MEDIA STUDIES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

Excerpts from a paper prepared for the New Zealand Ministry of Education
New Zealand Curriculum/Marautanga Project
on the philosophy of media studies
and its relationship with other subjects

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Introduction

Some large issues loom in the background of any discussion of media in education. Our society has been transformed over the past century by the development of new media of communication. Film, radio, sound recording, television, video, and the Internet, among other media, have grown to become the main sources of information, entertainment and cultural stimulation for most people. They have influenced elections, revolutionised marketing, altered existing industries and created new ones, and generally re-shaped our understanding of the world. They have also confronted the education system with new challenges and opportunities.

Education has a responsibility to prepare all students for this mediated world of work, culture and citizenship, developing the skills to participate fully and to realise their own potential. This is no longer a luxury or an optional extra but an essential part of what literacy and communication mean today. How and where exactly is the curriculum working to provide students with these necessary understandings and skills? And is it doing a coherent job - are there gaps, missed opportunities, awkward overlaps, or well-coordinated programmes? The present report seeks to ask these questions of the New Zealand education system at secondary level with particular reference to English and Media Studies. Such questions are too large and complex for a single report to resolve, but we hope to have at least contributed some ideas to this important discussion.

Our report has six sections:

(1) The recent history of English in New Zealand
(2) The recent history of Media Studies and its relationship with English
(3) Relationships with other subjects
(4) A brief look at what is happening in tertiary education
(5) Our response to a recent report on the English curriculum by Mike Fowler
(6) Some conclusions.

The document ends with a bibliography and three appendices. The reader may choose to skip the appendices but they do provide the report with an additional theoretical underpinning:

1) The theoretical basis of Media Studies
2) A brief history of English
3) A note on the computer in Media Studies

(1) The recent history of English in New Zealand

Teaching about the new communication media (as distinct from the classroom use of them as teaching aids) first emerged strongly in English in the 1960s and '70s. There were two main reasons for this. First, a new overseas model of English teaching that focused on personal growth became increasingly influential in New Zealand. This model promoted a more student-centred classroom, focusing on the concerns of students and the aspects of society relevant to them. John Dixon's book *Growth through English* (published after a seminal 1966 conference at Dartmouth in the USA) was a key document, although the broader context for this new approach was the cultural (and counter-cultural) upheaval that we know today as "the sixties." (The timelag in reaching New Zealand makes it more appropriate for us to talk about "the seventies".)

The second factor was an increasing number of English teachers who shared the views of John O'Shea, one of New Zealand's leading film-makers, when he attacked "the educational system" for being "doggedly out of touch with the visual images that bombard my own and other people's children" This was in 1963, and O'Shea felt so strongly about the situation that he did some unpaid media teaching himself, running voluntary lunchtime sessions at Wellington High School. By 1977 there were six high schools in Auckland with film teaching as part of English (Horrocks 1977). Any history needs to pay tribute to the early enthusiasts who saw the importance of media teaching in English and showed much initiative in developing their own resources, sometimes in an environment that was far from sympathetic. Film was the first medium of choice, and this was understandable because it had the most affinities with the favourite medium of English teachers – the book. (Historically the first medium of English was actually oral language, but written language – in the form of the printed page - has been central to the subject since the end of the 19th century. We have more to say about this in Appendix 2.) Films can be based on novels or plays; they employ script-writers; they tell stories; and a well-made film is a kind of text that calls out for close reading skills. The first film teachers were enthusiasts whose taste had been shaped by the 1960s, the golden age of "art films" by directors such as Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, and Godard, which left their viewers in no doubt that films could be seen as High Culture, as great literature.

The two factors worked together, as the discussion of films brought relevance and excitement to the classroom. Also, the timing was perfect as a new film industry was born in New Zealand in the 1970s, so film teaching and film-making developed simultaneously. The Education Department's funding of short films for the classroom such as the *Winners and Losers* series (based on New Zealand short stories) was crucial in giving the industry its start. Some teachers who learned about film-making by making films with their students (for example, Geoff Murphy and Merata Mita) went on to become well-known directors. Film grew into a large

creative industry in New Zealand and a central part of our culture (for example *Whale Rider, Once Were Warriors, The Piano, An Angel at My Table*, *In My Father's Den,* Peter Jackson's films, and so on). The film industry also became a realistic career option, which reinforced the value of production (including script-writing) as a component of education.

1983 was a turning-point, starting with the establishment of the Association of Film and Television Teachers (later NAME or the National Association of Media Educators) as a grass-roots network of teachers who shared advice and lesson plans. In the same year media-related activities within the English classroom were legitimated by the innovative *Statement of Aims: Forms 3-5* which encompassed not only films but a range of other media. Not all teachers responded to the new approach, but it certainly encouraged them to use a more diverse range of texts. Working with the "watching, viewing and shaping" foci, some teachers introduced newspaper and magazine activities or undertook studies of advertising. A few made super-8 films with students.

Meanwhile, film study was sanctioned at University Entrance level [form 6], though the film selected had to be an adaptation of a novel considered worthy of inclusion in the literary canon. While films were screened for junior classes - particularly titles from the National Film Library - film study was mostly for senior classes. In practical terms, film study at any level was a cumbersome affair since teachers had to work with temperamental projectors and vulnerable 16mm films. It was a tense business to run a selected scene back and forth through the projector for close reading. Feature films cost money to hire and their availability was limited. Eventually in the 1980s videos became readily available and this new medium solved the problems of close reading, cost and availability.

The English curriculum gazetted in 1994 identified "visual language" as one of the three strands around which the curriculum was to be structured. The curriculum noted that "the study of visual language, which draws on semiotics, provides an understanding of the ways in which visual and verbal elements are combined to produce particular meanings and effects. It involves the interpretation of dramatic conventions, signs and symbols and symbolic elements of visual language. Within the English curriculum, the study of visual language focuses on forms of communication which directly incorporate words or have direct relevance to linguistics. It lays the foundation for advanced studies that extend beyond the scope of English, such as advanced design, media studies, or film-making." (p.39) This formulation was careful to retain a place for words, to focus on the combination of visual and verbal elements, and to acknowledge that advanced forms of visual design, media studies or film-making are better located elsewhere in the curriculum. It also pointed out that anyone who wanted a theoretical basis in linguistics could draw on the tradition of semiotics. In the spirit of semiotics the curriculum saw the need for a broad understanding of "text" and "reading". For example: "Following contemporary critical precedents, the term [reading process] is used here to refer to the skills and information used to interpret texts of all kinds, not only written texts" (p.141). References to "specific media" (p.141) - "the material or technical means through which people communicate"– served to indicate that Media Studies was another relevant tradition. Visual language was a compendium

term because this strand included text-types from a range of media, but (as the glossary explained on p.141) this was equally true of oral language and written language.

English teachers with a broad interest in media were pleased and relieved to see that the *Curriculum* maintained the commitment (introduced by the *Statement of Aims*) to teach a diversity of text-types. While the *Curriculum* did not require teachers to give equal time to the three strands - and in some classrooms the visual language strand has continued to be under-valued (as we shall discuss later) - the three-strand structure had the positive effect of requiring every English teacher to pay at least some attention to visual language. This represents an important minimum requirement now that the most common form of text in our society is no longer simply words on the page. Today's readers must understand how "visual and verbal elements" interact if they are to come to terms in a thoughtful and critical way with any newspaper, magazine, illustrated book, film, television programme, cartoon, billboard or website.

The *Curriculum* advises English teachers that "[students] should combine theory with practice, producing their own examples of visual language by writing a script, planning and making a video, designing an advertisement, or producing a class newspaper" [ibid]. The most common production activities in English have been script-writing, story-boarding, video-making, designing posters, advertisements, book covers, CD covers, producing magazines and newspapers, and (perhaps less frequently) designing web pages. At senior level, English students have done media production for both unit standards and achievement standards. Media-related work can be undertaken in A.S 90059 [1.8] ("produce a media or dramatic presentation") and A.S 90374 [2.7] ("deliver a presentation using oral and visual language techniques").

There are opportunities for reception activities at both junior and senior level. Film study is a popular activity with junior classes [years 9 & 10] and film is the preferred medium when working with students on achievement standards 90056 [1.5], 90379 [2.5], or 90723 [3.4], which allow students to engage with an oral or visual text. A.S 90056 [1.5] asks students to "view/listen to, study and show understanding of a visual or oral text". A.S. 90379 [2.5] asks them to "analyse a visual or oral text", and A.S 90723 [3.4] to "respond critically to oral or visual text". Typical questions asked by English teachers focus on how verbal and visual elements within a film combine to produce meaning, and this is an informative approach, in the spirit of the curriculum. Close reading of selected scenes has become a widespread practice in the English classroom. One must note, however, that the approach sometimes lacks subtlety as teachers often discuss films purely in literary terms. It is perfectly valid to focus on plot, setting, character and theme, provided this is done with an awareness of how film-makers (and not only novelists) think about the shaping of these elements.

Film provides rich examples for the study of visual language, and the use of New Zealand films in the classroom has certainly helped to sustain the local film industry (albeit not to the same extent that the use of New Zealand books in the classroom since the 1960s has given a huge boost to the local publishing industry). The fact

remains that some classrooms would benefit from a broader representation of other media, since the ultimate purpose of the strand is not merely to learn film studies but to develop the set of skills required for the diverse range of visual and verbal texts in our environment.

Since 2002 NCEA has created problems for even modest forms of film and video production. In some schools, the making of video or super 8 films was once a regular part of English, but the pressures associated with internal assessment for NCEA have made it difficult to find the stretches of time required for production. The arrival of Level 2 Media Studies in 2003 opened up some new opportunities for that kind of work. However, the decline of such exercises in English is unfortunate as they help to counter the tendency to be narrowly "literary" in thinking about media texts. Also, the 1994 *Curriculum* conceived of English as laying "the foundation" for "advanced studies" in "film-making". While it recommended that advanced forms of production should be located elsewhere, it obviously saw modest production exercises as a useful part of the visual language strand.

42 years after O'Shea's comment that "the educational system" is "doggedly out of touch with the visual images that bombard my own and other people's children", we can take satisfaction in the progress made. Since 1963 the bombardment has itself increased considerably (via video tapes and cameras, DVDs, computers, computer games, multimedia, and a huge expansion in advertising), but the education system has made a commitment to keeping in touch, above all by explicitly including visual language as a strand in the curriculum alongside the traditional categories of oral and written language. English is a highly strategic place to display this commitment as it is a subject that almost all students encounter. We must remain aware, however, that the culture of English is still primarily print-centred. English teachers are passionate about books, which is a very desirable impulse, but in some cases it goes with a less-than-average interest in technology (or more precisely, forms of technology other than the teachers' favourite print media), and a less-than-average interest in the many media forms of contemporary popular culture. Some English teachers are still not confident even with computers. While understanding the cultural values that lie behind this stance, we believe that the education system needs to: (1) continue to emphasize visual language as an aspect of English teaching (a point to which we shall return in our discussion of a recent paper by Mike Fowler), (2) provide more resources and backup for this aspect of English, and (3) complement such work in English by the further development of Media Studies (as the place in the education system where media issues can be most fully and directly addressed).

(2) The recent history of Media Studies

Media Studies was first offered as a subject in secondary schools in 1983-84. Courses tended to be offered at sixth form level and students were able to obtain Sixth Form Certificate in the subject. Given the lack of a national curriculum or exam prescription, courses were said to be "local" in that they were designed by the teacher and submitted to NZQA for approval. The focus of Media Studies at that time tended to be on film studies, although journalism as a separate subject enjoyed a high level of popularity in the 1980s. Print journalism continued to be

offered as a separate subject until unit standards were introduced in the 1990s. The journalism ITO which developed the unit standards in print journalism insisted that these be taught by a registered journalist, whereas previously they had been taught by enthusiastic English teachers. This edict from the journalists' ITO resulted in a sharp decline in the number of journalism courses offered by schools.

By the '90s, interest in Media Studies among teachers had reached critical mass. Most but not all were English teachers – there were also enthusiasts in Art History and Social Studies. Teachers argued through their professional association, NAME, both for a Media Studies curriculum and for Media Studies to be available as a Bursary subject. (The fact that it was a Sixth Form Certificate subject that "went nowhere" meant that many of the interested year 13 students decided not to take the level 3 unit standards courses that were offered at a small number of schools.) Despite NAME's repeated overtures, the Ministry of Education declined to act on either request. Media teachers were deeply frustrated by the Ministry's attitude as simultaneously they saw large developments in Media Studies occurring in the tertiary education sector. During the late 1970s and most of the '80s, schools had effectively led the universities in media education; but the universities then leapt ahead by developing full-scale Film Studies and Media Studies programmes. (We shall discuss this striking divergence between schools and universities later.) In 1995 NAME developed a draft curriculum for Media Studies but this was not taken up by the Ministry. Finally, when NCEA arrived, the Ministry was persuaded to develop achievement standards. Achievement standards for level 2 were introduced in 2003 and level 3 and Scholarship in 2004. The Ministry would not sanction standards for level 1, arguing that students at that level had sufficient opportunity to engage with media through the English programme.

In the absence of an official curriculum, those constructing the achievement standards drew heavily on the British version of Media Studies. 'Institution', 'representation', 'narrative', 'audience', 'ideology' and 'genre' were concepts that a number of New Zealand teachers were already familiar with. Many teachers obtained their resources from the British Film Institute (BFI) which continues to play a major role in curriculum development in the UK. The BFI has a sophisticated conception of Media Studies and its resources are of a high standard, but when a New Zealand curriculum comes to be developed it should also draw on our own traditions of the subject. Media Studies as taught at Auckland University (for example) tends to base the subject in a more concrete way on the study of industries and production processes. While the British conceptual framework is also used, the Auckland approach is not so heavily theoretical. It seems to fit better with the down-to-earth relevance that characterises New Zealand education, and is immediately relevant to the country's energetic efforts to develop its media industries. It also offers ways round the problem that Media Studies in England has encountered of how to develop a concept-oriented course with a clear sense of progression from one level to the next (Hart 1992). Section 4 of this report discusses a possible New Zealand Media Studies curriculum in more detail.

The incomplete and under-developed local situation of Media Studies teaching in schools today may be summed up as similar to the early situation of media teaching in English. What has been achieved has been largely due to the efforts of

enthusiasts, many of them without formal training in the subject. New Zealand's culture owes much to this DIY attitude, but a time comes when it needs to be consolidated – in this case, in the form of a national curriculum. A 2004 survey by Sandra Smith that involved 30 practising Media Studies teachers showed clearly that a majority saw this development as desirable (Smith 2005). A curriculum was said to give added status to a subject and to strengthen the case for resources. A few teachers were concerned that such a curriculum might inhibit their flexibility in designing courses, or not be adequately resourced, but these were minority views.

A curriculum would also clarify the scope of the subject in relation to English and other areas of the curriculum. A brief comparison of Media Studies with English may provide a useful starting point.

- The close reading of texts is important to both subjects (but English devotes more time to this skill, particularly in relation to words);
- Media Studies explores a wider range of media and text-types;
- Media Studies is more sociological;
- Media Studies tends to be more conceptual;
- Media Studies is more contemporary in its orientation.

None of these differences makes Media Studies better or worse, but they do create a different kind of learning experience for the student. A level 2 English course will most likely include one film study lasting four to five weeks and an individual presentation utilising visual techniques; but a Media Studies course is also likely during the course of the year to touch upon television, radio, comics, web pages or magazines. Media Studies will require not only some close reading of texts but also analysis of the contexts in which the texts have been produced, including audiences, industries, technologies, production processes, economics, etc. English may touch on these matters but it will attach more importance to personal response.

The conceptual emphasis of Media Studies is largely a result of its stronger links with the Social Sciences (English tends to be less concerned with theory, more concerned with the practice of reading and writing). And what makes Media Studies a more 'contemporary' subject is the fact that it needs to engage directly with the rapid changes occurring in our media environment. Anyone teaching it needs to have his or her antennae always attuned (so to speak) to what is happening in popular culture, media technology, the media industries, and public debates on media issues. Some English teachers make enthusiastic teachers of Media Studies whereas others find its culture alien. (For a British comparison of this kind, see Buckingham and Sefton-Greene 1994.)

(3) Relationships with other subjects

A number of other subjects make use of media products (via video, computer, etc) but in a secondary (illustrative) way, as a teaching aid. This is perfectly appropriate but it is important for teachers to understand the difference between this approach and the approach of Media Studies which treats media products as its *primary* subject matter and seeks to analyse them as media phenomena. English might be

said to operate between these two approaches – aware of the concept of 'medium' but not attempting to deal with it in depth.

It is normal for subjects to overlap and to share some methods and concepts. The overlap helps to teach students not to compartmentalise the different areas of their education. What ultimately distinguishes any subject is its hub, its central or core concern (or set of concerns), and the tradition of theory and analysis that has developed around it. As large social and cultural changes occur, and new subjects emerge, existing subjects may be re-defined; but at any given time subjects need to be basically distinct to avoid unproductive forms of overlap. As subjects stand today:

ENGLISH focuses on language, and the associated skills required to read and write texts. These core concerns have persisted, although changes in our culture have made it necessary to enlarge the meaning of the key concepts ('language', 'reading', 'writing' and 'text').

SOCIAL STUDIES has society as its key concern. Human activities are to be understood in relation to their social contexts. The subject incorporates elements of Sociology, Anthropology, History, Geography, Politics, and Economics. Its talk of 'culture and heritage' seems on the surface to imply an overlap with English and the Arts, but this is not the case as its definition of 'culture' is primarily social. That is, it is closer to the anthropological definition of culture (way of life, customs, etc.) than to the arts or literary definition (creative semiotic activity).

TECHNOLOGY has technology as its key concern, with an emphasis on practical solutions and on innovation and change. It incorporates elements of science, engineering, and what used to be known as technical education.

THE ARTS has aesthetics as its key concern, in the context of communication and the making of meaning. Today these terms are understood broadly so it is possible to accommodate various conceptions of 'art', including a Maori perspective. Drama is included but other forms of literature are omitted as they are covered in depth in English.

MEDIA STUDIES has the communication media as its key concern. It focuses on media texts/products (in their double aspect as both text and product, communication and commerce, art and industry). It also seeks an understanding of the media themselves and the processes of media communication. Media Studies can either begin with media texts and work back to the media industries that produced them, or it can start with the industries and work back to the texts.

Interestingly, Media Studies includes elements of all the other subjects (just as all the other subjects include some media ingredients). A film, for example, involves language elements, aesthetic elements, technological elements (cameras, sound recording, computer editing, etc.), and social elements (representation of society, reception by audiences, commercial aspects, etc.). This multiplicity is found not only in films but in other media products such as CDs, books, magazines, newspapers, graphic novels, radio and television programmes, computer games,

websites, etc. In focusing on them as its primary subject matter, Media Studies is able to bring all the above aspects together, to understand media texts/products in their full complexity. It sees all texts as media texts, and 'media' immediately implies a range of contexts. The study of texts in English often is (and must be) informed by their media contexts, but English will not explore those contexts systematically or in depth.

This approach distinguishes Media Studies from the many subjects that use media materials. HEALTH, to take another example, touches on the important role (both positive and negative) that the media play in the promotion of the values of health and physical well-being; and this topic provides rich opportunities to study aspects of health education in media advertising campaigns (Hart, 1992). But studying this topic in its full complexity would require a good deal of Media Studies input.

Officially, Media Studies has been located in the Social Sciences domain. The Social Studies curriculum includes a few references to the media - in relation to themes such as 'place and environment', 'time, continuity and change', 'social organisation' and 'resources and economic activities'. Film and television programmes are mentioned in the curriculum's list of resources on p.27, but their function appears to be secondary or illustrative. The curriculum includes discussion of "how cultures and heritages are influenced by the movement of people and the spread of ideas and technology," and there are several concepts shared with Media Studies (such as 'stereotypes' and 'national identity'), but the emphasis is primarily sociological, political or anthropological. What are missing here are the semiotic or language aspects of the media (an important dimension of Media Studies). The general approach is society or people-oriented rather than media-oriented. In short, it may be possible to teach some aspects of the media within Social Studies but such teaching will be cramped by the context - this curriculum is like an umbrella that covers only a small part of Media Studies.

This is also the case with Technology. Most media production has a strong technological dimension, and there are many technical careers in the media industries for which this subject may be a useful starting point. But Technology, while it does refer to 'aesthetics' and does include a strand on 'Technology and Society', would not provide adequate training for the language, cultural, artistic or social aspects of the media that are covered by Media Studies. Its curriculum is also thin in media references or examples.

There has been much debate in Britain about the need for 'media across the curriculum' in addition to Media Studies (Hart 1992). In everyday practice in New Zealand, media texts/products are used regularly in most subjects, yet one would hardly guess this from their curricula. The most striking example is the Arts curriculum which is so light in media references that there has clearly been a conscious decision to exclude them. Since the media have a strong artistic dimension, media teachers and media professionals are likely to be shocked to see that film (for example) is not given equal billing with an art such as dance. The curriculum refers briefly to film and video as part of the category of 'time based media', which in turn is incorporated within the visual arts. Media production terms are conspicuously absent from the glossary. While it may be possible to do some

video production within the Arts framework, the curriculum is far from welcoming.

How has this happened? The narrowness of this Arts Curriculum reminds us of the battles that erupted within the QE2 Arts Council in the 1960s when it was first proposed that film might be included. The established forms of art felt threatened by this young upstart and were determined to defend their turf. Fortunately, film gained admission in the 1970s, and ultimately the growth of the New Zealand film industry (with most of our leading directors starting out with Arts Council grants) not only made a huge contribution to the national economy, but also proved to be highly beneficial to literature, theatre, music and the other traditional arts. Film now plays an important role among New Zealand art forms. But the school Arts curriculum appears to be caught in a time warp, particularly in contrast to the prominent role that film, video and computer play in contemporary practice in the visual arts internationally.

Perhaps this failure can work to the advantage of Media Studies since it provides another reason for expanding that subject. But even if Media Studies gains a curriculum, media aesthetics is never going to be more than one aspect; and there would still be a strong argument for giving film and other forms of media production a larger role within the Arts curriculum. One may compare today's universities where media production is seen as too important and too diverse to be confined to a single subject. For example, at Auckland University, a considerable amount of film, video and multimedia production occurs within Elam (Fine Arts) as well as within the Arts Faculty where it is under the supervision of Film, Television and Media Studies. Students in the Arts Faculty courses learn to make narrative films and documentaries, whereas students at Elam make experimental films or videos to accompany performance art. There is a similar difference between film and video funding by Creative NZ on the one hand, and funding by the NZ Film Commission or NZ On Air on the other hand. In schools, a similar distinction could be drawn between production work in Arts and production work in Media Studies or (more modestly) in English.

In general, then, Media Studies has connections with many subjects, but it also has a distinct identity, based (as is the normal way with subjects) on its key concerns. The examples and lists of terms in the glossaries of other curricula reflect the distinct concerns of each subject. While Media Studies shares some terms and concepts with other subjects, a curriculum for this subject will have a glossary that is for the most part unique (i.e. terms and concepts that are 'media-specific'). See Appendix 1 for an overview of such a curriculum.

(4) Tertiary education

This report has noted that Media Studies over the past two decades has been intensively developed at tertiary level. A case study of the University of Auckland (drawing on our own teaching experiences there) may clarify this point.

Film Studies was introduced as an M.A. course within the English Department in 1975. The course was well timed to catch the beginnings of the New Zealand film

industry – for many years it was the only university course of its kind available locally, and a number of its students went on to become film-makers. It also attracted Auckland high school film teachers, and for that reason it was taught after school hours. There was sufficient demand to justify additional courses, and the English department was sympathetic, but this development was blocked by some of the traditional departments who saw film as an illegitimate subject that would tempt students away from more serious forms of study. Such opposition continued until 1989 when the lecturer concerned was finally permitted to offer his first undergraduate course. By now his own teaching had expanded from Film Studies to Media Studies. He was joined by interested lecturers from other departments. The demand from undergraduate students was so great that the first course became a group of courses, managed by a Centre but still under the administration of the English department.

Eventually the programme grew so large that it was necessary to break away to become a separate university department. (This was essentially a department of Media Studies – as we shall describe it here - though it is still officially known by its full name 'Film, Television and Media Studies'.) The break with English was necessitated not only by size but by a feeling that the differences between the academic culture of Media Studies and that of English could no longer be reconciled. The English staff understood the need for Film Studies (apart from a few older lecturers in the early days who had tried to block the subject), but some were baffled by the sociological concerns of Media Studies. The original lecturer continued to teach both Media Studies and English and felt perfectly comfortable moving between the two worlds, but as more Media Studies specialists were hired, there were increasing differences of opinion between some individuals on each side. It became clear that it would be better to separate the two programmes. The divorce was amicable, and since then the two Departments have maintained a friendly relationship, teaching several joint courses (such as 'Drama on Stage and Screen'). There are many informal links between the two subjects such as the fact that one of the Media staff (Annamarie Jagose) is a novelist who last year won the national book award for fiction, while one of the English staff (Witi Ihimaera) wrote the novel on which the popular film *Whale Rider* was based. (The film was directed by Niki Caro, a former film student at the university.)

There is still some intellectual competition between the two disciplines, and that helps to keep things lively. There are English lecturers who continue to regard Media Studies as a mere sub-section of English. And there are Media Studies lecturers who see their subject as a new improved English that is better equipped to deal with the variety of texts in the world. They see English as a sub-section of Media Studies, because books (the favourite subject-matter of traditional English) are only one kind of media text. Meanwhile, many students take both English and Media Studies and regard the two subjects as distinct but complementary.

The Media department now has 20 fulltime staff, having recruited lecturers with a specialist interest in media from English, European Studies and Sociology, as well as hiring Media Studies graduates. Because Political Studies at the university has had a particularly strong tradition of studying television news and current affairs

and teaching journalism, Media Studies has tended to keep away from those areas. In the USA there is an alternative tradition to Media Studies known as Communications, with links to Political Studies. At the University of Auckland, Media Studies effectively leaves the Political Studies department to teach Communications (albeit on a small scale). The two programmes can be seen as complementary. (Incidentally, it remains an open question where journalism can best be fitted in at secondary level. As noted earlier, this has been a difficult question because of the conditions set by the profession.)

To ease the fears of other university departments that it is stealing away their students, Media Studies has tried to cooperate. 15 other departments run popular media courses of one sort or another. These have ranged from 'Politics and the Media', 'Representing Women', 'East Meets West', 'Shakespeare on Screen' and 'Maori and the Media' to 'History through Film'. Most foreign language programmes teach film courses. The fact that Media Studies has been willing to offer technical advice and to recommend those other courses to its students has helped to turn potential rivals into allies. In this way the Arts Faculty has achieved the goal of 'media across the curriculum'.

The acceptance of a new department is a rigorous process and it was necessary for Media Studies to convince the university of its academic validity and coherent identity as a subject and discipline. Its generic description read as follows: "[Media Studies] focuses on a unique topic – the communication media. These media have many features in common and are closely linked in terms of ownership, technology, personnel, etc. The social and cultural influence of the mass media of communication is so great that a subject is needed in which these media become the primary subject of enquiry. That enquiry needs to be informed by a knowledge of the media in their complex specificity – their particular histories and contexts and the traditions of theory and analysis that have developed around them."

At one time the Faculty was thinking of establishing a Humanities cluster of departments and a Social Sciences cluster. It is interesting that Media Studies was not able to commit itself fully to either domain. It saw itself as an holistic subject that drew from both the humanities and the social sciences.

Over the past decade Media Studies appears to have had the most consistent growth of any subject at the university. Tertiary enrollments are measured in terms of EFTS (Effective Full Time Students). Using the 2004 figures, we may compare the size of the Media Studies enrolment (392.83 EFTS) with that of English (549.56 EFTS, which includes its related Drama programmes), History (440.43), Political Studies (423.29), Sociology (356.34), Art History (276.64), or Classics and Ancient History (237.34). There are several smaller departments under 200 EFTS. This shows that Media Studies has become one of the major departments in the Arts Faculty. Its size (over 70% as large as English and Drama combined) is even more striking when one considers that it is the only department on the above list to have increased in size every year during the past decade, and it is still growing. This says something about the degree of interest in the subject among students. Many students take Media Studies courses simply as part of their general education. A

number of graduates have gone on to successful media-related careers; and an increasing number are entering the teaching profession.

Our case study has focused on Auckland, but there are also growing Media Studies programmes at other universities. Dr Geoff Lealand of Waikato University deserves special mention as an academic who has made important contributions to the development of Media Studies at secondary as well as tertiary level.

(5) A recent report on the English curriculum

'Refloating a Stranded Curriculum?', a March 2005 report by Mike Fowler, advocates simplifying the English curriculum by getting rid of its basic division into three strands (Oral, Written and Visual Language). We agree with Fowler that the curriculum would benefit from streamlining, and 40% of the teachers who responded to the National School Sampling Study in 2002 made the same general point. However, we strongly disagree with the particular change Fowler advocates. We think the more productive way to simplify the curriculum would be to revise the Achievement Objectives.

Fowler agrees that visual language texts were a vital addition to the curriculum. His argument is rather that their inclusion in English teaching can now be taken for granted. He writes: "The 1994 English statement, with its dominant 'oral/written/visual language' strand structure, was timely and necessary 11 years ago. It compelled teachers to acknowledge and, in many cases, to expand their teaching to encompass all three strands…. However, in 2005, the 1994 curriculum structure has served its purpose…. There are now other more pressing needs…." (p.9). Unfortunately Fowler's confidence about the absorption of "visual and non verbal forms" of language is premature. Both oral and written language have been present for thousands of years in the teaching of language whereas visual language is a newcomer. Its inclusion was hard fought; and some would say the extent to which it is covered in some classrooms is still a case of too little too late.

When the 1994 curriculum was finalised, it was agreed (after considerable debate) that there would be no compulsion on teachers to give equal time to the three strands. Still, the presence and prominence of the category of Visual Language did at least ensure that teachers were required to give it some attention. The second of the National School Sampling Studies (19 May 2005) reveals that over 40% of the composite area school teachers sampled for the survey still lack confidence in teaching the viewing and presenting sub-strands of the Visual language strand. This suggests that a significant number of teachers are nervous or lacking in confidence about visual language, and therefore teach it as little as possible. If Fowler's proposal to remove the visual language strand became official, then these teachers would be greatly relieved. Those with broader interests (teachers such as Fowler, for example) would continue to explore visual language as a normal part of the continuum of language, but other classrooms would almost certainly revert to the pre-1994 (and perhaps even the pre-1983) diet of written and oral English only.

Ironically this would compromise the very values that Fowler's report advocates, a "broad learner-centred curriculum" (p.2) that is both personally and socially empowering for students – a literacy that is broad and flexible enough to permit them to participate fully in the contemporary world. This should be the entitlement of all students, not only those fortunate enough to come from an affluent family or to chance upon a classroom with a media-savvy teacher. Currently this entitlement is protected by the fact that visual language is a statutory (and prominent) part of the national curriculum, which ensures that all students have access to at least some media-related work.

Fowler has a second argument, that technology is already blurring the boundaries between different text-types. He writes: "The influence of technological developments on the curriculum is one significant reason why reference to written, oral or visual forms of texts should not be given the structural prominence they currently enjoy" (p.13). The report appears not to explain this argument further, though it does suggest that "the boundaries around what constitutes written, oral and visual text [are becoming] increasingly blurred in an age of exponential technological advance" (p.12). Clearly oral and written remain distinct categories of language, so presumably the above comments refer to the boundaries between written and visual language. Now, there is an increasing use of computers in English (albeit more gradual than one might wish), and there is much talk within technical communities about convergence between digital media, but such talk should not be confused with the desirability in English teaching for integrated or holistic forms of education. Media specificity is as important today as it has ever been – the computer has assisted existing media rather than replaced them. Some boundaries have been re-drawn but the media continue to be separate and competitive. A person communicating needs to know which medium to use, what its strengths and limitations are, and how to use it most effectively. This applies to all the various forms of oral, written, or visual communication. The film medium, for example, is a complex, integrated form that incorporates words, images, performance and music (to mention only some of the elements) – yet it is still important to talk about the specific characteristics of the film medium.

When Fowler argues (p.14) that "purpose groupings" should "transcend" the distinction between "written, oral and visual language forms", the problem is that "visual language forms" are then likely to be downgraded in the classroom. Any act of communication involves four contexts - medium, genre, audience and purpose – that the student and the teacher need to consider. But three of them - genre, audience and purpose - have been known and discussed since Shakespeare's day (they played a central part in Elizabethan rhetoric), whereas medium (in the modern sense) has only been seriously studied for the past half-century. It is appropriate that 1994 Curriculum foregrounds this issue by means of the three strands, which are groupings of media. (As the 'Medium and Media' entry in the Glossary explains, each of the three forms of language "make use of specific media". It goes on to discuss each strand as a grouping of media.) In Fowler's report, medium (or mode) no longer receives more attention than the older, better-known contexts. Indeed, it receives less attention. We would argue that this is taking not one but two backward steps.

Fowler briefly suggests a third argument when he writes: “It is naïve to even attempt a ‘second-guessing’ of the impact developments in technology will continue to have….’ (p.5). As we see it, the challenge for English is not to predict the future – rather, it is for the subject to catch up with where we (or our students) already are today. As the ACER report (quoted by Fowler p.4) observes, the decision by the 1994 Curriculum to emphasise visual language was “particularly interesting and timely, given the increased delivery of communication in visual form through the popular media and the electronic media”. Eleven years is not a long period of time to come to grips with a new concept in teaching, and we should be cautious about removing from the curriculum so soon one of its most “interesting and timely” innovations. In our opinion, the full potential of this concept has yet to be realised.

Media production is an area in which the impact of the change would be most pronounced. Production in media other than simple oral and written forms has gained only a tentative foothold in many classrooms. It would be likely to lose even that foothold if the visual language strand were down-graded. Again, this will produce an unequal situation around the country as only the students in some schools will have opportunities to experience media production.

In fairness to Fowler’s report, we should add that it does not seek to remove the concept of visual language entirely but rather to reduce its prominence. The report is happy for the term to remain as “a secondary classification” (p.16), and as such it mentions it on several occasions (p.10, p.13). But it seems inevitable that giving it a secondary status will result in visual language teaching receiving no more than token attention in some classrooms. If this is the desired outcome, then the idea of reducing the amount of visual language teaching should be debated directly and fully, not in this indirect way (as a method of solving other structural problems in the curriculum).

If the curriculum needs to be simplified, then some rationalisation and trimming of the plethora of achievement objectives seems the best way forward. A ministry-led initiative is currently focusing on the achievement objectives, and a substantial re-writing is underway.

(6) Conclusions

If education has a responsibility to prepare all students for today’s world of mediated work, culture and citizenship, how successful is the curriculum in offering students the necessary understandings and skills? We can see that a good deal of positive progress has been made, though the results are still uneven. The following suggestions seek to build on what exists, to clarify and consolidate.

[1] Media Studies and English are basically distinct subjects which complement each other in many respects. Some English teachers make good Media Studies teachers (particularly when the close reading of texts is involved), but anyone working between the two subjects needs to understand their different priorities and

styles. Neither the nature of Media Studies nor its relationship with English appear to be well understood among teachers in general, and clarification is called for. English teachers may not realise that Film Studies is closer to English than are other aspects of Media Studies. This is not to imply that English teachers should limit their coverage of media texts to films – or that they should talk about films only in a 'literary' way - but simply to explain why films have been a particularly popular and valuable starting-point for discussions of visual language.

[2] The subject of Media Studies has a distinct and important role to play in helping the school curriculum (and students) to come to terms with today's media environment. The subject needs the coherence and consistency provided by a national curriculum. This curriculum should make good use of but not simply imitate British models, since there are also relevant New Zealand traditions of Media Studies.

[3] Such a curriculum needs to be adequately resourced.

[4] The visual language strand of the English Curriculum remains as important and timely an aspect of the subject as it was in 1994 when the Curriculum was introduced. The fact that almost all students do some English ensures that they receive some basic training in the analysis of visual language. However, the teaching of visual language is still patchy and uneven, and it would therefore be premature to give this category a lower profile. If the curriculum needs simplifying, the Achievement Objectives seem a more appropriate target.

[5] More training and resources in the area of visual language are needed, particularly for those teachers who still do not feel at home with this strand.

[6] Groups developing resources of this kind need to include experienced teachers and academics with a theoretical as well as a practical understanding of visual language (for example, an expert on semiotics, or on the concept of media).

[7] Some more research is needed to develop the theoretical basis of visual language. How is visual language changing and developing in the world today and what are the best ways to teach it? We have been busy bedding in the new curriculum in practical terms - now the time has come to develop more of its potential in theoretical terms.

[8] If the Fowler report is correct in identifying a tendency to compartmentalise or "atomise" aspects of English, then it may be useful to remind teachers of one of the foundations of visual language – that this strand deals with the *mix* of visual and verbal elements, and how they *interact* to produce meaning. As Fowler suggests, good communication always involves more than a single factor.

[9] The divergence between schools and universities in their development of Media Studies needs to be addressed. Schools may have lost the leading role that they played in this field until the late 1980s; but the establishment of a school curriculum for Media Studies should help considerably to restore parity. The new wave of

teachers who have received formal training in the subject will be able to make a special contribution in schools, provided they have an opportunity.

[10] Every subject has a responsibility to ensure it is taking full advantage of media education possibilities (from video to Internet), and that it is linking its teaching in relevant ways to the contemporary world. For example, if an opportunity arises to revise the Arts curriculum, the Arts should be brought more closely into line with contemporary practice.

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Appendix 1: The theoretical basis of Media Studies

What exactly should form the basis of a Media Studies curriculum? Let's begin with the media 'texts' (or 'products') that fill our world. Media Studies considers them not only as 'texts' (i.e. messages and communications) but also as 'products' (the result of industrial and economic processes – that is, it also considers their social contexts). We may focus on the 'text' or the 'product' – the semiotic aspect or (say) the economic aspect - but the presence of both aspects is always implied.

Media texts come in many forms. On a sample day, a typical urban couple may be

woken by an alarm-clock-radio playing music. Over breakfast they will read the newspaper. As they drive to the city, they may listen to talkback on a commercial station, or current affairs on National Radio. A clever election billboard catches their attention on the side of the road. Arriving at their separate places of work, each turns on a computer and reads and writes some emails. In the afternoon, she takes part in a tele-conference. He watches a training video. Driving home together, each makes a phone call on their mobile, and there is a text message from their daughter. They get home in time to catch the television news. In their parental role, they attempt to persuade their son to turn off his PlayStation and read a book for a change. Their daughter is excited about a new CD. Her mother goes on line to place a supermarket order via computer. Over dinner there is a debate about whether the family needs a digital camera (their daughter thinks it would be much more fun to buy an iPod). After dinner, the father programmes his video recorder to catch a rugby match (being broadcast live from Australia) then goes out with his wife to a movie (which they have selected from newspaper ads or a website). At the end of the day they settle into bed to read (he has a magazine, she has a bestseller everyone at work has been talking about).

What we have been describing here is admittedly a middle-class urban lifestyle, but even if we change the social context and a few of the details, the fact remains that today almost every New Zealander lives in a media environment (or mediascape) that would have bewildered and overwhelmed even our recent ancestors. Media Studies seeks to make us 'media savvy,' confident in our understanding of where media texts/products come from, why they take the shape that they do, how they address us as citizens or consumers, and what their social implications are. Such education helps a student to understand the contemporary world, to be a concerned citizen, a discriminating consumer, a thoughtful reader (and potentially a creative producer) of such texts. Basically Media Studies gives us a series of questions to ask of any media text, and seeks to make us critical, resourceful and well-informed as we answer those questions. It is characteristic of this subject that it assumes there are many shaping forces simultaneously at work (it is suspicious of single-factor explanations); hence, in answering the question 'why a media text takes the shape it does', the student is being trained to bring together (with increasing confidence) modes of analysis from English (close reading), arts (aesthetics), politics (political economy), technology, and economics, in addition to 'media-specific' information. Media Studies teaches an holistic (or what academics call a 'thick' or 'multi-perspectival') interpretation of media texts/products.

This corresponds to the complexity of the media themselves. For example, a film like *Lord of the Rings* involves a wide range of artistic skills (scriptwriting, acting, directing, editing, costume and set design, music, etc.) and is at the same time a complex technological and economic product, accompanied by highly sophisticated marketing techniques. It is also very global (based on fiction written by an Anglo-Saxon lecturer from England, financed by an American company, performed by an international cast, filmed in New Zealand locations, and shaped by a key creative team of New Zealanders).

The analysis of such media products is challenging and requires the development

of a range of skills. Other subjects can focus on one of their dimensions (for example, English may compare the film with the book, or compare scriptwriting with novel-writing) but only Media Studies can give a comprehensive view of the media text/product. Below are listed the typical questions asked by this subject. Ultimately what matters are not questions but answers - the ability of students to provide answers as their skills and understandings grow. Still, the questions provide a useful starting point and a way of identifying those skills that will be relevant, useful and necessary.

In the case of each question, the answers should initially be of the simplest kind, focusing on basic or concrete facts. Over the years, students will become progressively able to answer (as well as ask) each question in more ambitious or comprehensive forms, as they develop an increasing store of information and more complex skills and understandings.)

1. What kind of media text is this?
The answer should start by identifying and understanding the medium concerned. It is important to know something about the technology as the basis of the medium, but Media Studies leaves in-depth understanding of that to Technology, and turns to the messages conveyed, to the communication (or semiotic) aspects. It moves on to questions such as what is typical of the messages associated with this medium? Are there characteristic codes or conventions? And favourite genres?

2. What industry contexts does this media text come from?
Each year the student should gain basic knowledge of a few more industries, their production practices, economics, and regulatory environment (ownership, censorship, etc). Each of those aspects helps to shape a text. The student's understanding of these production processes can be enhanced by some practical exercises. Knowledge of the local media industries and the realities of their day-to-day activities will also help students to think about the world of work they will eventually enter.

3. How do such texts reach us?
How is the text packaged, marketed, advertised? How is it distributed or exhibited or broadcast? (Answering this last question will raise many important issues such as the nature of public service in comparison with commercial broadcasting.)

4. What do we discover if we do a close reading of this particular text to see what its individual characteristics are?
The answer should consider its structure, texture (details), and style. Followup questions include: Is this text well made (is it good of its kind)? What links does it have with other texts? What are its cultural inputs? How generic, how typical or unusual, how innovative is it? These are the kinds of questions pursued by media reviewing and criticism – this is the realm of media aesthetics (with media-specific concepts such as 'auteur theory'). There are opportunities here also for the student's personal response.

5. What is the relationship of such texts to society?

How do such texts represent society? (Discussions of representation employ concepts such as 'stereotype' and 'ideology,' race and gender, etc.) What 'uses and gratifications' do such texts serve? What are the possible social effects? There are many ways to research and understand media audiences – quantitative versus qualitative research, enthnographic research, reception theory, conceptions of the active audience, market research (with its focus groups), etc. Relevant terms include 'mainstream' and 'minority', 'target audience' and 'niche'.

6. What other debates surround texts of this kind? Are there other possible ways of talking about them?

7. What is the tradition or history of this type of media text?
This question can be applied to all the aspects covered in the other questions (the historical development of technology, conventions, industry, censorship, aesthetics, audiences, etc.). Such a study is suitable for advanced levels.

8. Could the student make such a text? If so, how would he or she plan it and make it?
There are opportunities here for practical projects, in terms of creative ideas, scripting and strategic planning, or actual production.

There may be some overlap between these questions but together they add up to a thorough analysis of any media text or product. (They cover the basic parameters of Media Studies – production, text, distribution, and reception.) The student should become progressively more resourceful by getting to know additional media (by a detailed study of at least two media each year) – including their traditions, main genres, social influences, production methods, industry contexts, and careers – and by learning to answer the questions listed above at a higher level of analysis. As students progress, they can move increasingly from facts and specific details to ideas and generalizations, and become better able to distinguish the innovative from the conventional. They can also come to understand how the various forces and contexts interact in the shaping of a media text (e.g. the push and pull between artistic and practical or economic considerations).

One way to understand a subject is to consider the glossary of key terms and concepts that would be attached to its curriculum. Students will come to understand and use these terms as their grasp of the subject develops. Below we will group some sample Media Studies terms/concepts that are available for use in response to the eight questions above. The terms in italics are those explicitly included in the existing Unit or Achievement Standards for Levels 2 and 3. (Of course, the other terms are also regularly used by individual teachers.)

1) What kind of media text is this?
Medium, technology, codes, conventions, genres, high culture/popular culture, narrative/non-narrative, etc.

2) What industry contexts does this media text come from?
Production, creative process, concept, treatment, strategic planning, production

schedule, preproduction, postproduction, *commercial production,* industry, ownership, monopoly, regulatory environment, standards, censorship, local/global, etc.

3) How do such texts reach us?

Distribution, exhibition, broadcasting/narrowcasting, public service vs. commercial broadcasting, marketing and publicity, packaging, etc.

4) What do we discover if we do a close reading of this particular text to see what its individual characteristics are?

Close reading, semiotics, narrative analysis, media reviewing and criticism, media aesthetics, auteur theory, mise en scène, etc.

5) What is the relationship of such texts to society?

Representation, stereotypes, values, messages, ideology, *national identity, ethical issues, audience,* uses and gratifications, social effects, quantitative research, qualitative research, ethnographic research, reception theory, active audience, market research, *target audience,* niche, mainstream/minority, etc.

6) What other debates surround texts of this kind? Are there other possible ways of talking about them?

This is an opportunity to bring in many other aspects – e.g. social controversies, discussions of the star/celebrity phenomenon, issues of privacy, etc.

7) What is the tradition or history of this type of media text?

History (and all the media terms associated with earlier periods of history).

8) Could the student make such a text? If so, how would he or she plan it and make it? (See the production categories for #2.)

As noted above, these are some of the possible terms – the detailed analysis of any industry would lead to many others. Also, many of the terms are not unique to Media Studies, though the particular ways they are used in the subject tend to be media-specific (e.g. representation, concept, treatment, active audience, media aesthetics, etc.)

Appendix 2: A Brief History of English

Our aim here is not to attempt a definitive history of English but to show the extent to which the subject has changed over the years as conceptions of language, literature and literacy have evolved.

The forerunner of the subject in Elizabethan times was 'Rhetoric', the study of how to write or speak in a way that can influence, persuade, or touch the emotions of an audience. This was excellent training for lawyers or dramatists. Some of today's Achievement Objectives still echo this tradition. The subject of 'English'

emerged in the late 19th century, and the curriculum was expanded to include the study of literature as well as language. This was highly controversial at the time because some regarded it as not appropriate that 'forms of entertainment' such as novels and plays should be included as part of serious education. Matthew Arnold provided a strong rationale for the new subject by arguing that a study of the canon of great literature could serve as moral education for the young. As imported into New Zealand, the subject involved a canon of writers from England ending in the 19th century.

Overseas, New Criticism emerged in the 1920s and '30s as a profound reaction against the Victorian emphasis on the moral aspects of literature. It sought to give a stronger basis to the new subject of English by focusing on precise close reading as the tool with which to interpret literature. There was not much room for personal response as students had to work hard to prepare themselves to read great literature. English became a kind of gym workout for the reading muscles. Also, since many of the New Critics were themselves writers (members of the Modernist movement), they expanded the curriculum to include examples of modern literature.

The so-called 'sixties' (actually the 'seventies' in New Zealand) brought a strong reaction against the values of New Criticism. When members of New Zealand's 'sixties generation' became teachers and lecturers in the '70s, they fought for a fundamental change of approach and a revision of the canon. They wanted education to be less uptight and hierarchical, and English to be more relevant, more personal, more diverse, and more contemporary. Some were influenced by ideas from the 1966 Dartmouth Conference in the USA. These trends led to a change of approach and a huge expansion of the curriculum – to admit popular as well as high culture texts; contemporary as well as modern texts; female as well as male writers; and all the various literatures in the English language (not only writing from England). This last category included New Zealand literature (a hugely important addition). The teachers of this generation also saw it as natural to introduce films and other media texts. This wave of change in the '70s and early '80s was initially small, and the inclusion of films, say, or rock song lyrics was as bitterly contested as the inclusion of novels and plays had been a century earlier. Over time, however, this approach grew to become the new mainstream.

At university level, there have been two other major changes. The first was what is sometimes known as 'the linguistic turn' (the arrival of post-structuralist theory in the 1970s and '80s). This tertiary development has generally not been seen as relevant to schools, with one significant exception – some teachers were impressed by its use of semiotics (or semiology), the expanded form of linguistics (first conceived at the beginning of the 20th century) that applied not only to words but to signs of every kind, including images. Semiotics expands the power of reading and can see virtually anything in the world as a text waiting to be read. In the classroom it provides a tool for coming to terms with the fact that over the last century words have appeared more and more often in the company of images. New printing technologies have made it possible for newspapers, magazines and books to make lavish use of pictures. Advertising combinations of words and

images have saturated our environment, and film and television have become hugely influential. The computer and the Internet continue this trend. Obviously this has changed the nature of our encounter with words, and English must therefore come to terms with these many forms of 'visual language'.

Finally the '90s brought a 'sociological turn,' also known as 'Cultural Studies'. This represented a strengthening of all the social, contextual aspects of the subject. Some high school teachers developed their own version of this tendency by using the discussion of literature to promote progressive ideas about social equality, gender, bi-culturalism and multi-culturalism. Some critics have objected that this kind of English teaching has become too 'politically correct', but it could be argued that such teaching is simply a return to Arnold's original conception of the subject as a form of moral education or preparation for good citizenship.

Looking back over the history of English we can see that - generally speaking - there have been distinct 'generations' of English teachers, each of which has expanded the curriculum, despite the resistance of other teachers who felt that the subject was being overloaded. Each approach has tended to remain a part of the subject, expanding its potential scope. What has changed is the mix or relative emphasis between approaches (and that is a crucial choice for those who manage the curriculum). There are always new trends coming along, and also occasional attempts by public interest groups to return to an earlier way of doing things. The pressure for change has frequently come from the surrounding environment – social and political shifts (such as 'the sixties', feminism, New Zealand cultural nationalism, biculturalism); new forms of artistic production (the novel, modern literature, rock music); and, as the aspect that we are particularly concerned with here, new media (film, television, the computer), etc. At the least the history of English should reassure us that change is continuous and healthy, and we should hesitate before being shocked by any new arrival, either because it seems 'un-English' or because it threatens to overload the subject.

Appendix 3: A Note on the Computer in Media Studies

A comment on the computer seems necessary as there has been some confusion about its relationship with Media Studies. The most profound media change in recent decades has been computerization, or more precisely the applications of digitalization in association with electronic media. The value of 'media across the curriculum' is well illustrated by the computer. It has offered new opportunities for all subjects, through the research possibilities of the Internet for example. In English, students can benefit from the use of the computer in writing, particularly in the ways it encourages revision and editing. The web also offers new kinds of text for English study – the email, the website, the e-zine, etc.

In addition to 'media across the curriculum', there needs to be a subject where the far-reaching implications of computer-based media are directly examined. Media

Studies provides such a subject. Computer-based media are not merely a teaching aid but directly part of the subject matter of Media Studies, which examines their effects and the various new kinds of text they have produced (analysing them as media texts). It can also see how digitalization is transforming the production methods of all the existing media (newspapers, books, music recordings, films, television programmes, photographs, etc.). This raises many important issues, such as the challenge to 'realism' that arises when photographic and film images can be modified or created synthetically via computer. This is not to suggest that the so-called convergence associated with the digital is going to do away with the traditional media; we can assume that books, newspapers, films and television will continue but they are likely to undergo some big changes, which Media Studies will have the task of tracking and analysing.

Digitalization is moving so fast that almost all teachers struggle to keep up. Requiring Media Studies to be a place where these changes are seriously discussed may be a daunting request. Many teachers are still coming to terms with the move from books to film, and then from film to other media such as television. The computer and the Internet confront us with a range of new text-types. Nonetheless, the education system has a responsibility to keep in touch with these profound social and semiotic changes, and Media Studies seems the ideal place (though the more technical aspects of computers should be covered by Technology). Media teachers must, however, be adequately resourced and supported if they are to fulfil this responsibility.