchers concentrated on instruction in media literacy and teachers' competence in the integration of media literacy into the English curriculum. Even when studies addressed student needs such as the need for marketing techniques, deconstruction strategies and practices, application of media concepts, identification of values and beliefs presented in the media, and the need to take advertising seriously, the researchers focused primarily on how the teacher could meet these needs and did not consider the student responses to media-literacy instruction.

In contrast, the present study addresses the perceptions of students by describing student responses. To

explore student perceptions, this review of the literature includes reports from ministry and local curriculum guidelines, professional journals, and theoretical accounts. These are categorized and discussed as:

- 1) Ontario Ministry and Board Guidelines for Media Literacy
- 2) Practical Approaches to Media Literacy
- 3) Theoretical Foundations of Media Literacy.

Ontario Ministry and Board Guidelines for Media Literacy

To earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), students must complete successfully five compulsory English credits. The English Intermediate and Senior Divisions (grade 7-12) Curriculum Guideline (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987) outlines three curricular areas of instruction for English courses: language, literature, and media. Media is a mandatory part of the English studies.

In senior elementary grades (seven and eight), media was given ten percent of the language arts time. This choice could be spread over a two-year period or concentrated in either grade seven or grade eight. The 1987 English Curriculum Guideline states, "In secondary schools, media shall be included as a category of study for one third of scheduled classroom time in one mandatory English course at each of the Intermediate and Senior Division levels" (Ontario Ministry of

Education, 1987 p.9).

The ministry guideline further explains the importance of oral fluency through whole class and group activities and clarifies the earning of English credits "from a course with special emphasis" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987, p.9). The NEWS UNIT for this study addresses six of the ten course emphases proposed by the Ontario Ministry of Education for English and shows, as the Ministry recommends, that an active role must be assumed by the media student. These six emphases are:

1. media literacy, including a substantial amount of creative activity
2. oral language
3. an intensive study such as drama, poetry or film
4. technological studies
5. integration study of other disciplines such as history and science or other art forms, such as music and painting, related to literature.
6. a special theme or topic, such as satire, children's literature or the role of women in literature (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987, p.9).

The Ministry of Education encourages the study of media as an integral part of students' language development. The Ontario Ministry stipulates that the study of media

"should make students visually literate and conscious of their viewing habits without overwhelming them with technical language. Students should read and produce visual media as well as practise other language arts: speaking, listening, writing, dramatizing and reading print. In so doing, they are acquiring skills and knowledge that will assist them in managing their lives in what has popularly been called 'the information age' (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987, p.19).

The media literacy course for the Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board followed the ministry guidelines very closely, when it published a pilot draft for media studies in 1988 titled Media Literacy 1: Television. This draft provided invaluable resource material for this media-literacy study, particularly in such areas as student evaluation, glossary of media terms, and resource selection. Because the draft designates specific lessons for specific grade levels, it proved to be a valuable guide for the spiral curriculum recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Education in that the teacher/researcher for this media study could expand upon the areas of curriculum suggested in the draft and allow students in this study to explore areas of media literacy in greater depth and at a more sophisticated level than they had experienced in previous grades. The fact that Media Literacy 1: Television concentrated on a single medium was not a problem.

The Ministry of Education published a resource guide entitled Resource Guide: Media Literacy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). This guide clarified the role of the study of

media literacy in English and outlined teaching strategies and models for 1)television, 2)film, 3)radio, 4)popular music and rock video, 5)photography, 6)print, and 7)cross-media studies. This guide supplied a source of information for this study, and it affirmed the basis of this study's media instruction through the assertion that the ministry's intention was to "encourage young people to understand a world profoundly influenced by mass media" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, p.3). Again, it was important for the credibility of this study that the media-literacy curriculum closely follow the Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum directives and the teacher/researcher's own Board of Education curriculum guidelines so that students' responses would be described accurately. These documents became the core of this study's media-literacy curriculum as well as a irreplaceable reference for the teacher/researcher in all areas of the media curriculum.

Practical Approaches to Media Literacy

Susan G. Cole (1988) outlined a teaching/learning process which began with a background of marketing techniques and expenses, then proceeded with the deconstruction of the basic elements of advertisements or video. She included the deconstructing of both the image and narrative, as well as an analysis of character and value. Students enjoyed the discussion

because, as Cole observed, this is their world and they have an opinion about ads and rock videos because they relate with them. Cole (1988, p.36) stated, "This easy recognition acted as a positive reinforcement for students who prided themselves on having information, who consequently felt their interest was validated and who were thus more willing to get involved in the discussion". Cole reported that students' input seemed to end with the conclusion of class. The spiral curriculum advocated by the Ontario Ministry of Education was not reflected. The students' application of their media literacy was not followed up outside the classroom setting. Cole's study provided an indication that this was an area for the present media study to consider.

Neil Andersen's (1992) work provided information in this exploration of students' application and responses. In his article, "Making a Case for Media Literacy in the Classroom", Andersen (1992, p.16) claimed that a positive attitude can increase the attention span "400 percent, if they [students] perceive a topic to be of personal relevance." Students must learn how to take information from the media. Their expertise as media users should be accessed and channelled. Andersen reported that students who spend five to six hours a day in school spend an equal amount of time listening to the radio or watching TV. Andersen's observation suggests that where students

previously received information through print, they are now shifting to visual and audio media as an information source. Student responses to the audio-visual images are important for this study and may provide the type of information that educators require to ensure that media literacy instruction is relevant for students. Andersen, like Cole, sensed a value system unfolding. "To a large degree, our images of how to be come from the media. They [media messages] are crucial shapers of the young lives we are striving to direct" (Andersen, 1992, p.16).

In an article published in 1993, Judy Steed investigated media messages and student responses. She reported that critical thinking is the cornerstone of media literacy because as students became media literate, they recognize the way media changed their world. Steed claimed that students are "inundated by a mind-boggling array of media angles and stories and formats that are transforming the way they see the world...in ways that earlier generations don't understand" (Steed, 1993, p.B1). Steed attributed much of her information to long-time media educator and writer, Barry Duncan. Duncan addressed educators' difficulty of staying in tune with media bombardment and persuasiveness (Steed, 1993). Indeed, much of Cole's and Andersen's work was an echo of Barry Duncan's persistent drive for media literacy in Ontario schools. Duncan strongly supported student participation in the exercise of deconstruction of media

messages by having students critically evaluate the emotional impact that is subliminally advertised in ads. Duncan exposed ad claims and allowed students to question and research the messages. Media-literate students recognize and decode the advertising messages that only a happy family drove car X and used brand Y. A student empowered with deconstruction skills works through the layers of advertisement ownership and power. In this way, media education prepares students for the future, if they apply their knowledge and skills, not only in the decoding of advertising messages but the messages of all media constructions. Len Masterman recognized the need for such empowerment. His work provided the present study with observations about the power of media messages and their ability to permeate students' lives. Sandy Greer (1991) reported Masterman's presentation at The New Literacy: Media Education conference held in Guelph in 1990.

At the conference, Len Masterman encouraged the empowerment of the student by focusing on advertising and the role of the consumer. Students are empowered when they learn to deconstruct media messages because they gain control of the media instead of being persuaded by its imagery. Masterman (Greer, 1991) believed that advertising must be taken seriously. He discovered that it was increasingly difficult for consumers to distinguish differences between advertising and non-advertising

material. For example, Masterman pointed out ads no longer appear only in the ad section of a newspaper or are confined to blocks of television time. There is an alarming increase of product use during TV programs and movies; even actors find themselves unwittingly endorsing a product because it is part of a script. Masterman strongly recommends a media literacy program that deconstructs media messages. The NEWS UNIT in this study has followed Masterman's recommendations to provide numerous opportunities for students to construct and deconstruct the news.

Michael W. Apple (1995) supported news construction and deconstruction, and like Masterman recognized several reasons for educators to pay attention to the media, especially the news. Apple recalled watching a news telecast in Norway, and related that although he was not fluent in Norwegian, Swedish, or German, he was able to understand the news because of its "planned flow" from "news" to commercials and back again. This "planned flow" or construction was complemented by attractive anchor people who were "never too happy or too sad". In this way, Apple predicted that the news "names the world" by presenting to the world what is important to know, say, and do. Apple's opinions linked with those of Hugh Rank (1992), particularly in the investigation of Channel One, a news and commercial broadcast available to American schools.

Rank (1992) was concerned about the commercial implications of Channel One. Apple was concerned with the news implications of Channel One. Both researchers identified the subtle persuasiveness of Channel One. Rank cited educators' popular misconception that "ads are not significant, not effective, and not harmful" (Rank, 1992, p.31). His concern reflected the use of Channel One in 8,000 American schools and that Channel One wished to reach 15,000 schools. In return for pumping two minutes of commercials into a school each day, the school received a \$50,000 package of television sets and VCR's. Rank claimed that educators were not concerned because, as they saw it, students were exposed to the commercials outside of school anyway. Unfortunately, educators failed to realize that an ad is a "unit of persuasion" (Rank, 1992, p.31). Rank felt that "commercial persuasion also promotes beliefs and behaviours which have significant and sometimes harmful effects on the individual, the family, and society" (Rank, 1992, p.31). Rank called for an education program that teaches the persuasive analysis of media during school time. Apple reiterated Rank's concern when he pointed out that along with the commercials that Channel One offered "free" to American schools, it also broadcasted ten minutes of news constructions.

Apple cautioned that the free equipment and the free daily news broadcast in fact had a price because the schools

signed a contract that stipulated that students would watch Channel One every day. He surmised that in this way, "in the guise of free news, we are selling our children as a captive audience" (Apple, 1995, p.208). Apple continued his analysis of news broadcasts by discussing the way the news broadcasts were constructed "into a narrative-dramatic structure" that often hid the real problem and consequently misled the audience. He provided numerous scenarios of what he coined "natural" disasters.

For instance, Apple provided the example of mud slides in South America. These, he stated, were not natural disasters because even though rain falls every year, rain does not always result in mud slides as the news would have one believe. When thousands of people died in the mud slides, it was the result of economic conditions. The people who built their homes on the mountain side where the mud slides occurred were very poor. They had no choice in the location of their homesteads. The economic structure was controlled by a minority and land distribution was not equal among the rich and poor. Thus, the disaster was economic, not natural. Apple conceded that to understand the real problem required the deconstruction of the news; "to understand this, to deconstruct and reconstruct what counts as news, is of great importance to teachers and students given the way news is constructed on television" (Apple, 1995, p.213). A

better economic sense and an understanding of "what the media do and don't do" or what is reported and what is not reported is required. Apple cautioned that the news is involved in one dominant ideology and it is patterned by the social, economic and political conventions of culture. Thus, the deconstruction of the news, Apple concluded, means placing its stories in context with the social system.

Rank and Apple are not alone. Their concerns about the ramifications of news constructions and with the broadcasting of Channel One are not unique to American classrooms. Barry Duncan battled YNN (Youth News Network), a Canadian network based on the same American Channel One that Rank and Apple opposed. YNN offered schools TV sets, satellite dishes, and a twelve-minute, public-affairs package that included commercials. Like his American counterparts, Rank and Apple, Duncan challenged the use of corporate takeover in Canadian schools. He was concerned with the long-term social effects of daily commercialism. Duncan stated, "the corporate takeover of public expression, extended into the schools, could further reduce children to passive receptacles, programmed to meet short-term business goals" (Quoted in Steed, 1993).

Other educators have shared Duncan's concern with cultural implications of media. Rick Shepherd (1993) called media a "culture" which students know about but may not

understand. Shepherd realized the potential of media literacy to deal with issues of ownership, control, cultural representation, ideology, and equity. He recognized the role of the media as central to society and recommended media literacy in all areas of the curriculum. Media literacy, Shepherd advocates, is "central to social and environmental studies [and] even mathematics is a natural presence in the media literacy classroom, whether through surveys and demographic studies or through the timing of production work" (Sheperd, 1993, p.26). Shepherd concluded that it is taking Ontario too long to incorporate media in the provincial curriculum. That media is central to society is an idea that Shari Graydon (1995) further investigated, particularly in the media creation of sex-stereotypes.

For this study, Graydon posed many interesting perspectives for the way that gender and medium may generate different responses, and how a NEWS UNIT could explore these differences. Graydon observed that "most key principles of media education can be illuminated through an analysis of the ways in which main stream media portray the sexes [and] a content analysis study of daily newspapers quantifying the number of male versus female reporters, columnists and newsmakers helps to illustrate the extent to which media reinforce existing power structures" (p.24). Graydon questioned the imbalance of female representation in the news media.

Finally, Graydon's observation that the different responses male and female students have to a particular medium and "the way individual perceptions influence the meaning derived from media products" (Graydon, 1995, p.24) strongly supports this researcher's questions. Students should realize that they are the potential targets of multi-million dollar ad campaigns. They must recognize their place as controllers of their culture and not simply consumers of their culture. Although educators seem to understand that they have a responsibility to encourage the media literacy of students, very few studies have investigated actual students' responses and the changes that these responses could undergo. Certainly, Marshall McLuhan (1964) understood this phenomenon. His work has helped to shape this study's focus on the way a message may change according to a medium and how a response to a medium may change a message!

Theoretical Foundations for Media Literacy

In the early 1960's, Marshall McLuhan recognized the effect of the media on its viewers. In his book, Understanding the Media: The Extensions of Man, McLuhan (1964) dismissed the standard education practice that media technology is the only aspect of the media that require understanding. While educators focused on the use of the equipment and did not consider the effect of its use on its users, McLuhan focused on the

relationship of the media and its users. He called the media "extensions of man" and urged educators to adopt a critical viewpoint of how the extensions changed society.

McLuhan (1964) considered many media extensions: from one's skin to clothing, clocks, and computers! At times, these extensions seemed ridiculous until the reader realizes that it is not the radio, the newspaper, or the television that McLuhan discussed but the essence of the message that each medium shaped and the subliminal ability the message has to permeate and change culture. McLuhan suggested that "the medium is the message" and warned that the media illiterate were powerless. He cautioned, "If the student of media will but meditate on the power of this medium of electric light to transform every structure of time and space and work and society that it penetrates or contradicts, he [she] will have the key to the form of the power that is in all media to reshape any lives that they touch" (McLuhan, 1964, p.60). McLuhan's theories helped formulate this researcher's question: Does the medium make a difference in the student responses? If so, what are the differences?

McLuhan identified the subliminal messages in the combination of various media. He proposed that one medium complements another medium and provides the world with a pre-packaged image. Unless society recognizes the construction, the media illiterate are convinced that the image or construction is

real and the world is not. McLuhan's example of a newscast held particular significance for this study. He warned, "The human interest dimension is simply that of immediacy of participation in the experience of others that occur with instant information. People become instant, too, in their response of pity or of fury when they share the common extension of the central nervous system with the whole of mankind" (McLuhan, 1964, p.223). Moreover, it is difficult to comprehend a newscast depicting the suffering of a nation when such a clip is followed by a thirty second commercial of "plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relieve it is..."

McLuhan hoped that media literacy would defend society, by recognizing that it is the content of the message that changes according to the users' interpretation of the message that in turn, changed society. An illiterate media user does not recognize a media construction and accepts the message without question or doubt. This user is easily manipulated by the message. The message changes when a literate media user is exposed to it because the media user understands the construction. Such a user deconstructs a message by questioning the message, its medium essence, and its source. Educators appreciate the role of the user in the content of the message, but their work is inconclusive. It has taken over twenty years for media studies to evolve from a competent use of audio-visual

equipment, to a media studies that encourages the deconstruction of media messages. Consequently, although McLuhan's work is now thirty years old, it continues to present many challenges for the media educator and provides serious questions for this study to explore.

Neil Postman amended McLuhan's "the medium is the message" because he feared that readers considered that a message was a metaphor. Postman stated, "A message denotes a specific, concrete statement about the world. But the forms of our media, including the symbols through which they permit conversation, do not make statements. They are rather like metaphors, working by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce their special definitions of reality" (Postman, 1985, p. 10). Put more simply, unless educators take the time to research the changes that students experience because of their media studies, media literacy will not reach beyond the classroom. Perhaps, as the practical approaches to media literacy acknowledge, these students enjoy media discussions because it is their world and they have an opinion about a world to which they relate. However, these same students may not apply their knowledge or be prepared for the future. They are, according to Postman, the most likely to "amuse themselves to death" (Postman, 1985).

Chapter Summary

The Ontario Ministry of Education and The Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board guidelines determine the extent to which student input is considered in the teaching and learning of media literacy. The 1987 Ontario Ministry of Education English Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7-12) Curriculum Guideline identified media as a component of English studies from grade seven to grade twelve. In 1988, the Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board published a pilot draft for media literacy titled Media Literacy: Television 1. The 1989 Ontario Ministry of Education Resource Guide titled Media Literacy provided numerous areas for media instruction. These resources emphasize teaching strategies but do not include student responses to media instruction. To a lesser degree, this omission is also true of professional literature reviews.

Many articles by such writers Cole(1988), Masterman (quoted in Greer, 1991), Greer(1991), Andersen(1992), Duncan(quoted in Steed, 1993), Steed(1993), Shepherd(1993), Apple(1995) and Graydon(1995) provide practical approaches for the teaching of media literacy through classroom observation and student work. Many of these reviews recount student discussions during media instruction and highlight the importance of student reaction. These approaches

present this study with information about media instruction, especially in the technique of media news construction and deconstruction. The reviews show how ministry policy is managed in a practical setting and how this study could not only do the same but move one step further by examining student responses to media instruction and the application of this instruction (to a lesser degree) outside the classroom. For these reasons, the theoretical accounts of McLuhan(1964) and Postman(1985) are included. McLuhan and Postman cautioned the educator that students do not learn in a vacuum; media literacy has social implications.

The works of McLuhan and Postman shaped the theoretical framework of this study by providing insightful observations of the media and its effects on society. These writers were pioneers in the media literacy movement. They recognized the power of media messages and predicted the cultural implications of the media. Their documentation provided a foundation for this study in the area of media messages and the investigation of the users' or students' responses to these messages.

Although the theoretical foundation of McLuhan and Postman, the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, as

well as the practical approaches of numerous researchers provide a rich background for this study's investigation of media-literacy instruction, it is the student responses to media instruction that this study addresses. This study focuses on the critical role of the student users and their use of the media.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter One examines the history and rationale for the teaching of media literacy. It includes a discussion of the evolution of media literacy and the importance of media literacy in the education of Ontario students. Chapter Two presents the literature research using three perspectives: 1) the Ontario Ministry of Education and local guidelines, 2) the practical approaches of media educators, and 3) the works of McLuhan and Postman as theoretical underpinnings. In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology are presented so that the reader may gain a better understanding of how this particular study combines the history, rationale, and literature perspectives to focus on the role of students in media literacy.

Media Literacy Program: An Overview

An overview of the research design and methodology is provided in **Figure 1** to give the reader a quick reference of the media-literacy program and to show the reader the timeline and location of the NEWS UNIT for this study. The overview is followed by a brief description of the media-literacy program

Figure 1: GRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Units 1,2 and 3 took place before the study.

<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>January</i>
Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
History of Advertising	Children's Literature	Local Media & Independent Study	NEWS UNIT	

The study was conducted during **Unit 4: News Unit**. It began with the distribution of the questionnaire for the first time and continued as outlined below.

Administration of 1st Questionnaire

Unit 4 News Unit; Introduction

Administration of 2nd Questionnaire

Unit 4 News Unit; Conclusion

Administration of Third Questionnaire

Upon the completion of the News Unit, the questionnaire was distributed for the third time.

Data Collection During Unit 4; News Unit

1. Journals,
2. Class assignments and school related documents,
3. Questionnaires,
4. Field notes from daily observations.

Data Analysis

1. Journals, Class assignments, and Observations,
2. Questionnaire Responses 1 & 2 Part A & B and Observations,
3. Questionnaire Responses 1 & 2 & 3 and Observations,
4. Journals, Questionnaires, Class Assignments and Observations.

and an explanation of the data collection and the data analysis.

THE NEWS unit was preceded by three media units. The first unit titled HISTORY OF THE MEDIA & ADVERTISING introduced the students to mass media and the concept of media constructions. The students studied the history of the media to gain an appreciation of its development. This unit also covered such areas as 1) the stages of advertising, 2) advertising claims, 3) the consumer as an advertising target, and 4) the power of advertising. The students created positive advertising images to use in their own advertisements.

The second unit on CHILDREN'S LITERATURE explored the history of children's literature and its correlation with the stages of advertising. The students gained an appreciation of the importance of children's literature in the child's development. They also re-defined the need for positive image building and messages in children's literature and in commercials that target the child consumer.

The third unit on LOCAL MEDIA & INDEPENDENT STUDY provided an opportunity for the students to promote 1) a school activity, 2) a local landmark, or 3) children's literature, using positive images and messages that had been discussed in the course to this point. The students also began an independent study to research a particular area of the media that interested them. The advanced-level students submitted their research in

essay format. The general-level students presented their findings orally to the class.

The NEWS UNIT was introduced after the first administration of the questionnaire. This questionnaire generated students' 'before' responses and provided the baseline for responses collected from administrations two and three of the questionnaires. Three weeks later, the second administration of the same questionnaire was completed. This administration provided the 'during' research responses. A third administration was completed three weeks after the second questionnaire at the conclusion of the NEWS UNIT. These data provided the 'after' research responses.

Although the teaching of the media-literacy program from unit one to unit four followed a linear progression, data analysis occurred during the data collection in a spiral design and developed as the study evolved. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies were drawn out of the data collection and analysis. These are presented in Chapter Four.

In brief, this descriptive study employed both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques and was conducted by the teacher/researcher over a six-week period, at the end of a media-literacy course that began with the History of the Media and Advertising, Current Advertising Techniques, Children's Literature and the Media, and Local Media and

Independent Study/Project. The teacher/researcher was very familiar with the students, having taught them every day, for three months before the actual research study commenced.

The qualitative research paradigm demands personal contact with the subjects in order to describe and understand human behaviour and education programs. As articulated by Patton "the strategic mandate to be holistic, inductive, and naturalistic means getting close to the phenomenon under study. The evaluator using qualitative methods attempts to understand the setting under study through direct personal contact and experience with the program" (Patton, 1986, p.43). Initially, survey data were gathered through the administration of a questionnaire to all students. This survey was supplemented with six cases of purposely selected subjects. The data were collected during a six-week unit of media-literacy study after which the collected data were analyzed and interpreted through contextualization. According to Miles and Huberman (1984) interpretation of an event without the context is limited. They concurred that "the context can be seen as immediately relevant aspects of the situation (where the person is physically, who else is involved, what the recent history of their contact is, and so on), as well as the relevant aspects of the social system in which a person is functioning (a classroom, a school, a

department, a company, a family, an agency, a local community)" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p.92).

For this study, contextualization is a natural means of data analysis and interpretation for many reasons. First of all, the students in this study were classmates. They had worked with each other for three months prior to the introduction of the study. Many of the students had attended school together since grade nine. Others had been in elementary school together, while others were close friends and neighbours. They were familiar with one another's work habits, and by the time the study was conducted, they understood the requirements of the course and the expectations of their fellow classmates as well as the expectations of the teachers. In summation, the students' shared history and the social system of the school and classroom were ideally suited to contextualization.

Subjects

Thirty-eight, grade-eleven media students attending the same school completed the questionnaire. Six of the thirty-eight students were purposefully drawn from this group to make up the case students. The six students were chosen purposely to provide variation in gender, academic achievement, and attendance. Three female students and three male students were selected. Parental consent was given for all students to

participate in the study. The parents and students understood and agreed that no students would be informed of their selection for a case study, so that they would respond naturally as they completed classroom assignments. In this report, selected students are referred to by the following pseudo names, Anthony, Bill, John, Alice, Becky and Kristy. The school is referred to "Alpha High" School. These procedures are consistent with the guidelines of Lakehead University's ethics committee.

The researcher taught the media English section of the media literacy program with two other teachers (one taught the graphic design section and the other taught the communication technology section of the media-literacy program). The media English teacher has been teaching for nineteen years. This was her fifth year in the high school. Her teaching experience included grade one (all areas) to OAC (English). She is an English major as well as a professional artist and musician.

The Communication Technology teacher has a strong professional background in television studio work. He has been teaching for approximately three years. His technical expertise was an asset to the course. His teaching responsibility was the communication technology section; he did not teach any other course during the semester.

The Graphic Design teacher has been teaching for more than twenty years. He is the Chairperson of the Social Science

Department. He taught art as well as the graphic design section of the media-literacy course. Three years ago, all three teachers were asked to teach the media-literacy course as a team. They attended four in-service workshops in Thunder Bay, conducted by the Lakehead District R.C. Separate School Board. They also received valuable input from the Hamilton-Wentworth Board of Education in Hamilton, Ontario. In fact the initial framework for the media literacy program was fashioned after the Hamilton-Wentworth model. However, it was up to the three teachers, identified above, to work together as a team and design and teach the course. The English section of the course was the core section. In this way, the Ontario Ministry Guidelines for media literacy were strictly observed. The English section provided the academic driving force for the other two sections. For example, the NEWS UNIT, which this study examines, originated in the English section when the English teacher suggested its inclusion based on students' needs. This study was conducted during the third school year, the third time that the teachers taught the media-literacy course as a team.

During the first year, the teachers met two or three times a week to discuss how the three sections were going and ways that each could be improved. However, thorough organization from the outset of the curriculum planning made these meetings more of a support group for cross-checking of curriculum than

changing or deleting curriculum concepts. Eventually, it was necessary to meet only at the end or beginning of a unit to make certain every section was running smoothly. The three teachers proved to be a great team. They demonstrated mutual respect for each other's expertise; they valued each other's opinions; there was no back-stabbing or gossiping. The high energy and motivation that the teachers maintained was reflected in the students' work.

The three media courses were offered as a package. Upon the successful completion of the "course package", a student would receive two credits: one for technological studies and the other for English. The English credit would supply the student with one of the five compulsory English credits that the Ontario Ministry of Education requires of students to graduate from grade twelve. Refer to Appendix A for an overview of the course package.

Although all three sections of the course package began at the same time, the English section gradually moved ahead so that the students could prepare material for the communication technology class and the graphic design class. For example, in the first unit of the English section, the students studied the history and techniques of print and video advertising while in the communication technology and the graphic design class, they were introduced to basic video communication, basic graphic

design, and black and white photography. During the first unit in the English class, the students wrote a twenty-second audio-video storyboard and the text for a poster. These were then completed during the second unit of the communication technology class and the graphic design class.

Meanwhile, as the students completed the twenty-second audio-visual and the poster design, they drafted a thirty-second audio-visual storyboard and a children's literature text in the English section. In this way, the English section prepared the students for the other two media literacy sections a unit ahead of time. By the fourth unit, when the NEWS UNIT for this study was introduced in the English section, the students were completing a five-minute, audio-video broadcast in the communication technology class and illustrations and binding for a children's storybook as well as a brochure in the graphic design class.

Data Collection

The six students chosen for the case studies were observed daily in class over a period of six weeks by the researcher who also was the media English teacher. Field notes were documented from a daily video-tape of the class as well as the teacher/researcher's personal observation notes, and the collection and review of related student, teacher, school

generated documents which included students' daily journal responses and written assignments, teacher evaluation records, and student records.

The data collection also included a questionnaire which was completed on three separate occasions by all thirty-eight students. The questionnaire was first administered prior to the beginning of the NEWS UNIT. It was administered for a second time during the NEWS UNIT, and for a third time at the conclusion of the NEWS UNIT, after the subjects had completed the UNIT.

First Administration of the Questionnaire

The initial administration of the questionnaire occurred when the teacher/researcher introduced the thesis study by thanking the students for their speedy submission of permission forms. Then the questionnaire was distributed with a brief explanation. The students were informed that the questionnaire was an important part of the thesis study. They were told that they would be completing the questionnaire on three separate occasions during the NEWS UNIT and that the questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part A (Program), they were advised, was about NEWS programs. Part B (Student & Program) was about their reaction to the news, and Part C (Media In My Life) was about their media interests.

A Likert type Scale was used to measure the responses. The students were instructed to circle a number from 0 to 5 or a word, as the statement required. The teacher/researcher cautioned the students to circle only one number or word per statement and she explained the significance of each number. The students were asked to refer to the Likert Scale available on the first page of the questionnaire if they needed a reminder. The fact that two statements involved a list of items that had to be re-arranged was also pointed out for the students.

Students were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers and that their individual responses were imperative. They were asked to keep their eyes on their own questionnaire. They were assured that they would have plenty of time to finish the questionnaire. If they had any questions during the questionnaire, they were asked to raise their hands. Finally, it was requested that they refrain from writing anything on the questionnaire, including their names.

Before the questionnaires were distributed a few students asked some interesting questions. For example, one student inquired if the questionnaire would affect their English media mark. The teacher/researcher assured the class that it was part of her thesis study and would not have a bearing on their English media evaluation. A student asked if the statements on

all three questionnaires were the same. The teacher/researcher announced that the questions were all the same. Another student wanted to know what they should do when they had finished the questionnaire. The teacher/researcher replied that the students should raise their hands so that the questionnaire could be collected, and that they could then resume their previously assigned work.

No other questions were raised before the questionnaire and only one question was asked during the questionnaire. This question is discussed in Chapter Four. The students seemed eager to begin and were excited about the prospect of participating in a thesis study. They completed the questionnaires quietly, submitted them, and continued with their regular assignment. The teacher/researcher was impressed with the students' cooperation and pleased with the positive start of the study!

The first questionnaire was administered prior to the introduction of THE NEWS unit. This followed the research study outline, as the students' responses before, during and after a media literacy instruction (in this case using a NEWS UNIT) was intended to evaluate the students' changing responses. The results of the initial administration provided the 'before' responses.

Introduction of the NEWS UNIT and Second Administration of the Questionnaire

At the end of the Introductory Section, the questionnaire was administered for the second time. It provided the 'during' research data. Students had been studying the NEWS UNIT for three weeks. This section included the introductory activities, written assignments, and journals for the NEWS UNIT. It was predominantly teacher directed. Each class section began with a journal question or statement to which the students responded individually in journal books which they kept separate from their class notes. The journal statements were designed by the teacher/researcher to complement the class assignments by inviting the students to reflect on as much of their background information as possible. For example, when the class activity focused on the power that news people have in the choice of news stories, the journal task might ask the students to list as many news people as they could and determine from their own point of view how influential each person on their list is in the choice of news stories.

An activity or an assignment was given every day or every second day. When a new assignment was not introduced, it was because the students were completing an assignment from the previous day. After the teacher/researcher introduced an activity or an assignment, the students discussed the work

involved either with a partner or in a small group. Many films, videos, audio recordings, magazines, newspapers, and book resources were used to supplement the assignments and, like the journals, provided as much information as possible for the students.

During this section, the following topics were covered:

- a) positive and negative news
- b) what people hear in the news versus what they want to hear
- c) news people- Who are they? What do they do?
- d) audience's role in the news
- e) the news as a media construction
- f) introduction of different news media
- g) the power that news people have to choose stories
- h) review of seven media concepts
- i) students choice of medium to broadcast the news
- j) news story categories
- k) advertising and the news
- l) Canadian and American news
- m) TV participation in the news changes everything
- n) newspaper assignment
- o) viewing the news
- p) popular commercial TV and the news
- q) introduction of 5 minute storyboard

Conclusion of the NEWS UNIT and Third Administration of the Questionnaire

This section provided the 'after' responses and concluded with the distribution of the questionnaire for the third time. It also saw the completion of the NEWS UNIT. During this section of the research study, the teacher/researcher acted as a facilitator and the lessons were not teacher directed. Teacher input was minimal. Each class began with a journal entry, but the remaining time was spent with activity and assignment partners or groups. Students discussed the topics on their own. They explored different aspects of the NEWS and prepared written and oral presentations. Much of the time was taken up with writing, editing, and re-editing the five-minute NEWS storyboards.

The storyboards required the concentrated effort and cooperation of the student groups, because the final storyboard would be produced and broadcasted in the communication technology class. As well, students were given class time to complete an Independent Study which had been assigned before the introduction of the NEWS UNIT. The activities and assignments that were covered strongly relied on the journal statement or question given at the beginning of each class to set the tone for the work and stimulate the students' thinking skills. For example, when the class assignment was to discuss the audience and the news

were the focus of class activities, the following journal idea was provided:

"What ails the truth is that it is mainly uncomfortable and often dull. The human mind seeks something more human and more caressing" (Cross, 1983, p.49).

The students were asked to copy the quote and comment on how they thought it reflected TV news. Their journal entries were done individually but later, during class discussion, ideas and reflections would surface from the journal.

Upon completion of this section, the teacher/researcher categorized the data for only the six case study students by gender. The daily video-tape observations helped alleviate possible problems of observations and field note taking by:

1. maintaining a natural setting so that the students felt at ease during observations
2. taping the whole group so that the six students remained anonymous
3. allowing the researcher/teacher to observe the students via video-tape after class as it was difficult to record detailed observations while teaching, during class time.

Triangulation was used to corroborate the research findings through the following sources of qualitative and quantitative data collection: questionnaires, observations of students, samples of students' daily journals and written

assignments. Using these sources, the teacher/researcher was able to compare the findings of one source such as a student's written assignment with the student's answer on the questionnaire and the student's journal entry. For instance, when a strong agreement was reached among these sources or at least when they did not contradict one another, then the item was deemed to have "good concurrent validity" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p.234).

The quantitative computer analysis provided a comparison and cross-checking of the qualitative data collection. Patton (1980) has cautioned against the use of both methods for one research study because they often answer different questions, because they may initially conflict with each other, and because researchers have their bias toward either qualitative or quantitative research; however, he conceded that "reconciling qualitative and quantitative data" (p.329) was possible. In triangulation the verification and validation of data resulted when one method of analysis was used to confirm and enrich the other. For this study the quantitative analysis was enriched by the qualitative analysis. Triangulation was employed to provide a more trustworthy description of students' responses as a result of a media-literacy program.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter Three, the teacher/researcher has presented the research design and methodology of the study and introduced the key participants of the research, namely the students and the teachers. She also described the setting for the study and the activities and assignments that were covered. In this way, the reader has not only gained an appreciation for the choice of design and methodology, but insight regarding the students' responsibility in the study and the importance of the students' changing responses about media literacy instruction. This insight will help the reader understand the study's findings and interpretation of the research data which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the analyses of the data and findings. It describes and interprets the patterns that emerged from the analyses of the research data. To facilitate this interpretation, the teacher/researcher has organized the data analyses as described in Chapter Three, using the following methods of data collection and the research questions that guided the study.

The sources of data included:

- 1) the students' journal responses
- 2) class assignments
- 3) students' questionnaire responses
- 4) the daily observations of the teacher/researcher

The analyses began with the reading of the case study students' journals. This information was compared with the field note observations and class assignments so that the teacher/researcher was able to explore patterns in the students' responses from their daily work. After the questionnaires were administered and analyzed, the journals, class assignments, and

field note observations were analyzed to provide descriptive support. All the statements from the questionnaires are discussed. In this way, students' responses are analysed from the patterns that emerged from all the areas of the data collection.

The relationships among the sources of data and the research questions are summarized below.

- A) Gender differences observed in analyses of journal responses, class assignments and observations were used to answer this question:
 - 2) What difference does gender make in the students' responses?
- B) Indications of change noted in analyses of student responses to questionnaires one, two and three (Part A & B), class assignments and observations focus on these questions:
 - 1) What changes occur in students' responses to media as a result of a specific media literacy unit?
 - 3) What difference does the medium make in students' responses?
- C) Student application of media concepts, questionnaires one, two, and three (Part A,B,C), journals, class assignments and observations were

useful for answering all of the questions, but particularly the question:

- 4) How do students apply their media literacy to real-life situations?

A computer analysis facilitated the interpretation of the questionnaire data. Five tables from the analysis will provide the reader with a quick summary of the data.

Data triangulation was used to corroborate all three areas of the research findings through the cross-reference of

- a) the questionnaire responses
- b) observation of students
- c) sample of daily journals and written assignment.

Gender Differences

The journal entries, class assignments and class observations showed that gender made a differences in students' responses. The responses of the females were completed more neatly, with a greater amount of description, and were consequently more lengthy (usually by three or more sentences), than the males' journal entries. However, the male responses contained insights and more global approaches to the journal questions or statements.

These male students wrote more concisely and exhibited

a different perspective about a given question than the female students, although sometimes the male students did not seem to recall past discussions or apply media literacy instruction from previously studied units. The females' responses included many anecdotes and personal experiences, references to class discussions, and a local rather than a global perspective.

Journals. The following case students' journal responses exemplify these gender differences.

Bill's response to the journal question: *What is news*, showed an understanding of media construction and popular commercial TV as well as the tendency for news stories to be more negative than positive. He answered, "...most disasters make news and violent things like wars and murders. Anything else as long as it is accompanied by pictures will make the news." John and Anthony were absent for this journal exercise

Alice's response to the same question showed an understanding of the negative and positive aspects of the news, but did not indicate an appreciation for the news as a media construction or as popular TV. She responded, "News is a look at the world around us...stories may be listed in [sic] accidents, deaths, amazing stories." Kristy's response to the same question showed a rather superficial point of view. She responded, "News is a gossip report on what people are doing." Becky did not

record a journal response.

John listed seven items for the journal questions, *How are news stories categorized? How is the order determined?*

These were "1) important people 2) concerns a specific audience 3) has wide appeal 4) human interest or drama 5) bad news 6) unusual events 7) uniqueness." He answered the second question by saying, *"what bleeds definitely leads."*

Anthony responded to the same journal questions by stating,

1. *"They are categorized by events, people and places of importance, bad news."*
2. *"By the importance of it, depending on the people who are included."* Bill did not record a journal response.

These responses from the males were similar to the responses of the females as they both showed an understanding of news categories and the importance of people in the actual ordering of news stories. They differed in that the males' responses seemed to recognize the role of sensationalism in news stories more often than did the females' responses. For example, Alice's responses to the journal questions were,

1. *"News stories are categorized as bad news, gossip, celebrities."*
2. *"The order is determined as what would grab the audience."*

Becky's responses were,

1. *"They're categorized by people, concerns a certain audience, has a wide appeal, human interest/drama, bad news, unusual events, unique sports events or other categorized."* 2. *"This order is determined by the importance and the amount of audience the categorize attracts."* Kristy was late for class and did not record an answer for this journal exercise.

Both males' and females' responses included the idea that Americans spend more money on their news broadcasts than Canadians spend, for the journal question: *Compare Canadian news coverage to American news coverage. You may include class discussions and personal opinion.* As mentioned, the females' responses were lengthier than the males' responses by three or four sentences. However, in this case, the entries were less sophisticated than the males' responses. The females' responses seemed to depend more on class discussions than their own personal opinions. The males' responses demonstrated more individuality and showed some interesting insights.

For example, John responded, *"Americans will spend millions to get the good or the best space to cover events that they consider will bring in ratings. Canadians will not spend near as much when they can mooch off the American millions to get their shots."*

Bill answered, *"The news coverage is not better or worse in Canada*

[it's] just different. Reasons that may account for this are 1) money 2) fringe benefits 3) presidential impact 4) "Manifest Destiny."

Becky replied, "The difference between American and Canadian news is money. The Americans can get into places close-up like the Prince and the Princess' wedding. The American's coverage of the wedding was good because they were up close and in the action. Canadian news people had to watch from a monitor and even the colours were different. I don't think that [it's] fair that the Americans have so much money to spend on news coverage and nice cars and other stuff, but I guess that [it's] good for the news and the media."

Alice answered in chart form:

Canadian News

shorter

edited news

not much violence

more local information

not whole story

less facts

American News

world wide

shows more

longer

more violence

interview

more pictures

more information

Kristy and Anthony did not record a journal response.

The male responses differed from the female responses in many ways, for the journal starter statement: *The news is a construction. Consider the key concepts of media literacy and discuss the implications of news constructions.* Obvious differences were in length and detail of responses. Again the females' responses were lengthier than the males' responses. The male responses showed a lack of knowledge of the term media construction whereas the female responses showed some knowledge and an attempt to recall the media concepts. One female's answers showed a direct reference to media concepts. Both female and male responses included examples of news stories.

Anthony responded, *"They don't have to run all the facts, they just tell the facts."* John answered, *"The news is constructed to keep attention, highlights, slight exaggeration, to grab attention."*

Kristy replied, *"The implication of the news is that it is not always based on facts and is changed to different people's point of views. Mostly only the negative points are shown in the news, positive news are shown at the end or with not as much enthusiasm as bad or negative news, such as when two little boys went missing and the boys ended up dead and the killer was the mom. I can't remember any positive news."*

Alice answered, *"The news is constructed because it takes hours*

to prepare the news. You do not always hear or see exactly what happened. News does construct reality in a way because it shows what goes on in the world but not always is realistic. News does not always negotiate meaning it [doesn't] give you a chance to say what you feel...news does contain ideological and value messages because some of the value and messages you need to know like if there's a storm or food poisoning, but there's not a lot of value in news. Media have social and political implications. Yes, if social and political implications are on the news it can [affect] the political economics. The media form and content are closely related in the media. Yes, because everything is planned in the media, it is not just a spur of the moment process. Each medium for news does have a unique aesthetic form because if you see news on TV you might learn more...if you need it, it might not [affect] you more..." Becky and Bill did not record a journal response.

During the last three weeks of the NEWS UNIT, the teacher/researcher acted as a facilitator. The activities and assignments covered in this section strongly relied on the journal statements or questions given at the beginning of class. Feedback during class discussions and small group assignments was limited. Again, gender differences in students' journals were observed in their responses to the journal prompt dealing with

audience appeal from Media Speak (Cross, 1983, p.49):

"What ails the truth is that it is mainly uncomfortable and often dull. The human mind seeks something more caressing."

How does this statement reflect TV news? The male students responses indicated that they considered the construction of the news and pleasing the audience as part of television business. This view differed from the females' responses which reflected a viewer perspective rather than a business point of view. As well, the female students seemed to agree that the viewer chose the news story and that news was audience pleasing because the truth was too bad or too dull.

For example, Bill answered, *"I believe this is how the editors of the news see the facts they are handed. They feel they must sugar-coat the truth so it will taste better and be swallowed more easily."* John responded, *"Well TV often uses quick cuts and a lot of blood in stories. Human suffering is a big seller, so TV has tears and hugs of condolences as a main feature. So they use extra little tips to fill the viewers' interest."* Anthony did not record a journal response.

Becky replied, *"If only the real news was told to people they would be bored with it because it is dull, or it is too bad and we could not handle the truth. The human mind wants to think and absorb news that can make our minds grow or news*

that can make our imaginations go wild and free. We want to hear positive news and news that makes us comfortable with others, ourselves, our community, our world etc..."

Alice answered, "I think that people do seek more amusing and caressing [news] because people rent horror movies or drama movies because people crave the emotion. Yes, this statement reflects [the news] because the news does show you what you want to hear so you'll turn on just like the movies that you rent."

Kristy did not record a journal response.

Gender differences in the students' journal responses also were apparent in the entries dealing with geography: *Does geography play a role in news coverage? How are stories chosen? What makes a story news-worthy?* Again, the males' responses were shorter than the females' responses. This difference occurred because the male students used less description and fewer anecdotes and examples in their writing than the female students. The male case students thought that news stories were chosen by the editor who in turn would consider audience appeal. The female case students considered the location of a story and the effect it might have on people. Becky did not think that geography played a role in news coverage. She considered public involvement and feedback important factors.

John replied, "Yes it does play a large role in the

news coverage. Stories are chosen by how much action they contain and how much grab the editor thinks it will have with the public and the geography." Bill responded, "Yes geography does play a role in news coverage. Not many Canadians care about the drought that plagued Australia for the last four months. The stories are chosen by the bleed factor. It takes so many dead to make a story "news worth." Anthony was absent for this activity.

Kristy answered, "Yes I think geography plays a role in news coverage. News stories are usually chosen by how far the place of the news story is. If a fire or something particularly big happened in the third world we would probably not hear about it. If something happened in Toronto or some place closer we would definitely hear about it. A story that is news worthy is if it [affects] people, those who are listening to the news, or if it happens fairly close to us." Becky answered, "No I don't think that geography plays a role in news coverage because it doesn't involve space or different locations. Stories are chosen by the amount of feedback they get from the public. Things that make a story worthy are if it's interesting, if it involves the public, if we need to know it. Mostly things that concern us." Alice did not record a journal response.

Class Assignments and Observations. Although, at

first, large group and class discussions did not show a gender difference in that both male and female students discussed issues with equal frequency, small group discussions showed that the male students had listened more attentively during large group discussions, organized themselves quickly for small-group activities, and shared and applied their knowledge from class discussions to the small-group discussions. In contrast, the female small group required clarification of the assignment. Their responses were brief and lacked an application of knowledge from the class discussion. In this way, boys and girls responded differently to the journals exercises.

For example, case students *John and Bill* worked in a group with two other people on an assignment titled What Makes The News? The assignment began with a video and a large group discussion. Afterwards, the students were placed in small groups to complete their discussion and submit a written report. The male group began the assignment by appointing a recorder. They shared in the discussion of each question, stayed on task, and completed the questions. Upon completion of the assignment, they handed in their answers and resumed their storyboard activity. Their answers showed a good understanding of the video and the class discussion. Anthony left for a dentist appointment and did not participate in this activity.

Alice and Kristy chose to work with two other girls. The other two girls talked to each other during the class discussion. During the small-group assignment, the group continued to talk off topic. They required clarification of the assignment and constant monitoring by the teacher to stay on task. They finally finished the answers but their responses were brief and showed little attention to detail from the video or class assignment. *Becky* was absent for this task.

Gender differences also were observed during an assignment titled Try It, in which students wrote a story about a possible alien invasion. The instructions for this assignment were discussed in a whole class forum. Then, the students chose a partner with whom to work. The partners were to write the story together and make a decision whether to broadcast it. The partners were to read their stories and provide reasons for their decision.

Bill and John worked together. They changed the broadcast message by dismissing the possibility of an invasion and calling it instead, a questionable sighting of a U.F.O. They used more sophisticated language than the original copy provided. *Bill* read the broadcast. It was clearly and precisely presented. Their decision to broadcast was because "*the public needed to know.*"

Anthony worked with another male student. They required a few clarifications of the instructions but they worked well together and stayed on task once the clarifications were made. *Anthony's* partner read the story and *Anthony* explained the reasons they decided not to broadcast. Their reasons included,

1. more information was needed,
2. sources needed to be checked,
3. public was not ready for a broadcast of this importance without sound proof.

Kristy and her female partner worked well together by staying on task. They did not change the original story and presented the broadcast seriously albeit with little creativity. They took turns reading the story and stated that it was important to broadcast news simply and factually. Their reason for broadcasting was, "*Its news.*"

Alice and her partner embellished the original Try It copy. It was too lengthy which showed a lack of understanding for news construction. This topic had been discussed in class. Nevertheless, their broadcast showed good effort and creativity. Their reason for broadcasting was to inform the public. *Becky* was absent for this assignment.

Summary

These class observations exemplify the observations

made during the NEWS UNIT. When compared with the journal entries, these observations showed that gender did appear to make a difference in the students' responses. By observing the case students, the teacher/researcher was able to focus on the differences.

Length of responses was one major difference between males' and females' responses. A key factor in length was oral versus written responses. Male students used lengthier oral responses but shorter written responses than the female students. Males preferred to talk about the issues at length rather than record them in journal entries. Their small-group discussions showed that they stayed on task longer than the female students, shared their ideas, came to a consensus about issues quickly, and applied their knowledge of class discussions and media concepts. Although the female students liked to talk, they were not necessarily on task all the time. Their small-group discussions required monitoring. Their oral presentations showed that they did not share ideas, agree on issues, or apply their knowledge of class discussions. However, the female students' written work was lengthier than that of the male students. The girls' journal entries did show an application of class discussions and a good understanding of media concepts.

Both journal and class observations showed that the

male students concerned themselves with facts and recognized the power of the media. This realization was seen in Anthony and partner's decision not to broadcast the Try It story. It was also apparent in John's journal entry in which he recognized the editor as the decision-maker in news broadcasting. In contrast, the female students' journal entries depended on personal opinions which were often vague and lacked credibility. This limited response was shown in Alice's journal entry when she noted that "...you need to know like if there's a storm or food poisoning, but there's not a lot of value in news..." It was also apparent in Kristy and partner's Try It presentation when they simply read the copy they had been given without upgrading the vocabulary. The girls realized the importance of broadcasting simply and factually but their reason for broadcasting showed a vague understanding of media concepts.

In conclusion, gender did make a difference in the students' responses. The differences in gender responses included length, a preference for either oral or written responses, and calibre of responses. Males stayed on task, shared their ideas, and presented the information clearly and precisely. They preferred oral presentations to written work. Male journal entries contained interesting insights and exhibited more knowledge about a given question than the female entries

showed. However, unlike the females' journal entries, the males' journals were brief and lacked an application of media literacy instruction.

Female students preferred the written assignments. Their written work included an application of media-literacy instruction, as well as more details and personal anecdotes than the males' journal entries. However, unlike the males, the females' oral presentations often were completed very quickly. Their presentations showed a lack of attention to media-literacy instruction application and class discussion.

Indications of Change

The following discussion focuses on the questionnaire responses, class assignments and observations to answer the research question,

1) What changes occur in students' responses to media as the result of a specific media unit?

For the Introduction of the NEWS UNIT, the questionnaire statements that showed the most change also reflected the class activities, assignments, and journals. It seemed that the students' responses expressed agreement or disagreement rather than neutrality in the areas that were actually studied and discussed in class.

Table 1 illustrates the students' changing responses between the administration of the first, second, and third questionnaire. This is followed by a description and interpretation of the findings and supplies further evidence that,

- a) students' responses do change as a result of a media literacy program, and
- b) the medium does make a difference in the students' responses.

Questionnaire Part A (Program). Part A of the questionnaire that dealt with program showed the following changes from the first administration to the second and third administration of the questionnaire:

Statement One: News is a media construction, showed a class change from a neutral position of 3.08 on the first questionnaire to an agree position of 4.03, on the second questionnaire. The case students showed a move from disagree place of 2.67 on the administration of the first questionnaire to 4.50 agree place on the administration of the second questionnaire. The class responses for the third questionnaire moved from an agree position, back to a neutral response as in the first administration. However the neutral response of 3.63

Table 1
MEAN RANKING BY CLASS AND CASE STUDENTS FOR PROGRAM STATEMENTS

Program	First Administration Class (Cases)	Second Administration Class (Cases)	Third Administration Class (Cases)
1. The news is media construction	3.08 (2.67)	4.03 (4.50)	3.63 (3.50)
2. The news constructs reality	2.82 (2.33)	2.81 (2.67)	3.00 (3.33)
3. The audience may change the meaning of the news	3.34 (3.00)	3.89 (4.50)	3.89 (4.33)
4. The news media has commercial implications	2.87 (2.83)	3.53 (4.17)	3.37 (3.33)
5. The news media contains value messages	3.34 (3.67)	3.44 (3.33)	3.50 (3.33)
6. The news media has social implications	3.11 (3.17)	3.36 (3.00)	3.29 (3.50)
7. Each news medium has its own form and content	3.24 (3.67)	3.67 (4.17)	3.89 (3.83)
8. Each news medium has a unique aesthetic form	2.39 (3.83)	3.28 (3.67)	3.37 (3.50)

KEY: Scale range from 0 to 5

0- don't know 1- strongly disagree 2- disagree
 3- neutral 4- agree 5- strongly agree

Class n=32 Cases n=6

was higher than the first response of 3.08. The case study students moved from an agree back to a neutral position, but again their response, 3.50 was higher than the first neutral response of 3.08.

The male students showed a change from an agree position to a strongly agree place than back to an agree position. The female students moved from a don't know response to a strong agree, then to a neutral position. The male response showed that they were willing to take a stand and risk a strong opinion. It reflected their journal entries and their world view of issues. This response was unlike the females' responses and journal entries because they relied on class discussions, referred to news as gossip, and did not express their own personal opinions.

Statement Two: The news construct reality, saw a change from disagree to neutral. This change was gradual from the first administration of the questionnaire 2.82, to the second administration 2.81 to the third administration 3.00. The case students moved from a disagree to a neutral position and like the class showed a steady move in this direction over the three questionnaires. The male students remained in the neutral position for all three questionnaires. In contrast, the female students' responses varied from a strongly disagree to strongly

agree position for all three questionnaires. This paralleled the female students' lack of consensus during small group discussions. Unlike their male counterparts, the females did not agree on issues as quickly. This response reflected the students' insecurity with the term "reality" and media constructions. It was interesting to note the differences in gender in that the male students as a group agreed with each other and the female students did not.

Statement Three: Audiences may change the meaning of the news, showed only a slight change from questionnaires one, two, or three. The class responses remained basically neutral. The case studies moved from a neutral response on the first questionnaire to an agree position for questionnaires two and three. The male students moved from an agree to a strongly agree and then back to an agree placement. The female students stayed in a neutral to an agree place for all three questionnaires. These response changes were a definite result of the numerous activities, storyboard assignments, and journals that both male and female students completed. It was observed that journal responses and class assignments showed that male students recognized the power of the editor in news coverage whereas females attributed news coverage to audience appeal. It seemed that a combination of teaching instruction and gender supported

the changes in class responses.

Statement Four: News has commercial implications, showed that the class remained in a neutral to agree position whereas the case students moved from a disagree on the first questionnaire to an agree on the second questionnaire then to a neutral position on the third questionnaire. The male students showed a strong agreement for all three surveys. Again, the female students' responses varied. They showed a neutral to a don't know response for the first two questionnaires. The final questionnaire showed no female consensus. Although this response showed a strong male stand, the females did move in the agree direction. The fact that females were the target of ad campaigns and thus failed to see the commercial implications of the news might account for their responses.

For *Statement Five: The news medium contains value messages,* the class remained in a neutral to an agree position and the case study group stayed at a neutral position. The female students agreed on the first two questionnaires but showed a neutral position on the last survey. The female students' responses again showed no resemblance. Instead, their responses ranged from disagree to strongly disagree on all three questionnaires.

For *Statement Six: News media has social implications,*

the class stayed at a neutral position. The case students' responses moved slightly from a neutral response of 3.00 on the second questionnaire to a 3.50 on the third questionnaire. The third questionnaire was higher than the neutral response of 3.17 of the first questionnaire. The male students showed no consensus on the first two surveys. However their responses were in the neutral to agree to strongly agree area. For the third questionnaire, this changed to a strongly agree. The female students did not have a consensus on the first questionnaire. The third questionnaire showed a change to a neutral response.

Statement Seven: Each news medium has its own form and content, moved steadily to an agree position of 3.24 to 3.67 and finally to 3.89 for the class responses. This change was not as apparent in the case study group. This group moved from an agree on the second questionnaire to a neutral 3.83 on the third questionnaire. However, this was higher than the response on the first questionnaire of 3.67. The male students moved from no consensus on the first two questionnaires, to strongly agree on the last questionnaire. The female students showed no consensus on questionnaires one and three respectively. Their answers ranged from a disagree to neutral to agree placement. On the second questionnaire, their responses fell in the agree area. Statements five to seven showed that the case study students

reflected the class results and that answers of male students seemed more aggressive than their female counterparts.

Statement Eight: Each news medium has its own aesthetic form, showed the class staying at a neutral response after an initial move from a disagreement position on the first administration of the questionnaire. The case students remained neutral, but of the three questionnaires, the third response was the lowest neutral placement. The responses moved from 3.83 to 3.67 and concluded with 3.50. The male students moved from an agree on the first two questionnaires to a strongly agree on the last survey. The female students changed from an agree placement on the first two questionnaires to no consensus on the final survey. These responses may be due to the meaning of the word aesthetic. Both male and female students added this word to their vocabulary as the NEWS UNIT progressed.

Class Assignments and Observations. The class did not show as sharp a degree of change in their responses as the case students did. It appears that the students may have had too much information to process and there may not have been sufficient time for students to form opinions about *all* the topics presented on the questionnaires. Although the responses certainly showed a strong tie to the topics covered during class discussions, the students were inundated with new information.

For example, a class assignment that asked students to account for the differences in two separate print coverage of the Olympic Games showed that they were skeptical of their findings. They questioned the teacher/researcher as if the teacher/researcher was responsible for the difference in coverage. They found it difficult to believe that the coverage of the same event could be so different. It wasn't until examples were provided that the students were convinced that the publications were authentic and that each country wrote the news according to their individual perspectives. This assignment, as well as other class assignments concerning television news broadcasting, contributed to a greater change in responses from the administration of the first questionnaire to the second questionnaire than the change from the administration of the second questionnaire to the third questionnaire.

It was observed that students were surprised when they were shown how a television station edited a news interview so that the final news construction gave a very different viewpoint than was originally intended by the parties involved. They expressed this with many "oohs" and "ahs", then asked if such editing techniques were possible in the school's studio. Another assignment studied how a television crew focused on tragic stories and sensationalism to capture audience attention. The

students were amazed and concerned. They "booed" the news anchor person and expressed their amazement and concern by saying that they thought news people couldn't focus on stories just because they (newscasters) wanted high ratings.

These assignments helped the students to realize that news presentations depended upon many factors. As a class the following list was compiled.

1. *the presentation of facts depended upon the origin of the story and the country covering the story*
2. *news stories were edited and therefore may not give a true picture of the way things really happened because*
 - a) *an interviewer could leave out important introductions and thus present a different picture from the one originally intended*
 - b) *stories may be organized to capture audience attention instead of focusing on important issues.*

The questionnaires showed a change in student responses because of a specific media literacy program. Their responses reflected journal questions and class discussions. Students' responses changed as they began to form opinions based on information discussed and studied in a media literacy program.

Type of Medium also made a difference in the students' responses. The following student statements were observed at the

conclusion of a class assignment in which the students had studied information about the different kinds of media:

1. TV and radio depended on bleed stories.
2. TV provided visual and audio.
3. Radio only provided audio.
4. Both relied on catchy news and tunes to introduce the news.
5. Both relied on good newscasters. Radio newscasters needed a good voice. TV newscasters needed to be good-looking.
6. Radio news used more interviews than TV news.
7. Radio news was not interrupted by commercials as frequently as TV news was.
8. Radio reported more frequently (most stations reported every hour) than TV news.
9. Radio news dealt with more news items than special interest stories. For this reason, radio news was completed more quickly than TV news. Radio didn't have the "song and dance" as one student commented that TV news had.
10. Print news was more detailed and lengthier than either TV or radio news. Print news was constructed by letter type (e.g. bold headlines), placement of

coloured and black and white photographs, and placement of stories in particular sections of a newspaper or magazine. Print stories often reported news from a retrospective view and followed radio and TV reports by reporting more than one circumstance of a situation. The audience could choose what story they wanted to read first, second, third and so on.

Summary. From the questionnaires, journals, class assignments and observations, it was apparent that students' responses changed as a result of a specific media program. As students progressed in their studies, they began to identify the different media constructions of TV, radio, and print news. The questionnaire results showed an application of the class assignments and provided evidence that the medium made a difference in the students' responses.

A description and interpretation of Part B of the questionnaire provided further findings which helped to answer the research questions.

Questionnaire Part B: (Student and Program). For Part B of the questionnaire, many changes in responses occurred. Both the class and case students showed changes for Statements

One and Seven. There were only slight changes in class responses for Statements Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six. The case students showed changes for all the statements, except for Statements Six and Eight. Refer to **Table 2**.

For example. *Statement One: News is an important part of my life*, the class moved from a disagree to a neutral position. Although this change may be considered slight, it shows a move toward more disagreement than the results of the first questionnaire. The first administration score was 3.00, the second was 2.56, and the third was 2.97. The case students showed an agreement position, with a change from a neutral 3.32 to 3.00 on the first and second administrations, to an agreement on the last questionnaire of 4.00. The male students changed from an agree position on the first two administration of the questionnaire to a non consensus on the third administrations. The female student results were opposite in that they had no consensus on the first two administrations of the questionnaires and agreement on the final one. These responses were reflected in journal and class assignments.

Statement Two: When I require detailed information it doesn't matter the type of news medium I choose, the class showed no change in their disagree to neutral position, for all three questionnaires. The case students showed a move from a neutral

Table 2

MEAN BY CLASS AND CASE STUDENTS FOR STUDENT AND PROGRAM

Student & Program	First Administration		Second Administration		Third Administration	
	Class	(Cases)	Class	(Cases)	Class	(Cases)
1. News is an important part of my life	3.00	(3.32)	2.56	(3.00)	2.97	(4.00)
2. When I require detailed information, it doesn't matter the type of news medium I choose	2.58	(3.33)	2.78	(2.67)	2.71	(2.50)
3. Most people rely on the medium of TV for their daily news information	3.82	(4.00)	3.64	(4.17)	3.61	(3.50)
4. News people are celebrities	2.42	(3.17)	3.03	(2.83)	3.00	(3.00)
5. News people are journalists	2.92	(3.00)	2.69	(1.50)	2.89	(2.33)
6. Canadian news broadcasts differ from American news broadcasts	3.63	(4.17)	4.00	(4.17)	3.95	(4.00)
7. Lead stories are chosen according to audience appeal	3.37	(2.83)	4.19	(4.17)	3.87	(3.50)
8. The news is edited	3.87	(4.67)	4.14	(4.17)	4.18	(4.50)

KEY: Scale range 0 to 5 0-don't know 1-strongly disagree 2-disagree
 3-neutral 4-agree 5-strongly agree

Class n=32

Cases n=6

position on the first questionnaire to one of disagreement for the second and third questionnaire. The male students moved from an agree position to no consensus and finally to a neutral response. The female student responses ranged from strongly disagree to neutral, to agree and strongly agree on the first two surveys. This response occurred in the agree zone. On the final administration of the questionnaire, their answers showed a consensus of agreement. Male students showed a preference for a medium whereas the female students did not show a preference for a particular medium. The change in responses showed not only that gender made a difference in the students' responses but that the medium also made a difference in students' responses. These differences are further illustrated by the following questionnaire statement.

Statement Three: Most people rely on the medium of TV for their daily news information, showed no change for the class at the neutral position. For the case students, the responses showed a surprising move from the expected answer. This group moved from an agree to a neutral position. On the first questionnaire, their responses showed a 4.00 score. On the second administration, the score was 3.64, and on the third administration, the score was 3.50. The male student responses changed from strongly agree on the first questionnaire to agree

on the second questionnaire and then back to strongly agree on the last questionnaire. The female students showed an agree on the first survey. Their response moved to non consensus on the last two surveys with only one of the three female case study students disagreeing both times. The male students watched more TV than their female counterparts. This finding may be the reason that male students preferred a particular medium in questionnaire statement two, but more importantly it may account for the difference in the gender responses in the choice of medium.

For *Statement Four: News people are celebrities*, the class responses stayed in the disagree to neutral range. For the case students, the responses moved from a neutral place to a slight disagree position, then back to a neutral place. The male students changed from a non consensus position on the first questionnaire to a neutral place on the second and third questionnaires. The female student responses ranged from don't know to strongly agree on all questionnaires. Again, this response may have been due to the fact that females are the target of ad campaigns and historically, the victims of more mixed messages of the ideal personality and the ideal look than their male counterparts.

The class response for *Statement Five: News people are*

journalists, showed that for all three administrations the class remained in a disagree to neutral place. The case students' responses were quite interesting. They showed a change from the first questionnaire of a neutral position 3.00, to disagree place 1.50 on the second questionnaire, then to an agree position on the last questionnaire. The male students changed from a strongly disagree on the first survey to agree, then to a non consensus situation on the final survey. The female students changed from agree on the first survey, to don't know on the second survey and finally disagree to neutral zone on the last survey. Again, this difference may have resulted because females were the target of mixed media messages. It also shows the amount of stereotyping that is perpetuated by the media.

Statement Six: Canadian news broadcasts differ from American news broadcasts, showed the class response was slightly down in the third administration of the questionnaire when compared to the second. However, the last questionnaire showed more agreement than the first questionnaire. The male students changed from agree on the first two administrations to strongly agree on the second and third. The females changed from a non consensus situation on the first to strongly agree on the second and finally to agree on the last. It was rather odd that the female students did not take a stronger stance because they

voiced strong opinions about female representation in the news during class discussions.

Statement Seven: Lead stories are chosen according to audience appeal, showed that the class moved from a neutral position 3.37 on the first administration of the questionnaire, to an agree 4.19, on the second and finally to a high neutral place 3.87 on the third. The case students showed the largest change between administration two and three of the questionnaire. On the second administration these students generated 4.17, an agree position. These same students shifted to a 3.50, a neutral position on the third administration. Although the last two administrations showed a change, they were both different from the first disagree position of 2.83. The male response on the first questionnaire showed non consensus. This response changed to strongly agree for administrations two and three. The female students began with a non-consensus response on the first survey to a strongly agree response on the second survey and back to non-consensus on the third survey, although their responses fell in the agree to strongly agree area. These changes reflected the class assignment and journal activities for both male and female students. Again, the females wavered in their opinions, unlike the male students who were more secure in their responses.

Statement Eight: The news is edited, showed that the

class moved from a neutral position on the first administration of the questionnaire of 3.87, to a strong agree position of 4.14 on the second questionnaire and finally to a 4.17 place on the third questionnaire. The case studies maintained an agree position for this statement on all three questionnaires. The male students remained in a strongly agree position for all three questionnaires. The female student responses changed from agree on the first survey to a neutral place on the second survey and then back to agree on the final questionnaire. The changing responses moved in the desired direction for both male and female students; however, the female students seemed hesitant to form a strong opinion.

Summary. The questionnaire responses for Part B confirmed findings from the students' journals, class assignments and field note observations. The most noticeable changes occurred between the administration of questionnaires one and two. These changes showed that students' responses changed as a result of a media literacy program, and that the medium made a difference in the students responses, even though not all the statements showed a change. Many factors may have contributed to the lack of change for some statements. For instance, it was likely that the students required more information about a topic

or that they had concentrated on information that particularly interested them.

The results of the first administration of the questionnaire showed that for the most part, the students were rather cautious. Their answers fell in the neutral area most of the time with only slight degrees of movement to an agreement/disagreement. There could be many reasons for the neutral answers. Observations and field notes indicated several possible explanations for the neutral answers. These included:

1. Although the teacher/researcher assured the students that the questionnaire was not part of their media English evaluation, a neutral answer was safe.
2. Students' questions indicated that more information about the NEWS was required. A neutral answer showed that they did have an opinion rather than marking the "don't know" category.
3. The students were busy with other assignments. The questionnaire was not important for them at the time because it was not part of their evaluation, not relevant to their class work and was considered an additional activity.

The first administration of the questionnaire provided a base from which a comparison of the students' responses could

be discussed and interpreted. The case students' responses showed a sharper change than the class responses. This difference may have been due to the wide range of variation in the class responses which was lost in calculating mean and accentuated the case students' responses. At any rate the comparison of the questionnaires provided evidence that students' response did change as a result of a media literacy program and that the medium made a difference in the responses. Class assignments and observations supported this observed change. The students gained a better understanding of news coverage through numerous class assignments. It was observed that they came to an appreciation of the newscasters' responsibilities in the ordering and editing of stories. They were also making connections between articles and films that they studied in class with their homework assignments that asked them to observe different local, regional, national, and international broadcasts.

The students were amazed at the extent to which television in particular could manipulate the news. They were shocked by the editing process. This reaction showed that the medium did make a difference in the students' responses. The students realized that print news and radio was edited as well but that print news provided more information, and radio news presented an hourly update of information. These connections

helped the students identify the news as a media construction. Although there were still a few students who accepted that local news was a media construction but felt that national and international news were not, the changes in questionnaire responses strongly tied the class assignments and observations. The students' responses to media did change because of a specific media program. The medium did make a difference in the students' responses.

Applications of Media Concepts

The third section of the questionnaire students were asked to identify the medium that they enjoyed the most and then to circle the amount of time they spent using that particular medium. Secondly, the students were asked to indicate from one to nine the media they preferred. Lastly, the students were asked to re-arrange a list of items to show how they felt the NEWS affected their lives. Part C of the questionnaire asked students only to report on media in their lives. The students were not interviewed about their application of media concepts or observed outside of the class environment.

Questionnaire Part C (Media In My Life). The purpose of Part C was to help determine the choice of media that students preferred, how the media affected their lives, and how their responses changed as a result of media instruction. For this

reason, all three surveys will be compared.

Table 3 shows an overall picture of the first, second and third administration of the questionnaire. It is followed by description of its findings. On the first administration of the questionnaire, three students did not answer. On the second administration of the questionnaire, six students did not indicate a response, and for the third administration, three students did not respond. This information accounts for the discrepancy in class number for the administration of the questionnaires as reported in Table 3.

Choice of Medium. The first statement of Part C (Media In My Life) asked the students to choose the medium they enjoyed the most. Their choices included: newspaper, CD player, tape recorder, TV, magazine, and radio.

For the purpose of the analyses, these media have been collapsed into three categories:

1. print- newspaper, magazine
2. audio- tape player, CD player, radio
3. audio/video - TV

On the first administration of the questionnaire, more students chose audio than print or video media. This choice was a very strong one compared with the print and audio choices. On the second administration of the questionnaire, the students'

Table 3**MEDIUM SELECTED AS MOST ENJOYED**

	First Administration	Second Administration	Third Administration
Medium			
Print			
* newspaper			
* magazine	2	5	2
Audio Visual			
* television	13	14	12
Audio			
* radio			
* CD			
* tape	20	13	21

choice shifted from audio to audio visual, and the number for the print medium strengthened. On the final administration of the questionnaire, the results of the choices were similar to those of the initial administration of the questionnaire, with audio being the first choice, audio visual the second choice, and print being the third choice.

The male responses reflected the class responses in that their first choice was also audio, their second choice audio/video, and their last choice print. However, the difference for the male students between the selection of audio over audio/video wasn't as wide a gap as the female responses showed. The female students' first choice was also audio, their second choice was audio/video, and their last choice was print. Eight male students chose audio, six chose audio video, and three chose print. These results contrasted with the female responses: six females chose audio, two chose audio/video, and one chose print. Twelve students did not respond to this question. Furthermore, the males reported spending two to three hours more than the female students who spent one hour enjoying their favourite medium.

Response to item 3 on the questionnaire provided information about gender differences in students' choice of medium. For this question students were asked to order from one

to nine, the medium that they preferred. The media choices included: reading books, reading magazines, reading newspapers, listening to music, listening to the radio, watching sit-coms, watching news, watching sports programs, watching movies, and listening to the radio.

Again, these choices were categorized as,

- 1) print- books, magazines, newspapers
- 2) audio- music, radio
- 3) audio/video- sports programs, newscasts, sit-coms, movies.

On the first questionnaire, the students' responses showed that the medium most enjoyed was audio with a raw score of 20 (66%). On the second questionnaire, audio received a score of 13 (43%), and on the third questionnaire, audio rose to a raw score of 21 (70%). Over the three administrations of the questionnaires, the male students most preferred the audio/video medium, then audio. For the female students, the medium of choice was audio, then audio/video. The reasons for the changes were numerous and are interpreted in relationship to the class activities, assignments, and journals.

For example, it was observed during class assignments that the students discovered that most people counted on television for their daily news update. They concluded that

although most radio news was broadcasted on the hour, some radio stations did not broadcast the news hourly. The students also found out that print news provided a detailed and retrospective point of view and that the further a news report was from the source, the greater the chances of inaccurate news coverage.

Table 4 provides an overall picture of the questionnaire results. It is followed by an explanation that further supports the fact that not only does gender make a difference in the students' responses but that the medium also makes a difference in the students' responses. All students responded to this exercise on the first administration of the questionnaire. Two students did not indicate their preferences on the second administration, and one student did not respond to this exercise on the third administration of the questionnaire. This explanation accounts for the discrepancy in class number for the administration of questionnaires one, two, and three as shown on Table 6.

Part C of Questionnaire One and Questionnaire Two reflected the findings from the journals and class assignments and the concentrated exposure of the NEWS which characterized the Introduction of the NEWS UNIT. During the last three weeks of the NEWS UNIT, students had less intense teacher directed activities to challenge their media literacy knowledge and

Table 4**MEDIUM FIRST PREFERENCE**

	First Administration	Second Administration	Third Administration
Medium			
Print			
*newspaper			
*magazine			
*book	4	4	4
Audio Visual			
*sit-com			
*movie			
*sports			
*news	21	14	12
Audio			
*radio			
*music	13	18	21

skills. The storyboard assignment became the students' focus. Several reasons accounted for the response changes for Part C of Questionnaire Three. These were.

1. responses seemed to show that the students were less convinced that news was a media construction
2. students forgot their media discussions
3. students were less impressed by media constructions
4. students were in a hurry to wrap up and complete the course
5. students had too many deadlines.

Influence of Media. The last questionnaire statement of Part C showed that students did apply media literacy to their daily life decision-making. Students were asked to rate how the news affected decisions about travel, living location, education, clothing, and eating.

Table 5 presents an overall picture of how students saw the media affecting their lives across the first, second, and third administration of the questionnaire.

On the administration of the questionnaire for the first time, one student did not respond to this exercise. On the second and third administrations of the questionnaire, three students did not respond. This information accounts for the

Table 5**DECISIONS AFFECTED BY THE NEWS**

	First Administration	Second Administration	Third Administration
Decision Topic			
travel	6	7	6
living	12	15	13
education	6	6	8
clothing	3	2	1
food	10	5	7

discrepancy in class number for the administration of questionnaires one, two, and three shown on Table 5.

On all three administrations, the class chose *living location* as their first choice. *Eating* was the class's second choice on the first questionnaire. This choice changed to *travel* in the second questionnaire and by the third questionnaire, *living location* was a second choice for many students, although it did remain the first choice for the class. The third choice for the class was a tie between *travel* and *education*. By the second questionnaire, the third choice affected by the news was definitely *travel* and by the last questionnaire the class's third choice was *education*.

By the second questionnaire, the fourth choice had changed to *eating*. In questionnaire three, the fourth choice was *travel*. *Clothing* was the class's fifth choice for all three questionnaires. This choice seemed the least affected by the NEWS according to the class results.

For the case students' results, the male students considered *travel* as their first choice for the first questionnaire. For the females, *eating* was the choice they felt the NEWS affected the most. On the second questionnaire, the gender opinions were scattered but students did share *clothing* as a first choice. By the final questionnaire, *clothing* was the

first choice of the case study male students, *eating* was the second choice and *education* was the last choice or least affected by the news. The case study female students chose *education* as the most affected by the NEWS and *eating* as their second choice. The other choices showed individual decision-making instead of a consensus of choices.

Summary Discussion of Findings.

The class responses showed that students' grasp of media concepts improved throughout the unit. The case students confirmed this interpretation as their responses provided a sharper picture and clarified the gender analysis. When one considers a class perspective, it is important to review the observations of the class's assignments during the third phase of the media literacy unit.

Unlike the Introduction, this phase was not teacher directed. The students concentrated on their storyboard productions and the teacher/researcher assumed the role of facilitator rather than teacher. A journal was presented and completed every day, but whole class discussions seldom occurred and even small group discussions dealt with the storyboard. Consequently, it was only the students' reflections in their journal that served to reinforce the concepts of media literacy.

Formal instruction was at a minimum. This method of teaching may explain, in part, why many student responses showed greater change between the administrations one and two than between questionnaires two and three. It would appear that students require reinforcement through directed discussions, group activities, and assignments. This oral exchange was not happening. When a major assignment, such as the storyboard, became a priority, the student focus was moved from the processing of media literacy knowledge to the task at hand, in this case the storyboard.

During this phase of the study there were several interruptions. For example, school was cancelled for rural students for half a day because of a snowstorm. This meant that only a few students were present and it was difficult to carry on group work. On another occasion, a fire alarm interrupted the class and created time problems for the completion of the storyboards.

Another challenge with the last storyboard was that students were allowed to work with people they had not had a chance to work with previously. Some students chose to work with other students for the wrong reasons. For example, it was observed that one group wanted to sensationalize the storyboard news broadcast. Their decision showed a disregard for the media

concepts covered, but it may have happened because the group was not used to working together. Others decided to work with friends. This choice ended in too much socializing and had to be closely monitored by the teacher/researcher.

Another group seemed to be completely incompatible. They stuck with the storyboard assignment but it was a struggle and an unpleasant experience for a few group members. These examples as well as the fact that the NEWS UNIT was the final unit of study complicated the students' processing of media concepts.

The NEWS UNIT took place at the end of semester one. Students seemed tired. Many were absent or late more frequently than at other times during the semester. Others seemed to realize that they may not see their fellow classmates next semester. A few girl/boy friendships were initiated while others were broken. The end of the semester was also exam time. The media course did not have an exam. This fact again contributed to a lack of concentration on media concepts as the students' energy was directed toward courses that required exam preparation.

The questionnaires, journals, class assignments and field note observations tied together to describe the students' changing responses. The students' gender often made a difference

in their responses and media choices. The case students' provided a confirmation of the students' changing responses and insight for gender differences. Like the class, the case study student responses showed the biggest change between the administration of questionnaires one and two and not questionnaires two and three. No student's response reverted back to an original response. This information provides evidence that a change had taken place as a result of a specific media program. The lack of distinct changes between the administration of questionnaires two and three may be attributed to the changes in the NEWS UNIT during the latter part of the semester.

In Chapter Five the implications of the research findings are discussed. Alternative avenues for future research are suggested and the role of the student in a media literacy program is examined with regard to task oriented instructional time.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This descriptive study employed both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. It was conducted in a natural classroom setting over a six week period of time. The analyses investigated students' changing responses to a specific unit, THE NEWS, in a media literacy program. This chapter provides a summary of the research design, data analyses, and interpretation, with implications of the research findings. It examines the students' role in theoretical descriptions of media literacy instruction and offers possibilities for future research studies of media literacy.

Summary of the Study

Thirty-eight senior high school students from the same school participated in a media unit, THE NEWS. This unit was the last of four media units conducted by the teacher/ researcher. The unit was introduced after the first administration of the

questionnaire. This questionnaire generated the students' 'before' responses. Three weeks later, the second administration of the same questionnaire was completed. This questionnaire provided the 'during' research responses. A third administration was completed at the conclusion of the NEWS UNIT. These data provided the 'after' research responses. During the NEWS UNIT, students responded to a variety of news media issues in their journals and in their class discussions and assignments. These activities, combined with the three administrations of the questionnaire and the teacher/researcher's daily observations provided information which the teacher/researcher used to describe students' responses to the unit of study, in effect to report how students understood news reporting.

The Introduction of the NEWS UNIT was task oriented and teacher directed. Journals were assigned daily at the beginning of class. The journal content set the focus for the class assignments. Students were given an opportunity to discuss and apply ideas from their journals to assignments. They were challenged to investigate and answer questions individually, with a partner, or in small groups. The students presented the results of their research and inquiry to other groups and/or to the class. They were given feedback by the teacher/researcher and by their peers to further their investigations. Many readings, audio, and audio-visual stimuli were employed to

confirm media concepts and generate new ideas.

It was observed that noticeable change in the students' responses occurred between the first and the second administration of the questionnaire. During this Introductory phase the learning activities were task oriented and teacher directed. The journals and class activities were designed to challenge the students' thinking about the media through inquiry and research.

After the administration of the second questionnaire, the final three weeks of the NEWS UNIT, the purpose of the journals and the class assignments altered. It was observed that students' responses shifted with the changes in the instructional approach. The tasks of the last three weeks of the NEWS UNIT were less teacher directed. Students focused on an integrated project (storyboard) rather than several short assignments. The journals were given at the beginning of each class, but the development of the storyboard became the major class assignment during the final three weeks of the course.

The storyboard was a group task that involved the writing, drawing of computer graphics, editing, and rewriting of a news broadcast. The storyboard required a background set, props, costumes, music, sound affects, commercials, and practice. It was an on-going assignment. An independent study that had been assigned prior to the NEWS UNIT and due a week before the

conclusion of the media literacy program also made significant time demands on the students.

During the final phase of the NEWS UNIT, the teacher acted as a facilitator. Assignments were not given daily. With the exception of a current issue or an audio or audio-visual presentation, the confirmation of media concepts and the generation of new ideas was left to the students. When a major assignment, such as the storyboard, became the focus, the students' processing of media concepts became task specific. It appears that students responded to teacher directed class discussions and assignments to reinforce the acquisition of media concepts. The fact that the conclusion of the NEWS UNIT also marked the conclusion of the media literacy course and the school semester may have influenced some of the shifts in the students' responses.

The NEWS UNIT took place at the conclusion of semester one. More students were either absent or late than they had been during the beginning of the NEWS UNIT. Others realized that they might not see their fellow classmates next semester so a few friendships were initiated, while others were broken. The end of the semester also marked exam time. The media literacy course did not have an exam. This situation may have contributed to a lack of concentration on media concepts as the students' energy was applied instead to courses that required exam preparation.

In brief, the students' changing responses were observed in the questionnaire results and in the journals responses and class assignments. A greater change took place when students were focused on tasks that emphasized specific media literacy concepts. Less change occurred between the administration of questionnaires two and three during which time students were focused on a generative rather than analytical task.

Conclusions

The teacher/researcher's study of the NEWS UNIT illustrated that students' responses to the media did change. Many factors contributed to the change and helped to answer the research questions.

Gender. *What difference does gender make in the students' responses?* Differences were observed in the responses of the males and the females. From the beginning of the study, the male students seemed to place more value on news coverage than the female students. As the males realized that the news was a construction and did not deserve the attention they gave it, their views about the news in their lives changed. The opposite seemed true for the female students who realized that even though news is constructed, it can be interesting and could be a part of their lives.

These differences were found in the quality and

quantity of both written and oral responses. For example, the girls' journal responses were lengthier than the boys' responses because they included the use of more descriptive words, anecdotes and examples from personal experiences or class discussions. The girls' responses reflected a knowledge of local news coverage but seldom referred to a global knowledge. The boys' journals responses were brief and to the point. They showed an awareness of global news coverage.

The male students preferred oral discussions about the news instead of written responses. This preference was apparent in small group discussions, large class discussions, and oral presentations. The male students stayed on task and completed assignments by sharing knowledge and research in a group situation for presentation. As a group, the male students were able to come to a consensus about a particular issue or at least agree to disagree so that their class presentations covered the topic thoroughly.

These male characteristics contrasted with those of the female students. The girls required reminders to stay on task. They used small group situations as opportunities to socialize. Although some girls contributed to large class discussions, the female students did not contribute as frequently or as readily as the boys. Furthermore, as a group they did not reach a consensus of opinion or agree to disagree. The girls' presentations were

brief and lacked the quality of the boys' presentations.

Gender differences also were noted in students' media preference and length of time they reported enjoying a favourite medium. Although the favourite medium for both male and female students was audio, more male students, over the three administrations of the questionnaires chose audio-visual as their first choice and audio as their second choice. At the same time, more female students chose audio as their first choice and audio-visual as their second choice. Male students reported spending two to three hours to the female students' one hour per day with their favourite medium. The male students as a group showed a preference for and strongly agree that TV was the medium that most people relied on for their daily news information. The female students as a group did not show a media preference and did not reach a consensus but disagreed that most people relied on TV.

Media Literacy Unit. *What changes occur in students' responses to the media as a result of a specific media unit?* The students' responses did change during the media literacy program. The changes not only were evident in the changing responses of the three questionnaires, but also were demonstrated by the students' journal responses and class assignments. The third administration of the questionnaire showed that the mean student ranking varied from the responses they had made on the first

administration of the questionnaire. The general direction showed that students were becoming more critical in their use of media constructions and more willing to seek a variety of media sources for their news information than they had prior to the NEWS UNIT.

Medium. *What difference does medium make in the students' responses?* Students' responses to the various media differed. Students preferred audio/visual or audio to print. As they progressed through the NEWS UNIT, the print media consistently held a third choice ranking. It also generated the least amount of time reported by students for their out of class use.

Media Literacy in Real-life Situations. *How do students apply their media literacy to real-life situations?* The questionnaires presented insights about the application of media literacy in Part C (Media In My Life). Living location was consistently and strongly influenced by the news media over the three administrations of the questionnaire. Together, decisions about food, education, and travel shared an average second ranking on the administration of questionnaires, while the news media was reported as having a very limited influence on clothing decision-making. This study did not observe the students' media application outside the classroom. Neither were students interviewed to clarify their media related behavior.

As noted under Gender, males and females reported differences in their media preference and the time spent on their choice of medium.

Implications and Recommendations

As advocated by the practical approaches to media literacy, this study found that students who developed media literacy skills were empowered by their new found powers of deconstruction. They recognized themselves as media users and potential targets of multi-million dollar advertisement campaigns. They identified the media as a culture which encompassed issues of ownership, control, cultural representation, ideology, and equity. Most importantly, the students recognized the way media messages change their world. This study's focus on the way a message may change according to a medium and how a medium may change a message, echoed Marshall McLuhan's (1964) theory about the effect of media literacy on its viewers.

By exploring McLuhan's "extensions of man" this study described how students were encouraged to analyze critically the meaning of media messages and the pre-packaging of media images. It reported students' examination of media constructions and the effect that these constructions have on society. This study discovered, as McLuhan predicted, that a media user who

recognizes a media construction is not as easily manipulated by the message because the user understands the construction. In the same way that McLuhan recognized that media users shaped media messages, this study demonstrates that media students shape media instruction.

Students' Role in Media Literacy Instruction. This study described and interpreted the students' use of media literacy in a classroom setting. Their changing responses and choices of media showed that both male and female students demonstrated the most noticeable change during teacher-directed and task-oriented media instruction to ensure the steady generation or spiral accumulation of knowledge and skills. The students' preference of audio media is indicative of the adolescent life-style because these media are portable. The study of this media genre adds personal relevance for the adolescent learners. The students preference of audio and audio-visual media confirms a move by the students away from educators' use of traditional print media. This finding challenges educators to vary their media instruction by offering the students a variety of media presentations and resources. In this technological age, instruction using audio and audio-visual media is more relevant, current, and interesting for students than traditional, print based methods.

Media Literacy Instruction. As a result of analyzing

students' responses to a media literacy program, the teacher/researcher developed important information about media instruction. When media studies were teacher-directed and task-oriented, and students were provided structural opportunities to discuss, inquire, and research media messages, noticeable change in the questionnaire responses of administration one and two occurred. This information suggests that change can occur quickly under such an approach. However, as the media instruction continued and became less teacher-directed and task-oriented, the changes appeared to be short-lived. This situation was the case during the second phase of the media program.

During this phase, media instruction was less teacher-directed and task-oriented, as the students focused on the integrated generative storyboard assignment. The responses of the third administration of the questionnaire did not show noticeable differences when compared to those of the first two administrations. Although the students' responses did not revert to their original answers, these responses suggested that change requires time, coupled with consistent instruction and reinforcement in order to foster its continued development.

Media literacy must continue to challenge students. The following recommendations are a result of this study's

findings.

1. Adoption of a Spiral Curriculum: A spiral curriculum is critical to the development of skills and knowledge because it allows students to build upon their media expertise through daily discussions, inquiry, and research.
2. Use of Current and Relevant Resources: Educators need to provide current and relevant information from all media resources so that students study media literacy as a modern culture and not as a history.
3. Use of All Media in a Variety of Situations: Media literacy instruction needs to offer students an opportunity to speak, listen, write, dramatize, and read about their media experiences. This is facilitated in large and small group situations. Experience and expertise are shared, discussed, and presented continually and consistently.

Media literacy is a life skill that will be judged by the students' use of its instruction after they have left school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). This study was able to describe and interpret the students use of media literacy in a classroom setting. However, the students responses to the questionnaire statements suggests that the influence of the assignments and activities which fostered inquiry and challenged

students' existing concepts (i.e. how media influences decisions about travel, living location, education, clothing, and food) was at best short term. Change takes time.

Research. The following topics are offered as recommendations for further media studies.

1. Society is bombarded by media messages. Educators need to realize that a media literacy program must focus on media messages and the effect that these messages have on their users. How students apply their media literacy to real-life situations is an area that this study examined only through students' reports. More exploratory research in this area is needed. Such studies might use interviews, small group discussions, or focus groups to understand how students apply media literacy instruction outside the classroom.
2. Research designed to help educators understand the influence of media instruction is needed through,
 - a) a more in depth study of student responses and different instructional strategies in media literacy education,
 - b) investigation into how students influence and shape media instruction in secondary classrooms.

3. The examination of gender representations in the media is needed to understand how this difference influences the responses of both adolescent females and males.

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APPENDICES

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THUNDER BAY, Ontario
January 1995.

Dear

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct a Masters of Education study that will investigate the responses of secondary media literacy students.

The study will be guided by four essential questions.

1. *What changes occur in students' responses to the media as a result of a specific media literacy unit?*
2. *What differences does gender make in the students' responses?*
3. *What difference does medium make in the students' responses?*
4. *How do students apply their media literacy to real-life situations?*

To date, very little research has studied the responses of students. This study will provide interesting insights for educators about the media literacy program from a student's point of view. It will provide students with the opportunity to participate in the process and evaluation of their learning. This study will show the sincere inclusion of students as active partners in the process and evaluation of program and teaching. This study will help teachers access and understand student needs for media education that extends beyond the classroom.

Once board permission is granted, a cover letter and a consent form will be sent to the parents/guardians of the students. A form will also be provided for the students' consent. All information collected during the study will remain confidential. I have included a copy of the cover letter, the parental consent form, and the student consent form for your information.

If you have any questions concerning this study, please contact me at
High School or you may call my supervisor, Dr. Roderick McLeod, at
343-8695. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Patricia Ambrose

January 9, 1995
REF: R06-RE

Mrs. Patricia Ambrose

Dear Mrs. Ambrose:

I am pleased to advise that our Executive Council has reviewed your research proposal and in accordance with Board Policy 904 - Research Activities you are granted permission to conduct your Master of Education study "Student Responses to Media Literacy".

In accordance with our policy on research activities, I would ask that you please complete the attached Research Agreement Code of Ethics and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

The contact person for this research proposal is Superintendent of Curriculum.

Sincerely,

Director of Education.

/s/uh
Attachment



THE LAKEHEAD DISTRICT ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD
LE CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES SÉPARÉES CATHOLIQUES DU DISTRICT DE LAKEHEAD

RESEARCH AGREEMENT CODE OF ETHICS

Research Project: Student Responses to Media Literacy

Researcher: Patricia Ambrose

1. The researcher conducting research within the jurisdiction of the Lakehead District Catholic School Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board) shall abide by the terms of Board Policy #904.
2. The research procedure shall not be harmful in any way to the subject(s) participating in the research.
3. While conducting the research, the researcher will place himself or herself under the jurisdiction of the designated Supervisory Officer and of the Principal of the school selected for the research in terms of their conduct while working in the school.
4. The researcher shall not without specific approval of the designated Supervisory Officer attract the interest of the mass media to this research or discuss the research with representatives of the media in such a way as to identify the system, the school or the school personnel involved in the research.
5. The data collected in the performance of the research shall be kept in strictest confidence. No names of persons tested, the test results or the names of teachers, principals or schools shall be mentioned or attention be unduly attracted to them during the course of or following research undertaken. General or specific results as would be used for research papers or scientific journals are permissible.

6. The researcher has requested access to the following records containing personal information in the custody or control of the Board.

Ontario Student Records (OSR)

daily student journals, class assignments, note books, tests

The researcher understands and promises to abide by the following terms and conditions:

7. The researcher will not use the information in the records for any purpose other than the following research purpose unless the researcher has the Board's written authorization to do so: (Describe research purpose below).

The purpose of this study will be guided by four essential questions. 1. How do the students' responses to the media change as a result of a media literacy program? 2. Does gender make a difference in the students' responses? If so what are the differences? 3. Does the medium make a difference in the students' responses? If so what are the differences? 4. How do students apply their media literacy to real-life situations?



THUNDER BAY, Ontario

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Dear student,

You are invited to participate in a survey of student responses to the content and learning activities you will experience in Media Literacy. Your responses will help teachers to understand better how students respond to media instruction. After the initial survey, six students will be chosen by the teacher for observation during a unit of study about the news.

You will be required to read a number of statements on a questionnaire. For each statement, you will respond by ranking your agreement from 1 to 5 or 0 if you do not have an answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Your participation in this study will not affect your grade in any way. You will complete the survey at three different times during the study.

You may choose not to participate in the survey if you wish to do so. You do not have to complete the questionnaire.

You do not have to sign your name. A student number will be provided for you. The number will help me organize and compare the results, but it will not be used to identify you. You will not be identified in the report.

I understand the purpose of this study and that I may be one of the six students selected for observation during the unit on the news.

(please print your name)

(student's signature)

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Directions: Below are statements about "The News". Circle the number that indicates your response from 5 to 0.

- 5 strongly agree
- 4 agree
- 3 neutral
- 2 disagree
- 1 strongly disagree
- 0 don't know

Part A: PROGRAM

1. The news is a media construction.
5 4 3 2 1 0
2. The news constructs reality.
5 4 3 2 1 0
3. The audience may change the meaning of the news.
5 4 3 2 1 0
4. The news media has commercial implications.
5 4 3 2 1 0
5. The news media contains value messages.
5 4 3 2 1 0
6. The news media has social implications.
5 4 3 2 1 0
7. Each news medium has its own form and content.
5 4 3 2 1 0
8. Each news medium has a unique aesthetic form.
5 4 3 2 1 0

Part B: Student and Program

1. News is an important part of my daily life.

5 4 3 2 1 0

2. When I require detailed information, it doesn't matter the type of news medium I choose.

5 4 3 2 1 0

3. Most people rely on the medium of television for their daily news information.

5 4 3 2 1 0

4. News people are celebrities.

5 4 3 2 1 0

5. News people are journalists.

5 4 3 2 1 0

6. Canadian news broadcasts differ from American news broadcasts.

5 4 3 2 1 0

7. Lead stories are chosen according to audience appeal.

5 4 3 2 1 0

8. The news is edited.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Part C: Media In My Life

1. Circle the medium that you enjoy the most.

newspaper magazine radio television CD tape

2. Circle the daily time to you spend enjoying your favourite medium.

under an hour 1 hour 2 hours 3 hours 4 hours 5 hours

3.

REARRANGE and LIST in order of preference the following items:

- a) listen to the radio
- b) watch a sit-com
- c) watch a movie
- d) read the newspaper
- e) watch a sports program
- f) watch the news
- g) listen to music
- h) read a magazine
- i) read a book

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____
- h) _____
- i) _____

4. REARRANGE and LIST in order of importance to you, how the news affects the following:

- a) decisions about travel
- b) decisions about where I live
- c) decisions about education
- d) decisions about the clothing I buy
- e) decisions about the food I eat

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

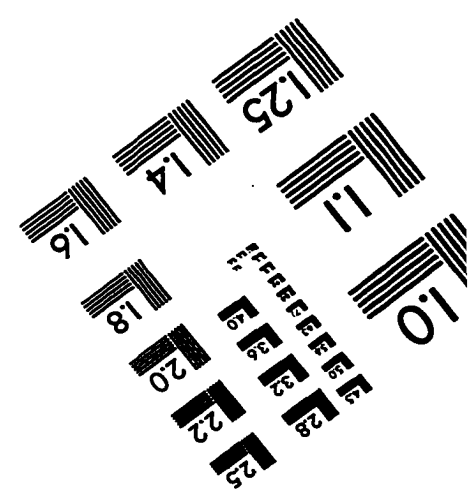
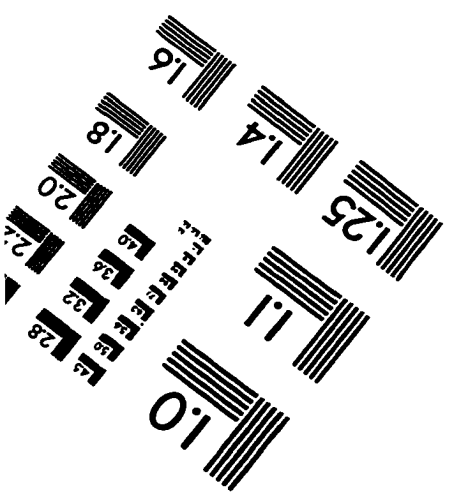
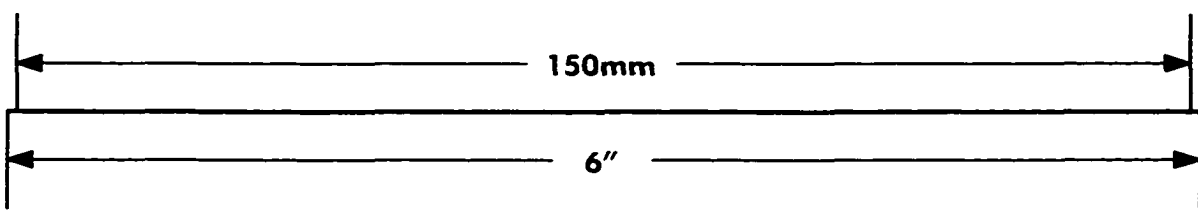
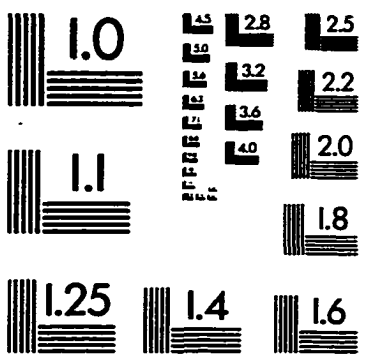
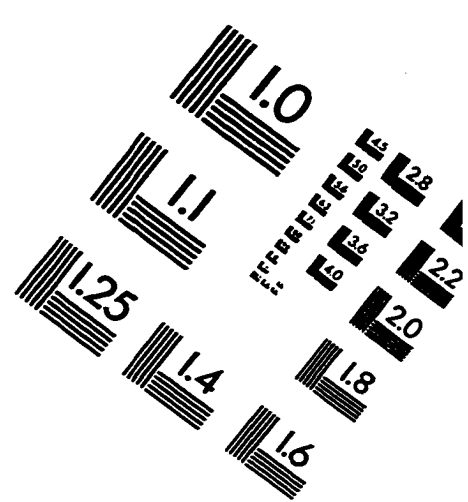
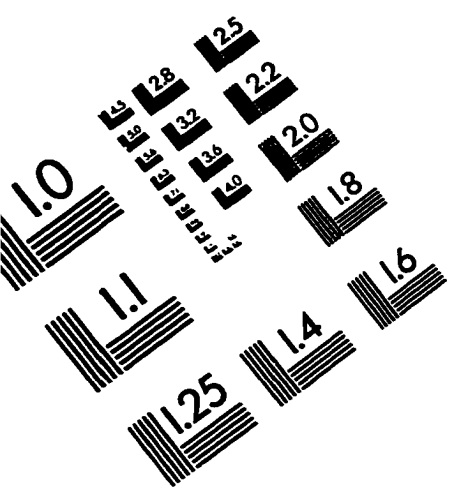
d) _____

e) _____

EMD-3G/3A1-TGJ-3G/3A1 SEMESTER UNIT SCHEDULE - SEMESTER ONE

MON.	MED. ENGLISH	GRAPHICS	VIDEO
EPT.	History and techniques of Advertising (Print/Video) Script preparation for 15 second commercial (storyboard, themes) Prepare poster content (themes, slogans, illustration layouts, text, etc.) Sept.6-30	History of Design and Layout Basic introduction to graphic communications B/W Photography Sept.6-19 Sept.20-Oct.3	Equipment training session Theory/Safety/Script Work/ Story boards Sept.6-19 Sept.20-Oct.3
CT.	Text preparation of Children's Literature (themes, illustration layout, paging) Script preparation for 30 second commercial (book promotion, storyboard) Oct.3-31	Introduction to desktop publishing Design a poster/posters Design a letterhead Design a business card Oct.4-18 Oct.19-Nov.7	15 second commercial Oct.4-18 Oct.19-Nov.7
OV.	Prepare draft of brochure for Graphics (8.5x11, double fold, front and back, titles, text, illustration layout) Script preparation for video of Children's Storybook (5 mins.) Nov.7-30	Advanced desktop publishing for Children's Storybook (text, paging illustrations, binding) Nov.8-23 Nov.24-Dec.9	30 second commercial or promotional video on Children's book Nov.8-23 Nov.24-Dec.9
C. N.	Independent Study (choices, conferencing, oral presentations) News construction 1. comparison of media construction 2. medium critiques 3. writing stories for news 4. news construction 5. assignment Dec.1-Dec.20	Advanced desktop publishing producing a Brochure (text, illustrations, headings, etc) Dec.12-Jan.6 Jan.9-20	Children's Video Production (5 mins.) Dec.12-Jan.6 Jan.9-20
N.	Independent Study Course Wrap-up and Final Test Presentation of assignments for All areas 1. Writing stories & 5 min. news construction Jan.23-26	Course Wrap-up and Final Tests Newspaper : article Jan.23-26	Course Wrap-up and Final Test 5 min. news construction Jan.23-26

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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