Using Technologies To Teach Critical Media Literacy in a Secondary School Film Studies Course

by

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract: This project focuses on developing critical media literacy skills in high school students through the use of technology integrated into the curriculum of a film and video studies course. Students will not only use these skills to evaluate and understand film and video they encounter, but also foster the technical skills and abilities to create and produce video projects with a focus on students' issues, interests, and values which may positively impact their peers and community. The project features six key lessons from a film studies course that meets outcomes of the Ministry of Education in British Columbia's *Film and Television Studies* and *Information Communications Technologies* Integrated Resource Packages.

Students live in a time of great technological change and innovation. The literature review indicates that literacy, media literacy, and critical media literacy are important to teach to students and should be integrated across the curriculum. Research has shown film and video to be a powerful medium that can evoke emotional and cognitive responses and, potentially, bring awareness to student interests, issues, and values to other students and teachers. Many students embrace technology as an essential part of their lives and this project strives to integrate communication technologies into the activities and assignments of the film and video course. The lesson plans include outlines and resources for instruction, direct reference to Ministry of Education Prescribed

Learning Outcomes, handouts and online resources, and assessment rubrics for evaluation. Finally, the reflection discusses my experience as a graduate student, the creation of this resource and some final thoughts on where educators and scholars might go next.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

All the world's a stage – Jaques
As You Like It (Shakespeare, trans. 1997, 2.7.139)

Introduction: It is no longer 1997…

Communication technologies and digital media are quickly shaping and becoming increasingly intertwined with our culture and daily life. Multiple kinds of visual media, such as, film, videos, YouTube videos, pictures posted to the Internet, and so on, are found in everyday interactions with television, smart phones, the Internet, during trips to the mall and to playgrounds--and, of course, to school. Information communication technologies and digital media are constantly expanding, developing, and changing the ways we communicate and understand the world. The expanding types and uses of technology are very new to many educators (who are simultaneously amazed and struggling to keep up), yet are accepted by scores of students who easily embrace the newest advances in technology. Some students embrace this "digitally mediated existence" (Taylor & Carpenter, 2007, p. 84). The global and widespread phenomenon of social media has become a part of students' "everyday existence as constant navigators in a digitally mediated landscape" (p. 84). Taylor and Carpenter (2007) argue that some students in this generation of "digital kids think and process information differently as a result of their complete immersion and access to digital wonders" (p. 84). Students today have a digital literacy that can "[represent and understand] ideas using a range of modalities enabled by digital

tools" (O'Brien & Scharber, 2008, p. 67). Students employ digital technologies to interact, construct, co-construct, re-construct and understand their culture, values, friendships, and identities through "multiple modes of delivery, including linguistic, visual, aural, and performative" texts (Hagood, 2010, p. 237). Today's ever-changing version of the Internet is a place to communicate, share and interact and not just consume; that is, "social networking and file sharing is commonplace… web 2.0 applications promote widespread social interaction and have brought with them new notions of what it might mean to be literate in the twenty-first century" (Davies & Merchant, 2009, p. ix). The interactions on the Internet between adolescents are changing educators' and scholars' ideas around literacy skills for today's students.

Many of these interactions take place online through interactive web 2.0 applications like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media have 4 key features that attract users: "presence, modification, user-generated content, and social participation" (Davies & Merchant, 2009, p. 5). According to Jenkins, Clinton, Purushatma, Robison, and Weigel (2006), students are immersed in a *participatory culture*, where students communicate, create and construct culture using new interactive web technologies and social media. Jenkins et al., (2006) define participatory culture as one:

1. With relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
2. With strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others
3. With some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices

4.Where members believe that their contributions matter

5.Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created) (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 7)

Many adolescents live in a participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2006). Digital natives (this term will be discussed in further detail in chapter 2), using web technologies, share multiple types of media created by themselves or others, and have an impact on their community and peers because their participatory culture "provides strong incentives for creative expression and active participation" (p. 7). In my experience, students want others to see their creations. They want their peers and their community to interact with and respond to their creations, opinions and ideas. Advancements in technology have created a culture and environment that enables and encourages students to communicate, share and collaborate.

Project Overview

This project will provide first a theoretical framework supporting the lessons. Next is an outline and examples of lessons for a film and video studies course in a secondary school classroom of students ranging from grade 10-12. In the course, students will interact, discuss, publish, collaborate and communicate through a social media engine as they study a variety of film videos from Hollywood classics to online viral videos to student produced film and videos. Students will learn to create, critically assess, write, produce, direct and

edit their own videos to express their interests, issues, and values to their peers and communities.

Students already know a lot about film and video through both passively and actively consuming and creating media. This, however, is changing as students actively engage with media online as they comment on and share videos through YouTube and other web technologies. Although students actively engage with film and video on a regular basis, they might not be completely aware of the techniques and methods employed by producers, directors, and filmmakers (Levin, 2011; Skinner, 2007). Therefore, it is important to teach students how to critically evaluate and understand film and video they encounter. In the lessons found in this project, students will study film through viewing examples, exploring film theory, participating in class discussions, group projects, written assignments and other forms of engagement with films as text. Students will also create films where they will be writer, director, producer, editor, actor and other supporting positions such as camera operators, sound and lighting technicians and so on. They will be taught the basics of how to create their own films and videos. For example, instruction will be necessary to show students how to operate cameras, import and edit footage on the computer, design a film project, storyboard, obtain consent from actors and film locations… and so on.

Throughout the semester students will create films based on interests, issues, themes and topics important to students, their peers and community. Students will blog on a class website, documenting their experiences and

learning as filmmakers and students of film throughout the semester. Screenings of the student-made films and in-class discussion will occur throughout the semester, culminating in a final screening, outside of class time, where students will share their films to friends, peers, parents, and community at large. This course will strive to integrate technology, digital literacy skills and critical media literacy into the curriculum and content. The *Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs)* found in the *Film and Television (1997)* and the *Information and Communications Technology (2003) Integrated Resources Packages (IRPs)* will be useful for exploring the purpose of this course, which will be further explored in chapters 2 and 3. Also, current Ministry of Education initiatives around *Personalized Learning* and *21st-Century Learning* will be important to consider, as both of the IRPs pertinent to the course are quite dated (1997; 2003).

Film and Video as a Narrative Text

Throughout the film studies course, students will further their critical abilities and understanding by engaging in critical thinking through dialogue with one another about film and the films created by their peers. The teacher and students will collaboratively "through guided facilitation… [use student-created films] …to engage in critical analysis of the meanings and social conditions they represent" (Wilson, Dasho, Martin, Wallerstein, Wang, & Minkler, 2007, p. 242). Through the film studies course, students will "record and represent their everyday realities; promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community strengths and concerns" (Wang, 2006, p. 148) through film and video. As students watch, discuss and create film, they will reflect on the production

process though blog writing. Wilson et al. (2007) recognize that “engaging in critical thinking through freewrites expands both individual and group awareness of the social causes underlying the issues or assets” (p. 242). The narratives and experiences found in the blogs and films of the students will enable the teacher and students to continually engage with the “concept of reflective practice” (Noffke & Somekh, 2011, p. 96): as the film studies course progresses the teacher will constantly adjust and refine the curriculum to the needs of the students.

Films and videos tell stories. Gill and Goodson (2011) outline two key points that are useful to acknowledge within the context of this course, they argue that narratives are “perceived to be an inherently human concept” (Barthes, 1975, as cited in Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 158) and that “human life is chaotic, whereas narratives through their plots, temporality and meaning, allow the chaotic nature of life to assume a certain structure and configuration as well as coherence, direction and unity” (MacIntyre, 1984, as cited in Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 158). Stories are “the primary way in which humans make meaning” (Hendry, 2010, p. 72); They are the way humanity organizes, develops and understands the experiences of life; therefore, it is the film “narrative itself that is the topic of investigation” (Harrison, 2002, p. 89) that this project will focus on. Gill and Goodson (2011) and Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2007) demonstrate that the relationship between stories and life “are both connected to, and representative of” (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p. 463) identity; the identity contained within narratives and the stories told by all of humanity are

"simultaneously cultural, historical, social and personal" (Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 158). All of these factors will make teaching a film and video course simultaneously challenging and exciting. Students want to tell their stories: motivating students to discuss and share their experiences of creating their films should be relatively easy. However, the interpretation, transformation, and representation of stories can be problematic. Different interpretations and understandings can arise from viewings by audiences. Therefore, it is important for the student-creators of the films to be involved in this process, to bring clarity to the differences in interpretation that will inevitably happen during in-class and online discussions. However, differences in interpretation can also add layers of understanding to narratives, which is an important process of growth in critical media literacy (to be explored in further detail in chapter 2).

To effectively understand and assist students through the film studies course, it will be important to listen to the narratives told by students. Throughout the course, students will record their stories and experiences in blogs as they co-create films and dialogue about the meanings found within peer made films. Insight will come from unstructured and informal online discussions of film where students collaboratively create community narratives of understanding. Harrison (2002) suggests that, in addition to language-based narratives humans use to understand and make sense of our world, we create, remember, and understand through "narrative picturing" (p. 95). She suggests that "narratives of remembering will involve elements of imagining and picturing" (p. 95) because language alone is insufficient for transforming visual experience, imagination, and

memory. The films created by students will be visual and aural narratives that might enable students and their peers to “provide order, structure and direction in life in richer and more integrated ways” (Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 158). The goal of this course and project is to help students collaboratively construct meaning of their world and share their understanding with other students and communities.

As students navigate and encounter the various different media and narratives in the digital world, it is important to teach students the attitudes and knowledge to independently direct their learning, understand and critically evaluate the technology and media intertwined into their lives. Critical media literacy needs to be integrated across the curriculum and cannot become just one more class that students take during their secondary education (Swenson, Young, McGrail, Rozema & Whitin, 2006). We need to create a culture of students who can independently critically evaluate and understand the vast amounts of media that surround them. Students are in constant contact with technology, it has become an increasingly important way in which they interact with their world and, maybe, in the not so distant future, physically part of who they are. Amber Case (2011) argues that many people have already physically integrated technology into their lives through the use of external digital systems to interact with the world. Therefore, teaching students critical media literacy across the curriculum is a must. Education needs to catch up to equip students with the skills to understand and critical evaluate media, and understand what it means to be a digital citizen in today’s world.

Conclusion

Students have a number of representation tools available to them which they can share and create through technology. Web technologies and social media has increased students' ability to communicate and represent their values and interests; film and video is only one small part of how students use technology and media to create and interact with their world. The purpose of this film and video studies course is to not only enable students with the abilities and knowledge to collaboratively create film and video projects, but also help students share their complex interests and values to positively impact others as they independently and collaboratively critically evaluate, understand, and create meaning from various types and forms of film and video.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

> We must teach communication comprehensively in all its forms. Today we work with the written or spoken word as the primary form of communication. But we also need to understand the importance of graphics, music, and cinema, which are just as powerful and in some ways more deeply intertwined with young people's culture. We live and work in a visually sophisticated world, so we must be sophisticated in using all the forms of communication, not just the written word. (Lucas, as cited by Daly, 2004, n.p.)

Introduction

In this literature review supporting lessons for a film and video studies course, I will discuss: adolescents; adolescent literacy, new media literacies; critical media literacy; the relevant Ministry of Education Integrated Resources Packages and current Ministry of Education initiatives; 21st-century education and personalized learning; the trends in, impact of, and the role of technology in students' lives and the classroom; and, lastly, the potential in the use of film studies in the classroom and students as filmmakers.

Adolescents and Adolescent Literacy

Adolescence is a period of time when young people undergo great changes and developments physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. Physically, their body is transitioning into the adult stage of its development. Their intellectual capacities are greatly increasing as they learn to problem-solve and think abstractly. Adolescents are also emotionally and socially shaping their

identity; taking risks, navigating relationships with family, peers and their community. They are attempting to place themselves socially within peer groups, looking for validation and recognition from their social groups rather than from parents or adults. As adolescents grow and mature in these ways, it is important for parents and educators to support this period of change and independence by giving adolescents safe opportunities to interact, grow and develop.

As adolescents grow cognitively, so do educator's expectations pertaining to adolescents' literacy. Literacy, according to the *National Council of Teachers of English* (2007), "encompasses reading, writing, and a variety of social and intellectual practices" (p. 2) including gestural motions and multimedia. Furthermore, as adolescents learn literacy in school, it is important for teachers to affirm and value the social literacies students bring to the classroom from other out-of-school communities (NCTE, 2007). To prepare students for graduation and life outside of school, Wise (2009) suggests literacy is the primary goal for education and "is, in reality, the cornerstone of achievement, for any student in any grade" (p. 373) because it will help students to be successful beyond public education. Padilla-Walker (2006) recognizes that as adolescents of the 21st-century "seek to define themselves independently of their parents, they often turn to media as sources of self-socialization," and identity (p. 1). The technology of today, such as the Internet and its ubiquitous connection with adolescents through phones and computers, affirms educators' and scholars' attempts to make integration of literacy skills across the curriculum of the utmost importance.

Changing Literacies: New Media Literacies and Critical Media Literacy

In the epigram at the beginning of this chapter, famed film director George Lucas expresses the opinion that educators *must* teach students what scholars term the "new media literacies" (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Gee, 2000; Hobbs & Frost 2003) and critical thinking skills. The idea that students need to be taught media literacy skills is not new, in fact, it has been a discourse in education for over two decades (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Hobbs, 2004; Hobbs & Frost 2003; Swenson et al., 2006; The New London Group, 1996). However, the advancements we experience almost daily around "new media/technologies are fundamentally and irreversibly affecting how ideas get represented in texts and communicated" (Alvermann, 2004, p. 78). Therefore, "literacy educators are responding to the social and cultural changes brought about by the increased dominance of visual and electronic media in the culture" (Hobbs, 2004, p. 46). In a 2003 study with grade 11 students, Hobbs and Frost discover that "media literacy instruction improves students' ability to identify main ideas in written, audio, and visual media" (p. 331). However, Hobbs and Frost note that educators perceive the study of media to be less rigorous than traditional print-based literacy instruction, although their research also reveals that media based literacy instruction can be effective in meeting traditional academic goals. Therefore, "[t]eachers need be less fearful of making use of a wider range of multimedia" (p. 350). Furthermore, Hobbs and Frost suggest "[s]tudents who received media-literacy instruction appeared to have a more nuanced understanding of interpreting textual evidence in different media formats

to identify an author's multiple purposes and intended target audience" (p. 351). Palfrey and Gasser (2011) also recognize the importance of literacy and the influence of technology, therefore, educators need to "figure out how to impart good media literacy skills" and that "this is the place where librarians and teachers are the most crucial (p. 200)." Jenkins et al. (2006) argue:

> [S]chools should always teach students critical thinking skills for 'sussing out' the quality of information, yet historically schools have had a tendency to fall back on the gatekeeping functions of professional editors and journalists, not to mention of textbook selection committee and librarians, to ensure that the information is generally reliable. (p. 44)

Critical thinking skills taught across curriculums will help students as they interact in online digital spaces outside of the school context. Hobbs (2004) recognizes another aspect of media literacy, that is, "students as media makers, composing for school newspapers and video yearbooks; creating public service announcements, narrative films, and music videos; writing film scripts" (p. 49). Thus, media literacy not only involves critical analysis of the media they encounter, but also the critical sharing and creation of media.

The interactive web technologies widely available today, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Wikipedia, allow students "the chance to become *involved* in the making of culture and the making of the knowledge base. They have a chance at a much richer, much more participatory way of learning and interacting with the world" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2011, pp. 200-201). They live in a participatory culture that encourages creativity and collaboration (Jenkins et al.,

2006), students “love social information platforms” (Palfrey & Gasser, 2011, p. 201) and they are highly capable of critical analysis. According to Itō et al. (2010), the literacy that educators should be teaching in the 21st-century “involves not only ways of understanding, interpreting, and critiquing media, but also the means for creative and social expression, online search and navigation, and a host of new technical skills” (p. xii). Considering the opinions and arguments of these scholars, new media literacy involves critical analysis of media when students both encounter and create texts.

Critical media literacy can be “defined in many ways [d]epending on one's perspective or theoretical frame” (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000, p. 194). Through their extensive research on literacy, Alvermann and Hagood (2000) describe a multifaceted definition of critical media literacy which should be implemented across the curriculum:

> [C]ritical media literacy should be understood to reside within theoretical perspectives aimed at engaging students in the analysis of textual images (both print and nonprint), the study of audiences, and the mapping of such positions become cause for celebration rather than distrust. (p. 194)

Students do not need educators to constantly critique popular culture and media, but teach students the abilities and knowledge to empower students as creators, “readers, viewers, and learners” (p. 194). The authors suggest “critical media literacy is a natural and necessary component of day-to-day literacy instruction” (p. 201) in schools due to the “blurring of boundaries” (p. 196) caused by advances and changes in technology and culture. Kist (2000) describes a new

literacy classroom as engaged, collaborative, and in representation, "resource-rich, interdisciplinary environment that students currently live in outside of the school day" (p. 717). Critical media literacy aims to give students the ability and tools to understand, create, and evaluate the multimodal texts they encounter in school and, more importantly, outside of school, such as, interactions online and others sources of media. Technology has changed how we interact with the world, for 21st-century students of a technological democratic world, these literacy skills are a must; therefore, the implementation of teaching these is a curriculum goal, I think, that all educators can agree upon.

Educational Reform and the Ministry of Education in British Columbia (BC): 21st Century Education and Personalized Learning

The Ministry of Education in BC also agrees that "the world has changed… the way we educate our children should too" (Ministry of Education, 2011a, p. 1). The Ministry has released documents at www.bcedplan.ca outlining how and why public education in BC will change, but has yet to rewrite, change or even revise the outdated IRPs currently used by teachers. The BCED plan outlines a "simple principle" that will transform the educational system in BC: it states that "every learner will realize their full potential and contribute to the well-being of our province" (p. 5). To bring change to the system, "the plan has five key elements: 1) Personalized learning for every student, 2) Quality teaching and learning, 3) Flexibility and choice, 4) High standards, 5) Learning empowered by technology" (p. 5). The Ministry of Education hopes that these five elements will

combine to produce an education system that will be more tailored for students' needs as they graduate and pursue lives after public school.

Personalized learning and 21st-century learning seem to be the rallying cry for the Ministry right now (2011a; 2011b). The Ministry has also released supporting documents to the BCED plan and an interactive website entitled "Personalized Learning in BC" (Ministry of Education, 2011b, p. 1), which outlines what the Ministry's vision of personalized education may be. However, what is unclear is how personalized learning and 21st-century education is to be implemented. Almost certainly, this duty will fall to teachers and administrators as they will be the ones who will ultimately interpret and implement personalized learning and 21st-century education in their own teaching practice and for students and schools.

Ministry of Education Integrated Resource Packages: *Film and Television* and *Information Communications Technology*

When considering integrating technology, new media literacies and critical media literacy into a film and video studies course, I started by looking at the *Television and Video* and *Information Communications Technology* Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) provided by the Ministry of Education of BC. My first observation is that they are both quite old (1997; 2003) especially given the pace of technological change since their last revision. Also, importantly, I noted that the two IRPs complement each other. Many of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) contained within each IRP could and should be integrated with the other as technology and media have increasingly become integrated into the

lives of students. In the film and video studies course I am proposing, using the current *Television and Video* and *Information Communications Technology* IRPs and considering the Ministry's new BCED Plan, students will be provided "opportunities… to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to respond to and create film and television works" (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. 21). The IRP for *Film and Television* divides the Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) into 5 different organizers. They are: "Exploration and Analysis, Drama Skills, Context (Social, Cultural, and Historical), Context (Industry), Technologies and Processes" (pp. A-3 – A-4). While the lessons in Chapter 3 will include the PLOs from the *Film and Television* IRP, many of the PLOs from the *Information Communications Technology* IRP will also be essential within the context of a film and video studies course. In fact, considering the importance of critical media skills and the ways technology has integrated into everyday life for students, one could argue, as Alvermann and Hagood (2000) do, that the *Information Communications Technology* IRP should be integrated across the curriculum into all subjects. The *Information Communications Technology* IRP aims to "help students develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to live, learn, and work effectively in an information-rich technological society" (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 1). The *Film and Television* IRP was revised in April 2011; however, this revision was undertaken only "to remove references to the 1995 Graduation Program" (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, n. p). The *Information Communications Technology* (2003) IRP replaces the 1996 IRP, however, it is

over 10 years old, which is an eternity when considering the advances in technology over the same timespan. In fact, some of the ministry resource links contained within the IRP, for example Appendix B, are broken. Under the BCED plan, all of these IRPs are meant to undergo revisions and changes; however, the ministry initiative to start this process has yet to begin.

21st-Century Education, Learners and Technology

The world has changed since 1997 when the IRPs were written. Educators, parents, and administrators were only just beginning to anticipate widespread changes that the Internet and connectivity might bring to education in the early 21st-century (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Prensky, 2001a; 2001b; The New London Group, 1996). Today's adolescents are much different than the adolescents of 1997, although, technically, both groups are *digital natives*. I was an adolescent in 1997 and could be considered a *digital native* (those born after 1980) (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; 2011; Prensky, 2001a; 2001b; 2010; 2011). However, my experience, and the experience of those who were adolescents in 1997, was quite different than the experiences of students with the Internet and technology today (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; 2011; Prensky, 2001a; 2001b; 2010; 2011; Thomas, 2011). Teachers are no longer teaching in the 20th-century, and hopefully not still relying on 19th-century pedagogy and 20th-century technology to teach 21st-century students. We are well into the 21st-century, where discourses of educational reform are focusing around such buzz terms as: technology, *digital natives,* 21st-century education and personalized learning. Many scholars, educators and researchers have suggested we should not teach "technology in

isolation, we would do better to take an ecological approach, thinking about the interrelationship among all of these different communication technologies, the cultural communities that grow up around them, and the activities they support" (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 8; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). Supporting the teaching and integration of technology and critical media literacy skills into all subject areas by all teachers is vitally important. Technology keeps advancing and integrating into the lives of students, resulting in "more and more educators… finding that they now have to keep up with their students' level of technological competence" (Skinner, 2007, p. 37). So, who, exactly, are these *digital natives* and how do they interact with their technology rich, connected world?

Digital Natives and Participatory Culture

In *Confronting the challenges of a participatory culture: media education for the 21st century* by Jenkins et al. (2006), the authors cite a Pew study in 2005, which discovered that "more than one-half of all teens have created media content, and roughly one-third of teens who use the Internet have shared content they produced" (p. 5). Considering how quickly technology has changed the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the last couple of decades, these ratios, seven years later, have increased dramatically (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Pesce & Tercek, 2011). Technology and the Internet has already become increasingly integrated into the curriculum, either by teachers or by the actions of students, *digital natives*, themselves. It would be detrimental to student learning if "teachers largely ignore the influence of media and ICT [information communication technology] literacies on youth's functioning both in and out of

school, they may fail to benefit from insights that could be learned from tapping into literacies that count in today's youth culture" (Alvermann, 2004, p. 81). However, teachers should not "co-opt youth culture" (p. 81), but recognize and validate students' out of school literacies because, as Alvermann notes, there is "evidence that adolescents are making valuable reading-writing connections in their bid to communicate in a computer-mediated world" (p. 81). Many students create content online using web 2.0 applications and send the teacher a link to this *public* media for assessment. Students have found the Internet to be a convenient place where they can create, collaborate, and share from wherever and/or whenever they wish to. Palfrey and Gasser suggest adolescents, or *digital natives,* "study, work, write, and interact with each other in ways that are very different" (2008, p. 2) from their parents and teachers. They experience relationships, music, media, and information much differently than their parents did; they live in digitally mediated spaces and have collaboratively created a *participatory culture*, where they feel free and compelled to create, co-create, criticize and curate (Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). It is astounding to consider the ways in which the digital era has transformed our lives socially, politically, economically and even physically; individuals separated by thousands of miles and an ocean may "collaborate creatively or politically in ways that would have been impossible thirty years ago" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 5). Technology provides students more avenues and possibilities to communicate and interact with their peers, community and even globally than any other previous generation. According to the research done by George Clark (2012),

“Canadians are among the most active users of social media in the world" (n.p.). In a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporations (CBC) in 2011, “16.6 million Canadians used Facebook at least once a month” (as cited by G. Clark, 2012, n.p.), many of whom are teenagers. Adolescent use of technology and social media is fairly widespread, but there are adolescents who do not yet have the experience, knowledge or even access.

When using digital technologies with students it is imperative for educators to remember “the participation gap” (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 3), “the huge divide it’s opening up between that haves and have nots” (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 14) and that “access to these technologies is not enough. Young people need to learn digital literacy” (p. 15) which involves critical media literacy. Prensky (2010) suggests a few ways in which educators may attempt to circumvent the participation gap:

> It is important that partnering teachers continue to encourage the use of technology and not hold back because some students do not have the same access as others. Students who don’t have the technology need to be accommodated by putting them on teams or partnering them with those who do and by making sure labs, libraries and other places with the technology are open. (p. 99)

Palfrey and Gasser (2008) and Prensky (2010) also, interestingly, note that teachers do not have to be technology experts: many *digital natives* are. In fact, Prensky (2010), in his own personal model, explicitly states that technology is for students, not teachers; educators should be guides, not necessarily experts.

However, students are not all technology experts, some students might know a lot about technology because it is integrated into their lives, but they, at times, merely consume and do not critical assess the media and technologies they are interacting with. Teachers will need to direct students to potential technologies that may aid learning and critical analysis, but not be tempted to use the technology to produce and represent for students who would then assume a passive role and fail to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities of appropriate technology use.

Although *many digital natives* are the experts, they will have a surprisingly large variation in expertise. Some may have much to learn in the use and operation of digital tools (Itō et al., 2010). Prensky (2010) suggests, somewhat controversially, that all students are *digital natives.* It is not what technologies they use, or have knowledge of, but a different way to *be* and interact with the world. Students are "developing knowledge and identity, coming of age, and struggling for autonomy as did their predecessors, but they are doing this while the contexts for communication, friendship, play, and self-expression are being reconfigured through their engagement with new media" (Itō et al., 2010, p. 1). In contrast, Palfrey and Gasser (2011) suggest that *digital natives* are a population contained within a generation. Is there a "generation of young people all using technology in the same way… the answer is no" (p. 188). Ultimately, Palfrey and Gasser have decided to redefine and use the term, *digital natives,* to describe a:

> core idea, what we mean when we talk about digital natives, is to allow a term to describe a subset of today's youth; the manners in which they

> relate to information, technology and one another; the problems that arise from some of these practices; and the new possibilities for creativity, learning, entrepreneurship and innovation. (p. 188)

Reflecting 10 years after he wrote *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,* Prensky reiterates that term *digital natives* "was intended to be a metaphor for describing the differences… between the attitudes of younger and older people regarding digital technology" (2011, p. 15). Prensky has since developed a concept of "digital wisdom" (p. 18), which not only includes the use of technology, but also critical thinking skills and new media literacy skills. It is these refined definitions of the term *digital natives* that I will be employing and applying throughout this project. Not all students are *digital natives,* however, defining the current generation of students who have grown up with technology is "much more about culture. It is younger people's comfort with technology" (p. 17) and the ways in which technology has changed and is continually shaping a *participatory culture*.

The New London Group (1996) recognize that "new communications media are reshaping the ways we use language" (p. 64). Multiliteracies, according to the New London Group, involve the "increasing complexity and inter-relationship of different modes of meaning" (p. 78). Much of the media that adolescents are subjected to daily involve "metalanguages," many modes, such as, "linguistic design, visual design, audio design, gestural design, spatial design, and multimodal design…" where multimodal design "represents the patterns of interconnection among the other modes" (p. 78). *Digital natives* navigate and are primary players in the construction of a *technological participatory culture* in

which they are in constant contact; where they are constantly switching between modes, using media to communicate, collaborate and share in a distinctly different way than previous generations did.

Palfrey and Gasser (2008), in *Born Digital*, outline many issues, topics and themes that keep recurring in the digital age. *Digital natives* live their lives in "digitally mediated ways" (p. 19) and "almost never distinguish between the online and offline versions of themselves" (p. 20). Palfrey and Gasser (2007) recognize that *digital natives* "are absolutely right not to distinguish between 'online' and 'offline' identities" (p. 36) because they are living in a time where there "is a real synthesis of real-space and online expressions of self" (p. 35). Through the use of a digital medium, adolescents have the ability to experiment and reinvent their identities many times over through many "different modes of expression, such as YouTube and blogging" (p. 21). There are thousands of ways adolescents can explore and expand who and what they want to be - all online. In fact, the way in which adolescents use technology is changing "our understanding of identity" (p. 21). The many opportunities that exist for students to explore identity and reinvent themselves via the Internet are amazing, such as, the ubiquitous use of social media by adolescents.

The prevalence of information communication technologies in students lives point to the increasing importance of helping students to develop "the skills and the tools they need to navigate these new, hybrid environments in ways to keep them safe, online and offline" (p. 85). Internet safety and digital skills need to be integrated into the curriculum and taught by teachers and parents from the

moment a young person starts to use a computer. Looking at the trend over the past decade, students in Canada are not going to become less connected, but more so (CBC, 2011, as cited by G. Clark, 2012, n.p.; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Prenksy, 2011), and this connectedness will occur at ever younger ages. Already more and more young people are carrying smart phones (Vasudevan, 2010), which are continually connected to the Internet, social networks, and the world. It is imperative that parents and teachers become involved with *digital natives* as they explore online environments and spaces, although often parents and teachers may feel lost, inadequate, and, frankly, scared. However, Palfrey and Gasser (2008) suggest that "our children, in many cases, will be our guides" (p. 110) and, in turn, "we can help guide them through the bad neighborhoods of cyberspace… And we can help them to keep themselves safe, online and off" (p. 110). Providing students with the skills to safely and critically navigate the informative, creative and social spaces is paramount.

Collaborative Creativity

One of the key features of this new *participatory culture* of *digital natives* is that it is creative and collaborative (Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). It is important to note that in a *participatory culture, "*members believe their contributions matter" (p. 3). Jenkins et al. (2006) identify four main areas in which *digital natives* interact with each other: "affiliations, expressions, collaborative problem-solving and circulations" (p. 3). The most savvy of *digital natives* will be highly successful once they enter the workforce through the benefits of a *participatory culture* because they possess these highly desirable abilities, skills

and knowledge developed by their culture. This culture provides “opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, a changed attitude toward intellectual property, the diversification of cultural expression, the development of skills valued in the modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship”, which may become a part of a “hidden curriculum” for those who do not have access (p. 3). Some students may fail to acquire the hidden curriculum skills if they fall into the *participation gap* (those without technological access) and the knowledge, skills and abilities that are not practiced and taught in formal education. *Participatory culture* builds on the “foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical analysis skills taught in the classroom” to a “focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement” (p. 4). The collaborative and technical skills of *participatory culture* should transfer to a film and video course because film projects often require many participants to cooperate and work together to create and produce.

Film and Video

Film projects can require the cooperation involve many participants and consume countless hours of planning, preparation, and production. They can be quite complex, time consuming and labour intensive (Lemish, 2011). They require a number of specific skills and talents to create. Jenkins et al. (2006) identify a number of new skills that *digital natives* have already started to cultivate and hone, which would be essential skills to develop and scaffold on in a film and video studies course:

> **Play** — the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving
>
> **Performance** — the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery
>
> **Simulation** — the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes
>
> **Appropriation** — the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content
>
> **Multitasking** — the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus as needed to salient details.
>
> **Distributed Cognition** — the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities
>
> **Collective Intelligence** — the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal
>
> **Transmedia Navigation** — the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities
>
> **Negotiation** — the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms. (p. 4)

Many of these skills have already been learned, developed, and practiced online by the most astute and savvy *digital natives*. They did not learn these skills from a parent or a teacher in school, college and university, but in the field – online (Jenkins et al., 2006; Itō, M. et al., 2010; Palfrey & Gasser, 2011; Vasudevan,

2010). And they are online constantly "switching back and forth between various tasks one after another" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2011, p. 192). Adolescents are not trying to do many things at once, but fully focusing their attention in bursts to different topics and interests. This can be identified as "switch-tasking rather than multitasking" (p. 192), which "young people who use technology extensively can actually become quite good at" (p. 193). Teachers sometimes find this characteristic of technology and *digital natives* to be distracting and sometimes offensive (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008) because some teachers may believe that a more traditional method, such as, concentrated focused attention is the best way to learn and complete projects or assignments.

As students constantly navigate, access, and create digital content, *digital natives* have come to expect that all information be delivered in digital format. Many students would rather spend an evening searching for videos they are interested in than sitting and watching analogue programming on television (I had a student tell me: "YouTube is my TV. I usually spend a couple hours a night searching and viewing videos"). The practice of searching out videos on YouTube is far from passive. In fact, YouTube has become "the search entity with the second-most number of search inquires in the US, second only to Google" (p. 194). This is astounding considering that the content on YouTube is comprised of user-generated videos and the comments posted by viewers.

Digital natives have reacted to and built on the "explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content in powerful new ways" (Jenkins et al.,

2006, p. 8). Through including technology into classroom there is a hope that the "static" state of formal educational institutions can embrace the "innovative" learning that is occurring in lives of adolescents today online (p. 9). Adolescents are already shaping popular culture as they create and interact in informal creative learning environments. *Participatory culture* empowers *digital natives* to become active players and leaders in political, social, and economic arenas, despite the common belief by many parents and teachers that the latest generation of adolescents is disempowered and complacent as they spend large amounts of time consuming digital media (Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

The BCED plan suggests that the traditional role of teachers needs to adapt and change in response to the digital era and the individual learning needs of students. The BCED plan also suggests that a more personalized approach to education is necessary to keep learners interested and active in today and tomorrow's world (Ministry of Education, 2011a). 21st-century education according to the BCED plan and Prensky (2010) suggests "adults (teachers) must focus on questioning, coaching, and guiding, providing context, ensuring rigor and meaning, and ensuring results" (p. 10). The time for lecturing, telling and showing students what they need to know is over because in general students are no longer listening. Knowledge is at student's fingertips and in their pockets, the computer and Internet are inexhaustible resources, however, students need to be taught how to critically and appropriately use technology to learn and represent. *Digital natives* do listen and engage when they are involved

in “discussions, sharing their own ideas, and hearing the ideas of their classmates” (p. 10) because that is part of the culture they have grown up in. They are ready to be challenged and are capable of learning, exploring, and figuring things out for themselves with the right mix of guidance and partnership. One way this state can be achieved is through 'partnering', Prensky defines “partnering” as “letting the students focus on the part of the learning process that they can do best, and letting the teacher focus on the part of the learning process that they can do best” (p. 13). This, however, for the teacher does not mean lecturing and telling, but “creating and asking the right questions, giving students guidance, putting material in context, explaining one-on-one, creating rigor [and] ensuring quality” (p. 13). Importantly, as Prensky points out, there is no “telling” by the teacher, only questioning and perhaps a few “suggestions of possible tools and places to start” (p. 13), which often results in more engagement by students. Hobbs (2004) also suggests “21st- century learning must de-emphasize the “tool focus… and emphasize instead the development of students’ critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity” (p. 54). The role of technology “is to support the partnering pedagogy and enable each student to personalize his or her learning process” (Prensky, 2010, p. 17). Personalized learning then does not fall to the teacher and intensify their teaching load, but relies on student use and application of digital technology and partnering to learn (Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2011b; Prensky, 2010). Technology becomes integrated into the curriculum instead of being an alternate lesson or exercise that often distracts *digital natives* from their learning (Prensky, 2010). For some *digital natives*

"being a participant in the 21st-century equates to being literate in media and ICTs in ways that exceed what many of their classroom teachers know or even consider worth knowing" (Alvermann, 2004, p. 78). As *digital natives* are given more autonomy in their learning and discovering, "in finding examples in multiple media, in creating and sharing their own examples, and in communicating with peers and writers around the globe" (Prensky, 2010, p. 17) teachers will notice "that students are often more motivated if they can share what they create with a larger community" (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 52). Technology provides students with public and distant authentic audiences to create for and interact with, which can be highly motivating and helpful for students (Kajder, 2010; NCTE, 2011). Web technologies, such as blogs and YouTube, provide students with relevant feedback and interpretations as audiences have the ability comment on writing and videos created and uploaded by students to the Internet (NCTE, 2011). The BCED Plan states the desire for parents and the community to become involved and support adolescents as they of learn. In this model, students' learning does not begin or end at the school doors, but continues throughout the day in partnership with the community that surrounds students.

As students participate in and shape in-school and out-of-school communities educators "have an opportunity to define, in partnership with youth, the shape of online participation and expression and new networked, institutional structures of peer based learning" (Itō et al., 2010, p. 341). Educators have the opportunity with students to influence, create and define digital practices and citizenship with students. To create these partnerships, Prensky (2010) outlines

several roles for the students and teacher to create and foster a respectful partnership in a learning environment. If educators allow students to assume these roles, it is “a sign of respect-respect that students are looking for” (p. 18). In a partnership with a teacher, a student should be seen as: “Researcher, Technology User and Expert, Thinker and Sense Maker, World Changer, Self-Teacher”; teachers should assume roles as Researcher, “Coach and guide, Goal Setter and Questioner, Learning Designer, Context Provider, Rigor Provider and Quality Assurer and Abandoning Total Control for Controlled Activity" (pp. 18-25). Other roles found within the partnering relationship are peer teaching roles for students, which often turnout to be the most effective (Prensky, 2010). Other partnerships essential for 21st-century learning include: administrators who support the pedagogy, technology and teaching, other teachers (more experienced in partnership relationships), the community, and other experts (including online communities consisting of other teachers and students), and parents (trusting that teachers are truly preparing their kids for the sometimes baffling 21st century world).

These vastly different roles and relationships in education are made possible by *digital natives* and the *participatory culture* students interact in (Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Prensky, 2010). Many of the different approaches will be difficult for both students and teachers; however, *digital natives* already assume many of these roles as they navigate, consume, explore, create and play in digital environments. For teachers, it may require a whole new framework, approach to pedagogy, self-identity, relinquishment of

control, and acts of humility. It is important to emphasize that partnering with students is personalized learning because "it is done student by student, rather than with classes as a whole" (Prensky, 2010, p. 21). To be effective partners with students, teachers need to fully embrace the roles defined by Prensky and "aim high, raise the bar" (p. 153). I am constantly amazed at the rigor, outstanding processes and products students are capable of: as educators give students more autonomy and choice, it is important to maintain high standards for creativity and deep, critical analysis.

Incorporating the 21st-Century into the Curriculum: Using Technology, Social Media, and Critical Media Literacy in Film and Video Studies Course

Incorporating technology and social media to foster critical media literacy in a film and video studies course can be highly motivating for students. When studying and producing films and videos, it should not be used merely for student enjoyment, entertainment and satisfaction, rather, "[m]edia production activities must support the development of critical-thinking skills about the media" (Hobbs, 2004, p. 49). Hobbs (2004) states:

> [w]hen teachers use videos, films, Web sites… in the K-12 classroom or when they involve students in creating media productions using video cameras or computers, they may aim to motivate students' interest in the subject, build communication and critical-thinking skills, encourage political activism, or promote personal and social development. (p. 42)

This approach was the aim of Skinner (2007). She used dialogic inquiry to develop students critical media literacy through the analysis and inclusion of

popular culture, magazines and film. Skinner discovered that "[s]tudents are fluent in multiple discourses" (p. 37) of the media they encounter daily. Therefore, it is important to recognize students' abilities and understanding of popular culture and media. Skinner recognizes students' abilities and understanding of popular culture media and incorporates these skills into the curriculum "because [the inclusion of popular culture media] provides opportunities for both pleasure and critical analysis as they design their own writing projects to address topics relevant to their lives" (p. 38) and teach critical analysis skills. It is through the incorporation of students' literacies and interests that Skinner is able to scaffold and foster critical media literacy in students. Through the inclusion of popular culture media, students develop critical media literacy and have the ability to tell their story and share their interests in ways that are relevant to their lives.

Vasudevan (2010) gives adolescent boys opportunity to share narratives through filmmaking and "explore the literacies, aesthetics, and digital practices associated with telling stories across multiple modes (writing, image, sound, and gesture)" (p.43). Vasudevan suggests "widespread social media use, particularly by youth, digitally mediated representation and communication are becoming increasingly diverse and more art-full" (p. 44) as students' "imaginations are finding homes across digital and digitally mediated social spaces" (48). Technology is providing opportunities for creative partnerships with students to create knowledge, learn, and play in personal and transformative ways. In a study with Scandinavian youth, Linstrand, Frølunde, Gilje, and Öhmann-Gullberg

(2011) discovered that young filmmakers often use the Internet to not only upload their productions to YouTube, Vimeo, and their own websites, but also for "disseminating films within a more formally oriented educational setting, [and their] quest to learn and develop as filmmakers" (p. 213). As students discover and dialogue with communities of common interests, it sometimes fosters creative collaboration between students through the use of technology in both online and person-to-person interactions (Linstrand et al., 2011; Vasudevan, 2010). The availability of technology and the skills of students has brought educators to a crossroads where "[t]eachers have an opportunity to engage in the pursuit of the imagination—to learn, play, and explore—with the children and youth who share their classrooms" (Vasudevan, 2010, p. 48). The very nature of social media and many web technologies such as YouTube and Prezi, encourage students to critically create, collaborate and share literacies.

From sharing and commenting about the viral video of the week, the latest Hollywood blockbuster, or the films made by students, all can "help students express themselves… or to frame their own place in society and raise their personal or collective agenda" (Levin, 2011, p. 141). Levin outlines three case studies of student-made films in a Jewish high school in Israel where the potential that "students' films have as alternative media… a space in which students could discuss… relevant matters by using fresh and authentic voices" (p. 139). However, students are not able to create such high impact films by merely being given cameras and teachers telling them to make a film, but, rather, through critical analysis and discourses of media, relevant research and

knowledge about the issue/topic, and being prepared to engage in conversations with each other as they direct, produce and premiere student made films (p. 152). Teachers need to partner with students to guide and assist students as filmmakers. Lemish (2011) also recognizes these important steps in student filmmaking and "the potential to develop, deep, even critical, understandings of social life and thus contribute in significant ways to students' capabilities as filmmakers as well as their participation as responsible participants in civic life" (p. 283). To help students create quality films that, potentially, change and expand perspectives on student issues it is important for student filmmakers to (1) continually question, research, and dialogue with each other during the production process to gain knowledge about the perceived issue/topic, (2) critically present, and integrate the knowledge and perspectives gained, (3) reflect and discuss the challenges presented by the explorations on a topic/issue, and (4) apply the knowledge gained into the film and test it contextually (Lemish, 2011; Levin, 2011). Film and video production gives students a safe context where they are able to explore some of the topics and issues important to them, their peers and community.

Tisdell (2008) explores how educators can use "popular culture and entertainment media to develop critical media literacy and to facilitate transformative learning around diversity and equity issues" with adult learners (p. 48). Like the relationship to the digital world and *digital natives,* Tisdell recognizes the immersion of popular culture and entertainment media within the conscious and subconscious identities of self. Through an extensive review of

literature, Tisdell demonstrates that entertainment media has the "power both to educate, when people critically reflect… and to "miseducate," when viewers are passive consumers" (p. 49). The same is true of adolescents and their directed or passive use of technology as they critically develop and shape their learning. It is easy to copy and paste media and content from Google and Wikipedia into a Prezi the night before a presentation as it is to consume and watch a favourite movie. Students are surrounded by media, and "it's fruitless for educators to argue the evils of media consumption" (p. 49): it is far more important to teach students to critically analyze the constant bombardment and interactions with media to bring about positive change and, potentially, transformative learning. Tisdell attempts to do just this when she uses the multimodal design of film to generate "important conversations on controversial topics" (p. 49). Media has the ability to:

> [r]eflect what's happening in our culture, it also has a role in shaping it as it raises viewers' consciousness about issues… in essence, this is the point… to raise questions and awareness, and to help people think about issues and assumptions in new and creative ways" (p. 52)

Technology and media, for *digital natives,* "is a source of pleasure that affects learning, that the media can both reinforce and resist the ideology of the dominant culture" (p. 53), therefore recognizing the importance of media and technology in students' lives and its inclusion across curriculum is important because it can teach critical media literacy. Tisdell notes that during the process of developing critical media literacy through film, "individuals challenge each

other to analyze media in new ways, which were seen as the most effective" (p. 60) to create diverse and potentially transformative meanings through peer interactions and teaching. Films can often generate emotion and affect (Tisdell, 2008); *digital natives* can also be quite passionate about their digital technologies, spaces and skills (Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Prensky, 2010). In fact, it is these very reactions to media that can bring about critical media literacy, potential transformation… and even social, economic and political change. As one participant noted: "it wasn't simply the movie; it was the movie and the discussion of it that lead to greater understanding" (p. 60). Creative projects, online communication, presentations and other forms of interacting to create meaning can deepen critical thinking, critical media literacy and, potentially, foster further transformation of not only participants, but also the families, friends, peers and communities of students.

Conclusion

Through a framework of critical media literacy, the technological culture our students inhabit, and a framework of how technology is understood and used by *digital natives,* a film and video studies and production course would aim to partner teachers with students to critically and collaboratively create meaning through discussion and production of film and video. The films and videos of students, potentially, can give students voice, positively impact their peers and communities through bringing awareness and perspective to values, interests, and issues important to students and to the greater society.

Glossary

Creative Commons – works with current copyright laws to provide opportunities to share and allow others to copy and distribute media that is made available under a creative commons license. For more information see http://creativecommons.org/

Critical Literacy – promotes that texts should be actively and reflectively critically analyzed to reveal underlying issues, meanings and messages. Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) through an extensive review of literature and research describe critical literacy in "four dimensions: (1) disrupting the commonplace, (2) interrogating the multiple viewpoints, (3) focusing on sociopolitical issues, and (4) taking action and promoting social justice" (p.382).

Critical Media Literacy – respects and uses interest in media to teach people to critically access, analyze, evaluate, and create media. It "involves a multiperspectival critical inquiry of media culture and the cultural industries that address issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and power and also promotes the production of alternative counter-hegemonic media" (Kellner & Share, 2007, pp.8-9).

Critical Thinking – "is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking" (Foundation of Critical Thinking, 2011, n.p.).

Digital Citizenship – the knowledge and abilities that enable students to use technology in appropriate and responsible ways.

Digital Native – a subset of people born after 1980 that have interacted and used digital technology from an early age (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; 2011; Prenksy, 2001a; 2001b; 2010; 2011).

Elgg – is an open-source social networking engine. For more information see http://elgg.org/

Ethical Digital Behaviour – closely related to digital citizenship, involves the appropriate uses and behaviours pertaining to digital technologies, such as, respecting copyright law.

Open-Source – refers to the source code of an application or program that is made available for public use and modification for free. Generally, open-source products are a collaborative effort where many people work together to improve a product.

Personalized Learning – “provides individual learners with the differentiated instruction and support they need to gain the required knowledge, skills and competencies and also provides them with the flexibility and choice they need to develop their individual interests and passions” (Ministry of Education, 2011b, p.28).

CHAPTER THREE: FILM STUDIES LESSON PLANS

Overview

In this chapter I present 6 lesson plans for inclusion in a secondary school film and video studies course. All of the lessons, especially the first two, incorporate the use of a secure open-source social media engine called Elgg. In fact, the use of Elgg in a film and video studies course could easily be implemented into any course to teach students digital citizenship and critical media literacy knowledge, skills and abilities. The other lessons also incorporate Elgg into the course, but primarily focus on developing student skills as filmmakers and critical media literacy to equip students with the abilities to communicate their values and interests effectively through digital video. The lessons consist of outlines, purpose, and connections to Ministry IRP documents and research, rationale, as well as, teaching suggestions, extensions, handouts, and assessment rubrics (handouts and rubrics can be found at the end of each lesson). The lessons attempt to use the current outdated Ministry of Education PLOs found in the *Film and Television* (1997) and *Information Communications Technology* (2003) IRPs. However, the IRPs are in need of revisions and an update to match the current public educational reform initiatives found in the BCED Plan (2011). These lessons attempt to apply 21st-century education methods and resources to 20th-century ministry documents. Hopefully, educators may find this resource useful in not only a film studies course, but also English language arts and social studies courses across many grade levels. Hopefully, it will also inspire and motivate educators to continue the journey in developing and

expanding student's literacies, digital citizenship and the inclusion of technology in the classroom. Below is a visual representation of the possible sequential order the lessons found in this project may occur over the course of a semester.

Possible Lesson Order

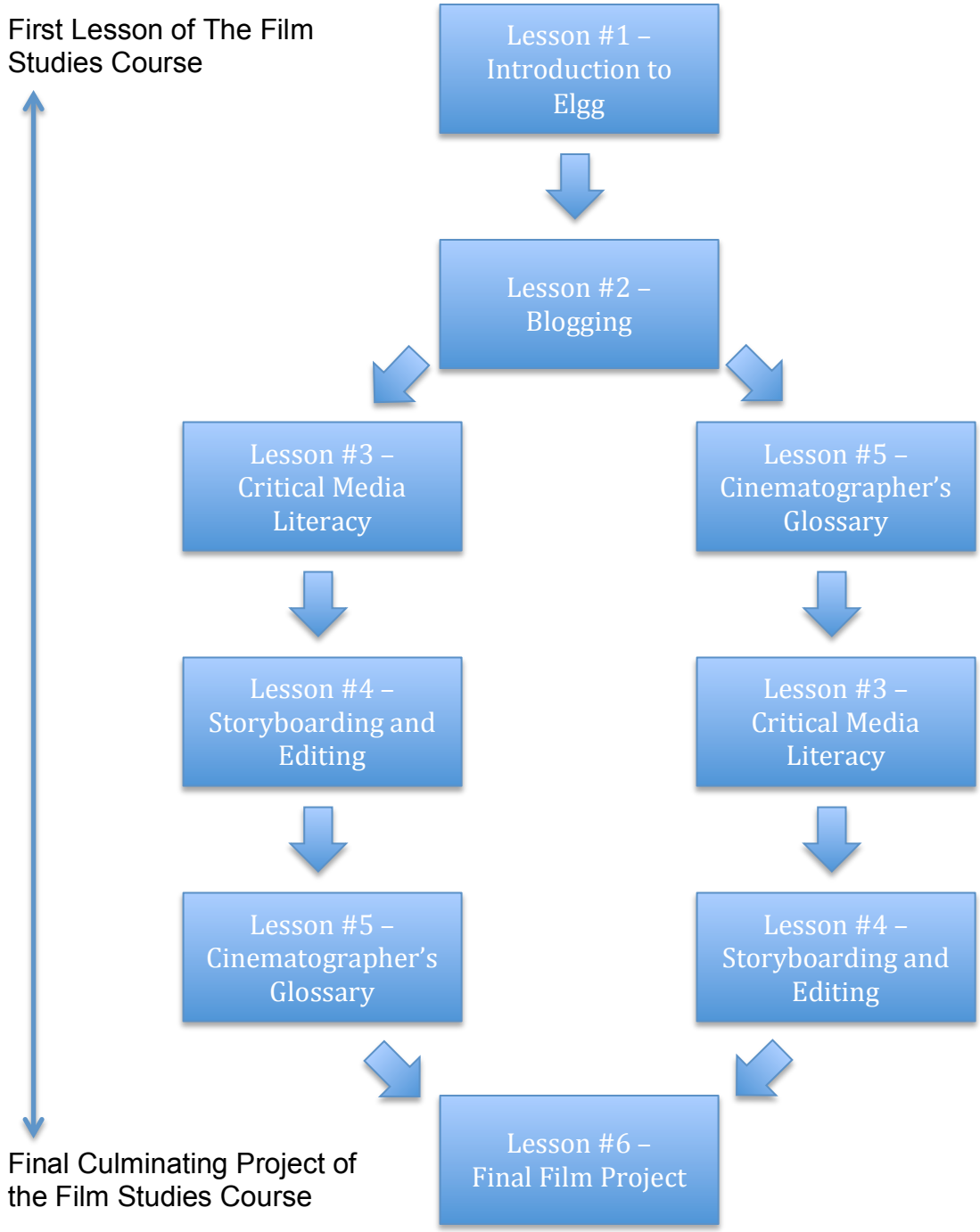
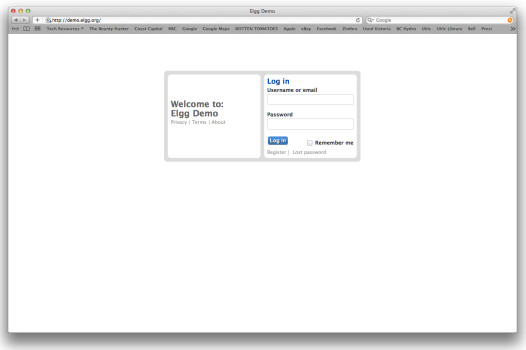


Figure 3.1 Possible Lesson Order

Lesson Plan #1 – Introduction to Elgg

Using Open-Source Social Networking to Aid Learning, Student Engagement, Communication, and Digital Citizenship and in Film Studies: Introduction to Elgg



Film and Video Studies 11/12

Introduction to Elgg

- Two 80-minute sessions
- Use of a social media engine to develop digital citizenship skills, empower students, enrich interactions and deepen learning through a connected and collaborative classroom.

Overview

This lesson scaffolds the skills that students already have with social communications technologies, such as Facebook and Twitter, which are essential for developing 21st-century learners. This lesson aims to provide students with opportunities to synchronously and asynchronously communicate, collaborate, and create using technology. Motivation, relevance, and autonomy play an important role in the education of students. Through the lesson, with the use of social media, students will become highly motivated to share their thoughts and ideas, participate discussions, collaborate on coursework, and learn digital citizenship skills all within the context of a film and video studies course. Giving students opportunities to connect and communicate with peers throughout the course provides a student-centred approach to learning and participation. It is an effective and engaging way to develop students' critical media literacy skills,

and increase both their academic participation and social interactions within and outside the classroom context.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Explore the Elgg environment and customize their profiles in Elgg.
- Continue to use Elgg throughout the semester to develop appropriate behaviours in digital citizenship as they communicate, collaborate and share their learning in a digitally ethical way (to be explored throughout the semester).

Rationale

The PLOs (found below) will be achieved in the lesson through students' ongoing participation in Elgg. Elgg will be an important collaborative and organizational tool for students to create their own groups to fulfill the requirements of their projects and duties. Through the use of Elgg, the teacher will be able to observe student behaviour, work habits and their development of online communication skills as they use Elgg to work together and plan film projects, evaluate (through comments and interactions with others), and build an online learning community. Students will also use the *Creative Commons Resource Page* to develop ethical digital media skills and demonstrate ethical practices as they share and create digitally using Elgg.

Resources

Elgg: Elgg is a closed, secure, open-source social networking application. It provides students safe opportunities to share ideas, files and content; connect,

and communicate with other students and the teacher in the film and video studies course. Students have the ability to customize their profiles, upload content, link to their Twitter account, and other content found on the Internet. It will help students to develop digital citizenship skills, publish, share, and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings as they study and create film and video throughout the semester. Elgg also gives students opportunities to organize and collaborate synchronously and asynchronously as they work together on film projects.

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Prensky, M. (2010). Teaching digital natives: Partnering for real learning. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin.

- Prensky (2010) observes that today's students:

  want to be respected, trusted, and to have their opinions valued and count… want to create, using the tools of their time… want to work with their peers on group work and projects… want to make decisions and share control, want to connect with their peers to express and share their opinions in class and around the world (pp. 2-3).

- Elgg provides a safe and secure social network for students to share and collaborate digitally without allowing outsiders to access the content created and shared by students. It will also give students opportunities to practice, develop and understand critical media literacy skills and appropriate digital behaviours.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Information Technology* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television

- demonstrate a willingness to delegate and accept responsibility in a group
- evaluate their work and that of others (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology

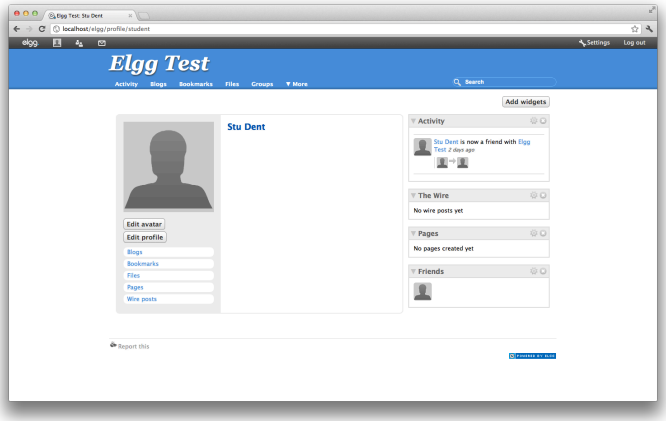
- demonstrate a moral, ethical, legal, and courteous approach to the use of technology (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with Internet access
- Install and set up Elgg for the class on school/district server

Student Interactives



Elgg allows students to create personal profiles, share, comment, blog, create groups, add media, link to external websites, collaborate and much more all in a closed network.

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- Rubric for *Elgg participation and peer-interactions* found on p.51
- Creative commons links and resources

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Set up Elgg site for the course. May need school/district technology assistant to help with server setup.
2. Create profiles for the teacher and all the students.
3. Create *Elgg Rules and Regulations page*. Make public and allow all logged in users to edit.
4. Create *Creative Commons* page. Introduce the concept of the creative commons and provide links to websites that provides access to media that operate under creative common licenses, such as, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page.
5. Upload the *Elgg Participation and Peer-Interactions* Rubric to Elgg.

Instructional Plan

Session 1: Discovering the Elgg Environment Part I

1. Begin a class discussion about the ways social networking could be integrated into a course to facilitate and further learning.
2. Explain to students how Elgg will be used throughout the course for students to show and share their learning, collaborate with others and practice safe and ethical behaviour when interacting online. Explain how blogging will be used to record and share their experiences throughout the course.
3. Show students Elgg. Everything they upload, write and publish online will be visible to all members of the course, including the teacher, therefore, all content and interactions must be appropriate for classroom use. However, no one outside the course will be able to view, comment or interact with any of the content in Elgg.
4. Provide students with their Elgg usernames and passwords. Show students how to change their passwords and instruct them to do so immediately.
5. Let students create their profiles and explore the Elgg environment which will help students to develop appropriate digital citizenship behaviours.

Session 2: Discovering the Elgg Environment Part II

1. Show students the *Creative Commons* page. Explain what a creative commons license is and how students will strive to uphold copyright law in the course. Therefore, all media that students use, change, and edit

during the course must either have a creative commons license or be created by the students themselves.

2. Show the students where to find the *Elgg Participation and Peer-Interactions* Rubric (if they have not found them yet already).
3. Start a class discussion about the potential rules and regulations pertaining to the use of Elgg in the classroom environment. Use the *Elgg Participation and Peer-Interactions* Rubric to help students frame their ideas and discussions around the potential rules and regulations. Inform them that they will collaboratively agree upon the guidelines and regulations for the use of Elgg in the classroom.
4. Let students continue to customize their profiles, explore, create and add to the Elgg site. Students should also begin negotiate and co-create the guidelines on the *Elgg Rules and Regulations* page as they collaborate and discuss their opinions and ideas on the social networking site.

Extension

- Suggest to students that they keep adding pages to Elgg so that it becomes a rich resource for the course, as well as, increase participation on the class Elgg site. For example, create a filmmaker's terminology page, favourite actors, films, television programs, and viral videos pages. Encourage students to create and collaborate and fill Elgg with an abundance of resources to enrich the classroom experience.

Assessment

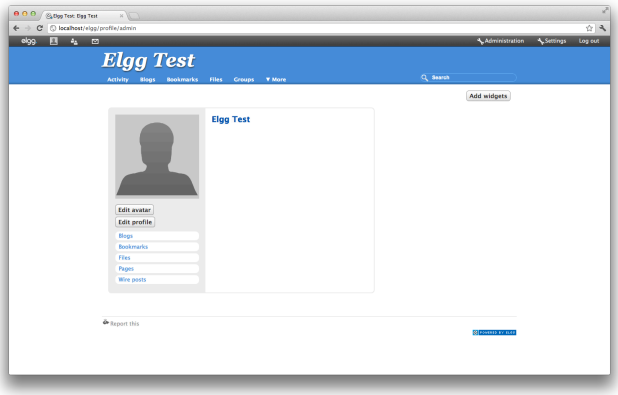
The *Elgg Participation and Peer-Interactions Rubric* will be used to assess student use, participation, interactions and learning on the Elgg site weekly as well as ethical digital citizenship. For example, the profile they created could be assessed for appropriate behaviours in digital citizenship, how they add and help to create community within Elgg through uploading content, commenting on the blogs of others, the use of creating “groups” to work on projects collaboratively with others, monitoring and showing leadership within the Elgg environment, the ethical and appropriate use of media and other aspects of participation within Elgg. The assessment will help students to refine and develop appropriate and ethical behaviours with digital media and social networking sites.

Elgg Participation and Peer-Interactions Rubric				
	Not Yet Within Expectations	**Minimally Meets Expectations**	**Fully Meets Expectations**	**Exceeds Expectations**
CONTRIBUTING TO THE CLASSROOM AND ELGG COMMUNITY	• appears apathetic or unfriendly and may try to manipulate or dominate others • avoids participating in class and group activities; shows little sense of responsibility • may or may not comment on the blogs and posts of others • comments are negative	• usually courteous and friendly • participates in class and group activities, but takes little responsibility for the school or community • may or may not comment on the blogs and posts of others	• usually kind and friendly • takes some responsibility for the school or community and contributes willingly to class and group activities • positively comments on the blogs and posts of others	• kind, friendly, and inclusive • works actively to improve the school or community; often volunteers for extra responsibilities and shows leadership skills • positively and constructively, comments on the blogs and posts of others
SOLVING PROBLEMS IN PEACEFUL WAYS	• in conflict situations often uses put-downs, insults, or sarcasm; has difficulty stating position clearly; may be illogical • can describe simple, concrete problems or issues and generate some strategies; often ignores consequences	• in conflict situations tries to manage anger appropriately, listens respectfully, states opinion clearly, and tries to be fair • can describe problems or issues, generate some strategies, consider immediate consequences, and evaluate actions	• in conflict situations usually manages anger appropriately, listens respectfully, presents logical arguments, and can paraphrase opposing views • can clarify problems or issues, generate strategies, weigh consequences, and evaluate actions	• in conflict situations shows empathy and a sense of ethics, presents soundly reasoned arguments, and considers divergent views • can clarify problems or issues, generate and analyze strategies, create an effective plan, and use evidence to evaluate actions
VALUING DIVERSITY AND DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS	• sometimes disrespectful; may stereotype or avoid those perceived as different in some way	• usually respectful; supports those who speak up or take action to support diversity and defend human rights	• respectful and fair; increasingly willing to speak up or take action to support diversity and defend human rights	• respectful and ethical; speaks out and takes action to support diversity and defend human rights, even when that may not be a popular stance
EXERCISING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	• tends to be egocentric and apathetic; displays little sense of com-munity or responsibility for others	• shows some sense of community-mindedness; may go along with positive actions organized by others, but without much commitment	• shows a sense of responsibility and community-mindedness; increasingly interested in taking action to improve the world	• shows a strong sense of community-mindedness and accountability; can describe and work toward an ideal future for the world

Adapted from the *Quick Scale: Grades 8 to 10* rubric found in the BC Performance Standards: Social Responsibility Grades 8 – 10 resource (Ministry of Education, n.d.b, p. 4)

Lesson Plan #2 – Blogging

Using Social Media to Aid Student Engagement, Communication, Digital Citizenship and Learning in Film Studies: Blogging



Film and Video Studies 11/12

Blogging – Weekly Reflections and Film and Video Responses

- Two 80-minute sessions
- Uses a social media engine to develop digital citizenship skills, empower students, enrich interactions and deepen learning through connected and collaborative classroom.

Overview

Students will use Elgg to reflect on their weekly experiences as filmmakers throughout the course. They will also create blog entries as they evaluate and respond to films and videos viewed in class through blog writing within the Elgg environment. Students will also be required to respond and comment on the blogs of others in a positive and constructive way to further their learning and understanding of film. This lesson builds on the *Introduction to Elgg* lesson and continues to use Elgg to promote student engagement, interaction, collaboration, and learning though the interactions in class and in an online environment.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Continue to collaborate and create a set of appropriate rules and regulations for the use of Elgg in the classroom.
- Write an evaluation and response blog entry to each required film and video they view throughout the semester.
- Also write a weekly reflection blog entry on a topic of their choice. Topics may include (but not limited to): further responses to and evaluations of films and videos students view in and outside class, their experiences with project work (topics could include: what they did, what they could do better, struggles, accomplishments… and so on) and other topics that might be engaging to students and pertinent to the course PLOs and content.
- Comment and interact with blogs and posts of their peers in positive and encouraging ways.
- Continue to use Elgg throughout the semester to communicate, collaborate and share their learning in a digitally ethical way.

Rationale

The above PLOs will be achieved through student blogs and the interactions and conversations that happen as students respond and comment on the blogs of fellow classmates. Students will respond and analyze the films viewed in class through blog responses. Through the study of film, students will discuss how artistic elements of the films and videos contribute to meaning, as

well as, place the film in a social, historical, and cultural context. As students comment and interact on the blogs of their peers through Elgg, they will collaboratively create meaning and understanding as they critically engage with films as text.

Resources

- Elgg

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Davies, J.A. & Merchant, G. (2009). *Web 2.0 for schools: learning and social participation.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Palfrey, J. G., & Gasser, U. (2008). Born digital: Understanding the first generation of digital natives. New York: Basic Books.

- Davies and Merchant (2009) note, “as a particular network grows, bloggers increase not only their readership and online presence but also their knowledge, or even social standing, in a particular area” (p. 29).
- Palfrey and Gasser (2008) recognize:

  > user generated content is what the Web 2.0 buzz is all about. In its pure form, this shift moves away from a world of largely passive consumers of content produced by a few powerful professionals

> towards communities of increasingly active users – often amateurs – who can produce and share their own TV shows on YouTube, publish their own news... [which is] something that we ought to find ways to encourage (pp. 114-115).

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Information Technology* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television

- analyze how the artistic components of film and television affect meaning
- identify social, cultural, and historical forces that influence and are influenced by film and television images (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology

- use technology to support collaboration and interaction with others (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with internet access
- Projector, media player and sound system

Student Interactives

- Elgg

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- *Student Blog Entries Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses Rubric* found on p.59.

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Upload the *Student Blog Entries Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses Rubric* to Elgg.

Instructional Plan

Session 1 and 2: Blogs – Responding to Films and Videos and Weekly Reflections

1. Show students the *Student Blog Entries Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses Rubric* (if they have not found it already). Explain to students that the blog entries are informal and do not always have to be text. Use the rubric to show what an excellent response might look like.
2. View film for film study this week.
3. If time, allow students time to create a film response blog entry in Elgg.

Extension

- Suggest students keep adding pages to Elgg.

Assessment

Students will write blogs responding and evaluating the films and videos studied throughout the course. Students will also create weekly blog entries reflecting on their participation and learning that week. The *Student Blog Entries*

Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses Rubric will be used to assess student blogs. The blogs of students in Elgg will act as a portfolio, which can showcase student learning over the course of a semester where both teachers and students can reflect and review what students have learned and how they have grown.

Student Blog Entries Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses	
Rating	**Criteria**
Exceeds Expectations	May show particular depth of insight, demonstrate thoroughness in planning and monitoring work, or provide creative solutions to problems. All required material is included. Relies on electronic communication tools to collaborate with others to expand or modify personal understanding about the task. Directs inquiries to experts electronically. Uses media ethically.
Fully Meets Expectations	Entries are complete, relevant, and accurate. Includes appropriate suggestions and plans for improving own work and solving problems. Uses vocabulary accurately with increasing precision. Uses communication tools consistently to collaborate with others to build personal understanding and share ideas about the task.
Meets Expectations (Minimally)	May be somewhat inconsistent, with some entries more detailed or insightful than others. May occasionally complete an entry in a cursory way. Material that is included is relevant, accurate, and generally described using appropriate vocabulary. Uses communication tools occasionally to interact with others to expand their understanding and share ideas about the task.
Not Yet Within Expectations	Entries may be omitted entirely or offer little relevant information. Critiques, self-analyses, and goals tend to be expressed in broad generalizations (e.g., I think my work was effective; I did a good job of operating the camera) with few details or examples. Works in isolation; does not use communication tools to build understanding. Incomplete. Does not fulfill requirements.
Incomplete	Does not fulfill requirements. Entries may be sporadic.

Adapted from the journal rubric in the *Film and Television IRP* and the Information and Communications Technology Integration rubric: *Rating Scale: Information and Communications Technology Integration Grades 5 to 10* (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, D-18; Ministry of Education, n.d.)

Lesson Plan #3 – Critical Media Literacy

Developing Critically Media Literacy Skills through Advertising

Film and Video Studies 11/12

Advertising and Critical Media Literacy

- Two - Three 80-minute sessions
- These lessons will begin to develop critical media literacy skills and introduce some of the processes involved in film and video production.

Overview

Through viewing, discussing and studying commercials, students will develop critical media literacy skills; learn some of the processes and methods used in the creation of film and video for the purposes of advertising. This lesson will scaffold on some of the activities, skills and processes used in the Elgg lessons. Students will continue to use Elgg to synchronously and asynchronously communicate, collaborate, and create.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Critically analyze and become aware of and recognize the techniques used by advertisers (and those who work on producing and creating commercials).
- Appreciate and recognize the many different perspectives and styles producers, directors and editors can apply to film and video. (Students will be creating commercials from the same footage, however, each

commercial will be quite different from the others in style, content and perspective).

Rationale

As students encounter a variety of commercial media on a daily basis, it is important for students to develop critical skills to understand and contextualize the advertising they view. Through the viewing, analysis and comparison of television and Internet commercials students will demonstrate an understanding of advertising formats by creating their own 30-second commercial. This will help students develop critical skills as they discern mass media and other electronic information.

Resources

- Elgg

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Tisdell, E.J. (2008). Critical media literacy and transformative learning: Drawing on pop culture and entertainment media in teaching for diversity in adult higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education,* 6(1), 48-67.

- According to Tisdell (2008), when teaching students critical media literacy, it is important that we teach students that:

> (a) the media are controlled and driven by money; (b) media images are constructions—both of directors, actors, and other media makers; (c) media makers bring their own experience with them in their construction of characters, including their perceptions of race, gender, class, and so on; (d) consumers of media construct their own meaning of media portrayals in light of their own background experience and gender, race, class, or sexual orientation; (e) unlike print media, entertainment media, such as movies and television, are a combination of moving visuals, sounds, and words that combine in facilitating meaning; and (f) it is possible to acquire multiple literacies in becoming media literate (p. 54).

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Information Technology* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television

- compare how artistic components in film and television are constructed for specific audiences and purposes in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts

- demonstrate an understanding of standard formats for screenplays, script treatments, and commercials (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology

- become discerning users of mass media and electronic information (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with Internet access and digital video editing software installed
- Projector, media player and sound system

Student Interactives

- Elgg

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- Advertising and Commercials group discussion prompts (preparation step #4) found on p.64 of this lesson.
- Storyboarding Handout and example found on pp.67 and 68.
- Group Discussion Guided Questions (preparation step #5) found on p.64 of this lesson.
- *30-Second Commercial Rubric* found on p.69.

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Find or create stock footage for use by the students to create commercials. Some creative commons video footage may be found at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Videos or http://www.stockfootageforfree.com. Check to make sure that the footage

does not need any converting once it is imported to video editing software. Provide students with approximately 5 minutes of a variety of footage.

2. Create a *30-second Commercials using Stock Footage* assignment page in Elgg. Upload all rubrics to the page. Add the assignment outline content to the page. Upload stock footage to the site. Make sure to set permissions so that students may download the files.
3. Add links to commercials on site. There are thousands of commercials available for viewing online at places like YouTube, and so on. For example, the following is a link to a website with a playlist of 76 Super bowl commercials from 2012 available on YouTube: http://superbowl-ads.com/article_archive/2012/01/01/2012-super-bowl-xlvi-commercials/
4. Provide students with a critical framework from which they should view the commercials and add to the *30-second Commercials* Elgg assignment page. For example, you could include the points from Tisdell (2008), found in the *From Theory to Practice* section of this lesson, to frame students' thinking. Also add the following questions: "Who is the target audience? What are the key images? What are the key words? How are sound and music used to create an effect? How does lighting affect the intent of the commercial? What is the message?" (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. 18).
5. Also add the following questions to the bottom of the *30-second Commercials* Elgg assignment page to guide students as they start to create the commercials: "What is your message? Who is your audience?

How do you get your message across in 30 seconds?" (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. D-8).

Instructional Plan

Session 1: Commercials and Advertising

1. Allow students to form or place them into project teams of 3 or 4. Project the Elgg *30-second Commercials using Stock Footage* assignment page on a screen. Start a class conversation about commercials and the techniques used by advertisers.
2. Instruct students to create a *group* for all the members of their project team in Elgg. Students have the ability to create exclusive groups within Elgg, which will be useful for discussing, organizing the production of the commercials, and any other topics of consideration pertaining to the assignment. Show them how, if necessary, but many students will already know how to do this.
3. Show a few commercials and get students to discuss/answer the questions found on the *30-Second Commercial* Elgg page as a group.
4. Refer students to the *30-Second Commercial* Elgg page and inform students of their assignment to create a commercial from the stock footage. They may edit, alter, and change the footage in anyway. However, they cannot add any visual footage. Students may add print text, a musical score, sound effects and narration. Show students the stock footage.

Extension

- Students can create their own 30-second commercials from concept through to production. This would be a logical assignment to follow later in the semester as students are taught technical and stylistic camera operation skillsets.

Assessment

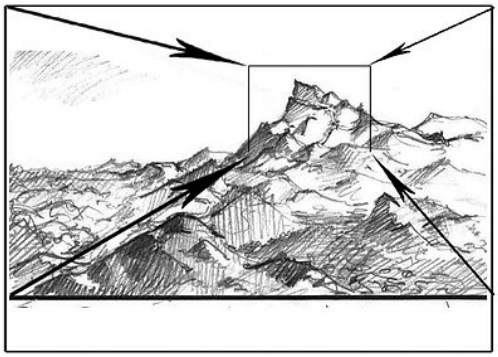
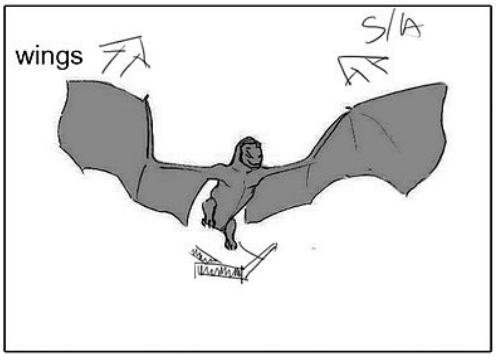
The *30-Second Commercial Rubric* will be used to assess the process of creating a 30-second commercial and the final product the students hand in. Students will also use the rubric to self-assess their own commercials in the form of a blog entry in Elgg. They will also use the rubric as students comment and assess the commercials of other groups in Elgg. Note: the *30-Second Commercial* assignment requires students to use stock footage provided by the teacher, therefore, they will not be assessed on the following categories: On Camera and Written Dialogue. Students will likely be producing another commercial from development to post-production and will be assessed in these omitted categories.

Title		Page
Action		
Dialogue		

Title		Page
Action		
Dialogue		

Adapted from Mitkus (2010) *Storyboard template*.

Storyboard Handout Example

Title George and the dragon		Page 1
S-1 1/1	S-2 1/7	S-2 2/7
		
Action zooming in Stilll image	Dragon come out from cave	Dragons starts swing his wings
Dialogue Far, far way in the high, high mountains	there lived a mighty dragon.	SFX: waving wings

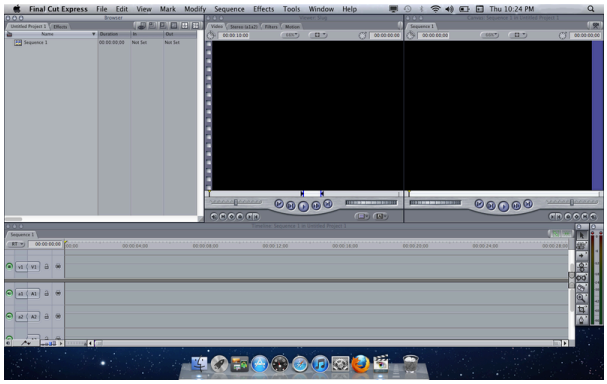
Adapted from Mitkus (2007) *Storyboarding example*.

30-second Commercial Rubric					
Rating	**Teamwork**	**Production Techniques**	**Analysis and Reflection**	**On Camera**	**Written Dialogue**
Exceeds Expectations	• shows leadership • supports and involves others; seeks and uses feedback	• uses a variety of camera techniques in an interesting, creative, and innovative manner • incorporates sound and lighting to create a specific effect	• shows insight and depth of understanding in critical analysis and reflections on industry and student-made commercials	• communicates clearly, with energy and enthusiasm	• writes effective, interesting, and creative dialogue
Fully Meets Expectations	• works well in the group • shows respect for and willingness to accept the ideas of others	• uses a variety of camera techniques • incorporates sound and lighting appropriately	• shows clarity and some depth of understanding in critical analysis and reflection	• communicates clearly and effectively on camera	• writes effective dialogue; creates a realistic voice
Meets Most Expectations	• works well in the group, but rarely offers suggestions • listens attentively to others; responds to their ideas	• uses some camera techniques; tends to repeat the same technique • may include sound or lighting elements	• shows some critical understanding of key aspects of the work; may miss subtleties or details	• communicates clearly, with some self-consciousness	• completes dialogue, but may have trouble staying within required time frame, choosing language with precision, or creating a realistic voice
Minimally Expectations	• makes few contributions to the group • shows little attention to the ideas of others	• uses few camera techniques • omits sound or lighting, or uses them in ways that detract from the intended message	• shows little understanding of the connections between the elements of the commercial and the intended audience	• very self-conscious on camera	• dialogue ineffective or inappropriate for the required time frame and projected meaning
Incomplete	• may have difficulty working with others • may ignore others' contributions or treat them disrespectfully	• may fail to participate	• displays little understanding of the concepts	• may fail to participate	• may be incomplete or inappropriate

Adapted from *Thirty-Second Commercial* rubric from the *Film and Television IRP* and the Information and Communications Technology Integration rubric: *Rating Scale: Information and Communications Technology Integration Grades 5 to 10* (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, D-10; Ministry of Education, n.d.a).

Lesson Plan #4 – Storyboarding and Editing

Learning Digital Video Editing Skills through Advertising



Film and Video Studies 11/12

Introduction to Film and Video Production and Learning Digital Video Editing Skills: Storyboarding and Editing

- Two to Three 80-minute sessions

- These lessons will introduce students some of the production processes, such as, storyboarding and collaboration, involved in film and video production and teach some basic to advanced skills using digital video editing software.

Overview

This lesson will scaffold on *Lesson #3: Critical Media Literacy* to further students' skills in understanding and deconstructing commercials, film and other video media. It will also function as an introduction to film and video making and digital video editing skills. Students will also collaboratively create commercials from stock footage provided by the teacher to develop digital video editing skills using software. Through working in project teams, students will hopefully become more aware of the collaboration needed in the production of film and video, appreciate and be made aware of the different perspectives and visions of filmmakers and producers can take when creating productions. This lesson will also build on some of the activities, skills and processes used in the Elgg lessons, such as, collaboration, group making and asynchronous communication.

Students will continue to use Elgg to synchronously and asynchronously communicate, collaborate, and create with other students in the course.

Student Objectives

Students will

- In groups of 3 or 4, collaboratively plan, create, produce and edit a 30-second commercial using stock footage provided by the teacher. (Students will be given an opportunity to create commercials from development to post-production later in the semester where they will be able to use their own footage).
- Develop basic video editing skills using software.
- Become aware of and recognize the techniques used by advertisers (and those who work on producing and creating commercials).
- Appreciate and recognize the many different perspectives and styles producers, directors and editors can apply to film and video.

Rationale

Knowledge and skills acquired from the previous lesson will enable students to demonstrate that they know how to create a 30-second commercial in an appropriate format. Students will apply individual styles to the stock footage provided by the teacher to create the commercial. Students will need to use Elgg to storyboard and collaborate to create their productions.

Resources

- Elgg

- Digital video editing software will be required for students to create, edit and produce their commercials. Applications such as *Adobe Premiere, Final-Cut, iMovie, OpenShot* (a free open source program) will be necessary for students to complete their projects.

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Tisdell, E.J. (2008). Critical media literacy and transformative learning: Drawing on pop culture and entertainment media in teaching for diversity in adult higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education,* 6(1), 48-67.

- As an educator, Tisdell (2008) recognizes the potential of using media in classrooms: “all of us who teach can draw on the power of the entertainment media to engage learners and to facilitate critical media literacy when the opportunity presents itself” (p. 63). A film and video studies course provides teachers with opportunities to use media found in popular culture to develop critical media literacy in students.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Media Arts* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television IRP

- apply artistic components to develop individual style in film and television

works

- demonstrate an understanding of standard formats for screenplays, script treatments, and commercials (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology IRP

- use technology to support collaboration and interaction with others (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with Internet access and digital video editing software installed.
- Stock footage created and provided for students to edit and create commercials from. Stock footage will be available for download on Elgg the site.
- Projector, media player and sound system.

Student Interactives

- Elgg

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- All rubrics, handouts and criteria from previous lesson, *Lesson #3: Critical Media Literacy* found on pp.67-69
- *Introduction to Importing and Basic Editing* Elgg page

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Create *Introduction to Importing Basic Editing Page* that outlines some very simple skills on how to import, edit and export video. Depending on the software that is available, specific instructions will vary. There are thousands of tutorial videos available on YouTube for many of the industry standard video editing software applications. Provide links or embed some of the most relevant videos and resources to the Elgg page. Most students will learn video editing technical skills organically throughout the semester while using the software.

Instructional Plan

Session 1: Commercials and Advertising

1. Remind students of the previous lesson and the assignment outline for the *30-second Commercials using Stock Footage.* Review and discuss some of the guided questions around commercials and media (from the *Critical Media Literacy* lesson) students answered as project teams after students viewed the commercials.
2. Watch the stock footage that will be provided to students again.
3. In their groups, allow students time to brainstorm potential ideas and thoughts about their commercials. Have students write a basic treatment outlining the commercial.
4. Introduce the concept of storyboarding as a blueprint or outline for the processes of creating and editing. Explain how a well-prepared

storyboard provides a framework for projects, organizes the process, reduces wasted time or forgotten clips/shots, and also helps to keep the project focused. There are plenty of YouTube videos that compare storyboards to the actual film, such as, *Monsters Inc.* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xwonyZdhgs&feature=related) and *Inspector Gadget 2* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkWKu6cHMW0). Reaffirm to students that they do not need to be artists to represent the basic ideas and flow of the project.

5. Show students how rudimentary drawings are just as effective by projecting the *Storyboarding Handout* onto a whiteboard, where the teacher can storyboard a few shots.
6. When students have finished storyboarding and have shown it to the teacher, inform students that they can move on to the *Introduction to Basic Editing Page* in Elgg. Where they can find basic importing, editing and exporting skills for the corresponding video editing software that is provided by the school.
7. Students may download stock footage from Elgg and begin creating their projects.

Extension

- Students can create more than one commercial using the stock footage. Encourage them to try something different. For example, students could create a new commercial and use footage that was not included in their

original commercial project or they could use the same footage, but edit it differently to show a different approach and perspective.

- Students can create their own 30-second commercials from concept through to production. This would be a logical assignment to follow later in the semester as students are taught more of the necessary skills and processes in filmmaking.

Assessment

The *30-Second Commercial Rubric* will be used to assess the process of creating a 30-second commercial and the final product the students hand in. Students will also use the rubric to self-assess their own commercials in the form of a blog entry in Elgg. They will also use the rubric as students comment and assess the commercials of other groups in Elgg. Note: the *30-Second Commercial* assignment requires students to use stock footage provided by the teacher, therefore, they will not be assessed on the following categories: *On Camera* and *Written Dialogue*. Students will likely be producing another commercial from development to post-production, therefore, will be assessed in these omitted categories later in the semester.

Lesson Plan #5 – Cinematographer's Glossary

Learning the Language of Filmmakers: Creating a Video Glossary of Cinematography Terms

Film and Video Studies 11/12

Learning the Language of Cinematography: Framing, shots and Transitions

- Two to Three 80-minute sessions
- These lessons will introduce students to some of the basic framing techniques, types of shots and transitions that are sometimes used in film and video production.

Overview

This lesson will scaffold on the storyboarding and editing skills learned in a previous lesson: *Introduction to Film and Video Production and Learning Digital Video Editing Skills: Storyboarding and Editing*. Students will be provided with a list of cinematography terminology, which is important for filmmakers to know. They will learn, define and show they understand these terms and processes through creating a video glossary.

Student Objectives

Students will

- In groups of 3 or 4, collaboratively define and learn the cinematographer terminology through online research and personal knowledge.

- Become aware of, understand, and apply the different shots, angles and various techniques used by filmmakers.
- Learn to operate and handle camera equipment in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Appreciate and recognize the many different ways in which a subject can be filmed and edited.

Rationale

The *Cinematographer's Glossary* assignment and activity will teach students to use and maintain production equipment appropriately. Students will need to employ a variety of strategies and resources to reproduce and apply the techniques and effects the assignment requires of them. Students will continually use the terms through the semester as they create films and videos as a result of the techniques and skills they learned in this activity.

Resources

- *Elgg*
- Digital video editing software.

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Kist, W. (2000). Beginning to create the new literacy classroom: What does the new literacy look like? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,* 43(8), 710-718.

- Kist (2000) recognizes that "our children now have more ways of learning about the world and more ways of expressing themselves through technology" (p. 711).
- In this lesson, students will be learning some of the tools and terminology of the trade, while expressing their learning through technology with the production a video glossary. The video glossary will show students' understanding of the terminology though using it, develop and refine their film and video production skills, and give students the opportunity to collaboratively build knowledge and shape their learning through work with others.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Media Arts* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television

- use appropriate vocabulary when discussing or producing film and television
- use and maintain film and television production equipment in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner
- reproduce various production techniques to create effect

(Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology

- employ a variety of strategies to identify, investigate, and solve problems,

including troubleshooting strategies (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with Internet access and digital video editing software installed.
- Digital Video Cameras (with memory cards and/or taps), tripods, and camera dolly (if available)
- Projector, media player and sound system.

Student Interactives

- Elgg

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- The Cinematographer's Glossary Handout found on p.82
- Rubric for Cinematographer's Glossary Assignment found on p.83

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Create Cinematography page in Elgg, upload assignment and rubric.
2. Prepare video cameras and other related equipment, such as, tripods, memory cards, tapes, batteries, and so on. Create basic camera operation and handling skills page.

Instructional Plan

Session 1: Cinematographer's Glossary

1. Demo basic camera use, importing and exporting, and safety. Point students to the *Basic Camera Use and Operation Page* in Elgg.
2. Show students the Cinematography Terminology page in Elgg. Explain to students in groups of 3 – 4 they will define the terms, upload the definitions to a *group* in Elgg, and create a video showing they understand the terms applied in film.
3. Inform students that they are already experts, and that many of them know what many of the terms mean and how they are applied from their previous experiences from watching film and television. They know the concept but may not know the label. For example, an *establishing shot* serves as an introduction to a scene or person that the audience will likely get know better and a *close up* is usually used on a subject or topic that the audience knows and understands intimately.

Extension

- Students could continue to add to the Cinematographer's Terminology beyond the basic set provided by the teacher. Students may also explore different transition techniques and tools, effects and audio effects in their video glossaries.

Assessment

The *Cinematographer's Glossary Rubric* will be used to evaluate the written definitions and the terms applied in action through video glossary that the project teams produce.

Cinematographer's Glossary Assignment Handout

In groups of 3 to 4, define the following basic cinematography terms. In the definition include why the method or technique is used and the implications (what it means).

Create a page in Elgg and define the terms using a written or multimodal response. After students have defined and completed the Elgg page, they will produce a video that shows their understanding of the terms by showing each term in action.

Framing

- Establishing
- Long shot
- Full Shot
- Mid shot
- Close Up
- Extreme Close Up
- Cut Away
- Reaction

Camera Movement

- Pan
- Track
- Dolly
- Zoom
- Tilt
- Point of View
- Dolly in Zoom out

Camera Angles

- Eye level
- Low angle
- High angle
- Headroom
- Overhead
- Follow
- Undershot
- Tight
- Over the Shoulder
- Two Shot

Lighting and White Balance

- Indoor/Outdoor
- Manual
- Three-Point Lighting

Focus

- Manual
- Depth of field

Composition

- Pyramid
- Rule of thirds
- Golden Section
- Symmetry
- Lead Lines
- Lead room

Basic Effects and Transitions

- Text and titles
- Fast forward
- Rewind
- Slow Motion
- Straight Cut
- Cross fade
- Fade to Black/White

Cinematographer's Glossary Rubric	
	Criteria
5	**Exceeds project requirements**. For example, format may be innovative; product may be particularly engaging; material may include information beyond what is required; may show creativity in use of techniques. **Research**: Complete; includes accurate and relevant information from a variety of sources; presented in an engaging way. Analysis is insightful and shows some depth in understanding. **Video**: Team functions smoothly, delegating and completing assignments efficiently and on schedule. Shows some innovative use of equipment and techniques. Product is innovative, creative, and engaging. Application and understand of the terminology is clear and effective.
4	**All requirements met**. Fully addresses the criteria established for the project. **Research**: Complete; accurate and relevant information is presented clearly. Easy to follow. Attempts to engage audience. Analysis is clear and logical, supported by specific examples and understanding **Video**: Team shares responsibilities and generally works well together. Uses a variety of equipment and techniques appropriately and safely. Product meets requirements. Team attempts to engage the audience with relevant and appropriate material that offers a good application and understanding of the terminology.
3	**Attempts to meet requirements and is successful in most cases**. Addresses all required aspects of the assignment. May be uneven, dealing with some aspects in a cursory way. **Research**: Complete and accurate. Generally easy to follow. May provide little detail or insight, and relevance of information is not always clear. Examples may be flawed. Understanding may be cursory and very brief. **Video**: Team works without conflict, but responsibilities may be shared somewhat unevenly. Uses equipment and techniques appropriately and safely, but may rely on a few pieces of equipment. Product meets most basic requirements, but may include some flaws and fail to engage the audience. Application and understanding of the terminology is not always clear.
2	**Attempts to address most requirements, but is unsuccessful in several instances**. May be confusing or incomplete in places. Needs careful supervision and support from the teacher. **Research**: Some accurate information, but may include unsupported definitions or generalizations. Often relies on one source of information. May be difficult to see the analysis and understand of the terminology. Confusing and difficult to follow in places. **Video**: Some difficulty with teamwork; may need intervention or close supervision by the teacher. Uses some equipment and techniques appropriately and safely, but may have difficulty with others. Product meets some requirements, but production is flawed and lacks rigor. Understanding or application of the terminology may be unclear.
1	**Incomplete**. Fails to complete a substantial portion of the assignment. May be very brief. **Research**: Little accurate, relevant information. May be hard to follow. May omit analysis or connection to own work. **Video**: Team cannot work together effectively without close supervision by the teacher. Uncertain of appropriate use of equipment; frequently follows incorrect or unsafe procedures. Production is seriously flawed. Understanding or application of terminology is unclear. May fail to meet production deadlines.
i	**Incomplete**. No project submitted.

Adapted from documentary rubric from the *Film and Television IRP* and the Information and Communications Technology Integration rubric: *Rating Scale: Information and Communications Technology Integration Grades 5 to 10* (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, D-14; Ministry of Education, n.d.a)

Lesson Plan #6 – Student Final Project

Final Film Project of Film Studies

Film and Video Studies 11/12

Final Project

- Four to Five Week Timeframe: 80-minute sessions

- This project will be the final assignment for the semester. It will build on all the skills, techniques and processes they have learned from studying and creating film and video all semester long. Students will create a 5-minute video that will bring attention to an issue or interest important to them and their community.

Overview

This lesson is the final project in the film and video students course. Thus, it will employ the culmination of all the skills and processes students have learned over the course of a semester, not just the lessons contained within this project. For example, students will have learned about film theory, sound and lighting techniques, development and production processes, and other supporting positions found in filmmaking. Students are to create a film of approximately 5 minutes in length on a topic or theme that is important or of interest to them and their community. The film will be designed to bring awareness to the theme or topic and, potentially, evoke positive feedback

reactions from their community. The video can be of any genre or issue they wish upon approval of the topic and format by the teacher. Students will be using all the skills they have learned throughout the semester from the application of technology, to production, direction and editing skills, to critical media literacy and the construction of media and it's messages. Once the final projects have been submitted, a premiere of all the student's final projects for the film and video studies course will be held. Students will invite their community to the premiere of the films they have created, such as, friends, peers, teachers, parents and family, actors and volunteers (involved in the projects), and the school community. Films will also be uploaded to the course or school's YouTube channel, so that the films can be shared with others and, potentially, have an impact on them as well.

Student Objectives

Students will

- In groups of 3 or 4, collaboratively plan, create, write, produce, and edit a 5 minute long film on a topic, issue or theme that is important to them.
- Appreciate and recognize the different perspectives, opinions and styles of filmmakers from within the class.

Rationale

The final project is the result of an entire semester's work and learning. Students will apply all the skills and techniques learned throughout the semester to collaborate and produce a film project. Students will apply every aspect of the filmmaking process: from planning and organizing to scriptwriting, directing, and

production. Elgg will be essential for students to organize, plan, and collaborate asynchronous and synchronously produce the final product.

Resources

- Elgg
- Digital video editing software

From Theory to Practice

Ministry of Education. (2003). Information and communications technology 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. (1997). Film and television 11 and 12. Province of British Columbia, Canada: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Tisdell, E.J. (2008). Critical media literacy and transformative learning: Drawing on pop culture and entertainment media in teaching for diversity in adult higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education,* 6(1), 48-67.

- Media consumption and production is a part of culture (Tisdell, 2008) and, according to Tisdell "not only do media reflect what's happening in our culture, it also has a role in shaping it as it raises viewers' consciousness about issues" (p. 52). Therefore, films and videos created by students can be a useful tool for students to expand their perspective and thinking on an issue or topic, share and, potentially, influence their friends, peers, community and even culture.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

BC *Film And Television* and *Media Arts* Integrated Resource Packages

Film and Television IRP

- collaborate to solve acting, scriptwriting, and technical production problems
- apply production techniques to translate scripts to film and television works (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. A-3 – A-6)

Information Technology IRP

- use technology to support collaboration and interaction with others (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. A-3)

Resources & Preparation

Materials and Technology

- Computers with Internet access and digital video editing software installed.
- Video cameras, tripods, microphones, booms, lighting, and other available filmmaking equipment.
- Theatre for the premiere equipped with stage projector, media player and sound system.

Student Interactives

- Elgg

Printouts/Handouts/Rubrics/Criteria

- Rubric for the *Final Film Project* found on p.91

- *Basic tool kit & resource guide for young filmmakers* from AFI Screen Education, American Film Insititute found at: http://myhero.com/myhero/go/theteachersroom/pdf/AFI_BasicsHandbook.pdf

Websites

- Elgg - http://elgg.org/, http://demo.elgg.org/

Preparation

1. Create *Final Project Page* in Elgg. In project teams of 3- 4, students are to create an approximately 5 minute long film focusing on a topic, issue or theme important to them. Their film should bring awareness to the topic, issue or theme in a positive way to potentially bring about change within the audience the film is intended for.
2. Students will be introduced to the project at about the halfway point of the semester. Therefore, students can start to think, plan, and prepare for the final project.

Instructional Plan

Session 1: Final Film Project

1. Allow students to form or place them into project teams of 3 or 4. Review the assignment outline and expectations. Support students as they make decisions, plan, film, edit, and so on.
2. Provide students with resources, such as the storyboarding handout and the *Basic tool kit & resource guide for young filmmakers* from AFI, to plan,

budget… and so on, their films. Many of the skills and processes will have been taught earlier in the semester.

3. When students complete their final project, they will write a final blog entry reflecting on the film they just created using the *Final Film Project* rubric. They may choose to focus on the process, successes (did they achieve what they set out to do?), what could be better, and how students have developed their skills and critical media literacy skills throughout the semester. Students will be assessed according to the *Blog Entries Rubric,* found on p.58, in connection with the *Final Film Project Rubric.*

Extension

- Students can enter their films in student, online, and other contests and festivals.
- Students could choose to remake one film or video that they created during the semester with the new skills they have acquired, if they were not happy with the final product of one of the projects.

Assessment

The video students produce will be assessed according to the *Final Project Rubric.* Also, student's final blog entry of the course, which will focus on the final project, course reflections, growth and development as filmmakers, and so on, will be important. The final blog entry will be assessed according the *Student Blog Entries Rubric: Weekly Reflections / Film and Video Responses* found in *Lesson #2: Blogging.*

Final Project Rubric

Rating	Teamwork	Production Techniques	Analysis and Reflection	On Camera	Viewers Experience
Exceeds Expectations	• shows leadership • supports and involves others; seeks and uses feedback	• visually interesting, creative, and innovative manner • incorporates editing, effects, sound and lighting to create a specific effect	• shows insight and depth of understanding in analysing and reflecting on the finished film	• communicates clearly, with energy and enthusiasm	• successfully presents the theme, topic, interest or issue in a creative, effective, cohesive and interesting film
Fully Meets Expectations	• works well in the group • shows respect for and willingness to accept the ideas of others	• uses a variety of camera techniques • incorporates editing, effects, sound and lighting appropriately	• shows clarity and some depth of understanding in analysis and reflection	• communicates clearly and effectively on camera	• presents the theme, topic, interest or issue in an effective, cohesive and interesting film
Meets Most Expectations	• works well in the group, but rarely offers suggestions • listens attentively to others; responds to their ideas	• uses some camera techniques; tends to repeat the same technique • may include editing, effects, sound or lighting elements	• shows some understanding of key aspects of the work; may miss subtleties or details	• communicates clearly, with some self-consciousness	• presents a theme, topic, interest or issue but the content and ideas and may lack cohesion
Minimally Expectations	• makes few contributions to the group • shows little attention to the ideas of others	• uses few camera techniques • omits sound or lighting, or uses them in ways that detract from the intended message	• shows little understanding of the connections between the elements of the commercial and the intended audience	• very self-conscious on camera	• may present a theme, topic, interest or issue, however, content and ideas may be confusing, ineffective or inappropriate for the intended meaning
Incomplete	• may have difficulty working with others • may ignore others' contributions or treat them disrespectfully	• may fail to participate	• displays little understanding of the concepts	• may fail to participate	• may be incomplete or inappropriate

Adapted from *Thirty-Second Commercial* rubric from the *Film and Television IRP* and the Information and Communications Technology Integration rubric: *Rating Scale: Information and Communications Technology Integration Grades 5 to 10* (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, D-10; Ministry of Education, n.d.a).

CHAPTER FOUR: REFLECTION

I originally wrote the reflection chapter as six different blog posts in Elgg after I created all the supporting lesson pages. The blog format felt like a good way to reflect on my graduate student experience over last two years. I also used the comment feature of blogs to further my thinking and reflections in the blog posts. In the comments I could adopt a different voice, often the voices of scholars and educators found in the literature review, to bring perspective to my experience. However, because I cannot hand in a social media engine, I have formatted them to appear in this project as the final chapter.

Introduction

When I started to consider pursuing a Master's degree in December of 2009, the new *Language and Literacy Middle Years MEd Program* at the University of Victoria caught my attention, specifically, the areas around multi/new literacies and technology. I contacted the university to see if a cohort might be starting in the summer of 2010. However, there was no cohort scheduled to start that summer, but it looked likely that there would be a new cohort starting the following year. I was a little disappointed because I wanted to start that summer and some of the topics that the Middle Years Program was going to explore, such as media literacy and technology, interested me.

During my teacher education practicum in a grade 8 class during 2005-2006, I taught a media literacy unit to students with an emphasis on the inclusion of technology into the curriculum. My sponsor teacher was really excited to attempt this experiment and journey with a very green student teacher because

he was admittedly, *old school*, as he primarily used lecture type teaching methods, textbooks, and worksheets for the assessment and engagement of curriculum. When I came into the classroom, he saw an opportunity to teach and learn for not only himself, but also for me as a student teacher. Together, we used technology as students created media and video projects to engage in the text and world of *Romeo and Juliet*. It was fun, students amazed us with their collaboration, projects, engagement, understanding and critical abilities as they worked together on the text of Shakespeare and other media during the media literacy unit. I learned a lot and saw the potential of media and technology in the lives and learning of students.

Over the next few years, I was beginning to see technology becoming increasingly integrated into the lives of students; more and more students were bringing cellphones, laptops, and other devices to class. Students were embracing a whole new digital shorthand called texting and were communicating almost exclusively through it. I had a student who had his own YouTube channel about setting up and caring for fish tanks and he was making money doing it. I continued to include technology into lessons and assignments, but I was starting to notice areas in which students were deficient and where they were knowledgeable. Teachers were complaining about the use of personal devices in class, the problems that social media were bringing into schools, and a seemingly lack of understanding and critical awareness around the consumption and the appropriate use of technology and media by students (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; 2011; Prensky, 2010). Also, as I was

finding that media and technology was becoming more integrated into my own life, I recognized the need to model appropriate and critical use of technology and media as an imperative and implicit educational need for students.

When I learned that a new *Middle Years* cohort was not going to start in the summer of 2010, Dr. Begoray suggested that I pursue a MEd at UVic in Curriculum and Instruction focusing on Language and Literacy, but design my own project, take electives and courses that I am interested in. This has turned out to be a wonderful decision; that is, the opportunity to tailor the Master's degree to my own research interests rather than being part of a cohort with required courses has been fantastic. Originally, when I applied to the program I wanted to look at the inclusion of media and technology into the curriculum in a partnership with teachers and teacher-librarians. However, this past year I was involved in a research project focusing on the re-structuring of the physical design and pedagogy of the library in the secondary school I was working at. Since I was already exploring the changing relationships of teachers, teacher-librarians, the library and students, I felt the need to explore something different. Through my teaching experience with survey media courses (which include a broad-spectrum of digital media) and short-term media studies units in my English language arts classes, I noticed that students often quite enjoy making videos. They often excel at creating and representing their learning in this format because it helps them create meaning and understanding. For example, last year, students in my school created persuasive films highlighting a few local charities. The school community viewed the student made films and helped to

decide which was the most persuasive. A judge's panel made up of students, administrators, and community members decided which film was the best. The student-producers of the film that received the most votes had the honour of presenting a $5000 donation to the charity the filmmakers choose to highlight. There were a few things I noticed from the films. The first was that the students who were creating a film about a local charity became quite personally invested in the project and charity. Students who were sometimes reluctant to participate really cared about the film and how it represented the charity. Students strived for perfection and became quite knowledgeable in the technical, artistic, and persuasive devices used in film and video. The students cared deeply about the projects and the subject matter. The second observation was about the school community. The school community was invested in the films not only when they were presented, but throughout the process. During the premiere of the films, the audience, made up of students, was engaged and attentive. After all the films were viewed and the audience dismissed because of time constraints, many audience members stayed behind to talk about the films, the charities and to await the final decision of the panel.

As schools in BC are in the process of reimagining and restructuring courses as they interpret 21st-century education, personalized learning and the BCED plan, educators have been given opportunities to think about courses and curriculum outside the traditional formats. I imagined a film and video studies course that would focus not only on the study of film and video, but also the production of it. It would include a strong emphasis on critical media literacy and

an intentional presence of the current technologies in use by students, which enable them to create, share and discuss media, integrated into the curriculum.

Coursework and Topic Consideration

The first course I took upon starting my Master's degree two years ago was an accelerated summertime curriculum theory course. I dove in headfirst and it quickly became apparent, first and foremost, I was behind in my reading and, second, I was going to need to flex some cognitive muscles that I had not used in a while. Curriculum theory was challenging in ways that I had not anticipated and I thoroughly enjoyed it. In fact, the content, discussions, assignments and readings in each course I have taken have challenged me personally as an educator, student, and parent.

Once I started to map out the potential topic and product of my Master of Education project, I realized it was important that I not only explore a theoretical perspective (which is quite enjoyable for me), but also create something tangible and immediately applicable to teaching, something that teachers might actually read and could potentially use. The goal of this project is to bring something new and innovative to a film studies course, to consider the changes in technology and media and their implications on the development and learning of students.

Literature Review

Like all graduate students, I quickly discovered there was a lot to read and that I could keep reading. A single article leads to entire bookshelves and libraries to consume and digest. Education is definitely at a crossroads, and with the technologies that make communication and information widely accessible,

education has to change because students and their future require it. Adolescents are developing socially and cognitively in technologically rich environments, they truly live in a digitally mediated existence where they can simultaneously share, communicate and create in, potentially, multiple places (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Jenkins et al., 2006; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Swenson et al., 2006). Many students have universally accepted technology into their lives without making any distinction between their physical and digital selves. Furthermore, many also do not apply any critical thought or evaluation about the use and implications of media and technology in their lives (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). Educators and scholars recognize that the inclusion and teaching of technology are "literacy issues, not technology issues, for English and literacy educators" (Leu, 2005, as cited in, Swenson et al., 2006, p. 353). Many teachers feel unequipped as trends in technology change very quickly. Even as I reflect on my experiences as a student in school, including university, and as a teacher, the changes that digital technology have brought to classrooms both formally and informally are astounding. The Ministry of Education and many scholars and educators have come to realize "that preparing students with only the same literacies that have been privileged for the past century will not prepare them for the next one" (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2011b; Swenson et al., 2006, p. 366). Students live and interact with a culture very different than the one the current education system was designed in (Jenkins et al., 2006; Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2011b; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; 2011; Prensky 2001a; 2001b; 2010; 2011). If

public education is truly preparing students for citizenship in their communities (Ministry of Education, 2011a; 2011b), then educators need to start preparing and critically equipping students for the technologically integrated communities that adolescents already inhabit.

To support the lessons I wanted to create in a film studies course, I learned that I would need to combine the conclusions drawn from a variety of fields and objectives. Hobbs (2004), Lemish (2010), Levin (2011), Linstrand et al. (2011), Skinner (2007), Tisdell (2008) and Vasudevan (2010) all recognize the power film and video has to engage students' interests and sometimes evoke emotional responses. They also stress the importance to teach students the knowledge, skills and abilities to critically evaluate and understand the film and video that adolescents not only encounter in the classroom, but also the other media they consume outside the school walls. Tisdell (2008) and Vasudevan (2010) suggest it is the emotional response of students to film and video which makes it a powerful medium for students to view, critically analyze and respond to, represent and create in. Students are highly creative individuals. Technology is enabling this generation of students to collaboratively create and share across diverse interests, social circles, and abilities.

The Lessons

As I have incorporated film and video in classroom activities and assignments, I realized that, first, students really enjoy creating and representing through film and video. And, second, because many students are interested in film and video recreationally or professionally, there is an opportunity to teach a

film studies course where students study and learn about film, techniques, the industry, processes, styles, genres and more.

The lessons surrounding Elgg could almost be applied to any course except for the specific components pertaining to the film and video studies course. I am really excited about the potential of using Elgg in the classroom. I love that it is open-source and free. Simply, open-source media and technology formed as a result of the ways in which technology allows people to communicate and share today. Open-source software is all about collaboration and sharing, people are collectively creating and changing software and media, avoiding concerns pertaining to ownership and copyright issues. There are no fees or charges; Elgg only needs to be hosted by a school or district server, which should be attainable for just about any school. Also, it is a closed network. No one from the outside is allowed inside to view what students write and create. Members of Elgg can link to external videos, sites, and documents, but no one will be allowed in who is not supposed to be there. This makes Elgg a wonderful environment for students to develop online identities and behaviours, much like a school environment allows students to develop their more traditional identities and social behaviours. Right now, students are trying out digital behaviours in a real-world environment, with huge potential real-world consequences (and Google caching!) that might never disappear (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

Elgg provides students with the opportunity to create personal digital profiles in relationship to the film and video studies course. Students have the

opportunity to continually develop their profile throughout the semester as they learn and create film and videos. I also like how student blogs have the ability to be assessed and viewed not as separate entities, but holistically, like a portfolio, during the course of the semester. Students will be able to review and comment on the blogs of students and their own throughout the semester, collaboratively sharing, shaping and developing their ideas, points of view, and interests. This is also an attractive and beneficial aspect of Elgg for the teacher as they review students' thoughts, reflections, comments and interactions within the context of a whole semester. Providing teachers with the ability to holistically assess student use and interactions in Elgg. It provides the students and teacher with opportunities to continually and collaboratively reflect on the learning and development taking place. It also extends the walls of the classroom beyond the scheduled timeslot, which is a huge benefit that technology can provide. The opportunities for students and teachers to communicate and learn will not end during the small block of time when they are physically together at school, but whenever students and teachers wish to access and use the social network. There will always be potential for abuse and failures, which the teacher will have to closely monitor and act on if necessary, but the hope is that students will be appropriate and will moderate each other as students interact in inappropriate ways. This provides an opportunity and practice for students to learn, develop and shape their skills in digital citizenship.

These lessons also aim to challenge student thoughts and habits regarding the use and appropriation of media from the Internet by providing

students opportunities to learn about concepts like the creative commons license. The creative commons resources Elgg page will provide students with a number of links to websites where students can find images, textures, audio, and video files that are usable under a creative commons license. This will be a challenge for not only the students, but also for teachers (Swenson et al., 2006). Ethical digital citizenship is a difficult topic and in even more difficult to practice. Ethical digital citizenship is a new way of thinking and respecting content found and used online. It is not practical to expect all students to adhere to complete ethical digital practices, but the lesson provides an opportunity to challenge students on their uses of media. It forces students to consider the media they appropriate from the web and make their own, it is not only plagiarism, but also stealing, unless it operates under creative commons licensing.

I really enjoyed creating the lessons. They have been in the planning stage for a while, however, it was really enjoyable to pull them together and apply all the research and literature I have read over the past two years. A central idea throughout this project is equipping students with critical media literacy skills as adolescents encounter vast amounts of media on a daily basis. There are two overarching themes that I felt were really important to include in the film and video course lessons as a result of the literature: the first, the need to integrate current technologies to foster adolescent literacy, new literacies, and critical media literacy. The second, is the need provide students who have an interest in film in video with the technical, practical, artistic skills to communicate values, interests, and issues important to them with their peers and community.

Future Considerations

There is a lot yet to do. This project only features six lessons from an entire course. The project lays out the framework, foundation, and a few of the major assignments for many of the skills and processes needed to achieve all the learning outcomes and goals for the course, but there are a number of additional lessons and PLOs to create and implement. I will enjoy teaching this course over the next few years, applying the literature and reading more; adjusting and changing assignments, teaching practices, and the resources and skills explored throughout the class. I am excited to see the projects and conversations that occur in the classroom as students learn, collaborate, and create. Technology will change and develop over the course of the next few years and it will be interesting to see how technology might change the study and production of film and, potentially, introduce a new set and framework of literacy skills. I will also follow the IRPs closely as they are updated and changed under the BCED plan. The current PLOs contained within these documents are in dire need of an update. The Ministry needs to recognize and develop relevant objectives, practices and technologies that are applicable to students and education in the 21st-century world.

Closing Thoughts

Advancements in digital technology in recent years have democratized many expensive and specialized technologies that were once exclusive and brought them to the average consumer. Many students have access to technologies in their pockets that seemed like science fiction 20 years ago.

Students have video cameras and editing software in their pockets in the form of iPhones, access to an inexhaustible resource known as the Internet, and are continually networking with peers and communities online around the world through social media (Davies & Merchant, 2009; Itō el al., 2010, Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). In schools, a large majority of adolescents have embraced the trends and advancements in technology and web technologies that have created "new opportunities for social interaction and participation, and new opportunities for giving ordinary individuals voice" (Davies & Merchant, 2009, p. 119). These new forms of participation create possibilities for extending the walls of the classroom beyond the school buildings to other learning communities and resources. The consumption, participation, and interaction with all kinds of digital media are indistinguishable from the physical/analog aspects of many students' lives. They love interacting in digital spaces like social networking sites and YouTube. The challenge for teachers is to work with students using new technologies, teach them essential 21st-century skills, like critical media literacy, to create and shape communities, both digital and analog, as they develop cognitively and socially, better themselves, their peers, and the world around them.

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