



AAMA Newsletter #6

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AAMA EXECUTIVE MEETINGS & NEWS	1
MEDIA EDUCATION/LITERACY RESOURCES	2
RESEARCH & REPORTS	11
EVENTS DATES OF INTEREST	15
AAMA NEWSLETTER INFO.	18

AAMA EXECUTIVE MEETINGS & NEWS

• **Adolescent Use of Pornography in Alberta — Speaker & Annual General Meeting, Tuesday, May 6, 2008** — The AAMA AGM will be on May 6, 2008. Members and non-members are welcome. The speaker will be Sonya Thompson speaking on the topic, *Adolescent Use of Pornography in Alberta*. Sonya Thompson is a former high school teacher and sexual health educator who currently works in media regulation. Her detailed study of adolescent use of pornography was part of her thesis study in the Family Ecology and Practice program in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. During a 30 year silence in research on adolescent use of pornography, the pornography industry has become a major influence on adolescent sexual socialization, particularly for boys. This session presents the most comprehensive global findings to date about adolescent use of pornography on entertainment media (Internet, video and DVD, satellite and digital television) — by 13 and 14 year olds in their homes and homes of friends. It reveals high rates of use and major differences in use between boys and girls, and urban and rural youth. The research participants are 425 students in grade eight who completed anonymous questionnaires in a classroom setting. The presentation will include an overview of findings on rates and contexts of use of sexual explicit media content by adolescents in Alberta and a discussion of patterns of use. Child, home, peer, family and environmental factors and their effect on rates of exposure to sexually explicit media use will be explained. The presentation will conclude with a discussion

position statement, *Toward a Definition of 21st Century Literacies*, in which they state,

“Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. (NCTE, 2008)

The conceptual terrain of these many literacies can prove difficult to navigate for teachers and educators who use media and technology to mediate activities with real students in real learning environments.

In *Secondary School Literacy: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice*, published by NCTE and marketed to teachers, Don Leu (2007) and members of the New Literacies Research Team at the University of Connecticut present the conceptual terrain of new literacies as:

“Highly contested space...the construct means many things to many people. To some, new literacies are new social practices (Street, 1995; 2003) that emerge with new technologies. Others see new literacies as important new strategies and dispositions, required by the Internet, that are essential for online reading comprehension, learning, and communication (Coiro, 2003; Leu et al., 2004). Yet others consider new literacies to be discourses (Gee, 2003) or new semiotic contexts (Kress, 2003; Lemke, 2002) made possible by new technologies. Still others see literacy as differentiating into multiliteracies (New London Group, 2000), or multimodal contexts (Hull & Schultz, 2002), or view new literacies as a construct that juxtaposes several of these orientations (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). (pp. 41-42)

While there are many descriptive studies written by researchers who use these theoretical orientations as heuristics to understand how educators and learners are using media and technology in- and outside of the classroom (e.g., Brass, 2008; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Kist, 2005; Ranker, 2008), there are fewer descriptive studies written by practitioners themselves who describe how they take up these theoretical orientations to mediate their students' (and their own) learning with media and technology (e.g., Hull & Katz, 2006; Whitin, 2005).

Media, Learning, and Sites of Possibility serves as a contribution to this work. This edited collection contains six ethnographic case studies presented by practitioners who are teaching and learning in a range of in-, out-of-, and of-school urban spaces. Each study is followed by two scholarly responses. The collection is the 22nd volume in the New Literacies and Digital Epistemologies series edited by Colin Lankshear, Michele Knobel and Michael Peters. The series is devoted to the exploration of emergent literacies and knowledges that are oftentimes absent from classrooms in this global informational age. The series and this edited collection inform educational theory and practice in constructively critical ways. The students presented in *Media, Learning, and Sites of Possibility* work with a variety of media, including writing, photography, a literary/art magazine, digital poetry and

storytelling, and recordings of music and speech, as they negotiate their identities, their relationships to each other and their community, and their use of space. In several of the case studies, students are invited to participate in the project as co-researchers. The studies are guided by fundamental questions posed by the volume editors: "What is at stake when media texts play a central role in teaching and learning processes?" (p. 199), "What possibilities exist for engaging school learning differently when media and media texts are part of the learning fabric?" (p. 201), and what "types of relationships...are enabled and constrained as a consequence of the recognized presence of media and media texts?" (p. 201). These questions frame the central themes to which the case studies correspond. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 address how images and other media are nearly always socially produced. Chapters 5 and 7 present the creation of particular kinds of space for the production of media texts. Chapter 6, as well as 2 and 4, discusses relationships between and amongst students and teachers, youth, and adults.

In Chapter 2, "This Is What I See": (Re)envisioning Photography as a Social Practice, Kelly Wissman examines writing and photography produced by young women of color within an alternate in-school space. Situating herself within the traditions of practitioner inquiry and feminist research, Wissman uses a "praxis-oriented inquiry" to explore "the kinds of pedagogical practices and relationships that can emerge when photography is viewed as a social practice" (p. 14). Wissman's students, a group of young women who called themselves the Sistahs, used photography and writing to craft self-portraits. For Wissman, two of the Sistahs' self-portraits are both socially situated and counter-hegemonic as their work took issue with "the inaccurate ways in which they believed they were being characterized and consistently asserted their own power to name, represent, and define their own identities and realities" (p. 35). The identity work of the Sistahs represents possibilities for literacy pedagogies and visual arts education. As respondents Katie Hyde and Valerie Kinloch agree that when students are given opportunities to use media technologies in student-centered spaces to explore self-representation, they are positioned as experts to critique and understand their relationship to the dominant discourses around them. Wissman states that for Maria, one of the Sistahs, this meant challenging "these deficit and deviancy discourses circulating in the educational field that reinforce images of all urban young women of color as living in the midst of crisis and despair" (p. 28).

Chapter 3, "Are We Our Brothers' Keepers?": Exploring the Social Functions of Reading in the Life of An African American Urban Adolescent, features an after-school community of students designated as "disengaged readers" by their teachers. Jeanine Staples and her students selected media, including movies, television shows, Internet websites and periodicals, and chose writing and discussion activities to learn more about the way students read media as popular culture narratives in relation to their lives. Staples works from a Freirean conception of reading to understand a student named James' social functions of reading using "theories of adolescent literacies, critical black feminism, and critical race theory" (p. 61). Central to this approach, Staples encouraged James and his fellow students to take lead roles in conducting the research and member checks of participants' transcripts, journals and field notes. For James, participation in this ethnographic inquiry afforded him an opportunity to reflect on his own words, pulling them out of transcripts, rewriting them, and eventually juxtaposing them with other voices, including the words of his teacher, Staples. Respondent Renee Hobbs understands this use of bricolage as "an adolescent and a teacher both discovering and clarifying their ethical positions through the

reassembling of their own voices, a process that demands time—and provides an opportunity for self-reflection and questioning” (p. 75). Creating space for the social function of this practice is what Staples sees as most useful and transformative for students.

Similar to James’ sampling of his own words, Gil, a fifteen-year-old turntablist, sampled music, sounds, and historic speeches to create multimodal compositions as political acts. Chapter 4, *Influencing Pedagogy through the Creative Practices of Youth*, features Leif Gustavson’s case study of the social functions of Gil’s turntabalism in after- and out-of-school contexts. Gustavson explains with ethnographic detail Gil’s practices and philosophy of turntabalism; for Gil the way he lives informs his practice, and his practice influences the ways in which he lives. Far from “indiscriminately dropping the needle...Gil had the power to resurrect [Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s] voices and embody their messages in the life he lived” (pp. 96-97). For Gustavson, Gil’s case begs questions of how “teachers can open their practice to these forms of youth work in two interconnected ways: as an ethnographer in his/her classroom and then as a conscious designer of the learning experience” (p. 101). Respondent Decoteau Irby finds the turntable metaphor appropriate because “the future of what happens in education is largely dependent on how learning is rearticulated through mixing, sampling, and fading...to create something new” (p. 118).

In Chapter 5, “Kind of Like Emerging from the Shadows”: Adolescent Girls as Multiliteracy Pedagogues, Rachel Nichols, participating as a teacher-researcher, describes the literacy work of adolescent girls on a literary/art magazine within an urban parochial high school for girls. She explores the social construction of the magazine production processes and “the relationships between the girls’ literacy practices and their evolving identities as learners and participants in the [production] process” (p. 121). To do this, she uses a host of theoretical lenses, including multiliteracies, practitioner inquiry, intertextuality and hybridity, and portraiture. Nichols further defines the community of practice using six emergent pedagogical dimensions: dialogue, structure, negotiation, collaboration, critique and representation. Aside from a lack of empirical evidence to ground the conceptual work, Nichols demonstrates how the adolescent girls negotiated their identities and relationships with each other and the school community to define themselves and their production processes. As respondent Michele Knobel reminds readers, Nichols’ contribution is useful as it raises interesting questions for the research community and practitioners who are attempting to put theory into practice.

Korina Jocson examined her own learning processes when participating in digital poetry production at DUSTY: Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth, an out-of-school, university and community collaborative. In Chapter 6, *Situating the Personal in Digital Media Production*, Jocson shares her experience from the perspective of a teacher/learner and “extend[s] the concept of ‘agentive self’ by examining what it means for teachers to be active learners and agents in accessing, valuing, and utilizing digital stories and poems” (p. 171). For Jocson, digital media production can serve as a pedagogical “third space” that allows “for hybrid literacies to intertwine various types of texts, resources, and experiences...[that lace] personal, social, and historical experiences” (p. 185). While the written text of this volume does not afford the reader an opportunity to experience Jocson’s digital poem, we do get a glimpse of how Jocson came to know what she knows and plans to teach – “one of the least understood aspects of teaching,” according to respondent Anne Burns Thomas (p. 195).

In the final chapter, *Negotiating Identity Projects: Exploring the Digital Storytelling*

Experiences of Three African American Girls, Heather Pleasants considers the digital storytelling experiences of three African-American girls, Tonisha, Monique, and ReShonda, who participated in a two-year project. Pleasants and the girls worked in an out-of-school space at the Carrollton House Community Center. Pleasants understands the girls' participation in the creation of the digital stories as enacted identity negotiations. Pleasants explains, If identity is indeed, as Bakhtin and others assert, relational and viewable through discourse, then the multimodal stories and discourse of Tonisha, Monique, and ReShonda can be explored as an artistic rendering of the way that centrifugal and centripetal forces of language reveal identity negotiation in action. (p. 210)

Pleasants also considers the digital stories as representative of important points of reflection and reevaluation, momentarily lifting them out "of the maypole of centripetal/centrifugal language activity" (p. 211). For Tonisha, this meant internalizing her grandmother and other adults' opinions that she was academically talented and a leader. For Monique and ReShonda this meant (re)negotiating their relationship with each other while working on their digital story and their relationship with adults and younger children at the community center. This work took place in an in-between space where relationship and identity boundaries were regularly tested and explored. Pleasants uses her case studies to emphasize "that engaging adolescents in multimodal literacy activities within after-school contexts is always more complex than providing kids with opportunities to tell their stories through computers and digital media" (p. 230). For respondent Glynda Hull, these relationship and identity complexities capture the spirit of Bakhtin's notion of "carnival." Hull advises readers "to think about the role of the carnivalesque in learning—of energetic play, of raucous laughter, of imagination, emotion, and the subversive" when thinking about taking digital media to school (p. 237).

These six case studies and the accompanied responses are important contributions for theorists, researchers, teacher educators and practitioners interested in "youth as producers of new media texts, new mediated spaces, and new media-influenced practices" (p. 5). These descriptive studies can help us understand how practitioners and learners use tools found on the conceptual terrain of literacies to co-create opportunities for students. However, the challenge for the reader is not to read these case studies as celebrations of media and technology coming to the rescue of urban youth. Rather, these accounts should be read as invitations "to consider new modes of learning, new media spaces in which to learn, and new media texts from which to learn" (p. 2).

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● **Universities/Schools Offering Degrees and Programs in Media Literacy Education —**

From: Susan Rogers — susan@medialiteracy.com I'd like to update the page on MediaLiteracy.com that tells visitors which schools have media-education related undergrad and graduate programs. Please check out what I have now. If you see any mistakes or additions, please let me know.

In the United States

• **Bachelors Degree:**

<<http://www.webster.edu/medialiteracy/curriculum.htm>>**Webster University** (School of Communication, Emphasis on Media Literacy);

<<http://www.nyu.edu/education/culturecomm/programs/undergraduate/massmedia.html>>**New York University** (Communication Studies with a concentration in Mass Media);

<<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/programs/jms/>>**Rutgers University**;

<<http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/cmt/>>**Univ. of Mass, Boston** (degree in Community Media and Technology); and

<<http://www.fau.edu/scms/undergrad.php>>**Florida Atlantic University** (degree in Multimedia Studies)

• **Masters Degree:**

<<http://www.webster.edu/medialiteracy/curriculum.htm>>**Webster University** (School of Communication, Emphasis on Media Literacy; and School of Education, Master of Arts in Teaching with an Emphasis in Media Literacy); and

<<http://www.ci.appstate.edu/programs/edmedia/medialit/mlmasters.html>>**Appalachian State**;

<<http://www.newschool.edu/mediastudies/>>NewSchool <<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/dcc/masters/>>**New York University**; and

<http://www.siu.edu/MASSCOMM/grad/masters_in_mc/index.html>**Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville**;

- **Doctorate:**

<<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/dcc/doctoral/>> **New York University**;
<<http://www.temple.edu/mmc/about/index.html>> **Temple University**; and
<<http://www.bama.ua.edu/%7Ecmgrad/>> **University of Alabama**;

- **Certificate:**

Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville;
<<http://www.udayton.edu/%7Eipi/ipi/index.php3>> **Univ. of Dayton**; and
<<http://www.ccde.umb.edu/certificates/cmt/>> **Univ. of Mass, Boston**.

Outside the U.S.

Institute of Education, **University of London**:

<http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid=882&882_1=830&var1=5&var2=MAMC> MA in Media, Culture and Communication;

University of Queensland, Australia: undergraduate course in

<http://www.uq.edu.au/study/course.html?course_code=EDUC4342> Media Studies for Secondary Teaching. Also, the Bachelor of Education and Graduate Diploma in Education programs require courses in Film and Media Curriculum; and

Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada has a Media Studies Working Group in its Sociology department <<http://www.ryerson.ca/mgroup>>.

- **Educators Learn Moviemaking From A Master** — Great movies are full of adventure, and Australia, the next film from Oscar-nominated director Baz Luhrmann (*Moulin Rouge!*, William Shakespeare's *Romeo+Juliet*), is no exception. But making a movie is an even bigger adventure—an adventure in creativity—and with the Apple Set to Screen Series, you can be a part of it.

Every few weeks through October 2008, a new podcast episode from Baz and his production team will introduce you to another aspect of moviemaking, starting with on-set still photography, then moving on to costume design, cinematography, scoring, and more. You'll get insights from the artists at work on Australia, watch them in action, view footage the rest of the world hasn't seen yet, and follow along as the movie comes together.

Here's where you come in — Five of the episodes arrive with something extra: a creative challenge for you. Each time one of these episodes is released, you'll have three weeks to complete the challenge and post it to the Apple Student Gallery. If your project is one of the best (10 from high schoolers and 10 from college students), you'll win an iPod shuffle, iPod nano, iPod touch, or a MacBook Pro. And if your work is chosen as the most creative of all, you'll be going on yet another kind of adventure—a trip for two to Australia. Five challenges mean you've got five chances to win.

Submit the top project for the final challenge, and Baz himself will plan your trip to Oz, meet you there, and take you along on the promotional tour for the film in the U.S. Your project will even be included on the DVD release of Australia.

Start your journey now — subscribe to the Set to Screen Series, and iTunes will automatically download each new episode that's posted. Once you've watched an episode, come back

here to check out the notes about the featured member of the production team, and—if there's a challenge for that episode—get all the details you'll need to participate. So start exploring your creativity. You could wind up anywhere, even Down Under. More information: <http://www.apple.com/education/settoscreen>

● **TeacherTube: A YouTube for Educators** — By Chris O'Neal 5/11/07

Edutopia. A while back, I posted a blog entry titled "A Teacher's Tour of YouTube." Many people replied with comments, questions, suggestions, and so on. A new site for educators, TeacherTube, takes the sharing, production, and community-building aspects of YouTube and offers an educator's version. According to TeacherTube's founders, "We seek to fill a need for a more educationally focused, safe venue for teachers, schools, and home learners."

The site officially launched in March 2007 and is slowly but surely gaining popularity. I've been sharing it and working with teachers in various districts to learn to take advantage of this kind of opportunity. What a great place for us to upload short instructional videos -- or long ones; there's no limit on size files or video length..

Some technology-resource leaders in Henrico County, Virginia, have uploaded several fun videos primarily for use with their own teachers. Check this one out that parodies The Blair Witch Project. According to TeacherTube, community members can:

- upload, tag, and share videos worldwide.
- upload support files to attach educational activities, assessments, lesson plans, notes, and other file formats to your video.
- browse hundreds of videos uploaded by community members.
- find, join, and create video groups to connect with people who have similar interests.
- customize the experience by subscribing to member videos, saving favorites, and creating playlists.
- integrate TeacherTube videos on Web sites using video embeds or application programming interfaces.
- make videos public or private; users can elect to broadcast their videos publicly or share them privately with those they invite.

Check TeacherTube out. The site offers a great help section as well, even detailing how to download the videos for use offline. What a great way to share our resources and just have some fun. Website at:

<http://www.teachertube.com/index.php>

● **BBC School Report Day (March 13, 2008)** — School Report Day - a media literacy project run by BBC News. Thousands of children in hundreds of schools across the country work to produce news bulletins by a 2pm deadline, gaining an understanding of the editorial decisions made on a daily basis by adult journalists.

Many of these items were featured on BBC TV bulletins, while hundreds more will be shown on the BBC website.

To find out more about School Report Day, just follow this link:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/default.stm

● **No Longer Swimming Against the Current** — Review by Mike Gange — *Our Schools, Our Selves: Media Education and Educating the Media*, Edited by Kirsten Kozolanka, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 208 pages.

It is a well known fact that Canadians are pioneers in the area of media literacy. Canadian media studies leaders are respected around the globe for their passionate, ceaseless and selfless efforts to help promote media studies in our public school classrooms and at universities. As a long-time media studies teacher, I often look to some of these leaders for inspiration and guidance in the way I teach media studies. Sometimes, however, I feel as though we are not making progress fast enough, that we are not making much headway in changing some deeply entrenched views against media education.

A new book from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives gives hope to those of us who are veterans in the field and will be insightful to those who are just getting their feet wet. *Media Education and Educating the Media*, released in late fall of 2007, is part of the "Our School, Our Selves" series from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Edited by Kirsten Kozolanka, a professor in the Carleton University School of Journalism and Communications, it is series of 25 articles written by some of the well known Canadian pioneers in the field and by some who are absolutely new to the field.

Media education guru Barry Duncan's review of the educational value in the Adbusters Media Empowerment Kit is balanced and fair and takes on the concept of a pre-packaged panacea. Neil Anderson, whose work is always insightful and analytical, writes about the evolution of media education across Canada. British Columbia's Dan Blake examines the 2007 Media Literacy Summer Institute held in his home province, while Warren Nightingale, of the Media Awareness Network, writes about how we can put media literacy concepts to work in any classroom. And, lawyer Bill Jeffery writes a persuasive piece calling for reforms on the laws of marketing to children.

Also significant is a piece by Erika Shaker and Bernie Froese-Germain, which looks at the study of commercialism in Canadian classrooms. Released in May 2006, the report shows us on the edge of a very slippery slope, with fund-raising in schools having long ago left behind the idea of small-time classroom bake sales. As a result of the study, report Shaker and Froese-Germain, national media started questioning why school fund-raising was necessary at all. Eventually, a court case went to the British Columbia Supreme Court, which ruled against the issue of school user fees.. However, the authors also report, most of the media missed even bigger questions, such as how schools do not really benefit from corporate advertising in their classrooms, hallways and gymnasiums.

These are all inspiring pieces, giving insight into the issues faced by the media literacy movement. But further hope for the field comes from some newcomers to media literacy, who clearly are understanding some of the concerns that media educators harbour. Nicole Baute, a grad student in Carleton's journalism program, writes about how some young Canadian teens negotiate or resist media images. Journalist Sarah Schmidt illuminates the business behind the Baby Einstein DVD craze.

And, although editor Kirsten Kozolanka is also a newcomer to the field of media literacy, she clearly gets the issues and sees the benefits of media education. She calls critical media literacy "an essential tool for lifelong learning, a gift of citizenship that we can offer our children." She reminds us that "public discourse in media settings is not necessarily representative of the public, but instead speaks to selected consumer audiences."

If there is a short-coming of the book, it is that it is too short. It needs at least another couple of essays. One would be a look at the future of media education, and while the essay by Henry Giroux addresses that somewhat, it is applicable to education in general, rather being specifically about media education. Also needed is an article on how media education has become a reality through its initiatives across the country, and a set of expectations for what it can be, and how it can be implemented.

Obviously, we are making progress in getting acceptance and support for the development of media education. The range of authors and opinions in this book shows that increasingly, the need for media education is gaining wide-spread acceptance, and indeed we are not simply swimming against the current. I'm hoping that sometime soon there will be a second edition of this book. We still have a ways to go.

This year, Mike Gange is a graduate student at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Mass Communications. He is on leave from teaching media studies and journalism courses at Fredericton High. He can be reached at Mike Gange <sportsjour@yahoo.ca>



RESEARCH & REPORTS

• **Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll — What Teenagers Are Really Learning From Their Laptops —**

Study on media and teenagers produces mixed results. Most adolescents spend six to seven hours a day interacting with some form of media, a trend that has been increasing the past several years. Jane Brown, a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, presented her findings Wednesday on what teenagers are really learning from their laptops in a talk about "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll."

Increased access to media and less interaction with parents cause both negative and positive effects on the health of adolescents, Brown said. "Kids are doing what they want with little parental interpretation," she said. Positive effects of the media on youth include many forms of self-expression and access to a wealth of knowledge, Brown said.

Because of television shows such as CSI, many children aspire to hold jobs that previous generations haven't heard of, while sites such as Facebook and Myspace give adolescents ways to express their personalities.

Ashley Brooks, a first-year doctoral student of health behavior and health education, said she believes the media has some positive effects. "For example, with the presidential campaign, the youth are becoming involved," said Brooks, one of about 45 who attended the event. "The media plays a role in that."

Yet the more popular view of the media focuses on its negative effects. Eating disorders, obesity, violence and early sexual behavior were among the negative effects Brown touched on in her presentation. "We are supposed to be as thin as Calista Flockhart while we are all eating burgers and fries," Brown said. The rise of eating disorders and obesity stems mostly from the media, Brown said. Only 5 percent of women actually look like the supermodels chosen for most advertising campaigns.

While adolescents' body image is influenced by the media, their behavior and perceptions of violence are also affected. Half of the shows broadcast on television include violence. Brown said this amount of violence causes adolescents to imitate what they see on television

and become indifferent toward violence. She compared some video games and TV violence to military desensitization training.

She blames the "Missing C's" - commitment to a partner, contraceptives and consequences for actions - as reasons why American adolescents are engaging in sexual activity earlier. The lack of these "three C's" gives adolescents false ideas about what sex and love are really about, Brown said. "Sex is part of human nature - of course it is going to be in the media," Brown said. "These are the most creative people in the world, they should be able to add it in a more reasonable and responsible way."

Allison George, a first-year graduate student in health behavior and health education, shares similar opinions with Brown on the media. "Social norms are defined by TV," George said. "Regardless of age, that's how we learn what is expected of us."

Brown ended her presentation by calling on parents and individuals to become their own critics. "I don't hold a lot of hope for restrictions," Brown said. "The media is too in love with the First Amendment."

● **Kids' TV Viewing Tied to Behavioral Problems: But the 'off' switch may reverse the chance of trouble down the road, study says** — By Randy Dotinga

<http://health.usnews.com/usnews/health/healthday/071001/kids-tv-viewing-tied-to-behavioral-problems.htm>

If your toddler is watching a lot of TV, turn it off now and save yourself a lot of trouble later. That's the conclusion of a new study that suggests that the negative effects of lots of early TV viewing on children can be overcome by limiting viewing before the age of 6.

The study doesn't confirm that television is actually bad for young kids. Nor does it show exactly how much of a cutback would help children exposed to lots of TV early in life. Still, lead author Kamila Mistry, a doctoral candidate at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said it makes a strong case for a "significant" difference in behavioral problems in kids depending on their viewing.

"It's never too late," Mistry said. "That's an important message for parents as well as pediatricians, encouraging parents to turn off the TV and think about alternative activities for kids."

Television, of course, has long been blamed for a variety of ills among children, from lethargy and obesity to shortened attention spans. The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages kids under 2 from watching any TV at all, and it says older kids shouldn't watch more than two hours a day.

Why take another look at TV and children? According to Mistry, the new study is unusual, because it followed kids over time -- from 2.5 years to 5.5 years -- and measured the effects of changing levels of TV watching. The researchers looked at the results of surveys of 2,702 families who enrolled in a national study between 1996 and 1998. The kids were followed from birth to age 5.5.

Twenty percent of parents said their kids watched at least two hours of TV a day at both 2.5 and 5.5 years. Four in 10 children had TVs in their bedrooms at age 5.5.

Even when the researchers adjusted the study results to account for factors such as income and "parental involvement," they found that kids who watched two or more hours of TV daily at both ages were more likely to suffer from sleep, attention and aggressive behavior problems, and "externalizing of problem behaviors." Also, those who watched more TV over

time had greater problems dealing with others. But those children who reduced TV watching between the two ages didn't have a greater likelihood of either social or behavioral problems.

The researchers also found that kids with TVs in their bedrooms were more likely to have sleeping problems.

The findings are published in the October issue of *Pediatrics*. The structure of the study didn't allow the researchers to say how much more likely kids were to have problems depending on their viewing habits, Mistry said. She added that it's not a cause-and-effect study. It's possible that behavioral and social problems may contribute to TV viewing, not the other way around, she said.

The study also didn't look at whether the children were watching educational programming, like "Sesame Street," or other programs, such as those geared toward adults. "I hesitate to say TV is horrible," Mistry said, "but excessive amounts of any activity is probably not good."

Madeline A. Dalton, director of the Hood Center for Families and Children at Dartmouth Medical School, said she's not sure that reducing heavy early exposure to TV will eliminate the risk of problems. She thinks more research is needed to determine that and to figure out if it's possible that "parents may be more likely to sit their children in front of the TV if they have behavioral problems." However, "time spent watching TV is likely to reduce the amount of time children spend interacting with adults and other children," Dalton said. "Therefore, it is not surprising that this may have an impact on ability to interact socially." She added: "We are raising our children in a media-saturated world. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but our knowledge of how media affects children -- both in terms of behavior and health -- has clearly lagged behind its use."

*** Young people & News — Young people perceive traditional media as more accurate, trustworthy and reliable than new media, but many get most of their news and information from another source entirely -- family and friends.** That is one of the key responses from 10 innovative focus groups of young people in 10 countries that is part of a major research project on how young people get their news.

The goal of the research was to have young people from around the world confirm or challenge hypotheses regarding their media usage habits and attitudes. The insights will be used to guide the next phase of Youth Media DNA, a quantitative study in which 1,000 youths between 15 and 29 years-old will be surveyed in every country that participates in the study.

"Most participants still value more traditional media sources and formats, because they are perceived as being more accurate, reliable and trustworthy," said Robert Barnard, founder and partner of the Canada-based research consultancy D-code, which is conducting the research for the World Association of Newspapers.

At the same time, however, "many participants in this phase listed 'discussion with friends' as a top source for news and information, sometimes ranking higher than TV or newspapers. In particular, social networks appear to be key in spreading entertainment news for most young people."

"Although information gathered from family and friends may not be accurate, young people appear to trust family and friends much more than media sources," said Mr Barnard, who added that the reasons for this phenomenon will be the subject of the next phase of research.

The research released today, during a seminar on the eve of the World Newspaper Congress and World Editors Forum in Cape Town, South Africa (<http://www.wan-press.org/capetown2007>), is a preliminary phase in a major WAN research project called Youth Media DNA to help newspaper companies develop better strategies for reaching young readers. The study is part of the WAN Young Reader Development Project, supported by Norske Skog, the Norway-based international paper manufacturer.

D-Code recruited 100 young people, 15 to 24 years-old, in Colombia, Japan, the Philippines, Lebanon, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, United States and United Kingdom, to document their media habits and discuss their attitudes towards news and newspaper readership. This was done through one-on-one long interviews, on-line discussions, and media diaries. While the exploratory phase was not designed to draw conclusions about young readers globally, it is enough to explore participant reactions to the hypotheses, which have implications for future news delivery and consumption and can help newspapers better understand how to reach young people. The hypotheses include:

- Are young people getting news and information from many media sources? "Many participants said that they feel uncomfortable trusting a single authoritative source -- even among those that they rely upon on a regular basis," the report said. The use of multiple sources and formats is true not only for the formats they use, but also for the news brands they are loyal to."
- Is interest in 'passive' forms of media (radio, TV, etc.), waning as young people want to interact with -- and contribute content to -- news media? "Despite the stated preferences for the internet as a news and information source, and the growing interest in personal devices that facilitate citizen journalism, most participants still value more traditional media sources and formats, because they are perceived as being more accurate, reliable and trustworthy," the report said.
- Are young people spending less time with traditional media and more with new media? "Young participants said that usage of new media (i.e., computers, mobile phones, the internet, and MP3 players) is increasingly taking up time participants would have spent with traditional media, though this time is obviously restricted in countries where the digital divide remains a strong barrier," the report said. "Despite this, many participants say they would like to spend more time with newspapers and other traditional sources of information. "Contrary to stereotype, many young participants remained respectful of traditional information sources and few dismiss them as obsolete."
- Is the biggest competition for news and information in the future the young people themselves and their social networks? "Feedback from participants in this phase listed 'discussion with friends' as a top source for news and information, sometimes ranking higher than TV or newspapers," the report said. "In particular, social networks appear to be key in spreading entertainment news for most young people. "In future research, it will be interesting to probe deeper about the nature of how news and information are shared through social networks. Although information gathered from family and friends may not be accurate, young people appear to trust family and friends much more than media sources. Why does this appear to be the case? What topics are more appropriate for this kind of relationship?"
- Are free newspapers driving curiosity in news and inspiring youth to dig deeper? "This issue appears to be key to the development of future strategies on youth newspaper readership,"

the report said. "Free commuter newspapers are common to most young participants around the world and the consensus is that they drive curiosity in news and information. Overall, most participants said they read paid newspapers more frequently than free newspapers. Many respondents said that free commuter newspapers are well-suited for travel to and from school and work, while paid newspapers are more likely to be read at home."

The Paris-based WAN, the global organisation for the newspaper industry, represents 18,000 newspapers; its membership includes 77 national newspaper associations, newspaper companies and individual newspaper executives in 102 countries, 12 news agencies and 10 regional and world-wide press groups.

The full report can be downloaded from the bottom of this page.

<http://www.wan-press.org/article14281.html>



EVENTS DATES OF INTEREST

● **April 5, 12 & 13, 2008 Teach, Think, and Play II: POPULAR CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM CONFERENCE, New York City, New York** — Teachers College, Columbia University's Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation is hosting *Teach, Think, and Play II: Popular Culture in the Classroom* Conference. This year's event features world-renowned UK media literacy specialist Prof. David Buckingham of the Institute of Education in London & Director of the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth, and the Media.

On Saturday April 12th Dr. Buckingham will give four keynote presentations: "Media Education – A Comparative Perspective", "Beyond Technology: Schooling the Digital Generation", "From Pokemon to Potter – and Beyond...", and "The Facts of Life? Children, Sex and the Media"

Dr. Buckingham's presentations will be framed by two days of coursework on popular culture in the classroom taught by TC professor John Broughton along with Ryan Goble and Nicole Trackman (high school teachers, Columbia doctoral students & founders of mindblue.com).

Detailed descriptions of the-three day event can be found at <http://www.tc.edu/ceoi/DavidBuckingham/>

● **April 11, 2008 — 6th Annual Northeast Media Literacy Conference — The New Media Literacies for Today's Plugged-In Generation, University of Connecticut** — Included on the conference website are the full brochure, accommodation and registration information, the program schedule, and some background information on keynote speakers and some of the workshop leaders at: <http://medialiteracy.education.uconn.edu>

Featured are two outstanding, innovative leaders as keynote speakers, providing up-to-date, fresh approaches and perspectives to the growing media literacy field:

Dr. Michael Wesch, a cultural anthropologist and digital ethnographer from Kansas State University, recently uploaded a short video to YouTube called <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE> **Web 2.0, the Machine is Using Us**. The video dramatically demonstrates how the Web is changing how we communicate and how fast. This production quickly became the most viewed video on YouTube, watched by over 3 million people. He is also author of a new film, **A Vision of Students Today**, and a timely blog,

Digital Ethnography. Wesch is a true activist for media literacy. He teaches teachers how to use the Web, because, he believes, students are good at being entertained by technology, but they're not particularly good at using it to locate, identify, and sort valuable information.

Anastasia Goodstein, author of **Totally Wired ^ What Teens and Tweens Are Really Doing Online**, has great insight into how being a teen today is very different from what it used to be and what teens are really doing on the Internet and with technology today, including such timely activities as social networking, blogging, and cyberbullying. What are *LiveJournal*, *Xanga*, *Facebook*, and *MySpace* and how have they become so much a key part of young people,s lives? Why is it critically important for parents, teachers, and other adults to be knowledgeable about and better understand these expanding, ever-present media forms? Goodstein examines the threats of today's technology to young people, but also provides fresh insights into the positive ways young people use the wired world in their lives.

In addition, the full day,s conference program includes twenty timely workshops based on key media literacy related areas ^ The Role of Today,s Advancing Technology, Mass Media,s Depiction of Today,s Culture and Values, Philosophy and Theory, Standards and Curriculum, Classroom Activities, Research and Evaluation, Teacher Education, and Media Production.

● **April 19, 2008 — Annual Literacy & Learning Day — Edmonton, Alberta** — Parents working for parents to promote literacy and learning. Keynote speaker is Dr. Barry MacDonald, a skilled relationship coach, and an effective parent consultant who assists people to strengthen their relationships and transform problems to opportunities — his presentation is on “**GenderSmarts**”. There will be over 50 concurrent sessions on new Alberta curriculum, Books, Libraries, Movies, Storytelling, Bullying, Culture of Drugs, Music, Writing Exams, Internet, Skills For the Information Age, etc. More information and registration at:

www.literacyday.ca

● **May 1, 2008 — Videoconferencing, Collaborative Videoconferencing Projects.** Organized by the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium cost: \$15 per person. Register at: <http://www.erlc.ca>

● **May 6, 2008 — Adolescent Use of Pornography in Alberta —_AAMA Annual General Meeting and Speaker, Edmonton, Alberta**— This meeting will be the Annual Alberta Association For Media Awareness General Meeting. Members and non-members are welcome. The speaker will be Sonya Thompson speaking on the topic “**Adolescent Use of Pornography in Alberta**”.

Date and Time	Tuesday, May 6, 2008 6:30 PM
Location	Edmonton (To be announced)
Cost	Members \$10.00 Non-members \$30.00 (includes membership)
Contact	For reservations and location please contact Wayne Blair at • 780-944-9667 or • wblair@planet.eon.net
AAMA Website	www.aama.ca

● **July 14-18, 2008 — 10th annual Media Literacy Institute, Ithaca College, New York** — This summer, Project Look Sharp is offering its 10th annual Media Literacy Institute. The 5-day intensive workshop includes both the theory of media literacy and hands-on practice with digital/computer technology (Mac-based). Project Look Sharp staff coach participants in developing and implementing individual media literacy integration plans intended to be used in their academic environments. This course may be taken for 3.1 continuing education units, or 2-3 graduate credit units (in which case the course extends 2 weeks beyond the institute and includes an online component). The institute takes place on the campus of Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York, and inexpensive on-campus housing is available. Limit of 18 participants. Dates are July 14-18, 2008. If you would like to see a 3-minute video from last year's institute, read comments from last year's participants, or get more information about cost and housing please visit our website at:

http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/services_summer.php .

● **July 21-24, 2008 — Media , Democracy & Diversity, Appalachian State University, North Carolina** — The full program for Appalachian State University's July 21st-24th institute is now published on the home page of the website for The Graduate Program in Media Literacy. More than 15 x 90 minute sessions conducted by Frank Baker, Chris Sperry, Carole Gerster, Nicki Soice and David Considine will take place over a 4 day period. More information and registration at:

www.ci.appstate.edu/programs/edmedia/medialit

● **August 19-28, 2008 — Third International Youth Media Summit, Belgrade, Serbia** — Summit will be held from 19th to 28th of August in Belgrade, Serbia. More at our web site:

www.iyms.eu

● **September 26-28, 2008 — Digital Dialogues: Moving Media Education, University of South Australia, Adelaide** — Sponsored by the National Media Education Conference, Early Bird Registration Closes August 11, 2008, For more information go to:

<http://www.conferenceplus.com.au/mediaeduconf08/index.cfm?mid=002.001>

At present there is a CALL FOR PAPERS AND WORKSHOPS — The digital future is upon us and we ought to be talking about the digital present. How are students, teachers and media education accommodating and responding to the changes brought by the digital revolution ? Where is Media Education now and where is it heading? Children and young people now have more choices as consumers, readers, viewers, creators and producers of media than their parents and even older siblings had, and their communicative power is considerable. Media that used to be exclusive and expensive is now everywhere and everyday. With so much availability and opportunity for creativity, what are the practices that we find ourselves engaged with as consumers, producers, educators, and citizens? This conference invites papers and workshops that engage with the most current issues, challenges and practices in media education. Papers will be accepted in peer-reviewed and non-reviewed streams. Workshops may provide examples of teaching and learning innovation, excellence, and engagement with media practices and projects. We welcome papers and workshops on a broad range of topics and here are a few suggested themes: Fostering Media Cultures; Me Media: More Than Just a Marketing Mantra?; Media Making; Developing Digital Literacy; IP: Creating/Quoting; Teaching Ethics in a Changing Media Culture; Indigenous Media Communities; Who are the Net Gen and What Do They Do?;

Media Regulation; New Media and Old Moral Panics; Relevant Education for Media Workers; Social Networking Sites and Services; Encouraging Childrens' Creativity with Media; Open-source in the Classroom; Personal Technologies, Creativity and Education; Cyber-bullying in Youth Culture. Please submit any questions relating to your abstarct to Grant Brindal at bigred@chariot.net.au

● **November 3-7; 2008 — Third Annual National Media Education Week** — For more information on how you can take part in National Media Education Week 2007, visit the Web site at: www.mediaeducationweek.ca. - The **Media Awareness Network** is a Canadian not-for-profit centre of expertise and excellence in media education. MNet's vision is to ensure children and youth possess the necessary critical thinking skills and tools to understand and actively engage with media.

AAMA will be organizing a number of Alberta activities, workshops, and speakers. Please contact AAMA to volunteer and/or participate.

Contact

Wayne Blair at

• **780-944-9667** or

• **wblair@planet.eon.net**

● **November 6-9, 2008 — The 27th Global Visions Film Festival, Edmonton, Alberta** — More information at: <http://www.globalvisionsfestival.com>



AAMA NEWSLETTER INFO

The **AAMA Newsletter** is sent to all AAMA Members. As a service to all Albertans, past AAMA Newsletters are available free about three to four months after initial distribution to members. Previous Newsletters are archived on the AAMA Website. Please pass AAMA Newsletters on to others who may be interested in information on media literacy/education/awareness. Join AAMA and the media awareness/literacy/education conversation, discussion, and action — join, support and contribute to the Alberta Association for Media Awareness (AAMA).

For information and/or membership, please contact Wayne Blair, Editor of the AAMA Newsletter at:

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NOTE: Back issues of the **AAMA Newsletter** are available on the AAMA website at: <http://www.aama.ca>.

NOTE: If you wish to have your name removed from the **AAMA Newsletter** e-mail list, please contact Wayne Blair.

NOTE: AAMA Newsletter Editor, Wayne Blair B.Sc., B.Ed., M.Ed.

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