TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN BC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of media education and integration of media literacy into the K-12 school curriculum is seemingly well established in Canada. Despite successes, media education does not yet have widespread acceptance. For example, in British Columbia (BC), research suggests that media education has not been significantly implemented into the curriculum. In order to identify a baseline and the challenges that media education faces, this research focused on a case study of Lower Mainland, BC secondary schools in order to understand the implementation of media education. One notable challenge is a lack of research on this topic; this dissertation contributes to knowledge of teachers’ perspectives on or perceptions of media education and literacy.

The case study includes five data sources and an analysis of texts. The data sources include: Pre-service teachers (n=42), In-service teachers (n=24), English and Social Studies teachers (n=17), Department heads (n=4), and teachers experienced in media education (n=4). The research addressed four questions. First, what are in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy? Second, what is the current status of media education? Third, what kind of support is available for media education or for teachers to integrate media literacy into classroom instruction? Fourth, what are the obstacles and challenges that teachers encounter when teaching about the media?

Findings from this case study suggest that media education is only partially included in the secondary school curriculum in Lower Mainland schools. In this case, media literacy is also hit or miss, and depends on teachers’ interests and time made available to address topics that fall outside of the conventional English and Social Studies curriculum. Experienced teachers manage to find their own ways and means for media education practice, but for other teachers, immense challenges
and obstacles prevent even a recognition of the importance of media education and literacy. A lack of teacher awareness of existing resources compounds the challenges, and opportunities for professional development are limited in BC. In summary, the recognition of media literacy’s importance does not in this case necessarily transfer to media education in practice.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Johannes Gutenberg is known for inventing a process for mass-producing movable type printing. He printed the *Gutenberg Bible* (or Forty-two line Bible) in 1455, which has been acclaimed for its high quality and aesthetic. His great legacy to later ages, however, goes beyond inventing a new printing process. The prevalence of mass-produced printed documents made possible by mechanical presses gradually became the de facto medium for communication. The Gutenberg printing press was a key element in transforming literacy, opening up a new world for common people. Print was for a long time the common medium for mass communication, until new technologies like telegraphy, radio, television, and the Internet were invented and diffused in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today we live in an “information society” where information is conveyed through multiple media formats that are highly complex mixtures of printed word, visual image, and audio recording. More than ever, we seem to have various sources, selections, and choices for information, knowledge, and entertainment. Or is that actually the case?

The omnipresence of media has changed our world in a way that human beings of previous generations have never experienced: the way we think about the world around us, and even the way we view ourselves, are influenced by the media. The average Canadian citizen watches television for 21.4 hours per week (over 1,100 hours per year).\(^1\) Young children are exposed to more than 40,000 advertisements per year. Some studies even claim that the average North American is


exposed to 3,000 ads per day.\(^2\) As for the Internet, Canada has one of the highest penetration rates in the world,\(^3\) and the number of Internet users has reached 84.3 percent of the whole population.\(^4\) Many other forms of media remain common as well, such as newspapers, magazines, CDs, DVDs, films, books, and computer games. Often times we engage multiple media at the same time or check various sources to get specific information, meaning that we spend a significant amount of our waking time with media whether for information or entertainment.\(^5\) The mass media now collectively serve as a powerful educator, preserving and creating private and public access, knowledge, and privilege (Giroux, 1999; Kellner & Share, 2007; Luke, 1997, Stack & Kelly, 2006). Moreover, the drift toward oligopoly in media industries has led to a concentration of media ownership and control in fewer and fewer corporate hands. Large corporations, such as Disney, General Electric, Viacom, and News Corporation, have increasingly expanded their influence in the realm of media, meaning that information is increasingly produced and filtered by corporations that are geared toward mass production for a mass consumption-based culture. More than ever, we need to understand what roles the media play in our contemporary society, what effects they have on our life, and who wields control over the media: we need to be media literate in order to survive and fully appreciate the media in this information society. For youth, this has serious implications:

The organization and regulation of culture by large corporations … profoundly influence

\(^3\) International Telecommunication Union (2006).
\(^5\) Statistics suggest that among those who follow the news on a daily basis or several days a week, seventy-two percent confirm two to four media resources to get information, and about ten percent check five resources (television, newspapers, radio, Internet, and magazines). Only seventeen percent follow a single resource, which is usually television. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2006008/9610-eng.htm#table1
children’s culture and their everyday lives. The concentration of control over the means of producing, circulating, and exchanging information has been matched by the emergence of new technologies that have transformed culture, especially popular culture, which is the primary way in which youth learn about themselves, their relationship to others, and the larger world. (Giroux, 1999, p. 2)

Promoting media literacy through media education is one way to help citizens become media literate. Media education has gained significant attention in the world especially over the last three decades. After passing through an initial phase of recognition and official approval, media education has entered its second phase in countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Bazalgette, 1997, Considine, 2002). The Canadian experience of media education or integrating media literacy into K-12 school curriculum across the country is sustained in a national narrative and Canada is considered one of the world leaders in the field (Mizukoshi & Yoshimi, 2003; Sugaya, 2000; Suzuki, 1997, 2001; Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005). Significant challenges still remain, however, before media education and literacy can be successfully incorporated into daily classroom teaching. Some advocates claim that a lack of research is a notable problem for media education (Bazalgette, 1997; Coleman & Fisherkeller, 2003; Hart, 2001a; Hobbs, 2005; UNESCO, 2001). This is generally the case in Canada (Crawford & Pungente, 1999; Suzuki, 2001) even though it is home to major contributions to media theory (the work of Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and Dallas Smythe) and media production (the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the film industry).
1.2 Definitions of Key Terms

Media literacy and media education have been practiced and researched for several decades in many English-speaking countries especially since the 1950s.6 Notions and definitions of these terms, however, have changed over the course of time and remain contested, which has resulted in various interpretations and practices.7 This section clarifies how key terms in this study, media literacy and media education, are used in this research context.

When discussing the meaning of the term media literacy, the terms media and literacy should also be examined respectively. Media is the plural form of the term medium, which refers to “newspapers, radio, television, etc., collectively, as vehicles of mass communication” (Oxford English Dictionary [OED]). In many cases, the term media refers to mass media. In addition, media indicates “a medium of cultivation, conveyance, or expression” (Merriam-Webster Online) especially with reference to the following four meanings of the term medium: (1) a channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment; (2) a publication or broadcast that carries advertising; (3) a mode of artistic expression or communication; (4) something (such as a magnetic disk) on which information may be stored (Merriam-Webster Online). Therefore, the term media refers to various aspects of communication practices.

Media can be categorized into three groups as Figure 1.1 shows: 1) a means or system to convey or store messages and information such as television, radio, magazines, billboards, telephone, Internet, CDs, DVDs etc; 2) contents or messages conveyed by those systems such as TV

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6 This is not to say that media education has only been practiced in English-speaking countries: it has in fact become widespread throughout various countries around the world, although the level of implementation varies greatly. For the global state of media education practice, see UNESCO (2001).

7 Various definitions, usages, and underlying concepts of these terms, as well as the historical development of media literacy and media education will be fully discussed in Chapter Two.
programs, movies, articles, advertisements, websites, etc., which are the combinations or parts of visual images, sounds, and letters; and 3) media corporations such as broadcasting stations and newspaper companies. It is clear then, that the term media is not the same as the term popular culture, which some researchers (e.g., Flores-Koulish, 2005) use interchangeably. Popular culture is part of media, but not a synonym for media.

Figure 1.1. Elements of Media

In addition to these three categories, there is also another way to classify media: mass media and personal media. Due to recent technological developments and the dissemination of digital media such as the Internet, media institutions and individuals employ these technologies for communication purposes. Therefore, the term media refers not only to systems and messages that reach a very large number of audiences (i.e., the mass) but also those used by individuals at a personal level. It is important to note that the term media carries various connotations, and this understanding is essential when examining what media literacy and media education mean to
participants of this study.

The term literacy is today generally associated with reading and writing, but the meaning of the term has changed and developed over the last few centuries.\(^8\) *Literacy* refers to “the quality or state of being literate; knowledge of letters; condition in respect to education, especially ability to read and write” (*OED*). The term *literate* in the meaning of “acquainted with letters or literature; educated, instructed, learned” (*OED*) was found in use as early as in the 15th century. The distinction between literate meaning “one who can read and write” (*OED*) and *illiterate* meaning one who cannot read and write emerged only in the late 19th century when reading print media, such as newspapers and novels, became common among the general public—due to technological developments and the prevalence of widespread education. With significant technological developments in the late 20th century, usage of the word literacy has again been extended. Being literate now means “having knowledge or competence” (*Merriam-Webster Online*) not only in reading and writing but also with symbols and processes in digital technologies, information and communication technologies (ICT), and media: thus terms such as computer literacy, information literacy, and media literacy were coined in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

As the concepts media and literacy vary, people have complex and diverse notions of the combined term media literacy.\(^9\) The general idea of media literacy is to have knowledge and competence in all aspects of media (means / systems, contents, and mass media corporations), but what constitutes media literacy depends on the context or setting, such as the country or level of

\(^8\) The underlying concepts of literacy are quite complex in reality and thus various theoretical perspectives and practices exist. The theoretical perspectives will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

\(^9\) The field of media literacy entails interdisciplinary scholarship that draws on media and communications studies, cultural studies, literacy studies, linguistics (especially semiotics), and education, and various approaches and theories of media literacy exist within each of these fields.
education being addressed (Alverman & Hagood, 2000; Bazalgette, 1997; Christ & Potter, 1998; Hart 1998). Definitions of media literacy range from those that are comprehensive to more teaching process-oriented descriptions of skills that are necessary for engaging with media. For example, the most common definition in the U.S. was framed at the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy at the Aspen Institute in 1992 (Kubey, 1997; Livingstone, 2004; Schwarz, 2005a, Tyner, 1998). The conference report defines media literacy as follows:

A media literate person – and everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can access, analyze, evaluate, and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training range widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence (Aufderheide, 1992).

These four components (access, analyze, evaluation, and content creation) are adopted by a broad range of people, and some definitions specifically target students learning media literacy at schools. For instance, Luke (1999) takes a cultural studies stance and characterizes the aims of media literacy as follows:

Media literacy aims to make students

(a) critical and selective viewers and consumers of popular culture

(b) able to reflect critically on media messages, their own selections, and pleasures from media and texts

(c) able to use those critical skills in the production of their own multi-media or audiovisual texts. (p. 623)

This broad definition is also reflected in Considine (2002):
Media literacy involves more than mastering key concepts or principles of the field. Rather than perpetuating the status quo or simply transmitting culture, media literacy is positioned as a change agent, capable of questioning and ultimately transforming culture. (p. 8)

In Canada, the definition of media literacy presented by the Ontario Ministry of Education is widely accepted (Media Awareness Network, 2005; Pungente, 1996). According to the *Media Literacy Resource Guide* (1989) published by the Ministry of Education, media literacy is:

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

It is worth noting that the Canadian definition of media literacy includes recognizing audience enjoyment of the media and encourages their enjoyment by learning more about the media, rather than judging or denying their tastes and teaching what and how to watch, read, and analyze media texts, which was often found in earlier media education practices. Despite various conceptions of media literacy around the world, it is generally understood and agreed that one who is media literate is able: 1) to understand the roles of media in society and the characteristics of each medium; and 2)

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10 There are some variations among provinces in ways school curriculum define and include media literacy and media education (Andersen, 2007; Hoechsmann, & Poyntz, 2008). How BC secondary school curriculum defines media literacy will be discussed in Chapter Two.

11 The *Media Literacy Resource Guide* also provides eight key concepts, which provides a theoretical base for media literacy: 1) all media are constructions; 2) the media construct versions of reality; 3) audiences negotiate meaning in media; 4) media messages contain ideological and value messages; 6) media messages contain social and political implications; 7) form and content are closely related in media messages; and 8) each medium has a unique aesthetic form.

12 Various approaches to media education are reviewed in detail in Chapter Two.
to critically analyze media texts. In addition, as we can see in the three examples introduced above, many scholars, teachers, and organizations that promote media literacy consider developing the ability to create media products as an integral part of media literacy\(^\text{13}\) (Aufderheide, 1992; Buckingham, 2003; Greenaway, 1997; Kellner & Share, 2007; Luke, 1999; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989; Sholle & Denski, 1994).

It is not the purpose of this study to determine what is the best or ideal *media literacy* to be implemented in school curricula. Rather, the purpose is to describe and understand various views and perceptions of media education and media literacy that exist among teachers and scholars. It is important, however, to clarify some common misconceptions of media literacy. First of all, media literacy is quite different from educational media. In many cases, media literacy in a school education context is misunderstood as classroom instruction that uses media such as educational television programs, the web, or DVDs in order to enhance students’ understanding of subjects and topics. Media literacy is not merely learning various subjects and issues by producing media works or watching the media; rather, it involves studying the implications of consumption and production, and exploring the roles that media play in society through various topics and subjects. Second, media literacy is not synonymous with computer or digital literacy. In some cases, learning how to use digital media and software applications are mistaken as the main focus of media literacy. It is certainly useful to know how to use multimedia, especially when engaging media production, for understanding how media work and what roles media play in our life; however, only focusing on acquiring production skills is not considered media literacy.

\(^{13}\) Those who include media production as an element of media literacy claim that learning to create media content helps students (and anyone who learns media literacy) to analyze professionally created media texts more deeply (e.g., Masterman, 1985). Some definitions, however, do not include media production (e.g., European Commission, 2007).
The term *media education* refers to a K-12 subject formed for, among many purposes, providing formal experiences for students to develop media literacy. A parallel is found in other subjects: art education and aesthetic or visual literacy; science education and science literacy; social studies education and historical or social literacy; technology education and digital or technological literacy. Media education focuses on teaching about the media in classrooms, and thus can be defined as “a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to the study of media” (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1996a, p. C-10). It is normally applied to K-12 education in those cases, though it sometimes refers to higher education as well (Christ & Potter, 1998; Williamson, 1999). The boundary between the two terms, however, is not rigid: *media literacy* and *media education* are often used interchangeably especially in North America (Sholle & Denski, 1994; Flores-Koulish, 2005). Moreover, some use the term *media literacy education* to emphasize the educational aspect of media literacy (Flores-Koulish, 2005; Galician, 2004; Johnson, 2001). Nevertheless, there is an inclination worldwide to use the term *media education* when discussing formal educational aspects of media literacy especially in K-12 school settings. Organizations such as UNESCO and the Media Awareness Network\(^{14}\) use the term *media education*.

In this study, the terms *media literacy* and *media education* are distinguished. The standpoint of this study is that *media education* is the practice of teaching about the media in formal school settings, and can be identified as one vehicle for implementing and promoting *media literacy*.\(^{15}\) The

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\(^{14}\) The Media Awareness Network is a Canadian independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting media literacy. The details about this organization are discussed in Chapter Two.

\(^{15}\) According to the general usage, ‘media education’ refers to K-12 school education in this study. Many claim, however, that media literacy is not necessarily for children only, but rather it can be widely acquired by adults as well in various informal settings (Buckingham, 2003). Thus
term *media literacy education*, which I believe to be somewhat redundant, is not used in this research. I also limit the usage of the term *media education* as follows. First, although media education can be implemented not only in K-12 education but also in higher education or life-long education, I discuss its practice only in the K-12 formal school education context with a strong focus on secondary schools due to the relevance to this research. Therefore, courses taught in technical schools, universities (except designated media education courses offered in teacher education programs that are intended to prepare future teachers to teach media literacy in K-12 settings), or any other private schools and institutions targeting their students or the general public are not included. Second, not all classroom instruction using the media is considered media education. As mentioned above, using educational media (e.g., photos, music, videos, DVDs, etc.) in classrooms to enhance students’ understanding of a topic, or classes that are mainly dedicated to teaching students how to use applications and devices and/or other media are not considered media education.

Third, the implementation of media education varies. Media education can be implemented as a stand alone course or, like other subjects, can be integrated into existing school subjects such as English, social studies, and technology, to name a few. Media education implementation, therefore, can be understood on a scale as shown in Figure 1.2. The word “Unit” shown in the middle of the scale in Figure 1.2 refers to a set of lessons, classes, or topics dedicated to media literacy within a course. Units can be comprised of a few lessons that last a few weeks, or several different units planned over several months. When the entire class is devoted specifically to dealing with media literacy from the beginning until the end of the term, it becomes the “Stand Alone Course” (i.e.,

different types of educational settings, such as workshops and lectures in communities, could serve as other means to promote media literacy to citizens of any age.
media education) presented on the right end of the scale. Although the length of each media
education unit in practice varies depending on a teacher’s lesson plans, briefly mentioning media
issues once or occasionally at the beginning of class or as an introduction to the topics students learn
that day are insufficient to be considered media education. Only when teachers dedicate a certain
amount of time and units exclusively to media literacy can that portion of their lessons be called
media education. Prior to this study, I presupposed two weeks as the lowest baseline of
implementation, and planned to examine classroom instruction that fits between a “two-week unit”
and a “stand alone course” as actual cases of media education practice in this research. While
carrying out the study, however, I realized that research participants’ understanding and
implementation of media education vary significantly. Therefore, various lengths and types of media
education and literacy practices were investigated in this research.

1.3 Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to examine the current status of media education in
secondary schools in the Lower Mainland area in the province of British Columbia (BC), and also to explore the diverse reasons that hamper the implementation of media education. Despite the fact that Canada has been one of the most advanced countries in officially implementing media education in school curriculum, media education has not yet been fully incorporated into classroom teaching, as I will explain in detail in the following section and Chapter Two. In order to identify the nature of the challenges that media education faces today, this study investigates BC teachers’ perceptions of media literacy, their views on the current status of media education practice, and teachers’ views on various issues with regard to teaching about the media in their classrooms.

Questions in the following four categories are addressed in this study:

(1) What are in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy? This category addresses the following questions: How do teachers define media literacy? Why do they teach about the media in classrooms? What are their goals for media education?

(2) What is the current status of media education? This category discusses the following questions: Is media literacy taught in classrooms? If so, what are the features of media education as it is currently practiced in classrooms? Which elements of media literacy are taught (e.g., decoding of media texts; the roles of media in society; media’s commercial implications; media production; etc.)? What kind of teaching materials are used in classrooms?

(3) What kind of support is available for teachers to integrate media literacy into classroom instruction? This category includes the following questions: What kind of educational background do teachers have with regard to teaching media literacy? Where do they get information on media literacy? Is there any support from other teachers, the schools where
they work, school boards, and/or parents when teaching media literacy?

(4) What are the obstacles/challenges that teachers encounter when teaching about the media?

This category raises the following questions: What are the major challenges of teaching media literacy? How have teachers overcome the obstacles? What do teachers think will help develop media education?

Each of these sets of questions will be highlighted and explored in detail in Chapter Four, Chapter Five, and Chapter Six.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As the literature review in Chapter Two demonstrates, research in the field of media education is sporadic. In Canada, there is a general understanding that media education has not yet been fully incorporated into classroom teaching even after receiving official recognition and approval by the Ministry of Education in each province (Media Awareness Network, 2005). However, there are no comprehensive studies that actually examine how extensively media literacy components are in fact integrated into every day teaching in classrooms, whether at the school board, provincial, or national level. Therefore, this research contributes to this field by exploring and describing the current status of media education in the Canadian context, particularly in the Lower Mainland area in the province of British Columbia.

Furthermore, by defining the complex nature of challenges that BC media education faces, findings in this study provide some recommendations for the further development of media education in general. Research that qualitatively documents why media education has not been successfully incorporated into daily classroom teaching is scarce. Much of the literature tends to
recite a few obvious causal factors when discussing challenges for media education, such as a lack of teaching materials, a lack of time, and a lack of teacher training (Coghill, 1993; Kellner & Share, 2005, 2007; Yates, 2002). By surveying and interviewing people who can comment based on actual experience, and by examining related documents, this study explores what hampers media education in a school district located in the Lower Mainland, BC.

Case study research often faces a criticism that results cannot be generalized by only examining a few samples. The parallel is that findings ought to resonate with other cases. This particular case study does not claim that the data reflect the whole picture of media education in BC; nor does it claim that obstacles and challenges found in this research are common to other jurisdictions. Nonetheless, other cases (in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, etc.) may find that the data resonate with their experiences.

This study also provides some implications in the areas of curriculum change and implementation. Compared with other school subjects such as English, media education is a relatively new addition to the curriculum (i.e., introduced in the late 1950s and early 1960s), and has thus experienced conflicts with established subjects in some cases. This research serves as an example of what happens when new subjects or topics emerge in school curriculum (Goodson, 1988).

1.5 Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature and conceptual frameworks of the study. It provides a historical overview of various approaches to media education, trends in the media industry’s involvement in media education, and a review of the existing research on media
education. It provides the basis for the justification of this doctoral research project by demonstrating how this study contributes new information to the existing research.

Chapter Three describes the methods of inquiry employed in this research. The chapter begins by examining various types of case studies and their characteristics. Problems related to using the case study method, such as generalizability issues and the roles of theory are discussed as well. This chapter also provides detailed information on the selection of sites and participants, data collection and data analysis procedures, the researcher’s subjectivity and positionality, and the limitations of this study.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six present the major findings of this study, each focusing on different data sources collected from participants in different settings. Chapter Four examines an orientation and analysis of in-service and pre-service teachers’ understanding of and engagement with media education by analyzing survey data. The chapter presents 1) in-service and pre-service teachers’ background knowledge and experiences with media education; 2) in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy and the current status of media education in BC; and 3) the support and/or challenges that in-service teachers face when teaching media literacy in schools.

Chapter Five addresses in-service teachers’ understandings and practices of media education by examining in-depth interviews and questionnaires administered in two BC secondary schools: one active school and one inactive school in media education. This chapter describes how teachers from active and inactive schools conceptualize media literacy and how they perceive various issues regarding media literacy in the classroom, including the support they receive and the challenges they encounter. It also provides an analysis of the differences and similarities between the two
schools by comparing the data presented.

Chapter Six describes how four expert teachers in media education have articulated their perspectives on media education. Data collected through in-depth interviews with each of these teachers reveal their perceptions of media literacy, their opinions on the current status of media education in BC secondary schools, and what they see as support for and obstacles to media education.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides implications for theory, pedagogy, and research. The chapter first presents a summary of the findings by synthesizing common themes and issues arising from different data sources. The chapter then discusses the theoretical implications of the findings by triangulating data collected and analyzed in this study in order to articulate the obstacles and challenges that media education faces in Lower Mainland, BC, schools. Recommendations for overcoming the challenges identified in this study and suggestions for further research are also provided.
This chapter reviews the literature related to media education and conceptual frameworks utilized. Section 2.1 provides a historical overview of various approaches to media education. Section 2.2 addresses issues on the recent trend of the media industry’s involvement in media education by examining one of the most prominent examples: Channel One’s involvement. Section 2.3 describes the historical development and the current status of media education in Canadian school settings. Section 2.4 outlines a review of the existing research on media education. Section 2.5 examines BC secondary school curricula, Integrated Resource Packages (IRP), of English and Social Studies in order to present how media literacy is situated within the curriculum of these subjects. Finally, section 2.6 reviews literature on curriculum change and innovation. It describes Hall and Hord’s (1987, 2006) model of “stages of concern about innovation,” which is employed in the data analysis of this study.

2.1 A Historical Overview of Media Education: Approaches and Rationales

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, media education has developed with regard to recognition from policy-makers and establishing school curriculum, most notably in countries such as the U.K., Canada, and Australia. Although media education tends to be considered a new field, it was established in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and debates about mass media effects and how to teach children about the media have repeated cycles of interest and decline for well over a century (Anderson, 1980 quoted in Schwarz, 2005a; Buckingham, 2003). This section provides a historical overview of various approaches to media education.
2.1.1 Initiation of Media Education: Protectionist / Inoculative Approach

Discussions over the media’s impact on children, in fact, have a long history. The oldest recorded example is found in the ancient Greek philosopher Plato’s Republic, in which he warned of the negative influence of poets and poetry on the youth (Buckingham, 1991, 1993c). He was anxious about poets becoming a negative influence on the formation of children’s minds and their character, insofar as the texts (typically verbal in this era) could produce moral weakness by encouraging emotional responses. According to Plato:

Shall we therefore readily allow our children to listen to any stories made up by anyone, and to form opinions that are for the most part the opposite of those we think they should have when they grow up? … Then it seems that our first business is to supervise the production of stories, and choose only those we think suitable, and reject the rest (Plato, Trans. 1987, p. 72).

Plato’s concern with the popular texts in his time is similar to debates about popular literature or novels in the nineteenth century, cinema in the 1920s and 1930s, and children’s comics in the 1950s.

Beginning in the 1930s in the U.K., the necessity of teaching about the media—in the form of films, newspapers, and advertisement—in schools was proposed in order to prevent students from being morally corrupted by the media. In 1933, F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson wrote a book entitled Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness, which is said to be the first systematic media education textbook, at least in English-speaking countries (Buckingham, 2003; Masterman, 1985; add more lit later). Leavis and Thompson viewed the media as agents of cultural decline and contributors to the corruption of values of art and literature that are inherently superior. For them, commercially catered media were insubstantial and offered merely superficial pleasure.
Teaching students how to ‘discriminate and resist’ against the commercial manipulation of the media was therefore necessary in order to preserve ‘high culture’ such as Dante and Shakespeare. They also claimed that the existence of highly trained and informed intellectual elites (including themselves) serve an important role in preserving English culture. This elitist approach has been criticized by many media educators in later years due to its ‘inoculative’ or ‘protectionist’ attitude against the media. Their book, however, was revised and reprinted many times for a few decades, and was influential in media education for quite some time. For example, this inoculative / protectionist approach still existed in schools during the 1970s when Graham Murdock and Guy Phelps (1973) conducted research in British secondary schools. Their study revealed that nearly 30 percent of teachers held unfavorable attitudes toward mass media and excluded media material from classrooms, and another 30 percent of teachers applied an inoculative approach in an effort to replace children’s consumption of popular culture with high culture. Masterman (1985) points out that one positive legacy Leavis and Thompson’s work left was that it made the discussion of the mass media in the classroom “an acceptable and intellectually respectable activity” (p. 40) for the first time.\(^\text{16}\)

2.1.2 The Popular Arts Movement and the Return of the Protectionist Approach

Media education entered a new phase in the late 1950s and early 1960s under the influence of key scholars who founded British Cultural Studies: Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart. Williams (1958) and Hoggart (1959) challenged the Leavisite notion of distinguishing between high

\(^\text{16}\) Although I agree with Masterman that Leavis and Thompson opened a path for media education in schools, it may be too unrealistic and optimistic to conclude that the discussion of the media had become an “intellectually respectable” activity. Even today media education remains perceived as an easy or less-academic topic, and ‘an alternative for underachieving students’ (Considine, 2002).
culture and popular or low culture. They argued that culture is not a privileged artifact but ‘a whole way of life.’ Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (1964) soon presented a key textbook with this new approach, *The Popular Arts*, which offered various analyses of popular media genres and artists, especially in the field of cinema. On the surface, this popular arts approach seems to take a more liberal way of understanding the media and thus it is quite different from Leavis and Thompson’s inoculative / protectionist approach to media education. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that this approach still contained the concept of discrimination and shared some similar views with the previous approach. As Hall and Whannel (1964) argue, “the struggle between what is good and worthwhile and what is shoddy and debased is not a struggle against the modern forms of communication but a conflict within these media” (p. 15). This popular arts movement, therefore, does not discriminate all genres of media, but still encourages teachers and students to distinguish ‘good’ forms and works of media arts from ‘bad’ ones in order to preserve cultural distinctions. For example, movies are regarded as good arts, but not television programs. Even among films, intellectual British or European films are considered good, but not popular films especially from Hollywood.

Media education under the popular arts movement in the 1950s and 1960s encouraged appreciation for certain arts, yet it left out the most influential part of the media: television. Television created a new social environment: watching television became people’s favorite pastime as well as their major source of information. This shift to an image-based culture caused great concern about its negative effects on viewers, especially children. In order to protect children from powerful and harmful media, teaching about the media in schools was considered necessary. This concern has become considerably strong among educators, parents, and communities since the
1960s. This defensive rationale for media education is based on different motivations at different times and in different national and cultural contexts, and some of them still remain as major reasons for developing media education to this day. The defensive rationale for media education can be categorized into three issues: cultural, moral, and political defensiveness (Buckingham, 2003). The cultural defensiveness is the continuation of Leavis and Thompson’s approach and aims to protect children from lower forms of media (i.e. popular culture) and to lead them to appreciate high culture. This style was often considered as old-fashioned and anachronistic by the 1950s; however, its variations are found in later times as well. For example, one study revealed that Leavis and Thompson’s discrimination approach still existed in schools during the 1970s in British secondary schools (Murdock & Phelps, 1973). Cultural defensiveness also takes the style of resistance against American cultural imperialism and remains to this day relevant, especially in English-speaking countries and to some degree in Latin America (Buckingham, 2003). For example, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the initial rationale for introducing media education into Canadian schools was to protect children from losing Canadian identity by absorbing too much American popular media (Mark, 1962; Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005). Australia has also experienced ‘cultural cringe’ due to the massive inflow of the U.S. media, which led to the introduction of media education (Greenaway, 1997).

Moral defensiveness, on the other hand, focuses on the negative influence of television’s violent and sexual scenes on children. This moral panic about children becoming more violent and sexually mature earlier has been discussed by many politicians and writers with regard to various social problems, and media education has been proposed as a solution to these social problems. For example, Winn (1980) argues that television has caused various problems such as mental laziness,
which could lead to the destruction of capacities for intelligent thought and a decrease in play and family time. She compares watching television with reading books and insists that reading (the “great” books, but not popular culture) is a superior form of liberal, mental training. Postman (1983) argues that television has blurred the distinction between adulthood and childhood, because children have learned adult ways from television programs. Television is thus responsible for the ‘disappearance of childhood’ and a primary force behind various social problems. Both writers regard school as the last bastion of a dying print media. Many current media literacy programs, especially in the U.S., employ this moral defensiveness rationale to tackle issues involving alcohol, drugs, unsafe sex, and violence (Heins & Cho, 2003; Hobbs, 2005). Common to these prevention programs is a viewpoint of popular media corrupting children and leading them toward problematic behavior.

The third category of the defensive rationale for media education, political defensiveness, also remains a major motivation for introducing media education. From this perspective, the main objective of media literacy is to emancipate children from false beliefs and ideologies (such as sexist or racist ideas) represented in the media. The media are considered primarily responsible for spreading or reinforcing certain political ideas and ideologies, so advocates of this perspective consider media analysis a useful means to displace or overcome stereotypes and misinformation (Buckingham, 2003). The political defensiveness perspective has become one of the major approaches to media education under the name of the ideological or ‘demystification’ approach.

17 Buckingham classifies the ideological or demystification approach as the third category of the defensive rationale for media education. Some clearly distinguish, however, between the ideological approach and the protectionist approach. For example, Kubey (1997) highly values that Masterman (1985, 1997), who is the most influential media educator developing the ideological approach, takes an appreciation of media into account when teaching about media and also indicates the necessity of reconstituting the relationship between teachers and students in media education.
2.1.3 Ideological Approach

The ideological approach to media education emerged in the 1960s and 1970s with an influence from structuralism and semiotics (Considine, 2002; Masterman, 1984, 1993b). It was again initially derived from academics in the U.K. and remains one of the major approaches to media education to this day. Journals such as Screen and Screen Education became a forum for discussing media education. In addition, Len Masterman’s two major works, Teaching about Television (1980) and Teaching the Media (1985), which presented a theoretical discussion and practical suggestions on media education, became key texts for introducing and developing this new trend in teaching about media. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the constructed nature of media texts: media are not merely reflections of reality, but representations of constructed ‘reality.’ Media are not only regarded as means of conveying information about the world, but also as ways for understanding the world: media is a consciousness industry that accumulates power to directly influence society. Thus, the objective of media education from this perspective is to “demystify” and criticize media messages: students are expected to analyze media texts in their relevant contexts in order to find hidden ideologies embedded within, as well as to reveal the way in which meanings were produced (Masterman, 1985).

The ideological or demystification approach has contributed toward the development of media education in three ways. First, various media texts such as advertisements, newspapers, comics, television programs, magazines, and films have all become subjects of critical analysis. Unlike the previous two approaches, the ideological perspective does not discriminate certain genres

These elements indicated by Kubey are not part of the protectionist approach and clearly show the differences between the two approaches. Thus, the ideological approach will be discussed separately in this chapter with further discussion on the differences between the ideological and the protectionist approach will be reviewed.
or types of media. It opposes the “middle-class, defensive and deeply paternalistic” (Masterman, 1985, p. 59) attitude of protectionist / inoculative and popular arts movements. This attitude has been more appealing to teachers from newer generations, as they are more familiar with various forms of media and popular culture in comparison with older generations (Masterman, 1985).

Second, the ideological approach has expanded its depth in media analysis: not only with the kinds of media, but also with methods of analysis. By applying semiotics, this approach adopts objective and rigorous media analyses (Buckingham, 2003). It also takes producers of media into account when analyzing media texts in context. The analysis focuses on what kind of values / ideologies are represented in media messages and who created these messages and why, thus seeking a more comprehensive understanding of media. Third, Masterman (1985) brought the discussion of pedagogical issues into media education. He expresses the importance of a non-hierarchical relationship between teachers and students when teaching about media. He mentions Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy and states the need for change in the structural relationships in the classrooms: teachers should not pass on their knowledge and information to students, as what Freire called “banking education” (Freire, 1970/2000), but instead a dialogue in classrooms is essential. Some aspects of the ideological approach to media education have been criticized, as will be mentioned in the next section, but this approach (especially Masterman’s work) has nonetheless greatly influenced the development of media education especially in the 1980s, not only in the U.K. but also in many countries including Canada.

2.1.4 A Change in the Perception of Audience: Toward a New Approach

One of the criticisms leveled against the inoculative / protectionist approach, and to some
extent the ideological approach as well, is its premise that media audiences (especially children) are inherently uncritical and easily manipulated when they receive media messages. The inoculative / protectionist approach to media education employs a simplified understanding of relationships between the media and audiences, which is based on the stance that audiences, especially children, were powerless receivers of media messages. For example, German intellectuals from the Frankfurt School suggested that ‘mass’ audiences were vulnerable. Adorno and Horkheimer (1977) stated that “under the regime of the Culture Industry … the film leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of its audience … the film forces its victims to equate it directly with reality” (pp. 353-354). Scholars who contributed to the British film magazine, Screen, also showed a similar viewpoint toward audiences. MacCabe (1976), Heath and Skirrow (1977), and others who developed screen theory argued that media texts had absolute power over audiences in the way they received meanings. From this perspective, the media is considered capable of transmitting messages to audiences without any intervention, suggesting that audiences are influenced easily by media messages (Figure 2.1).

![Figure 2.1. A linear Model of Communication Systems and Media Education](image-url)
According to this linear communications model, Message A created (coded) by producers (mainly media industries) is transmitted through a medium, which then reaches audiences, and is then interpreted (decoded) as the same Message A as the producers intended. Cast in this light, media education is regarded as a necessary defense mechanism to counter the messages that media producers convey. In the protectionist / inoculative approach, media education teaches students whether Message A is worthy of appreciation or not, and helps prevent them from being negatively affected if it contains undesirable messages. In the ideological approach, media education urges students to uncover what kind of and whose ideologies are embedded and represented by the producers of Message A. Either way, without the filter of media education, students receive Message A more or less the way that the producers intended, and face the threat of being rather easily manipulated or mystified by that message.

This linear model of relationships between the media and audiences and the role of media education has been challenged extensively, for the transmission of media messages to audiences is far more complex than the linear sender / messages / receiver model. Although criticisms of this view can be traced back to the early 1950s (Potter, 1998), many scholars and critics did not take media audiences very seriously until the 1980s when audience research began. The nature of research in media and communications studies shifted from the media text to the audience due to the influence of cultural studies and audience studies (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). As more studies closely examined how audiences engage media, audiences were considered much more active in the process of understanding and making meanings of messages rather than just merely receiving and accepting media messages. As Hall (1973/1994) conceptualized in his article, “Encoding / decoding,” audiences use their own social, racial, gendered and various other backgrounds when
interpreting media messages. Morley (1980) later supported Hall’s hypothesis by conducting audience research of the television program *Nationwide*. Since then, many studies have been conducted to examine how each audience interprets media messages differently and actively (e.g. Ang, 1985; Buckingham, 1993a; Dyson, 1997). In this sense, audiences are active producers of messages rather than passive receivers. Therefore, as Figure 2.2 illustrates, differences (or “misunderstandings” from producers’ viewpoint) may exist between messages created by media producers and those received by audiences.

![Figure 2.2. Active Audiences and the Media: A Revised Communication System](image)

Message A created by producers may be interpreted as A’ by one audience, and A” by another audience. Messages A’ and A” could be the same or similar to the original Message A, but it could also be completely different. In addition, decoded messages A’ and A” may be sent back to producers as feedback or public opinion and thus affect the media’s decision-making on what messages to send in the future. This model, therefore, is not one-way linear communication from...
senders to receivers, but rather a circle in which messages flow both ways continuously. Media education, then, becomes a process for understanding this circle of the communication system mechanisms and participation in the interpretation / creation of media messages.

Based on this new understanding that audiences are active interpreters and producers of media messages rather than passive receivers or victims of negative effects, media education moved toward a new phase around the mid-1990s (Buckingham, 2003)\(^{18}\). Media education is considered a form of preparation rather than protection, in order for students to fully participate in the current media environment (Bazalgette, 1989 quoted in Buckingham, 2003). It applies an approach wherein students’ experiences and pleasures with media do not have to be set aside while studying about the media in classrooms. Buckingham (2003) explains:

> [This approach] aims to develop a more reflexive style of teaching and learning, in which students can reflect on their own activity both as ‘readers’ and as ‘writers’ of media texts, and understand the broader social and economic factors that are in play. Critical analysis is seen here as a process of dialogue, rather than a matter of arriving at an agreed or predetermined position. (p. 14)

In some ways, this new approach—which I am calling the “preparation approach”\(^{19}\) for the sake of clarity—takes a more neutral stance in comparison with the protectionist / inoculative or ideological approaches: it does not impose on students a particular view as to which media is ‘good’ or whether ideas and values represented in media texts are ‘correct.’ With a closer look, however, it becomes clear that the preparation approach has not completely separated itself from the ideological approach.

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\(^{18}\) As will be discussed later, this shift in approaches to media education is a gradual process and thus, the protectionist and ideological approaches are also still in practice to this day.

\(^{19}\) Unlike the previous protectionist / inoculative and ideological approaches, there is no specific name for this new approach.
As a matter of fact, the preparation approach criticizes the ideological approach for certain issues, yet it does not suggest any solutions for these issues either. First, students engage in similar activities to learn about the media in both approaches – critical analysis of media texts, understanding social and economic factors affecting media, and developing students’ skills for producing media. The preparation approach, in fact, follows most of the curricular and pedagogical concepts of media literacy suggested in the ideological approach. Second, what the preparation approach suggests for change may not be that new after all. As Buckingham’s quote above demonstrates, this new approach tries to incorporate a new teaching style and a new view of audiences: it attempts to take a more reflexive style and emphasizes dialogue when critically analyzing media texts, due to the new but now widely-accepted recognition of students as active audiences. Buckingham (1993b) criticizes the ideological approach as follows:

The notion of ‘demystification’, for example, which provides the dominant rationale for a great deal of media education (e.g. Masterman, 1985), implies that students are mystified, and that they will automatically recognize the truth when the teacher reveals it to them. … this approach drastically underestimates the extent and the diversity of children’s existing knowledge about the media, and effectively ignores the social relations of the classroom. (p. 143)

As Masterman (1985, 1993a) argues, however, the ideological approach recognizes that audiences have been neglected in media education for a long time even though they are active and “ceaseless producers of meaning” (1993a, p. 6). Therefore, compared with the protectionist / inoculative approach, audiences are not regarded as an easily manipulated mass in the ideological approach. Masterman (1985) at least in theory also considers dialogue important. He claims that the processes
of dialogue, reflection, and action are vital to media education, and thus non-hierarchical teaching approaches are essential. The problem seems to be not the theory itself, but the practice. Even though the ideological approach is concerned with the social context that produces media texts and recognizes audiences as being active, the focus of analysis still remains mostly on media products (Lee, 1996). The main objective of media education with this approach is to uncover the embedded ideologies that are produced and disseminated by the media (i.e. ‘consciousness industry’): the way that audiences negotiate meaning-making of media texts in relation to their own knowledge and experiences tends to be left out from media education. Some research shows that ‘demystification’ tends to result in a single conclusion about the meaning of media texts by teachers imposing on students politically correct analyses (Buckingham, Fraser, & Mayman, 1990). This demonstrates the difficulty of putting theories into classroom practice. The preparation approach does not suggest how to incorporate its suggestions, or whether a student-centered teaching style can happen and work in reality. Therefore, it could also easily fall back onto the path of the traditional teacher-centered style, or what the ideological approach has encountered. Furthermore, it could also fall into the opposite situation: students’ views are fully celebrated, but not expanded to further analysis, which means that their understanding of and engagement with the media simply remain the same. In order for the preparation approach to fully develop as an actual separate approach, research on media education practice in classrooms and further exploration of the pedagogical issues of student-centered media education are necessary.

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20 A lack of research on media education practice in schools has been indicated for quite some time (Bazalgette, 1997; Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005), yet little has been done so far.
2.1.5 Critical Media Literacy

So far in this section, various approaches to media education have been reviewed according to the chronological order of development in media education: the inoculative/protectionist approach, the popular arts movement, the ideological approach, and the preparation approach. While these approaches have drawn from scholars and teachers in various disciplines such as media and communications studies, cultural studies, linguistics (especially semiotics), and education, theoretical perspectives in literacy studies have also exerted great influence on discussions and development of media literacy.

There are three primary theoretical perspectives that frame interpretations of literacy – functionalist, interpretivist, and critical (Anderson & Irvine, 1993). The first two are, in fact, similar to approaches previously reviewed. The functionalist view construes literacy as a technical skill for reading and writing, and focuses on an individual’s empowerment by acquiring this rudimentary skill. It presumes “the existence of a societal consensus of values, a social system reflecting meritocratic principles” and takes “a cultural assimilationist posture” (Anderson & Irvine, 1993, pp. 81-82). This theoretical perspective on literacy resembles the inoculative/protectionist approach to media education. According to the functionalist view, media literacy represents the acquisition of skills for understanding ‘the grammar’ and genres of media, the ability to identify ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ media, technical media text analysis such as stereotypes in media representation, and learning how to use media. The interpretivist view of literacy, on the other hand, claims that social reality is constructed by social interaction. It takes social contexts into account when discussing literacy/illiteracy, but it does not consider the political power behind inequalities in society. This perspective is similar to the ideological approach to media education insofar as the ideological approach
encourages students to read and critique media texts in contexts and to learn how to express their views and ideas through media.

The third theoretical perspective on literacy is critical literacy. This viewpoint has quite a different understanding of literacy itself in comparison with the previous two perspectives: it questions power relations, discourses, and identities through which practices of reading and writing are constructed. In short, critical literacy regards literacy as “indices of the dynamics of Power” (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. xviii) (Petrina, 1998, 2000).

Critical literacy is rooted in Freire’s work on repositioning the politics of literacy (Anderson & Irvine, 1993; Lankshear, 1997; Petrina, 1998, 2000). It is directed at “understanding the ongoing social struggles over the signs of culture and over the definition of social reality, over what is considered legitimate and preferred meaning at any given historical moment” (McLaren & Lankshear, 1993, p. 424). Critical literacy, then, ultimately seeks to challenge social inequalities. Adopting this critical literacy perspective into media education, the critical media literacy approach advocates a very distinct purpose for acquiring media literacy. Critical media literacy is not a skill-based or text-based approach, unlike other approaches to media education. It is a cultural, political, and social practice (Sholle & Denski, 1993). Students critically interpret and produce media texts, and question the power of the media. As Lewis and Jhally (1998) argue, media literacy teaches students to “engage media texts, but it should also…teach them to engage and challenge media institutions” (p. 109). As such, critical media literacy tries to 1) enable citizens to use media technologies by themselves so that they can alter social conditions and 2) empower individuals with the ability to dampen media influence.21

21 For an example of a media education program that applies a critical media literacy approach, see Kline, Steward, & Murphy (2006).
So far in Section 2.1, I have described the historical overview of various approaches to media education. Figure 2.3 summarizes the three major approaches to media education and their relations to perspectives on literacy.\textsuperscript{22} Although these approaches to media education developed chronologically from inoculative / protectionist to ideological and finally to critical, it does not necessarily mean that older approaches have been displaced by newer ones. While media education is often said to have moved away from the protectionist model to a critical or empowerment approach (UNESCO, 1999), some argue that the protectionist approach tends to recur as new media develop. Every time a new communication technology that produces popular culture (such as television, video games, and most recently the Internet) has been diffused within a society, the concern over negative impacts on children has arisen. For example, public debate about children’s use of the Internet focused on negative influences as well as on potential benefits, thereby reviving an inoculative approach to media education (Buckingham, 2003). Likewise, the emergence of highly violent video games has led to efforts to have them banned or have minimum age requirement to purchase them. Others also argue that the ideological approach to media education is often seen in school classrooms, as it allows teachers to bring various media content for critical analysis without referring to uncomfortable issues such as politics.

\textsuperscript{22} The purpose of this section is not to address the wide scope of literacies. Rather, this section outlines the range of definitions of media literacy by scholars in this field. Though not perfectly parallel, it is possible to draw broad affinities between the media education approaches and conceptions of literacy.
2.2 Media Industry and Media Literacy

It has been usually the case that one crucial party has been missing both in practice and in discussion in the field of media literacy for quite some time: the media industries. Although media
corporations create and distribute a majority of media content, they have been absent from the realm of media education. This is largely due to the fact that there has been a wide gulf and mistrust between media educators and the media industry. The topic of the media industry could be included in media education; however, many media literacy lessons tend to focus on analyzing media texts and therefore the media industry is missing from the discussion, or at best merely mentioned as creator of those contents. In some cases, media corporations are considered as subversive institutions that deliberately deceive audiences by sending faulty or excessively commercial-centered messages. The media industry becomes a mere enemy, and one of the goals for media literacy then moves toward helping audiences learn how not to be manipulated by the media industries and how they can possibly fight against them. Meanwhile, media corporations (and in some cases public service broadcasters as well) have been indifferent or hostile to media education for a long time (UNESCO, 2001). From the media companies’ perspective, media literacy seems to be focused on criticizing their products only in negative ways. Given the scale and scope of the media industry, there have been relatively few efforts at direct involvement in media education. Over the past two decades, however, this has changed.

There is a new phenomenon where media corporations are providing or supporting media education (Kline & Steward, 2007). Along with many other private corporations that market to students through advertising and the sponsorship of curriculum and programs, media corporations have entered schools—getting involved in media education is one way to do so. The case of

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23 This stance can be found in any approach to media education whether protectionist, ideological, or critical media literacy.

24 Canada is one of the few exceptional cases of media industries actively involved in media education. Details will be discussed in later sections of this chapter.
Channel One in the United States is a great example.\textsuperscript{25} Channel One Network produces a daily twelve-minute news program (including two minutes of advertisements) watched by students in 400,000 classrooms throughout 12,000 middle and high schools in the U.S. It is watched by over eight million students each day, or about 40 percent of the country’s entire teenage population.\textsuperscript{26} Channel One has faced criticism from liberal groups and educational organizations, such as the National Parent-Teacher Association and the American Federation of Teachers, against its practice of broadcasting private corporations’ advertisements for two minutes during each news program. As Channel One is funded by sponsor advertisements, which cost up to $200,000 per thirty-second spot, many of the Channel One studies have been associated with advertising content analysis (Barry, 1994; De Vaney, 1994) and privatization of public education (Apple, 1993; Buckingham, 1997; Molnar, 2004). The implications for media education, however, should be also discussed, for some argue that Channel One initiated the media industry’s entrance into the production of media education curriculum (Namita, 2006; Tyner, 1998).

Channel One has employed various means, both discreetly and directly, to engage in media education. First, their main “products” of news programs are created with a certain agenda: when providing news, Channel One constructs its views and values as “answers” for students. Channel One’s executive vice-president of programming, Morgan Wandell, states that: “A lot of times they [students] are looking for the answers to their questions and they don’t know who to turn to. I think Channel One can help provide a lot of answers to them” (Channel One Network, 2004). Given that

\textsuperscript{25} A discussion on media corporations’ involvement in media education and the example of Channel One was previously published in the following online journal. Namita, Y. (2006). Pulling back the curtain: Corporate media literacy and media education. Educational Insights, 10(2). http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v10n02/toc.html
\textsuperscript{26} This is about five times the number of teens who watch ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN news combined (Manning, 2000).
Channel One’s values and views are represented and marketed as a brand, it can present the news as answers for teens, but the brand trust that arises from self-marketing leads to an antithesis of media literacy (Namita, 2006). In addition, the educational benefits from Channel One have been questioned by many. Even Channel One’s own research indicates that its news programs have an educational benefit only when teachers integrate the program into the daily lesson plan, which is rarely the case (Brown, 1998; Manning, 2000). Second, in addition to its usual contractual arrangements with schools, Channel One produced free media literacy curriculum, “Media Mastery,” in February of 2000 (Branch, 2000). The curriculum consists of a 30-minute video and lesson plans that can be downloaded from their website.\(^{27}\) Five lessons are dedicated to news and another five to advertising. Each lesson plan has descriptions that focus questions, goals, instructional processes, and worksheets for distribution to students. The lessons instruct the basic skills required to analyze media messages. Most lessons, except one that uses a script from a Channel One news broadcast, do not deal with Channel One news programming directly. Therefore, Channel One’s programs are unlikely to be critically analyzed if teachers decide to use this media literacy resource kit. Third, Channel One made financial contributions to media education by stepping forward as a major sponsor for the National Media Education Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, held in 1999. The donation was solicited by Renee Hobbs, a leading media literacy scholar and paid consultant for Channel One.\(^{28}\) Its $25,000 contribution nearly provoked a boycott of the conference by Canadian educators who opposed the entrance of Youth News Network (YNN) into schools, Channel One’s equivalent in Canada (Golden, 1999). This incident also caused a split among the U.S. media educators: those who accept involvement of and financial assistance from

\(^{27}\) The curriculum is no longer available on their website.  
\(^{28}\) Hobbs also created the media literacy lesson plan mentioned above.
media corporations and those who oppose the idea by claiming that media education will be hijacked when it is sponsored by or in collaboration with the media industry (Kellner & Share, 2005). 29

Why and how did the media industry come to involve, and in some cases gain control over, media education? As the Channel One case clearly demonstrates, media corporations did not miss an opportunity for public relations. In addition, both the media industry and media educators gain in some ways. From the media corporations’ perspective, supporting media education is a perfect public relations opportunity to show the public their enthusiasm for education. The media are often faulted for negatively impacting children’s behavior with depictions of sexuality and violence. Media education, therefore, was originally introduced to schools as an antidote that could serve as a measure for inoculating and protecting students from the media’s negative influence. Many educators have moved away from this inoculative/protectionist approach and now take into account student abilities to critically analyze the media. Criticism of commercialism and violence in the media, however, has not disappeared. As such, the entrance of the media industry into media education serves as a strategic response to such criticism. Especially for Channel One, involvement in media education allows it to escape criticisms against their program content and business tactics of broadcasting commercials directly into classrooms. Besides, producing media literacy resources is a low-cost investment for media corporations, since they can easily fit previous programming into educational materials (Tyner, 1998).

For media educators, the circumstances of the current media education environment have

29 Each side has formed a national media literacy membership organization: The former is the Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA), and the latter is the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME). While AMLA takes a more liberal education approach and focuses on literacy, ACME takes a more radical advocacy position and focuses on media institutions (Kellner & Share, 2005).
made this situation of media corporations’ involvement in media literacy somewhat useful. Firstly, the Channel One case illustrates how the lack of funding has opened the door for the media industry to participate in public education. It was launched when U.S. schools were suffering from reductions in public funding. Channel One’s offer of a satellite dish and television sets seemed too good to resist for many schools that could not afford such equipment. In this sense, it is not surprising that Channel One programs are mostly in low-income and African American districts rather than upper-income and predominantly white districts (Buckingham, 1997; Brown, 1998). Schools subscribing to Channel One were unlikely to replace such equipment on their own and became permanent Channel One schools. Secondly, media literacy is a relatively new field and still does not hold secure status in K-12 education. The back-to-basics movement during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as constant shortages in educational funding, left various problems in media education unresolved, such as limited access to high-quality resources and a lack of teacher training (Buckingham, 1998; Coghill, 1993; Wulff, 1997; add more lit later). Media literacy resources provided by media corporations proved useful for teachers to incorporate media literacy in school curriculum, especially since they offer original up-to-date media source materials. Under these circumstances, Channel One and other prominent media corporations were provided with an untapped market to introduce media literacy resources.

Media corporations’ involvement in media education is not entirely harmful and in fact can be beneficial for both parties. The current situation is, however, a concern for the future of media education. Figure 2.4 captures the mechanism of corporate media in society and their role in media literacy. Media literacy, especially when it takes a critical form, is a counterforce to the media corporations’ power and influence. This is not to say that the purpose of media literacy is to bash the
media industry: for citizens to become media literate and analyze, monitor, and provide feedback to
the media industry is healthy for a democratic society. Media literacy enables us to question unequal
social relations and conflicts of interest, and motivates activism to possibly create a better society.

When media corporations, however, control media literacy and exerts influence over media
education, the motivation for activism is dampened. Anything that could be potentially harmful to the media industry is unlikely to be included in media literacy materials provided by the industry. Therefore, instead of serving as a counterforce, media literacy merely becomes part of a self-contained circle of corporate media. Once media literacy is appropriated by the media industry, the loop is closed and will likely remain closed.

As it will be addressed later in this study, the media industry should be encouraged to get involved in media education. Even with the current technological developments and the trend of non-professionals creating media messages, the majority of the media we engage in our daily lives derives from major media corporations. Media corporations could potentially serve an important role in media education, but not in the way described above. The corporate media’s self-reinforcing circle or circuit of power should be broken so that a balance between media education and the media industry is re-established. Thus, examining the relationships between media corporations / media professionals and media education / educators is an essential component in research on media literacy.

2.3 Media Education in Canada

In the previous two sections, I reviewed the historical development of various approaches to media education and also examined the recent trend of media industries’ getting involved in media education. This section describes how media education emerged and has developed in the Canadian educational setting in order to situate this dissertation research.
2.3.1 The First Wave of Media Literacy – Screen Education

The media education experience in Canadian schools can be traced back to “screen education” in the 1960’s. It was adopted from England where screen education (previously called “film teaching”) was already taking place. The main objectives behind screen education in Canada were twofold: 1) to teach children an appreciation of film and television as an art form; and 2) to develop self-defense mechanisms against possible exploitation by the power of visual media (Canadian Education Association, 1969). Screen education started as a grassroots movement among English teachers and it began to gather momentum in Canada during the late 1960s. The Canadian Association for Screen Education (CASE) was formed in Toronto in 1966 and the organization hosted the first national conference for media educators in 1969 at the University of York in Toronto.

In the province of Ontario, where most of the initiatives took place, a new position exclusively dedicated to screen education (Assistant Superintendent, Screen Education) was created within the Ontario Department of Education in 1968. This contributed not only to the promotion of screen education throughout the province, but also to developing the official guidelines for teachers, the Screen Education Guidelines, which were published in 1971.

Growing interest in teaching children about film and television was a response to social changes due to the rapid diffusion of mass media (especially television) as well as the popularity of Canada’s own media guru Marshall McLuhan. Radio was the most popular form of home entertainment in Canada from the 1920s to 1950s, when television arrived. Canadian television broadcasting first started in 1952, and nearly 85 percent of households installed television sets within ten years (Ungerleider & Krieger, 1985). At the beginning of its introduction, television was simply considered as another technological development, like washing machines or automobiles,
thus its influence on people’s values and beliefs was not discussed (Ungerleider & Kreiger, 1985). By 1966, however, only half of the public considered television a good influence on family life compared with two-thirds in 1956 (Rutherford, 1992). In addition, there was another growing concern unique to Canada. Due to its proximity to the United States and the use of the common language English (except in Quebec), some expressed alarm over the heavy influx of American media. Since 90 percent of the population lives within 100 kilometers from the U.S. border, many households were receiving U.S. radio and television programs even before Canadian broadcasting started. Protecting children from American media imperialism was regarded as necessary to guard Canadian national identity (Mark, 1962; Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005).

Coinciding with the beginning of discussions about mass media and its influence, Canadian English professor Marshall McLuhan started to gain international publicity with his media theories. His coined phrases such as the “medium is the message” and “global village,” in the early 1960s which became well known, and his works were widely read by the public as well as scholars and students. He argued that the electronic media transformed culture and values in society. McLuhan emphasized the importance of education about media to control these revolutionary transformations so that we do not become slaves of the media (McLuhan, 1964; McLuhan & Zingrone, 1995). Many early proponents of screen education, including Canada’s current leading media literacy experts Barry Duncan and John Pungente, SJ, were either students or friends of McLuhan (Lee, 1997).

Despite some teachers’ enthusiasm and the development of a core organization, a report from the Canadian Education Association (1969) reveals that Canadian screen education was still in at an “embryonic stage” in the late 1960s. The association conducted a screen education survey with more than 100 school boards across the country in mid-1968. According to the report, due to the
general attitude toward movies and television as merely “entertainment,” very little impetus for developing screen education had come from the school board level. The report also reveals an interesting fact that screen education advocates were usually English teachers and not audio-visual specialists in schools, which resembles the status quo of media literacy teaching today. As for major obstacles to the prevalence of screen education, the report cited a lack of school time for extra curricula, a lack of teacher training, and the lack of a central source from which teachers can receive advice and assistance. The report was optimistic about the growth of screen education in the future, though it also mentioned that it was unlikely for screen education to become a separate official curriculum in schools. Duncan (1993), however, is more critical of early screen education practice. Duncan argues that many English teachers used media clips to attract students’ attention and to provoke classroom discussion: it was “mainly teaching through rather than teaching about the media” (Duncan, 1993, p. 14). This first wave of media literacy, however, ended in the early 1970s due to the back-to-basics movement and the dissolution of CASE resulting from budget cuts.

2.3.2. Legitimating Media Literacy and the Aftermath

Although screen education was retrenched in the early 1970s, there was a new growth in school media education in the 1980s (Andersen, Duncan & Pungente, 1999). The Association for Media Literacy (AML) was formed in 1978 with seventy members, headed by Barry Duncan (high school teacher), Arlene Moscovich (the National Film Board), and Linda Schuyler (elementary school teacher). Since its foundation, the organization has provided networks for teachers involved in media education, organized workshops and conferences, and supported establishing media
literacy organizations in other provinces. The Jesuit Communication Project (JCP) was established in 1985, headed by John Pungente, SJ, in order to bring in international links. English teachers, parents, and women’s groups comprised both organizations. Largely due to lobbying efforts by these two organizations, the province of Ontario became the first educational jurisdiction in the world to mandate media literacy as a part of the English curriculum in 1987 (Association for Media Literacy, n.d.).\(^{30}\) As Lee’s (1997) thorough analysis on the introduction of media education in Ontario reveals, incorporating media literacy into formal school curriculum was the primary goal of media literacy proponents.

The grassroots movement in Ontario eventually spread to the rest of the country, and the Canadian Association for Media Education Organization (CAMEO) was established in 1992 to support promoting and developing media education nationwide. CAMEO is the umbrella group for seven provincial media literacy associations, which includes British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. In the province of British Columbia, the British Columbia Association for Media Education (BCAME), BC’s equivalent of AML, was formed in 1991 by a group of teachers and media professionals.\(^{31}\) In 1994, the group signed a contract with the BC Ministry of Education to prepare a conceptual framework for media education. The report became the basis for including media education in all curriculum areas of K – 12 education.\(^{32}\) This framework was also given to the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) that developed common curriculum frameworks for four provinces: BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.


\(^{31}\) The association was originally formed under the name of the Canadian Association for Media Education (CAME).

\(^{32}\) The report titled “A Conceptual Framework for Media Education & Cross-Curricular Learning Outcomes and Opportunities for Teaching and Assessment” will be examined in a later section with the IRPs.
Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. BC became the first among the western provinces to introduce the new Language Arts curriculum, which contained mandatory media education components. As of September 2000, every province and territory in Canada has mandatory media literacy components as parts of the language arts curriculum.

During the mid-1990s, two organizations were founded that boosted media education in Canada. One is the Media Awareness Network (MNet), which started in 1994 as a clearinghouse of resources for media education under the support of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the National Film Board (NFB), and then incorporated in 1996 as an independent non-profit organization. Since its initiation, MNet has been providing media literacy resources for teachers, parents, and students through its bilingual websites. The other organization is Cable in the Classroom (CITC), which is the Canadian cable industry’s education foundation. It provides elementary and secondary schools commercial-free, copyright-cleared educational television programs free of charge. Although most of the programs are not necessarily for media education, but rather for enhancing classroom learning in various subjects through the media (thus, not teaching about the media, but teaching through the media), some programs, especially those provided by special channels such as Bravo! and MuchMusic, are created for media literacy. Up-to-date free resources provided by these two organizations, MNet and CITC, could be quite useful for Canadian educators. How many of these resources are actually in use for media education, however, is not certain due to a lack of research in classroom settings.

One of the distinct features of Canadian media education is media professionals’ active involvement in promoting media literacy while keeping a good relationship with media educators.

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33 WCP has been renamed the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for collaboration in education (WNCP), which includes the Yukon, Northwest, and Nunavut Territories.
34 The U.S. version of Cable in the Classroom (CIC) was founded in 1989.
For example, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) created a few media education programs for classroom use in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{35} CHUM Television (now integrated into CTV Limited after being taken over by CTVglobemedia in 2007) was perhaps the most active participant in media education by Canadian media industries. CHUM produced TV programs related to media literacy such as: \textit{Media Television}, \textit{Too Much For Much}, \textit{The New Music}, \textit{Fashion Television}, \textit{MovieTelevision}, and Pungente’s show \textit{Scanning the Movies}.\textsuperscript{36} CHUM also sponsored various media education workshops for Canadian teachers and the international conference, Summit 2000, in Toronto. CHUM was also the first national broadcasting station in the world to appoint a full-time Director of Media Education (Pungente & O’Malley, 1999).\textsuperscript{37} Contrary to the strong opposition against the Youth News Network – the daily news program with commercials for students developed by Athena Educational Partners, Inc. and the Canadian equivalent of Channel One in the U.S. – CHUM’s support for media education was welcomed by media teachers (Crawford & Pungente, 1999). The positive response among media educators with regard to partnerships with media corporations is a situation unique to Canada, compared to commonly negative relationships in many other countries (UNESCO, 2001). Some explain that Canadian media corporations involved in media education hold the belief that “the

\textsuperscript{35} NFB issued three video resource packages, \textit{Images and Meaning}; \textit{Media and Society}; and \textit{Constructing Reality}. CBC’s six-package resource, \textit{Inside the Box}, includes videos and teacher’s guides.

\textsuperscript{36} Some of the shows were aired on special channels owned by CHUM. The show \textit{Scanning the Movies} was aired from 1997 for 10 years on the channel Bravo! Although this show was cancelled, a similar show called \textit{Beyond the Screen} began, starring Pungente as a host again in May 2008 on Bravo! CTVglobemedia kept most of the television channels when it took over CHUM, except for Citytv. For each episode in these programs, media educator Neil Andersen prepares a study guide which is posted on-line for teachers for free. For details on CHUM’s media education programs, see Crawford (2001).

\textsuperscript{37} Due to the takeover of CHUM Television by CTVglobemedia, some media education programs and the full-time director position no longer exist.
ability to better understand media should be a primary skill of all Canadians, and that broadcasters
can and should play a role in encouraging this literacy as part of good corporate citizenship”
(Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005, p. 150), and in CHUM’s case it was very much to do with
the founder of Citytv, Moses Znaimer’s philosophy. However, whether or not Canadian media
corporations are truly different from other media corporations in the world in terms of media
education, and if so why, has yet to be researched.

Once the initial goal of mandating media literacy in formal school curriculum was achieved,
however, the drive to further develop media education in schools seems to have weakened in
Canada. AML membership that used to be over one thousand at its peak at the end of the 1980s, has
now dwindled to four hundred. Core members who have been actively involved since AML was
formed represent most of its current membership since not so many younger teachers are joining the
organization (Suzuki, 2001). Because the leading figures in Canadian media education—such as
Barry Duncan, Neil Andersen, and Carolyn Wilson who are teachers or former teachers, and John
Pungente who is a priest and also a media education TV icon—are all based in eastern Canada
(mainly in the greater Toronto area), disseminating media education to the rest of the country has
been even more difficult than it was to originally implement media education in Ontario. In BC,
after getting involved in preparing school curricula in 1994, BCAME’s activities have been very
limited. Workshops with Pungente for teachers were held a few times in Vancouver. Most of the
teaching about media, however, has been the result of individual teachers’ isolated efforts (Blake,
2001). In addition to a lack of teacher training and a lack of teaching resources, the widely spread
population in the province is also pointed out as an issue that makes collaboration more difficult
(Pungente, Duncan & Andersen, 2005). Ultimately, though, there are few media literacy scholars,
which is unique to Canada (Crawford & Pungente, 1999; Suzuki, 2001) and likely contributes to the stagnation in Canadian media education’s further development.

2.4 Research on Media Education

Media education has been incorporated into school curricula predominantly in English-speaking countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia—yet it is still not considered part of the core curriculum in schools or considered a serious academic discipline (Hart, 2001b; Luke, 2002). One of the reasons for this is that research on media literacy classroom teaching is scarce and varies in quality (Hart, 2001a; Hobbs, 2004). Only a handful of studies have examined actual classroom instruction. Yates (2002) conducted a survey study in a small southeastern city in the U.S. to assess the current status of media education by distributing 359 surveys—with a response rate of 26.7 percent—to public and private elementary and secondary school teachers. The survey contained 95 items (92 closed questions and 3 open-ended questions) regarding media use in classrooms, goals and values of media education, teachers’ media qualifications, teaching resources, and barriers to classroom instruction, and the results were compared with similar surveys conducted in the late 1980s. This study revealed that despite teachers’ high level of interest in teaching media literacy, a lack of time, materials, and equipment served as barriers to implementing media education.

Hart (2001a, 2001b), on the other hand, conducted qualitative research on English teachers who teach media literacy in the United Kingdom. He conducted 11 case studies using systematic classroom observation and in-depth interviews with teachers in the south of England in order to examine what exactly English teachers are doing when they are teaching Media at Key Stage 4 in
secondary schools. This study is significant to the field due to the detailed way that it describes the aims of media education, methods used in the classroom, first-hand impressions of students’ reactions, and resources, considering that there is very little classroom research on media literacy. Choosing teachers who are already teaching media literacy rather than general teachers in schools also contributed to a better understanding of current media education practices. However, the concluding discussion of future suggestions merely states that there is a need for teacher training, and that the challenges of media literacy teaching are not situated in the bigger picture surrounding media education classrooms.

In the Canadian context, the Media Awareness Network conducted research on the current status of media education across Canada in 1998 (Media Awareness Network, 2005). The report describes which subjects’ curricula contain media literacy components in each province and territory, as well as a brief history of the process of mandating media literacy. With Lee’s (1997) in-depth research on the introduction of media literacy in Ontario, the origin and the general background of media education in Canada is well covered in these studies. These studies, however, do not describe the actual status of teaching practices: how and whether or not media education is implemented in daily classroom teaching, and if so how much, is not studied. As is the case for other countries and regions, only a few studies have examined Canadian classroom practices of media education and its challenges, such as Morgan (1996, 1998). Morgan (1998) conducted a survey study and interviews with media teachers in Ontario from 1992 to 1995. His research reveals that media text analysis is the main activity in stand-alone media education courses, and many teachers still employ a protectionist approach to media education. The study also reveals that stand-alone media literacy courses tend to have students that experience difficulty in studying other subjects (low achievement
students. Morgan suggests teaching media literacy by employing an everyday life approach, which gives consideration to students’ media involvement in daily life. However, his research focuses only on stand-alone media literacy courses, and thus does not capture the whole picture of media education, which often is embedded in other subjects like history and English.

As for the current status of media education in BC, there have been no provincial-wide or even school board-wide surveys conducted to assess how much media education is taking place in classrooms, thus making concrete details unavailable. Reports and articles from national organizations and people who are dedicated to the promotion of media education in Canada suggest, however, that media education has been struggling to gain a foothold in Lower Mainland area schools (Blake, 2001; Media Awareness Network, 2005; Pungente, J. J., Duncan, B. & Andersen, N., 2005). A report from the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2004) reveals a partial picture of the status of media education in the province. According to the report, stand alone media education courses exist in very few schools in the province: among all approved programs by the ministry, there were only 16 secondary schools offering a total of 26 media education courses in the 2004/2005 academic year. There are no data available, however, on whether secondary school teachers in BC are incorporating media education into existing subjects, and if so, how often.

Because the two subjects most expected to incorporate media education into their curriculum are English Language Arts and Social Studies, this dissertation research aims to investigate and provide

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38 Kline and Stewart (2007) conducted a survey of 80 teachers in BC in 2005 and 2006 and reported that many of the specified media education Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in BC curricula are ignored or not taught. This further confirms that media education is not implemented in daily classroom teaching.

39 Courses offered under the name “media 11 and 12,” “media literacy 11 and 12,” “media studies 10, 11 and 12,” “media & culture 11 and 12,” and “media Education 11” were counted as stand-alone media education courses. The data is obtained from the following website: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/k12datareports/04tsqtab/1592a.txt. Note, the BC Ministry no longer collects or distributes course-based data, and this 2004 report was the last made available.
a picture of media education practice in secondary schools in Lower Mainland area by employing a case study method, focusing on media education in these two subjects.

2.5 Media Education in BC Secondary School Curricula

In the previous two sections, I have reviewed research on media education as well as the historical development of media education in Canada. This section discusses how media education is situated in the focus of this dissertation research, BC secondary schools, by examining how media education and literacy are positioned in the current secondary school curricula. Media literacy was officially incorporated into school education in BC when major curriculum revisions took place in the mid-1990s. Prior to the curriculum revision, the British Columbia Association for Media Education (at the time called the Canadian Association for Media Education) was contracted by the Ministry of Education to prepare a conceptual framework for media education and many of the contents from the framework were integrated into various curricula. Media literacy elements are found mainly in three areas in the BC Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs): 1) English Language Arts (ELA); 2) Social Studies; and 3) Cross-Curricular Interests section in some of the IRPs. Some subjects and sections, however, have changed over the course of time in the newer versions of the IRPs. This section describes how media education and literacy has been incorporated into the IRPs in BC, and what changes have occurred in terms of media literacy treatment in newer curricula.

2.5.1 Media Education in English Language Arts Curriculum

The English Language Arts (ELA) IRPs for grade 8 to 10 (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1996a) and for grade 11 and 12 (Ministry of Education,
Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1996b) were the first ELA IRPs to include explicit reference to media education and media literacy. In these IRPs, students are expected to learn to use and appreciate language through a variety of forms and in a variety of contexts. Communication forms are categorized into three elements in these IRPs: literacy communications, informational communications, and mass media. Although these three categories overlap to some extent, the section on mass media includes common media literacy elements. Mass media is defined as “print, film, and electronic communications directed to a mass audience” (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1996a, p.4), and students are expected to be able to do the following six issues:

- examine and evaluate content and audience
- analyse cultural, racial, and gender roles and stereotyping
- communicate effectively using media
- select information and expand their knowledge base
- think critically about the messages surrounding them
- comprehend the role of mass media in society and their personal lives (p.4).

Students are thus encouraged to learn how to critically analyze various media texts as well as to learn about the role of media in society, which are both major elements in media literacy. Although learning how to communicate effectively by using media is briefly mentioned, this has more to do with handling information technology tools, such as word processing, rather than media content creation. As such, media production is not included in these IRPs.

The learning goals related to media literacy described above are introduced in more detail in the Comprehend and Respond (Critical Analysis) section in the Prescribed Learning Outcomes.
Each grade has its own expected outcomes and more complex topics and issues are included at higher grade levels. In grade 8, for example, students are expected to identify persuasive advertising strategies and also to identify biases in various media texts. In addition, they are encouraged to analyze stereotypes portrayed in popular culture, such as music videos, song lyrics, and primetime TV programs. In grade 9, students are expected to identify how different cultures and socio-economic groups are portrayed in the media and also to be able to explain how the media influence self-perceptions and lifestyles. By grade 12, students are expected to describe potential sources of bias, in addition to recognizing and analyzing these biases. The PLO sections in the IRP include a few examples of suggested instructional strategies and assessment strategies as well: these suggestions contain more details than prescribed goals and expected outcomes, as such teachers have a better idea of how to include media literacy elements in English classes. Media education is also included in this IRP in the Cross-Curricula Interests section in the appendix, which I will examine later in this section.

Since the release of ELA IRPs in 1996, there have been some changes in BC curricula. The new version of the ELA IRP for secondary school students (grade 8 to 12) was introduced in 2007. The description of the focus of this subject has changed from “learning language” to “the development of literacy” in this IRP. It now specifically describes how the definitions of literacy and text have expanded due to the rise and prevalence of multi-media. The term text is referred to as “oral, visual, or written language forms including electronic media” (p. 17), and students are

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40 Another section in these IRPs that highlights media literacy elements is the Cross-Curricula Interests section that is listed at the end of each IRP as an appendix. This will be discussed later.
41 For example, the Comprehend and Respond (Critical Analysis) section for grade 9 suggests that teachers provide students with examples from newspapers, cartoons, posters, videos, and advertising with a group of people (e.g. women, people with disabilities, ethnic groups), and ask students to comment on the implied messages.
expected to learn to “read, negotiate, and craft” each form of text, which has its own codes and conventions. On the surface, the new version of the IRP continues to keep media literacy as a part of ELA curriculum by pursing “multiple-literacies” and as such treats various forms of texts equally. However, the concrete goals and expected outcomes related to media literacy that existed in the 1996 version have mostly disappeared from the new version. What is left in the new version is mostly located in the B2 and B3 sections of the PLO sections for each grade. These sections describe how students are expected to learn to read and view a variety of information, persuasive texts, and visual texts (e.g.; magazines, newspapers, advertising and promotional material, broadcast media, websites, film and video, and photographs). The Suggested Achievement Indicators (equivalent of former Suggested Instructional Strategies) section briefly includes a few statements on referring to various media texts, such as “identify differences between a print text and visual representation (e.g., compare scenes from A Midsummer Night’s Dream to a film version) for grade 9. As such, many crucial elements of media literacy (e.g., being able to understand the roles of media, conducting in-depth content analysis of various media texts, understanding the commercial implications of media, engaging in media production) are not specifically mentioned in the new ELA curriculum. The Cross-Curricular Interests section in the appendix that included media education as one of the topics has disappeared altogether, and as such, detailed description of media education and literacy is missing in this new IRP. This change that makes media education and literacy less visible in ELA curriculum stands in stark contrast to the province of Ontario’s English curricula innovation in 2006 and 2007, which was modified to list media literacy as one of the main strands and made it more visible in all grades from kindergarten to grade 12.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{42} English curriculum in Ontario is designed to develop oral communication, reading, writing, and media literacy skills. See Ontario Ministry of Education (2006, 2007a, 2007b) for
2.5.2 Media Education in Social Studies Curriculum

The Social Studies IRPs for grade 8 to 10 (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1997a) and grade 11 (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1997b) were the first versions released for this subject after the mid-1990s major curriculum change in the province. References to media education and literacy in these IRPs, however, are somewhat limited compared to English Language Arts IRPs, which were introduced a year before. In the grade 8 to 10 Social Studies IRP, the most relevant section referring to media education is in the appendix for cross-curricula topics (which I will explain in the following section). In the main body of the IRP, media is simply considered as one of the resources to gather information when learning each topic. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of resources, such as “texts, electronic information, audio-visual materials, people, and mass media” (p. 6) in order to present multiple perspectives to students. Students are also encouraged to present information using various oral and visual media, as well as to make use of a wide range of information sources like the Internet and mass media. The only concrete example written for media literacy teaching is the suggestion to have students create an edition of a newspaper devoted to the topic of Canadian rebellions: students are encouraged to write an article, letters to the editor, editorial comments, and political cartoons to present various points of view and biases about the rebellion. As such, this IRP contains some media literacy elements (e.g., media texts analysis and media production), but learning about the media and/or roles of media in society are not positioned as major learning objectives. This IRP is currently still in use for grade 8 and 9.

The grade 11 IRP is similar to that of grade 8 to 10 in terms of referring to the media mainly as an information source, but it also has one specific prescribed learning outcome directly related to details.
media literacy. In the Skills and Process section, it describes that students are expected to “assess the influence of mass media on public opinion” (p. 10). The suggested teaching strategy for this particular outcome is to choose an issue of current interest in the mass media and let students take polls to gauge the opinions of groups, such as other students, teachers, parents, or community members. Students are expected to present the results in written and graphic form. It is possible for students to learn about the influence of the media in society by engaging in this exercise depending on the way teachers lead the activity. Moreover, the suggested strategy is focused more on students gathering data and presenting them, rather than critically evaluating and learning about the influence of the media on forming people’s opinions. As such, it is not certain how much teachers will include media literacy in their teaching based on this activity.

Recently the BC Ministry of Education released new versions of Social Studies IRPs for grade 11 and grade 10. The Social Studies 11 IRP was introduced in 2005 and it contains more information on media education and literacy than the 1997 version. In the Classroom Assessment Model section that contains a series of classroom units that address learning outcomes organized by topics and themes, media education is referred to in a designated section titled Media Analysis. It is emphasized that students should learn how to analyze media messages critically and independently since “much of the information that the public receives about issues and events is received through media messages – in newspapers and magazines, on television and radio, and on the Internet” (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2005, p.40). This section also provides ten concepts of media education as examples for teachers to work on. The concepts include: representation (all media messages are constructed and as such they are only representations of real or imaginary worlds), values (media messages contain explicit and implicit values), interpretation
(audiences bring their own knowledge, values, and experiences when interpreting media messages), production (people who understand about the media can make purposeful media messages) and so on. Media analysis is encouraged in the sections on election campaigns and public policy campaign as well. In addition, a few lesson plans and videos for the topic of media literacy, and a Media Awareness Network website are listed in the Learning Resources section. This IRP emphasizes critical thinking skills as one of the main elements for students to achieve, yet media education and literacy are not mentioned in the Students Achievements or the PLO sections in relation to critical thinking. It is worth noting, however, that the new version of the Social Studies IRP directly mentions media education and literacy for the first time in this subject.

The Social Studies 10 IRP was released in the following year in 2006. It briefly mentions “media literacy skills” as one of the three skills and processes that students should develop in this subject, along with two other skills: critical thinking skills and communication skills. This IRP also includes the same Media Analysis section that appears in the grade 11 IRP described above, yet it does not include detailed explanations on what constitutes media literacy skills or teaching resources as are listed in the grade 11 IRP. A close look at the recent Social Studies IRPs for the secondary school level reveals that media education and literacy are incorporated in the subject more than before. Although there is some inconsistency and a lack of detailed description and explanation in some parts, it is clear that media education and literacy is getting recognition as an important element in the subject.

43 These concepts are very similar to those of the eight key concepts introduced in the Media Literacy Resource Guide developed and published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, as described in Chapter One.
2.5.3 Media Education as a Cross-Curricula Interest

One of the features in the IRPs introduced after the major curriculum revision in the mid-1990s in BC was the inclusion of the Cross-Curricular Interests section as a part of an Appendix for the IRPs in all subjects and grades. Media education was included in this section along with topics such as environment and sustainability, aboriginal studies, gender equity, and multiculturalism and anti-racism. Media education is positioned here as an opportunity for students to develop abilities to think critically and independently about various issues, and it is indicated that all curriculum areas provide learning opportunities for media education. The key themes of media education listed in this section are:

- media products (purpose, values, representation, codes, conventions, characteristics, production)
- audience interpretation and influence (interpretation, influence of media on audience, influence of audience on media)

These key themes are cited directly from the media education conceptual framework developed by the British Columbia Association for Media Education (BCAME). Examples of curriculum integration include: English Language Arts, Visual Arts, Personal Planning, Drama, and Social Studies. The section omitted all descriptions of curriculum outcomes and the examples for teaching and assessment provided by BCAME, and as such it may be difficult for teachers to understand what these key themes mean. The examples of subjects that could incorporate media education are also limited in the IRP compared with the framework, which provided outcomes and teaching
suggestions for all subjects. Yet it was a noteworthy and creditable achievement to officially include media education and literacy in all areas of school curricula, as many countries in the world have not been successful despite grassroots movements.

There have been some changes, however, in the treatment of media education and literacy in BC curricula in recent years. The IRPs introduced after the year 2000 no longer include the cross-curricular interests section, and as such media education is not included in many of the IRPs. Even among subjects that are closely related to media education and literacy, the way and the amount of referencing to media education fluctuated as examined in this section: Social Studies IRPs have increased in some grade levels, but English Language Arts have dropped significant a amount of description on media education and literacy compared to the previous IRPs released in the 1990s. The relations between IRP descriptions on media education and literacy and teachers’ perceptions of media education and literacy will be closely examined in this dissertation research.44

2.6 Curriculum Change and Innovation

Since this research explores the state of newly added media education into curriculum and the diverse and complex challenges media education faces, literature on curriculum change and innovation are examined as well. Goodson’s study on changing school subjects is particularly insightful among the considerable research that exists on curriculum change and innovation. Goodson (1993) conducted historical and sociological case studies of school subjects, examining patterns of change and conflict when new school subjects emerge. His research yields three main arguments. One argument is that sub-groups, rather than monolithic entities, comprise subjects, and

44 During the data collection period for this research, secondary school English teachers were still using the 1996 version of the IRP, while grade 10 and 11 Social Studies teachers had already moved to the 2005 and 2006 versions of IRPs.
they contribute to changing boundaries and priorities within subjects. He also outlines a second argument, suggesting that “academic subject” status at the university level promotes the establishment of school subjects. Finally, Goodson also argues that conflicts between subjects over status, resources, and territory are the main factors of curriculum change. Goodson’s work (1993; 1997) highlights the importance of examining borders between new subjects and other school subjects in order to learn about new curriculum areas. These conclusions are further reinforced by Hargreaves (2001), Bascia and Hargreaves (2000), Fullan (2001), and Siskin (1994).

Hall and Hord’s (1987, 2006) model of “stages of concern about innovation” is useful for assessing levels of curriculum implementation and innovation. They develop the “concerns theory” originally advocated by Frances Fuller (1969) into seven levels: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing stages. In an educational context, the first three stages refer to teachers who gather information on a subject for themselves. However, once the knowledge is put into teaching practice, attention moves toward the task of using the innovation and the impact of innovation on students. Hall and Hord suggest three techniques to assess the stages of concern for individual or groups of teachers: interview, open-ended statement, and questionnaires. Using this model to rate teachers’ involvement with an innovation enables researchers to locate the current status of the innovation’s development, as well as an individual teacher’s understanding and practice of the innovation.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, I examined the historical development of media education and conceptual frameworks for media education and literacy, along with some issues surrounding media education
in the Canadian context. As this literature review reveals, the definitions, objectives, and approaches to media education and literacy are diverse and disputed. In terms of media education practices in Canadian schools, there is a general understanding that media education has not yet been fully incorporated into daily classroom practice despite the successful adoption of media education in policy for K-12 school curriculum in all provinces. Research on media education practice is scarce, however, and as such, the challenges and obstacles that teachers encounter while teaching media literacy have not been fully investigated. This dissertation research therefore serves as a case study that examines the status of media education practice in Lower Mainland secondary schools and explores the reasons that hamper the inroads of media education in the classroom.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF INQUIRY

This study explores media education and the challenges it faces by investigating teachers’ perceptions of media education and literacy, available support for teaching, and the obstacles that they encounter when implementing media education or teaching media literacy. This study employs a case study approach, using multiple methods: surveys, interviews, and document analysis. This chapter begins by examining various types of case studies and their characteristics, while also discussing problems related to using this research method, such as generalizability issues and the roles of theory. Site or setting and participant selection, data collection and data analysis procedures, the researcher’s subjectivity and positionality, and the limitations of this study are outlined.

3.1 Case Study Research

3.1.1. What is Case Study?

The case study approach has a long history and has been used by both academics and practitioners in numerous disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, medicine, law, psychology, political science, business, and education. Consequently, concepts and usages of the generic term “case study” vary significantly in various settings: there is little consensus on a terminological definition or the procedure for this type of research (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Ragin, 1992). In some instances, case studies are confused with specific data collection methods, such as participant-observation, while other times it is simply considered as the exploratory stage for other types of research strategies (Yin, 2003). Some research textbooks mention the case study approach only briefly as a variation within qualitative research.
The case study approach is an independent primary method for conducting research (Creswell, 1998; Gillham, 2000; Yin 2003). It systematically and thoroughly examines a specific unit, i.e. a “case.” The defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, which is referred to as “the instance in action” (MacDonald & Walker, 1975) or “a bounded system” (Smith, 1978). A case is a unit around which there are boundaries (Merriam, 1998): it is necessary to identify what is studied and what is not studied. A case is also bounded by time and place (Creswell, 1998) and a case may be simple or complex: it can be an individual, a program, a group, an organization, a community, or a country. It may also be a decision, a policy, a process, an incident, an event and so forth. While some focus on pinpointing the unit of study in order to define case study research – therefore drawing attention to a case as an object rather than a process – others, such as Yin (2003), argue that citing the types of topics that case study strategies apply to is insufficient. Yin distinguishes between “case” and “case study” and defines the latter in terms of the research process. “Case study” is thus the substance of research inquiry, consisting of research questions, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, interpretations, and conclusions (Yin, 2004).

He describes a case study as an empirical study that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 2003, p. 13)

In contrast to experiments or quantitative surveys, this places great emphasis on investigating a phenomenon in natural, social situations. Another way of defining the term “case study” is to see it as an end product of field-oriented research (Hammersley, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Wolcott, 1992). Stenhouse (1984) advocates calling the product a “case record,” but the practice of calling the final
report a “case study” remains widely established. Thus, both the process of inquiry about a case and the product of that inquiry are referred to as a “case study” (Stake, 2000).

In addition to the various definitions outlined above, certain characteristics are peculiar to this research method. In general, case study research is suitable especially when posing “how” or “why” questions, and when a researcher has little control over the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2003). It is also appropriate when research focuses on understanding the process behind particular events/phenomena (Merriam, 1998). Case study research seeks to preserve the wholeness of the cases. Sturman (1997) argues that:

the distinguishing feature of case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits. As a consequence of this belief, case study researchers hold that to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalize or predict from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge. (p. 61)

Case study seeks to preserve the wholeness of a case, though research questions should focus on specific features of the case in order to achieve some focus (Silverman, 2005). The case study approach also employs various means for data collection. Sociological and anthropological fieldwork methods, such as field observations (e.g., participant observations, direct observations), interviews, and examinations of documents and records, are often applied in case study research. Although the term “case study” is sometimes used as a synonym for “qualitative research,” ethnographic methods are not the only way to collect data: case study research may also employ questionnaires and numerical data. In fact, case studies can be either qualitative or quantitative, or both (Gillham, 2000; Punch, 1998; Yin, 2003, 2004).
3.1.2 Types of Case Study Research

Depending on research goals, case studies fall into different categories. As with definitions, types of case studies also vary from one another. Yin (2003) outlines four case study categories based on the number of cases examined and units of analysis: single-case holistic, single-case embedded, multiple-case holistic, and multiple-case embedded designs. While holistic design focuses on the global nature of a single unit of analysis (e.g., organization), embedded design pays attention to subunits within a unit of analysis (e.g., individual members of an organization). The single-case design is suitable when a case represents 1) a critical test of an existing theory, 2) a rare or unique circumstance, 3) a representative or typical case, 4) a revelatory case, or 5) a longitudinal case. In the multiple-case design, by contrast, cases that are predicted to show either similar or contrasting results should be chosen in a manner close to multiple experiments.

Contrary to Yin’s positivist or scientific paradigm, Stake (1995, 2000) employs an interpretive paradigm for understanding case study research. He identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case studies. An intrinsic case study aims to understand the case because of its uniqueness and/or commonality. Instrumental case studies, on the other hand, attempt to understand a problem or a question by focusing on a case: the use of a case study seeks to understand something else. Finally, in a collective case study, more than two instrumental case studies are conducted with coordination between the individual cases.

Merriam (1998) offers perhaps the most detailed categorization of case study types. Focusing on special features, case studies are divisible into three: particularistic (focuses on a particular situation, program, or phenomenon); descriptive (aims to produce “thick description” of a case); and heuristic (intends to illuminate readers’ understanding of a phenomenon by letting them discover...
new meanings, extend experiences, or confirm what is known). Merriam also categorizes case studies according to different disciplines.

While lawyers, medical doctors, psychologists, and social workers, for example, employ case studies on behalf of individual clients, case studies in business, journalism, political science, economics, and government tend to help in formulating policies. In education, however, researchers conduct case studies so that “specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (p. 34). Education often borrows both theoretical frameworks and research techniques from other disciplines such as anthropology, history, psychology, and sociology. The field of education can therefore divide case studies into four categories: ethnographic, historical, psychological, and sociological. Merriam identifies case studies in education by the overall research intent: descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative. While a descriptive case study focuses on presenting a detailed account of a phenomenon, an interpretive case study aims to analyze, interpret, and/or theorize about a phenomenon rather than merely describe it. An evaluative case study involves judgment about a case after describing and explaining a phenomenon.

How various scholars define and categorize case studies shows not only the pervasiveness of this method among many disciplines, but also the diversity and complexity within case study research. It is thus important to define clearly what a researcher means by “case study” when conducting research as well as the purpose of employing one strategy over others. It is useful to also consider into which category (or categories) research will fit, in order to choose the most suitable strategies for data collecting and analysis.
3.1.3 Roles of Theory in Case Study Research

In general, the purposes of and approaches to research affect how researchers apply and deal with theory in their studies. Historically, quantitative research has been concerned with theory verification (theory-testing, theory-first\textsuperscript{45}, deductive approach), while qualitative research has aimed to generate theories (theory-later, inductive approach)\textsuperscript{46}. Theory-generating research is more likely to be implemented when a new area is explored, thus often employing qualitative research fieldwork techniques (Punch, 1998). Because of its distinguishing methodological feature that employs systematic in-depth examinations in a manner that preserves wholeness by using various research techniques, case study research is “an ideal methodology” for grounding theory (Sturman, 1997).

Theory attempts to explain a phenomenon under study in more abstract terms than the terms used to describe a phenomenon itself. (Punch, 1998). Theory guides research and makes sense of what is under study (Payles, 1997). Theory varies, however, in size, density, abstractness, completeness, and quality (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), not to mention that theory application in research varies from researcher to researcher. Some avoid theoretical commitment prior to fieldwork and others emphasize the importance of theory utilization. Gillham (2000) argues that until researchers get in the field, they will not know what theories work best for the cases being examined. Although background reading on the research topic is useful, Gillham suggests that researchers should conduct literature review and fieldwork simultaneously so that knowledge from readings and actual data interact. Yin (2003), on the other hand, stresses that implementing theoretical concepts

\textsuperscript{45} This distinction of theory-first and theory-later research is developed by Wolcott (1992, 2005).

\textsuperscript{46} The correlation between purpose and approach is not absolute. Therefore, quantitative research can be used for theory generation and qualitative research for theory verification (Punch, 1998).
from the research design stage is necessary for completing successful case study research. According to Yin, theory helps locate research in the realm of study, allowing research results to advance knowledge of the topic. Theory also helps in defining a unit of analysis, which is the most important function in case study research. Wolcott (2005) takes a position that lies somewhere between Gillham’s and Yin’s stances. Wolcott considers theory as “part of the baggage that accompanies the role of researcher as a scientific thinker” (p. 181), and regards it as essential for acquiring knowledge of the topics under study. Yet he leaves up to the researcher when and how theory plays a role in research, and even whether or not to explicitly use theory.

As these different stances reveal, timing and the degree of theoretical engagement in research vary from researcher to researcher, but there is no disagreement that becoming familiar with preliminary theoretical concepts is essential for designing and conducting research. In fact, providing theoretical frameworks is one of the literature review’s fundamental roles. Although the location of a literature review in research reports is also contested, some engagements with theory is necessary in order to locate research in the field of study and prove the significance of conducting research.

3.1.4 Strengths and Limitations of Case Study Research

Different research strategies have their relative strengths and limitations, making it therefore necessary for researchers to know them well in order to enhance their merits and eliminate their weaknesses as much as possible while planning and conducting their studies. One of case study research’s greatest strengths is its capacity to capture and describe a rich and holistic account of the

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47 Some suggest that it is better to incorporate the literature review in the data analysis sections of research reports rather than presenting it before the research design section as a traditional second chapter in theses (Silverman, 2005; Wolcott, 2005).
phenomenon under study. It recognizes the complexity of a case whether it is a typical or atypical phenomenon. These insights can advance a field’s knowledge base significantly and can help structure future research (Merriam, 1998). Especially in applied fields, such as education, case studies can describe and analyze problems, processes, and programs, in order to understand and even improve practice. As Adelman et al. (1984) write, case studies are “a step to action”: they start in a real world of action and come back to contribute to it. Case studies can have an impact greater than almost any other form of research reports (Gillham, 2000). Another advantage of applying the case study method is that results are usually more easily understood by a wider range of readers that spans beyond the academic circle. Nisbet and Watt (1984) for this reason characterize a case study as “a three-dimensional reality, like a good documentary” (p. 76) if it is well written. Although it is crucial to clearly distinguish between research and journalism—which can be achieved by carefully employing theoretical and analytical concepts (Delamont, 2002)—reaching a broader readership is greatly advantageous for achieving a deeper understanding of phenomena and possible improvements in the field.

Case study research, however, also has a number of limitations. Yin (2003) describes the current status of case study research as follows:

The case study has long been (and continues to be) stereotyped as a weak sibling among

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49 Nisbet, J. & Watt, J. (1984) suggest avoiding “journalism” that picks out sensational aspects of the case that distort the account, as well as “selective reporting” that is also often found in the media.

50 In American sociology, case study research was the approach of choice at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, especially with the University of Chicago’s strong influence. However, due to criticism of case study methods by Columbia University, statistical surveys became dominant. Columbia’s criticism against case study research parallels present criticisms. Hamel (1993) discusses in detail the history of the case study approach and the methodological conflict between these two schools.
social science methods. Investigators who do case studies are regarded as having downgraded their academic disciplines. Case studies have similarly been denigrated as having insufficient precision (i.e., quantification), objectivity, or rigor. This stereotype of case studies that began in the 20th century continues into the 21st century. (p. xiii)

Yin (2003) attributes case study research’s second-class status to “the lack of rigor.” In many instances, he argues, case study researchers are “sloppy” and fail to follow systematic procedures or they allow biased views to influence findings and conclusions, which is less likely to happen when using other research methods. Furthermore, as Hammersley and Gomm (2000) argue, close links between case studies and various occupational practices have also contributed to the image of case study research as unscientific. Thus, even though a good case study is difficult to conduct, it has been considered a “soft” choice when compared with positivistic approaches that depend heavily on quantitative methods.

Another frequent criticism against case study research is the need for money and lengthy time periods to conduct research (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Moreover, even when time and funding are available, a case study’s final report is often times too lengthy and detailed for busy practitioners and policy makers to read (Merriam, 1998). As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) state, different groups have different interests in research:

An academic constituency wants a lengthy technical monograph detailing how the data were collected and how the results affect future theoretical or empirical considerations; policy makers have very little interest in how the data were collected but a great deal of concern over the implications a study has for legislation or administration. Project directors and practitioners, still another constituency, are less interested in the philosophy of participants
than they are in the effectiveness of a given project. (LeCompte & Preissle, p. 105)

Therefore, detailed description of complex phenomena, which is the strength of case study research, is also disadvantageous for reaching audiences, such as practitioners and policy makers, who could make changes in practice by gaining deeper knowledge from case study research. The most common criticisms against case study research, however, pertain to issues of generalizability and the subjectivity stemming from researcher bias, which will be discussed in the following sections.

3.1.5. Generalizability and External Validity in Case Study Research

Although qualitative researchers have traditionally paid little attention to the issue of generalizability, the rapprochement between qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the 1970s changed the situation (Schofield, 2000). Generalizability assumes real importance especially in the field of education where qualitative studies are used for evaluation and basic educational research in the examiner's own society, rather than exotic foreign cultures as is often the case with anthropology (Schofield, 2000). The issue of generalization is closely related to external validity: whether findings of a particular study can hold up beyond the specific subjects and settings so that they are applicable in other situations. Case study research often faces the criticism that asks “how can you generalize when n = 1?” (Bassey, 1999, p. 30). Since the degree of the original data’s representativeness of the larger population measures generalizability, generalizing from only one or a few samples is considered weak in evidence. The starting point, however, should be whether or not any research, regardless of methods employed, in fact needs to aim for generalization. Some qualitative researchers attempt to follow traditional research concepts of generalizability, validity, and reliability that quantitative researchers usually employ. Some argue, however, that research
methods and fundamental concepts of positivistic/scientific studies do not necessarily apply to qualitative studies. As such, manners for dealing with generalizability vary significantly depending on researchers’ perspectives on social reality and research paradigms.

Those who view the issue of generalizability from a traditional viewpoint take one of two positions: either they assume that it is not possible to generalize case study results and thus accept it as a methodological limitation, or they attempt to enhance external validity by employing other methods (Merriam, 1998). Hammersley (1992) argues that empirical generalization is a legitimate goal for case studies as well since generalizability is not a synonym for statistical sampling. He proposes three strategies for improving generalizability in single case study research: 1) obtaining published information on relevant aspects of the population of cases to compare with the case under study; 2) using survey research on random samples of cases; and 3) conducting one or more other case studies in order to assess whether the primary case is or is not representative of the larger population. Silverman (2005) recommends Hammersley’s first suggestion—utilizing other relevant studies for comparison—for student researchers who are usually restricted by time, funding, and contacts to conduct research. Relevant information can be demonstrated in a literature review section as well as in the analysis of research results. Similarly, Gomm et al. (2000) object to the idea that generalization is irrelevant to case study research, claiming that most case study research conclusions indeed present some kind of generalization and very few can avoid the issue by being identified as “intrinsic” cases. Gomm et al. outline two types of systematic case selection: 1) selecting a case that is as typical as possible; and 2) combining case studies with surveys. Schofield (2000) also emphasizes the importance of choosing cases on the basis of typicality rather than convenience or easy accessibility.
Yin (2003) also claims that case study results are generalizable, but in a different way. According to Yin, when critics state that a single case study offers a poor basis for generalization, they point out the weaknesses of case study research in relation to the empirical strength of survey research. While survey research relies on “statistical generalization” that aims to enumerate frequencies, case study research relies on “analytical generalization” where researchers “generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory” (p. 37). Although generalization is not automatic, researchers can generalize findings to theory by replicating the findings in other cases. In this sense, Yin claims that case studies resemble experiments.

While some strive to generalize findings in a manner in line with a scientific/positivistic approach, others argue that case study researchers do not need to demonstrate generalizability in such a traditional way. Stake (1995) claims that “the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization” (p. 8). What is required of case study researchers is to describe a case in detail so that its uniqueness can be understood. Stake argues that in some instances certain patterns repeat within a case, which can be called “petite generalizations,” although these kinds of generalizations are usually not considered generalizations. It is not suitable to draw “grand generalizations,” meaning general statements on issues under study, from case study research, but the findings from particular cases (i.e., petite generalizations) can lead to modifications in grand generalizations.

In addition to the distinction between “grand” and “petite” generalizations, Stake offers fresh insight into concepts of generalization by introducing the idea of “naturalistic generalizations” and “explicated/propositional generalization.”51 While explicated generalizations refer to assertions and conclusions drawn by researchers, naturalistic generalizations are those “arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs” (p. 85). He argues that readers can learn much and generalize from a

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51 The concept of “naturalistic generalization” was originally introduced by Stake (1978).
single case, since they are familiar with other cases in their own lives. Readers will add their own stories to what researchers present, and then form generalizations by themselves. Therefore, the most important thing for researchers is to provide readers with detailed narrative descriptions of cases so that readers can gain “vicarious experience,” which is necessary for naturalistic generalizations. Stake also advises caution regarding how extensively researchers should write explicated generalizations in reports, which can also influence readers’ naturalistic generalizations. Others also espouse this view of external validity that leaves readers some control in choices and decisions on generalizations. For example, Stenhouse (1988) claims that generalizations are “matters for judgment rather than for calculation,” and as such, researchers should provide reports that “invite judgment and offer evidence to which judgment can appeal” (p. 49). Walker (1980) also argues that it is the reader’s decision to judge whether or not case studies are applicable to other situations.

Lincoln and Guba (2000), on the other hand, oppose Stake’s notion of “naturalistic generalization.” Although they agree that case studies play a crucial role in readers’ understanding by inducing naturalistic generalizations, they do not believe that replacing “the formalistic or logical generalizations that people usually have in mind when they used the term ‘generalization’” (p. 38) with naturalistic generalization is adequate. Instead, Lincoln and Guba argue that a case study produces a “working hypothesis” instead of a generalization as conclusion, and that transferability of working hypotheses from one case to another depends on the “fit” between the two. Researchers must thus provide a holistic and detailed account of cases to enable readers to judge transferability. Lincoln and Guba also differ from those who take a positivistic approach to generalization by claiming that samples do not need to be representative in a statistical sense: any part or component

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52 The concept of “working hypotheses” was originally developed by Cronbach (1975).
is adequate for obtaining information about the whole.

As we have seen, the issue of generalization and the strategies to improve external validity differ significantly according to a researcher's beliefs in and approach to research. Since generalizations can be unconsciously formulated by both researchers and readers (Stake, 2000), researchers must clearly demonstrate their views and treatment of generalizations in the research reports so that both researchers and readers are aware of generalizability issues. Researchers can use one or more of the following strategies to enhance external validity:

1) Provide thick descriptions of cases so that readers can judge how similar the situation under study is to their own situations, and whether findings can be transferred or not (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

2) Describe typicality or atypicality of cases so that readers can compare with their situations (Gomm et al., 2000; Merriam, 1998; Schofield, 2000).


4) Combine case studies with surveys (Gomm et al., 2000; Hammersley, 1992).

5) Compare research results with other relevant studies (Hammersley, 1992, Silverman, 2005).

Hence, qualitative researchers employ concepts such as confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability or fittingness to achieve purposes of validity and reliability. I will address how I cope with these issues in my study in section 3.6.2.

3.1.6 Objectivity/Subjectivity, Reliability, and Internal Validity in Case Study Research

Case study research is often strongly criticized for its credibility due to “subjective” techniques employed in conducting research (Sturman, 1997). Especially in qualitative case studies,
researchers are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (as is the case with qualitative research in general), therefore leading some to consider researchers’ subjectivity brought into investigations as problematic. This negative opinion of subjectivity originates from positivistic research perspectives and is also based on the “lack of rigor” in case study research procedures (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Researchers who employ a positivistic approach gather data from observations and experiments through standardized procedures that eliminate subjectivity, while naturalists also try to limit the influence of researchers’ values (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). According to these viewpoints, qualitative case studies rely too much on subjective judgments by researchers. Case studies have also been attacked for the lack of rigor that results from inadequate discussions about data collection and analysis procedures. Until recently, it has often been said that case study researchers rely only on their instincts and abilities to carry out research (Merriam, 1998). Thus, the influence of researchers’ (and others involved in the study) subjectivity in research has been suspected to distort research results.

In recent years, however, value neutrality and objectivity in any research project have been questioned (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and researchers’ subjectivity has come to be recognized not necessarily as a fault but as an essential element for understanding (Stake, 1995). In qualitative studies, researchers are “the research instrument par excellence” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 19) and they bring to investigations their background knowledge on and biases toward the cases examined: researchers bring the complex whole of themselves. Subjectivity operates during the entire research process (Peshkin, 1982) and can be even seen as “virtuous” since it serves as “the basis of researchers’ making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected” (Peshkin,
Therefore, what is required for qualitative case study researchers is to acknowledge and clearly state their subjectivity and positionality, so that researchers and readers do not misunderstand or misinterpret cases under examination.

The issue of subjectivity relates to both reliability and internal validity of research. Reliability refers to the degree to which research results can be replicated if other researchers follow the same procedures to investigate the same phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Palys, 1997). This reliability concept assumes that there exists a single reality and thus a replication of research will yield the same results. In qualitative studies, however, researchers’ personal perspectives play a significant role in data collection and analysis, and as such, even the same researcher may not arrive at the same findings when replicating a study. When the subjects under study are human beings, their subjectivity, attitudes, and interactions with researchers will also affect research results. It is therefore quite difficult to achieve reliability in the traditional sense in qualitative research, leading some researchers to instead aim for result “consistency” or “dependability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Internal validity, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the relationships between variables are correctly interpreted (Punch, 1998). In qualitative studies internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality (Merriam, 1998): in other words, whether researchers are observing and measuring what they think they are measuring. Since one of the underlying assumptions of qualitative research is that there is no single, fixed, objective reality to be studied, what researchers observe are people’s constructions of reality (Merriam, 1998). Thus, both researchers’ and study participants' subjectivity affect internal validity as well.

It is clear, then, that the issue of subjectivity has considerable influence on both reliability and internal validity (and in some sense external validity as well). Some researchers prefer the term
“trustworthiness” rather than traditional positivistic terms (Bassey, 1999; Denzin, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Regardless of terminology, however, researchers need to pay careful attention to the way research data are collected, analyzed, interpreted, and presented, in order to prove that research is accurate, logical, and reliable. Researchers can use the following strategies to enhance reliability and internal validity.

1) Triangulation – using multiple methods of data collection and multiple researchers to increase both reliability and internal validity (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2000; Sturman, 1997).

2) Audit trail – describing in detail how researchers collected data, how coding was done, and how decisions were made throughout the investigation to enhance reliability (Merriam, 1998).

3) Member checking/Participant review – taking data back to research participants in order to correct factual error and also give participants opportunities to add further information, which will increase internal validity (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

4) Verbatim accounts – using direct quotes and transcripts from data to enhance internal validity (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Mechanically recorded data will be often times collected by audiotaping, videotaping, and photographing in the field.

5) Positionality/Reflexivity – explaining and clarifying researchers’ assumptions, positions, biases, and theoretical orientations to increase both reliability and internal validity (Cohen et al. 2000; Merriam, 1998; Sturman, 1997).

The last strategy mentioned above, positionality and reflexivity, relates to the issue of subjectivity and is worth examining more closely in this section. Reflexivity refers to the process of researchers reflecting and self-monitoring in ways that reveal interactions and connections between
researchers and those being researched (Delamont, 2002; Hatch, 2002). It allows researchers to monitor their own subjectivity as well as that of research participants. Critical reflexivity involves constant researcher reflection and assessment during the entire research process. Being reflexive and making all processes and decisions explicit helps protect research from reliability and validity problems (Delamont, 2002). Similarly, positionality refers to displaying the researcher’s standpoints and contextual grounds for reasoning (i.e., social, cultural, historical, racial, and sexual location in studies), so that readers can understand the whole research process, from data collection and analysis to research results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). By using these strategies, researchers will learn not only about the research subjects but also about themselves. In a sense, researchers are conducting two research projects at once by monitoring subjectivity: one into the topics and the other into the “self” (Glesne, 2006).

So far, we have discussed the characteristics and various issues around case study research in detail. The following sections describe how the case study approach was applied to this study. Units of this research (i.e. “cases”), sites and participants selection procedure, participant ethics, data collection and analysis, limitations of this study, and strategies employed to increase the trustworthiness (or reliability and validity) are illustrated. The researcher’s subjectivity and positionality are also presented.

3.2 Defining Cases: Sites and Participants Selection

3.2.1 Overview

The province of British Columbia (BC) was chosen for this study because no systematic research on media education in the province has been conducted before this study. Compared with
Ontario, where media education originated in the country, less attention has been paid to activities in other provinces including BC. It does not mean, however, that BC has not been involved in promoting media education. The British Columbia Media Education Society (BCMES), the organization committed to promoting media education in BC, played an essential role in including media education in BC school curricula, which were the first in Western provinces in Canada to contain media literacy components. Although the organization has been less active over the past 10 years, key members of the organization are still concerned with media education and hosting media literacy workshops for teachers during the summer. Workshop participants in the summer of 2005 exhibited great interest in reviving the organization, thus suggesting that a new wave is developing. It is therefore worthwhile to examine media education practices in BC. The Lower Mainland area is the focus of this study, due to BCMES’ location. Although the organization represents the whole province, activities have been taking place only in the Lower Mainland area.

This research examined the following five data sources which were selected by employing the purposeful sampling strategy: (1) pre-service teachers who enrolled in a media education course at a university; (2) in-service teachers who attended a media literacy workshop at a provincial teachers’ organization; (3) English and Social Studies teachers in a secondary school that was actively involved in media education; (4) English and Social Studies teachers in a secondary school that was not involved in media education; (5) secondary school teachers who were experienced in media education. The details of selecting each case will be described in the following sections.

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53 The name of the organization has been replaced with a pseudonym. All the names of research locations and participants have also given pseudonyms in this dissertation.
3.2.2 Sites and Participants

(1) Media Education Course at Pacific Coast University (PCU) (Data Source 1)

A 400-level course, EDxx (Media Education), offered at Pacific Coast University (PCU) during the summer of 2005 was selected to examine pre-service teachers’ perceptions on media education. This course was considered suitable for the proposed study for the following reasons: 1) PCU produces a significant number of teachers in the province; 2) this was the only course at PCU exclusively dedicated to the topic of media education; 3) although it was an elective course, most of the students who enrolled in this course were pre-service teachers in either elementary or secondary teacher education programs; 4) all three sections of this course were offered during the summer term by the same instructor, thus all potential participants were exposed to the same teaching and classroom activities; 5) the researcher audited the course taught by the same instructor before and therefore had some prior knowledge of the course content. Every student in all three sections of this course who attended classes on the days that the researcher visited the classrooms was provided with questionnaire forms.

(2) Media Literacy Workshop at an Educational Association (Data Source 2)

This media literacy workshop for teachers was held in summer of 2005 for 5 days at a provincial teachers’ organization. It was organized by BCMES, committed to promote media education in the province as previously mentioned. This workshop was chosen for this study for three reasons. First, this was the only short-term workshop offered to teachers in the Lower Mainland area to learn how to teach media literacy. Second, participants of the workshop were mostly in-service teachers, thus the data from this group could be compared with those from Data
Source 1, which mostly consists of pre-service teachers. Third, instructors for the workshop were leading experts in the field of media education in Canada: a president of a national media education organization, a president of an association for media education in Ontario, and a president of BCMES. The researcher also registered for the workshop. All participants in the workshop were provided with questionnaire forms.

(3) Active and Inactive Schools (Data Source 3 and Data Source 4)

In order to cover a broader base of media education practice in the Lower Mainland area, two schools were chosen from a school district as well for this research. The criterion for the school selection was the degree of involvement in media education. One school was active in teaching media literacy in English and Social Studies courses, and the other school was not active. Since no systematic research had been conducted with regard to media education practice in the Lower Mainland schools, and even members of BCMES did not know which schools were actively involved (if any) in media education, the researcher called all eighteen secondary schools a school district in Lower Mainland in order to find out which schools were active and which were not. Secondary schools were the focus of this study due to more active involvement in media education than elementary schools in general. Furthermore, the core members of BCMES were secondary school teachers including a president. Questionnaire forms were provided to all English and Social Studies teachers in both active and inactive schools. Although every subject of BC school curriculum, Integrated Resource Package (IRP), includes media education as one of the cross-curricula topics in the appendix, English and Social Studies tend to be the two major subjects that incorporate media education. One third of Language Arts curriculum in BC is dedicated to
media education and Social Studies curriculum also contains some of the media literacy components. In addition to surveys to teachers, the section head of the English department and the section head of the Social Studies department of both schools were interviewed (except one, due to her preference to participate in the research via correspondence rather than meeting with the researcher in person) in order to attain a more detailed picture of media education practice in schools.

(4) Teachers Experienced in Media Education (Data Source 5)

This study employed criterion-based selection for interview participants: interviewees were drawn from teachers who had been engaged in teaching media literacy for a lengthy time in BC secondary schools. More specifically, the reputational-case selection strategy was employed, and therefore the candidates of interview participants were chosen based on the recommendation of a president of BCMES, due to his significant contribution to BC media education and his knowledge of colleague members of the organization. This president contacted possible participants first, and once they accepted to be contacted by the researcher regarding this study, the researcher E-mailed them the letter of initial contact. This president recommended three teachers and two agreed to an interview. In order to enhance the reliability of this study, the researcher also asked the instructor of EDxx media education course at PCU (Data Source 1), who had been involved in BC media education as a former director of a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the understanding of films and moving images. He recommended two teachers (one of them was the same candidate that a BCMES president suggested). Both teachers agreed for the interview. The researcher attempted to find other participants by employing a snowball/network selection strategy and asking participants of Data Source 5 interviews to recommend other experienced media literacy teachers in the Lower
Mainland area. However, it turned out that either they knew each other through BCMES or they were independently involved in media education and thus did not know other teachers who taught media literacy. In total, four teachers (including a president of BCMES) were interviewed as experienced teachers in media education.

3.2.3 Participant Ethics

Participation in surveys was voluntary and respondents remained anonymous. Names were not recorded on questionnaire forms, nor were questions asked that could identify respondents. For Data Source 1 and Data Source 2, boxes in which to return questionnaires were placed outside of the classrooms/rooms so that neither the course instructor/workshop organizers nor the researcher was able to identify respondents. For Data Source 1 in which students received grades at the end of the course, the researcher explained to them clearly that the survey study had no relation to the course and that their decisions on whether or not to answer the questionnaires would have no effect on course grades. Participants had at least one week for Data Source 1 and five days for Data Source 2 to decide whether or not to participate in the survey. Questionnaire forms for Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 were brought to schools in person by the researcher, after receiving permission from a school board and principals of each school. Questionnaire forms were placed in each teacher’s individual mailbox by department heads. Every teacher was provided with a prepaid envelop for returning the questionnaire form to the researcher, in order to protect teachers’ privacy as well as anonymity inside schools.

Participation in interviews was also voluntary. An informed consent form was filled out by all participants before the researcher began collecting any data. Participants had at least two weeks to
decide whether or not to participate in this study. Interviews with participants were audio-taped with their permission. All of the data gathered were treated as confidential and participants were given pseudonyms in any stored data as well as in this dissertation. Only the researcher and her Doctoral Committee members had access to the data. All the data, including tape-recorded data, has been stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office at school. Any data stored digitally were password-protected, which would only be accessed by the researcher.

3.3 Data Collection

This study employed multiple data collection methods to enable corroboration of the data. The use of multiple methods of data collection, triangulation, is one of the strategies for enhancing the credibility of qualitative research, as was discussed in Section 3.1.6. The following methods were used for this study: 1) surveys; 2) interviews; and 3) relevant documents. Survey and interview data were collected between May 2005 and June 2006. Table 3.1 summarizes the data collection methods, and overall data sources, which are elaborated in the sections that follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Data Source 1</td>
<td>Mostly pre-service teachers</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Questionnaire forms (42 out of 99, return rate of 42.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Source 2</td>
<td>Mostly in-service teachers</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Questionnaire forms (24 out of 31, return rate of 77.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Source 3</td>
<td>English and Social Studies teachers</td>
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<td>Questionnaire forms (17 out of 40, return rate of 42.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Source 4</td>
<td>Department heads</td>
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<td>3 audio-recorded and transcribed interviews</td>
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<td>1 written reply to the interview question list</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Source 5</td>
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<td>Course outlines and workshop materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>BC school curriculum (IRP)</td>
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<td>BCMES newsletters and a report</td>
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(1) Surveys (Data Source 1 and Data Source 2)

Questionnaire forms were created and used to obtain information during EDxx courses at
PCU and the media literacy workshop both in the summer of 2005. The main purposes of the surveys were 1) to gather information on how pre-service and in-service teachers perceive media literacy; 2) to find out whether or not in-service teachers incorporate media literacy in their classroom teaching, and if they did incorporate media literacy, what challenges they encountered; 3) to find out pre-service and in-service teachers’ opinions about what kind of support with regard to media education they would like to have in the future. The same questionnaire form was used for both Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 surveys (Appendix A).

With Data Source 1 participants, the researcher had very limited interaction: she visited each classroom to inform students about the research and distributed the questionnaire forms during the halfway point in the course. She also visited classrooms two more times on different days to remind students of the survey. The instructor of the course emphasized that he had no connection with this study to protect and respect students’ privacy and their choices as to whether or not to join this study: therefore, he did not remind students of the survey at any time. A box was placed outside of the classrooms to return questionnaire forms. In total, ninety-nine questionnaire forms were distributed to Data Source 1 potential research participants.

During the media literacy workshop (Data Source 2), the researcher interacted with both workshop participants and instructors since she was also a participant in the workshop. Conversations with them potentially influenced the researcher’s understanding of the background of media education in BC, though no data collection other than by means of questionnaires took place during the workshop. The researcher made this point clear to workshop participants at the beginning when she explained about the survey. A box was placed at the back of the room for participants to return questionnaire forms. In total, thirty questionnaire forms were distributed to Data Source 2
potential research participants.

(2) Surveys (Data Source 3 and Data Source 4)

As previously mentioned, in order to identify active and inactive schools with regard to their involvement in media education, the researcher first sought advice from a president of BCMES and the media education course instructor at PCU. They both replied, however, that there were no active schools in Lower Mainland secondary schools, at least to their knowledge. Thus, the researcher needed to find out first whether there were any schools actively involved in media education to make a selection of Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 schools. The researcher phoned all eighteen secondary schools in an educational jurisdiction and spoke with both English and social studies department heads to inquire whether they were involved in media education or not. There was one school in which both English and Social Studies department heads replied that they were teaching media literacy, and therefore that school was chosen as the Data Source 3 school. For the Data Source 4 inactive school in media education, the researcher chose one of three schools that both English and Social Studies department heads replied that they were not teaching media literacy. The selection was due to: 1) the school’s availability and willingness to participate in this research; and 2) one of the Data Source 5 interviewees worked in the school. The researcher wished to find out why the Data Source 4 school was not highly involved in media education even though there was at least one teacher who was teaching media literacy in his classroom.

The questionnaire form for Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 surveys (Appendix A) was modified and shortened for use as Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 surveys (Appendix B). The former questionnaire form was seven pages long, which was too lengthy for teachers in Data Source
3 and Data Source 4 schools to fill in during the middle of the school term. In addition, unlike Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 in-service and pre-service teachers who chose to enroll in the media education course or workshop and may therefore have had some interest and background knowledge in media education prior to this study, Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 prospective research participants were English and Social Studies teachers who happened to be invited to join this research simply by invitation from the researcher (with permission from the school board, relevant principals, and relevant department heads). Therefore, in order to make this survey more approachable and feasible, a one-sheet (double-sided) shorter version of the questionnaire form was created. The main purposes of Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 surveys remained the same as the Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 surveys: 1) to gather information on how in-service teachers perceive media literacy; 2) to find out whether in-service teachers incorporate media literacy in their classroom teaching or not, and if so, what challenges they encountered.

With Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 teachers, the researcher had almost no direct contact with them except through the heads of the English and Social Studies departments of each school. The researcher dropped off questionnaire forms and letters of invitation to this study to each department head, and they placed the materials into their respective department’s teachers’ individual mailboxes. Three weeks to one month after the researcher dropped off questionnaire forms to each school, she brought reminder letters to teachers (again to be placed in their mailboxes) in order to increase the return rates. Questionnaire forms and reminder letters were distributed to all English and Social Studies teachers in two schools, which was forty in total.
(3) Interviews (Data Source 3 and Data Source 4)

Three out of four English and Social Studies department heads of the two schools were interviewed between May and June of 2006. One department head preferred to be contacted via E-mail correspondence, thus a question list was sent via Email. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information on the following: 1) department heads’ perceptions on media education; 2) why media education was (or was not) active in their departments from their point of view; 3) available support, if any, for media education from their school, the parents, or from outside of school; and 4) the major challenges of teaching media literacy. The interviews employed a semi-structured format by using an interview guide prepared beforehand (Appendix C). The researcher provided department heads with the question list prior to interviews. By using the interview guide, reliability was better controlled, while also allowing interviewees to demonstrate their ideas more freely compared to highly structured interviews. Interviews took place at their schools, at their choice of date and time. Each interview lasted between half of an hour to one hour, and were audio-recorded with their permission.

(4) Interviews (Data Source 5)

Four experienced teachers in media literacy were interviewed between February and April of 2006. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain the following information: 1) teachers’ background in media education; 2) their perspective on media literacy and media education; 3) their practices of media education in the classroom (e.g. elements of media literacy, teaching materials, and approaches); and 4) support and challenges they encountered with regard to media education. The interviews employed a semi-structured format, using an interview guide prepared by the
researcher (Appendix D). Interviewees were provided with the question list prior to the interviews and the interview took place at their choice of location, date, and time. Each interview lasted about one hour and interviews were audio-recorded with teachers’ permission.

(5) Relevant Documents

Relevant documents such as the course outline for EDxx at PCU (Data Source 1) and materials used for the media literacy workshop (Data Source 2) were collected in order to generate a deeper understanding of the background surrounding each research participant. Aside from those documents, school curriculum referred to as the BC Integrated Resource Package (IRP), BCMES newsletters, and a framework for media education submitted to the BC Ministry of Education by BCMES were also collected. The intensive literature review on media education also yielded substantial data for building a theory on what constitutes obstacles for further developing media education in BC, especially in the Lower Mainland area. Curriculum change and innovation theories were employed as well.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research primarily employed an inductive process following traditional qualitative research approaches: patterns, categories, and themes emerging from collected data. Data analysis from Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 questionnaires employed a descriptive approach. First, this process required categorizing and presenting participants’ background information, such as age range, teaching subjects, length of teaching experience, and previous knowledge and experiences with media literacy or media education. Using these subject descriptors, the
questionnaire’s initial analytical stage was devoted to closed questions. Answers to these closed questions that provided data on the research topics were cross-referenced among respondents to see whether there were any significant similarities or differences for specific traits. The second stage of data analysis relied on content analysis to open-ended questions. Responses to each open-ended question were categorized and as analyzed with descriptive and interpretive techniques. Data from Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 questionnaires followed a similar process. All questionnaire results were then further cross-referenced to identify similarities or differences among the data sources.

Analysis of data from semi-structured interviews of Data Source 3, Data Source 4, and Data Source 5 required transcribing each of the audio-taped materials. These transcribed data were kept in a separate file for each interviewee. Classifying the data required “analyst-constructed typologies” (Patton, 1990) based on the interview questions, which produced six categories. The first category identifies the interviewees’ background in teaching media literacy, such as their engagement with and interest in the media, and experiences while receiving any training for teaching about the media (if applicable). The second category identifies their definitions of media literacy and media education. The third category identifies their reasons for starting media education and what they believe is its purpose. The last three categories identify: (4) classroom teaching practice; (5) available support for their media literacy teaching efforts; and (6) what they perceive as obstacles to effectively teaching media literacy. This research also assessed each participant’s stages of concern by employing Hall and Hord’s (1987, 2006) “stages of concern about innovation.” Categories 0 (awareness) to 6 (refocusing) were used for the coding.

The data were then organized by data source type. Data Source 3 includes two teachers from a
school actively involved in media education. Data Source 4, by contrast, includes two teachers from a school not significantly involved in media education. Data Source 5 includes four experienced teachers in media education. This case-based data organizational structure and analytical format made it possible to examine themes and issues that emerged in different sites and to compare the experiences and perspectives of teachers within the case. Finally, applying cross-case synthesis made it possible to look for similarities and differences among the case, while naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2007) helped identify the complex nature of the challenges that media education in British Columbia faces.

3.5 The Researcher’s Subjectivity and Positionality

In qualitative research, subjectivity and positionality will naturally influence decisions made throughout the investigation, data analysis, and presentation of findings. By conducting research on media literacy in BC Lower Mainland secondary schools, it is necessary to examine several categories of positionality: researcher role, educational background, racial/ethnic identification, gender background, and background knowledge and theoretical orientation toward media literacy. The following sections outline my location in each of the categories.

3.5.1 Researcher Role

A researcher's professional background and scholarly position in academic disciplines are important aspects of identity (LeComte & Preissle, 1993), and they are directly related to researcher roles in the field. I was a “student researcher” when conducting observations, interviews, and questionnaires in educational settings. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) warn researchers to pay
attention to their roles, arguing that the relationships between researchers and the researched are rarely symmetrical, and even student researchers hold higher status than participants due to their social status as future professors. Similarly, in her research on media literacy and teacher education, Flores-Koulish (2005) recounts the difficulty she encountered during her interviews with pre-service elementary school teachers. She noted that participants considered her as their teacher and felt that they had to answer what she wanted to hear due to her title as a Ph.D. holder. Although I cannot speak for research participants in my study, the situation in this research – from my point of view – was different from what LeCompte and Preissle (1993) and Flores-Koulish (2005) described. Throughout the research, my role remained primarily a “student” due to the various reasons mentioned above. This was especially the case during in-depth interviews with in-service teachers: they all had years of experiences in teaching and they were all older than me.

At the initial stage of field research, I thought that researcher-participant relationships might change over the course of research, and as such, I continued paying attention to ethical issues as well as monitoring closely whether I would see and feel any changes in the relationships. I even anticipated that this research could possibly be a developmental stage for me transitioning from a student to a researcher. During the field research, however, my main role as a “student” did not seem to change, as my direct contact with each teacher was very limited and did not develop closer connection with most of them. The only exception was when I made phone calls to English and Social Studies department heads in each secondary school. I sensed that some teachers were giving me answers that I (as a “researcher” from a local university) wanted to hear: a few teachers were quick to answer that their schools were actively involved in media literacy teaching. In one case, a teacher directly asked me the reason for my phone call (even though I did explain at the beginning
of the phone call) and wanted to know whether he (and his department) was under evaluation of their media education practice. In those cases, I explained the purpose of my research in more details and assured them that it was not an evaluation and that the research would not identify any participants or their school affiliation, and that I was collecting information on media education practice in their schools if they did not mind sharing with me.

3.5.2 Educational Background

Since my research deals with teaching about the media in formal school settings, my educational perceptions, expectations, and experiences should be stated as well. Other than during graduate school years in Vancouver and one year of elementary school (from grade 1 to 2) in Toronto, I received the majority of my school education in Japan, thus meaning that my experiences and notions of education may differ from those in North America. An Anthropology and Education graduate course in which I was enrolled during my Master’s program was helpful for me to conceptualize the roles and purposes of school education, as well as to reflect on its impacts on my life.

The kind of education I received was what Freire (1970) called “banking education.” From the age of three when I took my first entrance examination for kindergarten all the way to my high school years, and more or less during my undergraduate university years as well, my education focused on solving endless exercises to pass exams and emphasized memorizing “facts” that teachers presented in classes. I do not recall any classroom teaching that required or encouraged students to critically assess the subjects we studied, but I instead recall the focus on acquiring an overwhelmingly large knowledge base. Due to the entrance examination system that requires
students to take tests to enter each level of school (mainly high schools and universities, but also for kindergarten and elementary schools for the urban middle class), the higher the students’ academic achievement, the more they receive a “cramming-style” knowledge-transfer-based education. Ironically, less academic (lower-achieving) students receive more a flexible and unique school education since they do not have to prepare for surviving the “entrance examination hell.” This examination-centered education does offer students an equal opportunity, though, since they only need to achieve expected scores in exams, which thus reduces the impact of subjective evaluation standards that accompany critical analysis.\(^{55}\) Although Japan’s entire population is said to belong in the middle class financially, many Japanese regard formal schooling as a means to move up the social hierarchy ladder. For me, however, education was not a matter of “choice” or “getting chances,” but “fulfilling a duty” so that I did not regress from where I was: to successfully compete at the top was expected and considered normal from my family, teachers, and even local community because of the academic background of some members of my family.

Japan’s first education minister, Arinori Mori, said in 1885 that “education in Japan is not intended to create people accomplished in the techniques of the arts and sciences, but rather to manufacture the persons required by the State\(^{56}\).” My experience resembles the elite education from Mori’s era that trained future bureaucrats rather than developed minds through learning. My image, expectations, and experiences of North American education, on the other hand, is the complete opposite from my schooling in Japan. Although it is a different matter whether or not North American schooling are the way I interpreted, my expectations were that 1) schools in North

\(^{55}\) Of course, this argument is based on when students are provided with relatively equal financial support as well as understanding from parents, thus the equal opportunity of education is in reality not fulfilled in many ways. See Okano & Tsuchiya (1999) for issues on contemporary Japanese education.

\(^{56}\) Quoted in Smith (1997, p. 77).
America (particularly in Canada) value critical thinking and creativity; and 2) preparation for higher education (especially to enter university) is not as harsh in Canada as in Japan. This was a bias that should be declared but has been monitored throughout my research. In addition, my sense of feeling as an “outsider” during the field research may also have had something to do with my educational background as I did not share the knowledge and experiences of secondary school education in Canada.

3.5.3 Racial / Ethnic and Gender Background

Growing up in Japan where nearly 99 percent of population is ethnically Japanese, I did not think of my ethnic background until I moved to Canada. Only when I met with people from all over the world in Vancouver did my identity as Japanese start to develop. At the same time, because of my experience living abroad for a quarter of my life (as a child in Toronto and seven years in Vancouver), I have developed a very different identity from many Japanese living in Japan. My “Japaneseness” therefore seems to play only an indirect role in this media education research. I recognized this immediately during the summer while participating in the Data Source 2 workshop when I talked about the research on media education with a workshop instructor who was one of the foremost dedicated and popular figures in Canadian media literacy. He mentioned that many Japanese scholars and graduate students had visited him to learn about Canadian media education, and then asked me why they do not collaborate to share their research and save their time and money, rather than individually making a visit all the way to Canada and asking him the exact same questions. I did not know how exactly I should answer his question, but I knew that I was no longer considering myself as exclusively Japanese or a Japanese scholar. While the fact that Canada is one
of the leading countries in the field of media literacy made it logical for me to pursue graduate work in Canada, I did not return to the country solely for media literacy. I had always felt that Canada was my second home country even when I lived in Japan after returning from Toronto. Therefore, I have been interested in contributing to the further development of Canadian media education, rather than learning about media literacy in Canada and bringing the knowledge back to my own country.

Media education often entails issues related to race or gender, and as such my lenses as being Japanese or a woman could affect my interpretation of certain issues in this field. As my gender and ethnic background are both inescapable parts of my identity, I did not intend to lightly dismiss either in this research. However, due to my lengthy student life and without living much outside of the academic setting, I have not experienced significant gender inequality. Though many in North America appear to view Japan as still being highly chauvinistic, I did not feel that way at all when I was growing up in the country, especially in educational settings and at home. Moreover, as this research focused on the implementation of media education, rather than analyzing substantive media education topics like the portrayal of race and gender, my own gender and ethnic background was not a factor in this particular research.

### 3.5.4 Background Knowledge and Theoretical Orientation toward Media Literacy

Though most countries now have highly evolved images of culture, Japan seems to be at the extreme end with constant technological developments and media inundation (Richie, 2003). Although I did not grow up with various “mass” media (e.g., commercial television programs, movies, video games, and popular music, which were all implicitly limited to my access), I watched NHK (the Japanese equivalent of BBC and CBC, but without commercials) television programs,
read newspapers from an early age, and was always interested in journalism. However, as school education was mostly in the knowledge-transmission-style previously described, media literacy elements were absent from every school subject. My first encounter with media literacy itself was in an undergraduate semiotics class that assigned Williamson’s (1988) textbook, “Decoding advertisements.” It opened my eyes and led me to critically examine the ubiquitous mass media, and made me realize that the influence and power of the media in society was greater than I had imagined.

Given my educational background, it is unexpected that I became interested in and ended up specializing in media literacy, which takes a highly critical mind. Or perhaps it is from experiencing a lack of formal instruction on critical thinking skills that makes me wish to have media literacy thrive in schools for future generations whether in Canada, Japan, or elsewhere in the world. Considering the amount of information created and consumed, as well as roles of the media in children’s lives, learning about the media should be regarded as not only a necessity for surviving in the contemporary world, but also a guaranteed right. In addition, media literacy may empower children with the skills necessary to change the world. Thus, my stance regarding media education has been as an advocator of critical media literacy rather than functional media literacy.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

3.6.1 Limitations of Scope and Methodology

This study focused on media education taking place in public secondary schools located in the BC Lower Mainland region. Therefore, it was not within the objectives of this research to explore or to compare with the national or global status and practice of media education. Also, media literacy
courses offered in elementary schools, technical schools, universities (except a media education course offered in teacher education program at PCU), or any other private schools and institutions targeting the general public were not looked at in this study. Another limitation of this study was the selection of research participants. This study attempted to capture the nature of the challenges that media education faces through various teachers’ perspectives, but it did not intend to examine students’ reactions to media education or their achievement by contacting students directly. Teachers’ perceptions of media literacy and thoughts on issues surrounding media education were examined and identified in order to detect what kind of support and challenges exist for teachers at their school and at the school board level. Students’ responses to media education were indirectly gathered through teachers who had been incorporating media literacy components into their classroom teaching.

The major limitation of this methodology was sampling. Since there were very few experienced media literacy teachers in general, it was difficult to find a sufficient number of appropriate cases for the study. Also, the researcher depended on a snowball technique, beginning with two people for finding interviewees; therefore a few qualified cases might have been missed: though unlikely, it is possible that there could have been other experienced media literacy teachers in the Lower Mainland area who were not involved in BCMES, yet actively involved in media education in their daily classroom teaching. Another limitation of this methodology was the possible negative effects of the recording device during in-depth interviews with teachers. Except for one teacher who was a president of BCMES, the researcher was not acquainted with the interviewees prior to interviews. Thus some of them might have felt uncomfortable about being interviewed by a stranger and being recorded. I made efforts to reduce this potential effect by sending an interview
guide beforehand so that teachers knew exactly what they would be asked. Interviewees also had the right go off the record anytime during interviews, if they wished to do so.

### 3.6.2 Design Limitations: Reliability and Validity

#### a. Reliability

In qualitative research, achieving reliability in a traditional sense (to replicate research findings) is impossible (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, this study pursued consistency of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), rather than aiming for replication. The following strategies were employed to ensure that results are dependable:

1) **Explanation of the researcher’s position.**
   
   I provided a detailed description of the researcher role; my background knowledge for these topics; the basis for selecting participants; and a description of research sites as well as participants.

2) **Triangulation.**
   
   The researcher collected multiple sources of data to confirm the emerging findings.

3) **Audit trail.**
   
   I described in detail how the data were collected and how decisions were made throughout the investigation, in order to explain how I arrived at the results.

#### b. Internal Validity or Confirmability

Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative research, this is referred to as confirmability. Since the researcher is the
primary instrument for data collecting and analysis (i.e. the construction of reality) in qualitative research, the following strategies were used to enhance confirmability:

1) Triangulation.
   The researcher collected multiple sources of data.

2) Mechanically recorded data / verbatim accounts.
   In-depth interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed.

3) Researcher’s bias.
   The researcher’s assumptions and theoretical orientation toward the topics of investigation (roles of media in society, aims and concepts of media literacy, curriculum theories, etc.) were described at the outset of the study. Also, my educational background /experiences in Japanese schools were mentioned briefly as well, in order to clarify some of my criteria for understanding media literacy teaching that might have come from the differences in school cultures.

c. External Validity or Resonance

   External validity is concerned with how generalizable the research results are to other situations. This may be referred to as “resonance” in qualitative research. The interviewees in this research were not necessarily typical examples of media education, since they were selected by purposeful sampling. However, by examining multiple teachers for each case (Data Source 3, Data Source 4, and Data Source 5) and also supplemented with survey research (Data Source 3, and Data Source 4), I attempted to derive conclusions of what appears to be the essential understandings and issues associated with teaching media literacy. Also, by studying a diverse group of in-service and pre-service teachers with questionnaires (Data Source 1 and Data Source 2), I expected to capture
various perceptions of media education and its challenges, which directly contributed in building a
theory of obstacles to the implementation of media education in schools of this region.

Characteristics of the research site, courses, the demographics of students and interview participants
were described in detail as well, so that readers can determine how closely their situations resonate
with this research situation (Merriam, 1998). Comparability of the study was increased by carefully
describing the research design, including the data collection strategies and data analysis procedures.

3.7 Report of Outcomes: Recipients of Outcomes and Utilization of Knowledge

Considering that this study was for the researcher’s dissertation for a doctoral degree, the
number of readers examining the outcomes of this research may be limited. However, the researcher
believes that the results of this study will be helpful for various groups: participants, teachers in
general, school boards, the Ministry of Education, and other researchers in academics in the field of
education. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) state, different groups have different interests in
research:

An academic constituency wants a lengthy technical monograph detailing how the data were
collected and how the results affect future theoretical or empirical considerations; policy
makers have very little interest in how the data were collected but a great deal of concern over
the implications a study has for legislation or administration. Project directors and
practitioners, still another constituency, are less interested in the philosophy of participants
than they are in the effectiveness of a given project. (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 105)

Therefore, various types of reports should be written after the completion of the dissertation in order
to utilize the outcomes of this study, and to enhance and further develop the practice of media
education in BC as well as in other provinces and countries. The researcher especially recognizes
that it is important to give feedback to participants and the members of BCMES, as well as to report the results at academic conferences for further discussion and information exchanges.
CHAPTER 4

IN-SERVICE AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA EDUCATION

This chapter presents an orientation and analysis of in-service and pre-service teachers’ understanding of and engagement with media education by examining in-service and pre-service teachers’ survey data in detail. The first section presents the demographics of survey participants, making it possible to effectively use subject descriptors (such as respondents’ ages and teaching experiences) in data analysis. The following sections analyze data from multiple-choice and open-ended questions and presents the results according to the following categories: 1) in-service and pre-service teachers’ background knowledge and experiences with media literacy and media education; 2) in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy and the current status of media education in British Columbia; 3) the support and/or challenges that in-service teachers face with regard to teaching media literacy in schools.

4.1 Demographics of Survey Participants

Out of 130 questionnaires distributed during three sections of an EDxx media education course at PCU (Data Source 1) and a five-day media literacy workshop (Data Source 2), respondents returned a total of 66 forms, which are employed for data analysis. As Figure 4.1 shows, the overall number and the ratio of in-service and pre-service teachers are relatively balanced.
While the ratios are similar, there is nonetheless a minor imbalance between in-service and pre-service teachers. More specifically, EDxx courses (Data Source 1) and the five-day workshop (Data Source 2) yield inverse ratios of in-service and pre-service teachers, as Figure 4.2 highlights. Most of the participants in EDxx courses were students in the teacher education program at PCU, while most of the participants in the workshop were in-service teachers. Out of seven in-service teachers who took EDxx courses, five of them were enrolled in Master of Education programs at PCU at the time, thus they were able to get course credits for their Master’s programs by enrolling in the class even though this was a 400-level course.

Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants’ ages varied from early twenties to early sixties, though the vast majority of participants fell into the twenties to early thirties age range, as Figure 4.3 highlights. Twenty-one percent (N = 14) of participants were in their early twenties, 35 percent (N = 23) were in their late twenties, and 18 percent (N = 12) were in their early thirties. In total, 74
percent (N = 49) of the participants were between 20 to 34 years old. This imbalance in age group distribution was due to the fact that 81 percent (N = 30) of pre-service teachers were in their
twenties. Other than one participant whose age is from 40 to 44, all of the pre-service teachers were either in their twenties or early thirties (Figure 4.4).

![Figure 4.4. Age Range of Pre-Service Teachers](image)

The age range category, however, reveals balance with regard to in-service teachers. Twenty-four percent of participants were in their twenties, 28 percent were in their thirties, 20 percent were in their forties, 21 percent in their fifties, and seven percent were in their early sixties (Figure 4.5).

In-service teachers reported a wide range of teaching experience, with respondents ranging from less than a year to as many as 33 years of teaching experience. The average length of teaching experience was 11 years. Twenty-eight percent (N = 8) had taught for 5 years or less, while 42 percent (N = 12) had between 6 and 14 years of experience, 20 percent (N = 6) had between 15 and 24 years of experience, and 10 percent (N = 3) had 25 or more years of experience as Figure 4.6 illustrates.
Figure 4.5. Age Range of In-Service Teachers

Grade levels taught by in-service and pre-service teachers were divided into elementary (K-7) and secondary (8-12) in accordance with the British Columbia educational system. As a whole, Data
Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants primarily taught secondary school-level grades: 83 percent (N = 55) in secondary and 12 percent (N = 8) in elementary (Figure 4.7).

Out of 42 participants from the Data Source 1 group, all but one participant were secondary school teachers or teachers-to-be. The exceptional participant in this group was an in-service elementary school teacher. Participants in Data Source 2 demonstrated considerably more variety: 29 percent (N = 7) of in-service teachers worked at elementary schools and 59 percent (N = 14) worked at secondary schools (including one pre-service teacher). The exceptions in this group were three participants: two participants were teaching at the collegiate level and one participant was teaching English to adult ESL students.

As for in-service and pre-service teachers’ areas of expertise, the majority of secondary school-level participants specialized in either English or Social Studies. Among 54 in-service and
pre-service secondary school-level teachers, 20 percent (N = 11) specialized in English and 42.5 percent (N = 23) specialized in Social Studies, while 13 percent (N = 7) specialized in both English and Social Studies. In total, 75.5 percent (N = 41) of secondary school-level participants were in fact English or Social Studies teachers (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1.

Secondary School Teachers’ Areas of Expertise (Data Source 1 and Data Source 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>11 (20%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>23 (42.5%)</td>
<td>4 (7.5%)</td>
<td>19 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English and Social Studies</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (5.5%)</td>
<td>4 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Education</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>4 (7.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concentration of teachers’ fields of expertise into these two subjects corresponds with school
subjects into which media literacy tends to be integrated\textsuperscript{57}. Other secondary school-level participants specialized in various subjects such as art, music, foreign languages, home economics, library, math, music, and sciences\textsuperscript{58}. Two college-level teachers specialized in English and communication respectively, and one ESL teacher for adult classes specialized in English. As for elementary school-level teachers, most of the participants wrote “all subjects,” therefore their fields of expertise are not categorized in this research. The following sections examine in-service and pre-service teachers’ experiences and understanding of media literacy, and how they perceive the current situation of media education in British Columbia.

4.2 In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers’ Background Knowledge and Experiences with Media Literacy and Media Education

In order to grasp in-service and pre-service teachers’ understanding of and views on media literacy and media education, the questionnaire form included questions with regard to participants’ background and experiences with media literacy and media education. One of the first questions that participants were asked was whether they were familiar with media literacy and/or media education before they took part in the EDxx Media Education course or the five-day summer workshop. As Table 4.2 shows, a total of 82 percent (N = 54) of participants answered that they were familiar with media literacy / media education before taking these courses. In-service teachers had a much higher rate of familiarity (which was 90 percent) than pre-service teachers (76 percent) in this survey.

\textsuperscript{57} There has been much debate as to where in the curriculum media literacy / media education should be added when introduced into schools. Explicit descriptions of media literacy and media education are found in English Language Arts and Social Studies, as discussed in Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{58} Although it is not charted in Table 4.1, four pre-service teachers listed Social Studies and Physical Education both (in this order) for their specialization. In the table, they are counted in the column of Social Studies.
Table 4.2.

Teachers’ Familiarity with Media Literacy / Media Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 66 (%)</td>
<td>N = 29 (%)</td>
<td>N = 37 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54 (82)</td>
<td>26 (90)</td>
<td>28 (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12 (18)</td>
<td>3 (10)</td>
<td>9 (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference in the familiarity rate between in-service and pre-service teachers may be related to the difference in the nature and objectives of courses as well as participants’ motivation for enrolling in these courses. While EDxx courses were offered as a part of a teacher education program during the summer term at a university, the five-day workshop was held by an educational association during the summer break in order to provide teachers with basics in media literacy applicable to their classroom teaching. For an open-ended question in the survey asking their reasons for taking part in the workshop (Data Source 2), 23 participants (87 percent), who were all in-service teachers except one (who was a pre-service teacher), answered that they signed up for their professional development. In fact, all Data Source 2 participants except one replied that they were familiar with media literacy before taking the workshop (Table 4.3). It became clear that Data Source 2 participants were informed of and highly motivated with regard to the topic of media literacy / media education prior to attending the workshop.

By contrast, when looking at 41 respondents’ comments on the reasons for enrolling in the EDxx course, seven of the respondents (17 percent) indicated that one of the primary reasons was
Table 4.3.

Comparison of Teachers’ Familiarity with Media Literacy and/or Media Education between Data Source 1 and Data Source 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Data Source 1 (EDxx)</th>
<th>Data Source 2 (Workshop)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 66 (%)</td>
<td>N = 42 (%)</td>
<td>N = 24 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54 (82)</td>
<td>31 (74)</td>
<td>23 (96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12 (18)</td>
<td>11 (26)</td>
<td>1 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

due to scheduling considerations in relation to their timetable, or that they simply needed the course credit to fill in their elective course requirements for their teacher education program. Due to the fact that EDxx courses were offered three times during the summer in different periods, many students had an opportunity to register for this course\(^{59}\). Over 50 percent of the respondents (21 out of 41) indicated that one of the primary reasons for taking this course was based on personal interest, stating that the course seemed either “interesting” or even “fun.” Taken together, these two types of responses (which sometimes overlapped) indicate that 68 percent (N = 28) of respondents did not intend to use the media literacy knowledge or skills taught in this course in a classroom setting. Only 34 percent (N = 14), who were all pre-service teachers except one, indicated that they enrolled in the course explicitly for purpose of learning more about media literacy skills or getting ideas that they can apply in a classroom setting. Thus, as Table 4.3 shows, 11 out of 42 EDxx students (26 percent) took the class without prior knowledge of media literacy / media education.

\(^{59}\) EDxx courses were offered three times during the summer term: the first class was twice a week on Monday and Wednesday from 16:30 to 19:30 over the course of six weeks in May and June, and the other two classes were three-week intensive courses from Monday to Friday at 8:00 to 10:30 and 10:30 to 13:00 back to back in August.
The survey also asked whether respondents had any experience in learning media literacy at school when they themselves were students. Out of 65 responses, 11 participants (17 percent) answered that they remembered learning media literacy in classrooms, but a vast majority (83 percent) had no experience (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4.

Experience in Learning Media Literacy as a Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total N = 65 (%)</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers N = 29 (%)</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers N = 36 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11 (17)</td>
<td>4 (14)</td>
<td>7 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54 (83)</td>
<td>25 (86)</td>
<td>29 (81)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those eleven participants who had media literacy experiences as students, nine participants (three in-service teachers and six pre-service teachers) answered that it was during their secondary school years between grade eight and grade twelve. The other two were exceptions: one in-service teacher with 26 years of teaching experience learned media literacy-related topics as part of teacher training, and one pre-service teacher did not remember when s/he received media education. For this in-service teacher case, however, it is not clear whether media education exposure was before becoming a teacher or as part of professional development after becoming a teacher. Among these eleven participants, four were in the 20 to 24 years old age group, while another four belonged in the 25 to 29 years old age group. One participant was between 30 and 34, and another was between 35 and 39 years old. The exceptional case was the in-service teacher with 26 years of teaching experience.
experience who was in the 55 to 59 years old age group. As such, 73 percent of those who received media education were in their twenties and 18 percent in their thirties. These data indicate three points. First, less than a fifth (17 percent) of Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 research participants had experienced media education during their school years. Second, for those who had experienced media education in their school years, it was mostly in secondary school. Finally, those who had received media education in schools were part of the relatively younger generation (mostly in their twenties), suggesting that media education is still in its infancy in school education.

In order to understand whether there were any media literacy / media education courses and/or workshops available for in-service and pre-service teachers and also in order to estimate how much they had been exposed to media literacy through courses of some sort, the survey included a question about experiences in other media literacy-related classes and workshops. As Table 4.5 shows, a total of 20 respondents (31 percent of research participants) had taken courses related to the topic elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in Other Media Literacy Classes and Workshops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 65 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was no difference between in-service and pre-service teachers with regard to the ratio of those
who had taken courses and those who had not. Although this percentage, 31 percent, is higher than the percentage of participants who learned media literacy at school (Table 4.4), it is much lower than the percentage of participants who claimed to know about media literacy / media education (Table 4.2 and Table 4.3). This indicates that the majority of participants (82 percent) had heard of or known about media literacy / media education previously, yet for many of them the EDxx courses and the five-day workshop represented their first time learning about the topic intensively in a formal class setting.

By examining detailed information on courses those 20 participants had taken before, the following two features became clear. First, very few courses were exclusively related to media literacy / media education. Often times, existing university courses or professional development events included certain aspects of media literacy (e.g. analysis of advertisements, cultural studies). Only two participants (both in-service teachers) attended workshops specifically on media education, which happened to be the same one as the Data Source 2 workshop held in previous years. Second, those courses / workshops were provided either at local universities or schools where teachers worked. All pre-service teachers but one declared that their prior experiences with media literacy courses were at universities in this province (mostly at PSU where Data Source 1 EDxx courses were offered). The one exception was a pre-service teacher who attended a conference on media studies in the U.K. In-service teachers, on the other hand, mentioned professional development events at schools and the Data Source 2 media literacy workshop (as mentioned above). In addition, many participants mentioned that instructors and guest speakers of those courses / workshops were the same as those of the EDxx courses and the five-day workshop. It became clear that those courses were only partially related to media literacy / media education and in many cases instructors

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60 The same summer workshop for media literacy was held in 2002, and 2007 as well.
seemed shorthanded in this field and these same people were among the few involved in teaching media literacy for teachers.

In addition to teachers’ previous experiences with media literacy, the survey included questions about expectations for the classes (i.e., what they would like to gain from EDxx courses and the workshop) in order to understand their interests and kinds of support they wished for with regard to media literacy / media education. As Table 4.6 shows, participants were expecting to gain information that they could use in their own classrooms by taking these courses.

Table 4.6.

Teachers’ Expectations of Learning Content in EDxx Course and Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 65 (%)</td>
<td>N = 29 (%)</td>
<td>N = 36 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Theory</td>
<td>46 (71)</td>
<td>21 (72)</td>
<td>25 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>51 (79)</td>
<td>24 (83)</td>
<td>27 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Media Education</td>
<td>26 (40)</td>
<td>7 (24)</td>
<td>19 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Resources</td>
<td>63 (97)</td>
<td>29 (100)</td>
<td>34 (94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 97 percent of participants (100 percent in the in-service teachers’ case) replied ‘teaching resources,’ followed by 79 percent (N = 51) replying ‘pedagogy.’ A total of 71 percent of participants showed interest in the ‘background theory’ of media literacy, and no differences with regard to the degree of participants’ interest in this topic were found between in-service and pre-service teachers. The only less-popular topic among the four options prepared for this question
was the ‘history of media education’: only a total of 40 percent (N = 40) of participants replied yes to this option. This was also the only topic that differed between in-service and pre-service teachers: while 53 percent (N = 19) of in-service teachers were interested in learning about the ‘history of media education’: only 24 percent (N = 7) of in-service teachers were interested in learning about this type of background knowledge. As participants’ responses to this question shows, in-service teachers seemed to have been much more interested in practice-oriented information that could be applied instantly to their classroom teaching. Cross-referencing between participants’ interest in the ‘history of education’ and courses / workshops they were enrolled in revealed no relation between the two. The questionnaire also had a column ‘others’ and free space was left for comments in addition to the four options shown in the chart, but no participants checked this option or wrote in responses.

4.3 In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers’ Understanding of Media Literacy and Media Education

This section captures teachers’ notions about media literacy as well as their understanding of media education by examining related questions from the survey. The majority of Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants showed positive responses to the question “do you think teaching students about media in school is important?” A total of 80 percent (N = 53) of teachers answered ‘very important’ and 15 percent (N = 10) answered ‘important,’ meaning that a total of 95 percent

61 The content of EDxx courses and the five-day workshop was quite different. While the EDxx course covered various topics such as the definition of media education, advertising and consumer culture, representation of identities, and media production, the workshop was almost entirely focused on providing materials that could be used in classroom teaching. Since one of the reading assignments for EDxx classes covered the historical development of media education, I suspected that course content could have influenced participants’ responses to this particular question, but there was no relation as stated above.
(N = 63) of participants thought it was necessary to teach students media literacy in school (Table 4.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of Teaching Students about Media in Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 66 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While every single in-service teacher acknowledged the importance of teaching media literacy in schools (86 percent replied ‘very important’ and 14 percent ‘important’), a few pre-service teachers did not see much necessity compared with others (two pre-service teachers replied ‘neutral’ and one ‘not much’). These three in-service teachers were all enrolled in EDxx courses, and were in their twenties (two in their early twenties, one in his/her late twenties)62. In general, however, most Data

62 The respondent who replied ‘not much’ to this question was a math teacher in the 20 to 24 age range, who was not familiar with media literacy / media education prior to the EDxx course. S/he had not taken any other classes related to this topic previously and had no interest in taking any in the future either. The reason for enrolling in this class was because it “sounded fun.” One of the respondents who replied ‘neutral’ had similar responses as well, choosing this class among the “choice of 2 elective (courses).” S/he was a Social Science teacher in the 20 to 24 age range with no prior knowledge about media literacy and had no interest in taking any more courses related to this topic. The other respondent was aged between 25 and 29 and was a biology teacher who knew about
Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants felt that media literacy was an important topic to be taught in schools.

As discussed in previous chapters, media literacy contains various topics and elements and thus the way individuals conceptualize media literacy / media education varies greatly. In order to examine teachers’ conceptualization of media literacy in more detail and in order to also investigate what aspects of media literacy teachers thought important for students to learn in schools, the survey posed the following question: “Which element(s) of media literacy do you think should be taught to students in class?” Table 4.8 shows media literacy elements in the order that teachers considered most important to teach.

**Table 4.8.**

**Elements of Media Literacy to be Taught to Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Media Literacy</th>
<th>Total N = 66 (%)</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers N = 29 (%)</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers N = 37 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decoding Media Texts</td>
<td>64 (97)</td>
<td>29 (100)</td>
<td>35 (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Audience Relationships</td>
<td>61 (92)</td>
<td>28 (97)</td>
<td>33 (89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Implications</td>
<td>61 (92)</td>
<td>27 (93)</td>
<td>34 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of Media in Society</td>
<td>60 (91)</td>
<td>26 (90)</td>
<td>34 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge on Media Industry</td>
<td>52 (79)</td>
<td>24 (83)</td>
<td>28 (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Production</td>
<td>44 (67)</td>
<td>19 (66)</td>
<td>25 (68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

media literacy before taking this course, and was willing to take more classes but felt ‘neutral’ toward the necessity of teaching media literacy in schools.
More than 90 percent of participants in total considered it essential to include in media literacy teaching the following four categories: ‘decoding media texts,’ ‘media / audience relationships,’ ‘commercial implications,’ and ‘roles of media in society.’ All four of these elements are typical and popular topics in media education in general, and are also included in ‘Eight Key Concepts for Media Literacy,’ which is often referred to as a guide for teaching media literacy in Canada and other countries.

The other two elements received slightly lower response rates when compared with the first four: 79 percent (N = 52) for ‘knowledge of media industry’ and 67 percent (N = 44) for ‘media production.’ When cross-examining responses to these two elements among Data Sources (the courses that participants were enrolled in), 74 percent of Data Source 1 participants and 88 percent of Data Source 2 participants answered ‘knowledge of media industry,’ and 69 percent of Data Source 1 participants and 67 percent of Data Source 2 participants included ‘media production’ as essential for inclusion in media literacy teaching in schools. These two elements are often split among educators and media literacy scholars especially in the ‘media production’ category: the issue is whether these elements should be included or not in the first place, and whether it is feasible for teachers to cover these elements in classrooms even if they would like to. Teaching about the

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63 The order of elements of media literacy listed in the questionnaire form was different from the order shown in Table 4.8, thus these four elements did not receive the highest responses from participants because of the visibility in the questionnaire form. See Appendix A for the questionnaire format.

64 The ‘Key Concept’ was first developed by media education advocates in Ontario and was included in the Media Literacy Resource Guide published by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1989. This book has been translated into French, Japanese, Italian, and Spanish (Pungente et al. 2005). The list of this ‘Key Concept’ was included in the material provided at the site of Case 2 (five-day workshop) as well. For the details of key concepts, see Chapter One.

65 I analyzed both Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 course contents to see whether it was responsible for different response rates in ‘knowledge on media industry,’ but neither course had specific content related to the media industry, except the Data Source 2 classes, which included a fieldtrip to the studio of a broadcasting company that sponsored this workshop.
media industry, unlike decoding media texts, requires some knowledge about media corporations. Teachers also need up-to-date teaching materials, such as which media oligopolies are developing. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 2, information on the media industry is often missing from media education, or it is at best merely mentioned in terms of who creates the content discussed. As for ‘media production,’ the purpose of including this element in media literacy lessons at school is often disputed as well since there are simple technical problems such as: 1) whether or not schools are equipped with cameras and other necessary equipment; and 2) whether or not teachers know about media production and are able to teach students about this technically demanding subject. Although this multiple-choice question in the questionnaire could not identify each participant’s reasons and criteria for the selection of these media literacy elements, this study did confirm that participants were more inclined to select the first four typical categories, while also confirming that often disputed topics were less popular among these participants.

In order to inquire about teachers’ reasons for teaching media literacy in schools and to investigate which types of media literacy (inoculative / protectionist, ideological, or critical media literacy, as discussed in the previous chapter) were prevalent among these participants, the following questions were asked: “which of the following statements is the closest reason for you to teach media literacy?” As Table 4.9 reveals, the most popular response was to ‘develop critical thinking’ both for in-service and pre-service teachers (85 percent and 78 percent respectively), followed by ‘help students to become active citizens’ (15 percent and 20 percent respectively). One pre-service teacher checked off the section ‘other’ and wrote in a comment saying: “because it’s fun.” None of the participants replied ‘protect from negative influence.’
Table 4.9.

The Main Reason for Teaching Media Literacy to Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total N = 64 (%)</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers N = 27 (%)</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers N = 37 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect from Negative Influence</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Critical Thinking</td>
<td>52 (81)</td>
<td>23 (85)</td>
<td>29 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help to Become Active Citizens</td>
<td>11 (17)</td>
<td>4 (15)</td>
<td>7 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the surface, the results shown above seem to indicate that ideological media literacy is dominant among Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants, followed by some critical media literacy supporters. Inoculative / protectionist media literacy, on the other hand, seems to have lost its popularity. This result corroborates the general description of media education as shifting from protecting children from media’s negative influences and instead moving toward a critical or empowerment approach (e.g., UNESCO, 1999). Examining more carefully all responses throughout the questionnaires, however, revealed that inoculative / protectionist ideas had not necessarily disappeared completely. For example, a Data Source 2 participant who was an in-service teacher with 26 years of experience in teaching English in secondary schools wrote comments in the section asking for reasons for enrolling in the five-day workshop: “to explore and develop strategies that will help me in empowering students so that they can guard against the hidden messages / implied meanings / subtle agendas of the writer / composer / producer and become critical consumers of information.” This written comment not only revealed the participant’s intention of taking the
workshop for professional development, but also revealed his/her perspective on the purpose of teaching media literacy to students. Although this participant used the word ‘empower,’ which is often associated with a critical media literacy approach, the expression ‘guard against’ connoted the inoculative / protectionist ideas. As this teacher wrote, “hidden messages / implied meanings / subtle agendas” could be found by analyzing media texts, yet having the intention of ‘guarding against’ those messages and meanings involved judgment calls that students should be protected from manipulation by those media texts. As this example shows, even though the inoculative / protectionist approach seemed not to have any supporters from the result of this particular question asking for the reason for teaching media literacy to students, it became clear that whether the protectionist approach has become obsolete as some claim should be carefully examined in greater detail. Data from other sources were used to cross-analyze with regard to this subject, and as such will be discussed later in this chapter.

Since the year 2000, media literacy components have been included in all grades from kindergarten to grade twelve in all provinces and territories in Canada. In British Columbia, a group of teachers and media practitioners were contracted by the British Columbia Ministry of Education to prepare a framework for media education curriculum development that came out in 1994 as a report titled *A Conceptual Framework for Media Education & Cross-Curricular Learning Outcomes and Opportunities for Teaching and Assessment*. Some of the media literacy components from this framework have been available in an Integrated Resource Package (IRP) since 1996 as I reviewed in Chapter Two. Yet whether or not the curriculum had been put into practice and whether or not teachers considered teaching media literacy in all grades necessary is quite a different matter. Thus, participants of this survey were asked when they thought was the most desirable grade for
students to start learning media literacy in schools. As Table 4.10 shows, nearly 40 percent of all respondents (39 percent of in-service teachers and 38 percent of pre-service teachers) chose between ‘Grade 4 – 6’ as the most desirable grade for students to start media education.

**Table 4.10.**

**Desirable Starting Grades to Learn Media Literacy in Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total (N = 65 (%))</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers (N = 28 (%))</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers (N = 37 (%))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>14 (22)</td>
<td>10 (36)</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 – 3</td>
<td>16 (25)</td>
<td>4 (14)</td>
<td>12 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 – 6</td>
<td>25 (38)</td>
<td>11 (39)</td>
<td>14 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7 – 9</td>
<td>9 (14)</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td>7 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 – 12</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Necessary</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there were some differences in the order of second, third, and forth, most in-service and pre-service teachers (89 percent of in-service teachers and 81 percent of pre-service teachers) replied that it is best for students to start in elementary school. Another notable, albeit predictable, feature of the result is that elementary school teachers tended to choose earlier grades than secondary school teachers.

The survey also asked participants whether or not they knew that media literacy was included in the IRP of all school subjects as a cross curriculum topic in British Columbia and thus teachers of
all grades and subjects could teach media literacy. In total, 64 percent (N = 42) of participants knew this fact, but when comparing in-service and pre-service teachers, results were quite different (Table 4.11). There is a much higher ratio of in-service teachers (76 percent) who knew about this while only a little over half of pre-service teachers (54 percent) knew about this fact. Respondents’ teaching subjects, however, did not have any correlation to knowledge of this particular fact.

Table 4.11.

Knowledge of Media Literacy as Part of K – 12 IRP in BC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 66 (%)</td>
<td>N = 29 (%)</td>
<td>N = 37 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42 (64)</td>
<td>22 (76)</td>
<td>20 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24 (36)</td>
<td>7 (24)</td>
<td>17 (46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the survey asked respondents to identify in which subject media literacy should be included in school (Table 4.12). More than 60 percent of respondents (64 percent of in-service teachers and 60 percent of pre-service teachers) thought it best to include media literacy in all school subjects. There was a slight difference in percentages among in-service and pre-service teachers who selected the column ‘some subjects,’ which had the second most responses to this item: while a quarter of in-service teachers selected this response, more than a third (35 percent) of pre-service teachers replied that media literacy should be included in some selected subjects. The two most common subjects that in-service and pre-service teachers thought media literacy should be included in were English and Social Studies. Other subjects were journalism, art, drama, music,
Table 4.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects in which Media Literacy Should be Included</th>
<th>Total N = 65 (%)</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers N (%)</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Subjects</td>
<td>40 (61)</td>
<td>18 (64)</td>
<td>22 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Subjects</td>
<td>20 (31)</td>
<td>7 (25)</td>
<td>13 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Course</td>
<td>5 (8)</td>
<td>3 (11)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

personal planning, marketing, business education, technology / ICT, and sciences which had one or two respondents each. Relatively few suggested that media literacy should be taught as an independent course in schools.

In order to gauge understanding of the current status of media education in the province, the questionnaire included the following item: “Do you think media education has taken root in K-12 school education in BC?” Twenty-three percent (N = 15) of respondents answered ‘yes,’ but the majority (70 percent) did not think that media education had taken root in BC schools (Table 4.13). When comparing the responses of in-service and pre-service teachers, fewer in-service teachers than pre-service teachers thought that media education was rooted in BC: only 2 out of 29 in-service teachers (7 percent) replied ‘yes,’ in comparison with 13 out of 37 (35 percent) pre-service teachers who answered ‘yes.’ Considering that pre-service teachers had not started working in schools yet (other than practicum) when they completed the questionnaire, their experiences and knowledge of
media education were limited and necessarily differed from the experience and knowledge of in-service teachers, which likely explains the differential.

Participants also responded to an item querying whether or not they thought that there existed enough support for teachers trying to teach media literacy (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 65 (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7 (11)</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td>5 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56 (86)</td>
<td>26 (90)</td>
<td>30 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Others)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

66 The questionnaire form did not have the option ‘others’ originally. Those five respondents wrote in “do not know” instead of choosing one of the two options for this question, thus this section was added to the table.
Only seven respondents (11 percent) answered ‘yes,’ while 56 respondents (86 percent) answered ‘no.’ When cross-examining responses from in-service and pre-service teachers, there are slightly fewer in-service teachers than pre-service teachers who indicated that existing support is adequate for teaching media literacy.

A total of 54 participants (23 from Data Source 1 and 31 from Data Source 2) responded to an open-ended item addressing support systems to help teachers gather information and enhance their understanding of teaching media literacy. This open-ended option immediately followed the previous question on whether enough support existed. Among the Data Source 1 group, 65 percent (N = 20) respondents suggested that more resources or lesson plans would help with teaching media literacy. Forty-eight percent (N = 15) of respondents emphasized a need for additional training, more workshops or conferences. One respondent added that more “proof” that media education is as important as other courses would help. The pattern was similar with Data Source 2 workshop respondents. Forty-eight percent (N = 11) of respondents stated that more resources or lesson plans would help teachers teach media literacy in the classroom. Forty-eight percent (N = 11) of respondents emphasized a need for additional training, more workshops, more conferences, or online support. One respondent suggested that more time to implement media education would help, while another respondent suggested that raising awareness would be beneficial.

There was relatively little difference between suggestions made by Data Source 1 EDxx course respondents and Data Source 2 workshop respondents; 48 percent for each suggested additional support in the form of conferences, workshops, or training. However, there was a noticeable difference between Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 respondents regarding a need for

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67 As was the case with Table 4.13, the questionnaire form did not have the option ‘others’ originally for this question either. Those five respondents wrote in “do not know” instead of choosing one of the two options for this question, and thus this section was added to the table.
additional resources: 65 percent of respondents from EDxx courses emphasized a need for additional resources, while only 48 percent of the workshop respondents stressed a need for additional resources. This is likely a result of content differences between EDxx courses and the five-day workshop. While the workshop devoted almost all of its time to introducing various teaching materials that teachers could use in classrooms, EDxx courses focused more on background information and expressions of media literacy. At the workshop participants had an opportunity to see some multimedia materials for classroom teaching. In addition, they also received 300 pages of photocopied materials from newspapers, books, and online websites that could also be used in their teaching. By contrast, reading materials for EDxx courses were more context-oriented: the class content covered various key concepts in media education (such as advertising and consumer culture, representation and identity, and alternative media production) designed to provide a background in media literacy in general, rather than directly introducing materials for use in classroom settings. Thus, differences in materials between EDxx courses and the workshop could be one of the major reasons that Data Source 1 participants from EDxx courses felt more strongly that there was a need for more classroom resources. Overall for this item, 31 out of 54 respondents (57 percent) stated that more resources or lesson plans would help in teaching media literacy, while 26 out of 54 respondents (48 percent) emphasized the need for additional training, more workshops, more conferences, or online support.

As mentioned in previous chapters, a lack of sufficient and up-to-date teaching materials has often been considered one of the major obstacles to establishing media education in the schools. The results presented above provide support for this view. However, careful examination of participant responses to other items in this questionnaire reveals that there is another aspect to the issue of
resources: while teacher expectations for more ready-to-use and up-to-date materials were indeed understandable and despite the fact that teaching materials were not abundant, in some cases teachers simply did not know where to find useful existing resources. The questionnaire contained an item asking respondents what kind of teaching materials they were using (or would like to use in the future) when teaching media literacy. Almost all participants checked off options such as “Newspapers,” “Magazines,” “TV programs provided by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC),” and “TV programs provided by National Film Board (NFB),” yet far fewer respondents chose specific resource titles such as “Scanning the Movies (CHUM television program),” and “Scanning Television (video / DVD resource package.)” A total of 14 respondents (21 percent) checked off the option of “Scanning the Movies” and 21 respondents checked off (32 percent) “Scanning Television.” Many of those who did not choose either of these two options left a question mark on the questionnaire sheet, indicating that they did not know about those materials.

Similarly, an item asking whether or not participants had consulted any existing media literacy resources that were popular and known to experts (both teachers and researchers) further revealed a lack of awareness about available resources. The questionnaire listed three major Canadian resources, two of which were online materials and one was in the form of printed material, and participants were asked whether they were aware of the materials (Table 4.15). A total of 14 (21 percent) respondents indicated that they had browsed the Media Awareness Network website68 in the past. The other two resources were less known to the respondents and only two (3 percent)

68 The Media Awareness Network website is “one of the world’s most comprehensive collections of media and digital literacy resources” and offers free online materials for teachers and parents in both English and French. (http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/corporate/about_us/index.cfm).
Table 4.15.

Number of Teachers Who Consulted with Existing Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>In-Service Teachers</th>
<th>Pre-Service Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 66 (%)</td>
<td>N = 29 (%)</td>
<td>N = 37 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Awareness Network Website</td>
<td>14 (21)</td>
<td>9 (31)</td>
<td>5 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesuit Communication Project Website</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Media Literacy Resource Guide</td>
<td>6 (9)</td>
<td>6 (21)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Adbusters magazine)</td>
<td>5 (7)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered that they had browsed the Jesuit Communication Project website; six (9 percent)
answered that they had read the Media Literacy Resource Guide, a textbook published by the
Ontario Ministry of Education. This question also had an option for “Others,” and all five
respondents who left comments in this section wrote Adbusters magazine. The data demonstrates
that a relatively small number of participants were familiar with existing materials and hubs useful
for finding information on media literacy. Further examining the attributes of those respondents who
knew those materials reveals that in-service teachers tended to be more familiar with the materials
listed. No pre-service teachers checked the Jesuit Communication Project website or the Media

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69 Jesuit Communication Project (JCP) websites offers information on various resources
and services for teachers, parents, church groups, and other interest groups in order to “encourage,
promote, and develop media education across Canada.” (http://jcp.proscenia.net/index.htm).
70 The Media Literacy Resource Guide contains ideas for integrating media literacy into
various subject areas in elementary and secondary school.
71 Adbusters magazine is published by the Media Foundation, a non-profit organization
based in Vancouver, BC, Canada. It aims to change “the way we [the media audience] interact with
the mass media and the way in which meaning is produced in society” (Adbusters, Vol. 9, No. 2,
Mar/Apr, 2001, p. 64). The circulation of the magazine is now 120,000 with a majority of readers
based in North America, and there are also many subscribers from over 60 countries in the world.
Literacy Resource Guide. Respondent age ranges did not have any relation to their familiarity with these resources. Adbusters magazine, on the other hand, was more known to pre-service teachers in the younger age range: four out of five respondents who mentioned the magazine were pre-service teachers and all four of them were in their twenties. These results offer two conclusions. First, resource availability is viewed by teachers interested in media literacy as a significant obstacle for effective curriculum and teaching. Conversely, in spite of the limited teaching resources for media literacy, there is also a lack of teacher awareness of existing resources. In short, there exists an apparent gap between actual resource availability and perceived resource availability, with the latter being greater than the former and thus may compound the resource availability problem.

4.4 In-Service Teachers’ Experiences and Voices on Media Education

The questionnaire form distributed to Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants consisted of two parts: the first part included general items regarding media education and media literacy for both in-service and pre-service teachers and the second part presented more specific items only to in-service teachers regarding media education practices. This section describes results from the second half of the questionnaire for in-service teachers. Out of 29 in-service teachers in total from Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participating in this research, 28 responded to this part.

The first question asked participants whether or not they teach media literacy in their classrooms, and 15 respondents (54 percent) answered ‘yes.’ The rest of the 13 respondents all answered ‘no,’ but they selected an option ‘would like to teach media literacy in future.’ On the surface, quite a few teachers had already been involved in media education and those who had not been involved expressed a high level of interest for incorporating media literacy into their teaching
as well. The high ratio of media education practitioners and equally high interest in teaching in the future were understandable considering the nature of the courses and workshop, as previously discussed: in-service teachers, especially participants in the workshop (Data Source 2), had a high level of interest in the topic and were motivated to learn more for professional development. Further examination, however, makes it clear that identifying and comparing their media education practices is complicated. Among fifteen respondents who answered ‘yes’ to the question, only three (11 percent) devoted a significant amount of time to media literacy in their classrooms: one teacher had a two-week unit, another had a one two-month block, and the other used approximately a sixth to a fourth of the entire course time on media literacy. The remaining twelve respondents did not include specific media literacy units in the curriculum and either included it as “teachable moments as a part of classroom discussion” or time devoted “when it fits.” Thus, there were significant differences in media education practices among those fifteen in-service teachers who replied ‘yes’ to this question, with these differences extending to both the amount of time spent and the way they taught media education. This result coincides with the situations described in existing literature on media education. As discussed in previous chapters, definitions of media literacy vary significantly still to this date, and thus what is taught in classrooms under the name of media education or literacy also varies.

Immediately following the previous item on whether or not participants teach media education, respondents then addressed what materials they use when teaching media literacy (Table 4.16). The most popular resources were audio-visual materials such as VHS and DVD, with 20 respondents (83 percent) selecting ‘yes,’ followed by 17 respondents (71 percent) selecting newspapers, and 16 respondents (67 percent) selecting magazines. Only one respondent answered
that s/he used Cable in the Classroom programs. Three of the respondents left written comments in the ‘Others’ section: two wrote ‘Internet’ and one mentioned ‘CBC radio programs.’

As these results indicate, teachers tend to bring in multimedia or print media clips from traditional sources, including the Internet. They also tend to bring in materials that they found on their own rather than pre-made materials—even when using VHS / DVD many respondents mentioned recording programs from television, although some wrote in specific documentary or movie titles.

If surveyed in 2010, one could easily capture a trend of teachers’ increasing use of recordings or multimedia (e.g., audio, video) clips saved or linked to web pages or sites such as MySpace and Youtube. Nevertheless, teachers in Canada and the U.S. are specifically obligated to request approval for curriculum materials adopted outside of pre-approved resources in curriculum guides or the IRPs. Given established practices, more traditional media are likely to remain popular or

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72 Whether this tendency to use more traditional media materials for media education (as opposed to newer multimedia, such as the web) is related to the availability of resources in schools or more to do with teachers’ choices and content of teaching will be examined with other data sources in this study.
common as well, but further research is necessary here. This current research provides a baseline (which we do not currently have) for future researchers of media literacy in BC and Canada. This questionnaire queried the teachers on the materials they employ, and not the materials their students employ within or outside the classroom. Students may in fact develop a form of media literacy outside of media education, but, as indicated, the relationship between media literacy and media education is no different than other disciplines (e.g., social literacy or historical literacy and social studies education). One does not eliminate or obviate the other. We might say that media literacy merely attunes one or turns one toward media education or facilitates media education.

The previous two items on the questionnaire reveal the limitations of using questionnaires to gather information about media education practices. Data on whether or not teachers were involved in media education, and if so how they were teaching media literacy, were obtained from information on self-assessment items. Thus, definitions of media education practice (e.g., how they teach and how much they need to teach media literacy to be able to claim that teachers are practicing media education) varied from respondent to respondent. Consequently, it is difficult to precisely gauge how accurately some might have self-assessed their media literacy teaching or how others might have inaccurately self-assessed their practices as not constituting media literacy even though they were employing similar teaching practices. In addition, there may have been minor confusion or misunderstanding while responding: although only 15 respondents answered that they were teaching media literacy in their classrooms, 24 respondents provided responses to questions about materials used in the classroom when teaching media literacy. One possibility for this discrepancy is that some respondents may have checked off various media resources that they used in the classroom for other teaching objectives that were not necessarily meant for media literacy.
Another possibility is that they may not have recognized that they were involved in media literacy teaching. For example, one participant wrote that s/he had been teaching some form of media literacy in the classroom without knowing until taking part in this workshop that it was actually a form of media education.

Finally, in-service teachers were asked to identify challenges they experienced while teaching media literacy. Unlike the previous open-ended items on what kind of support respondents thought would help enhance their understanding of media education, which was asked to all participants in the introductory section, the researcher prepared multiple choice options and also left a blank space for comments in this item. As Table 4.17 shows, among the multiple choice options, teachers most frequently responded that the barriers for media education were “finding good teaching resources” and “a lack of teacher training,” which coincides with the results from the first part of this questionnaire. The third most common challenge that respondents identified was “a lack of time in class.” In comparison with results from the open-ended question in the first half of this questionnaire, significantly more respondents indicated that limited classroom time was one of the major reasons for an inability to include media literacy. Only one respondent mentioned classroom time as a factor in the previous open-ended item, while fifteen respondents chose “a lack of time in class” for this item. Although considerably fewer respondents selected the other options, six teachers chose “a lack of support from school,” three selected “a lack of support from other teachers,” and two answered “a lack of support from parents.” One respondent provided an open-ended response, stating that schools should support teachers by providing them with more funding in order to integrate media literacy into teaching. Another respondent expressed that it was difficult to engage in media education at school because other teachers in her/his school were not
Table 4.17.

**Challenges in Media Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Total N = 25 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding Good Teaching Resources</td>
<td>21 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Teacher Training</td>
<td>17 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time in Classroom</td>
<td>15 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support from School</td>
<td>6 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support from Other Teachers</td>
<td>3 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support from Parents</td>
<td>2 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support from Students</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aware of the importance of integrating media literacy into the curriculum. This item makes it clear that the obstacles for including media literacy are multidimensional: teaching resources and teacher training are major factors, yet they are not the only challenges that teachers face. An absence of school-wide support from both administrators and other teachers appears to discourage the few teachers that have chosen to teach media literacy. Moreover, the lack of resources and funding may very well stem from this general sense that media education is not an important subject. This suggests that solutions for these obstacles are more complex than simply increased funding – there is seemingly a need for educating teachers about the importance of media education, which in itself could result in not only greater material support, but could also serve as valuable peer support that professionals need.
4.5 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I examined survey data collected from in-service and pre-service teachers who were enrolled in media education courses / a workshop and explored their perceptions of media education and literacy. This section synthesizes findings by analyzing the data in the following three categories: 1) in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media education and literacy; 2) their perceptions of the current status of media education in BC schools, including in-service teachers’ experiences with teaching media literacy in their classes; and 3) support and obstacles surrounding media education. I examined similarities and differences between in-service and pre-service teachers in those categories as well in order to explore what hampers the full implementation of media education in BC schools. The comparison between these two groups of teachers also helps to explore support for in-service and pre-service teachers exclusively and inclusively.

First, this survey indicates that both in-service and pre-service teachers had high awareness levels of media literacy and media education: 90 percent of in-service teachers and 76 percent of pre-service teachers were familiar with media literacy and education even prior to taking EDxx courses or the five-day workshop. Regardless of participants’ age, their prior experiences in media education as students, or their experiences in teaching (whether they were in-service or pre-service teachers), a total of 95 percent participants in this study recognized the importance of teaching about the media to children in schools. In addition, the majority of participants (89 percent of in-service teachers and 81 percent of pre-service teachers) replied that it is best for children to start learning about the media in elementary school. Nearly two-thirds of participants thought it best to include media education and literacy in all school subjects, and a third replied that it is better to include
media education in a few subjects such as English Language Arts and Social Studies. Very few participants suggested an independent media education course. This survey research also reveals that for the majority of teachers the main reason to teach students media literacy was to develop students’ critical thinking ability. Some indicated that it was to help students become active citizens in society, but none of the participants replied that it was for protection from media’s negative influences on children. A few responses to open-ended questions in this survey, however, revealed that some teachers shared the protectionist / inoculative approach to media education as well. As such, teachers’ approaches to media education and/or reasons to teach media literacy are examined closely throughout this research.

Second, regarding the current status of media education in the province, a total of 70 percent of participants (80 percent for in-service and 62 percent for pre-service teachers) believed that it has not been rooted in BC school education, which supported preliminary indications before this research began that media education had not been fully implemented in BC secondary schools. This study also presents a snapshot of media education practice in classrooms. According to fifteen in-service teachers who replied that they incorporate media literacy in their teaching, it is clear that teachers’ notions and practices of media education vary greatly. Both the amount of time spent on and the way to teach media education is diverse. The research also shows that the typical materials used in classrooms were multimedia (e.g., DVD, film) and print (e.g., newspapers and magazines), but the Internet or Cable in the Classroom materials were not used much. Whether this use of more traditional media has to do with availability of materials and equipment in schools, an aspect of the point in time in which they were surveyed, or is due to teachers’ notions of media literacy and perceptions of what content is appropriate is an issue that is examined in other data sources and
discussed in later chapters.

Finally, this research also examines support available for teachers and the challenges they face in terms of media education in BC schools. The majority of participants (90 percent of in-service and 83 percent of pre-service teachers) replied that there was not enough support available for teachers. The two most common challenges they referred to were a lack of teaching materials and a lack of teacher training. Although these two responses are often listed as obstacles for media education in relevant literature (e.g., Coghill, 1993; Kellner & Share, 2005, 2007; Yates, 2002), this study reveals different aspects of these challenges in the BC context. For teaching materials, it is clear that a lack of teacher awareness of existing resources compounds the resource availability problem. This could be easily resolved with teacher-training: however, this research also indicates that opportunities for teachers to learn about media literacy and education are very limited in BC. Despite teachers’ high awareness level and interest in media literacy and education, for the majority of participants (82 percent) the EDxx course or the five-day workshop represented their first time learning about media education and literacy in a formal class setting. By examining the detailed information of those who had learned media literacy and education elsewhere previously, it is clear that very few courses and workshops have been exclusively related to media literacy and education, and often times only partial aspects of media literacy were included. In addition, instructors in this field have been very limited in BC, as many participants who had previously received media education training indicated that the instructors were the same as those from the EDxx courses or the five-day workshop. Those findings provided a baseline for the remainder of this research (Data Source 3, 4, and 5), and some of these issues will be revisited in the following chapters for cross-analysis.
CHAPTER 5

TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN ACTIVE AND INACTIVE SCHOOLS

This chapter addresses in-service teachers’ understanding and practices of media education by examining in-depth interviews with English and Social Studies department heads and by examining questionnaires administered in two secondary schools (one active school and one inactive school in media education). First, data from a preliminary phone survey to all English and Social Studies department heads in the selected school district explains why these two schools were selected as cases for active and inactive schools in this research. Second, this section describes how teachers from active and inactive schools conceptualize media literacy, how they evaluate the current status of media education practice in each school, and how they perceive various issues regarding media literacy in the classroom. Finally, by comparing those data gathered from active and inactive schools, this section outlines differences as well as similarities between the two schools.

5.1 Status of Media Education Practices in Secondary Schools in the District

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the researcher phoned all eighteen secondary schools in the selected Lower Mainland, BC school district and talked with the English and the Social Studies department heads in order to select secondary schools that are active and inactive in media education. There was no district-wide or provincial-wide research available that contained information on the status of media education in secondary schools in the province, and expert teachers in this field (Data Source 5 interviewees) also did not know which schools were active in
media education. In fact, one of the expert teachers (Richard) mentioned that there might not be any active schools in BC. Thus, this phone survey was necessary in order to identify and choose one school actively involved in media education (Data Source 3) and another school that was inactive or uninvolved in media education (Data Source 4). The Table 5.1 shows the results of this phone survey.

Table 5.1.

English and Social Studies Departments’ Involvement in Media Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Partially Active</th>
<th>Not Active</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of eighteen secondary schools, three English department heads and four Social Studies department heads replied that their schools were active in media education. Seven English department heads and four Social Studies department heads responded that a few teachers in their schools were incorporating media literacy in their classroom teaching, but added that media education was not prevalent throughout the department; these were thus categorized as “partially active.” Six English heads and eight Social Studies heads replied that to the best of their knowledge media education was not taking place in their schools. Four department heads (two in English and another two in Social Studies) in total replied that they were uncertain whether teachers in their departments include media education in classroom teaching. Based on the phone survey results, the
The researcher chose one secondary school to serve as the active school case (Data Source 3). The school selected as the active case was the only one where both English and Social Studies department heads replied that their teachers incorporated media education in their practices. As for selecting an inactive school (Data Source 4), in this educational jurisdiction there were three schools where both English and Social Studies department heads reported that they were not involved in media education. The researcher chose one school among those three due to the following two reasons. First, the school’s availability and willingness to take part in this research was crucial. The other reason for choosing this school is that one of the expert teachers in media education (Data Source 5 interviewee) worked in one of these three schools, and thus the researcher considered it a good opportunity to find out why this particular school was not active in media education even though there was at least one teacher who was teaching media literacy.

This preliminary phone survey to English and Social Studies department heads not only provided information for the researcher to select Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 schools, but it also added new aspects to the researcher’s understanding of the current status of media education in the school district studied. First, the phone survey indicated differences among teachers and schools with regard to awareness of and perspectives on media education. Unlike Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 questionnaire participants who chose to participate in courses or a workshop on media education, these thirty-six English or Social Studies department heads were not necessarily aware of or familiar with media education. I rephrased my question in two different ways: 1) do teachers in

There were eight schools where one of the department heads in either English or Social Studies replied that a few teachers were involved in media education while the other replied that they were not active at all in media education. Those schools could also be considered relatively inactive schools. However, only those where both English and Social Studies department heads replied that they were not involved in media education were considered as prospective cases for a Data Source 4 inactive school in this research to avoid any ambiguity.
your department incorporate media education in English / Social Studies classes?; and, 2) do teachers in your department teach media literacy in English / Social Studies classes? In many cases I had to give a broad definition of media literacy and media education in order to get their response on whether or not their department was active in media education. One teacher clearly mistook media education as information technology courses until I described some concrete examples. Even when general understanding of media education and media literacy were shared between department head teachers and the researcher, their definition of the terms media literacy and media education varied greatly. One English department head expressed that in her understanding media education was to teach students how the media in general were manipulating audiences, and that was not included as part of her (nor other teachers’) lesson plans in English classes. A few Social Studies department heads stated that although their departments were not active in media education in general, one aspect of media literacy was incorporated in their classroom teaching: informing students about media biases in relation to current news such as local elections. One Social Studies department head remarked that media literacy was not part of the centralized Social Studies curriculum, thus teachers in his school did not teach media literacy. As these comments show, short phone calls to department heads revealed not only information on whether any teachers in their departments were teaching media literacy or not, but also their diverse levels of understanding of media education in general.

Second, three English department heads’ comments revealed an aspect of how teachers viewed media education in secondary schools that was quite different than the views of Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants. For example, one English department head mentioned that many English teachers in her school felt that media education did not belong in the English curriculum.
According to her explanation, many teachers in the department did not consider media literacy an integral part of English classes, and furthermore, they did not see it as their responsibility to teach it in schools. She also mentioned that teachers may not have received any training on teaching media literacy, which might be another major reason why media education was not taking place in the school. She stated that younger teachers might have some training, but older teachers had no training for dealing with the issue of media in English classes. Another English department head stated that “communication-related subjects” were not for academic-oriented students, thus teachers did not teach media literacy in regular English classes in his school. These comments indicate that biases and/or prejudices against media education found in others’ research (e.g., Morgan, 1998) still exist among some teachers to this date: some consider media literacy an easy non-academic topic for less-academic oriented students. These comments also indicate that the purposes and aims of actively practicing media education might not necessarily be shared by secondary school teachers in general.

Another English department head’s comment gave one possible explanation as to why media literacy was not taken seriously and not considered an integral part of classroom teaching in some schools. She mentioned that her school used to actively teach media literacy in English 10 classes, but they no longer included it as a part of curriculum due to the pressure of provincial examinations. This statement was also confirmed by the Social Studies department head from the same school. Although those somewhat negative (or less-enthusiastic) statements on media education were expressed by only a few department heads, these comments revealed how media literacy was situated in their schools, which is crucial for understanding the current status of media education, as well as exploring the potential reasons that hamper the progress of media education in schools.
5.2 Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Literacy and Experiences in Media Education in the Active School

This section describes English and Social Studies teachers’ perspectives on media literacy at the selected active secondary school, which is categorized as Data Source 3 in this study. This school is located on the Eastern side of the educational jurisdiction examined, with about 1,700 students in total from grade 8 to grade 12. According to the Social Studies department head, many students are from working class families and many of them are second or third generation immigrants from Asia. Data reviewed here were 1) a questionnaire completed by the English department head; 2) an interview with the Social Studies department head; and 3) questionnaires (Appendix B74) returned by teachers in both the English and the Social Studies departments. The following four categories of research questions presented in Chapter One are the focus of analysis in this section: 1) teachers’ perceptions of media literacy; 2) the current status of media education in the schools; 3) available support for teachers to practice media education; 4) the obstacles and challenges that teachers encounter in media education.

5.2.1 English Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Literacy and Media Education

Caroline is the English department head of the Data Source 3 school that is active in media education. She is in her thirties and has been teaching English for approximately ten years. She indicated both in the preliminary phone survey and in the questionnaire75 that English teachers in

74 This questionnaire distributed to Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 participants contained similar items as those provided to Data Source 1 and Data Source 2 participants, but the form was modified to fit in one sheet of paper (double-sided) so that busy teachers would not feel that it was too time consuming for them to participate in this research.

75 This questionnaire is the copy of the interview question list (Appendix C) that was sent to department head teachers prior to their interviews, thus it is different from the questionnaire
her school were highly active in media education. In her case, she includes at least one media literacy unit per year in her English classes. She has received some training for teaching media literacy at professional development workshops. The teaching materials she uses in the classroom include TV, film, magazines, and newspapers from her personal media library, and students deconstruct those media texts during classroom activities. She also wrote down the *Adbusters* magazine as one of her teaching materials (no other specific titles of media texts were written in her questionnaire). She incorporates media literacy in her teaching because she feels that “it is important for students to become critical thinkers in this area.” For the support available for her in media education, she simply stated “Just Pro-D [professional development]. No funding” and mentioned that a lack of funding was one of the two major obstacles for teachers to include media literacy in teaching. The other obstacle she pointed to was a need for more up-to-date teaching resources.

There were thirteen English teachers in this school and six of them (46 percent) returned questionnaires. The six participants included three males and three females, mostly in their thirties to forties except for one who was in her early sixties. All six replied that they were familiar with media literacy and media education, and all included media literacy in their English classes. All of them were aware that media literacy was a part of English IRP in BC, and three of them also knew that media literacy was included as a cross-curriculum topic in the IRPs that could be included in any school subjects. Three teachers stated that media education should be included in some school subjects such as English and Social Studies. One thought it should be included in all subjects, and another preferred having it as an independent media studies course. Three replied that they received training for media education and one mentioned that this was at professional development distributed to English and Social Studies teachers in Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 schools. Caroline preferred to write in her comments to this question list and send it back via mail rather than meeting me in person for an interview.
workshops. The other three participants had no teacher-training in media education. All six believed that it was important to teach students about media in schools: out of five multiple choice options that ranged from ‘very important’ to ‘not at all important,’ three teachers indicated ‘very important’ (an extreme choice on the scale) and the other three checked off ‘important’ (second most extreme choice). The main reason for these six teachers to teach media literacy was mostly ‘to develop critical thinking,’ but one female teacher in her early forties replied that it was ‘to protect children from media’s negative influence.’ Teaching materials that all six teachers used in the classroom were Video/DVD, newspapers, and magazines. Four used film as well. Only two teachers mentioned the Internet, and none used Cable in the Classroom programs. The majority of participants considered the following four categories essential and indicated that they should be included when teaching media literacy: all six teachers selected ‘roles of media in society’ and ‘decoding media texts;’ five of them chose ‘media / audience relationships;’ and four of them listed ‘media’s commercial implications.’ Three teachers chose ‘knowledge of media industry,’ but only one selected ‘media production.’

With regard to support for teachers to engage in media education, half of the respondents (three teachers) answered that there was enough support available. The most common challenge they encountered was ‘finding good teaching materials,’ which five teachers selected. Three teachers replied a lack of teacher training was a challenge and one teacher specifically wrote a note that it was necessary to “update training.” Two respondents listed ‘a lack of time in class’ and ‘a lack of support from school.’

Other than the fact that teachers in this department have a much higher ratio of incorporating media literacy in their classroom teaching (100 percent of the six teachers who returned the
questionnaires), most of their responses to items discussed were similar with those of in-service teachers in Data Source 1 and Data Source 2.

5.2.2 Social Studies Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Literacy and Media Education

John is in his late fifties and is currently the Social Studies department head of an active school in media education. He has been teaching Social Studies and English for over twenty-five years in this educational jurisdiction. When he was younger he was in business, then went into theater, and finally became a teacher when he was in his thirties. He teaches Social Studies in this school during the day and English in a different school in the same district at night.

During the interview John clearly articulated his attitude and beliefs toward media literacy as well as media in general. His background in history seems most responsible for his view of media and media literacy: “history is a story, basically. … The media often presents stories and where none exist they will make it up, they will manufacture it … you have to make them [students] understand that most of what we consider to be real is storied reality.” His approach to media literacy is based on this idea, thus he incorporates media literacy in his teaching by examining media texts and making students aware that each text is “all story.” Instead of creating separate units or formal media literacy lessons, he encourages students to think critically. As John states, “it is useful to have it in the background of criticism of everything, not just the media, but being critical. Be critical. Don’t trust anyone. Don’t trust me.”

Although he encourages students to be critical, suggesting that the reason for John to incorporate media literacy into his Social Studies classes is to develop students’ critical thinking skills, his objectives for media education are not so simple. From John’s perspective, media
education is also a defensive strategy against new media that are not inherently beneficial. With regard to the Internet, John points to the prevalence of Wikipedia and YouTube, for instance, which allow for a profuse dissemination of information from sources that are unknown, and as such provide no verifiable credentials for potential authorities on particular topics, which is in stark contrast with academic or journalistic print (history, etc.) and documentary film. He also claims that the computer (which he calls “an evil box”) has done “a great disservice to our education system in general” because it took over and replaced things like encyclopedias. John considers the purpose of media education as follows:

It is a combination of objectives. It is to protect. Certainly, kids are a lot more tender than people assume, and they do not need to be exposed to a lot of things that are just unnecessary. Look at the way our language is degenerating, especially English speakers. We are re-entering a period of foul language, or I do not like to load it like that, because it is really just uncouth, where everybody just feels free to use a low-end of the English verb spectrum. The F-word is constant … and I blame the media for that, because the media fought for the right of free speech, and of course not just presented free speech, they have presented a vocabulary which is degenerative. And you can see the difference where our level of ability to think is going down because we no longer have the vocabulary to think with. And one of the great struggles of literacy we have is this lack of vocabulary. Common words, kids have common word misunderstanding because they got only one word to express everything with. … Now I am supposed to … invent Canadians here everyday … teach them a story that they can then all relate to, and they can go to the other coast of Canada or to the center of the country, or Quebec, or whatever, we have this shared story that they learned in their social studies class
…. Now, if we go to this media I have to, I HAVE TO, get them to be critical of what that story is. What are you being told? Is it true? Question it.

It is clear that media education for John serves a few purposes: in addition to develop students ability to think critically, media education is a way to counteract the negative effects of media (such as foul language and corporate agendas), and also it is a way to ensure that students interpret media in the context of a collective Canadian national identity. As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is often said that approaches to media education have moved away from the protectionist approach to a critical approach (e.g., UNESCO, 1999). These two different approaches, however, can and do co-exist in practice as John’s statement makes clear.

John states that media education is in fact rooted in his current school, and that Social Studies teachers are aware of the effects that media and the story that media present have on children. He believes that the successful integration of media education in his school is in large part due to having an older staff: “older staff are [sic] less likely to believe what they are told.” He suggests that the younger staff members display a certain “naiveté” and believe that something written in a newspaper must be true. As John surmises about the younger staff members: “There is that kind of faith, not just in the media, but in the whole structure of the system.” When asked why younger teachers that are most adept with technology and contemporary media texts are not contributing to implementing media literacy, John suggests that they are also a product of the media era and thus unable to truly evaluate it critically. As he states:

They are asleep with it. That is basically what happened. They have been lulled by it … because if you are raised with the cable on and the TV on … you kind of get so used to it that you don’t become critical of it, because it has always been that way, it has always been there.
So you don’t ever have a time when it was not there, so you do not fear it.

John states that older teachers, by contrast, are more likely to restrict and moderate their access and viewing of cable television. He further points out that for him and his generation, television is like a “stranger” in the home, and this is “not a very pleasant stranger” that teaches children all sorts of things. According to John, the older generation is more alert about the intrusiveness and influence of television content on the development of children’s worldviews. It is also clear that John’s conception of media literacy is based on his own personal experiences: the dramatic increase in television’s influence, which he believes is something to fight back against.

In addition to having older staff in the Social Studies department that John directly mentioned as a major reason for media education being rooted in his school, there are a few other contributing factors for this school being active in media education, which can be categorized into the following three groups: 1) school administration; 2) parents; and 3) students. First, the teachers in this school receive support (particularly in terms of understanding) from the school to include media literacy in teaching. School administrators are not necessarily actively pushing ahead with media education, but by adopting teachers’ proposals for what they want to focus on in classes, administrators are indirectly supporting media education. According to John, the administration is always loaded with so much managerial work (as is often the case in any school) that they cannot function as educational leaders. Yet because they are too busy, “they are happy to take on anything that comes up from the bottom,” and teachers in this school have always made literacy a primary issue and have asked for the support on the matter. This support, however, is “almost perfunctory” and does not include much funding. As it will be mentioned later, funding for purchasing materials is scarce even in this active school. Second, parents’ attitudes toward education and school in general are also
indirectly making it possible for media education to be part of classroom teaching. As John mentioned, there is very little parent involvement in this school: “on this side of town parents are happy their kids are getting an education and there is a tremendous amount of trust given to the system, or just relief that the kids are safe.” Thus parents are not necessarily supporting media education, but they are approving it in a way by not telling teachers what or what not to teach in classrooms. Third, students are supporting media education in a much more direct and positive way than administrators or parents. According to John, students are interested in decoding media texts and actively engage in learning media literacy: “you see this *Adbusters* thing up there, … they want to ask about it, and *they want* to know about the corporate [unclear], and that of course leads to discussions about … how the corporate agenda is out there and should be questioned” (emphasis added). John also mentioned that students know that media present “stories.” As he states:

If you take for example the last strike we were involved with, there was the media story and then the kids want to know: well, what’s THE story, what’s your version of it? So they can instantly see that there is what is being told to them, and then there is what we perceive, and then there is what they perceive.

The fact that students are interested and actively participating in learning about the media thus seems to be one of the essential factors that help teachers incorporate media education in Social Studies classes.

Although the Social Studies department in this school is relatively active in media education, John mentioned several difficulties its teachers encounter while teaching media literacy. The obstacles he mentioned can be divided into five categories: 1) money; 2) teaching resources; 3) classroom time; 4) youth; and 5) teachers’ positions towards the media. The first obstacle is a lack of
funding to purchase teaching resources for media literacy. He believes that public education is always under-funded in general, and as such this translates into difficulties in obtaining teaching materials. Even when the school administration supports teachers to incorporate media literacy into their teaching, this support often does not include funding. The problem of a lack of resources due to a funding shortage was also pointed out by Caroline, the English department head of this school. The second obstacle John mentions is a lack of available teaching resources related to media literacy topics. This is also often indicated as one of the major obstacles, but John states that there are two reasons why this is a problem. First of all, he feels that media literacy is inadequately presented in the Social Studies curriculum (IRP and textbooks). Second, he indicates that accessing various media texts and preparing them for classroom use is difficult. Unlike some teachers who would like to get ready-made lesson plans or worksheets and simply photocopy and distribute them in class, John wishes to have more raw materials so that he can use them in class to deconstruct and critique those media texts. When asked about his opinion on media literacy resources prepared by media corporations, he showed great interest and claimed that he would use them. Even when those materials are heavily biased, he thinks it is a good opportunity to teach students about biases. For the third obstacle, he points to classroom time constraints given that the curriculum is so vast, meaning that teachers must pick and choose what topics to actually cover. John believes that part of the reason why teachers cannot cover the entire curriculum is because the movement in schools and the media has been to “dumb things down” for students and lower expectations. He believes it is increasingly difficult to cover as much of the curriculum as teachers once did, let alone add anything

76 John also believes that the departments have too much autonomy and this leads to cost overruns. In particular, since each department can generally choose its own textbook, it leads to a missed opportunity for all departments in the province to collectively buy one particular textbook for a specific course at a greater bulk discount.
The other two obstacles he mentioned are quite distinctive. John indicates that newly incoming teachers from younger generations are less interested in media literacy and less likely to incorporate media education in Social Studies classes, and thus from his perspective ‘youth’ is also an obstacle for media education. As previously mentioned in this section, he problematizes the way younger teachers (or younger people in general) perceive and engage with the media: from his observation and interaction with his colleagues, he feels that younger teachers are less likely to be critical of what the media present as they are “asleep with it.” This opinion is quite unique as it is the opposite of what is typically mentioned in much of the literature, which address teachers’ generational gaps. When discussing obstacles for media education, it is often argued that younger teachers are more comfortable with the media in classrooms, as they are more adept to new media technologies (e.g., Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). As such, it is usually older teachers that are considered more problematic and less enthusiastic in media education than younger teachers. In John’s opinion, however, the age factor is more problematic for the younger teachers especially when critiquing media texts. For the fifth obstacle, he raises the issue of teachers’ positions or attitudes towards the media: “what position are we going to take on this? Are we anti-media? Are we just conscious of media? I mean, I would very much doubt if some of my colleagues are even aware of it as an issue, whereas some of them I’m sure are fervently involved.” Because the media is often discussed in relation to current political and social issues as well as history in Social Studies classes, he is aware that a teacher’s opinion of the media itself becomes problematic. When I asked what stance he takes on the media, he answered that, for the sake of critical thinking, he liked to be neutral in the classroom: “I like people to shape their own opinions. I like to present things the way they are.
you can make up your own mind about it. I have to do that with politics.”

So far, I have discussed how John, the head teacher of the Social Studies department, perceives media literacy and media education practice in his school. I will now triangulate these data from John’s comments by discussing results from questionnaires filled in by other teachers in the department. There were seven Social Studies teachers in this school and five of them (71 percent) returned questionnaires. These five participants included three male teachers who were all in their early fifties and two female teachers who were both in their late forties. All five replied that they were familiar with media literacy and media education, and they also believed that it was relatively important to teach students about media in schools: one teacher listed ‘very important’ and the other four ‘important.’ Among those five teachers, however, only three included media literacy in their Social Studies classes. Among those three, two teachers had received training for media education (one at PCU and the other at the workshop organized by BCMES). The teaching materials that these three teachers used in the classroom were Video / DVD, film, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. None of them were using Cable in the Classroom programs.

Compared to the English teachers in this school, Social Studies teachers’ awareness of the IRPs with regard to media education was limited. Only three out of five teachers knew that media literacy was part of the Social Studies IRP in BC, while all English teachers knew that it was part of the English IRP. One of the two Social Studies teachers who did not know that media literacy was part of the Social Studies IRP was in fact incorporating media literacy in her teaching without knowing that it was included in the IRP. Only one teacher knew that media literacy was included as a cross-curriculum topic in the IRP and that it could be taught in any school subject. With regard to the placement of media education in school curriculum, two teachers stated that it should be
included in some school subjects such as English and Social Studies. The other three thought it would be better to include it in all subjects. The main reason for teaching media literacy in schools according to all five is that it was ‘to develop critical thinking.’ All five teachers indicated that the ‘roles of media in society’ and ‘media’s commercial implications’ were two essential elements of media literacy that should be included in media education. The difference between English teachers and Social Studies teachers was that while all English teachers chose ‘decoding media texts’ as one of the two important elements, all Social Studies teachers selected ‘media’s commercial implications’ instead. Three out of five Social Studies teachers chose ‘decoding media texts,’ two selected ‘media and audience’ and ‘media production,’ and only one chose ‘knowledge on media industry.’

With regard to the item asking whether there is enough support for teachers to engage in media education, four out of five Social Studies teachers replied that there was not enough existing support. The most common challenges they encountered were ‘finding good teaching materials’ and ‘a lack of time in the classroom,’ which all five teachers selected. Three teachers chose ‘a lack of teacher training’ as also problematic and two respondents chose ‘a lack of support from school.’ One female teacher who had been teaching media literacy wrote a comment stating that media literacy was often overlooked since it was not in the textbook. Thus, she indicated that media literacy should be incorporated into textbooks for widespread use. She also mentioned that it would be nice to have a listing of free materials from the government, media corporations, and not-for-profit organizations, given that money for resources is scarce at school.
5.3 Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Education in the Inactive School

This section describes English and Social Studies teachers’ perceptions of media literacy at a secondary school selected as a sample of an inactive school in media education, which is categorized as the name of Data Source 4 in this study. This school is located on the western side of the educational jurisdiction examined, with about 1,400 students in total from grade 8 to grade 12. According to the Social Studies department head, many parents in this school are highly interested and involved in their children’s education. Data reviewed here were 1) interview transcripts with the heads of English and Social Studies departments; and 2) questionnaires (Appendix B, same as Data Source 3) returned by teachers in the Social Studies department.\(^7^7\)

5.3.1 English Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Literacy and Media Education

Jennifer is the English department head of the Data Source 4 inactive school in media education. She is in her thirties and has been teaching English and a transitional course (which is considered between ESL and a regular English class) for the past twelve years. This is her first year working in this school and before that she was teaching in a school located in another region of the same educational jurisdiction for eleven years since she first became a teacher. Both in the preliminary phone survey and during the interview she indicated that English teachers in her department are not teaching media literacy. As she put it: “I think in English that [media literacy] tends to be the one that gets left towards the end of the year.”

Although she does not incorporate media literacy much in her English classes and the department in her school is not active in media education, she does believe that it is important to

\(^7^7\) The data of English teachers’ questionnaires is not mentioned here, as only one out of ten teachers in the department returned it.
teach students about the media. As she stated during the interview:

Literature is in a lot of different forms and it is in plays, in drama, it is in film, it’s in television, and I think it’s important that we do start talking about that with our students so that they are aware of the biases and … they understand that it’s the same skills to analyze a book or to understand a book and connect it to your culture, connect it to yourself, connect it to a bigger picture … it’s those same skills that you’re applying to film, to when you go to see a play, when you look at websites, and I think it’s really important for English to keep growing that we make those connections.

She thus considers media literacy to be an extension of print literacy and believes that English classes should also extend literacies to various media. She goes on to clarify what media literacy is for her and why it should be included at school:

It’s critical skills… it’s kids you know, we swim, you can swim in water … a fish can be in water and not be aware of the water … there are kids swimming in our society, but they’re not aware of it, and I think they need to be aware of it. … that’s what’s exciting about English: it’s about reading skills and writing skills, but its also about learning, considering how you are going to be a member of your society and what you want your society to be like. And that awareness of community is in the IRP, and I think that’s the bigger picture of education, and so yeah, I think they need to think about it. .. I have to ask them ‘well, you know, if you know they’re manipulating you, or you know this is something that’s not right, why are you okay with it, and how is this going to affect your life?’ You know, and starting to think about it, and giving them those skills of interpretation, which are the same skills in reading. Yeah, I think it is really important.
For Jennifer, media literacy is being critical of the media, especially with regard to biases they present. She mentions that some teachers make students create a performance and videotape, or use computers in the lab at school, but these activities may or may not help students “understand media” or “dissect media.”

Although Jennifer does not include media literacy units or lesson plans, she has mentioned the media in her classes in the past and describes students’ reactions. She states that during a few occasions when media literacy issues are raised, students’ reactions were positive in general. As Jennifer puts it: “they get excited because that’s in their domain … it’s a form that they’re really comfortable with. And the students like that, because they know it’s easy for them … and it’s fun for them.” So activities that rely on Internet searches, making websites, or visual media really appeal to them. She notes some resistance, however, to classroom activities that for example require students to analyze advertising. She states that students know that advertising is manipulating them, but she believes that they are not disturbed by this. In this case, then, it appears that students enjoy using media but not necessarily analyzing media content, for as Jennifer states: “it’s positive, usually positive, because they like the medium and they’re always dying to see films, in fact if you bring the book, [they ask] ‘can we see the film?’”

The interview revealed that Jennifer is aware of media literacy and personally has experience with incorporating some media literacy elements into her classes, and she also believes that it is important for students to learn media literacy at school. This raises an obvious question: why is her school not active in media education? What is the difference between this school and the active school? When asked what she thinks the reason is for this school not being active in media education, she replied that “it comes down to time and resources.” She explains that by ‘a lack of”
time’ she means both the classroom time and her own. First, with regard to a lack time, she states that it would require a significant amount of her own time to learn about media literacy first and then to prepare a unit for classes. It would also require a sacrifice of valuable teaching time that can be used to help students develop key skills for the provincial examination, like writing skills. She says that she would like to teach media literacy, but since she carries mostly senior classes she cannot do as much as she feels she should. Second, with regard to a lack of materials, she states that this school does not have any textbooks for media and communication. The school where she previously worked had once purchased textbooks for media literacy, but could buy only sixty copies and two thousand students had to share them over a number of years. She also mentions that because of the copyright issue, teaching materials such as a set of commercials and film clips are too expensive to buy. “It’s great for the government to say ‘you will do this’ or ‘you will do that,’ and I know that it’s important, but the reality is I can barely get a set of new textbooks.” As such, she also indicates a lack of funding as an obstacle that by extension leads to a lack of resources. She also briefly mentions a lack of formal teacher training in media education as being an obstacle, but the insufficient teaching resources for media literacy is more problematic for her. As she stated during the interview: “as long as we don’t have the resources in the school, you can have all the training you want, but it’s frustrating when you get here and you want to do this but … you can’t teach media if you don’t have the medium.”

She was also asked during the interview whether or not her school administration, the school board, and/or the parents are supportive if teachers decide to take up media education. She said that the administration in her school is quite supportive, but only within the limitations of its budget. As Jennifer put it: “my administrators, if there’s something I want to pursue, and they can, they will
always, always support us. And they will support, they have, because if I say this is what we really need, if they can they will … as much as their budget allows.” With regard to the school board, she simply states that “school board is not supporting us in any way or form.” She also notes that the parents at her school are “phenomenally supportive, but … they really prefer their funds to go to the traditional literature. They want to bring in more books.” She goes on to explain that “parents want to know that, you know, are you reading Shakespeare?; are you reading books?; and I want them reading books too because they’re spending more and more time on the web, they want to read things online, which isn’t the same as a book. They watch a lot of television already, so there’s a perception that if you’re showing films or you’re looking at websites that may be not doing what’s traditionally English.” Parents in this school are not only quite interested in their children’s education but they are also involved in what the school should teach to their children: in this case more traditional literacy skills rather than media literacy.

As for teachers in this department, there seems to be some mixed attitude toward media education. On the one hand, there is hesitation from teachers to talk about the media in classrooms. According to Jennifer: “students in this school are really savvy, they know media … they’ve grown up with it. … There is a bit of a challenge, because honestly, I think this generation probably knows more about it than I do in a lot of ways. They know more about the medium, and they’re aware of it because they’ve grown up with it.” This could therefore put some teachers in a situation where they are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the topic, and the students conversely may already know more about the topic. On the other hand, Jennifer mentions that some of the teachers in her department are talking about bringing in other sources in English classes so that they can teach not only books but other media as well. One of her colleagues in the department wants to develop a unit
using documentaries in English classes and Jennifer is excited about the idea. She was also excited to learn about the Media Awareness Network website that I mentioned after the interview, and she intends to spread this information to the other English teachers in the department. Throughout this interview with Jennifer, I sensed that teachers are in a complex situation: some teachers do recognize the importance and necessity of teaching media literacy, but there is also the hesitation of dealing with media in classrooms. Furthermore, even when some of them are interested in expanding literacy from print to other media and want to incorporate media literacy into their teaching, various obstacles (such as classroom time, resources, and funding) hinder efforts to incorporate media literacy. They also have to take into consideration parents’ firm stance that English classes should focus on traditional literacy.

5.3.2 Social Studies Teachers’ Perceptions of Media Literacy and Media Education

Harold is the head of the Social Studies department in a school that is not active in media education. He has been a secondary school teacher for nearly twenty years in this educational jurisdiction, teaching Social Studies (mainly grade 12) and Physical Education. He received his degree in Physical Education and his concentration is geography. In his Social Studies classes, he occasionally mentions the media when it is related to topics that he is teaching, but he does not have any units or lessons specifically devoted to media literacy. As Harold stated during the interview: “We talk about what media presents and what reality may or may not be, and how media manipulates every time we look at media, but it’s not in any sort of systematic sort of prescribed way … it’s informal … it’s not done with any training beyond what an average adult would have as far as awareness.”
When asked whether or not media education had taken root in his department during the preliminary phone survey, Harold answered no. During the interview he clarified that he cannot say that media education is rooted in the department since none of the teachers in his department has a unit dedicated to media literacy as far as he knows, but whether or not teachers mention the media in Social Studies classes varies. He knows that a few teachers include some elements of media literacy, those which primarily focus on the relationship between news agencies and the government. As Harold specified during the interview:

I think it’s done perpetually like especially with the leftist leaning in this department that every time a media source is brought into the course it’s always qualified: this is from the *Vancouver Sun*, this is CanWest, Global, you know … I’m pretty well talking about print media … but it’s interesting because whenever the subject of print media comes up the people who are very sensitive to that are always talking about how unreliable it is and how it can be manipulated, but they don’t do that with the TV media.

As such, the few teachers in Harold’s department that do incorporate media literacy in their teaching concentrate on bias in the printed news.

Harold believes that these teachers who focus on media literacy in his department are “the people who are left of center union supporters.” He is personally critical of the way media education is done in this department, because he does not believe that these teachers apply the same degree of criticism to left-leaning news sources. As he put it:

You find people who are very critical of the *Vancouver Sun* and wouldn’t apply the same degree of criticism to the papers that they look at. Say that they are looking at the *Georgia Straight* or the *Tyee*, or something like that, which would be more left wing papers. … Their
frame of reference would be ‘no, this is right, and the *Vancouver Sun* is wrong,’ as opposed to ‘this has some bias too.’

He goes on to explain that the job action taken by British Columbia teachers, where teachers were in a tense standoff with the government and public opinion, has likely made many teachers sensitive about media bias against a progressive agenda that includes workers’ rights. And so Harold suggests that in this case a teacher’s ideological leaning in conjunction with recent events like job action has influenced conceptions of media education for the teachers in his department, which has apparently contributed toward a form of media analysis that does not deconstruct the mediating process. This attention to media instead only analyzes particular messages from particular sources, and this analysis is introduced to students as an alternative to the main stream media which are portrayed as inaccurate and/or biased, etc.

When asked what he thinks the obstacles are for media literacy to become rooted in his school, he lists a lack of prescribed lesson plans, provincial examinations, and a lack of time. He remembers that their previous textbooks had an exercise about bias in the press, but their current textbook does not include topics directly related to discussion on the media. He recognizes that a provincial teachers’ organization provides many lesson aids for teachers and three geography listserves that he has signed up with keep sending him E-mails every week, as thus teachers are exposed to “a huge amount of stuff that you can enrich your class with that are not specifically in the curriculum.” He points out, however, that a ready-made unit or a module on media literacy may help, as it will be easier for teachers to pick that up and use it in their classes rather than having to look for materials and prepare on their own. As he shared during the interview: “nobody does it exactly as a module would lay it out, but they could use it as a way to organize their thoughts or tweak it and present it
their own way … if it’s this thick and it’s all in pedagogical gobbledygook, and you know, it’s not very reader-friendly, their gonna go ‘uhhh.’ But if there’s something that’ easy to use ….”

The second obstacle he mentions, the provincial exams, seems to be the central issue that is related to all of the obstacles he lists. He believes that not being a provincially examinable subject marginalizes media education: “there’s no hook as far as the exam end of it, so because there’s no hook as far as being accountable to a test at the end, then the participation is really up to who has the energy.” Harold estimates that the provincial examination may feature only one question, if any, that vaguely relates to media education. Preparing for the provincial examination appears to be a very high priority in this school and Harold refers to this concern throughout the interview. For example, when asked about the reactions of parents and school administration with regard to media education, he indicates that parents in this neighborhood will say ‘teach media literacy as long as it doesn’t take away from kids’ preparation time for their provincial exams.’ If media literacy questions comprised a notable percentage of the exam, then parents would strongly push schools to teach media literacy. With regard to the school administration, he believes that the administration recognizes that departments cannot cover the mandated curriculum, which means that the exclusion of media literacy is recognized as a practical necessity. Unless parents were to complain about this, and they have not thus far, then media literacy will not be a top curriculum priority. He also believes that teachers in his department are all very “autonomous” and do not like to be told what to do, which means that they are probably influenced by the administration to implement changes only if requested by the parents.

Harold also emphasizes that the time constraint that teachers constantly experience is a major obstacle:
People are always under stress that they are going to get through the curriculum … the 
curriculum is always bigger than we have time to do … so that’s always a sort of background 
concern for everybody…. I would almost say that it’s one of the biggest problems in teaching 
is that as soon as the teachers feel that they are slipping and they’re behind and they know 
they should be here at this point in the term and they’re here [he gestured two different linear 
points with hands], all that great enrichment stuff, all that … all this stuff, all the what you 
would probably think are the really interesting things to do in class, they fall off because the 
teacher is trying to catch and make sure that they’re gonna get through what they see as the 
core of the course.

His statement reveals that media literacy is not considered part of the core Social Studies course 
content by teachers or parents, as it is not included in the provincial examinations. Thus even if 
easy-to-use teaching materials on media literacy were provided, there is no guarantee that teachers 
would include media literacy in their classes when they already face considerable pressure to cover 
everything they need to before the provincial examinations. He in fact recommends that if someone 
wants to try to make media education rooted in secondary schools, they have to start from the top: 
put media literacy in provincial examinations first, then teachers will teach it. As he stated during 
the interview: “I think that’s the only way, and it’s horrible to say, but I think that’s the only way that 
you would get all personalities, like it or not, or feeling busy or stressed or not, to do it 
conscientiously. Otherwise, you’re just at the whim of their energy, their interest, whether they’ve 
gotten through the course of not.”

I will now triangulate these data by analyzing the findings from the data collected through the 
questionnaires returned by Social Studies teachers in the department. There were ten Social Studies
teachers in this school and five of them (50 percent) returned the questionnaires. These five participants included four male teachers and one not specified. Their ages were distributed over various age ranges, one of each in his early twenties, his late thirties, his early forties, his/her early fifties, and his late fifties. All five replied that they were familiar with media literacy and media education. Three of them replied that they teach media literacy in their classes (one male teacher in his early twenties, one male teacher in his early forties, and one unspecified gender teacher in his/her early fifties.) Among these three teachers, two (the male teacher in his early twenties and the male teacher in his early forties) received training for media education. All three of these teachers who incorporate media literacy into their classes believe that it is ‘very important’ to teach about the media, and two teachers who do not teach media literacy replied that it is ‘important.’ All three teachers who teach media literacy knew that media education was part of the Social Studies IRP, but only one of them knew that it was included as a cross-curriculum topic in the IRP and could thus be taught in any school subject. One male teacher in his late thirties knew both but did not incorporate media literacy in his teaching. One male teacher in his late fifties did not know that media education was part of the IRP at all.

When teaching media literacy, all three teachers use Video / DVD and the Internet, and two teachers use film, newspapers, magazines, and Cable in the Classroom programs. The other two teachers who do not incorporate media literacy also use Video / DVD and newspapers in the classroom. With regard to the placement of media education in school curriculum, three teachers think it should be included in all subjects and two teachers indicate that it should be in some school subjects such as English and Social Studies. Three teachers who teach media literacy replied in the survey that the main reason for teaching media literacy in school is ‘to develop critical thinking.’
The other two who do not teach media literacy replied that the main reason for teaching media literacy in schools is ‘to protect children from media’s negative influence.’ It is interesting to see that those two who do not teach media education both take the inoculative / protectionist view. All five teachers considered the ‘roles of media in society’ to be an essential element of media literacy that should be included in media education. Those three who teach media literacy also chose ‘media’s commercial implications’ as well. Two of the teachers who include media literacy mentioned ‘decoding media texts,’ ‘media and audience,’ and ‘knowledge on media industry’ as well. None of the five teachers chose ‘media production’ as an element taught in their classes.

With regard to the item on the questionnaire asking whether or not there is enough support for teachers to engage in media education, four out of five Social Studies teachers replied that there was not enough existing support. Among those three teachers who practice media education, the challenges that they encountered varied: two teachers selected ‘a lack of support from school’ and one each for ‘finding good teaching materials,’ ‘a lack of time in class,’ and ‘a lack of teacher training.’ Those two teachers who do not include media literacy both chose ‘finding good teaching materials’ and ‘a lack of time in the classroom’ as challenges to teaching media literacy. Teachers’ written comments confirm some of the issues that Harold mentioned in the interview. One teacher wrote that there was a lack of awareness about media literacy in his school. He points out that as a consequence, “many students are still naïve and lack the ability to critically analyze the spoon-fed mainstream media content.” Another teacher wrote that the move toward provincial testing has taken time away from critical analysis of the media. With regard to the political view of teachers: a male teacher in his early forties who practices media education wrote that “CanWest Global is in bed with Gordon Campbell and the Liberals. As a consequence, they want to manufacture the News
to their neoconservative ideology or keep the public dumbed down,” while a male teacher in his late fifties who does not teach media literacy wrote that “media is ‘slanted’ too much, usually towards liberal – left wing opinion.” This confirms Harold’s point that the ideological views of the teachers in his department influence their views of the purpose of media education.

5.4 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I have explored English and Social Studies teachers’ perceptions of media education and literacy from two secondary schools. One school is active and the other is inactive with regard to media education, as indicated by a preliminary phone survey. This section synthesizes findings by analyzing similarities and differences between these two schools in the following three categories: 1) teachers’ perceptions of media education and literacy; 2) the current status of media education in each school; and 3) support and obstacles surrounding media education. I examine possible reasons as to why one school is active and the other inactive in media education, which contributes to discussions of why media education is not significantly established in Lower Mainland secondary schools and what support could be helpful for teachers to more easily incorporate media literacy into the curriculum.

First, the data presented in this chapter indicates that English and Social Studies teachers in both schools have high awareness levels of media literacy and media education. All seventeen teachers who returned questionnaires indicated that they are familiar with media literacy and media education regardless of whether they worked in the active school or inactive school. All of them accept that it is important to teach students about the media in school. Those who replied that they teach media education or incorporate media literacy in their classrooms tended to reply that it is
‘very important’ to teach about the media, and even those who did not teach media literacy indicated that it is ‘important.’ Questionnaires also indicate that regardless of teachers’ involvement in media education, all seventeen consider the role of the media in society as a major element of media literacy. On the other hand, most of these teachers do not think that media production is an important element of media education\(^78\). Despite the fact that many media literacy definitions include media production as a key element, as mentioned in Chapter One, teachers in this research do not consider students creating their own media content an integral part of media education or literacy. This research also indicates that there are some differences in perceptions of what constitutes media literacy between English and Social Studies teachers: in both schools English teachers consider decoding media texts to be a major element of media literacy, whereas Social Studies teachers indicate that media’s commercial implications is an important element.\(^79\) It is noteworthy to recognize the differences in teachers’ perceptions of and interests in media literacy between English and Social Studies. I will return to this point when discussing available support and obstacles for media education in the final chapter.

This research also demonstrates that the purposes of teaching media education are complex. The majority of teachers in Data Source 3 and Data Source 4 (thirteen out of seventeen) indicate that the main reason to incorporate media education is to develop critical thinking skills in students, but others referred to protecting children from the negative influence of the media as a main reason.

\(^78\) Only three out of seventeen teachers (18 percent) chose media production as an element of media literacy. Those three teachers all indicated that they teach media literacy in their classes. (But this does not mean that they incorporate media production in their classes, as the question was framed in a way to ask which elements they thought should be taught in classrooms.)

\(^79\) This perhaps represents the differences about media literacy’s location within each subject: in English classes media literacy tends to be considered as an extension from the traditional print media literacy to various ‘new media,’ while Social Studies tends to include discussion on the media as one of the information sources for the topics taught in classes, and thus naturally focuses on the identity and reliability of the sources and biases contained in them.
As the Social Studies department head John’s interview demonstrates, the objectives are complex and often times include both objectives: while he emphasized that students should learn to be critical about everything presented to them, he was also quite concerned with the roles and impacts of new media (such as the Internet) and affirmed the necessity of protecting children from their negative effects. As such, despite some claims that media education has moved away from the protectionist model to a critical or empowerment approach (e.g., UNESCO, 1999), this research shows that in reality the protectionist approach coexists with the ideological approach.

Second, the data presented in this chapter reveals a snapshot of media education in the two schools. Among those seventeen teachers who returned questionnaires, twelve indicated that they taught media literacy in their classes: nine from the active school (six English teachers and three Social Studies teachers) and three Social Studies teachers from the inactive school. The high rate of English teachers incorporating media literacy in the active school was notable.80 None of the English teachers in the inactive school were teaching media education or literacy according to Jennifer, the department head, but she noted one teacher’s interest in incorporating a unit on documentaries, which she would like to support as well. As such, the interest in media literacy was found in the English department of the inactive school as well to a certain extent, but it had not yet been put into practice.

For Social Studies departments, questionnaire results indicate that both active and inactive schools had three teachers each who incorporated media literacy in their teaching. The active school’s department head, John, indicated that teachers in his schools have always made literacy a

80 Out of thirteen English teachers in active school, six of them returned questionnaires and they all indicated involvement in media education. Of course, it is possible that only those who were interested in and teaching media literacy bothered to take part in this research, as such the data should be interpreted carefully.
primary issue: especially older generation teachers in the department who he believes are aware of the effects that media have on children. Five out of seven Social Studies teachers responded to questionnaires and three of them indicated that they were teaching media literacy. All five teachers were in their late forties to early fifties, and as such there was no correlation between teachers’ age and the practice of media education. The inactive school’s department head, Harold, on the other hand indicated that his department is overall not active in media education. But he was aware of a few teachers who included some elements of media literacy in their classes in a politically left-leaning way, which was confirmed by the questionnaires as well. In short, both the active and the inactive school had a portion of their teachers incorporating media literacy in Social Studies departments, but the way each department head located media education in the department was different: while in the active school the head teacher considers media literacy as a shared element to be included in Social Studies, in the inactive school media literacy is treated as a choice for individual teachers and is not regarded as core curriculum or part of shared values as a whole in the department. As such, only those who are interested in media literacy and education and “have energy left,” as Harold puts it, teach about the media in Social Studies classes in the inactive school.

Third, teachers in both schools share relatively similar views on the support and challenges for media education. Only five out of seventeen teachers believe that there is enough support for teachers to engage in media education. The challenges that teachers indicated in the questionnaires were quite similar in both schools. The most common obstacles mentioned were ‘finding good teaching materials,’ ‘a lack of teacher training,’ ‘a lack of time in class,’ and ‘a lack of

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81 Four out of five teachers who indicated that there was enough support were from the active school, and as such the active school may have more support in general. Yet, examining various challenges that teachers mentioned indicates that the active and inactive school shared most of these obstacles—this research found no special support in the active school that was missing in the inactive school.
support from school.’ Neither school has textbooks exclusively for media education, and neither school has devoted funding support from school administrations. Although teachers in the active school place emphasis on literacy, thereby including media literacy, neither English nor Social Studies department teachers organize a place or time to share and exchange information on media education. As such, on the surface these two schools appear quite similar in terms of available support and obstacles.

There is, however, one notable difference: the provincial examinations and parent involvement in education. While no teachers from the active school mentioned anything about provincial examinations in questionnaires or the interview, some teachers in the inactive school mentioned that there was not enough time to include media literacy due to pressures to prepare for provincial examinations. The department heads from the inactive school both emphasized the difficulty in teaching about the media when they had to make sure that students were ready for provincial examinations. Parent involvement in school education is very much related to this issue as well. While in the active school parents are happy that their children are safe and learning something at school (according to the Social Studies department head, John), parents in the inactive school are closely monitoring what their children learn at school. The English department head, Jennifer, stated that parents wanted to see her school’s funding used to purchase books, such as Shakespeare titles, to make sure that children are learning culturally defined texts included on the examinations. The Social Studies department head, Harold, also mentioned that parents at this school do not mind teachers including media literacy as long as it does not detract from preparation for the provincial examinations. Harold indicated that there is at most only one media literacy related question on the provincial examinations, suggesting that media education is not a strategic
priority, and so teachers do not have an incentive or motivation to include media literacy in teaching. As such, this research reveals that a school culture that places importance on achievement tests and examinations makes it difficult for media education to gain a position in the curriculum. This supports the argument and the research that media literacy has been considered less academic and less important in formal school education (e.g., Morgan, 1998).

As demonstrated in this chapter, the data analysis and comparison between the active and the inactive school in media education reveals three points. First, teachers’ awareness of media literacy and media education are quite high whether they work in an active or an inactive school. Second, perceptions of media education and literacy do not necessarily coincide with definitions often introduced (e.g., this research reveals that media production has little recognition as part of media education among teachers). The purposes of media education also show a more complex reality than what is often mentioned in the relevant literature. Third, although more teachers incorporate media literacy in the active school, there was not much difference in terms of support and obstacles encountered in the active and the inactive school. With regard to these two schools, whether the school was active or inactive in media education has more to do with the emphasis that teachers and parents place on academic achievement measured in terms of provincial examination results, and also to do with teachers’ interests and energy to teach media literacy.\footnote{In the following chapter, I will introduce one of the expert teachers in media education, Donald, who works in this inactive school. How and why he is incorporating media literacy in this inactive school where academic achievement is highly valued will be explored.}
CHAPTER 6

EXPERT TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA LITERACY AND EXPERIENCES IN MEDIA EDUCATION

This chapter describes how four teachers have articulated their perspectives on media education. These Lower Mainland, BC, teachers represent examples of experts in this field due to their commitment to media education. Data from in-depth interviews with each of these teachers reveal their perceptions of media literacy, what they think of the current status of media education in BC secondary schools, available support for teachers who engage media education, and the obstacles and challenges to media education.

6.1 “The Media is So Much a Part of Students’ Daily Lives”: Andrew’s Perspective on Media Education

Andrew’s background is in English and film studies and he has been teaching English and Media Arts in secondary schools for a little over ten years. His comfort with and interest in contemporary media motivated him to bring in up-to-date visual media, to which students have responded well. Andrew found that: “[existing resources] weren’t really that relevant, and that students really enjoyed dealing with current forms of media more than anything else, then I just made that part of my repertoire.” Furthermore, while teaching a film class in an alternate program he discovered that students were interested in making their own short films and narratives that echoed themes prevalent in Hollywood, but those themes could clearly not represent any of their own experiences. As Andrew stated during the interview:
I taught a film class, and we had a video camera and editing equipment and that sort of thing, and it was interesting: I started to notice a trend in the students’ films. Typically they were these sort of urban dramas about teen suicide or drug deals gone bad, or whatever, and a lot of that obviously came from American cinema … they were drawn to those really gritty urban dramas, even though I knew for a fact that a lot of these kids didn’t actually experience those things.

It is this link between the influence of popular culture found in music, movies, and television and how students came to view their own lives that led Andrew to deal with media issues in the classroom, while his own familiarity and interest in contemporary culture allowed him to recognize these issues as topics for educational deconstruction. In addition to incorporating media literacy in his teaching, he also examined the stories that teenagers tell through film-making for his Master’s thesis project while he was in a graduate school.

In his English classes, Andrew has not implemented a particular media literacy unit, but instead has implemented it consistently throughout the year. He believes that integrating various media into classes throughout the year is much more effective than having a specific unit on media literacy once a year. This is entirely consistent with his definition of media literacy and the reasons he teaches about the media:

For me, media literacy is about the students becoming a little bit more sophisticated in their abilities to articulate how it is that they interpret media that’s disseminated to them, and I think that for the most part the students are fairly media savvy, that is I think that they have tremendous amount of experience in dealing with media because they absorb so much of it everyday. But what they are, I find anyways, very often unable to do is articulate a position on
it. And because media is presented for the purpose of interpretation, and because there are usually a few sides to the way in which you can interpret anything in media, I find that part of what we are teaching kids, I mean in a standard English class it’s ‘here’s the novel, tell me about the theme, let’s analyze it.’ But we don’t really do that with media, even though they interact with media considerably more than they do with novels or short fiction in their daily living. So for me media literacy is sort of a crucial ongoing part of what they should be doing in the classroom anyways because it’s so much a part of their daily lives. So for me media literacy is basically the ability to articulate their understanding of the media that they deal with everyday.

For Andrew, then, literacy is a key skill for allowing students to take a stance on or a position toward the media that they consume, and because they regularly engage modern media, the topic should be more common. Andrew goes on to clarify that for him, media is primarily movies, but also includes television to some extent—which he believes is more of a background media element for students while doing other things—as well as the web, music, and video games. With regard to the web in particular, he finds it problematic that students take everything they read on websites to be true without questioning it. As such, Andrew often integrates media literacy in his teaching by inviting students to discuss various media that are part of students’ everyday lives. Although popular culture and other media materials he brings into the classroom are not typically addressed in scholastic settings the way that classic novels are studied, he believes that it is negligent not to address them in the classroom.

When asked how students respond to media literacy related topics in his English classes, he replied that they are fairly receptive because they find it relevant. As Andrew put it:
I find with media, because it is so immediate, so relevant, it’s so much a part of their day to
day life I find that media is far easier to get discussions going around and to be more inclusive,
than, say, teaching a novel … media on the other hand, that they enjoy, because all they have
to do is think about what they do everyday, and weigh in on it and discuss, and you can just
create assignments built around that, that allow for them to basically do the exact same thing
they do when they do the novel unit anyways. Write about their personal reflections, how does
this affect them? What impact do they think it has on society? All that sorts of things, you’re
going to cover in the novel study anyways you can do with media.

As such, students appear to enjoy media literacy as a topic and it helps increase their classroom
participation, but they do not know about the topic itself until they are actually introduced to it.
Nevertheless, Andrew states that “there’s not really a huge demand from the students,” and as such,
most teachers are “conveniently” not motivated to implement media literacy in the classroom.

Andrew also believes that media education is beneficial for students, but the effects are
difficult to interpret. He mentions that the secondary school atmosphere and the social pressures
therein make it difficult to change student perspectives. As Andrew points out, “the peer groups will
change the way that they really genuinely think, but as far as internal change, it’s hard to measure.”
For example, when he discussed the manufacturing practices and advertising strategies of a
particular brand of shoes students nonetheless continued buying that particular brand. It was the
same when he had classes on fast-food industries’ marketing, consumption, and health issues:
students went into a fast-food chain store right after the class. Some of the students he met after they
graduated high school, however, appeared to have adopted some of the critical thinking skills
developed in media literacy modules. Overall, Andrew believes media education is important and at
least effective to a certain extent and makes it clear that this is why he is teaching it.

Andrew was also asked about what support was available to him at school with regard to media education. He mentions that while he has tried organizing units related to media literacy with other teachers in different departments, he found it difficult because not all of the same students attended all of the related classes and it is a lot of extra work. Andrew summarized this point succinctly: “if you want to build some kind of a unit, chances are you’re going to be doing it on your own.” With regard to funding, Andrew suggests that it is difficult for teachers to purchase media resources with school money because they are typically cost-prohibitive. He points out that the nature of teaching media literacy is especially expensive because “it always has to be in the now.” Ordering textbooks is always expensive, but media literacy presents an added dilemma because he believes that this topic absolutely requires up-to-date material otherwise kids will not relate to it or understand it. Departments face the burden of either buying used textbooks at an affordable price and consequently filled with dated material and media references that are out of touch with students, or buying new materials that will quickly become outdated and thus quickly require departments to purchase updated editions. As Andrew put it, “So there’s that upfront cost that’s really hard to … it’s hard to convince departments that this is a worthwhile expenditure.” Besides, he mentions that the funding they receive in the English department is usually used for “upgrading novels that get worn out and sort of time-honored novels like The Catcher in the Rye, or Lord of the Flies.” In a Social Studies department, according to Andrew, money is spent on geography textbooks, due to the necessity of having updated maps, and/or history textbooks, as such there is no funding left for media education in either department. Therefore, he has been teaching media literacy with little support from his colleagues and administrators.
With regard to teaching materials, Andrew indicated that he had not found “any effective ongoing media literacy tools, that are affordable, that are accessible.” Due to his interest in and knowledge of popular culture, he has his own large personal media resource collection that he can draw on to find teaching materials. For some existing materials and support, however, he does credit a provincial teachers’ organization for publishing resources and making those available to teachers, and points to BCMES, an organization committed to promoting media education, as previously mentioned, for holding meetings for teachers. He also points out the benefits of *Adbusters* as another example of available material, along with the web in general. Yet he mentioned during the interview that many of his colleagues come to him to get materials or ask him how to get them because they do not even know that all these materials are available to them. In short, as Andrew put it: “I’m not really sure what more you can do to bring teachers to that, or bring that to the teachers, or where the middle ground is, but because there’s not really a huge demand from the students, a lot of teachers conveniently feel like they don’t have to produce anything.” It is therefore clear that he believes the support is available to a certain extent for teachers who choose to pursue media education, but “it is just hard to access” and they do not know where and how to access those available resources. Moreover, many teachers do not own the type of large personal media resource collection that Andrew has.

Although Andrew has been teaching media literacy due to his interest in and knowledge of current media and his belief that students should learn about the media that affect them, he thinks that media education is not rooted in BC secondary schools in general. As he clarified during the interview: “that’s not to say that there aren’t people that are really involved in it and really trying to make a difference, but in a widespread way, I don’t think it’s a relevant subject for most teachers.”
He gives two reasons why he thinks that so few teachers incorporate media literacy in their teaching. First, part of the reason is that it is not clear for teachers who should be teaching media education, and some teachers even do not think it is necessary to teach media literacy at school. As he put it: “a lot of times English teachers will say Socials teachers should do it, Socials teachers will say English teachers should do it.” He further clarified that “realistically most teachers are going to teach the course however they want to teach it,” and as such, even though media education is included in the IRPs, many teachers will not take the initiative to unless it’s stated in the curriculum “in a really clear and cohesive way.” Andrew believes that anybody who is teaching should engage in media literacy; however, he also indicates that there is an assumption among many teachers that “students already know a lot [about the media], so why bother?” Personally, Andrew believes it is important to teach media literacy as students may be familiar with the media but they are not literate: they are for the most part “passive consumers” and are rarely critical of the media. But again, there is no demand from the students either to include media education, as such many teachers do not take up media education according to Andrew.

The second reason he mentions as to why media education is not rooted in BC secondary schools is the amount of extra work teachers have to put in order to incorporate media literacy in their lesson plans. As he puts it:

It’s a tremendous amount of work … you have to go out of your way to bring in these resources for the purpose of discussion, or at the very least, you have to come up with these sort of poignant questions, these burning questions that warrant some kind of valid discussion and that means that you have to think outside of your typical lesson plans, or outside of the resources that are available to you, and we’re not expected to do that. I mean it’s nice if you
do, and it’s nice if you’re that sort of a person, but nobody expects you to do it, and it does mean that it’s more work for you.

The time commitment is therefore ongoing and requires more than a one-time commitment to find media resources, which in many cases requires teachers to not just go out and purchase relevant materials, but to record TV shows and advertisements at home. Familiarity with media and popular culture is vital, and the absence of such knowledge would require an even bigger time commitment for teachers to familiarize themselves with contemporary media. Without personal interest in and knowledge of media issues, and without a formal requirement to push teachers to engage it in some way, then it is not feasible for teachers to effectively teach about media issues to students and there is no motivation to do so especially with the amount of time they need to spend on other teaching duties.

Andrew believes firmly that students should learn about the media in school, and he suggests one way that could be a long-term solution to making media literacy more visible in school curriculum: that is to implement media education in teacher education programs for future teachers.

As he articulated during the interview:

I don’t want to say that it’s a lost cause for teachers that are out there now, but for a lot of teachers if they’ve gotten comfortable teaching things the way they have been, and there are no complaints, then they’re going to continue teaching things the way they are. They’re not going to suddenly wake up and have some epiphany about media education and decide to integrate into their teaching style. I think that any sort of grand scale change in this province has to happen at the teacher training level, teachers have to be encouraged… rather than mandating students [student teachers] to take some sort of a classroom management course,
mandate them to take a media studies course, and talk about how media studies can be integrated throughout the curriculum … [student teachers] are younger or at least they’re sort of full of energy and they’ve got a sort of fresh outlook on what education should be, … that those are the teachers that will make some effort to integrate it.

He believes that the low levels of teacher involvement in media education stem from a combination of various issues. Therefore, rather than trying to promote media education by asking for more funding or forcing teachers to incorporate media literacy, changing the content of programs for pre-service teachers will play a central role in making changes. He is quite critical of the role universities play currently in teacher education, and claims that courses provided in teacher education programs are mostly outdated and instructors do not know the reality of classrooms in BC secondary schools. However, he did not state how or who should demand changes to teacher education programs.

6.2 “Critical Media Literacy Allows Students to Understand the Hegemonic Function of Corporate Media”: Donald’s Perspective on Media Education

Donald has been teaching in secondary schools for 20 years and has also been actively involved with media literacy instruction. He is currently teaching Social Studies courses and Civics Studies courses at a secondary school that was selected in this research for being inactive in media education (Data Source 4). When asked what sparked his interest in media literacy, Donald pointed out that he has always been a “news junkie” and that he became concerned when media bias toward fiscally conservative positions during the Reagan/Mulroney years undermined Canada’s historically strong social welfare state. Donald believes that the social welfare state he benefited from was being
taken apart and he also believes that corporate media were contributing to its demise. As such, he saw an opportunity to counter what he perceives as a rightward swing by having public educators shift to the left in order to maintain the status quo: “So I thought maybe media literacy was the best way … or critical media literacy in particular … so that students who will soon become functioning citizens could see that the corporate media is but a hegemonic device.” Donald’s own ideological position and the perceived rise of an opposing political climate therefore sparked his interest in media literacy.

Donald was asked about his definition of media literacy and what he thought was media education’s primary purpose. He believes that there are two types of media literacy. The first one he describes as the kind of compensatory media literacy that relies on a cultural perspective, which looks at issues of representation with regard to historically disadvantaged groups, such as First Nations, women, the working class, and others. While he believes that this is an important element, he describes his own approach to media literacy as follows:

My own way is more from a sociological paradigm in that I want to know how the language is controlling the discourses around poverty, and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and how the media might support political parties who are working in … with a pro-corporate agenda, rather than a working-class agenda, in Canada the NDP for the working class interests or working families and the shareholders’ interests for a Conservative or a Liberal. … I think media literacy should come from a critical perspective that where the student should understand that knowledge, not just in the curriculum but what the media talks about, media content, is socially constructed, manipulated: certain aspects and perspectives are omitted, and they should understand that the social construction of media content is often
tied to outside political and economic interests … usually of the privileged and the elite.

Donald’s framework for media literacy is clearly concerned with ideological leanings and the concern that media can serve as a tool for securing the interests of the wealthy. When asked to clarify what he considers the purpose of media literacy, Donald stated that critical media literacy helps students see the media as a hegemonic device that is interconnected with political and social interests. Donald emphasized that critical media literacy must allow students to understand that bias and political spin supports certain interests at the expense of others. More broadly, then, Donald describes the purpose of critical media literacy as follows: “This idea that media is objective or neutral has got to be deconstructed very early, in my mind, for students to understand that the Vancouver Sun may not be saying it exactly how it is; in fact it’s impossible to when talking about social relations—we all are biased.”

In Social Studies 11 courses, he implements media literacy in his teaching throughout the year. He brings in various materials in the classroom such as DVDs (e.g. The Corporation, Orwell Rolls in His Grave, Manufacturing Consent, and Outfoxed), and printed and/or online newspapers (e.g. Vancouver Sun, National Post, The Globe and Mail, and Tyee). Students are introduced to both dominant and oppositional discourses, and compare how the topics are covered differently in those media. He sometimes brings in guest speakers as well for the same topic, but from two different groups with contrary opinions. For those resources, other than the National Post newspapers that are donated free to his school everyday, he has to rely on his personal finances to purchase materials for media literacy components and he believes that most teachers face similar circumstances in media education. And so in terms of support and resources, he has not received any assistance from his school. He does not use resources available for teachers specifically for media literacy, such as the
Media Awareness Network website, nor does he reach for ready-made materials prepared by corporate media.

He described students’ reactions to his critical media literacy lessons as being overall extremely positive. In the beginning students tend to “parrot the dominant discourses that are heard out there in the media,” but as the course moves along they are able to see the bias and spin in the media. He states that teaching them about the media is “like taking the blinders off” and he feels that students can definitely make much better sense of media. With regard to the effects on students, however, he is not sure whether teaching critical media literacy is making any difference, as other teachers do not involve media literacy much in their own teaching, especially not in the way he teaches. He firmly believes that if the majority of secondary school students engage in critical media literacy, they would “become critically thinking, functioning, participating citizens,” and in that way it would make a difference.

When asked about the current status of media education in BC, he states that there may be a few teachers doing media literacy as a study of the depiction of disadvantaged groups in media since many of the teachers could be personally impacted by these depictions. He does not believe, however, that critical media literacy that looks at the media as a hegemonic device is very widespread. Donald suggests that one possible reason why this kind of media literacy is rare in Lower Mainland secondary schools is due to the teacher training and teachers’ personal backgrounds. As Donald put it during the interview: “just maybe the teachers themselves have not gone through media literacy, and they’re a product of their own education and so they might not see the Vancouver Sun in quite the same way say I do as a hegemonic device in the interests of the privileged and maintaining the status quo.” Though Donald was not trained to teach critical media
literacy, his own experience of growing up during an apparent ideological shift allowed him to witness the media’s influence first-hand. According to Donald’s comments, then, younger teachers who are not trained in critical media literacy have no such life experience to foster a critical attitude toward the media, which is consistent with John’s interpretation of younger teachers and media education.

With regard to available support for teachers in media education, he did not list existing available resources for teachers, but instead explained how teachers can gain support for what they teach in their classrooms. Donald believes that one of the biggest fears teachers have is “invoking the wrath of either parents or administrators.” If teachers know curriculum well, however, then they can point to the section in the curriculum where “multiple perspectives on an issue is to be promoted,” which thus makes it possible for teachers to defend themselves for engaging critical media literacy. As he put it: “you have to learn to work with them, to make them feel comfortable that you know what you’re doing.” So far, his administrators have been supportive. This support from school administration is more in the form of accepting that he teaches what he believes in, and is not in the form of funding. In terms of obstacles to media education, he briefly mentioned teachers’ own lack of education in media literacy and a lack of time for teachers to become interested in the subject, but what he emphasized most is the potential risk of incurring the wrath of “the stakeholders in public education,” such as school administrators, parents, colleagues, and the media, when taking a critical media literacy approach in the classroom. Especially in the case of the media industry, he believes that if critical media literacy spread en masse, there would be a huge backlash against it.

In Donald’s case, his beliefs and ideological position on the media and social issues in general
shape the way he teaches about the media in the classroom, and thus much of his concerns and experiences are unique in comparison to the other expert teachers’ cases. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Donald works in the school selected as an inactive school in media education. The Social Studies department head, Harold, is critical of the way media literacy is incorporated into classes: he believes that those few who teach about the media do not apply the same degree of criticism to left-leaning news sources. As such, he does not consider media literacy part of shared curriculum in the department. Donald is aware of potential problems between the school and parents, thus is careful to present various resources in class and is also prepared to explain which part in media literacy is related to what curriculum. He implements media literacy throughout the year in Social Studies 11, for which the current version of the IRP directly mentions media education and literacy, by choosing curriculum into which critical media literacy may fit. As it became clear through the interview, Donald’s motivation and reasons for teaching critical media literacy stem from his own experiences and beliefs, as so he obtains materials and organizes classes by himself, rather than through collaboration with other teachers. For example, the English department head, Jennifer, mentioned during the interview that she had previously asked Donald for some advice on what multimedia materials to use in her class. He is willing to share his knowledge with other teachers when asked, but he seems not to want to impose his beliefs or the content and style of his teaching on other teachers inside or outside of the school. As such, for the most part, media education is at the fringe of school curriculum in this inactive school.

6.3 “Media Literacy is a Human Right”: William’s Perspective on Media Education

William has been a secondary school teacher in one of the Lower Mainland, BC, schools for
twenty-three years, during which time he has taught classes for the hearing impaired, ESL, and Media Literacy. His use of multimedia in his classes for those with hearing disabilities and for non-native English speakers sparked his interest in the way media impact our opinions and worldviews. In addition, his own extensive international travels allowed him to see first-hand how “the information we are often getting about those other countries and their situations was not always very accurate.” This motivated him to help students understand the need to “dissect” media messages, especially news. William states that it was the workshop on media literacy he attended three years prior to the time of this interview that ultimately pushed him to pursue a formalized approach to media education. Since then he wrote two stand-alone courses on media literacy, one for grade 11 and the other for grade 12. His stand-alone media education classes are the only two in the school district in which he works.

When asked to state his definition of media literacy and what he believes is the purpose of teaching media literacy he states as follows:

Mine is basically to teach kids how to deconstruct different media texts. In other words, magazines, newspapers, movies, film, and to construct their own media using those skills. And in that way I think they balance each other off. You learn to analyze media, but by creating your own media you really start to learn the techniques and skills involved in constructing media products. And the purpose … well, there are many ideas, but principally, it is to empower kids because if you don’t understand bias, context, agenda, from those who create media, you will be overly influenced because you won’t know what questions to ask in order to understand what that media is that you are looking at. Like who’s created it and what purpose it has and what economic agenda it has. And by knowing that, it helps kids

83 This workshop is the same one as the Data Source 2 media literacy workshop for teachers.
understand the world a lot better, they tend to get a little bit closer to the truth, maybe never quite get there, but they learn that there are different points of view, that they have to look at more than one point of view, or one resource, in order to form a reasonable opinion or an informed opinion. Because if you don’t, if you rely on one source of information for how you view the world, you are probably going to have a very skewed view of the world. … Bottom line is media literacy is a human right, and kids need it in order to be full participants in a democratic society.

His approach to media education thus emphasizes that students not only learn how to deconstruct the mainstream media texts, but also to create their own texts and to get first-hand experiences. In his classes students learn to analyze various media such as documentaries, mockumentaries, newspapers, magazines, music video clips, but they also create their own media texts such as magazine covers, films, and public service announcements that they enter into contests. His involvement in media education includes travelling in some cases.

William gave one prominent example of his media literacy efforts: he took a group of students on a trip to South Africa in order to help break down stereotypes and help students understand the different realities outside of Canada. By going on local radio and television there, they learned through experience about the media in South Africa as well. During the one-month stay, William states that his students underwent cultural awareness building and learned the differences in types of news outlets in a different country. As such, it is evident that William’s conceptualization of media education focuses on students understanding bias in the news as well as recognizing cultural stereotypes, and thus the objective is to help students become more aware of the world from different perspectives. Moreover, William’s background and experiences are clearly reflected in
both his understanding of media literacy and the way that he implements it, which primarily focuses on the bias in the media and the way this bias skews cross-cultural understanding.

At the time of the interview, it was his third year teaching the stand-alone media literacy course, and he stated that student reactions to his media literacy classes have been extremely positive. Based on the feedback he receives at the end of the course, which is written after final grades are established and thus the feedback is likely not motivated by a concern for grades, William states that students are glad they took the course and generally state that it has altered their outlook on life: “they are a little more suspicious of everything that they hear and see … they realize they are going to have to research more … not just rely on something on the nightly news for 30 seconds.” He also believes that students are excited to have a different kind of curriculum to work with, especially film-making. Since their regular curriculum is oriented toward provincial examinations, they like focusing on issues and assignments typically not addressed in other courses. As William put it: “Well, my exam, or my course is not provincially examinable so I can just go all over the place. And so far so good.”

Although his media literacy classes seem quite successful, they would not have come this far without William’s struggles and efforts to build the course content and to keep the course in the school curriculum. Initially he started out the course by using Barry Duncan’s textbook on media literacy titled Mass Media and Popular Culture (Version Two), which was published in 1996. It is outdated, however, and according to him does not work well with current students. So he decided to update the teaching materials on his own by searching for appropriate media texts: materials range from films, news, and documentaries, to music videos clips from MuchMusic and magazines that students are interested in. As previously mentioned, he also took initiative in participating in a media
literacy workshop for teachers in order to learn about media education and to access more information on teaching materials. He admits that it is “time consuming” to prepare everything from scratch, “but it is fun if you like it.”

In addition to the teaching material preparation for the stand-alone media literacy course, he constantly has to make an effort to keep the course running in his school’s curriculum. As the media literacy course is one of many elective courses in his school, he needs to have a sufficient number of students in his class, or the course will be cancelled if enrollment is too low. The course started with twenty students in the first year, and during the third year when the interview took place, he had two full courses with sixty students. As he put it:

it is a selling job we have to do to kids, because kids have a huge variety of interests, there’s so many choices for electives courses, everything under the sun. And for media literacy, we have to yell a little bit louder to get noticed. … If I don’t do that [advertize this course to them], students don’t know what it is and they will choose weight training or something else. He therefore goes around to classrooms before students make choices on elective courses and does a mini-lesson and also shows some films students made in the previous year. He also adjusts his teaching in the classroom according to students’ interests and abilities: students in his course range from “some of the [academically] strongest students in the school” to “some who find learning a challenge,” and even in some cases those who happen to be there “because it was the only course that fit in their schedule and the course that they wanted to take was full.” He gives students some choices in assignments so that he can accommodate the needs of all kinds of students. He claims that media creation units are always popular to students and also helpful for motivating students, as there are various roles involved in film-making: from script-writing, acting, to filming with the
camera, and editing, which allows all students to find something that they are good at and in which they are interested.

Securing classrooms and getting media materials for classes, including audio-visual equipment, is also difficult for an elective course like media literacy. William states that usually his media literacy course is one of the last considered for classroom space, thus he sometimes teaches in a home economics room for six weeks and then switches to another room, for example. With regard to media materials, as William states “there is only so much money available to these new elective courses that principals worry [the classes] may only last a year or two, and they don’t want to invest too much money in them.” As such, it has always been “beg and borrow,” meaning that for filming projects he asks other teachers to let students use camcorders they personally own or asks students to bring their own from home. William has not been able to buy various materials that he believes would be excellent for his classroom use, such as those from the Media Education Foundation. Students also engage in fund-raising by selling foods and hosting a concert so that they can use all the proceeds for their film projects. The issue of a lack of funding, however, seems to have improved during the year of this interview when a new principal came to his school. The principal took time to find out what the course is about and then allocated twelve thousand dollars to the media literacy program to purchase equipment. As he now had two full courses and was expecting to have three in the following year, the school administration gave significant financial support.

As William’s case reveals, teachers have to put considerable effort in order to start and keep running an independent media literacy course. Cooperation from school administration and students is necessary as well, which William has been fortunate to have. He also knows three teachers in three different schools in the district who are also interested in media literacy and they exchange
information and ideas – and perhaps encourage each other: “It’s an uphill battle, but those who are into [media education] are pretty motivated and believe it.” He recognizes though, however, that media education is not rooted in BC yet when compared to Ontario: there are only a handful of teachers who are devoted to media education in his school district out of five to six thousand teachers in total. When asked what the obstacles are for teachers in general to include media literacy in their teaching, he raises a few issues: a lack of classroom time, a lack of teacher training, and little awareness of media education in BC. According to William, there is increasing pressure on public school teachers that their students perform well on the provincial examinations. As he stated:

there is just not enough time in the regular English curriculum to try and fit them [media literacy issues] in. School is very much geared toward the final exams, the provincial exams, especially grade 10 and grade 12, and there is not a lot on media literacy on those exams, so the teachers don’t tend to focus on it – they tend to focus on the examinable material… If students don’t perform well [on their provincial exams], it comes back on you [i.e., teachers]. Once again, as emphasized by other teachers who teach media literacy in the classroom, this topic does not get much priority in relation to the provincial examinations, in which this topic has no significant presence.

In addition to the classroom time shortage, William believes that most of teachers do not have any training in teaching media literacy, thus if they decide to take up media education it requires devoting a significant amount of their own personal time to learning about the subject and preparing lessons—in addition to the other things they need to do for their regular English classes. He therefore believes that workshops for in-service teachers to provide them with ready-made teaching

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84 The information on the number of teachers in the district comes from William during the interview. According to data released by the BC Ministry of Education (2008), his school district has about 3,800 teachers.
plans on media literacy would work as an effective teacher training strategy. He believes that if he leaves teachers enough material for a two-week unit, then some teachers may use them. However, he believes that if there is a workshop that tried “to educate teachers and you say ‘there you go, here are the issues,’” it would be ineffective. He holds a high opinion of the workshop that he attended (the same as the one in which Data Source 2 respondents participated) because it provides “a big thick binder of ready-made materials and that is the way to go for getting teachers involved.” William states, however, that briefly touching on media literacy concepts in already existing courses such as English and Social Studies will not do much in terms of students becoming media literate, as even his stand-alone courses struggle to get through the extensive number of media literacy issues. As such, it comes back to a lack of time in classroom, even when some teachers are willing and eager to incorporate media literacy in their classes.

With regard to the lack of awareness also being an obstacle for the entrenchment of media education, William explains that other teachers, including colleagues in his school, know little about media literacy. He stated that many teachers in his school, despite the fact that he has had independent courses on media literacy for three years, still often ask him “what is it that you do?” or “do you watch movies all day?” and thus he feels there is a need to educate his colleagues as well. But he admits that it is difficult to try to root media education in the current state of school education where core courses’ achievement in examinations is the main focus. As he elaborates:

Well, it would sure make life a lot easier if it [media education] was a provincially examinable course that could be part of the mainstream curriculum, like English 12, or Social Studies 12, because then they would be mandated to be taught … [but the focus is on] test scores and exam scores and core academic skills, math and English … and there is not a lot of room for
media literacy in that kind of view of the world….When I go into a department heads meeting, they are talking about how we are going to get our math scores better, how come we are fourth in the district in math?, how come we have no one in the district math contest? I say well you know what, I need some money to buy some DVDs from some Media Education Foundation, they think I am out of my mind!

He believes that media education will remain at the fringe of school education until the culture of education changes from focusing on scores and accountability to instead talking about “what’s learning all about?; what are kids interested in?; what are kids’ needs in order to be well rounded people?” And he admits that for those who are involved in media education, it is quite a challenge to keep up with it given the numerous challenges. He believes that if a professional organization or provincial specialists association for media literacy can be established and give support to teachers, it will be a great help and will serve as encouragement for them to keep practicing media education.

6.4 “In Order to Become Productive Members of a Democratic Society, You Have to Have an Understanding of the Media”: Richard’s Perspective on Media Education

Richard is a recently retired English teacher who taught for nearly thirty years in Lower Mainland secondary schools. Before coming to Canada, he also taught in London, U.K., for six years. He became interested in teaching students about the media due to his own interest in film. He was interested in the way film and other media shape the way people perceived the world around them, and thus he wanted to find a way to incorporate media literacy into his classes. He received no formal training for media education, since he does not recall available courses on such a topic at the time when he began teaching. His sociology background served as an impetus for looking at the
media as a subject meriting close attention: “in the sense that you think of sociology as the study of society and the way society functions and the way institutions in society function, then, the media, which is a major institution in society … clearly has a significant role.” Over the years, Richard supplemented his interest in media literacy by extensively reading related literature and by occasionally attending day-long or week-long instructional sessions. When asked what his definition of media literacy is, Richard defined it as follows:

Well, when I am speaking fairly generally I usually sort of explain it as media shapes the world in which people live. Basically it mediates the world of people. And so to me media literacy is examining that mediation process. How do the various media take different aspects of the world in which we live and how do they re-present them to people? So, sometimes we also talk about it from another … from I guess a sort of teachers’ approach. We also sometimes talk about it as providing students with knowledge, skills, and attitude about the media in order to become productive members of a democratic society. And I would say that in order to do that you have to have an understanding of the media.

In short, Richard’s definition of media literacy focuses on the mediating process itself rather than the effects, and he suggests that the purpose is to help students develop the necessary thinking skills to become productive members of society.

Richard mentions that English curricula in secondary schools, especially at the senior level, have a heavy emphasis on literature and thus it is sometimes very difficult to incorporate media literacy in English classes. He nevertheless managed to find opportunities to include media literacy elements even when the main topic of a unit centered on reading classics. For example, when teaching a work by Shakespeare, he brought the film version of the work into the classroom in order
to provide students with an opportunity to learn about the media. Students learned about the media by examining how differently the film version of the play constructed the story in comparison to the written text, and/or they learned about the media by discussing what aspects are unique to film that allowed the film-maker to present the story in a new way.

Advertising, according to Richard, is also a great resource for looking at the way people use language to create particular kinds of effects. This is, according to Richard, is a perfect way to engage in textual analysis, which is a component of English curriculum. He also managed to have his school buy a set of Barry Duncan’s textbook, *Mass Media and Popular Culture*, which in itself was “quite an achievement,” since most schools do not want to or cannot spend their budget on buying expensive textbooks that do “not appear on the surface to relate directly to the curriculum.” He believes that there are advantages and disadvantages to using textbooks for media literacy: textbooks save teachers’ preparation time and the topics are organized, but on the other hand, the content in textbooks is disconnected from students’ lives, as sometimes students cannot relate to them. As such, he claims the best resources for classroom use are “the ones that are directly in the environment in which the students live.” Therefore, he has also used movies and television programs that students watch daily as part of his media literacy units. The only type of media he did not deal with in the classroom was the web. Although he was familiar with the Internet and how to use it early on, Richard believes that it was seen as more of a tool rather than a medium like television or radio when it first came out. The idea of the web as another medium was just emerging as he was concluding his teaching career.

Many teachers talk about how it is difficult to find teaching resources for media education lessons, but Richard states that the main challenge is how to use these resources successfully. He
emphasizes that merely showing clips from movies and television, or talking freely in an open-ended way about the clips, does not constitute media literacy—nor does waiting for an opportunity to come up during the class for teaching about the media. As he put it during the interview: “it [media education] needs to be structured and … it needs to be contextualized for the students, it needs to have clear objectives.” As such, he prepared units and lessons on media literacy for each English class for all grade levels to ensure that media education was incorporated into his classes throughout the year.

When asked about how students reacted to media literacy, Richard stated that part of the reaction he experienced from students was: “why are we doing this?” He believes that this reaction partially resulted from the fact that he was teaching an English class and students did not expect that kind of subject matter in a class that traditionally focuses on writing skills and reading classic novels. Richard believes that part of their reaction was also resistance, because students think they see through things like advertising and that it has no impact on them—they do not want to feel foolish for liking a particular television program or movie. However, Richard found the non-confrontational approach effective in getting students to critically look at the mediated world in which they live.

Richard was also asked, as one of the most knowledgeable teachers regarding media literacy in the Lower Mainland area and as someone who has worked in upper-level management for a provincial teachers’ organization, about the status of media education in the province. When asked specifically if he believed that media education had taken root in schools in this region, Richard replied:

There is really no concrete sort of analysis being done … but I suspect it has not taken hold in a significant and substantive way. That is not to say that there is not a lot of interest … there
are a significant number of teachers who have taken courses … it’s really kind of frustrating for me because anytime I presented a workshop I sort of see a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of teachers get really excited when they start talking about the role of the media, but it doesn’t seem to translate into a desire to take that interest or enthusiasm to a larger quite of audience… when they come to training sessions, when you talk to them about it, it’s nods all along the way. There’s nobody that says it is not important. I have never had people say that. But … at the level of teaching at school and as a society, I think we have not quite made the next stage.

As such, he believes that despite the fact that there is some existing support for teachers (such as workshops for teachers that Richard organizes and teaches), and that those who attend these workshops acknowledge the importance of media education, not so many teachers seem to have actually incorporated media literacy into their teaching.

Richard believes that there are multiple reasons why media education has not taken root. First of all, he believes that many English teachers in general do not consider media literacy a “logical and integral” part of the English curriculum. Second, although there now are courses on media education at universities available if student teachers (or teachers) are interested in media education, it is not a required part of teacher training. Third, Richard mentions that media industries are also not interested in media education, since they do not want people to “think too critically on what they do.” Finally, he believes that a lack of enthusiasm in media education is related to the way teachers and society in general think about the media. As he puts it:

I think that part of it … is that a lot of people are actually unaware or don’t think a lot or don’t reflect a lot on the role the media plays. I mention it in relation to students, but I think it is
also true of adults. … the fact of the matter is that advertising is a multibillion dollar industry. Clearly all of us, myself included, are very much influenced by the media and I think that until people are more willing to acknowledge the potential for influence, even if they are not ready to acknowledge the actual strength of the influence, at least to begin to acknowledge the potential for the influence, then I don’t think there’s going to be as much engagement at both the school level and the society level as there needs to be.

He personally cannot understand why teachers of all people would not be interested in deconstructing media messages, as he suggests that media consistently have a very negative perception of teachers. He mentions that a provincial teachers’ organization has done an analysis of media coverage of education and found that teachers are often portrayed negatively such as “they don’t do their job properly,” “the kids are failing,” “they are too political,” “they make too much money,” “they have too long a holiday” and so on. Even so, Richard claims, teachers do not see it as crucial to learn media literacy skills themselves, let alone teach those skills to students. As such, he feels that it is necessary to find ways to make media literacy more relevant and interesting to people, so that teachers, students, and society in general will see media education as more important. One person alone cannot do it all, so he believes that it is necessary to mobilize people and have contact around the province. Although he is retired now from teaching in public schools, he continues to put his time and energy into promoting media education by functioning as a key person in BCMES: “I will continue to explore this issue because it is something that I feel strongly about. Hopefully we will find a way to do something about it.”
6.5 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I examined how four experienced teachers in media education – Andrew, Donald, William, and Richard – define media literacy and have incorporated it into their teaching. I have also introduced their perceptions of the current status of media education in the province in general, as well as challenges and obstacles to media education that they have encountered or overcome.

First, interviews with these four expert teachers in media education suggest that backgrounds and experiences are significant in their desire to teach media education and their conceptualization of media literacy. Their interest in media literacy and education resulted from their own experiences with the media as opposed to being introduced to the topic during teacher training. For instance, it was his own interest in and familiarity with contemporary popular culture that led Andrew to bring current media into the classroom. Similarly Donald’s interests in news media, William’s extensive international travels, and Richard’s interest in films and his sociology background led each to pay close attention to various media, media’s effects on society, and relationship between media and audiences. Moreover, the particular experiences of each teacher that sparked an interest in media literacy have shaped how they define media literacy and what they envision as the purpose of media education. Andrew’s interest in media literacy, for example, was cultivated while observing students’ media production, in which he found links between the influence of popular culture and the way students view their own lives. In addition, his observations of students’ tendency to believe anything on the web led him to firmly advocate that students need to learn about the media despite being fairly media savvy in terms of functional literacy. As such, he considers media literacy to be a key skill for allowing students to take a stance on or a position toward the media that they consume.
For Donald, however, his own ideological position and the perceived rise of an opposing political climate led him to pursue critical media literacy. As such, media literacy (especially in the form of critical media literacy) for him helps students see various media as interconnected with political and social interests or power. William, on the other hand, considers media literacy a human right that enables students to become full participants in society. By comparing representation of various countries and cultures in the media and his first-hand travel experiences led him to realize the necessity of having students develop skills for “dissecting” media messages in order to understand the world. He also emphasizes the importance of media production as a major component of media literacy, for learning how to create media makes students better able to analyze media texts. In Richard’s case, his sociology background as well as his interest in film led him to further explore and learn about the media as a major institution in society. He focuses on examining the mediation process of the media and suggests that media literacy helps students develop thinking skills to become productive members of society.

Second, this study describes the variety of media education practices that these four teachers adopted and developed. There are some obvious differences from the start, such as the subjects that they teach (Andrew, William, and Richard teach English, while Donald teaches Social Studies) and the ways they implement media literacy in classrooms (Andrew, Donald, and Richard add media literacy into existing subjects, while William has created his own stand-alone media literacy course). However, some commonalities are found as well. It is not my intention to categorize and generalize these four teachers’ media education practices; however, some shared experiences and
similarities are worth noting. The most notable commonality among these four teachers is that none take an inoculative / protectionist approach to media education. Despite their own backgrounds and interests, and different emphases on what constitutes media literacy, they share a view that students need to learn media literacy in order to better understand the world in which they live. Their approaches to media education are closely related to the ideological approach, and in Donald’s case, some elements of critical media literacy. Donald was the only one who framed his approach by using the term critical media literacy. His ideological position and views certainly are based on critical media literacy.

Some also shared similar views and practices to a certain extent. Andrew and Donald both teach media literacy in existing subjects, implemented throughout the year. They both believe that it is more effective to continuously teach about the media rather than include a few units on the topic. They also bring various multimedia materials that they personally own into the classroom and prepare classes around those materials rather than using textbooks. Andrew emphasized that materials have to be up-to-date so that students can relate to them. William and Richard, on the other hand, preferred implementing units that focus on learning about the media. Richard emphasizes that media education needs to be structured and contextualized for students, as such merely mentioning the media in “teachable” moments or talking about it in an open-ended way after watching a media clip do not count as examples of media education. William also prepares units on various issues in media literacy and since there is not enough time in regular English classes, he created an independent course of media education. They both used Barry Duncan’s textbook in their classroom at some point, and recognize some benefits of using structured and ready-made materials, which they have used as a starting point to create their own lesson plans.
Third, in terms of support and obstacles surrounding media education some shared experiences and views were expressed among these four teachers. They all seem to have certain support from their school administration, in terms of recognition of, or permission to teach, media literacy in schools; but, they did not receive funding except for William. Andrew, William, and Richard mentioned other colleagues and teachers’ organizations, such as BCMES, for providing workshops or networking opportunities. Richard is a key person in BC media education in terms of both networking with other teachers and organizing and teaching media literacy workshops. William also started networking with others through the workshop he attended, and takes part in BCMES with Richard.

Interviews with expert teachers highlight common obstacles as to why media education is not fully implemented in BC secondary schools. Andrew and Donald state that no money will be spent on media education materials, as schools will use funds for textbooks on literature or history instead of media literacy – William seems to be an exception with regard to funding. Andrew and Richard mention the ambiguity in schools about who should be teaching media education as another major obstacle. Since English teachers think that Social Studies teachers should teach media literacy, and vice versa, few end up taking responsibility or initiative. Many teachers also believe that media literacy is simply not a part of their subject, or in some cases part of any subject at all, as they assume that students already know a lot about the media, creating a sense of ‘why teach them more at school?’ This relates to the other obstacle that Donald, William, and Richard mention: teachers’ lack of awareness. Despite the fact that William had been teaching independent media education courses for the past three years at the time of the interview, many of his colleagues do not know what media literacy is or simply regard it as a class in which they just watch movies. Richard also
states that teachers and society in general do not want to admit the influence of media on people’s lives and do not see the necessity of learning about media. All four teachers also mention a lack of class time as a general obstacle. William emphasized the difficulty of promoting media education when it is not a provincially examinable subject, and thus it is difficult to justify using class time for this topic. They themselves, however, have found a way to cope with this issue of a lack of class time by finding ways to implement it into existing subjects, or in William’s and Richard’s instances, found a way to teach independent media education courses, and clearly without more support in terms of materials and pre-made lesson plans, this issue will likely to remain for most teachers. All four mentioned a lack of teacher training and a lack of time for teachers to prepare materials as major problems. All agree that media education in BC secondary schools is still in its infancy, and they are also aware of various existing challenges for full implementation of media education. Yet as shown in this chapter, their personal experiences with and interests in the media have driven them to encounter challenges and pursue media education, showing that media education is possible for some teachers in some settings.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through this case study, I explored in-service and pre-service teachers’ notions of media literacy, the current status of media education practices in a sample of BC secondary schools, and teachers’ perspectives on various issues regarding media education and literacy. This chapter summarizes the findings by synthesizing information and conclusions from multiple data sources and triangulating data related to various obstacles and challenges that media education faces in Lower Mainland secondary schools. Recommendations for overcoming the challenges identified in this study and suggestions for further research are also provided.

7.1 Summary of Findings in Relation to this Study’s Research Questions

In this section, I return to the four questions addressed in Chapter One in order to synthesize the data gathered throughout this research. The first question was: what are in-service and pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy? This question addressed how teachers define media literacy, why they teach about the media, and what their goals are for media education and literacy. Participants in this research had high awareness levels of media literacy and media education. All in-service teachers in data sources 3, 4, and 5 replied that they were well aware of media literacy and media education. Even among data sources 1 and 2 participants, 76 percent of pre-service teachers and 90 percent of in-service teachers replied that they were aware of media literacy and media education before enrolling in associated courses or workshops.86 This study also

86 These data do not include English and Social Studies department heads that I talked with over the phone for the preliminary survey, except for the four whose schools were chosen for Data
found that most teachers who participated in this study believe that it is important to teach students about media in schools. Among 91 in-service or pre-service teachers (data sources 1 through 5) who took part in this study, 88 replied that it is ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to teach students about media.87

Though respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness of media literacy and media education, and similarly recognized the relevance, their understanding of media literacy and education varied greatly: participants in this study expressed various definitions of media literacy and purposes for media education. For many participants, media literacy is associated with critical thinking skills. Many believe that the main purpose of media education is to help students deconstruct media texts and become more critical when “reading” media messages, which is similar to the ideological approach to media education reviewed in Chapter Two. This study found, however, that the protectionist / inoculative approach coexists with the critical approach, as indicated by some participants who expressed a desire to protect students from media’s negative effects. For some teachers, media literacy is understood as, and limited to, discerning biases in the media, and so their purpose for media education is to raise students’ awareness about how media in general manipulate audiences. On the other hand, a few teachers view media literacy as a necessary skill to live in the current media saturated society or a human right and believe that media education and literacy help students become productive members of society. In short, although some educators and researchers in the field dismissively conclude that media education has moved away from a protectionist approach, teachers’ understanding of media literacy and education are not uniform and varying definitions and different conceptions coexist. Diverse definitions and concepts are not an

Source 3 and 4.

87 The exceptions were two pre-service teachers who replied ‘neutral’ and one pre-service teacher who answered ‘not much.’

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issue per se, but may contribute to a difficulty in advancing the implementation of media literacy and education in school curriculum if teachers cannot share common ground. The variety of levels in teachers’ understanding of media literacy and education may be related to a lack of shared knowledge: BC school curricula (the IRPs) have limited descriptions of media literacy and education, as reviewed in Chapter Two, and opportunities for teacher training in media literacy and education in the province are limited as this research indicated.

The second question addressed in this research was: what is the current status of media education? This question examined the features of media education currently practiced as well as the extent to which media literacy and education are incorporated into classroom teaching. This research demonstrates that teachers incorporate media literacy into their practices in various ways. For example, although the ability to create media products is often considered an integral part of media literacy, as mentioned in Chapter One, participants in this study placed much greater emphasis on teaching about the roles of media in society and decoding media texts rather than media production. This variety of approaches to teaching media literacy is an important finding and holds promise for developing and rooting media education courses. Nevertheless, with regards to the extent to which media literacy and education are incorporated into actual classroom teaching, this research reveals that the recognition of media literacy’s importance does not necessarily transfer to media education practice. Media education is not rooted within the case study district, and according to expert media educators interviewed it is not rooted in BC in general, a perception that those surveyed also have. As such, this research further supports the sparse research about media education in BC indicating that this field is not rooted in the province. Within the confines of the Lower Mainland case study boundaries, media education is sporadic, and whether or not teachers
incorporate media literacy in their teaching appears to depend primarily on personal interests and levels of energy. All teachers interviewed emphasized the voluntary nature of teaching this subject, and the personal sacrifices entailed with pursuing media education (e.g., personal time to familiarize themselves with the subject, time to prepare teaching materials, take workshops / classes for professional development, or purchase materials with their own money). A correlation between teachers’ ages and their interest in media literacy was not found in this research, despite often being indicated in the literature that younger teachers are more inclined and less hesitant to include media literacy in classroom teaching.

The third question was: what kind of support is available for teachers to integrate media literacy into classroom instruction? This addressed teachers’ training for media education, access to information on media literacy, and the level of support received from other teachers, schools where they work, school boards, and parents. These issues are directly related to the last question raised in this research, as such they will be discussed together. The fourth question was: what are the obstacles/challenges that teachers encounter when teaching about the media? This question addressed the major challenges that teachers face when introducing media education or teaching media literacy, how some teachers overcame obstacles, and what teachers think will help increase the presence of media education. Data suggest that the support teachers currently receive is limited: few occasions for professional development (such as the Data Source 2 workshop); some lesson plans provided for teachers at a provincial teachers’ organization; BCMES and online free resources for media education (such as the Media Awareness Network); and understanding from school administrations in some cases (although this does not usually include support in the form of funding). As such, teachers have to take initiative and rely on their own efforts to teach media
literacy as part of existing English or Social Studies curriculum.

Compounding the lack of support, however, is that some teachers surveyed and interviewed were not aware of some of these resources. For instance, data collected from in-service and pre-service teachers (Data Source 1 and 2) indicate that only a small number of teachers are familiar with existing materials and hubs useful for finding information on media literacy. This study thus highlights that a lack of support and resources for teaching media literacy greatly contributes to its lack of implementation, but it also indicates that the few existing forms of support and resources are not widely used. Efforts must be made to dispel a seemingly widespread view that there simply are not enough resources available with which to engage in media education. Without significant additional investment in training and/or funding, media education implementation could very well increase to some extent simply by increasing awareness of existing teaching resources, such as the Media Awareness Network website and existing local network (e.g., BCMES).

However, an increase in funding or resources is not sufficient: many participants also indicated a lack of both personal time and class time as a major obstacle. As most schools do not have resources or funding, in most instances teachers must obtain and plan for integrating new resources during their own personal time. As such, they are forced to choose between personal time and work. With a lack of teacher training, time needed for class preparation increases. As for class time, particularly in schools that emphasize academic achievement, there is little room to include media education due to pressures to concentrate on provincially examinable subjects and content. For example, Harold, the Social Studies head teacher in the inactive school (Data Source 4), mentions that parents tolerate media literacy as long as it does not distract from preparation for provincial examinations. If media literacy was a notable part of provincial examinations, then
concerned parties, parents, schools and ministry, would exhibit greater concern for implementing media education. This raises an issue that Richard, one of the expert teachers, brought up: is the influence of media recognized as an important issue in society today? While many participants in this research demonstrated high awareness levels of media literacy and education, some participants raised concerns about their colleagues’ and schools’ lack of awareness of the importance of media literacy and education and mentioned a lack of understanding from colleagues and schools as one of the obstacles for the implementation of media education. These comments indicate that biases or prejudices against media literacy and education found in others’ research (e.g., Morgan, 1998) still exist in schools to date. As such, it is clear that media education suffers from an image problem as much as a resource problem. Although beyond the scope of this research, it is increasingly important for media educators and researchers to explore new trends in functional media literacies. As Penrod (2001) observes:

Great numbers of educators believe the myth that students are highly media literate because of their large amounts of media consumption. Media educators Ladislaus Semali and Ann Watts Pailliotet [1999] suggest otherwise; instead of children becoming increasingly more literate, these media distorted boundaries “between school and home, fact and fiction, narrative and live reporting are confusing.” This is because youngsters, even the most media-savvy adolescents, are still building the multi-dimensional schema they need to develop the broad overall perspective people use to separate the superficial from the meaningful. Usually, children and teenagers operate with very limited knowledge structures about the media; they tend to focus on the recognition of surface information like song lyrics, television characters, actors' or characters' names, and so on. (p. 3)
7.2 Theoretical Issues and Pedagogical Implications

In this section, I analyze some of this study’s findings in relation to theories of curriculum change and innovation and discuss pedagogical implications of this study for media education practice. First, I draw on Hall and Hord’s (2006) Stages of Concern\(^{88}\) model for gauging teachers’ engagement with media education. Hall and Hord’s model has four dimensions (Unrelated / Self / Task / Impact) and are divided into seven stages (Stage 0 to Stage 6). Participants of this study show various stages but media education within this district examined appears to be stalled at the levels of the first four stages. Some teachers do not progress from Stage 0 Awareness to Stage 1 Informational. They may be aware of or may have heard of media literacy and media education (Stage 0), but do not seek more information. And in many cases, Stage 2 Personal appears quite prevalent, where worry about time and financial restrictions that affect teachers seem to be weighty concerns that mitigate efforts to gather more information (Stage 1 Informational). As Hall and Hord mention, these stages may not progress in order, and in this case, Stage 2 precedes Stage 1. As such, very few teachers progress to Stage 3 Management in which teachers actually implement the change (i.e., media literacy and education in this case) and pay attention to the best use of information and resources.

The final dimension of this model is Impact, where teachers turn their attention to the impact of the innovation on clients (i.e., the impact of media education on students). This dimension includes the following three stages: Stage 4 Consequence, Stage 5 Collaboration, and Stage 6 Refocusing. Some participants indicated their concerns in ways that place them in Stage 4

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\(^{88}\) Hall and Hord (2006) define the term concern as “the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (p. 138). As such, “questioning, analyzing, and re-analyzing, considering alternative actions and reactions, and anticipating consequence” (p. 138) about an issue are all part of concern.
Consequences by presenting these concerns in a rather negative way: instead of focusing on how media education impacts students and the outcomes achieved through media education, they were concerned about the loss of valuable class time for teaching content directly related to provincial examinations. What students achieve (e.g., media literacy) was mentioned by a few participants in a broad way, such as becoming productive members of society, but what it means to be a productive member or how to achieve this was not mentioned. In order to assess and anticipate outcomes and achievements of media literacy and education, further research is required. Some participants, including expert teachers, have reached Stage 5 Collaboration, in which they exchange information and cooperate with others regarding use of the innovation (i.e., implementation of media education), and as such can be situated in Stage 5. However, only a few participants (e.g., expert teachers William and Richard) were able to maintain this stage and many teachers did not have an opportunity to share information due to their lack of support. Another expert teacher, Andrew, simply retreated from this stage after experiencing difficulty in collaborating with others. The other expert teacher, Donald, was willing to share his information with others only when asked and was not seeking collaboration. Finally, Stage 6 Refocusing was not evident in the data. In this stage, teachers explore more universal benefits from the implementation of media literacy and education in school curriculum, and also have definite ideas about alternatives to the existing situation. As there are many obstacles in the lower stages of concern (Stage 1, 2, and 3), it is difficult for media educators in this case to transition to this refocusing stage.

Having identified participants’ stages of concern, I now turn to an analysis of why the implementation of media education has been relatively unsuccessful in the case examined in BC by drawing on Yates (2004). In order to identify reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of media
literacy in Canada and the US, Yates draws on diffusion theory and provides models for successful innovation in curriculum. Four factors influencing the adoption of an innovation are: “1) the innovation itself; 2) the communication channels used to spread information about the innovation; 3) time; [and] 4) the nature of the society to whom it is introduced” (p. 4). For the first factor of the innovation itself (i.e., media education), potential adopters (i.e., teachers) are likely to innovate when the following attributes are found: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Data collected in this dissertation show that these five attributes are not necessarily explicit in media education. One relative advantage of media education is students becoming media literate. However, the fifth attribute, observability (the effectiveness of media literacy relative to students’ achievement), is without evidence and thus it is difficult for teachers to identify advantages of implementing media education. As such, demonstrations of advantages and the effectiveness of media literacy and education are needed.

The second attribute, compatibility, was found in this dissertation in instances of teachers who incorporate media literacy into English Language Arts courses: those teachers recognize that skills for the critical analysis of texts can be applied to various forms of media; as such, media literacy complements or enhances print literacy. This understanding of media literacy as part of a skill for multiliteracies coincides with the ELA IRPs’ positioning of media literacy within the subject. For many teachers, however, media literacy and media education are incompatible with existing curriculum. As such, positioning media literacy and education within an existing curriculum and explaining the relationships between media literacy with that curriculum are one of the strategies to increase adoption. The third attribute, complexity, means that teachers should not perceive media literacy and education as an overly complex challenge; data collected in this study, however,
indicate that teachers have to learn new methods, topics, and issues in addition to finding resources, which are perceived as complex and time-consuming processes (especially without pre-service or in-service teacher training). As such, providing teachers with adequate support is necessary.

The fourth attribute, trialability, means that teachers can test media education for a limited time. This criterion reflects the current state of media education in BC curricula. Media literacy and education are included as part of the official curriculum in the form of IRPs, thereby facilitating interested teachers. Yet, as these components of the IRPs are not part of the provincial examination, media literacy is not a priority. This criterion may have a shelf life implication as even those who have adopted media education may eventually lose interest or energy and quit. As Hall and Hord (2006) acknowledge, appropriate intervention and leadership are necessary to implementation. It has been nearly fifteen years since media literacy and education were formally incorporated into BC curricula. Leaving media education as a trialable subject without intervention (support) impinges on the diffusion of media education in this case.

The second factor that influences the adoption of an innovation is communication channels. Although mass media channels are the fastest and most efficient, interpersonal communication is more effective (Rogers, 1995; Yates, 2004). In this study, expert teachers, Richard and William, both described their opportunities to share and exchange information with others who are also interested in media education. In general, however, this research reveals that communication channels for media literacy and education are insufficient, as there are very limited opportunities for pre-service and in-service teaching training. BCMES has a listserv to share information, but the number of members is very limited. Ways to increase communication channels among teachers are required.

The third factor in the diffusion process is time, which can be analyzed through three different
aspects: innovation-decision process, individual innovativeness, and the rate of adoption (Yates, 2004). The innovation-decision process has five steps and is similar to Hall and Hord’s (2006) Stages of Concern: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. This case study indicates that teachers’ high level of awareness in media literacy and education (step 1) is apparent among participants; however, many of them are not yet persuaded of the merits of media education (step 2), and as such have not decided to adopt (step 3). In some cases, even when teachers have decided to implement media education, various challenges prevent them from actual classroom practice (step 4). Though the teachers who have decided to implement media education are committed, their negative outlook on the current status of media education indicates that they themselves may not fully see their decision as the best decision. The second aspect of the time factor is the relation between time and individual innovativeness. As we have seen in this study, some individuals (such as expert teachers and those who actively seek professional development opportunities to learn about media literacy) have adopted or decided to adopt media education, yet there are many who have been slow to accept the innovation. Should media education gain a solid foothold in BC, successful implementation of media education will require ways to convince those labeled as the “late majority” and “laggards.” Finally, the third area in the diffusion of innovations involves time or rate of adoption. Adoption rate suggests that growth is slow in the beginning, followed by a period of rapid growth, and eventually there is stability and declination. The practice of media education in the province has never been evaluated or monitored, making it difficult to determine its rate of adoption within an s-shaped curve. The successful inclusion of media literacy and education in IRPs in the mid-1990s could be considered a growth in interest, yet in terms of practice and implementation, in this case, it is still in an initial stage.
The fourth and last factor that influences the diffusion of innovations is the nature of society to which media education is introduced. Yates (2004) claims that diffusion of media literacy within a social system is dependent on social structure, norms, and opinion leaders. First, Yates concludes that members who are most alike tend to communicate with each other; thus, when a teacher adopts a new idea, other teachers are more likely to adopt it as well. In this research, this was not the case. Individual teachers’ interests and energy for taking extra time were found as a major reason for those implementing media education. Those teachers who adopted media education coexisted with those who are indifferent within the same school, indicating that teachers who pursue media education do not readily influence other teachers. Data suggest that in some instances teachers take a reclusive stance toward their teaching practices. Second, Yates (2004) points out that norms within the social system provide guidelines for behavior and affect diffusion. Various norms preventing the implementation of media education in secondary schools were found in this research. For example, the norm of teaching the examinable curriculum for successful achievement impedes the adoption of media education. In other instances, a general impression that students already know enough about the media impedes some teachers from recognizing the necessity and importance of teaching media literacy. Different norms in schools, and society in general, are recognized as challenges for the implementation of media education, which parallels findings from Yates’ (2004) research. Third, the existence of an opinion leader was confirmed in this study via Richard, who is one of the expert teachers interviewed. His dedication to promoting media education in the region seems to have almost single-handedly made it possible to hold a five-day workshop and other professional development opportunities. In order for media education to further develop in the province, more personnel are required to keep the momentum.
7.3 Recommendations for the Practice of Media Education in BC and for Further Research

In the previous section, I analyzed the current status of media education and identified reasons that influence the implementation of media education in this case of BC secondary schools. This section provides suggestions for various parties interested in media education.

First, there is clearly a need for more involvement from the BC Ministry of Education and school boards. It was an accomplishment in itself in the mid 1990s to officially include media literacy and education in IRPs as part of school curricula, but recognition is not sufficient. As stated in the previous section, leaving media education as a trialable subject with little support is one of the main factors influencing the diffusion of media education in BC. In order to fully implement curriculum, Ministry and school board officials must offer support in various ways. The Ministry could consider mandating the media literacy components of the IRPs. Descriptions of media literacy and education in the IRPs could be improved as well: some of the current descriptions are mere topic statements and hard to understand. How media education and literacy are related to the existing curriculum is not fully described. School boards can also support teachers by organizing in-service teacher training and providing teaching materials. The lack of Ministry and school board support was notable in this research.

Second, universities can offer more forms of support for media education. With more specialized faculty members, universities can contribute to both the education and the research field. As mentioned, teacher education programs can and should offer media education courses for teachers as a mandatory course rather than as an elective – teacher training is a must for fully implementing media education. The content of media education courses should also be modified to balance the emphasis between both theory / background knowledge and practical training on how to
incorporate media education or literacy. This research indicates that there are differences in perceptions of what constitutes media literacy between English and Social Studies teachers: what elements should be included in each subject and how can teachers incorporate it within existing curriculum?

Another party that is noticeably absent from the picture of media education in BC secondary schools is the media industry. Although a UNESCO report (2001) mentions that Canada is an exception where media industries are highly involved in media education in positive ways, evidence was not found in this research. As mentioned, Citytv sponsored the five-day workshop for teachers, but their involvement was limited and unclear. Richard, one of the expert teachers, indicated during the interview that media industries do not usually want people to become critical of what they are doing. As discussed in Chapter Two, it is important that media industries do not takeover media education for their own benefit. But media education cannot exclude such central players either.

In terms of research, there is much left to be examined. As Goodson (1988) shows, it is important to be accepted as an academic subject in order to be adopted in schools. Unfortunately, media literacy and education stay at the fringe in academia, making it understandable that schools, the Ministry, and society in general do not take it seriously. This dissertation research could be followed up by province-wide and pan-Canadian research to investigate the status of media education and literacy in K – 12 schooling. A combination of survey and qualitative research is recommended. This research showed how existing definitions of media literacy and education made it difficult to analyze responses to simple questions such as whether or not teachers are involved in media education with only surveys. Interviews with teachers were necessary to understand the practice of media education as well as the obstacles and challenges in depth. Evaluative research to
profile the advantages and effectiveness of media literacy and education is needed: in what way is media education effective? As media education is not an examinable subject, it is important to demonstrate what students gain through media education. Longitudinal studies on the effects of media education could demonstrate lasting effects. Such research could address a concern expressed by some participants in this study that parents and people in general have a limited awareness of media education. John, the Social Studies department head in the active school, mentions that many parents do not care what children watch on television as long as it preoccupies them or keeps them out of trouble.89 Considering that children spend hours with media at home, parents’ awareness of and support for media literacy is necessary. In this way, media education’s future is just as much tied to the society that it aims to benefit as much as it is tied to the educational system through which it is practiced, and future research can prove instrumental in enhancing society’s perception of media education’s purpose and practices. As such, further implementing media education likely requires a broader dialogue in which its importance can be recognized—it is my sincere hope that this research and the conclusions drawn therein can serve as a small step toward making this a reality.

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89 This statement coincides with results presented by Kline, Steward, and Murphy (2006).
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire for Teachers and Student Teachers

1. Are you a teacher or student teacher?
   □ Teacher □ Student teacher

2. (For teachers) How many years have you been a teacher?
   ____________ years

3. What subject do/will you teach in school?
   __________________________________________________________

4. Which grade(s) do/will you teach in school?
   From grade __________ to __________

5. What is your academic background?
   (Please check all that apply).
   □ Bachelor of Arts
     Major ___________________________ Minor ___________________________
   □ Bachelor of Education
     Concentration ___________________________________________________
   □ Bachelor in other fields
     Specialization: Bachelor of ____________, Major _______________________
   □ Master of Arts
     Thesis topic ______________________________________________________
       Circle one: Completed or In progress (# of years completed _____)
   □ Master of Education
     Concentration _____________________________________________________
   □ PhD
     Dissertation topic _________________________________________________
       Circle one: Completed or In progress (# of years completed____)
6. Which age range do you fit?
   □ 20 – 24   □ 40 – 44   □ 60 - 64
   □ 25 – 29   □ 45 – 49   □ 65 – 69
   □ 30 – 34   □ 50 - 54
   □ 35 – 39   □ 55 – 59

7. Were you familiar with media literacy or media education before you took part in this class, CUST 432?
   □ Yes   □ No

8. Do you think teaching students about media in school is important? (Circle one).
   Very important – Important – Neutral – Not much – Not at all

9. Were you taught media literacy when you were a student?
   □ Yes (which grade(s)? _____________________________)
   □ No

10. In which grade do you think students should start learning media literacy in school?
    □ Kindergarten □ Grade 7 – 9
    □ Grade 1 – 3 □ Grade 10 – 12
    □ Grade 4 – 6 □ Not necessary

11. Do you think media education has taken root in K-12 school education in BC.?
    □ Yes   □ No

12. Did you know that media literacy is included in the Integrated Resource Package (IRP) of all school subjects as a cross curriculum topic in British Columbia and that you can teach media literacy in any class?
    □ Yes   □ No
13. In which subject(s) do you think media literacy should be included in school? (Please check one that is closest to your opinion.)
   □ All subjects
   □ Some subjects (specify ________________________________)
   □ Independent media education course
   □ Others (specify: ________________________________)
   □ None

14. Which of the following statement is the closest reason for you to teach media literacy? (Please check one that is closest to your opinion.)
   □ To protect children from media’s negative influence
   □ To develop critical thinking
   □ To help students become active citizens in society
   □ Other (Specify: ________________________________)

15. Which of the following should be addressed in media education? (Please check all that apply).
   □ Television
   □ Magazine
   □ Video games
   □ Film
   □ Radio
   □ Popular music
   □ Newspaper
   □ Internet
   □ Others (specify __________________)

16. Which element(s) of media literacy do you think should be taught to students in class? (Please check all that apply).
   □ roles of media in society
   □ media’s commercial implications
   □ decoding media texts
   □ knowledge on media industry
   □ relationship between media and audience
   □ media production
17. What kind of teaching material(s) do/will you use, when/if you teach media literacy in school? (Please check all that apply).
- □ TV programs provided by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
- □ TV programs provided by National Film Board (NFB)
- □ “Scanning the Movies” by CHUM
- □ Other TV programs provided by Cable in the Classroom
- □ Video/DVD resource package, “Scanning Television”
- □ “TV & ME” by Concerned Children’s Advertisers
- □ Newspaper (Specify: ____________________________)
- □ Magazine (Specify: ____________________________)

18. Have you consulted any of the following media literacy resources? (Please check all that apply).
- □ Media Awareness Network website (http://www.media-awareness.ca/)
- □ Jesuit Communication Project website (http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/JCP/)
- □ “Media Literacy Resource Guide” by Ontario Ministry of Education
- □ others (Specify: ____________________________)
- □ none

19. Did you know that many major media corporations (such as CBC, CHUM, CNN etc.) now provide cost-free media literacy teaching materials for classroom use?
- □ Yes
- □ No

20. Do/will you use corporate-media-provided materials in your class?
- □ Yes, I am using them in my class. (specify ____________________________)
- □ Yes, I would like to use them in my class in future.
- □ No

21. What are your reasons for deciding whether or not to use corporate-provided materials in your class?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
22. What are your reasons for enrolling in this class / workshop?
   (Requirements? Particular interests?)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

23. What aspects of media literacy do you hope to learn from this class/workshop?
   (Please check all that apply).
   □ Background theory of media literacy
   □ Pedagogy
   □ History of media education
   □ Information on media literacy teaching resources
   □ Others (specify: _____________________________)

24. Have you taken any other classes/workshops for media literacy/media education before?
   □ Yes (Institution _____________________________
          Title of the class _____________________________)
   □ No

25. Would you like to take more classes/workshops for teaching media literacy in future?
   □ Yes    □ No

26. Do you think there is enough support (teaching materials/training workshops) for teachers to teach media literacy in school?
   □ Yes    □ No

27. What kind of support system will help teachers gather information and enhance their understanding of teaching media literacy?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

28. Are there any other comments you can add regarding media education?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
(For teachers only)

29. Do you teach media literacy in your class?
   □ Yes (how often? _________________________________)
   □ No (would you like to in future? □ Yes □ No □ Not sure)

30. What materials do you use when teaching media literacy in the classroom?
   (Please check all that apply).
   □ Video/DVD (Specify _________________________________)
   □ Cable in the Classroom programs (Specify _________________________________)
   □ Newspaper
   □ Magazine
   □ Others ( □ None
   □ None

31. What challenges do you find in teaching media literacy?
   (Please check all that apply).
   □ Finding good teaching materials
   □ Lack of teacher training
   □ Lack of support from school
   □ Lack of support from other teachers
   □ Lack of support from parents
   □ Lack of support from students
   □ Lack of time in class
   □ Other (specify: _________________________________)

32. Are students interested in learning about media in the classroom? (Circle one).
   Very interested – Interested – Neutral – Not much – Not at all

33. Are there any other comments you can add regarding the teaching of media literacy in school?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Questionnaire for English and Social Studies Teachers

1. How many years have you been a teacher? __________ years

2. What subject(s) do you teach in school? ______________________________________

3. Which grade(s) do you teach? From grade _______ to _______

4. Which gender / age range do you fit?
   □ Male   □ Female
   □ 20 – 24   □ 25 – 29   □ 30 – 34   □ 35 – 39
   □ 40 – 44   □ 45 – 49   □ 50 – 54   □ 55 – 59   □ 60 – 64

5. Are you familiar with “media literacy” or “media education”?  
   □ Yes   □ No

6. Do you teach media literacy in your classes (e.g. unit or formal lessons on media literacy)?
   □ Yes   □ No

7. Have you received any training (classes / workshops) for media education before?
   □ Yes   when and where _________________________________  
   □ No

8. Do you think teaching students about the media important? (Circle one).
   Very important – Important – Neutral – Not much – Not at all

9. Did you know that media education is included in the IRP of English and Social Studies?
   □ Yes   □ No

10. Did you know that media education is included in the IRP of all school subjects as a cross-curriculum topic in BC?
    □ Yes   □ No
11. In which subject(s) do you think media education should be included in school?  
(Please check one that is closest to your opinion).

- □ All subjects
- □ Some subjects (specify ____________________________)
- □ Independent media education course
- □ Others (specify ____________________________)
- □ None

12. Which of the following statement is the closest reason for you to teach media literacy?  
(Please check one that is closest to your opinion).

- □ To protect children from media’s negative influence
- □ To develop critical thinking
- □ To help students become active citizens in society
- □ Other (specify ____________________________)

13. Which element(s) of media literacy do you think should be taught to students in class?  
(Please check all that apply).

- □ Roles of media in society
- □ Decoding media texts
- □ Media and Audience
- □ Media’s commercial implications
- □ Knowledge on media industry
- □ Media production

14. What materials do you use when teaching about media in the classroom?  
(Please check all that apply).

- □ Video / DVD
- □ Film
- □ Newspaper
- □ Magazine
- □ Internet
- □ Cable in the Classroom programs
- □ Others (specify ____________________________)

15. Did you know that many major media corporations (such as CBC, CHUM, CNN etc.) now provide cost-free media education teaching materials for classroom use?

- □ Yes
- □ No

16. What do you think about the trend of media corporation-sponsored curriculum materials?

- □ Desirable
- □ Problematic
- □ Dangerous

17. Do/ will you use corporate-media-provided materials for media education in your class?

- □ Yes, I am using them in my class (specify ____________________________)
□ Yes, I would like to use them in my class in future.
□ No

18. Do you think there is enough support for teachers to engage in media education in general?
□ Yes □ No

19. What challenges do you find in media education?
(Please check all that apply).
□ Finding good teaching materials □ Lack of support from other teachers
□ Lack of teacher training □ Lack of support from students
□ Lack of time in class □ Lack of support from parents
□ Lack of support from school □ Other (specify ________________________)

20. Are there any other comments you can add regarding media education in school?
(e.g. suggestions for media education’s further development, etc.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Interview Question List I

(For English and Social Studies Department Heads)

1. How long have you been a teacher?

2. Do you think media education has taken root in your school, and why or why not?

3. Approximately how much of English/Social Studies curriculum in your school is devoted to media education (is it a significant part of the curriculum)?

4. What are the students’ reactions to media education?

5. What kinds of support (in terms of media education) have been available for you and other English/Social Studies teachers both inside and outside of school? (Is there any support/understanding from school, school board, BCTF, parents, etc.?)

6. Are there any obstacles/problems for you and/or other English/Social Studies teachers when teaching media literacy?

7. Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding media education/media literacy? (e.g. suggestions for media education’s further development, etc.)
Appendix D

Interview Question List II
(For Expert Teachers in Media Education)

Background
1. How long have you been a teacher?

2. Would you mind telling me a little about your teaching background in media literacy, and how you became interested in teaching about the media?

3. How often do you integrate media literacy into your classroom teaching?

Media Literacy
4. What is your definition of media literacy and what do you consider the purpose of media education to be?

5. What elements of media literacy (television, movies, newspapers, internet, etc.) do you teach in your classes?

6. What kind of teaching materials do you use when teaching media literacy?

7. What are the students’ reactions to media literacy classes?

Status of Media Education
8. Do you think media education has taken root B.C. schools?

9. What kinds of support (in terms of teaching media literacy) have been available for you both inside and outside of school?

10. What do you think the major obstacles are for teachers to include media literacy components in their classroom teaching?

11. Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding media education?
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Petrina, S.

DEPARTMENT
Curriculum Studies

NUMBER
B05-0448

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT
UBC Campus,

CO-INVESTIGATORS:
Namita, Yoko, Curriculum Studies

SPONSORING AGENCIES

TITLE:
Media Education in BC: Perceptions of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

APPROVAL DATE
TERM (YEARS)
1
DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:
May 18, 2005, Questionnaires / Cover letter

CERTIFICATION:
The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:
Dr. James Frankish, Chair,
Dr. Cay Holbrook, Associate Chair,
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
# Certificate of Approval

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<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
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<td>Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>B05-0448</td>
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**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT**

UBC Campus

**CO-INVESTIGATORS:**

Namita, Yoko, Curriculum Studies

**SPONSORING AGENCIES**

Media Education in BC: Perceptions of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

**APPROVAL DATE**

05-06-13 (year/month/day)

**TERM (YEARS)**

1

**AMENDMENT:**

July 19, 2005, Study location / Covering letter

**AMENDMENT APPROVED:**

JUL 25 2005

**CERTIFICATION:**

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

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Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:

Dr. James Frankish, Chair,
Dr. Cay Holbrook, Associate Chair,
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
## Certificate of Approval

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<th><strong>Principal Investigator</strong></th>
<th><strong>Department</strong></th>
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<td>Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>B05-0779</td>
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</table>

### Institution(s) Where Research Will Be Carried Out
Surrey School District, UBC Campus, Vancouver School District Schools,

### Co-investigators:
Namita, Yoko, Curriculum Studies

### Document(s) Included in This Approval:
Sept. 2005, Contact letters / August 24, 2005, Consent form / Questionnaires

### Approval Date
**OCT 19 2005**

### Term (Years)
1

### Certification:
The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

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*Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:*  
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,  
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
# Certificate of Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petrina, S.</td>
<td>Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>B05-0779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT**

UBC Campus,

**CO-INVESTIGATORS:**

Namita, Yoko, Curriculum Studies

**SPONSORING AGENCIES**

**TITLE:**

Examining the Practice of Media Education in British Columbia: Case Studies in Secondary Schools

**APPROVAL RENEWED DATE**

AUG 21 2006

**TERM (YEARS)**

1

**CERTIFICATION:**

The request for continuing review of the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

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*Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
by one of the following:*

- Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
- Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
- Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.