

In an age when people are being bombarded with information and media texts of all kinds, it is the mission of the schools to help students develop their thinking skills in order to deal appropriately with the 'infoglut' that exists within the public domain. With this in mind, Media Literacy is mandated in almost all of the curriculum frameworks across Canada including *Quebec's Education Program (QEP)*. In broad terms, Media Literacy curriculum enables students to construct knowledge and develop a global outlook to cope with the changing and interdependent world in the 21st century, and develop student's lifelong learning.

The QEP is the most comprehensive education reform to take place in Quebec in the last forty years. ([www2.qesnrecit.qc.ca/reform/FMPro](http://www2.qesnrecit.qc.ca/reform/FMPro)). The new curriculum is divided into three sections including the cross curricular competencies, the subject specific areas, and the Broad Areas of Learning. It is in the latter area that Media Literacy is included. Its aim is stated as, "To enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights."

What follows is intended to provide an overview of the development of Media Literacy in Canada over the last four decades, its current state and the challenges that confront its place in the education system.

## ***THE DEVELOPEMNT OF MEDIA LITERACY IN CANADA***

### ***Media studies in Canadian Schools: The early years***

In a paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council of Teachers of English, in Los Angeles, California (1987), Emery pointed out that Canada has a long commitment to audio-visual media in schooling, dating back to the 1940's. The arrival of television in Canada during the 1950's's prompted both federal and provincial agencies to embark on initiatives to bring the new medium into schools. From 1954 to 1958, the CBC began experimenting with educational television broadcasting, also referred to as instructional television. By the mid sixties almost all Canadian provinces had formed some sort of education organization, associated with the provincial ministries of education, responsible for overseeing educational/instructional television. At the same time, school boards acquired large numbers of television sets and programs. Indeed, some went as far as to establish mini-television studios for student production activities. And yet, the uses of television in Canadian schools during this time delegated it to the status of advanced audio-visual hardware. For the most part, it was considered as a display medium and/or a gimmick to motivate students by providing a visual experience.

### ***The study of mass media in English Language Arts: 1960's to 1980's***

There are several reasons, why the study of mass media initially took place in English classes. First, the social revolution around the world in the 60's led to universities in North America to include the study of television as a means through which to study society at large. So for instance, mass-media courses in universities investigated issues such as: gender and racial stereotyping, censorship, violence.

In many secondary schools, attention to feature and short film study took place. Typically, the teaching of English, not just in Canada, but in places like Britain (keep in mind Canada until 1967 was closely tied to Britain), during the early 1900's, was the site in schooling where films and other forms of mass-media texts were used primarily as a means to teach young people how to *distinguish and judge* the basic differences between high and low

culture texts. Also, English educators understood that the mass media were sources of interest to their students and so considered that such texts would have the affect of leading them to more ‘sophisticated and serious forms of literature’. Another reason for the study of mass media in English can be attributed to the entrance of a large number of new teachers during the late 60’s, and into the late 70’s, which were enrolled in English programs in university. Since film and communications was part of their course of study, they naturally incorporated what they had learned into their teaching.

Meanwhile, back in Canada, the teaching of mass media in schools during the 1960’s was essentially the result of individual English teachers, who took it upon themselves to introduce the study of media in their classes. *The Canadian Association for Screen Education (CASE)*, formed in 1966, sponsored the first conference for media educators in 1969 at the University of York in Toronto, Ontario. Duncan (1993) refers to the years from 1966 to 1977 as the first wave of Media Literacy in Canada. Unfortunately, interest in Media Literacy declined in Canada for most of the better part of the decade. One casualty of this lack of support was CASE, which was dissolved in 1971 as a result of budget cuts.

While the first formal practices in Media Literacy in Canada came about in the early 1980’s, the first steps toward including the study of mass media in schooling actually took place earlier, in the 1970’s, concentrating on the study of the impact of television on society. The development of Media Literacy across Canada varied in scope and kind from province to province. Indeed, not all provinces took part in the development of Media Literacy during the 1980’s.

### ***The Association for Media Literacy in Ontario - the birth of Media Literacy in Canada; 1980’s and 90’s***

In 1978 *The Association for Media Literacy (AML)*, an organization, headed by Barry Duncan, Arlene Moscovich and Linda Schuyler, noted for producing the very successful television series, *Degrassi High*, was formed. The AML spearheaded what became known in Canada, and consequently in most areas of North America, as Media Literacy. In 1985, the *The Jesuit Communication Project (JCP)* was established, headed by Father John Pungente, SJ. The JCP brought international links, as well as recognition of Ontario’s work in Media Literacy. Comprised largely of teachers, parents and women’s groups, the AML and the JCP aggressively lobbied the Ontario Ministry of Education for the integration of Media literacy into its elementary and secondary schools. Guided by the AML and the JCP, in 1987 The Ontario Ministry of Education released guidelines for Media Literacy in English Language Arts, making Ontario the first North American educational setting to mandate Media Literacy in its curriculum. Two years later, the AML submitted to the government a framework document, *The Media Literacy Resource Guide, Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (1989).

The Ontario program included the principal mass media, including film, radio, television, print, magazines, photography, popular music, video, and cross-media studies such as advertising, sexuality and violence in the media. The curriculum stipulated that Media Literacy should be included in one-tenth of grades seven and eight ELA and one-third of grades nine to ten and eleven to twelve. Approaches taken to teaching Media Literacy, as developed by the AML and JCP, stressed critical analysis and production of media texts.

Media Industries and agencies also contributed to the initial years. *The Children’s Broadcast Institute of Toronto* made available *Guidelines for the power of television workshops* for

teachers and parents (Nostbakken & Nostbakken, 1982). As well, *TV Ontario* created critical television viewing materials called *Let's Play TV in the Classroom*.

As Canada's official languages include English and French, an adaptation of the resource guide was produced for the Francophone sector of the province titled, *La compétence médiatique* (1989). This document was produced by *Le Conseil pour l'intégration des médias en éducation (CIME)*, a group of Francophone teachers in the Ontario French school system. As well, the French sector of TV Ontario produced a thirteen part series, which complemented existing English programs, and which aimed to assist students decode messages and values in television, advertisements, videos and magazines.

As well as being the force behind the implementation of Media Literacy into Canadian schooling, the AML and the JCP were instrumental in organizing the *Trent Think Tank*, held at the University of Trent, in 1989. Forty-six educators and media professionals attended the Trent Think Tank, the aim of which was to examine the future of Media Literacy in Ontario, indeed in Canada.

Encouraged by the response at Trent Think Tank, the AML and JCP joined forces again to sponsor major international conferences at Guelph University, in 1990 and 1992. These conferences were significant in that educators and researchers from around the world came together for the first time. The Guelph conferences also set the stage for *Summit 2000*, in Toronto. Comprised of fifty-three countries and fifteen hundred participants, *Summit 2000* was the largest Media Literacy conference held anywhere in the world (Duncan, 2004).

### **From theory to practice**

Media Literacy practise in Canadian schools is predicated on several factors. One of these is the notion that media construct reality, put forth by Len Masterman (1990). In this instance, the role of Media Literacy attempts to assist young people in identifying the relationship between the images constructed in media texts with that which occurs in the immediate and distant socio-political realities. A second factor, as pointed out by Anderson, Duncan and Pungente (in press), has to do with the role of the mass media's influence in the socio-economic lives of young people, with a capitalist, market society. A third factor, also noted by Anderson, Duncan and Pungente (in press), refers to the idea of citizenship and the function of Media Literacy in helping young people to identify who they are socio-culturally.

Media Literacy in Canadian schooling takes several forms. In many areas, Media Literacy is taught in a specific discipline, such as English Language Arts, Social Sciences or Arts. Some schools teach Media Literacy as part of a larger communication course, often focusing on one medium or theme at a time; so a course may be offered in television, radio, print or advertisement. Still others integrate Media Literacy across the curriculum.

Neil Anderson, a leading Canadian media educator and author, suggests that most teachers have a limited understanding of Media Literacy. Chris Worsnop, a pioneer in the development of Media Literacy curricula in Canada, and a world leader in the assessment of Media Literacy, stated through e-mail, that Media Literacy in Canada today is dependent on, "the enthusiasm of isolated teachers. What is going on in response to the 'required' standards/expectations in the provincial curricula is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Continuing, Mr. Workshop stated that, "Most teachers are seduced by the effects model and take Media Literacy to mean media bashing". He went on to say that in order for Media Literacy to be further developed in Canada, it would be necessary to get "people to take it seriously and make time for it in the overall curriculum". Mr. Gange, a media educator in New Brunswick, remarked that, "It seems a

lot want to jump on the bandwagon, and they are only getting part of the answers right. I would like to see (Media Literacy) more widely spread. Not only is it applicable to Social Sciences and English classes, but also it needs to move also to Science where great questioning skills on the part of the kids would make them wonder what was being sold”.

Barry Duncan, has been a major driving force in the establishment of Media Literacy in Ontario and consequently across Canada and many parts of the world for several decades. When asked about the state of Media Literacy in Canada, via e-mail, Duncan responded,

I can't generalize but surveys would reveal a range from well informed to not informed at all. Using the term Media Literacy allows us to capitalize on the notion of literacy. Using multi-literacies is also one way of making a point re the different skills we need in today's classroom.

## **STUDENT MEDIA PRODUCTION IN CANADA**

Canada is no different than the rest of the world in acknowledging the omnipresence of media in daily life, and specific to the present discussion, in the lives of youth. And, as also stated earlier, this reality does not argue that Media Literacy be used as a means to protect young people from media products nor as a rationale for media bashing in a classroom. On the contrary, In many ways, the aim of Media Literacy is to sustain young people's enjoyment of media texts, while assisting them to be critical consumers. Student media production is a crucial element towards this goal. It is through media production work that young people begin to appreciate the language and the processes of 'writing' media texts. At the same time they come to understand how, for whom, and why media texts are constructed.

Many educators in Canada are not aware of the value of student media production as a powerful means by which they come to understand the constructed nature of media texts (Masterman, 1985). While Media Literacy in Canada has made tremendous strides over the past several decades, print is still the dominant form of literacy in Canadian schooling, and indeed in most of the industrialized world. For the most part, the printed word is still the primary means by which students are asked to represent their idea of reality. As elsewhere, the education system in Canada has been slow to acknowledge that while print has not lost its value, and in fact is even more valuable today than ever before, it is not the dominant source of information and entertainment for both youth and adults.

Across Canada, student media production is noted, either implicitly or explicitly, to be an integral part of Media Literacy Curriculum. For example, the new *Quebec Education Program* states that, "students should be provided with opportunities to represent his/her literacy in different media". (reference here). Unfortunately, many educators in Canada, especially those who are not cognizant that Media Literacy curriculum must include both media analysis and production, see student media production as technological education. That is, teaching that primarily focuses on the 'how it works', rather than on thinking critically about the technology as a writing tool to create media messages and texts. Consequently, in many parts of Canada, the use of technology in schooling has been delegated to computer or technological courses that focus on teaching how to operate a specific hard/software, unrelated to media production work. This limited use of technology is illustrated in a survey of elementary and high schoolteachers in public schools across Canada in 2003. On behalf of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), the survey showed that two thirds of teachers have their students using the Internet and instructional CD-ROMS, one-third use desktop publishing, and half use spreadsheets, computer games and simulations. PowerPoint and other presentation software are used by half of the teachers in their teaching.

Indeed, it may be fair to say that in many parts of Canada, educators have not only fallen behind their students in understanding not only the mechanics of the new and converging technologies, but also in recognizing that media production helps students to demystify media texts. Often there is a lack of awareness by many educators regarding the links among the key concepts and framework of Media Literacy, and student production work with new digital technologies and multi-literacies.

Reasons for Canadian teachers resistance to student media production may be a lack of confidence in their own abilities using ICT, as well as an uncertainty in the role of ICT in education. For example, teachers in the CTF survey indicated that while many had taken advantage of computer in-service training, they still did not feel adequately trained to use computer technology in their classes. Also, 55% of these same teachers felt that too much emphasis is placed on computers, rather than on other approaches to improve learning, and 63% disagree that ICT will play an important factor the future of education.

These statistics seem to support Chris Worsnop's comments, via e-mail (August 28, 2004) to the Canadian author. Mr. Worsnop comments,

In Canada there still seems to be an attitude that production is less important than other parts of the media curriculum. I see (student) production as the writing component to the reading side of media courses; reception and expression. Equally important, and for some students, the place to begin rather than to work towards.

There are of course other factors, which contribute to Canadian teachers' hesitation in using ICT with their students. For example, readily available access to ICT remains problematic in Canadian classrooms. Still, as the level of operational know how needed to operate technology becomes less sophisticated, and as the quality and capabilities improves, and as the costs of technology for classroom use becomes more attractive, more and more teachers in Canadian classrooms are beginning to investigate the role of technology can play in their students' learning.

Mr. Worsnop sums up the state of student media production work this way:

In brief, there is a small group of really outstanding (student media production) work, indicative of deep understanding of production values and conventions with lots of creative drive. Then there is a larger group of fairly competent (work) that shows promise. There is (an even) larger group again of acceptable work, which often relies heavily on the finished product, and a focus on teen genre content without understanding the technique and conventions.

Mr. Worsnop's comments suggest that while Canada has made huge leaps toward bringing Media Literacy into classrooms, student media production still has a long way to go in its development.

## **PARTNERSHIPS IN MEDIA LITERACY**

Over the last three and a half decades Canada has been fortunate in developing a number of partnerships. What follows is a directory of some of these partnerships. What follows is not intended to be a complete accounting but rather an overview of some of the partnerships across Canada. Regrets are offered to those which may have been

overlooked.

*The Jesuit Communication Project*, headed by John Pungente, SJ, (<http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/JCP/resources/violence.html>) lists a large number of organizations from across Canada. For example:

*Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, Canada's national broadcast system, provides a comprehensive data base related to CBC radio, television and other media related services. This is the homepage for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Of special interest is the potential of digital radio.

*The Centre for Literacy of Quebec, in Montreal* is a resource and teacher-training centre that supports and promotes the advancement of literacy, including Media Literacy, in schools, the workplace, and the community. It provides linking, training, research and information services. Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. In a technological society, the concept of literacy is expanding to include the media and electronic text, in addition to alphabetic and number systems.

*CHUM Television* is a division of CHUM limited, a leading media company, based in Toronto, Ontario. CHUM has supported Media Literacy projects across Canada, since 1980.

*The Media Awareness Network (MNET)* is the result of a two day meeting in 1994, in Toronto, Ontario, of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)* and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), and representatives of parent and educators groups, led by John Pungente, SJ. The MNET, directed by Jane Tallim, serves as a clearing-house of Media Literacy resources, research and reference materials.

## **THE FUTURE OF MEDIA LITERACY IN CANADA**

Media Literacy is a recognized part of the curriculum across Canada, in part due to the early efforts of the *Association for Media Literacy* in Ontario in the 1970's, and more recently the hard work of the WCP and the APEF, as well as provincial Media Literacy associations and its national umbrella organization, *The Canadian Association for Media Literacy Organisation (CAMEO)*. For example, in 1997 the WCP produced an ELA framework, which included a Media Literacy component. Each of the associated provinces is in the process or near completion of writing their own curriculum, implementation and teaching strategies, and outcomes. In similar fashion, the APEF has produced *The Foundations for English Language Arts for the Atlantic Provinces*, which indicates that Media Literacy, Visual Literacy and Critical Literacy are crucial elements of English Language Arts. Ontario and Quebec have produced their own curriculum.

Still, it is difficult to say to what extent it is actually practiced by teachers, its form and/or place in individual provincial curriculum. Media Literacy in Canada is competing with other subject disciplines for room in the packed school day. Again, the root cause of this dilemma can be traced, to some extent, to a lack of understanding by many educators regarding the nature of Media Literacy. That is, many view Media Literacy as either a course in its own right and/or something to 'enrich' their program. In the first instance,

the value of Media Literacy is weighed against other courses, such as Languages, Mathematics and Sciences, considered to be the tenets of a 'basic' education. In the second instance, most Canadian curricula at the senior levels demand formal examinations at specific times in the school year; Media Literacy in this occasion is viewed as a frill. There is a lack of understanding by many that Media Literacy is an approach that is best exploited across and with disciplines, rather than as a separate field of study or an 'add-on' to an existing course.

In other words, while mandating Media Literacy in provincial curricula across Canada is a major step forward, there is still along way to go in ensuring that Media Literacy is actually a part of young people's education. Mr. Gange, a Media Literacy high school teacher in New Brunswick, comments,

Given the conservative movement sweeping the globe, I fear we have a continued up hill battle in Canada to make Media Literacy more than it is now. Mr. Gange fears that lack of government funding is forcing (Ministries of Education) to, "make tough decisions to keep certain aspects of their curricula. There is a lack of knowledge on the part of the bureaucrats about what is really meant by Media Literacy. Some still think it is related to the multi-media skills, rather than about thinking skills.

## **MEDIA LITERACY TEACHER TRAINING IN CANADA**

Media Literacy is not an examined part of the curriculum, and so teachers – and more importantly – school boards, governments, teacher unions and colleges – do not see it as a priority for professional development. Enthusiastic teachers are always around in small numbers. They often teach excellent courses which die when they move on to another location. Much of the initiative for teacher courses, come from sources outside of education. It should be a priority of teacher unions, ministries of education and colleges of teachers, and since it is not, any other initiative will be an uphill battle. Chris Worsnop (E-mail, August 28, 2004).

Mr. Worsnop's comments above illustrate some of the difficulties in establishing Media Literacy programs for teachers. Pre and in-service teacher training in Media Literacy at the university level in Canada is still in its formative stages, and indeed, is still struggling to find a place in teacher training programs across the country.

There are many reasons for the small number of Media Literacy courses in Canadian universities, many of which are similar to those in Canadian public schools at the elementary and high school levels, discussed earlier. These include, but are not limited to: 1) the decentralized nature of the Canadian education system, 2) unavailability of funding, 3) unavailability of and reluctance to use technology, 4) the still dominant focus in teacher education programs on developing young people's print literacy, 5) the feeling by some professors in faculties of education that Media Literacy has little value for teachers and their students, 6) a misunderstanding that teachers need to have broad knowledge of media and communication theory or high levels of technological competencies. Perhaps one of the principal deterrents to the development of Media Literacy in teacher training at the university level may be a misunderstanding of the difference between Media Literacy/Literacy, Media Studies and Communication Studies.

Consequently, the study of the media in higher education is often offered in faculties of mass communication and/or liberal arts, and in such department as Journalism, English, Humanities and Media Arts, and in a few instances in Faculties of Education. In many instances where Media Literacy is offered in faculties of education, it is often introduced as a small portion of a methods and/or English language Arts and/or technology in education course. Research for this paper into availability of pre and in-service teacher courses at the tertiary level supports the confusion of a clear definition of Media Literacy.

The following universities have listed some form of Media Literacy or Media Studies courses in one or more of its faculties: Memorial University in Newfoundland, Humber College, Ryerson University, University of Toronto, and University of Windsor in Ontario, Malaspina University-College, University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and the University of Winnipeg. In the early nineties, the Canadian author of this paper designed and continues to teach the first Media Literacy Distance Education course, in the Faculty of Education for McGill University in Quebec. Also in the Faculty of Education at McGill University since the mid-nineties, along with others instructors, the author has been teaching teachers in training Media, Technology and Education, and in the past year, introduced Media Literacy to Cree teachers in James Bay, a northern area of Quebec. As well, the same author designed and instructed Media Literacy courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the Faculty of Education at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec. It should be noted that this listing is not meant as a complete directory of Media Literacy/Literacy courses at universities across Canada. Apologies are given for any oversights.

In some ways, the public school system is moving ahead of the universities in incorporating Media Literacy into their programs. For example, since Media Literacy is now mandated in elementary and high school curriculum across Canada, there have been many in-service projects at various school boards. These projects are often initiated by interested teachers, administrators, and most often by educational consultants connected to the school boards. As a result of these projects, an awareness is developing that teachers do not have to be media specialists but rather need an understanding of the place of Media Literacy in student centered learning. Over the last fifteen years, the Canadian author of this paper has been actively involved in providing short and long term Media Literacy training for in-service teachers in English school boards across Quebec.

Also, there is increasingly a realization by school board officials in Canada of the need to bring technology into their schools. Unfortunately, such a move often results in technology being taught as a separate ICT or computer course. Still, there is progress being made in many public school boards to develop projects, which incorporate Media Literacy and technology in interdisciplinary projects.

## **MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES IN CANADA**

What follows is meant to provide a brief overview of the origin, development and titles of but a few of the Media Literacy resources produced in Canada and/or adapted from foreign sources, such as that from Australia and Britain. It should be also mentioned that enthusiastic teachers for their own classroom usage are producing many superb materials.

### ***Non-print resources***

The *National Film Board of Canada (NFB)* was, and still is, a source of many resources, for elementary and high school students. Over the last several years, the NFB has reworked many of its earlier, archived productions, especially documentary products, so as to be used in a Media Literacy classroom environment. For example: 1) *Images and*

*meaning* is an anthology of nine NFB productions; 2) *Media and Society* is a compilation of short film excerpts, in three videos, dealing with Advertising, images of women, cultural sovereignty, and information/news gathering; 3) *Constructing Reality*, aimed at senior high school students, includes six videos, each exploring a different aspect of documentary film-making. Excellent teacher guides are included with each of these resources, providing teaching ideas and/or critical issues related to a specific aspect of the media.

*The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)*, is Canada's national broadcast agency, operated by the Federal government. From the early days of instructional television in the 1950's to the present, the CBC has produced and marketed materials aimed at elementary and high school students. One of its early productions, *Inside the Box*, focused on topics related to television, including documentary, news, children's programming, drama, consumerism, and artistic production.

Private and public agencies have worked together over the years to produce many resources. For example, *Cable in the Classroom*, is an initiative involving cable operators across Canada. Cable companies provided hardware and cabling that enable Canadian schools to receive and copy programs from a number of specialty channels. This allows teachers to have permanent or limited access to copyright free materials, thus by passing Canada's complicated copyright laws. Another such joint effort is that of the youth programming channel *YTV*, which along with noted media educators, such as Neil Anderson, have produced several teachers' guides to accompany various programs.

John Pungent, SJ, a leading Canadian educator, hosts *Scanning the movies*, broadcast on the Bravo channel. The program looks at movies made for mass consumption, including interviews with directors, producers and actors involved in movie making. Members of the AML also produce accompanying teacher materials.

*The Media Awareness Network (MNET)*, offers in its catalogue, scores of video resources in English and French. Many media educators from across Canada have assisted in the development and/or testing of resources initiated by the MNET. The MNET also hosts an on-line Canadian content clearing house of materials, the only one of its kind in the world.

A truly collaborative project involves, *The Jesuit Communication Project*, *YTV*, *CHUM TV*, *Warner Brothers* and *the NFB* resulted in *Scanning Television*, a unique collection of short television excerpts, averaging six minutes in length, which support the development of media literacy skills. This unique collection offers teachers a wide range of examples that will promote classroom discussion, analysis, and understanding of the key concepts of media literacy. In the last couple of years, a second series of *Scanning Television* has been produced. Members of the AML produced the teachers' guides.

### ***Print resources***

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, many initial Media Literacy resources used in Canada originated overseas. These were quickly adapted for a

Canadian context. It is interesting to note that many of the Canadian print resources were developed by practicing Media Literacy teachers; thus many of those mentioned below are written in a form that invites teachers to use the ideas and materials in their classrooms.

One such example is *Meet the media*. Originally written by Robyn Quin and Barry McMahon, leading Media Educators in Australia, John Pungente, Jack Livesly, a former English teacher and TVO host, and the Australian authors rewrote the text for use with Canadian students.

Neil Anderson, of Ontario, authored ( ) and *Media Works*. Both of these texts were intended to provide teachers with ideas and materials they could use in their classrooms. Barry Duncan, also from Ontario and a pioneer in Media Literacy in Canada has authored and/or co-authored several texts, including, two editions of *Mass Media and Popular Culture*. Likewise, John Pungente, SJ, co-authored *More than meets the eye* and several other documents aimed at a teacher population.

Jack Livesly's book *Media Scenes and Class Acts* (1987) provides teachers with strategies for making media a part of effective learning, through advertising, poetry, drama television, film, newspapers and magazines.

As provincial ministries of education continue to include Media Literacy in their curricula, more and more teacher resource guides will be developed. In 1989, the Ontario Ministry of Education looked to many of the original members of the *AML* to produce *Media Literacy: Intermediate and senior divisions*. The Canadian author of this paper, along with several other media and English Language Arts educators were contracted by the Quebec Ministry of Education to produce a teacher resource guide for secondary teachers, called *Media Files*.

In 1994, Chris Worsnop's book, *Screening Images* was published. The book is aimed at teachers and students in high school and colleges. It includes personal essays, frameworks, activities and resources.

*Adbusters* is a quarterly magazine originating in British Columbia. The magazine takes a strongly critical approach to advertising and consumerism.

Suffice to say that the number and quality of Media Literacy non-print and print resources is constantly growing and improving. Canada is fortunate to have a plethora of experienced educators to look to for providing enthusiastic educators with resources and materials that can guide them in integrating Media Literacy into their classrooms.

### **Current challenges**

While Media Literacy has been given support by provincial ministries in virtually every province across Canada, the truth is that its acceptance as an integral part of a student's education is still in doubt.

Media educators, from across Canada, were asked what they considered the challenges confronting further of Media Literacy. Their responses can be summarized into the following areas:

- Ministerial funding for professional development, resources, hardware and software, infrastructures, technical support
- Teacher training in undergraduate and graduate university courses
- In-service training
- Time in the curriculum
- Teachers are besieged with ever increasing demands to keep up with curriculum and policy changes, leading to indifference and/or burn-out

Closer examination of the challenges listed above point to a lack of understanding by many individuals in ministries of education, school boards and teacher training programs at the university level, of what Media Literacy entails. Media Literacy for many is viewed as just another 'technology' initiative, often confused with developing a student's 'multi-media' skills rather than thinking skills. For many others, Media Literacy is a life skill whose importance in today's information society is crucial.